

Fashion Forecast: INDIA Shining

Reminiscing m y
early
years, I must confess that in my teens I had no idea of fashion. It was only much later due to various turns of events in my life that I discovered a passion for designing.

I started designing the men's line and that too not the conventional suits, trousers or shirts. I felt that these conventional attires are too stereotyped and drab. In our eagerness to ape the West, we have lost our way somewhere. I also felt that like women, why couldn't men too embrace colours?

I reinvented the traditional *Kurta* for men, which was always there but had been pushed down in the ladder of preference. I strongly feel that men should not stick to the blacks, grays and browns. Taking this philosophy of mine forward, I started designing *Kurtas* in a myriad of colours. Earlier, no one had imagined wearing a coloured *dhoti* but I experimented with it and slowly that caught on too.

Today, when we look around we find men's shirts with a choice of colours that our fathers could never have imagined. Even some years back would anyone ever imagine wearing a canary yellow shirt? Today the colour barrier or the set colour code is no more. This generation of men has embraced bright colours in their clothing. Red, Orange, Yellow, Lilac and Pink

are no longer considered ladies' colours. Today, colour plays an important part in both men's and women's clothing.

Cut and style is another factor that is gradually gaining appeal. The oriental cuts, say for instance the Chinese collar, have become quite popular. The Indian cut and style has also gained universal appeal. This is apparent in both men's and women's wear around the world.

India has so much to offer in terms of embellishments... weaving or embroidery techniques. There is *bandhni*, *batik*, mirror work, tie and dye - the list is long. These are used on both

men's and women's clothing. A man no longer feels like an alien when he walks in to a party wearing a shirt that has Indonesian *batik* or *chikan* embroidery.

Overall, in terms of trend spotting, I would like to focus on two developments. One, the fashion market will become a global one that transcends geographies and nation states. Two, and more importantly, India and things Indian will enjoy the center stage, not just for ethnic niche but also at a mainstream level. Who knows? We may see Angelina Jolie walking up the red carpet at the Oscar Awards wearing a gown made in Howrah!

Who knows we may see Angelina Jolie walking up the red carpet at the Oscar Awards wearing a gown made in Howrah!



SHARBARI DATTA
FASHION DESIGNER