

Women's T-shirts to grow with changing dress code and comfort factor

With western wear gaining popular among Indian women, demand for T-shirts has seen huge growth. What adds to its appeal is, comfort, pocket-friendly prices and style. The market will continue to grow with more brands entering the fray,

write **Shubhangi Bidwe and Ajay Kumar**

Comfort is a major reason that has made T-shirts acceptable among Indian women. Their multiple usage as day wear, gym/fitness wear, party wear, leisure wear has attracted the urban women towards this segment. Indeed increasing demand for apparels that deal with changing weather conditions besides satiating the customer's need for comfort has caused a significant upsurge in demand. The women's T-shirt segment is growing at a faster rate than ever before due to the comparatively lower market base and increasing acceptance of casual clothing among women. "T-shirts are finding larger space in wardrobes of both men and women. While men's apparel is restricted to shirts and T-shirts, the women's segment includes various categories, hence the pace of growth in this segment is slower," says Sameer Patel, Founder & Chairman, Deal Jeans.

- **There is distinct shift in shopping patterns of women from formal to casual**
- **Women's T-shirt segment is growing at a faster rate than ever before**
- **T-shirts are available in varied neck styles like V-neck, boat neckline, etc.**
- **Women's knitwear growing at around 34 per cent in total knitwear market**
- **Super premium brands are more popular among urban upper class women**
- **Middle class still prefer pocket-friendly options in tees**
- **Non-branded market is more cost efficient**

Modern women focus more on comfort clothing. With western wear taking a large space of Indian women's closet even in smaller cities, demand for T-shirt has grown. "Increasing participation of women in the workforce, flexible dress codes, changing preferences are the key factors driving demand amongst women," adds Patel.

Demand drivers and pricing issues

Knitwear fabrics are comfortable, stretchable, and easy to care. Being moisture absorbent, they are apt for sports and yoga wear. "With changing time, consumer's tastes and preferences are evolving. The emergence of new categories such as athleisure, gym wear, yoga wear, comfort wear, etc, has lured many brands/retailers to cater to this market," adds Jain. "One of the prime benefits of knitwear is that it perfectly suits Indian climate. Hence, the knitwear market in India is gaining share in Indian fashion retail," Patel explains.

Growing at 9 per cent, the knitwear market

is expected to reach Rs 150 crore over the next decade. "Out of this, women's category is around 34 per cent," notes Patel. "Primary factors driving growth are increasing adaptation of casual wear by Indian women, an increase in working women and rising fashion consciousness among rural women. The knitwear segment will continue to grow due to a rise in disposable income, upgradation in standard of living and the emergence of startups with flexible dress codes," he adds.

The average price of women's T-shirt ranges between Rs 499 to Rs 799. But, depending upon the brand's position it can go up to Rs 1,999. "Women don't mind



Sandeep Jain,
Executive Director,
Monte Carlo

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 Founder & Chairman,
 Deal Jeans

“Trends in the T-shirt category are changing with Bollywood. Travel themed tees gaining popularity.”

picking up a super premium brand as well,” states Guneet Singh, Director, Juelle. “However, when it comes to bulk buying they don’t buy T-shirts costing Rs 1,500 for day to day wear. For specific occasions or evening wear or party wear, super premium brands are preferred.” In fact, super premium brands are more popular among the upwardly mobile women while regular middle class prefers casual fast fashion concepts. “With growing Indian middle class, demand for moderately priced branded



Amit Jain,
 Director, Shingora

“With easy return policies, customers do not hesitate to try out different products. And since reviews are also mentioned, it provides clarity about the product.”



T-shirts is increasing,” observes Singh.

However, even though premium and super premium brands have seen good traction among women consumers, the fact remains it's the unorganized branded player who still has larger market share. “Coping with ever evolving trends requires steadiness. To suffice this huge demand partly backed by pricing factors, non-branded market hold slow pace but high volume sales. This market is more cost efficient for fashion conscious people,” adds Patel.

Growth in online retail

As online retail has gained ground in fashion retail, the T-shirt segment has seen sales growth. Some major reasons are: increasing penetration of internet, technological advancements and rapid communication to drive adaptation of western wear. “The increase in number of smartphone users, higher convenience, affordability factor and variety of products offered will speed up growth of online retail in T-shirt. Rising preferences for online shopping and the launch of innovative sale concepts like flash sales and daily deals is expected to drive the online T-shirt market,” adds Patel.

New Age customers always face a time crunch and hence, prefer online shopping. Moreover, online retailers always offer running discounts throughout the year. Amit Jain of Shingora points out online retail is



a boom not only for knitwear but all types of textile businesses. “With easy return policies, customers do not hesitate to try out different products. And since reviews are also mentioned, it provides clarity about the product,” he sums up.

Shift in trends and styles

Sandeep Jain, Executive Director, Monte Carlo feels, no other outfit is as simple and as comfortable as the T-shirt. “Although T-shirts are a basic piece of clothing, they are available in varied neck styles like V-neck, boat neck, etc. Collars too have a huge variety like basic, Peter Pan, Chinese and high neck. Price points of T-shirts vary from brand to brand but basic and average starts from Rs 500 onwards.”

There is distinct shift in the shopping pattern of women from formal to casual. Increasing urbanisation has led to more women shopping for western wear. “Trends in the T-shirts are also changing with Bollywood and travel-themed tees gaining popularity,” adds Patel. Also in demand are neutral palette tees, type centric tees and foil prints.



Guneet Singh,
 Director, Juelle

“When it comes to bulk buying women don’t prefer a Rs 1,500 tee for day to day wear.”