

**Westernwear to get more popular with Indian women**

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The Indian fashion industry has been witnessing an impressive growth over the past few years. With over 20 percent of Indian women joining the workforce, the women's Westernwear category has grown steadily, coupled with the fact that India is getting younger and the country's youth is increasingly dressing the same as their counterparts across the globe.

Discussing the various aspects of this growth and its future, a session titled "The Global and the Desi: Which way is Womenswear in India Going?" and moderated by Amit Bagaria, Chairman, ASIPAC, was held on the second day of India Fashion Forum 2012 in Mumbai.

The session explored the critical question: whether Westernwear is eating into the Indianwear market, or is that the Indian consumer is chasing both Indian and Western

brands to make their wardrobe eclectic? Prominent personalities from the fashion retail business discussed the future of the Indian womenswear segment. These included Amit Jain, CEO, Shingora; Anant Daga, CEO, TCNS Clothing Company; Asheet Chhabra, Head--Business Development, Chhabra 555; Manish Saxena, Entrepreneur and Advisor, Tommy Hilfiger India; Salil Nair, COO, Shoppers Stop; Samir Sahni, Director, RituWears BigLife; Siddharath Bindra, MD, BIBA Apparels; Vikas Purohit, COO, Planet Retail; and Vineet Gautam, Country Head, Bestseller.

The participants were of the view that the present share of women's Indianwear, which forms 80 percent of the total apparel market, is likely to go down in the near future. With changing trends and global influences, today's women prefer to create their own ensemble. They like to mix and match to create their own new looks. "This is a primary reason why the sale of dupattas is going down," said Daga of TCNS Clothing Company. Jain of Shingora however was of the view that the market has also witnessed the growing trend of duppatta being replaced by stoles and scarves.

Sahni of RituWears BigLife said: "In the present day scenario, the distribution of men versus women clothes is 70:30. Therefore, the industry needs to have a more balanced distribution network." The panelists were of the general opinion that more exclusive and multi-brand outlets for womenwear are required to balance the equation.

The Indianwear market is largely dominated by small manufacturers and the need of the hour for them is to create their own brand identity and establish it in the consumer's mind. For example, there are no sari brands in India despite the country being a huge market for them. The panelists were of the view that small manufacturers need to develop a better succession process so that their brand continues to exist and evolve even after the founder or entrepreneur has moved on.