

Comfort, style & fashion define knitwear market for kids

T-shirts, the all weather garment for kids across age groups has seen a huge traction with brands introducing numerous innovations to attract the New Age kid high on fashion and style, find out **Shubhangi Bidwe** and **Ajay Kumar**

With the kind of comfort it offers, T-shirts play an important role in kids' wardrobe today. The fabric of a shirt, suit or sherwani may be softer, but wearing a T-shirt makes one feel at ease as no other garment does. "T-shirts are kids-friendly, easy to wear, easy to remove and also easy to scale up in size. Besides, they offer lots of creativity," says Ranjiv Ramchandani, Director, Tantra. "This category has always been trending because of its usage and improvement in fabric and techniques. Around 30 to 40 per cent of kids wear market is dominated by T-shirts as it is the basic requirement for any brand," adds Sharad Venkta, Managing Director & CEO, Toonz Retail.

Innovations drive segment

Tracing the evolution of kids T-shirts in India, Venkta says, "Kids T-shirts category has evolved from basic to fashion. As per age group, kids in the 0-12 year group are demanding more funky and quirky designs. However, as these kids cross 12 years, they



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- **Around 30-40 per cent of the kidswear market is dominated by T-shirts**
- **Indian kids wear market is more experimental in terms of bold prints and colors**
- **Domestic players are performing better as they are experimenting more**
- **Indian fashion retail is shifting from unorganised to organized retail**
- **T-shirt licensing helps brands achieve higher brand positioning in global market**
- **Kidswear market is likely to almost triple in the next five years**

opt for more premium clothes, where fabric and styling takes priority." Ritu Ajbani, Co-founder, Petit Royal points out, "The T-shirts market has evolved from plain to graphic, vintage and personalised. The segment is more experimental in terms of bold prints

and colors compared to the global market where they are happier with basic colors and subtle prints."

The kid segment is ideal for innovations, feels Ramchandani. Personalised T-shirts are the latest market trends. In terms of



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styles, V-neck and long sleeve T-shirts are gaining popularity. “The T-shirt category also has a futuristic approach.

It is a canvas for upcoming trends and ideas. Glow in the dark, neon, LED, artificial intelligence, heat sensitive hyper color T-shirts are likely to be some of the upcoming trends in this category,” notes Venka. In terms of fabrics, organic cotton has become very popular.

Domestic players have an edge

The kids apparel market is growing rapidly and trends in the market are changing fast. “Changing consumption patterns of Indian households and growing preference for ready to wear is boosting market growth,” adds Venka. “The Indian fashion retail industry is witnessing a shift from unorganised to organized retail. Penetration of corporate retail is not limited to metros and Tier-I cities only but is also growing in semi-urban markets,” he further states.

The kids wear market offers scope for all players. Both national and international players are involved in this segment. “Domestic players are performing better growth and market positioning as they are experimenting more than global players,” notes Ajbani. Moreover, international players need to realise the cultural difference between them and Indian players. They need to recognise that the Indian way of life and living is unique and self-germinating, with ideas and emotions,” adds Ramchandani. Currently growth is more in the super premium and premium categories as consumers are willing to pay a premium for customising their clothes according to their personalities. “Prices in this segment range from Rs 800 to Rs 5,000. Boys in the age group 1 to 3 years have a larger share as parents don’t mind spending big amounts on them at this age especially first time mothers,” informs Ajbani.

Licensing issues

An emerging trend in this category is licensed T-shirts. Superheroes and Disney characters call the shots in this trend. “However, license business only makes sense if all aspects for licensor and licensee are in place,” notes Ramchandani. “Also licensing doesn’t lead to extra premium T-shirts, it helps brands achieve higher brand positioning in global market,” adds Venka.



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With the fashion industry all over the world supporting this industry, the market for kids’ wear is likely to almost triple in the next five years. Ajbani feels the segment holds a bright future in India. To tap this growth potential they plan to add new categories like hand painted and graphic printed and hand embroidered T-shirt to their collection. The brand also plans to start an online portal besides exploring new markets. Toonz Retail, plans to expand its retail network across India. As Ramchandani notes, “with a 1.3 billion population, the kids sector will always see sunny days.”

