

Chapter 1

Introduction and Understanding of Fashion Terminologies

In Order to be Irreplaceable, One Must Always be Different.

– Coco Chanel

Fashion Overview

"Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, the street; fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening"- Coco Chanel.



Introduction to the Fashion Industry



1.1 Fashion – As Overview and Definitions in different aspects

Fashion is the manner of our being-the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the way we spend our leisure time and the activities we are involved in. Hence, Fashion is the integral part of our everyday life or in other words 'lifestyle'.

Fashion is the visual representation of a society's - economic, political or cultural state at a particular time. This visual representation can be seen in our everyday lives or in the museums, can be read in books or magazines or even watched in the cinemas.

If I were allowed to choose from the pile of books which will be published one hundred years after my death, do you know which one I would take?...I would simply take a fashion magazine so that I could see how women dress one century after my departure. And these rags would tell me more about the humanity of the future than all the philosophers, prophets, and scholars.- Anatole, France, French writer, 1844- 1924



Fig 1: Household plastic products popular in the decade of 50s and 60s. Source: Women and Home magazine, Dec 1958

Ancient civilizations had identified these visual elements in the attire, worn by the kings, priests or warriors to exercise their political, religious or military powers. The clothing and the insignia associated with each profession continued to be adorned by individuals in a community in order to 'belong' to that group.

However, from twentieth century the societies opened up and dressing became more generalized indicating the economic level of the people as well as the surroundings in which they lived. Post industrial production systems, fashion icons along with the mass media played a pivotal role in shaping the lifestyle of societies in this century.

Fashion in the 21st century is marked by the awareness of depleting natural resources and everyday nuances in the field of science and technology. This led to the shift in the lifestyles of consumer groups in the society. In today's times fashion hence, demonstrates an individual's expression and his philosophy of life. Fashion is therefore a vital, challenging and a dynamic force that has influences on individuals on beyond boundaries. It affects the whole world we live in.

Fashion is also described as a style at a given point of time that is accepted and worn by substantial number of people who have the power to influence a lot more. For example in the seventies decade, it was fashionable to wear flared pants, platform heels and have puffed hair. The same flared pants may be in vogue again after some decades but in combination with other stimulus/s existing in that time. Fashion hence, is always addressing the current needs and aspirations of the consumer.



Fig 2: Heinz Print advertisement, Magazine - Women and Home, Dec 1958, back cover

1.2 Fashion Categorization

Fashion can be categorized according to:

- ❖ Group in which it is accepted - i.e. High Fashion or Mass fashion.
- ❖ Duration for which it lasts - i.e. Classic or Fad.
- ❖ Custom made or in multiple size ranges - Haute Couture or Prêt-a-porter.

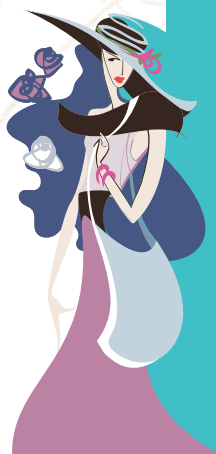




Fig 3a: 70's Mass Fashion for Flared Look
Source- <http://trendnerd.com>

1.2.1a High Fashion

High Fashion refers to those styles or designs accepted by a limited group of fashion leaders like celebrities, socialites or fashion innovators who accept fashion change at a very early stage. Such people have fan following and hence power to influence many more.

The garments are presented in the fashion shows by fashion designers in the presence of the media, which plays the role of giving coverage to the styles exhibited, thus highlighting the fashion direction for the viewers or readers. Fashion leaders, celebrities or socialites initiate the process of supporting this trend in significant events where high level of public viewing is inevitable. Having the power to influence, the trend catches up with more and more people. High Fashion garments are introduced at a high price and manufactured in limited numbers with more elaborate detailing and overall good quality fineness in the product.

1.2.1b Mass Fashion

Mass Fashion refers to those styles or designs that are accepted by higher number of fashion conscious consumers. Mass fashion garments are produced

in huge quantities, moderately priced with garment detailing that can be replicated in bulk quantities. A considerable number of apparel brands cater to this sector. For e.g. Max, Globus, Stop by Shoppers Stop etc.



Fig 3b: Current Mass Fashion for Flared Look
Source- <http://www.surfaddictfashionista.com>

1.2.2a Classic

Some styles have the perennial ability to never become completely obsolete, but instead to remain timelessly popular. A classic is characterized by simplicity of design and impeccable quality, which prevents it from being outdated. An iconic example is the blue denim used for certain merchandise like the unisex jeans and jackets. Even after 100 years of its existence the blue denim jeans continues to make strong fashion statement which is classless, ageless and with a universal appeal.



Fig 4: Audrey Hepburn in classic black dress
Source: <http://www.examiner.com>

1.2.2b Fads

Fads are short-lived fashions that peak in popularity within a very short period due to an unusually quick level of acceptance by a particular segment of the market. They lack the design strength to hold consumer attention for very long. Often fads are introduced in lower price ranges. Thus, they are relatively simple and inexpensive to copy with the potential of flooding the market in a very short time. Quick market saturation causes an equally rapid onset of boredom leading to the disappearance of the fad.



Fig 5: Current Fad - Harem pants
Source: <http://arabiczeal.com>

1.2.3a Couture

Couture saw its emergence in France, which used to be the center of fashion because of the patronage that it received from the royal court. From the work of Charles Worth (who is called the father of couture in the mid-nineteenth century, that included making dresses for Empress Eugenie, wife of Emperor Napoleon III) to the modern day, couture has carried with it the connotation of being high fashion, intricate and exquisite in workmanship, embellishments and often, flamboyance. Hence, it results in high cost, exclusivity and therefore a limited clientele. Couture clothes are often custom-designed created for specific occasions and are often the subject of discussions and reports along with the celebrities who wear them. Since, a large segment of population cannot afford couture clothes; these are often copied to some degree in look and style to be sold at lower prices.



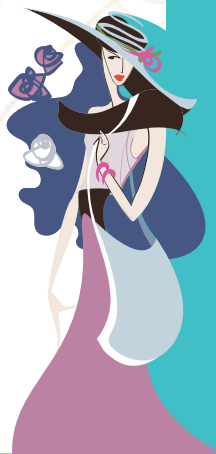
Fig 6: Couture gowns created by Charles Worth, 19th century



Fig 7: Jean Paul Gaultier, Haute Couture, Spring 2011
Source: <http://macheriedior.blogspot.in>

1.2.3b Prêt-a-porter:

Prêt-a-porter is another French term that denotes 'ready to wear', and refers to mass produced fashion, where styles are produced in various sizes and colours. This facilitates the customer to purchase the garment off the shelf without alterations. Historically, with the couture garments becoming increasingly expensive, the mass produced garments became more and more fashionable, and by the 1960s, the ready-to-wear became as influential as the couture. This affected the commercial performance of the couturiers. Hence,



they introduced their own pret-a-porter collections in the market. While the high-end prêt designer clothes may cost substantially, and almost as much as some of the designer clothes, the prêt line does not lend itself to exclusivity. It is the mass production of clothes that makes prêt-a-porter or ready-to-wear a profitable business.



Fig 8: Pret line for brand GAP, season summer 2012



Fig 9: Designer Sabyasachi's pret line

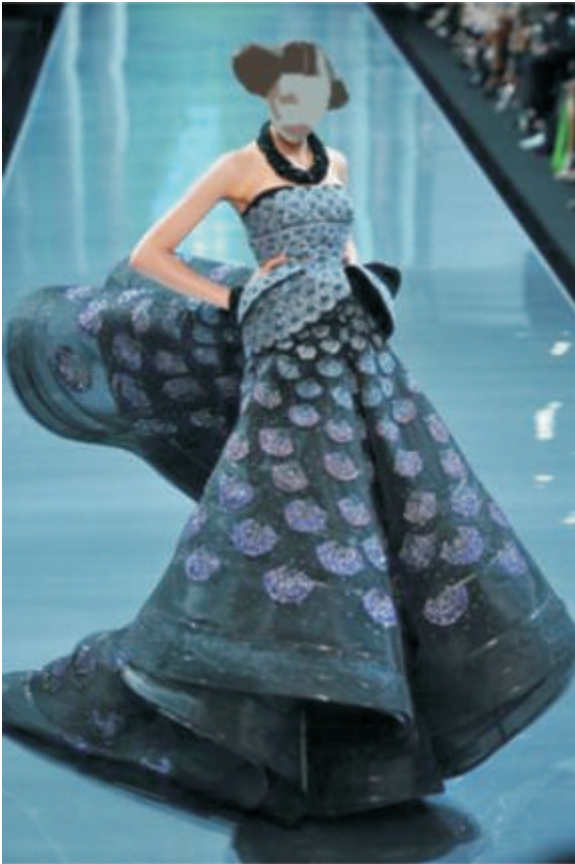


Fig 10 a, b : Garments showcasing High Fashion, High Fashion garment by Christain Dior and Stephane Rolland



Fig 11: Mass Fashion garments by Sonia Rykiel and H & M

1.3 Fashion Dimensions

The term fashion has three important components: Style, Acceptance and Time.

1.3.1 Time

Time makes fashion cyclical, what is in fashion today may be out the next year. This change keeps fashion business growing and exciting. Change may never have a consistent pace. It may be sometimes rapid and some other times gradual. Womens apparel category has always shown most rapid changes whereas, fashion in home furnishings transforms comparatively slower. Assuming fashion was not prone to change; the economies would have ended up generating money only through only replacing needs of consumer and thus would have lost a million dollar business daily. Hence, economies generate huge business though fashion change. Thus, it may not be completely incorrect to state that fashion is a product of induced cyclic change. Sense of timing is an important attribute at various levels of the industry. The speed of change depends on the advancement in communication, level of technology in mass production, marketing skills and tools used discretionary income and other factors of seasonal change.

1.3.2 Acceptance

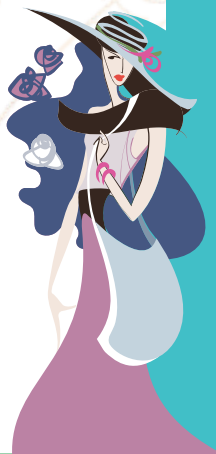
Acceptance is the willingness of the consumer to buy the style and wear it in order to get visibility.

World-famous designer Karl Lagerfeld once commented “There's no fashion if nobody buys it” (Quoted in “Fall Fashions: Buying the Line,” Time, April 23, 1984, p.77.).



Fig 12: Fashion icon Audrey Hepburn in movie Sabrina, adorning a style that has become a classic over a period of time

Acceptance does not need to be universal. A style may be accepted in one group while other segments may ignore it. For example styles that are considered fashionable in a metropolitan city may not be acceptable to people living in the villages. Likewise, a style that may be acceptable and fashionable in one part of the world may be rejected in the other. Wearing different styles of turban and carrying long moustaches may be acceptable and flaunted in different states of rural India but same may not be considered appropriate in cities or other parts of the world. Similarly, some tribes may adorn themselves with different styles



of clothing and accessories that may be acceptable within the group but may be rejected by those who do not belong to that tribe. Hence acceptance also means that a fashion is considered appropriate for the place and occasion for which it is worn.

Similarly, certain radical styles sported by some students in college may not be considered appropriate for a job interview.

The group of consumers who reject or accepts a style also has the power to influence and change what is acceptable. The styles those are acceptable today may not have been considered so, some decades ago. For example it was not acceptable in business world for working women to be dressed in casual separates before 1990s. Hence, there is a potential for a lot of styles and many fashions to co-exist, as the market is composed of heterogeneous mix of groups of people with different preferences, lifestyles, needs and aspirations.

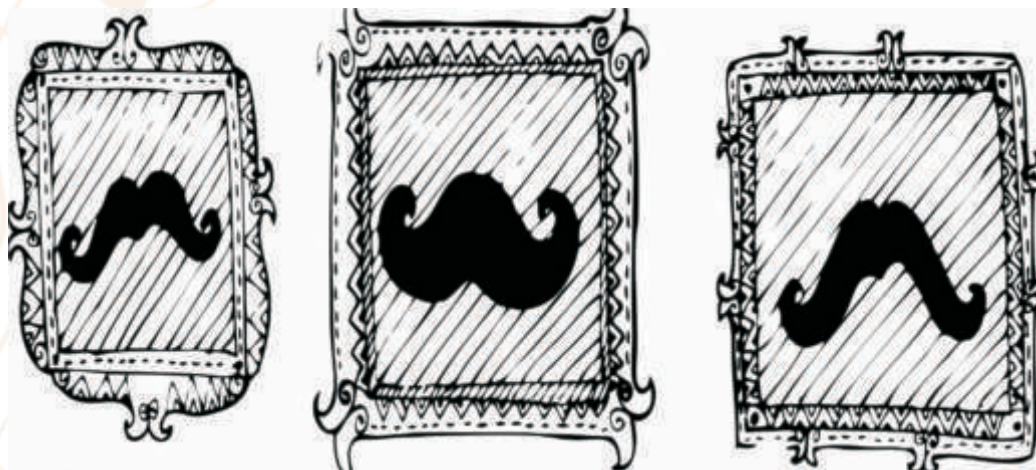


Fig 13: Moustache- a necessity and identity in a tribe, which may not be a compulsion other- wise

1.3.3 Style

A style is a characteristic or distinctive feature of a garment that makes it look different from the others. The word style can be addressed not only for apparel but also for the way one speaks, writes, and looks which makes him different from the others.

Designers interpret fashion ideas and create an array of styles for their targeted group of customers. These styles when received and sported well by the people become fashionable. A style whether in fashion or not always remain constant. For example, a tiered skirt style may not always be in fashion, yet it will always be comprised of the same cut and details, which make it a tiered skirt. Thus, fashion puts together various styles that may be seen extensively at a prevailing

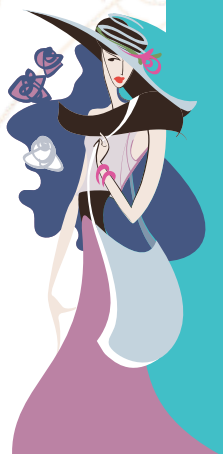
time but style itself is timeless and permanent. A pleated skirt will remain a pleated skirt whether it is in vogue or not. Similarly the style in which one carries self can be distinctive whether that may be considered in fashion or not.



*Fig 14: Style -Straight sheath dress
with unique ethnic embroidery*

A specific style of a garment has many components, for example it's- fabric, colour, surface ornamentation and trims, all of which contributes to difference in design. Therefore, these details characterize each design, setting it apart from the others in the same genre thereby becoming individual interpretations of a style.

In fashion industry there could be many variations of a particular style of a garment which may be popular in the current fashion. In such cases each variation is then given a reference number called as style number. For example Style number S/S 2005 ATL-288, will identify the product with a particular garment detail during its several stages of sampling, production, shipping and retailing.



BPG SU'13 – GIRLS

	GL272911BG/LG, FLOWER TULLE DRESS 	GL272930BG, ANNI LACE TANK 
GL273082BG, FLORAL LACE SKIRT 	GL275008BG, BAIL WOVEN TANK 	GL275010LG, SARA WOVEN DRESS 
GL275027BG, KYLIE HOODIE 	GL275028BG, GENIE SMOCKED SKIRT 	GL2725104BG, OLIVIA DRESS 

Fig 15: Different styles represented by their style numbers

“Fashions fade,
style is eternal.”
- Yves Saint Laurent

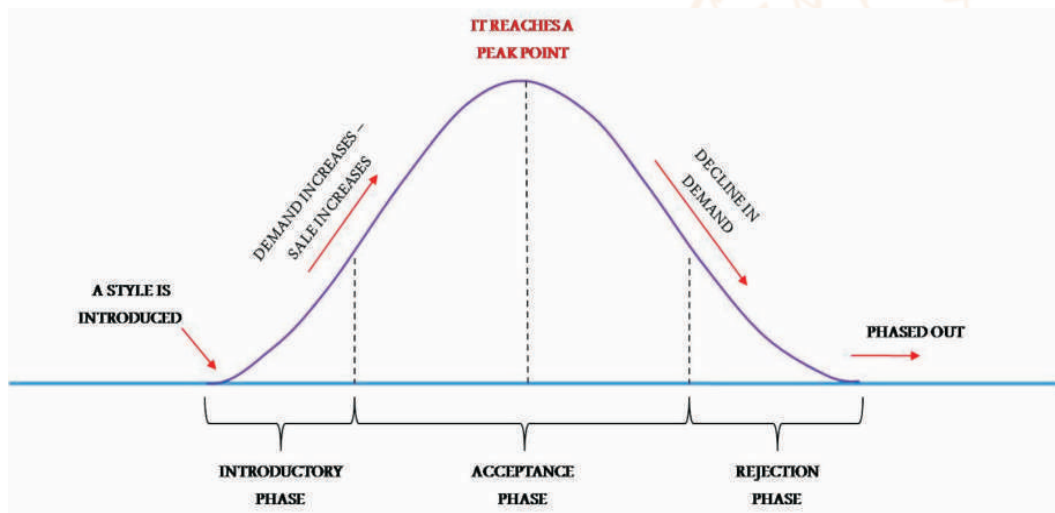
1.4 Differentiation between Style and Fashion

Very frequently the word fashion and style are used interchangeably specially for garments but the words are not synonymous. Fashion is cyclical in nature and remains in vogue only for a certain time period. Thus, fashion seasonally highlights certain styles, if worn gives the feeling of being 'in' trend until it is replaced by another. In order to remain fashionable a consistent change in style is hence required, as indicated by the fashion of that time. On the other hand, the style is eternal and timeless. Style can also be self created and not be guided by the fashion actually. Hence, no consistent adaptation to what is 'in' may be required to be stylish. There could be a consumer with no style, but he /she can

be an ardent fashion follower. Such people can be called as fashionable but not stylish. However on the other way round, it is also possible a person can be stylish without being fashionable.

To sum up:

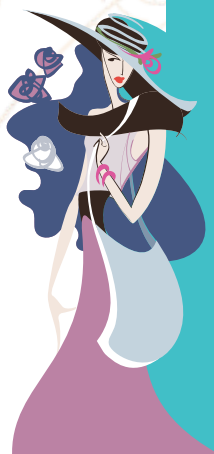
- ❖ A style is considered in fashion if it is accepted by the majority of a specific group of people at a given point of time and place for a particular occasion.
- ❖ Fashion means what is 'in' at the moment. It is transitory and has a limited time span whereas, Style is permanent and timeless.
- ❖ Fashion is a trend and the people who follow it are called fashionable, while style could be a creation of individuals that compel others to follow it.



1.5 Trend- Definition and Origin

Trends are manifestations of similar fashion styling that most of the influential designers and brands reflect in common, at almost the same time. It is hence an indicative of the direction in which fashion is likely to move.

Some styles may have fresh detailing that has been captured in common by different designers with their own variations. This collective thread of similar response is because of instinctive similarity in creative thinking that may be result of common inspiration. For example, a certain form of garment silhouette, fabric, and color surface decoration may be reflected in common in several design collections. These highlighted design variations in fashion styling when are perceived and reported by trend analyst and written or broadcasted by media sets a trend.



1.5.1 Trend Analysis

Trend Analysis is to perceive and report the prophetic styles or garment details that have simultaneously been reflected in collections of various designers hence, professing the direction in which fashion would move. Owing to the wide diversity of market segments, there could conceivably be several trends existing at one point of time.

Consumers could be very different in terms of age, income, preferences and lifestyle patterns, which imply that designers and merchandisers must understand and analyze their particular niche target market really well. A keen awareness and analytical ability to sense the changing customer psychographics and demographics forms the basis of assessment of contemporary trends and predictions for its shifting paradigms for the future, which is a crucial factor for manufactures and retailers.



Fig 16: Mood board designed by Chitrarth Verma to create garment range, Theme- Augmented reality of a dragon flies

1.5.2 Fashion Forecasting

Fashion producers like the designers, brands or retailers have huge financial investments in the fashion business and hence, have to ensure that the products they produce are as per current fashion, consumer tastes and preferences. Therefore, forecasting fashion trends far ahead of selling season becomes inevitable.

Fashion forecasting is a vital activity where experienced fashion analysts or agencies:

- ❖ Scrutinize past consumer buying patterns for indicative signs for current market dynamics and project these in future.
- ❖ Analyze current successful trends which have the potential to be progressive and hence carried forward in next selling season.
- ❖ Decide which fashions are prophetic from the fresh design collections.
- ❖ Estimate which segment of the market will accept a particular fashion.
- ❖ Determine the time when these fashions will be acceptable to the target customers.

1.5.3 Sources for Trend and Fashion Information

The information for fashion forecasting can be drawn from varied sources, which are interpreted in terms of fashion preferences of the targeted customers.

The sources could be:

- ❖ Market research – A research can be undertaken to determine current or potential consumers and gauge factors that influence their buying preferences and decisions. A study could be conducted to determine what is selling in the market and for what reasons. Comparative study on styling, fit, pricing and quality can be the guiding factors to a successful creation for the next selling season.



Fig 17: Style board to create a garment collection, Theme- Projection, Spring/Summer 2013 Designed by Raiman Sethi

- ❖ Evaluation of sale records – Fashion producers and retailers maintain record of sales. Interpretation of this information indicates the customer interests. It can reflect what fashion trends are developing (rising sales) and what trends may have passed its peak (declining sales).
- ❖ Accessing collections – Manufacturers, retailers and press endeavours to analyze trend directions through evaluating newest fashion ideas, twice every year for spring/summer and autumn/winter collections. Fashion capitals like London, Milan, New York, Paris and Tokyo are invaded by members of both ready to wear and couture industry along with press and fashion forecast agencies to perceive the forthcoming change.
- ❖ Fashion reporting services – They are agencies or consultants who create trend reports for people who have not witnessed the collections or who need aid to decipher the focal trends from overwhelming assortment of styles and details.
- ❖ Fashion Publications – Fashion Publications constitute trade magazines and trade newspapers that are intended for working members of the fashion industry to be used as a resource for gauging fashion trends. Fashion publications also constitute consumer publications created for the awareness of fashion trends and generating a keen interest of the potential customers in the field.

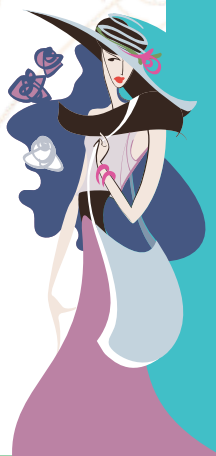


Fig 18: Fashion Magazine - Women and Home, issue Dec 1958, Pg. 37



Fig 19: Fashion Magazine - Women and Home cover page, issue Dec 1958, Pg. 37

- ❖ Fashion Forecasting websites – There are paid internet sites that reports fashion trends within days and hours after a fashion collection .They bring forward fashion plates, mood, and colour and silhouette details. Some examples of such sites are www.stylesight.com, www.doneger.com and www.wgsn.com.
- ❖ Fashion media channels – Fashion media channels like Fashion TV, Social networking sites, fashion blogs and You tube videos have become major source for spreading fashion trends, thus making Fashion information accessible at a click of a button.



1.6 Linkages and Differences between Fashion, Design, Art and Craft

Fashion is a mirror of its time reflecting society's lifestyle at that given time. Fashion is like art forms, for example architecture, documents prevailing aesthetic, cultural inclinations and aspirations of the period. This is so because the surrounding factors that affect design as a creative process extends to include fashion as well. This applies both to widely popular mass fashion as well to the distinctive clothing of smaller subgroups. For example *Women and Home* magazine dating back to year 1962 reflects the vogue of contemporary interior and furniture, comparable in influence with the apparel.

'Fashionable lehngas in six gored flared skirt style designed for formal occasions using the art of fine zardozi embroidery crafted by master craftsmen of Varanasi' The narration is an example to demonstrate the connotation of words - Fashion, Design, Art and Craft with comparable difference in the meaning.

A very commonly quoted phrase for art is 'Art for art's sake', where design as a creative process may be viewed as an applied art. In order to maintain the balance between design aesthetics and commercial viability, fashion has to constantly redefine itself and innovate so as to remain ever fresh for the consumers. Craft is a manifestation of the intrinsic heritage and skills of the people of a country. It emanates out of collective consciousness and traditions of the community.



Fig 20: The Kiss - Painting by Gustav Klimt



Fig 21: Craft piece

1.6.1 Design

The word Design is derived from Italian word 'disegno', meaning 'drawing of work'. Even though it is commonly believed that a good design is one that looks beautiful, but this is not always true. A good design is one which focuses mainly upon its intended function and a successful design is the one that absolutely accomplishes the needs of its intended purpose, 'form follows function'.

1.6.2 Art

Art is proficiency in a particular skill. For example, someone can know the art of oil painting on canvas or the art of embroidery or weaving. The word art can be understood in many ways as decorative art and a beautiful object for one's own sake. Liberal art like, courses in history, philosophy and applied art including architecture. The word art is used in more specialized way to mean fine arts such as painting and sculpture. Things as a result of such activities are supposed to be different from more valuable than things that require craftsmanship or skill.



Fig 22: Packaging design of Coca Cola can

1.6.3 Craft

Craft is a product that is created with the craftsmen skills which are either inherited or developed, and is specific to a region, or tradition of a community. The nature of work requires skill especially with hands.

In India and several other cultures art, design and craft are inextricably woven. It is a difficult task to draw a line between art and craft and art and design. Folk art is essentially a craft and every handcrafted item is created to perform a specific function in a day today life. 'Rangoli' is a prime example of art, craft and design. In order to maintain a balance between design aesthetics and commercial viabilities fashion has to constantly redefine itself, and innovate so as to remain ever fresh for the consumers.



Fig 23: Rangoli - adorning Indian houses celebrating festivity

Summary:

Fashion being a vital, dynamic force has its influence beyond geographical boundaries. Fashion can be understood in the aspect of its dimensions or its categories. The words fashion and style do not have identical meaning, even if some times used interchangeably.

Trend spotting, analyzing and forecasting fashion form a major function of global fashion business. The information is provided through varied sources like: market research, evaluation of sale records, accessing collections, fashion reporting services, fashion publication, fashion media channels and through Internet blogs.

Fashion has close linkages with design, art and craft with each having its individual character and relevance in today's time.

Glossary

- ❖ Art: Proficiency in a particular skill.
- ❖ Craft: Manifestation of intrinsic heritage and skills of people of a region in form of a created product.
- ❖ Couture: The art of fine dressmaking.
- ❖ Classic: A style which have the perennial ability to never become completely obsolete, but instead to remain timelessly popular.
- ❖ Design: The layout or sketch of a pattern.
- ❖ Fashion: An ever changing, vital and influential force that impacts our everyday lives.
- ❖ Fashion Capital: A city which has the potential to be a major centre for fashion industry.
- ❖ Fads: Short-lived fashions.
- ❖ Fashion Forecast: The prediction of forthcoming trends highlighting colors, silhouettes, and fabrics.
- ❖ Haute Couture: High-class dressmaking.
- ❖ High Fashion: A style or design accepted by a limited group of fashion leaders.
- ❖ Mass Fashion: A style or design that is accepted by larger number of fashion conscious.

Question Bank:

- Q1. Differentiate between fad and classics?
- Q2. Write short notes on fashion dimensions.
- Q3. Write a short note on sources for trend and fashion information with examples?
- Q4. Explain the role of market research in developing a good design.
- Q5. What are Fashion Publications, define with few examples?
- Q6. Write a short note on the relationship between fashion, design, art and craft.
- Q7. What do you understand by Fashion Forecasting?
- Q8. What is the role of a fashion forecaster?
- Q9. Differentiate between style and fashion.
- Q10. Write short notes on the Design, Art and Craft.

