

Denim

never goes out of fashion as makers play around with new styles

Denim a wardrobe staple has seen numerous innovations in terms of fabric, colours washes, styles over the years. With its popularity only increasing across age groups and geographies, denim makers are incorporating new style trends to woo customers, finds out **Ajanta Ganguly**

Just like the ubiquitous little black dress for formal wear, the basic denim blue jeans for casual wear never goes out of style. The youth driven denim market in India promises both domestic as well as global manufacturers lucrative returns along with volume growth in the overall apparel market for both men and women. Indian market trends over the last couple of years has predicted increased penetration of denim across semi-urban and rural centres, driving volume growth across

- Denim among the highest growth categories in Indian apparel market
- Has the largest number of local and global players
- Denim sells well across all economic segments
- Lightweight fabrics with breathability and moisture absorption important functional aspect of denim
- High-end finishes, innovative product designs gaining popularity
- Colors, structures, patterns becoming cleaner more muted
- Stretch denim is very popular



Neha Shah

Assistant General Manager-Marketing, Pepe Jeans
 “Pepe Jeans London looks to the traits and personalities of ‘The Insiders’ for its spring/summer 2019 collection, which builds upon its ongoing exploration of the idea of ‘the club’: The Pepe Jeans London club. Self-expression is key here bringing their own sense of non-conformist style to whatever they are wearing, be it through slogans and motifs, logos or the addition of bright splashes of colour.”



mass market and unbranded segments. The increasing shift of rural fashion market from ethnic to western wear, online retail penetration and versatility and innovation in design and styles is what is rocking the denim industry. Denim is among the highest growth categories in the Indian apparel market and has the largest numbers of local and global players. Most denim brands are now busy bringing out their Spring/Summer '19 collection in a colorful medley of cool, warm tones in a host of styles for both men and women.

Trend forecast for Spring/Summer '19

Experts estimated the market size of Indian denim at Rs 20,205 crore in 2016. It is now projected to grow at a CAGR of 14.5 per cent and reach Rs 39,651 crore by 2021, and Rs 77,999 crore by 2026. The men's denim segment comprises 84 per cent while women's and kids' denim segment comprise 10 and 6 per cent respectively. It is thus definitely a segment that garment manufacturers are including in their general apparel portfolio even if they are not a strictly a denim company. Denim sells well across all economic segments as it is affordable, trendy and widely accepted in society as it covers all and reveals nothing.

"For the denim line this season, we dig into American heritage and reinterpret it for our modern times on one hand while on the other, we have a fun holiday collection high on 90s youth fashion inspiration, resort shirts and acid washed jeans summing up the look perfectly. As a style statement, we can describe our styles as effortless casual and laid back luxury. For this season we worked on seven themes, five big ones and two capsule. For the athleisure line, we have 'Lab Sports' and 'Deconstruction' as themes the first is minimalist and the other is techno grunge. For the denim line the themes include Americana, Poetic Nature and Soda Punk, visually they are very different but denim is central highlight of all these themes. Apart from these five we have Africanation and Art not War as capsule collections," says Kunal Mehta, VP, Marketing and Business Development, Being Human Clothing.

India's climatic conditions play a major role in the design aspects of a range. Lightweight fabrics with breathability and moisture absorption are important functional aspect. Denim apparels are considered low maintenance and easy to wear which makes them readily acceptable. Denim wear is available in different designs, stretch and colours and forming a part of apparel segments like dresses, joggers' pants, jeggings, lightweight denim shirts, denim shorts and accessories. Denim products with high-end finishes and innovative product designs are gaining popularity across the globe. Owing to its fit and comfort characteristic, stretch denim has catch up the trend. Colors, structures and patterns are becoming cleaner and more muted. Deep indigo, greys and black denims besides blue in all a variety of shades always



take centre stage in the denim portfolio.

“Pepe Jeans London looks to the traits and personalities of ‘The Insiders’ for its spring/summer 2019 collection, which builds upon its ongoing exploration of the idea of ‘the club’: The Pepe Jeans London club. Self-expression is key here bringing their own sense of non-conformist style to whatever they are wearing, be it through slogans and motifs, logos or the addition of bright splashes of colour. The Revolutionaries & Challengers line puts emphasis on innovation and ingenuity with traditional techniques and local materials used in new and exciting ways. Laid-back denim is at the core of this collection, a fresh blue and white palette encapsulating retro styles built around shorts and great shirts; and, for women’s wear, boho Seventies styles like peasant tops, corduroys and relaxed bottom wear. Lastly the ‘Explorers & Curious’ line which is a collection with an eclectic spirit from print and pattern to style and silhouettes,” points out Neha Shah, Assistant General Manager- Marketing, Pepe Jeans.

Denim mills today are focusing on a range of innovation in their fabrics and high quality yarns to fight their way to the top in this competitive scenario. Denim shirting has a good future because the Indian shirting market is largely non denim,

leaving enough scope for denim to replace non denim clothing. From being confined to small urban pockets and casual settings, denim is now trending in both men’s and women’s apparel segments across India. This has seen consumption of denim going up considerably. A traditional cotton yarn player is now increasing its product portfolio to include denim in both top and bottom wear. Although denim is popular across all age groups and income classes, the young generation wears it the most, especially the fancier and coloured denims. Recently there has been a big play in colours, with over 10-12 sulphur colours trending this summer.

“Staying close to our core of providing exceptionally comfortable fashion, in the upcoming season, Raisin is all set to introduce a new collection ‘You Are Hue’. The collection, keeping true to its name is a colourful medley of pop, cool, and warm tones with a host of styles and patterns to cater to the preferences of our customers. Armed with a combination of premium quality fabrics and aesthetically crafted styles, Raisin is ready to build itself as the ultimate go-to brand that is widely accepted and revered when it comes to high quality fabrics, chic designs and trendy styles,” explains Vikash Pachariwal, Co-Founder, Raisin, a new fashion brand that aims to blend Indian culture and contemporary influences.



Manjula Gandhi

Chief Product Officer, Numero Uno

“We have innovated with an interesting mix of natural and sustainable fabrics, technology driven sustainable washing: ‘One Glass Water Jeans’. In denim, indigos span a wide range from pale, sun-faded and bleached out blues to brighter mid-tones, vintage and heavily washed, to deep raw clean look. Also, frayed denim with boro-inspired repairing is a highlight. Our denims range named ‘Amekazi’ takes inspiration from native American culture, military clothing and vintage denim styles amalgamated with Japanese design to form a distinctive Japanese-American aesthetic.”

Innovations and challenges in denim

Changing fashions make innovations in existing and new products necessary. With international ramp shows heralding in new seasons in a rapidly growing tech-savvy India, the fabric industry is working overtime to be in tune with current trends. Experts feel India is capable of a lot of innovation and variety since it has around 12 lakh textile retailers spread across the country

Manjula Gandhi, Chief Product Officer of Numero Uno explains, “We have innovated with an interesting mix of natural and sustainable fabrics, technology driven sustainable washing: ‘One Glass Water Jeans’. And there is a new collection of graphic tees known as the ‘Magic Tees’ where the print color changes as you move from indoor to outdoor. In denims, indigos span a wide range from pale, sun-faded and bleached out blues to brighter mid-tones, vintage and heavily washed, to deep raw clean look. Also, frayed denim with boro-inspired repairing is a highlight. Our denims range named ‘Amekazi’ takes inspiration from native American culture, military clothing and vintage denim styles



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The emergence of tattered denim has provided a perfect option for fashion conscious youth. The applications of distressed/ripped/tattered/patched denim in many new forms come every season and can also be seen in jackets, shorts and skirts along with denim jeans. New denim fabric washes, which are basically shades of the denim fabric are created by the top players who focus on achieving different hues of blue by washing the fabric in certain dyes, bleaches or other agents that affect the denim colour. Dark indigo, faded blue/vintage/aged, stone wash and distressed jeans are new denim fabric washes trending now.

“Key product innovations that we engage in a balance of maximal and minimal elements within our design to enhance performance as well as functionality. We instrument a two-line approach of core and fashion, that centres around our marketing strategy of contributing to building awareness of active wear products and its usability for daily casual wear and active wear. The collection continues to follow extreme silhouettes and sculpted volume silhouettes that have fluidity for movement that is lightweight and cooling transitioning from Studio to Street,” points out Sunishka Goenka, Creative Director and Founder of Myriad Activewear.

Fabric trends weave comfort with style

There are many types of fabric in the current range of denim which includes knitting denim, chalk denim, structured denim, normal denim, jacquard denim and printed denim. The types of fabric in the current range of cotton include: stretched cotton, structured cotton and blended cotton. Cotton and Lycra have been most preferable components in denim. A large chunk of denim is a combination of these two fabrics and there has been a lot of incorporation of Tencel, Modal and viscose, especially in the fashion segment.

“Sustainability in fashion will be the biggest drive for future. Hybrid products from Derby’s Denim DNA will be our unique style statement. Our hybrid workwear will feature clean rinse washed jeans that can be worn for work & casual lifestyle. Our range will complement our hybrid jeans and provide a wide variety of product mix for urban and aspiring market segments. Some of the key fabrics used with denim this season include a few regenerated fibers like Tencel, Excel are blended onto natural fibers for a soft hand feel and comfort, stretch fabrics are our brands’ strength that offers unmatched comfort. Derby is listed among the top 100 sustainable brands within the country and hence, we do not use synthetic fabrics like polyester that are made from petrochemicals that exploit natural resources,” says Vijay Kapoor, Managing Director, Derby Jeans Community.

The Indian denim market is bursting with challenges. The first challenge is stiff competition by both local and international players, the second is pricing of yarns and



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fabrics going up constantly while MRPs remain almost static in the basic segment, resulting in a pressure on manufacturers in terms of business, revenue and margins. Most bigger players have a R&D team to visit national as well as international markets and implement their findings in their portfolio. Denim mills today are focusing on a range of innovation in their fabrics and high quality yarns to fight their way to the top. Denim shirting has a good future because the Indian shirting market is largely non denim, leaving enough scope for denim to replace non denim clothing.

“We have two exciting collections: Leisure Saturday and New Denim City, coming in for women’s and men’s respectively. Fashion today, means ready-to-wear all the time. We are now over with winter trends but not yet ready for an entirely new summer wardrobe. This is the time where we are looking for ‘in-betweeners’ new essentials of our everyday wardrobe. Season-less, is a new aesthetic for today’s youth. Dressed-up leisure looks are the key; layering bright knit styles and flower midi skirts or bright coloured sweaters with a new blue high waist jeans. Fabrics used in our general apparel portfolio will include linen that will be a big fabric trend



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Creative Director and Founder, Myriad Activewear

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in the coming season. People are done with basic styles and we think will see new details and cuts being used in this fabric. Natural fabrics will also see an upswing,” says Devender Gupta, Founder (Inceptra Lifestyle), the force behind brand Tom Tailor, an online shopping site for men and women.

The future of denim industry will depend on how brands build their omni-channel strategy and its technology through which they can tap additional customers across smaller cities. The mid segment is stronger and bigger as it reaches a wider number of aspirational customers across Tier II and III cities. The rising aspirations of these price and quality conscious consumers looking for more variety and innovation in the denim segment have led to a growth spurt. And in the premium luxury segment, a variety of designs, mixed blends and sophisticated finishes is the need of the hour. Not only in the western section as bottom and top wear, denim has penetrated into almost every category in women’s wear in some form, including blouses and kurtis in ethnic wear. Denim never goes out of style but how brands handle innovation to keep the segment looking and feeling is the magic wand to market success.