

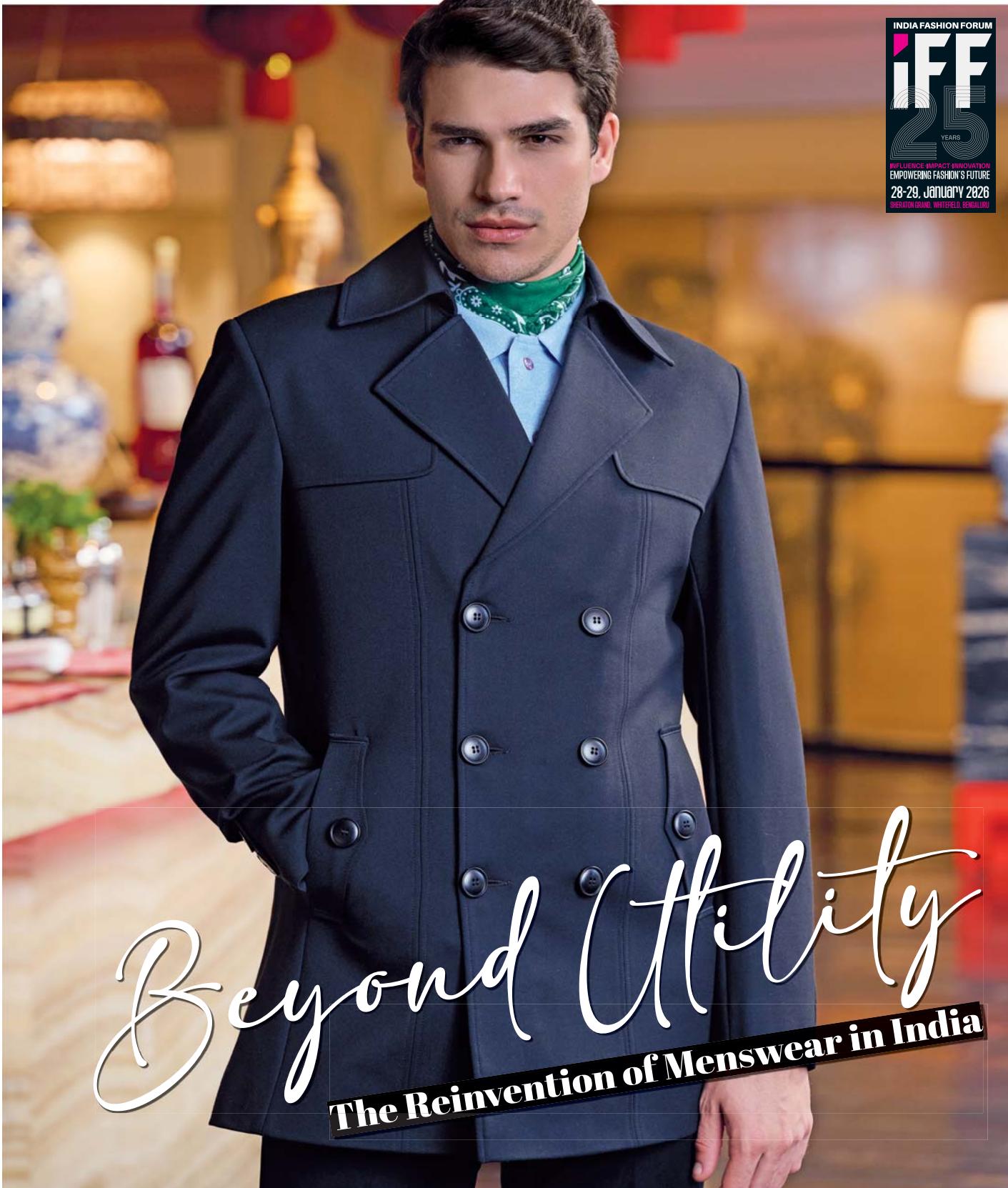
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Beyond Utility
The Reinvention of Menswear in India



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Dear readers,

Men's fashion in India is undergoing one of the most profound evolutions in its history. What was once a space defined by functionality and muted expression has transformed into a vibrant arena of experimentation, aspiration, and cultural confidence. Today's Indian man embraces clothing as a marker of personality, ambition, and lifestyle—ushering in a new era where menswear sits at the forefront of the country's fashion momentum.

A confluence of global exposure, digital influence, and rising incomes has fuelled this shift. The modern shopper is far more informed and discerning, evaluating fabrics, fits, performance attributes, and sustainability with a sharp eye. His wardrobe now stretches far beyond familiar staples: relaxed athleisure, refined smart-casuals, fluid occasionwear, and fashion-forward silhouettes all have a place in his daily rotation. This lifestyle-driven mindset has prompted a seamless blending of categories, making the boundaries between casual, work, and festive dressing almost indistinguishable.

The industry has responded with innovation, agility, and renewed creative ambition. Brands, both homegrown and international are reimagining menswear through hybrid design philosophies, performance textiles, and modular wardrobes tailored to dynamic routines. Stretch fabrics, breathables, wrinkle-free blends, and eco-conscious materials are no longer luxuries but expectations.

Numbers underscore this rise. Menswear has emerged as the single largest pillar of India's apparel sector, commanding nearly 40% of the market and witnessing remarkable post-pandemic rebounds. Smaller cities are powering this growth, driven by digital retail, rising aspirations, and a democratised access to premium fashion.

The future looks even more expansive. Digital-first retail, influencer-led discovery, live commerce, and quick-delivery fashion will shape the next decade, creating an ecosystem where content, community, convenience, and commerce merge. With projections pointing to a market nearly quadrupling by 2032, Indian menswear is not just growing—it is redefining the cultural fabric of modern male identity.



Amitabh Taneja

FROM FORMAL TO FLUID

CHARTING A DECADE OF

MENSWEAR

GROWTH IN INDIA



The Indian menswear market growth is underpinned by a combination of demographic scale, evolving lifestyle preferences, and the seamless convergence of offline and online retail experiences.

Madhulika Tiwari, Partner & Parmesh Chopra,
Head Content Writer, The Knowledge Company

The Indian menswear market represents the largest and most established segment within the country's apparel industry, contributing close to 40% of total apparel consumption by value. Once defined by formal shirts, trousers, and value-driven dressing, the segment has evolved into a multifaceted ecosystem that now embraces casualwear, activewear, ethnicwear, and digitally native fashion. This transformation, accelerated by the pandemic, reflects broader socio-economic and behavioural shifts in how Indian men perceive, purchase, and wear clothing.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic served as a structural reset. As offices, events, and travel came to a standstill, men's wardrobes evolved from being occasion-centric to **comfort-oriented and versatile**. The dominance of formalwear gave way to

hybrid categories such as chinos, polos, and denims, while work-from-home culture made loungewear and activewear essential. Even after normalcy returned, these habits persisted, creating a durable preference for functionality, fit, and ease of movement over conventional formality.

India's demographic profile reinforces this long-term opportunity. With over 360 million men between the ages of 15 and 44, India's male population forms one of the world's largest active fashion-consuming cohorts. This generation is not only digitally connected but also culturally expressive and brand-aware, treating fashion as an extension of individuality and lifestyle. Rapid urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, and expanding access to digital retail have made style more inclusive – bridging the gap between aspiration and affordability.

DECODING THE FUTURE MAN: MENSWEAR

S/S 27 STRATEGY

For menswear, this season, purpose takes center stage as brands are moving beyond aesthetics to create designs that resonate with emotion and everyday values.

By Puneet Dudeja, Director, Business Development- South Asia, WGSN

The future of menswear isn't about tearing up the rulebook — it's about rewriting it with intention. For S/S 27, the story is one of evolution, not revolution. As men navigate an increasingly complex world, they're seeking clothes that do more — pieces that balance optimism with practicality, comfort with expression, and sustainability with sincerity.

This season, purpose is the new power move. The challenge for brands isn't just to create what looks good, but what feels right — designs that earn their place in the wardrobe and align with shifting lifestyles and values.

WGSN's S/S 27 menswear forecast is built around three defining narratives: Kintentional, Geo-Logic, and Empowered Play — each offering a roadmap for creativity, commercial opportunity, and long-term relevance.

Kintentional: The Rise of Personalised Utility

At its heart, Kintentional celebrates kinship, craft, and community — a move away from disposable fashion toward clothes that carry meaning. This is about authenticity: pieces that feel lived-in, well-loved, and built to last.

Design Focus: Versatility leads. Every product must justify its space — able to move fluidly between work, leisure, and downtime. Expect a softer approach to structure, with relaxed tailoring, tactile finishes, and subtle cultural detailing that speak to shared identity rather than spectacle. The new uniform is intentional, grounded, and emotionally resonant.





BEYOND UTILITY: The Reinvention of Menswear in India

The Indian menswear market growth is underpinned by a combination of demographic scale, evolving lifestyle preferences, and the seamless convergence of offline and online retail experiences.

Sandeep Kumar



Stylox Fashion

Sets Bold Expansion Drive; From B2B Roots to 500 Stores by FY30

Stylox plans to open 100 stores annually, targeting 500 outlets by FY30, focusing on India's booming Tier 2 and 3 markets.

Sandeep Kumar

Urugram-based Stylox Fashion, one of India's fastest-growing denim and casualwear brands, is charting an ambitious new chapter in its growth story. With active operations starting in 2019, Ritika and Vishal Mehra have steered the brand to become a strong player in menswear landscape, growing a franchise-first network of 50 stores across North India.

Stylox was founded with a simple yet powerful vision to create a denim brand that offers premium quality and style without the premium price tag. Recognising a gap in the market where affordable brands often compromise on quality and premium brands remain inaccessible, the founders aimed to cater to young, ambitious men who value both style and practicality. Originally built on a B2B foundation, Stylox is now transitioning toward direct consumer engagement, establishing its presence on leading e-commerce platforms like Myntra, Amazon, Flipkart, Ajio, and Styli (UAE), alongside its own website, Stylox.in. This shift underscores the brand's commitment to deepening customer relationships and enhancing accessibility, both nationally and internationally. More than just a jeans brand, Stylox stands for attitude, aspiration, and empowerment — for customers and business partners alike. Now, Stylox is setting its sights higher with plans to open 100 new stores every year and reach 500 outlets by FY30, primarily targeting Tier 2 and 3 cities where value-driven fashion is thriving.

The brand's growth momentum received a major boost after securing ₹3 crore in funding from the Fashion Entrepreneur Fund (FEF), following its impactful pitch on the fashion reality show Pitch To Get Rich on Jio Hotstar. This investment marks a turning point for Stylox, enabling it to strengthen its retail network, expand inventory, and accelerate its D2C transformation. With a clear focus on doubling revenue and scaling, Stylox Fashion is poised to redefine affordable menswear retail in India's next growth phase.

As co-founders Ritika Mehra and Vishal Mehra emphasise, "Ultimately, Stylox isn't just about jeans; it's about building a brand that stands for attitude, aspiration, and empowerment for both our customers and our business partners."

Arrow

Leads a New Style Shift with AutoPress Shirts and AutoFlex Trousers

Supported by a strong retail presence with over 200 exclusive stores and more than 1,000 multi-brand outlets across 109 cities, Arrow continues to shape how Indian men dress for work, leisure, and celebration.

Sandeep Kumar



With a legacy spanning 174 years, Arrow stands as one of the most iconic names in menswear, both globally and in India. Founded in 1851 and introduced to the Indian market in 1993, the brand has long been synonymous with sharp dressing, impeccable craftsmanship, and a distinctly American heritage that defined the modern professional's wardrobe. From pioneering innovations such as the detachable collar to revolutionising workwear with wrinkle-free formal shirts, Arrow has consistently set benchmarks in shirt-making and tailoring excellence.

In India, Arrow's influence extends far beyond the boardroom. While it built its reputation as the go-to brand for refined formalwear, its evolution mirrors the changing aspirations of the Indian man. Today, Arrow offers a comprehensive lifestyle wardrobe that spans crisp formal shirts, structured blazers, tailored trousers, elevated occasionwear, and a fast-growing smart-casual range designed for contemporary living. This shift from a pure formalwear authority to a versatile lifestyle brand marks one of Arrow's most significant milestones.

At the heart of this transformation is the brand's commitment to innovation; seen in performance-led fabrics like AutoPress wrinkle-free shirts and AutoFlex stretch trousers that blend comfort, style, and utility. Supported by a strong retail presence with over 200 exclusive stores and more than 1,000 multi-brand outlets across 109 cities, Arrow continues to shape how Indian men dress for work, leisure, and celebration.

As fashion sensibilities evolve, Arrow's ability to balance heritage with modernity keeps it deeply relevant. It remains a trusted companion for men who value elegance and consistency, while its refreshed lifestyle positioning ensures it speaks to a new generation seeking effortless sophistication.

*Speaking exclusively to IMAGES Business of Fashion, **Anand Aiyer, CEO, Arrow (Business Unit)** sheds light on Arrow's enduring heritage while exploring how India's menswear landscape has transformed, touching upon the most relevant trends and market developments.*

Menswear retail is becoming more experimental. How is Arrow adapting to trends like gender-neutral fashion, elevated basics, or occasion-driven dressing?

At Arrow, we've taken a strategic call to move from being a pure-play formalwear brand to a modern menswear lifestyle brand. Our portfolio now spans formalwear, smart casuals and occasion wear so elevated basics, transitional styles and event-ready dressing are already a big focus.

For example, one previous campaign, 'Every Special Moment Deserves an Arrow', with Hrithik Roshan spotlighted the versatility of wardrobe staples, wrinkle-free shirts, knit blazers and tied into the idea that every moment, personal or professional, deserves stylish dressing. And our latest campaign, 'Tailored for the Good Life' with Vedang

rock.it

Sets Sights on Global Growth with AI and Community Focus

Key innovations like convertible clothing, multi-utility cargo pants, and jackets engineered for diverse weather conditions from PolarTech thermal layers to CoolTech fabrics and reversible outerwear; enhance rock.it's adaptability across environments.

Sandeep Kumar

Launched in 2017, rock.it, the athleisure and activewear sub-brand from Monte Carlo, embodies the spirit of movement and modern living. Built on the philosophy of 'Own It. Donn It. rock.it,' the brand bridges performance and style, offering apparel that moves effortlessly with you. From sleek activewear and track essentials to everyday comfort wear, rock.it caters to the new-age consumer seeking functionality without compromising on fashion. Leveraging Monte Carlo's strong manufacturing legacy and retail reach, rock.it has rapidly carved a niche in India's growing active lifestyle market—where confidence, comfort, and contemporary design come together to empower every individual to perform and look their best.

In an exclusive interaction with *IMAGES Business of Fashion*, Rishabh Oswal, Executive Director, Monte Carlo Fashions Ltd. talks about how rock.it is redefining what it means to dress for movement; merging technical innovation with everyday comfort and a mindset rooted in active living.

The athleisure market is evolving beyond activewear into a lifestyle statement. How is rock.it interpreting this shift, on grounds of performance, everyday comfort, and cultural mindset?



Rishabh Oswal
Executive Director,
Monte Carlo Fashions Ltd.

“rock.it incorporates UV-protective fabrics that safeguard the skin outdoors, along with anti-bacterial properties that maintain long-lasting freshness. Wrinkle-free constructions make the clothing travel-friendly and office-appropriate, eliminating the need for constant maintenance. **”**



rock.it sees athleisure not just as clothing but as a reflection of today's active, expressive, and comfort driven lifestyle. 'All Day, Anywhere, Anytime'; we interpret this motif by blending high performance functionality with everyday versatility- pieces. The focus is on creating apparel that complements physical activity while still offering the ease and confidence needed for daily routines.

Soft fabrics that elevate comfort and well-being, with performance-engineered constructions that enable movement whenever the moment demands. In essence, rock.it interprets the shift as a cultural transition toward attire that reflects identity while empowering life in motion.

How is rock.it designing for this fluid (work, travel, and leisure) lifestyle?

rock.it is redefining the fluid lifestyle of work, travel, and leisure through its Work-Ath range, designed to move seamlessly between performance and everyday wear. The brand integrates tech-advanced fabrics such as 4-way stretch nylon and wrinkle-free blends that ensure all-day comfort and versatility. Key innovations like convertible clothing, multi-utility cargo pants, and jackets engineered for diverse weather conditions—from PolarTech thermal layers to CoolTech fabrics and reversible outerwear—allow adaptability across environments. Whether it's a meeting, a flight, or a weekend hike, every piece is designed to deliver comfort, function, and style without compromise.

DUKE

Established in 1966 in Ludhiana, Punjab, DUKE Fashions (India) Ltd. has grown from a homegrown menswear label into one of India's most trusted and admired lifestyle brands. With nearly six decades of heritage, DUKE has mastered the art of combining international design sensibilities with Indian comfort and functionality. Today, the brand enjoys a robust retail presence with over 400 Exclusive Brand Outlets (EBOs) and a network of 2,000+ Multi-Brand Outlets (MBOs) across the country, earning numerous industry awards and customer accolades along the way.

Having evolved into a comprehensive family fashion brand, DUKE now caters to men, women, and kids—mirroring India's



Komal Kumar Jain
Chairman, Duke Fashions India Ltd.

“Through advanced data insights, we tailor merchandise assortments for regional preferences and consumer behaviour. Online, DUKE's digital platforms use recommendation engines to enhance customer journeys, while in-store touchpoints focus on creating personalised styling assistance and curated product displays. **”**



dynamic shift toward accessible, stylish, and comfortable everyday fashion. The modern DUKE consumer is younger, more informed, and increasingly conscious about both quality and sustainability, pushing the brand to innovate in design and materials.

In menswear, DUKE continues to lead with strong categories such as T-shirts, shirts, sweatshirts, jackets, and sweaters, while the next growth frontier lies in athleisure, premium casualwear, and multi-occasion clothing. With comfort and versatility at its core, DUKE remains steadfast in its mission to deliver value-driven, trend-forward apparel for India's evolving lifestyle landscape.

Adapting to the New-Age Menswear Aesthetic

DUKE's design strategy emphasises versatility and inclusivity. The collections focus on elevated essentials, athleisure-inspired casualwear, and occasion-ready styles, allowing consumers to effortlessly transition from work to leisure. While maintaining the brand's masculine DNA, DUKE continues to experiment with modern silhouettes, neutral palettes, and functional fabrics that appeal to diverse lifestyles.

Crafting Individuality: Personalisation as the New Luxury
Personalisation is a key pillar of Duke's

VLSM

Building Stronger Regional Alliances for a Future-Ready Fashion Ecosystem

From a humble 1979 trading start, VLSM evolved into an integrated textile innovator with global reach.

Sandeep Kumar



Vishnu Laxmi Silk Mills (VLSM) provides the best range of poly/viscose fabrics like, suiting fabrics, specialised TR fabrics, shirts fabrics, cotton fabric, kurta fabric, lycra fabrics, wool blended fabrics, linens fabrics & mens cotton trouser fabric with effective & timely delivery.

VLSM's journey began in Kalbadevi, Mumbai in 1979 from a trading-driven business into a fully integrated textile manufacturer. Setting up the Tarapur production unit in 2004 was a turning point, allowing them to take full control of quality and innovation. In 2018, it entered the export market, expanding the presence as a leading producer for blended fabrics. More recently, it launched its ready-to-wear garment line.



GEN Z & MILLENNIALS

Redefining Fashion Consumption In India

Organised players leveraging technology, sustainable practices, and consumer insights are composed to capture the next wave of growth in India's apparel segments.

Ramesh Agarwal, Whole-Time Director, Rupa & Company Ltd.

India's innerwear and knitwear markets are at an exciting crossroads, driven by the evolving tastes of Gen Z and millennials. According to research, the country's innerwear market is projected to reach \$20.5 billion by the next five years, growing at a CAGR of 7.6% from 2024 to 2030. [<https://www.grandviewresearch.com/horizon/outlook/innerwear-market/india>] But this growth is about more than just numbers; it's a reflection of how consumers are rethinking comfort, style, and self-expression, starting from the layers closest to their skin. As the old adage goes, 'fashion begins from the inside out,' and in today's India, this has never been truer.

These younger generations are rewriting the rulebook. Gen Zs, aged 12 to 27, value self-expression, boldness, and sustainability. They are unafraid to experiment with colours, patterns, and fabrics, seeing innerwear not just as a necessity but as a reflection of their identity. Millennials, aged 28 to 43, on the other hand, are driven by a mix of practicality and style. They prioritise quality, fit, and versatility, seeking pieces that can move seamlessly from home to office, from casual outings to active lifestyles. Together, these two groups are reshaping how manufacturers design, produce, and market this apparel sector in India.



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