



CHAPTER

01



Overview of Fashion

1.1 UNDERSTANDING FASHION: INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION

Fashion has become an integral part of contemporary society. It is an omnipresent aspect of our lives and is one of the focal topics of the print and electronic media, television and internet, advertisements and window displays in shops and malls, movies, music and modes of entertainment etc. Fashion is a statement that signifies societal preferences created by individual and collective identities. The key to its core strength lies in its *aspiration value*, which means that people aspire to be fashionable. Fashion travels across geographical boundaries, history influencing and in turn, influenced by society.

Though the term 'fashion' is often used synonymously with garment, it actually has a wider connotation. A garment is not fashion merely because it is worn. To become fashion, a garment has to reflect the socio-cultural ethos of the time. As a generic term, fashion includes all products and activities related to a 'lifestyle' - clothes, accessories, products, cuisine, furniture, architecture, mode of transportation, vacations, leisure activities etc.



Fig 1.1 Evening gowns by Sanjeev Sahai Creative Director of Amethlysta Viola

Fashion has emerged as a globally relevant area of academic study which includes various aspects of fashion design, fashion technology and fashion management. Due to the wide range of human and social aspects within its ambit, it is also a topic of scholarly study by sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists.



Its multi-faceted nature leads to numerous interpretations. For an average person, fashion could generally refer to a contemporary and trendy style of dressing being currently 'in' and which is likely to become 'out' by the next season or year. To an economist, fashion presents an ever-changing dynamic scenario because of its potential to make any product obsolete within a certain time span, inducing the desire for replacement even though the newer item may or may not necessarily function better. A sociologist is likely to perceive fashion as a product of socio-economic-political factors prevailing within a country or even globally at a given point of time. For a psychologist, it could be an expression of personality, human behaviour or a reaction to the surrounding environment.



*Fig 1.2 Alpana Neeraj SS
2013 show*

It is difficult to separate the two sides of fashion - the frivolous from the serious aspects. Beneath the aura of glamour, fashion is a serious business with a well-coordinated cycle of activities from concept to creation of clothing merging the economic aspects of the industry with design. The organization of the fashion industry includes linkages among a wide network of producers of raw material, designers, forecasters, manufacturers, merchandisers, retailers, media persons etc. This is achieved by the *supply chain* which comprises planned activities from raw material sourcing, manufacturing, marketing to sales. Fashion goods are produced for different segments of the domestic market and also for export which generates foreign exchange and stimulates the country's economy. It includes both **domestic trade** which refers to the fashion business within the country and **international trade** which refers to the export-import business. The fashion industry does the following:

- ★ Generates employment and facilitates payment of salaries to employees
- ★ Contributes to the national economy through purchase of materials and services as well as payment of taxes.
- ★ Contributes to the growth of the domestic trade and markets in terms of time, effort and money incurred on account of the raw material, manufacturing and marketing, product creation/innovation as well as promotion/marketing within the country.
- ★ Creates profit for the company and related industries.
- ★ Earns foreign exchange for the country through the international export-import trade.



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Defining Fashion

Malcolm Barnard traces the origin of the word 'fashion' to the Latin '*facere*' which means 'to make' or 'to do'. This includes the dual processes of making and doing, be it clothing or appearance. Fashion has wide-ranging implications, engaging with a multitude of surrounding influences. In simple terms, fashion is a style that is popular in the present time, or a set of trends which have been accepted by a wide audience. The Webster International Encyclopedia 1998 defines fashion as "prevailing style of dress, particularly new designs representing changes from previous seasons". Fashion educationist and writer John Hopkins defines fashion culture as "a system that unites individuals, establishes its own rules and offers a social structure in relation to current conditions and societal norms".

Some of the quotes of fashion designers indicate their philosophy and approach to fashion.

Giorgio Armani: *"I've tried to find a new elegance. It's not easy because people want to be shocked. They want explosive fashion. But explosions don't last; they disappear immediately and leave nothing but ashes... My philosophy is evolution not revolution"*

Ralph Lauren: *"I've never been about fashion and trends. I believe in design that has lasting integrity."*

1.2. FACTORS INFLUENCING FASHION

Fashion expresses the prevailing interests, human motivation and aesthetics in society. It is a vibrant subject incorporating the interplay of social, cultural, psychological, political, geographical, economic, technological factors. In other words, the surrounding stimuli, whether directly or indirectly, result in influencing fashion. By its very nature fashion is transient, subject to continuous change and revival. The human mind tends to become bored with available goods and services and seeks stimulation through novelty and change. This causes a demand for newer products. Human nature is the most important and essential driver of changing fashion and trends; fashion reflects the human condition with its wants and needs which designers attempt to anticipate in advance and create products accordingly.

The example of mobile phones would explain the point where simple acts of making and receiving calls and texts are inadequate to hold consumer interest. Today mobiles have features like sleek forms and a wide range of inbuilt functions. Manufacturers compete with each other, innovating forms and functions by adding new 'apps' to entice customers by turning the mobile phone into a personal manager/ entertainer/ companion. It thus becomes 'fashionable' to claim that one possesses the





latest updated version of a particular mobile which may even mean replacement of a perfectly functioning piece of equipment. The mobile phone has also been elevated from the status of a utilitarian object to a luxury fashion product by using precious metals and encrusting with expensive stones and diamonds for an elite customer segment.

Fashion is inspired by and responds to *Zeitgeist* meaning 'spirit of the times'. Every new stimulus or development leads to a transformation in society, leading to new fashion cycles and new trends. Some of the influences and thoughts prevailing in society at a particular point in time interact mutually and thereby affect fashion are:

1.2.1 Dominating events

Significant occurrences like war or political events, celebratory, centenary and cultural events, Fashion Week, Fashion Awards ceremony, national and international competitions and games like Olympics, Commonwealth Games or IPL cricket affect the design of the garments and products.



Fig 1.3 Joy Mitra 2011. On the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel Laureate's handwriting was used as a reference for the stylized print

1.2.2 Influence of celebrities

Film stars, sports persons, musicians and others with wealth and power are constantly in the public domain through high visibility coverage in social and entertainment media like movies, TV series, reality shows, interviews and photographs in print media. The dressing style of such celebrities has a significant impact on the public demand for similar designs and brands endorsed by them.



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Fig 1.4 Madhuri Dixit in a Varun Bahl creation

1.2.3 Economic factors

Fashion reflects the global or national state of the economy, whether buoyant or in recession. For example during recession, issues like 'value for money' and durability affect the demand for classic items. There is perceptible buoyant mood in society when the economy is thriving, which results in innovative and Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). The global effect of devaluation of the dollar, inflation rates, international trade agreements etc. affect manufacturing, marketing and buying patterns. The current global economic recession has resulted in consumers buying practical clothes that provide 'value for money' and are more durable.

In addition to the short-term influences, there is a range of other contemporary factors with long-term effect on fashion:

1.2.4 Psychological factors

While at a fundamental level fashion encompasses a wider lifestyle including clothes and accessories, it affects people at a deeper psychological level playing a crucial role of how we view ourselves and others.

- i. **Duality of fashion:** It can simultaneously express a personal style and also the public image of an individual; it can establish social norms of dress codes and also allow creation of personal identity; it can create commercially viable products for the present and also project a vision for the future.



- ii. **Freedom within social norms:** Fashion allows individuals to express individuality without having to succumb to societal or peer pressure. These differences may be in terms of gender, culture and aesthetics in clothing which are based on prevailing concepts of ideals of beauty.
- iii. **Endless search for novelty:** Since the human mind seeks to counteract boredom through the new, there are choices in every product category available to the consumer through fashion cycles.

1.2.5 Social factors

Fashion emerges as a response to societal influences during a particular period impacting self-identity and group-identity. There are historical examples of fashion which typify a period. Examples are frayed jeans, tie-and-dye shirts and T-shirts during the Hippie movement of the 1960s, the broad-shouldered women's suits reflecting Power dressing of the 1980s, the Grunge look of the 1990s etc. Some of the social factors are:

i. Dynamics of social groups

The domination of economically stronger social groups wields its influence on fashion trends in two ways namely **imitation** and **differentiation**.

Imitation refers to the fact that consumers of the lower social strata aspire to look like the more affluent groups which leads to manufacturing of cheaper or even faux(fake) goods. Differentiation takes place in two ways:

- ★ Differentiation of the upper classes from the masses through a conscious focus on exclusivity of products, original brands, high priced luxury items etc.
- ★ Differentiation among similar products through presentation of a product to highlight its differences and superiority over other products of similar type in order to attract a particular segment of target market. The product is publicized through a strong marketing approach to achieve the following:
 - ★ Appeal to the target consumer
 - ★ Differentiate the product from other products in the category
 - ★ Create desirability in the consumers mind to encourage purchase



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An example is that of a variety of bathing soaps where product differentiation is created by positioning some as beauty products either for the masses or classes while others differentiate themselves as a product catering to individual and family health.

ii. Global issues and concerns

The Bruntland Report in 1987 popularized the term 'sustainable development' elaborating on the need to propagate the use of systems for development that would meet current needs without jeopardizing requirements of future generations. The industrial practices and processes of producing, buying and selling, wearing and disposal in the fashion and textiles sector impacts the environment. The growing awareness and need for sustainable fashion is also indicative of a wider social consciousness about responsibility in the fashion business. In India, initiatives are taken by the government, individual designers and design institutes to work with artisans through fashion-

craft linkages to build a socially responsible sustainable design environment. Health issues and concerns like for HIV/ AIDS or awareness drive about breast cancer symbolized by the pink loop bow are publicized through high-profile events or fund-raising events.



Fig 1.5 Pero by Aneeth Arora 2013

iii. Ethical concerns and practices

The concerns addressed by the international fashion community regarding social and human issues are gaining increased importance in society and by extension, in the fashion industry. Ethical fashion is gaining momentum in order to balance economic considerations with the human aspect of business. Issues pertaining to Fair Trade Practices in the fashion industry like fair wages to workers, decent working conditions, child labour etc. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) involving positive social contributions and reduced environmental impact need to be under taken by all companies.





Fig 1.6 Tsunami is more than a doll; she is a symbol of hope and courage born out of a collaborative initiative by Upasana Design Studio, Auroville to help the Tsunami- devastated villagers of Kerala

1.2.6 Cultural factors

Fashion and culture influence and fuel each other through interaction. This is achieved in the following ways:

- i. **Reflection of both High culture and Popular culture in fashion:** **High culture** includes appreciation of arts, literature, music and customs whether of one's own country or that of foreign land. For example ethnic and national folk costume can provide inspiration for details like fabrics, style or trims in apparel designs. Traditional embroidery of different states often has socio-cultural references through the motifs and use of colour. **Popular culture** includes the influence of advertisements, television, movies, magazines, internet, mainstream music etc.



Fig 1.7. Pankaj and Nidhi 2012 collection based on Polish culture



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- ii. **Expression of gender indicators in different cultures through clothing norms:** In Western culture many traditional garment forms were specifically reserved for one gender e.g. trousers for men and skirts for women. With the relaxation of the earlier rigid social attitudes since 20th century, the roles of men and women have changed. Over a period of time, conventional barriers have been breached wherein fashion for one gender has 'borrowed' components from the other's wardrobe e.g. trouser suits for women.



Fig 1.8 Rajesh Pratap Singh 2012

1.2.7 Political events and personalities

Political events and political personalities affect prevailing fashion. Events like war are echoed across society through T-shirt prints and slogans expressing solidarity and support for the nation. The unification of East and West Germany has created a larger market for European brands like H & M. *Khadi* spun by Mahatma Gandhi in pre-independent India was not just a fabric but a symbol of the desire for independence.

Public personalities associated with politics may, by virtue of their charisma and achievements, evoke people to emulate them through clothing. The jacket with a band collar called *bandhgala* jacket worn by Pandit Jawarharlal Nehru was a popular alternative to the western menswear suit in the 1950s. Lady Diana was a global icon whose style was appreciated for elegance and appropriateness for the occasion.



1.2.8 Historical inspiration

Often historical fashion and styles from museums, archives, design houses or in private collections are researched by designers to identify characteristic style features like silhouettes, fabrics and colours. These are used as sources of inspiration and 'revival' in the following ways:

- ★ Updation and re-interpretation of the key features e.g. an earlier silhouette can be recreated in a new fabric or a different construction technique. These can become the basis of the next collection e.g. royal costumes of princely India have often inspired wedding trousseau-oriented couture fashion shows.
- ★ Research for designing of authentic costumes for movies e.g. Academy award winning designer Bhanu Athaiya had undertaken an intensive process of authentic historical research before designing the costumes for Sir Richard Attenborough's movie '*Gandhi*'.

1.2.9 Geographical factors

History has examples of clothing that developed in consonance with the geography and weather of the area. Brightly coloured Rajasthani clothes visually compensate for the arid desert landscape. Camouflage prints used for military or para-military uniforms are designed to blend in with the surrounding terrain. High desert temperatures also necessitate layered clothing to prevent dehydration. Inhabitants of lands with cold temperatures inevitably need to wear multi-layered clothes made of thicker fabrics. People wear fur for protection against cold weather though the use of fur in fashion receives strong opposition from animal rights activists.



Fig 1.9 Fur overcoat

1.2.10 Spread of Information Technology

Prior to the Information Technology boom, the pace of fashion movement across nations was slower. The internet has accelerated the rate of fashion change reducing the time from the fashion ramps to the stores. Globalization has shrunk the world enabling fashion shows to be globally transmitted live and reducing the life span of fashion trends from a year to a few months. With Skype, geographical boundaries and time lines can be bridged with ease, facilitating international business discussions and quicker decisions. This has also resulted in fashion business becoming '*glocal*' combining global thinking with local flavour, thus developing a wider perspective of the business.



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1.2.11 Technological advancements in textiles

The advent of new technology in textiles is the result of intensive research combining design, clothing, engineering and science by textile technologists. This has enabled the development of technologically advanced 'smart' textiles or 'intelligent' textiles whose functions go beyond the issue of everyday clothing into more varied applications. For example research has provided versatile fabric structures with enhanced performance e.g. fabrics with medicinal properties, wearable technology, designs of spacesuits for extra-terrestrial environment are some examples of technological advancements in textiles and clothing.

EXERCISE 1.1

Fill in the blanks:

1. The word _____ refers to the spirit of the times which influences fashion.
2. The _____ trade refers to the fashion business within the country while the _____ trade refers to the global business.
3. The global fashion business helps the country to earn _____.
4. Research provides versatile fabric structures with enhanced _____.
5. Smart textiles are also referred to as _____ textiles.
6. The key issue in the Brundtland Report in 1987 has resulted in _____ fashion.
7. The domination of economically stronger social groups wields its influence on fashion trends in two ways namely _____ and _____.
8. Faux goods mean _____ products.
9. _____ wages for workers is an example of Fair Trade Practice.
10. Fashion simultaneously incorporates _____ culture and _____ culture.
11. The sequence of planned activities from raw material sourcing to sales is called _____.
12. A buoyant economy results in Fast Moving _____ Goods.
13. The acronym CSR stands for _____.
14. A business strategy combining international thinking with local perspective is termed as _____ approach.





Review Questions

1. Define fashion
2. Explain the factors influencing fashion
3. What are the ways in which fashion is a serious business?
4. What is Sustainable fashion?
5. Name three Fair Trade Practices in the fashion industry?

ACTIVITY 1.1

Background: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) also referred to as Corporate Conscience or Responsible Business, is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model to ensure its active compliance with social contributions which need to be undertaken by corporate organizations and companies.

This activity is intended to enable students to find out about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) issues related to the fashion and textile industry.

1. Refer to books, magazines or internet to find out more about CSR.
2. Find out how is CSR relevant in the context of the fashion and textile industry.

1.3. KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

1.3.1 Art Design and Craft

Art is the process or product of deliberately arranging elements in a way that appeals to the senses or emotions. The term can be used to define a variety of creative activities including *useful arts* (beautiful objects that have functional value), *decorative arts* (objects that have ornamental value), *liberal arts* (study of humanities), *graphic arts* (visual communication) etc.

However the term 'Art' is most used to describe 'creative arts' or 'fine arts' (painting, sculpture, dance, music, film) which expresses the artist's creativity and communicates an ideology to engage or connect with the aesthetic sensibilities and emotions of the audience. In advanced studies there are various theories of art which attempt to define its meaning or provide a historical or social context.



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The New Webster's International Encyclopedia 1998 defines **Design** as the "purposeful arrangement of the elements in a creative work or process. Broadly speaking, the aim of design is to unify function and aesthetics in a harmonious whole". The root of the word 'design' is *disegnare* (French) which means 'to create' or 'to mark'. To design is to conceptualize and plan for a specific end purpose. Everything man-made is designed be it apparel, textiles, products etc. The person who designs in specialized design areas is the designer, referred to as a fashion designer (designs clothes) costume designer (designs for performing arts - theatre and movies) textile designer (designs textiles), interior designer (designs private and public spaces), graphic designer (designs different forms of visuals for communication) etc.

The New Webster International Encyclopedia (1998) defines **Craft** interchangeably with Handicrafts as the "name given to the process of making objects by hand; also refers to the products of the process. Traditional handicrafts include basket-weaving, carpentry, carving, ceramics, embroidery, knitting, sewing and leatherwork". Aditi Ranjan and M.P. Ranjan, authors of '*Handmade in India*' have documented Indian crafts including "mastery of tools, techniques and processes that have evolved over the centuries through social and cultural interactions...which can be harnessed for future development of society".



Fig 1.10 Painting titled *Cypresses* 1889 by artist Vincent Van Gogh.



Fig.1.11 Jacket from *graduating Design Collection* 1997 by Namrata Joshipura

1.3.2 Trends

Trends are key indicators that directly or indirectly affect and characterize of the look of a season. Trends are transitory fashion statements. Fashion is often affected by seasonal trends which imply that a particular style, silhouette, colour, texture etc. may be dominant at a given point of time leading to a collective societal tendency to wear similar clothes. This aspect is highlighted and re-enforced by the magazines, advertisements etc.



Trend watching is undertaken as an ongoing activity by fashion forecasters who have professional experience in identification of future trends. Once identified, the trend is 'labelled' i.e. given a catchy theme/ name. This catches the attention of the apparel industry which takes steps to capitalize on this trend and produces its own collection which is called the *coat-tail or bandwagon* effect. Popularized by the fashion leaders, the spread of the trend across market and consumer segments is called a *flow*. The declaration of styles being 'in' or 'out' is publicized by the fashion media. At times it seems that fluorescent colours are 'cool' or that animal prints are 'in' which may give way to earthy colours and foliage prints in the next season. Sometimes bootleg jeans are heralded as the next big trend which could later give way to skinny fits or cropped lengths. Trends are reflected in different design details like garment length, colour, texture, silhouette, cut, fit, garment details (e.g. necklines, collars, sleeves, pockets etc). When there is a prevailing trend, design variations in a multitude of options are seen across consumer segments catering to differences in taste and price points. Eventually, the trend loses its edge and phases out to be replaced by a new trend.

1.3.3 Collection

A collection, also called a *range or line*, refers to a well-defined and diligently-edited group of clothing or products for a specific season. For example this could be a range of blouses with a colour-coordinated focus on design variations of details like collars, necklines, silhouettes, lengths etc. for the ready to wear (RTW) market. Even couture collections of designers are recognized by the trends of the season.



Fig 1.10 Manish Arora 2012 collection



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1.3.4 Style

The word 'style' has varying meanings according to the context:

- ★ Style, also referred to as 'signature style' of a designer or manufacturer/brand may refer to an aesthetic sensibility that distinguishes the designer/ company from others in a similar apparel/ product category. The style may have a characteristic cut, silhouette, fabric, colour palette, surface embellishment, pattern-making, garment construction or finishing techniques associated with the label that attracts its target niche market/ customers. Examples are Tarun Tahiliani, Manish Malhotra, Neeta Lulla and others who design glamorous couture styles which are sought by film actors and socialites.
- ★ Style may refer to a particular design in an export house or buying house which is assigned an identifying 'style number' (rather than a descriptive tag) within the company during the processes of sampling, production and shipping.
- ★ Style may refer to the personal style statement of an individual. A person may like to dress in a particular way, irrespective of whether it is 'in' or 'out'.

1.3.5 Haute Couture and Pret a porter

Haute couture (French) refers to high fashion created by designers known as '*couturiers*'. Couture refers to unique and exclusive creations of fashion customized for individual clients, since the design is never duplicated. The extremely high prices are due to design exclusivity, high quality of fabric, skilled labour used for surface design techniques, embroidery, drape, craftsmanship, garment construction and quality of finish. Globally while couture shows that bring visibility and publicity for the company but the prime source of generation of revenue and profit comes from *licensing* and other products like perfumes, handbags, watches etc. Among the most reputed international couture labels are Chanel, Dior, Versace and Valentino. India has several designers like Ritu Kumar, Tarun Tahiliani, Rohit Bal, Suneet Verma, Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Manish Arora, Manish Malhotra and others in this genre. The main label of most designers is 'eponymous', i.e. the label bears the name of the designer.

Prêt a porter (French) refers to ready to wear (RTW) clothing derived from the couture line or collection of each designer. It reflects the same aesthetics, manufactured with high quality standards, at more affordable prices in multiple sizes in a wider range of colour options or 'colour ways'. This term is widely used now as the fashion retail sector grows and diversifies into different collections in larger quantities.





Designer	Main Label	Pret Label
Ritu Kumar	Ritu	Label
Manish Arora	Manish Arora	Fish Fry, Indian by Manish Arora
Rohit Bal	RohitBal	Balance
Ashish Soni	Ashish Soni	A & S
Tarun Tahiliani	Tarun Tahiliani	TT
Issey Miyake	Issey Miyake	Pleats Please
Donna Karan	Donna Karan	DKNY



Pic 1.12a 'Manish Arora' label

Pic 1.12b 'Indian by Manish Arora' label

1.3.6 Avant Garde fashion

Avant garde (French) refers to the 'advance guard' or vanguard of art and culture which differentiates it from the mainstream. In terms of fashion, it aims at expanding the boundaries of existing norms and aesthetics through experimental and innovative designs. The underlying idea is to showcase these creations as statements of the designer's vision or ideology. These designs are limited in numbers and may not be wearable or commercially viable. The publicity gained from



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avant garde fashion generates enough 'buzz' to sell other products like accessories, hair and make-up. *Avant garde* style is seen in the designs of UK-based designers like Hussain Chalayan, Gareth Pugh; Belgian designers like Martin Margiela, Ann Demeulemeester and others.



Pic 1.13 Circus dress by Manish Arora 2009

1.3.7 Mass fashion, Knock-offs and Limited fashion

Mass or **volume fashion** as the name suggests, is widely available in stores nationwide. These designs are available in a variety of 'colour ways' (options of colours) and sizes, practical and generally affordable by a wide cross-section of society. Global labels like Gap, United Colours of Benetton, Zara, H & M. and Indian labels like *Shoppers Stop*, *Pantaloons*, *Westside*, *W* etc. are examples of brands dealing in large volumes of merchandise.

A close resemblance or reproduction of a designers 'look' by another designer or company usually using relatively cheaper materials and lower production cost is called a **knock-off**. This is a common practice where a popular trend or distinct style of a successful designer/brand is replicated with minimal changes, if any, to lower the cost for moderate level markets. While this gives the opportunity to the larger population to buy popular styles in fashion, it also raises problems of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Copyright Law infringement.

Limited fashion or **Limited Edition fashion** is a reference to the partnership between a brand/store with a fashion celebrity or designer to create an exclusive line of clothing in limited quantities. This is of mutual benefit; on one hand it fosters new design talent providing them with a



platform while on the other it boosts the sales of brand/store since the collections have fresh design approach. For example UK-based Top Shop has partnered with designers Christopher Kane, Emma Cook, JW Anderson and model Kate Moss to create successful limited-edition clothing.

1.3.8 Classics and Fads

Classics are enduring styles that do not become obsolete; instead reaching a plateau of acceptance continuing for a long period of time. Classics have acceptability through minimal modification in design thus retaining a sense of simplicity and timelessness. Examples could include staple fashion items like a crisp white collar shirt, little black dress (LBD) or well-fitted black formal trousers.

Fads are fashions of short duration that peak in popularity due to a fast rate of acceptance by the consumer but have a brief life expectancy with the tendency to become outmoded rapidly. Another characteristic is that they are typically confined to particular social groups. They usually have no forerunner or successor. They tend to begin at lower prices, are not expensive to copy or produce and therefore the market gets saturated easily. Examples are fluorescent coloured T-shirts, ankle or calf length jeans with turn-up cuffs, baggy anti-fit jeans etc.

EXERCISE 1.2

Fill in the blanks:

1. Designers of high fashion/couture are called _____.
2. Designs that characterize of the look of a season are called _____.
3. The spread of a trend across markets and consumer segments is called _____.
4. Unconventional design at the vanguard which differentiates it from mainstream designs is referred to as _____ designs.
5. The steps taken by the apparel industry to capitalize on a trend and produce a new collection is called a coat-tail or _____ effect.
6. _____ are fashions of short life expectancy.
7. _____ are enduring styles that continue for a long period of time without becoming obsolete.
8. Choices of designs in a variety of colour ways and sizes at affordable prices characterize _____ fashion.



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9. A collection is also called a _____ or _____.
10. A _____ label is one where the name of the designer and the label is the same.

Review Questions

1. In what way do trends function as key indicators that characterize of the look of a season?
2. Why are Haute Couture garments so highly priced?
3. What is the meaning of Limited Fashion?
4. What are Knock-offs?
5. Why do designers create avant garde fashion?
6. Compare Classics and fads with examples

Match the columns

Designer	Pret Label
Ritu Kumar	DKNY
Manish Arora	Balance
Ashish Soni	Pleats Please
Tarun Tahiliani	A & S
Issey Miyake	Label
Donna Karan	Fish Fry

ACTIVITY 1.2

Background: The labels of most brands and designer labels bear their names. The stature and reputation of the label is associated with high prices attributed to design exclusivity, craftsmanship of fabric embroidery, garment construction and quality of finish. The *Prêt a porter* (pret) or Ready to wear (RTW) label of a designer usually derives from their couture lines reflecting similar aesthetics and is available at more affordable prices in multiple sizes in a wider range of colour options.

This activity is intended to familiarize students with designer labels and brands.

1. Identify any one Indian designer of who has both a main label and a pret label.



2. Refer to fashion magazines to find pictures of designs under the respective labels.
3. How are the designs of the main label and pret label differentiated from each other?
4. Discuss in class if all designers have both main and pret labels.

1.4. MOVEMENT AND DIRECTION OF FASHION

Fashion spreads in different directions through different media. Some examples are:

- i. Print media e.g. magazines, newspapers and catalogues
- ii. Electronic media like fashion television and their websites e.g.
Fashion TV - www.fashiontelevision.com
Video fashion - www.videofashion.com
- iii. Celebrity styles in public events and brand endorsements
- iv. Websites covering runway fashion e.g. www.style.com/vogue and www.firstview.com.
- v. Fashion trend-spotting websites like www.stylesight.com and www.trendwatching.com

The 'movement' of fashion refers to indicators of speed and is related to the direction of future trends. To understand its implication in the fashion industry, it is important to know about fundamental concepts of Fashion Forecasting, Pendulum Swing and Fashion Cycles.

1.4.1 Fashion Forecasting

Fashion Forecasting is a complex activity where research and analysis of previous fashion trends help in identification of future trends. It is a method by which the activities of fibre, yarn, fabric and apparel producers as well as retailers are coordinated.

The work of trend identification for the apparel, cosmetics and home textiles industry by trend forecasters requires the following:

- i. Trend chasing and trend spotting by professionals who are alert to new socio-cultural influences and technologies across the globe.
- ii. Frequent travel to leading fashion capitals like London, New York, Paris and Milan and other countries/continents to 'pick up' i.e. locate trends.



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- iii. Scouting for new developments in fibres, yarn, fabric developments and new research on colour.
- iv. Study shifting patterns in consumer behaviour, fashion preferences and lifestyle which signal future trends in consumer preferences.
- v. Experience to analyze the information to identify emerging patterns.

Forecasting is a collective activity of specialists who analyze the information and identify what they consider to be the potential key trends for the next season/ year. Their findings are then analyzed and compiled by the forecasting agency which publishes forecast *trendbooks* which predict future trends 6 to 18 months in advance. These forecast books and periodicals include colour palettes, fabric swatches, photographs, fashion sketches and specification details to illustrate apparel trends for women, men and children. These are exhibited and presented in trend forecast seminars/fairs/exhibitions and are awaited with anticipation by fashion industry professionals, buyers and retailers. These trend-books are also a reference point for collections of fashion designers for the next season.

It is important to understand that some forecast agencies cater primarily to their domestic market while others have a larger perspective. Examples of reputed names in fashion forecasting are:

- i. **Lidewij Edelkoort** is an expert forecaster for 'Trend Union' based in Paris and also conducts trend workshops in India.
- ii. Trend forecast agencies are Paris-based **Nelly Rodi**, **Peclers**, **Promostyl** from France, **Doneger** from USA and others.
- iii. Colour forecasting services include the **Color Association of the United States (CAUS)** and the **Color Marketing Group (CMG)**.

1.4.2 Pendulum Swing

Fashion is like a pendulum that swings from one end to another. A particular trend becomes outdated when there is no further creative interpretation of the style. This process may take a fashion season or even years. Gradually the thrust of the pendulum begins to reverse its direction, gathering momentum as it moves. This occurs to avoid design stagnation. For example, when the 'seam rise' of jeans becomes minimally low, the pendulum swings towards high rise jeans. In the 1960s when the market was saturated with fitted mini-skirts, the pendulum swung to the other side ushering in long





skirts. In India, the trend of flowing Anarkali-like kurtas in longer lengths teamed with churidars was replaced by fitted, shorter kurtas worn with salwars. When form-fitted 'jeggings' (combination of jeans and leggings) dominated the market, looser straight leg trousers emerged with a completely different silhouette.

Due to the inherently transient nature of fashion, designs inevitably become outdated. Between the two extremities, the designers, forecasters, manufacturers and retailers try to anticipate the direction of fashion change. Thus the fashion pendulum moves from one end to another like a clock. The Pendulum Swing refers to the periodic movement of fashion which gathers momentum as it swings from one extremity to another. This helps an organization with business foresight to strategically plan its range of clothing for the next season.

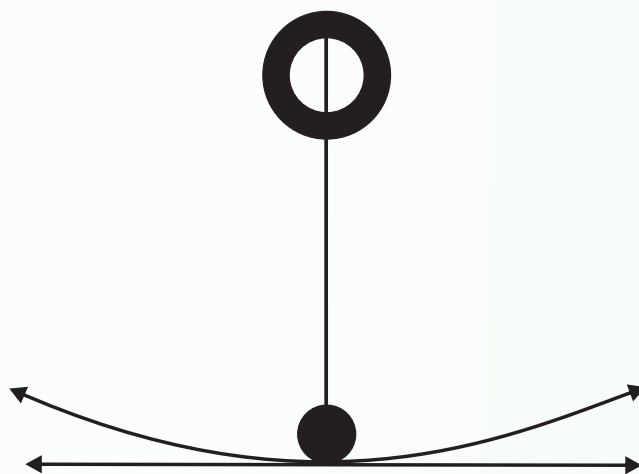


Fig 1.14 Pendulum Swing

Some examples of Pendulum Swing are:

Mini dress <-----> Maxi dress

Low-rise pants <-----> High-rise pants

Bootleg jeans <-----> Skinny jeans



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1.4.3 Fashion Cycles

Fashion is transient and evolutionary in nature; it responds to changes in the socio-cultural milieu by introducing new styles fanned by commercial interests of the fashion industry which play an important role in anticipating and encouraging new fashion. While adopting a contemporary style of dressing may be fashionable, the next cycle of changes initiated by fashion innovators and style leaders is equally inevitable.

The acceptance and discontinuation of a particular style by a larger segment of society is indicated through a bell-shaped curved path called a Fashion Cycle. It has periodicity but has no predictable regularity.

There are 3 kinds of variations:

- i. Duration (length of time)
- ii. Undulations (high and low points)
- iii. Velocity (speed of acceptance and rejection).

There are 3 main cycles - Fad cycle, Standard trend cycle, Classic trend cycle

- i. **Fad cycle:** Fads are fashions of short duration fashions that peak in popularity due to an accelerated rate of acceptance but have a brief life expectancy with the tendency to become outmoded rapidly.
- ii. **Standard trend cycle:** Some recurring cycles, called *long-wave phenomenon*, are reflective of styles that start gradually and sustain for a longer period of time until their popularity eventually decreases.
- iii. **Classic trend cycle:** Classics are enduring styles that reach a plateau of acceptance continuing for a long period of time.

The diagrams of the three fashion cycles explain the phenomenon.



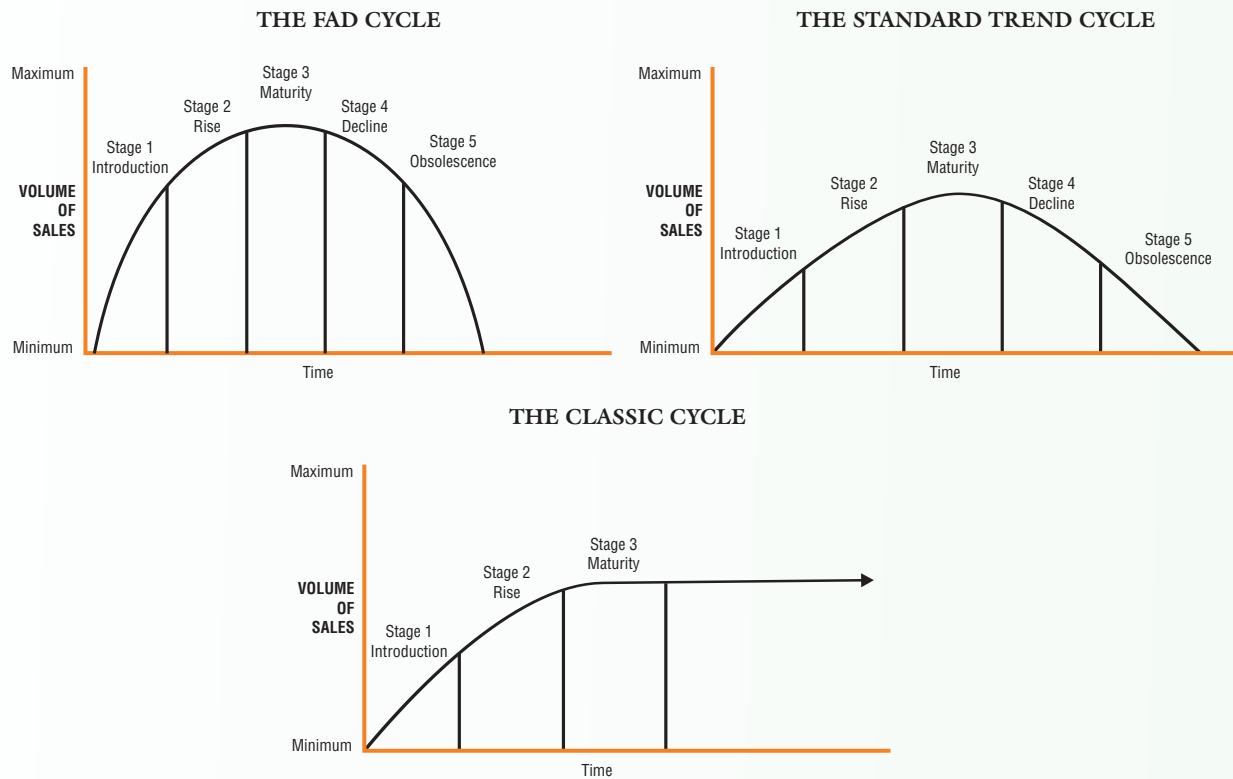


Fig 1.15 Fashion Cycles

Each cycle represented by a bell-shaped curve, is indicated through sequential phases over a period of time:

- i. Phase 1 is the **Introduction** of a style when the fashion-conscious consumers adopt it at the earliest. These consumers are considered to be the fashion leaders whose styles act as signifiers to future trends.
- ii. Phase 2 signifies the **Rise** when the style gets wider acceptance. At this stage the style is adapted by the designers and manufacturers to make it more widely available to the general public. Fashion followers pick up the trend thus increasing the appeal and popularity of the style. This is achieved through media publicity.
- iii. Phase 3 represents the **Peak** of popularity, when the style is widely worn in society. It is the phase when the majority of consumers demand and accept variations of the style at different price points. At this stage, most fashion-conscious consumers who were the early adopters, discard the style because it is widely worn in society.



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- iv. Phase 4 indicates the **Decline** in popularity due to over-exposure of the style. With decreasing number of customers, retailers start offering discounts and sales.
- v. Phase 5 marks **Obsolescence** when the style is considered to be passé i.e. outdated and is therefore rejected.

As shown in the figure, the Fad cycle of a style is characterized by a rapid movement across all the stages and is indicated by a sharp steep curve. Generally this is the result of quick acceptance and equally rapid rejection by the consumers. The Standard Trend cycle is the normal cycle with a gradual downward slide into obsolescence. The Classic cycle is technically not a curve because once a style gains acceptance, it maintains a steady plateau-like popularity. The most basic and timelessly elegant items of clothing are represented by the Classic cycle.

1.4.4 Cycle within Cycle

To capitalize on and cater to the demand of a particular style during the popularity and acceptance stage, different design interpretations and variations in terms of silhouette, colour, material, trims etc. are created. Each of these variations is like a cycle rotating within a larger cycle known as Cycle within Cycle. An example is that of denim jeans which became popular during the 'Gold Rush' in California, has continued as a fashion staple. Yet there are variations in cut (e.g. straight leg, tapered leg, boot leg, baggy), colour (shades of blue and other colours), surface treatments (e.g. acid-wash, enzyme-wash, stone-wash), weight of denim etc. The successful adaptation and adoption of several variations of jeans by both men and women have been 'in' and 'out' of fashion.

1.4.5 Interrupted Cycle

Sometimes manufacturers and retailers decide to stop the production of specific design styles in anticipation of changes in levels of popularity, preferences, seasons or socio-economic-political events like economic recession or war which results in an Interrupted Cycle. This is best explained through changes in fashion during World War II when shortage of fabric forced production of previous styles to be stopped and functional clothing to be adopted for women.

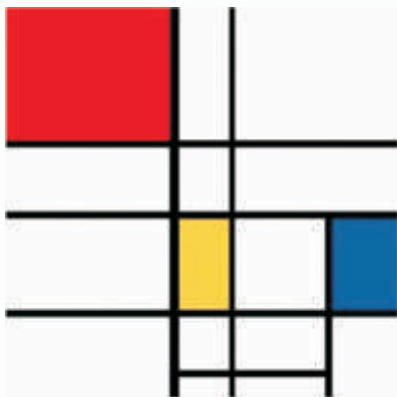
1.4.6 Recurring Cycle

Some styles are so popular that even after the trend has run its course and fades away, it resurfaces through design re-interpretations in terms of silhouette, fabric or detail. This is called a Recurring Cycle. For example, the painting by Piet Mondrian inspired the creation of Yves Saint Laurent in





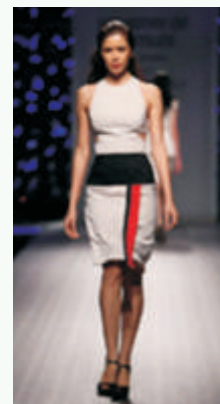
1960s, which was referred to as *colour-blocking*. Several designers have used different design interpretations of colour-blocking as a design feature for Spring Summer 2012 season.



Pic 1.16 Painting by artist Piet Mondrian



*Pic 1.17 Colour-blocked dress
by designer Yves Saint Laurent
in 1960s*



*Pic 1.18 Atsu Sekhose
collection 2012*

EXERCISE 1.3

Fill in the blanks:

1. The activity where research and analysis of previous fashion trends help in identification of future trends is called _____.
2. Books and periodicals which predict fashion trends in advance are called _____.
3. The periodic movement of fashion as it swings from one extremity to another like a clock is called _____.
4. A particular trend is said to be _____ when there is no further creative interpretation of the style.
5. The curved path indicating the acceptance and discontinuation of a particular style is represented by a _____ shaped curve.
6. During the popularity and acceptance stage, different design variations create multiple cycles within the larger cycle which is called _____.
7. After a particular trend has run its course, it fades away and resurfaces after a period through design re-interpretation called _____ fashion cycle.



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8. The five phases of a fashion cycle are Introduction, Rise, Peak, Decline and _____.
9. A Fashion Cycle may have unpredictable variations in terms of duration, _____ and velocity.

Review Questions

1. What is Fashion Forecasting?
2. What are the 5 qualities required by a trend forecaster?
3. What is a Pendulum Swing?
4. What is a Fashion Cycle?
5. What are the reasons for variations in a Fashion Cycle?
6. Define the 3 types of Fashion Cycles with diagrams
7. Define Cycle within Cycle through the example of denim jeans

ACTIVITY 1.3

Background: The Pendulum Swing refers to the periodic movement of fashion which gathers momentum as it swings from one extremity to another. This helps an organization with business foresight to plan its range of clothing for the next season.

This activity will enable students to trace the Pendulum Swing in fashion history.

1. Identify any one item of clothing (jeans, skirt, kurta etc.)
2. Find pictures of design variations of this garment.
3. Identify the design component that has undergone the pendulum swing (e.g. length, width, flare etc)
4. Discuss the duration of the trend in class (e.g. months, years etc.)

1.5. THEORIES OF FASHION MOVEMENT

As discussed earlier, changes in the direction of fashion are dependent on trends. Often there are questions on where and how trends originate? Who are the innovators and who are the followers? Is the direction of change vertical (upward or downward) or horizontal? The answers come from the





3 theories that explain and predict the movement of fashion namely Trickle-down, Trickle-up and Trickle-across theories.

1.5.1 Trickle-down Theory

Fashion history shows the royalty and nobility by virtue of their birth, wealth and status were the social elite at the top of the pyramid-like societal structure. This social class led a luxurious lifestyle of entertainment and travel where acquisition of art collections, large houses with expensive furnishings, extravagant clothes and accessories indicated high levels of material consumption. The exclusivity also emanated from the fact that the clothes, hairstyles etc. were so elaborate that the help of attendants and maids was required to get dressed. Therefore high fashion was restricted to those in the highest levels of society. The commoners could admire them but did not have the money or sometimes, even the freedom to wear such clothes. Gradually fashion trickled downward from the upper strata to the lower classes imitated through cheaper versions of the design and fabric by the latter.

Any fashion which starts as high fashion is characterized by the 3 qualities:

- i. Design aesthetics
- ii. Elaborate and exclusive manufacturing process with higher allocation of man-hours
- iii. High quality materials and finishing

High fashion is created by fashion and accessory designers who cater to clients who comprise the fashionable and affluent elite, occupy power positions in business and media, possess the taste and aesthetics for designer clothing and products. Due to its aspirational value, fashion trickles downwards spreading to the lower socio-economic strata. Designer couture creations, accessories and bags are desirable **status markers** (indicators of socio-economic status) but are unaffordable by most. The aspirational value of these labels and brands result in the trickle-down of the design until others have the original product or a facsimile/variations of the design at affordable prices. e.g. couture creations of Manish Malhotra, Sabyasachi Mukherjee or Louis Vuitton bags are desirable status markers.

1.5.2 Trickle up or Bubble up Theory

This theory states that trend inspirations do not necessarily start from the elite class but can start from the masses. In the constant search for novelty, certain styles gradually trickle-up or bubble-up



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the social strata. Unconventional styles and experimentation by the youth to provoke attention originates as **street fashion**. An innovative street-style may be 'picked up' (identified) by the trend spotter/trend forecaster which becomes a source of visual inspiration for designers, photographers and stylists. Thus street fashion travels in an upward direction from the street to a designer runway collection. Rugged blue jeans worn during the Gold Rush in California in the mid-19th century has transformed into premium denim jeans costing hundreds of dollars in this century. Mutilated denim jeans have risen from streets to fashion show ramps. Gianni Versace took the humble safety pin and transformed it into a bejeweled accessory for his couture show. The black leather motorcycle jacket as a symbol of rebellious youth was immortalized when film star Marlon Brando wore it in movie *The Wild One*. It was adopted by rock musicians like Jim Morrison and Bruce Springsteen who made it fashionably 'cool' while designers Claude Montana and Gianni Versace presented it on their runway shows.



*Fig 1.19 Play Clan
by Himanshu Dogra*

In India, designers and brands occasionally use images from the street or surrounding environment interpreted through their designs. Manish Arora has often used images of traditional dances, graphics on transport, streets and people in a variety of surface techniques. The brands 'Play Clan' and 'NappaDori' also depict such images in a graphic manner on products and clothes.

1.5.3 Trickle Across Theory

The Trickle-across theory is also referred to as the **Mass Market theory**. It states that instead of a vertical movement, fashion information trickles across horizontally across all social strata and is adopted by different social classes at the same time.

In the Trickle-across mode, the independent designers and in-house design teams of domestic and export companies play significant roles along with the manufacturers, retailers and media, who decide on the styles for mass production and publicity.

The speed with which the trends trickle across different market segments depends on factors like:



*Fig 1.20 Sabyasachi Mukherjee
designs have high popularity
across market segments*



- ★ Turnover rate (rate of replacement of existing merchandise with new styles)
- ★ Mass/volume production
- ★ Speed of fashion awareness and popularization created by the mass media.

With the high speed of communication and technology, fashion trends spread through **knock-offs** by which stores can offer variations of the same styles at different price points to suit the budgets of various consumer segments. This implies that consumers across all strata have the option of choosing from the wide spectrum of product categories. Knock-offs operate in 2 ways:

- ★ A close copy passed off as authentic product
- ★ A close copy which does not bear the original label.

Though this is a common practice in the fashion industry, it inevitably raises ethical questions regarding copyright issues.

EXERCISE 1.4

Fill in the blanks:

1. The Trickle Across theory is also called -----.
2. The Trickle up Theory is also called _____.
3. The rate of replacement of existing merchandise with new styles is called _____.
4. Variations/copies of original designs called _____ are available at cheaper prices to suit different budgets.
5. Street fashion travels in a _____ direction from the masses to a designer collection.
6. The spread of design from the higher to the lower classes through imitation using cheaper versions of fabric is an example of _____ theory.

Review Questions

1. Name the three theories of Movement of Fashion?
2. What is Street Fashion?
3. What are the factors which affect the speed at which trends trickle across different market segments?
4. What are Knock-offs?



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ACTIVITY 1.4

Background: Changes in the direction of fashion are dependent on trends. The source, and process of trends, the innovators and followers, the vertical or horizontal direction and movement of change can be explained by 3 theories.

This activity is intended to enable student groups to trace the movement of fashion and relate to the appropriate theory.

1. Each group will select one fashion theory for detailed analysis.
2. Collect pictures of one item of clothing or an ensemble from photographs or articles from magazines or catalogues.
3. Keep a regular record of the design variations of the item/ensemble reported in the print media with prices, if possible, for a period of a few months.
4. Discuss the relevant theory of Movement of Fashion with the teacher.

1.6 CONSUMER SEGMENTATION

Consumer segmentation attempts to identify clusters of people who share characteristics, usually in the form of demographics, lifestyle attitude and behaviour. Consumers who share characteristics form groups called **cohorts**. For example the young consumer segment can be subdivided into categories based on data like occupation, age, marital status, ethnicity and other characteristics. Young consumers in the same age group, have a collective mind set and shared characteristics, are likely to shop and purchase in similar ways. Similarly generational cohorts are in the same age group being born more or less around the same time and encounter the same socio-economic-political situation prevailing around them. This commonality shapes their relationships and attitudes to other people and products, while sharing common preferences in lifestyle. Some examples are:

- i. **Baby Boomer generation** are those born after World War II (between 1942 -1960) was the first TV generation and likely to have direct or indirect experience of war.
- ii. **Generation X** born between 1961-1981 was the first computer generation.
- iii. **Generation Y** born after 1982 are the children of Baby Boomers and the target of many marketing groups.





A combination of all these groups and their sub-groups comprises the target market. Professional consumer research companies use different data collection methods like focus groups, survey and observation to understand and analyze consumer behaviour and preferences. It is crucial for a company to identify and understand their target consumers who are likely to respond/purchase the products offered.

Segmentation strategies are based on psychographic and demographic data of the target consumers.

- ★ **Demographics** refer to data like occupation, age, marital status, ethnicity as important characteristics that drive consumer attitudes and behaviour.
- ★ **Psychographics** (combining consumer psychology and demographics) are supplementary data which help to identify a consumer segment characterized by common values, attitudes, preferences and behaviour. Health, fitness and nutrition-conscious consumers comprise a relatively small but influential segment of consumers in all categories. Positioning of fashion products is more effective if it incorporates the 'who' of demographics (identification of the consumers) with the 'why' of psychographics (reason for their purchasing choices). Today research of lifestyle patterns forms the foundation for product development and marketing.

The consumer is not a single person but represents a very wide and diverse segment of people. It is this diversity that creates diffusion i.e. spread of fashion across segments of society. Some consumers are fashion leaders while others are followers.

The consumers are broadly categorized into:

- ★ Fashion Influentials
 - ★ Fashion Followers
- I. **Fashion Influentials** also known as **Fashion Change Agents**, play an important role in the initiation and spread/ diffusion of fashion. They establish dress codes and styles followed by others. They are classified into 2 groups - Fashion Innovators and Fashion Motivators:

i. **Fashion Innovators**

Fashion innovators are fashion leaders who sense the spirit of the times and are early adopters of new styles. Though they are a small segment of society, due to their personal charisma, aesthetic sensibility, social position/ celebrity status, financial standing, achievements or personal charisma, they are perceived as fashion role models and style



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icons capable of influencing large segments of the population. This gives their credibility to innovative style statements a sense of credibility and the impetus to start trends.

Fashion leaders are interested and knowledgeable about fashion and are extroverts. They are self-confident in their choices and are also keen on differentiating themselves from others. They are quick to adopt new styles long before they become full-blown trends making them influential within and beyond the social group.

Several kinds of Fashion Influentials comprise this category:

- ★ They may be designers themselves and are therefore the ones who actually create fashion trends.
- ★ They could also be innovators in terms of their personal style statements that challenge prevailing fashion trends.
- ★ They may be socialites or successful professionals like musicians, sports persons or celebrities like movie stars, who wear one-of-a-kind ensembles on the red carpet or for highly publicized events.

ii. Fashion Motivators

They play a role in motivating consumers to adopt new fashion:

- ★ They can be movie stars, models or celebrity professionals who endorse fashion products and brands which are motivating factors for increased purchasing patterns across all social strata.
- ★ They can be media persons and fashion journalists whose articles in newspaper columns, fashion magazines and blogs are avidly read by many. Since they have a passion for the latest fashion, they are considered to be more knowledgeable about some aspects of lifestyle and their opinions matter to others in the group.
- ★ They may be fashion designers who are often interviewed, quoted and asked for advice on fashion and are therefore influential as opinion leaders in their own right.
- ★ They can also be high-end retailers and exclusive boutiques who have the experience and the position to identify the most saleable designers whose creations are then showcased. Their judgment is usually based on the understanding of their clientele and their ability to zoom in on the next big fashion direction.





II. On the other hand are those who belong to a wider cross-section of the consumer base and abide by the dress codes of the majority. They are divided into 2 segments:

i. Fashion Followers

ii. Fashion Victims

i. **Fashion Followers**

They are the majority of consumers who accept and emulate trends which are firmly entrenched in the market. They feel a sense of comfort in conforming to styles that merge with others in a larger group. Fashion followers may also be those who may not have much of disposable income or have limited time and interest in fashion. Some designers and manufacturers create more variety of affordable styles for this consumer segment. Fashion needs followers without whom it would not gain momentum. For marketing experts, fashion followers are the drivers of mass production of commercially viable fashion in large volumes.

ii. **Fashion Victims**

This phrase is sometimes used to refer to those who follow fashion trends without exercising their own judgment. This consumer segment is often characterized by high income and high purchasing power. They tend to buy the latest fashion simply because it is expensive or because media or fashion pundits declare it as being 'in'.

EXERCISE 1.5

Fill in the blanks:

1. Consumers who share characteristics form groups called _____.
2. Fashion Change Agents are also known as _____.
3. Marketing experts try to understand the target consumers through analysis of _____ and _____ data.
4. Fashion innovators are also called _____.
5. Those who follow trends without exercising their own opinion, are referred to as _____.



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6. The consumer segment referred to as _____ are the drivers of mass production of commercially viable fashion in large volumes.
7. In order to attract a particular segment of the target market, the positioning and presentation of a product requires _____ to highlight how it is different and better than other products in the category.
8. The spread of fashion across social strata caused by the diversity of the consumer segment is called _____.

Review Questions

1. Define Cohort.
2. What are the two broad consumer segments?
3. What is the role of Fashion Change Agents in spreading fashion?
4. Compare Fashion Victims and Fashion Followers.
5. What are the two broad categories of data needed to understand the target market?

ACTIVITY 1.5

Background: The visibility of fashion influentials like celebrity personalities like film stars, sports persons and musicians or other dominant social groups with wealth, power, culture and leadership is widespread in the public domain. The style quotient of such celebrities has a significant aspirational impact on the public demand for similar designs and fashion brands endorsed by them.

This activity will enable students to relate fashion and brand endorsements to the influence of celebrities.

1. Identify any one celebrity personality who is a Fashion Influential.
2. Examine whether the coverage about the celebrity personality is in the social or entertainment media (movies, TV series, reality shows, advertisements, interviews and photographs in magazines and newspapers etc.)
3. What are clothing or lifestyle brands endorsed by the celebrity?
4. Based on your findings, do you agree/disagree that celebrity status and brand endorsements affect and influence each other?



1.7 INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FASHION

International Trade also called Global Trade refers to any exchange of goods involving two or more countries. International Trade is about the relationships among nations and cultures in the manufacturing and distribution of products. **Exports** represent goods shipped/airlifted to another country in return for money or other goods by which revenue accrues to the company or government where the goods originate. **Imports** refer to the raw materials brought into a country for production of goods or foreign readymade goods made available for domestic use. In terms of international trade, the textile and apparel industry has emerged as consumption and production hubs. The professionals in this field are responsible for a wide range of activities like merchandising, marketing, design production and distribution which determine product availability across the globe.

The earliest example of international trade was through ancient trade routes where camel caravans brought silk fibre, yarn and fabrics out of China crossing through Middle East to Europe, popularly known as the Silk Route. Textiles were precious commodity traded for goods or services. Even today, international trade enables import and export of goods which generally takes the form of developed countries sourcing textiles and apparel from developing nations where the labour cost is low.

Due to increasing globalization there is a widespread inter-connectedness and inter-dependence among producers and consumers. The textile and apparel business is a source of employment for millions in every country. It is a global trade where processes like weaving and manufacturing may be outsourced to other countries. On one hand are the consumers of textile and apparel products while on the other, are the producers and manufacturers. The global fashion industry is increasingly focusing on responsibility and ethics in fashion, involving the elimination of social exploitation and environmental degradation through pollution, waste disposal means, chemical dumping etc.

Production of textile and apparel has now shifted from developed countries like USA and the European Union to China, India and Bangladesh. The developed nations 'consume' (buy and use) more than developing nations. USA is the biggest importer of apparel in the world followed by Germany and Japan. Future growth in demand is expected from developing nations because of their rising population, urbanization and higher per capita income.

Overall India's textile and apparel exports was estimated to be USD 31 billion in 2011 and growing



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at an annual rate of 10% since 2005. India's share of the world textile and apparel exports currently stands at 4.5% and is expected to rise to 8% by 2020.

EXERCISE 1.6

Fill in the blanks

1. The exchange of goods involving two or more countries is called _____.
2. _____ refer to goods shipped to another country in return for money or other goods.
3. _____ refer to the raw materials brought into a country for production of goods or foreign readymade goods made available for domestic use.
4. _____ addresses the need to balance economic considerations with the human and environmental aspects of the fashion business.
5. _____ is the biggest apparel importing country in the world.
6. Future growth in demand is expected from developing nations because of three reasons namely _____, urbanization and per capita income.

Review questions

1. What is International Trade?
2. What is Imports?
3. What is Exports?
4. In what way is textile and apparel business a global trade?

ACTIVITY 1.6

Background: Global consciousness of ethical fashion involves the elimination of social exploitation and environmental degradation on one hand with the introduction of Fair Trade Practices on the other.

This activity will develop awareness of Sustainable fashion among students.

1. Refer to websites on Sustainable Fashion.
2. What are the issues of prime concern (social exploitation/ environmental degradation/ fair trade practices etc.)
3. Find out about any brand which caters to Sustainable Fashion.





1.8 REGULATORY BODIES IN FASHION AND TEXTILE SECTOR

The textile industry in India is one of the leading textile industries in the world incorporating textile manufacturing and export. The economic liberalization in 1991 gave a boost to this industry. The textiles and ancillary sectors generate direct employment for over 35 million people in India, which makes it the second largest provider of employment in the country, after agriculture. The textile industry is divided into several segments or 'sub-sectors' which include cotton textiles, silk textiles, woolen textiles, handmade textiles, readymade garments, jute and coir.

There are several regulatory bodies in the Indian fashion and textile sector comprising government, semi-government and private institutions:

1.8.1 Ministry of Textiles, Government of India

The overall national-level regulation of the textiles, apparel and handicrafts sectors takes place under the aegis of the **Ministry of Textiles**. It is responsible for policy formulation, planning, development, export promotion and trade regulation in the textile sector. This includes all natural and man-made fibres used to make textiles, clothing and handicrafts.

The Government of India has taken several initiatives including a number of export promotion policies with incentives to broad-base coverage of market-linked product scheme in order to increase the Indian share for textiles and clothing in the global market as follows:

- ★ Welfare schemes to weavers and artisans
- ★ E-marketing platforms and other marketing initiatives to promote niche handloom and handicraft products through different events
- ★ Skill development of people across all sub-sectors
- ★ Financial packages to help handloom sector weavers and cooperative societies
- ★ Textile Parks which facilitate employment to several millions of textile workers in the apparel, hosiery, silk, processing, technical textiles including carpet and powerloom areas. Such industries are supported in the following aspects:
 - ★ Land
 - ★ Common infrastructure like compound wall, roads, drainage, water supply, power plant for electricity supply, telecommunication lines etc.



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- ★ Factory buildings for production purpose
- ★ Machinery
- ★ Buildings for common facilities like testing laboratories, design centre, training centre, warehousing facility, packaging unit, offices of service providers, marketing support system etc.

The objective of the Scheme of Integrated Textile Parks (SITP) is to identify industrial locations with high-growth potential and provide them with infrastructural facilities to set up textile units of international standards.

1.8.2 Advisory Boards

These operate under the aegis of the Ministry of Textiles and include:

- ★ All India Handloom Board
- ★ All India Handicrafts Board
- ★ All India Powerloom Board
- ★ Jute Advisory Board
- ★ Central Wool Development Board
- ★ Central Silk Board

The main task of these Boards is to look after production levels, export and imports, implementation of schemes, providing necessary funds for growth of handloom industry and advising government on matters of implementation of new technologies or trends.

1.8.3 Export Promotion Councils (EPC)

These are non-profit organizations which include:

- ★ Apparel Export Promotion Council, New Delhi
- ★ Carpet Export Promotion Council, New Delhi
- ★ Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council, Mumbai
- ★ Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, New Delhi
- ★ Handloom Export Promotion Council, Chennai



- ★ Indian Silk Export Promotion Council, Mumbai
- ★ Powerloom Development & Export Promotion Council, Mumbai
- ★ Synthetic and Rayon Textiles Export Promotion Council, Mumbai
- ★ Wool & Woolen Export Promotion Council, New Delhi

Each EPC is responsible for promotion of a particular group of products, projects and services to enhance exports in these sectors. The functions of these EPCs are:

- ★ To project India's image abroad as a reliable supplier of quality goods and services.
- ★ To assist their member exporters to take advantage of such opportunities for expansion and diversification by providing commercially relevant information and advice on design improvement, technology upgradation standards and specifications, product innovation etc.
- ★ To organize visits of delegates and members abroad to explore business avenues
- ★ To encourage and monitor observance of international standards and specifications by exporters.
- ★ To build a database of India's export-import figures and provide data on international trade.

EXERCISE 1.7

Fill in the blanks:

1. The overall nation-wide regulation of the textiles, apparel and handicrafts sectors takes place under the aegis of the _____.
2. The SITP stands for Scheme of _____ Textile Parks.
3. EPC stands for Export _____ Councils.

Review questions

1. What are the sub-sectors of the textile industry?
2. What are the different regulatory bodies of the Government of India?
3. What are the organizations that promote textile-based exports?
4. Name any 3 initiatives taken by the Government of India to promote exports in textiles and clothing.



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ACTIVITY 1.7

Background: The overall national-level regulation of the textiles, apparel and handicrafts sectors takes place under the aegis of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. It is responsible for policy formulation, planning, development, export promotion and trade regulation in the textile sector.

This activity is intended to familiarize student groups with the regulatory bodies in fashion and textile sector

1. Refer to the website of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India and select an Advisory Board or Export Promotion Council.
2. Refer to the website of the selected organization/ council about its role in the textile, clothing or handicrafts sector.
3. Discuss the information with the teacher and the class.

1.9 ROLE OF FASHION PROFESSIONALS

In fashion institutes, a variety of subjects are taught in the streams of design, technology, fashion merchandizing, retailing and management. The course curricula and syllabi are developed to train students to become professionals with knowledge, skills, ability to think creatively and problem-solving. The fashion industry offers a range of career and employment opportunities for graduates in positions requiring creativity, technical competence and retail acumen. Since some of the job responsibilities may overlap, it is critical to have professional interpersonal skills in order to work as a coordinated team.

The industry comprises companies/ organizations each with its specific range of products and services catering to its own clientele/consumer segment. The focus could be on apparel, accessories, design communication, manufacturing, forecasting or marketing. Some cater to the domestic retail market be it brands like Shoppers Stop, Fabindia, Anokhi etc. or the designer clothing segment. In addition the export houses and buying houses manufacture apparel and products only for export and do not retail within the country. This necessitates a well-synchronized flow chart



Fig 1. 21 Students in a Garment Construction lab



of activities by different departments each focusing on a particular area while supporting the other sections and coordinated by a centralized core team. Each company irrespective of whether it is design, technology or marketing oriented, can function at peak efficiency levels only if there are competent professionals within the organization.

The roles of designers, technologists and merchandisers are explained below.

1.9.1 Fashion Designer

A designer could be working in an export house, buying house, a corporate retail company or could be an entrepreneur. He/she could be specialized in clothing for men, women or children. A fashion designer's career in the fashion industry specifically in an export house or buying house, initially begins as an assistant designer with a Head Designer who by virtue of experience and/or long association with the company understands the entire process and is in a position of authority within his/her own department. In an export house, a designer works as part of an extended team that includes a pattern-cutter, sample machinist, garment technologist and merchandiser.

The role of the designer is to undertake the following activities:

- i. To understand the vision and goal of the company, the company-product association in terms of customer perception and positioning in the market.
- ii. To participate in brainstorming sessions with a team of seniors and colleagues for generating ideas and strategies rather than working in isolation.
- iii. To synchronize individual design sensibility with that of other designers within the organization to contribute to a cohesive look of the brand.
- iv. To understand that design is not merely a paper-pencil activity. Design decisions are not only about originality and creativity but equally about commercial realities and financial constraints. Financial implications of details like selection of fabrics, cost and availability of trims, threads, textile surface treatments/ embroidery etc. are equally important
- v. To undertake sampling i.e. making the first sample prototype which incorporates the entire design process from sketch to final product. While the designer will conceptualize, oversee and present the prototypes as part of the new collection, the feedback of other colleagues in design, production coordination, merchandising or marketing is also essential.



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- vi. To develop a focused and cohesive collection which would be in tandem with the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) i.e. the special characteristics of the company/brand and fashion forecast for the next season.
- vii. To understand the importance of time-management since time is equated to money. In export houses this would include calculation of time taken from the point of placement of order by buyers, fabric procurement, production process and shipping of finished consignment as per schedule.

1.9.2 Fashion Technologist

A garment technologist is the interface between the designer, the sample prototype and final finished collection. The technologist works in discussion and coordination with designers, textile technologists, pattern-cutters, production teams and merchandisers. In export houses and retail companies, the first sample is sent to the CMT (Cut Make Trim) unit where a fashion technologist can assess the cost and processes of production.

The role of the technologist is required to undertake the following activities:

- i. To assess the sample created by a designer, suggest suitable modifications if necessary until it is completely as per specifications given by the design team and therefore is ready to go into production.
- ii. To attend meetings with the design team where the sample may be tried on a dress form or on a 'fit model' to review any alterations and make detailed notes for the manufacturing unit to be followed precisely.
- iii. To ensure a rigorous process of quality control.
- iv. To check the results of any fabric tests e.g. colour fastness, shrinkage etc.
- v. To prepare a graded size chart for adherence by the production unit
- vi. To finalize all necessary requirements and create a pack of technical specifications (Tech Pack) as a control measure to avoid deviation during manufacture.
- vii. To carry out inspection and random checks garment while in production.
- viii. To address and resolve technical problems that may be detected during manufacturing.





1.9.3 Fashion Merchandizer

Line planning is an integral creative and commercial activity in the fashion industry which involves planning and creating a range of merchandise for the next season. However the success of the designer in creating the next collection would be less effective without the valuable inputs from merchandizers. It is important to balance commercial viability with good reviews from the customers. A merchandizer is the interface between design and commerce. With the increased competitiveness in the market, the merchandizer has to make critical choices in terms of design and product positioning strategy which will affect the profit margins of the company.

The role of the merchandizer is to undertake the following activities:

- i. To coordinate between the company and retailer to provide a wider platform for the merchandise
- ii. To understand the USP of the company/ brand while analyzing and exploring commercial opportunities in the market to represent the creative team's design vision.
- iii. To undertake market research for trend directions and evaluate market competitors.
- iv. To review the company's sales figures of the previous season by style as per the apparel or product category.
- v. To draw up an in-house merchandising calendar to include key dates and deadlines for different departments to adhere to.
- vi. To discuss the new collection(s) with the team of designers and buyers regarding integration of commercial concerns of costing and pricing with the creative aspects.
- vii. To brainstorm with the marketing team to plan a strategy to position and publicize the new collection.

EXERCISE 1.8

True or False

1. Line planning activity is the single-handed responsibility of the designer.
2. A fashion designer is always an entrepreneur with his/her own label.
3. The responsibility of a fashion designer is to:



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- i. Focus only on design based on originality and creativity
 - ii. Understand the goal of the company in terms of customer perception and its positioning in the market
 - iii. Concentrate on design by isolating oneself from other departments of the organization.
 - iv. Develop a focused and cohesive collection which would be in accordance with the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of the company/brand
4. The responsibility of a fashion technologist is to:
 - i. Undertake sampling
 - ii. Assess the cost and processes of production in export houses and retail companies based on the first sample
 - iii. Provide specifications for the first sample based on which production will be undertaken
 - iv. Ensure a rigorous process of quality control
5. The responsibility of a fashion merchandizer is to:
 - i. Coordinate between the company and retailer to provide a wider platform for the merchandise
 - ii. Make critical choices in terms of design and product positioning strategy of the company.
 - iii. Be the interface between design and technology
 - iv. Undertake market research for trend directions and evaluate market competitors

Review Questions

1. What are the activities undertaken by a fashion designer?
2. What is sampling?
3. Who are the extended team members with the fashion designer?
4. Who is a fashion technologist? What are the activities undertaken by a fashion technologist?
5. Who is a merchandizer? What are the activities undertaken by a merchandizer?
6. What is a merchandizing calendar?





GLOSSARY

Accessories:	Articles worn (like jewellery/ hat/ shoes/ belts etc) or carried (e.g. purse etc) to match with clothing
Apparel industry:	Designers, manufacturers, merchandisers, distributors, retailers working in the garment trade
Avant Garde:	French term for design which is unconventional and ahead of its time
Classic:	Long-lasting fashion that outlast seasonal forecast
Cohort:	Consumer segments categorized according to shared characteristics like demographics and lifestyle.
Consumer:	The end user who makes the decision to purchase.
Copyright:	The legal right of a creator of an original concept or style
Collection:	Range of clothing or accessories for a season
Custom-made:	Made to order as per specifications of client. Also called Bespoke tailoring
Disposable income:	Income of a person after tax-deduction which could be spent on consumable items
Fad:	Short-lived fashion that peaks and fades out quickly
Fashion Cycle:	Cyclic repetition of styles from a previous period
Fashion Forecasting:	A specialized activity to predict fashion for the next season(s)
Fashion Seasons:	Bi-annual periods of Spring-Summer and Autumn-Winter according to which fashion collections are planned
Haute Couture:	French term for High Fashion of one-of-a-kind fashion
Obsolescence:	When a product is discarded for something new
Pret a porter:	French term for ready-to-wear fashion
Knockoff:	Copy of a higher-priced garment available at a lower price
Licensing:	Grant of authorization by owner or authority to hold rights or to engage in activities related to the profession
Retailing:	The entire process of buying merchandize from different sources and selling to customers at various points of retail like boutiques or department stores



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Staple:	Items of clothing or accessories which are in constant demand
Supply Chain:	A series of sequential stages incorporating the entire process from raw material sourcing, production to marketing
Toile:	Sample garment made in muslin or cheaper fabric
Turnover rate:	Speed of replacement of merchandise with new styles
Zeitgeist (za-it-ga-ist):	German term for 'spirit of the times' indicating the prevailing influences, trends and styles in society at large.

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