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# CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	<b>TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING</b> <i>SAUD AHMED KHAN &amp; WAN KHAIRUZZAMAN WAN ISMAIL</i>	1
2.	<b>PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN INDIA – WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UTTAR PRADESH</b> <i>DR. CHANCHAL CHAWLA &amp; DR. VIPIN JAIN</i>	7
3.	<b>USING ANT LION ALGORITHM FOR PORTFOLIO OPTIMIZATION ON THE BASIS OF TIME PERIOD OF INVESTMENT</b> <i>KSHMA KAUSHAL &amp; SUKHDEV SINGH</i>	10
4.	<b>SAVINGS BEHAVIOR IN UNAKOTI DISTRICT OF TRIPURA: A CASE STUDY</b> <i>SUKHARANJAN DEBNATH &amp; PRALLAD DEBNATH</i>	14
5.	<b>MONEY AND OUTPUT: IMPACT ON PRICE LEVEL IN INDIA DURING 1970-71 TO 2012-13</b> <i>M. MANIKANDAN, DR. N. MANI &amp; DR. P. KARTHIKEYAN</i>	19
6.	<b>ROLE OF CUSTOMER RETENTION STRATEGIES IN RETAILING SECTOR</b> <i>DR. K.V.S.N. JAWAHAR BABU &amp; S. KALESHA MASTHANVALI</i>	25
7.	<b>GENDER DIVERSITY: WOMEN ON BOARD AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY</b> <i>DR. D. RAJASEKAR</i>	27
8.	<b>GLOCAL FASHION: IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN GARMENT AND TEXTILE SECTOR</b> <i>DR. MINAKSHI JAIN</i>	31
9.	<b>SUCCESSFUL ATTRIBUTES OF FINANCIAL SERVICES TARGETED FOR WOMEN CUSTOMERS</b> <i>PREETI AGARWAL GARG, DR. MANISHA GOEL &amp; DR. RINKU SANJEEV</i>	35
10.	<b>PILGRIMAGE TOURISM IN THE REALM OF FOREIGN TRADE CONCERNING ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR (A CASE STUDY OF KANGLA SHRINE)</b> <i>DR. N. TEJMANI SINGH &amp; CHINGLEN PUKHRAMBAM</i>	39
11.	<b>CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN INDIA &amp; THE LAW</b> <i>DR. FAIZANUR RAHMAN</i>	44
12.	<b>A REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES IN INDIA</b> <i>DR. P. GURAVAIAH</i>	49
13.	<b>WEST BENGAL FINANCIAL CORPORATION: THE REGIONAL LEADER IN FINANCING TO MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSME): A CRITICAL EVALUATION</b> <i>SRI SUSANTA KANRAR</i>	54
14.	<b>CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OR DISSATISFACTION SURVEY ON BANKING SECTOR AFTER INCREASE OF SERVICE CHARGES FROM 01-04-2017</b> <i>SUDIREDDY NARENDAR REDDY</i>	60
15.	<b>ATTRITION IN GARMENT INDUSTRIES: A STUDY FROM HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PARADIGM</b> <i>WASEEHA FIRDOSE</i>	66
16.	<b>GROWTH AND CHALLENGES IN RETAILING: AN INDIAN EXPERIENCE</b> <i>S.R. NAKATE</i>	72
17.	<b>LEADERSHIP STYLES ACROSS ORGANISATIONAL TYPES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL ORGANISATION</b> <i>MADHUSMITA SAHOO &amp; BHAKTA BANDHU DASH</i>	75
18.	<b>EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE</b> <i>ARUNA ADARSH &amp; ROOPESH KUMAR B</i>	83
19.	<b>INFLUENCE OF VARIOUS ASPECTS ON THE CHOICE OF INVESTMENT INSTRUMENTS BY THE HOUSEHOLDS</b> <i>NC RAGHAVI CHAKRAVARTHY</i>	88
20.	<b>THE ROLE OF SFCs IN THE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH OF THE STATES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE OF DELHI FINANCIAL CORPORATION</b> <i>LACHHMAN SINGH RAWAT</i>	94
	<b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK &amp; DISCLAIMER</b>	98

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## GLOBAL FASHION: IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN GARMENT AND TEXTILE SECTOR

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**CHOMU**

### ABSTRACT

*With the expansion of western colonialism and development of foreign trades, Indian fashion has been continually improving to perfection. There has been both positive and negative impact of globalization on social and cultural values in India. globalization is providing new panorama of dressing up as well as employment and thereby bringing happiness in the lives. The fusion of various fashions and styles, multiplicity of apparel fashion is enriching the cultural heritage of this country. When global fashion becomes the local, it is referred as "glocalization". A beautiful synthesis of traditional and western costumes is emerging as the new style statement of Indian youth. India is a developing economy, with a growing population of youth and technological advancement, which is opening doors for newer and diversified trends in wardrobe. Increase in the number of shopping malls, advent of brands, popularity of designer clothing, boom in the number of fashion institutes, initiation of fashion shows, boutiques, emergence of fashion houses, globalization of Indian attire, use of synthetic fibers, improvement in professional management skills, rising demand for readymade garments, availability of superior quality at rational value, high competitiveness, installation of new technology in garment and textile production, sustainable and ethical consumerism, fair trade - supply chain transparency, eco-friendly fashion and green wardrobe, use and throw concept are the major impact of globalization on Indian garment and textile sector. All these arenas have their own distinctive influence – good or bad - on Indian society and fashion industry.*

### KEYWORDS

eco-friendly fashion, fair trade, globalization, glocalization, sustainable consumerism.

### JEL CODE

M (Business Administration and Business Economics; Marketing; Accounting; Personnel Economics)

### INTRODUCTION

Indian fashion industry has a long history of its richness of styles and trends. It embraces the stories of various cyclic and non-cyclic changes. The panorama of Indian fashion has always proceeded ahead and evolved incessantly. Its fruition has been aided by a mixture of diverse influences and invasion of India – foreign traders, Greek and Islamic invasion and then Western colonialism. However, Indian fashion industry has the unique characteristic of absorbing and transforming foreign influences into something that is so Indian that it is tough to recognize its origin. In the present times, our fashion industry is mainly influenced by customer choices and globalization of Indian economy.

Indian economy had experienced major policy changes in early 1990s. The new economic reform, popularly known as, Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG model) aimed at making the Indian economy as fastest growing economy and globally competitive. The series of reforms undertaken with respect to industrial sector, trade as well as financial sector aimed at making the economy more efficient (Malik). Socialization of people for improving business and financial activities across the globe can be referred as globalization. In essence, it refers to increased possibilities for action between and among people in situations irrespective of geographical considerations as per the definition of social theorists. Developed countries have been trying to pursue developing countries to liberalize the trade and allow more flexibility in business policies to provide equal opportunities to multinational firms in their domestic market. International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank helped them in this endeavour. Liberalization began to hold its foot on barren lands of developing countries like India by means of reduction in excise duties on electronic goods in a fixed time frame. Indian government did the same and liberalized the trade and investment due to the pressure from World Trade Organization (Sankar, 2006).

The initiation and development of globalization and Indian textile industry took place simultaneously in the 1990s. The Indian textile industry, until the economic liberalization of Indian economy was predominantly an unorganized industry. The process of globalization and Indian textile industry development was the effect of rapid acceptance of 'open market' policy by the developing countries, much in the lines of the developed countries of the world (business.mapsofindia.com, 2011).

The clothing-textiles value chain has historically played an important role in the process of industrialization and is generally regarded as being a potential first step for developing countries embarking on an industrialization path. This clothing-textiles value chain has become increasingly globalized (Morris and Barnes, 2009). Wide scale impact of Globalization resulted in increase in Indian imports from the west, which in turn, also made it easier for Indians to keep a track on the latest fashion clothes and accessories ruling the Western men and women's wear market. Incidentally, Indian fashion industry has been drawing even western buyers. Needless to say, the fashion fraternity in India have willingly adopted western designs keeping in mind both the Indian and western sensibilities. In addition, the Indian designers embrace western fashion industry to such an extent that they like to adapt the social and cultural changes and western lifestyles as well.

There has been both positive and negative impact of globalization on social and cultural values in India. There is no denying of the fact that globalization has brought cheers to people's life by opening new vistas of employment. It has also made inroads in the cultural heritage of this country. About the impact of globalization, in particular on the development of India, the ILO Report (2004) stated: In India, there had been winners and losers. The lives of the educated and the rich had been enriched by globalization.

### GLOBALIZATION

Friedman (1999) defines healthy glocalization as "...the ability of a culture, when it encounters other strong cultures, to absorb influences that naturally fit into and can enrich the culture, to resist those things that are truly alien, and to compartmentalize those things that, while different, can nevertheless be enjoyed and celebrated as different". Glocalization, then, seems to be the art of attaining a fine balance of assimilating foreign influences into a society that add to its diversity without overwhelming it.

Although there has been a surge of foreign products that have become available in the past decade, Indian consumers are still negotiating their choices in this new environment. Indian consumers are typically described as currently in a state of tension (Mazzarella, 2003). Although the caste system no longer exists, it has evolved into a social system almost as rigid. Indian consumers use consumption of newly available products to reinforce these deeply ingrained notions of social distinction within Indian society. In addition, the Indian consumer has been characterized as sophisticated and savvy, even when rural and illiterate. All of these characterizations imply that Indian consumers are active in seeking choices in the marketplace, making the Indian context an ideal one in which to explore consumer agency issues vis-à-vis globalization (Eckhardt and Mahi, 2004). Indian fashion wear has been constantly evolving, with the expansion of western colonialism and development of foreign trades and Greek and Islamic invasions. However, the forte of Indian fashion industry lies in its free-wheeling nature that incorporates anything exotic into integral Indian so much that it is not that easy to sport its origin. Today, the Indian fashion industry is driven by customer choices as well as globalization of Indian economy (Impex, 2010).

Chronicling the various ways in which the consumer approaches consumption decisions in the globalization process has some important implications. When transformation of meaning occurs, what was at first the global becomes the local – “glocalization” occurs. When consumers are allowed to consume in traditional ways, the product ceases to be exotic or foreign, and in fact becomes part of the local scenscape. In India this has happened with western-style clothing. This ‘glocalization’ enables consumers in developing countries to receive the benefits of modern technology, which might include convenience, while still upholding traditional values.

### TODAY’S GLOCALIZED INDIAN CONSUMER

There are many reasons accounting western impact on the Indian apparel and costume industry. As a melting pot of multi ethnic groups, the open-minded culture coupled with cultural diversities of India embrace the whole world in tolerance posture. Each group has its own prominent style and type of dresses and costumes. Indian Fashion designers are known to interweave these diverse fashions and lend an amazing Indian touch to them. Winning of beauty pageants on international platforms, Indian Movies and Overseas Education and employment opportunities are big influencing factor. People of India have a lasting impression on them by watching Indian movies. People blindly follow what the celebrities are wearing in the films. Many of the Indian movies have usage of western patterns in their costumes and this is eventually followed by the Indians. A change has also been brought in the style and lifestyle of Indian youth because of overseas education and employment opportunities available abroad. To make themselves in sync with the western culture, Indians follow the western culture and adjust themselves with the lifestyle of the foreigners.

A theoretical implication of this framework is that opening up economically does not necessarily mean pitting the modern against the traditional, a stance argued by many scholars (Venkatesh and Swamy, 1994). Consumers are able to take something new and incorporate it into their traditions, thus embodying both. In fact, they are able to use modern products to uphold their traditions (i.e., polyester saris make them more affordable, and thus more people can wear them), not simply become more like the West by virtue of their use of these products. Due to globalization consumers have a larger variety of goods to choose from, and hence are eventually better off. Contrary to it, now-a-days consumers seem to be the slaves of multinational offerings.

The fear of loss of cultural identity also allows the consumer to adapt the non-local offering in question (English) to use it in a manner that makes it ‘Indian’, thus effectively glocalizing. Men in urban India wear western clothes to work and suits for formal wear, which is not the case for most women. It can be argued that since traditional Indian clothing styles for men differ by region, the use of western clothing provides a uniformity of clothing style. Consumers evaluate if and to what extent foreign offerings are in line with important underlying local values and ways of interacting. If the offering radically challenges the nature of the social fabric, dismissal occurs. When the foreign offering provides a new medium to uphold traditional values and ways of interacting, the meaning of the offering will be transformed from what the multinational and/or marketer has conceptualized the meaning to be to what is appropriate in the local context (Joy and Ross, 1989). One of the product categories that has gone through great changes in the past ten years and thus is very illuminating in illustrating the acceptance and transformation of product meaning is the fashion industry in India - Use of polyester in saris is evidence of this. Finally, when products do not provide the means for upholding traditional values yet provide novel benefits, they are accepted as foreign and treated as such in the marketplace.

### IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN FASHION SCENARIO

- 1. CROPPING UP OF SHOPPING MALLS:** Number of shopping malls is gradually increasing in India. In the year 1993 Shopper’s Stop was launched as the first retail outlet in India. After this, a number of such malls became perceptible in the major cities in the country. These malls offer an assortment of wide-ranging branded stuff under a single roof. Some of the famous malls of India are Pantaloons, Westside, Lifestyle, Globus, etc. These retail outlets have also launched clothing line under private labels, manufactured and sold by them. The buyer gets an international shopping experience in such retail outlets. There are no nagging sales persons pressurizing the customers to buy. Family stores are becoming hot favorite shopping hub for the middle-class and upper middle class shoppers. These stores sell garments of nearly all age groups and sexes. Apparels of various brands can be found in family stores. They are being considered as one-stop shopping destination. Big Bazaar, V-mart, Maxx, etc are examples of some family stores.
- 2. ADVENT OF BRANDS:** The market of branded garments is growing up in India. More and more people are switching on to branded apparel then non-branded ones as it provide quality assurance. Many national as well as international brands have established themselves in Indian garment industry. Allen solly, Van Heusen, Louis Philipe, Charagh Din, Raymonds, Arrow, etc. are some leading national brands. The branded apparel market saw a boost due to growing denim demand. Many international brands entered the denim industry in India like- Lee, Levi’s, Seven Jeans, Pepe Jeans, etc. But these foreign brands get a tough competition from Indian branded denim manufacturers like Flying Machine, Wrangler, Killer, Numero Uno, etc. Branded clothes have captivated the market of both menswear and women’s wear and slowly catching up in children wear segment. The Indian consumer has become brand conscious, which is a sign of globalization of Indian apparel industry. Branded garments are beginning to occupy Indian retailers’ shelves. The trend is the combination of exclusive brand stores and multi-brand outlets.
- 3. POPULARITY OF DESIGNER CLOTHING:** Recent western influences on clothing and fashion in India have brought about another effect on Indian consumers – it has changed perceptions of what constitutes ‘designer’ clothing in India. Bullis (1997) reports that India has embraced *haute couture*, but with traditional clothing (i.e., the sari or the salwar-kameez). The face of designer clothing in India has changed to adapt western influences where the end product of these western influences is one that is a mix of the East and the West in what is termed ‘fusion fashion’ in India. This style incorporates western styles with Indian fabric (hand-painted trousers); adapts traditional styles to give a western look (Western cut shirts to accompany traditional saris) or is a mix where the lines blur on the East-West divide (Indian-style bead embroidery on a western style shirt). The ‘fusion’ aspect of this trend illustrates the adaptation of influences to indigenize them where the end product is ultimately Indian.
- 4. BOOM IN THE NUMBER OF FASHION INSTITUTES:** Indians have started experimenting with fashion trends and styles; they are all geared up for the international exposure. This fact can be proved by the existence of 80+ odd small and big fashion schools in India. Thousands of designers are produced every year by these institutes. Designers are getting exposure through fashion weeks, here they can show their talent to Indian and foreign audience. These fashion weeks have contributed to the change in style preference especially in women wear. Indo-western or fusion wear is the most preferred manner of dressing gaining popularity globally. Pure traditional outfits are worn on special occasions only. Earlier buying designer wear outfit was a very costly affair and upper class people could only afford them. But now it is possible for the common people to wear designer clothes, this change occurred due to popularity of diffusion of fashion.
- 5. INITIATION OF FASHION SHOWS:** Exhibition of fashion garments and designer costumes by means of fashion shows has become a quite frequent fashion trend in India. In fashion catwalk the models display the collection of designers on ramp. At the start, simple catwalks were common in trend but today many theme-based and speculative fashion shows and fashion weeks are being organized to display the current fashionable attire. These assist in showcasing the coming fashion trends especially for various seasons.
- 6. BOUTIQUES:** Another aspect seen in the changing face of Indian garment industry is the increasing popularity of ‘Boutiques’. A boutique is a small shop or departmental store selling designer, unique and trendy products. A wide range of items can be displayed in a boutique like watches, lingerie, evening wear, sportswear, t-shirts, tuxedos, etc. Boutiques are generally specialty stores. Exclusive designer items can be purchased from such stores. Boutiques are operated both online and offline, this concept is yielding positive outcome for the retailers. Some time back only rich and famous people were customers of such boutiques, but now due to increasing demand of designer outfits more and more fashions stores are opening up.
- 7. EMERGENCE OF FASHION HOUSES:** High profile and eminent fashion designers of India mainly merchandise through their personal boutiques – “Fashion Houses”. Ensemble was the first fashion house of India founded in 1987. As these are designed and marketed by the distinguished designers, the collections available in these outlets have very high price tag and only the rich customers can afford to purchase.

8. **GLOBALIZATION OF INDIAN ATTIRE:** The craze for fashion sari, salwar-kameez, sherwani, etc. is increasing day by day. Even people outside India adore dressing in a designer Indian garments. Indian patterns and designs attract and allure everybody towards our custom and traditions. Embroidered and embellished fashion wear presents the Indian ingenuity and attracts people with their work and designs. Many types of needlework are there in trend since a long time and people love to dress in diverse and eminent Indian embroidery designs.
9. **USE OF SYNTHETIC FIBERS:** According to Joy and Wallendorf (1996), "Cloth and cloth transactions acquire meaning because they symbolize status, they record changes in status, and they transform the moral and physical bearing of the wearer". Gandhiji encouraged Indians to purchase Indian-made clothing to support the Indian economy at the time of independence from Britain. Now, as non-native fabrics such as those made up of synthetic fibers are becoming more and more popular in India. It is becoming quite popular to buy traditional garments such as saris in non-indigenous fabrics such as polyester. However, these garments are preferred with traditional colors and prints, which suggest that the incorporation process is guided by acceptable cultural norms and principles rather than mere emulation. Further, although polyester is used for day-to-day activities, it is not acceptable for ritual activities. This implies a rejection of western influences on clothing in more traditional settings but an acceptance of the same in more modern settings, thus allowing the consumer to slip in and out of modernity at will using fabric/clothing to do so.
10. **IMPROVEMENT IN PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS:** In professionally managed companies Benchmarking, Human Resource Development, best management practices, and quality certifications have started gaining importance in the textile industry. These influence a variety of customers in various ways and the dealers as well. The skilled managers are able to meet the problems in production and distribution efficiently.
11. **RISING DEMAND FOR READYMADE GARMENTS:** There has been an increase in demand of readymade garments, because today's customers have rising financial status along with higher expending capacity and willingness. High and middle income groups now days prefer readymade garments as compared to the customary tailor made outfits. Shortage of time, appearance, fitting, finishing and readiness to wear are some of the factors behind the popularity of readymade garments.
12. **SUPERIOR QUALITY AT RATIONAL VALUE:** Due to globalization, the textile industry has shown some signs building competitiveness not only in terms of price but also in terms of quality. To make their identity in the globally competitive fashion industry, the domestic manufacturers have focus on to check the outflow of local customers towards foreign brands. Therefore, some big production houses are providing good quality fashion products in a price range affordable for a large number of Indian customers.
13. **HIGH COMPETITIVENESS:** Garment retail sector is increasingly becoming competitive. With globalization aided by WTO agreements on increased market access, the number of international brands is on the increase. The emerging trend is that the brands are becoming paramount importance and companies that build brands successfully are gaining advantages in the market place. As customers get more knowledgeable, product differentiation is becoming more difficult. Building regional markets across the country (not just concentrate on metros) through franchise programmes and distributorship arrangements taking place.
14. **INSTALLATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY:** Indian garment producers are now putting in new technology not only for production but also for design, communication and integration of the entire supply chain.
15. **SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL CONSUMERISM:** The concept of sustainable and ethical consumerism is on the rise. Due to the large quantity of products manufactured, used, and disposed of, the textile and apparel industry has a big environmental impact in every phase of product life cycle. Considering all the social and environmental impacts from harvest/processing to waste/reuse is a total mindset shift at the product design and creation level and a key component to sustainable economic development strategies. It's a movement based on purchasing products that have been ethically produced by organizations that are involved in a process of ensuring that the basic labor rights of the employees of their Third World suppliers are respected. It is ought to be remembered that without a sustainable and productive growth of the textile sector, the other types of development in any sphere will be unstable and deceptive.
16. **FAIR TRADE - SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY:** Fair Trade Certification is a market-based model of international trade that benefits over one million farmers and farm workers in developing countries. Fair Trade products have experienced consistent global growth in the 40 percent range over the last few years, making Fair Trade good for business.
17. **ECO-FRIENDLY FASHION AND GREEN WARDROBE:** Inclination of educated Indian consumers towards eco-parameters and eco-labeling, i.e., fabrics / garments that are degradable, compostable, ozone-safe / ozone-friendly, recyclable, free-of and non-toxic, made with renewable materials, made with renewable energy, carbon offsets is increasing rapidly, as they are aware of environmental constraints occurring because of textile production processes and utilization. Consequently, eco-friendly fashion is gaining momentum in an environment-conscious segment of Indian people. Textile Eco-Footprint calculator allows consumers to calculate the environmental impact of their clothing.
18. **USE AND THROW CONCEPT:** Street wear concept developed in west and no doubt is slowly catching up in India as well. Street wear mainly involves low-priced clothes that could be worn a couple of times and then discarded. Street wear is considered economical as opposed to the Indian traditional clothes that involve fine cotton, silk, etc. (Dicosta, 2011). Street wear are produced in bulk and sold at the cheapest rates. But to save our planet it is better to prevent waste than to treat or clean up waste after it is formed.

## CONCLUSION

Indian fashion industry has come at par with international standards. It has become one of the most happening and revenue generating industry of India. The people like to dress in style, which is accepted globally. Dressing has become one of the important aspects of one's identity and personality. A lot of influence of west is seen on the Indian fashion industry though it is manipulated beautifully and seem to be original designs. Modern fashion scenario in India is influenced greatly by western fashion. The local costumes and designs, artwork and crafts are intermingled with western dresses, creating fusion fashion garments. This blend of global and local fashion is widely accepted in India and worldwide. This concept of glocalization is facilitating us the distinct dignity in the modern global world with preserving and nurturing our traditional cultural values in addition.

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