



**SMALL SIZES, BIG SHIFTS**  
**Sustainable, Trend-Led Momentum**

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Dear readers,

Once treated as a practical offshoot of adult clothing, kidswear has evolved into one of the most vibrant and resilient segments of India's fashion industry. For brands and retailers, kidswear today represents more than seasonal sales—it offers predictable demand, repeat purchases, and strong emotional connect with consumers, making it a critical pillar of long-term growth in the Indian apparel ecosystem.

Currently, the Indian kidswear market is witnessing sustained momentum, driven by rising disposable incomes, urbanisation, and a new generation of informed, aspirational parents. The category has moved beyond unbranded basics to structured, brand-led offerings across mass, premium, and luxury tiers. While offline retail continues to play a dominant role—especially for fit, touch, and trust—digital channels are rapidly expanding, reshaping how parents discover, compare, and purchase children's clothing. This omnichannel evolution has allowed brands to scale faster and reach deeper into Tier II and III markets.

Trends shaping demand reflect the changing mindset of Indian families. Comfort-first design has become non-negotiable, with cotton-rich, skin-friendly fabrics leading the way. Sustainability is no longer a niche conversation; parents are increasingly seeking safe dyes, durable materials, and responsible sourcing. At the same time, fashion-forward influences—athleisure, character licensing, gender-neutral palettes, and fusion ethnicwear—are gaining traction, driven by children becoming active participants in purchase decisions.

Over time, the kidswear industry has adapted by blending function with storytelling and innovation. Brands are investing in better fabrics, sharper design, and tech-enabled forecasting to reduce waste and improve efficiency. Looking ahead, kidswear in India is set to evolve as a purpose-led, experience-driven category—where comfort, conscience, and creativity define success, positioning it as a cornerstone of the country's apparel growth story.



Amitabh Taneja



# MAJESTIC MAHARAJA

## Turning 90 Years of Values into Retail Momentum

*Brand's 84- year journey with landmark destinations reflect scale, heritage, and an elevated retail experience across Tamil Nadu.*

Sandeep Kumar

Category Watch

**M**aharaja Silks traces its origin to 1936, when Maharaja Textile began as a humble 500 sq. ft. store in Kalavai, built on a strong foundation of quality, trust, and customer commitment. Over the decades, the brand's unwavering focus on authentic fabrics, diverse assortments, and exclusive designs helped it earn the loyalty of generations of customers. Maharaja's legacy and work ethic also became the inspiration behind the success of Seematti, further strengthening its presence in South India's textile landscape.

From a single store, the journey expanded steadily to key cultural centres including Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Ramanathapuram, Thiruvavur, Karaikudi, Trichy and Karaikal. Backed by over 84 years of experience, the brand today operates six direct stores spanning more than 3 lakh sq.

ft., offering an elevated and expansive retail experience.

Rooted in reliability, dedication, and customer loyalty, Maharaja Silks stands as a respected heritage textile brand. With the launch of the Seematti showroom in Thiruvavur in 2018, the group continues to evolve—blending tradition, scale, and unmatched customer service while celebrating India's enduring sartorial culture.

In an exclusive interaction with IMAGES Business of Fashion, M S Asif Ali, Managing Director, Maharaja Textile, talks about the brand's enduring legacy, its evolution and how a steadfast focus on quality, customer trust, and authentic assortments has driven sustained growth across generations.

***A nine-decade legacy is exceptional in Indian retail. How has the Maharaja-Seematti journey since 1936 influenced the brand's philosophy, organisational culture, and core business values today?***

A ninety-year legacy is a responsibility we carry with pride. The Maharaja – Seematti journey from 1936 has shaped our philosophy of trust, quality, and heartfelt service. Each generation from the start till the current fourth generation have passed on the baton by making them understand and built on our core values — honesty in pricing, respect for customers, and deep societal connection. Even as we embrace modern retail, technology, and new formats, our foundation remains unchanged; a culture born from tradition, strengthened by relationships, and guided by the belief that purpose must always be stronger than profit.

***How has each milestone influenced your expansion strategy and local market understanding?***

Every milestone, from Kalavai to Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Ramanathapuram, Thiruvavur, Karaikudi, Trichy, Karaikal and now Tiruchirappalli refined our understanding of people and markets. First 30 years of the journey helped create a stronger foundation and from 2014 when we started expansion, each town taught us something unique. Trust and humility, store ambience, customer experience, festival-

based buying, value-conscious shopping, hyperlocal preferences, youth-driven fashion, and finally the urban aspirations of Trichy. We do not replicate stores; we curate them for the community they serve. Our strategy has always been simple — grow with people, not ahead of them.

***With the launch of Majestic Maharaja as a modern retail format, what differentiates it from the traditional Maharaja experience?***

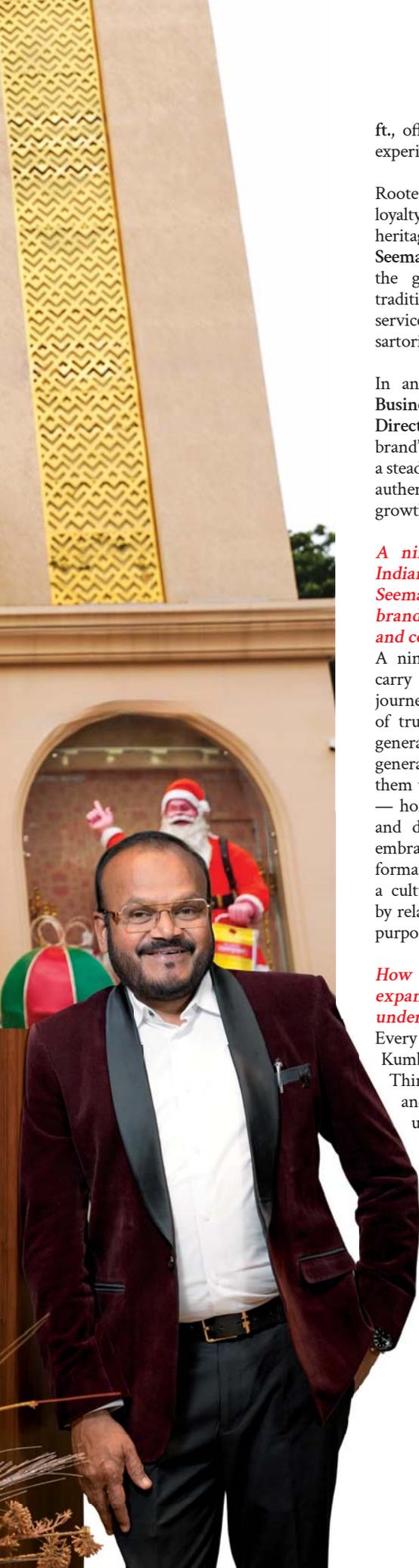
Majestic Maharaja marks the point where our ninety-year legacy meets the vision of the fourth generation. While Maharaja continues as the soulful, tradition-rich experience trusted by families for decades, Majestic Maharaja is its youthful interpretation, shaped by fresh ideas, modern design sensibilities, and a deep understanding of today's fashion culture. Evolving from a pure textile store, it was curated as an all-in-one shopping destination offering enhanced experiences such as cafés, nuts and spices sections, and kids' play areas. The fourth generation has introduced faster fashion cycles, trend-led assortments, sharper value pricing, digital engagement, and global retail cues, all while preserving the emotional core of Maharaja. This evolution bridges generations — honouring the past while confidently embracing the future.

***What is your current store portfolio and how each format is designed to serve a specific segment of consumers?***

Our retail strength today is anchored in two clearly defined formats under the Majestic Maharaja umbrella. The large format stores serve as complete family-shopping destinations, offering expansive assortments across all categories, age groups, and price points — from affordable daily wear to premium boutique collections. Complementing this, our short format stores are compact yet thoughtfully curated, combining value-driven essentials, fast-moving low-range products, and select boutique pieces for youth, families, and price-sensitive shoppers. Currently, we operate five large-format and two short-format stores, with plans to expand to six large and four short formats by 2026.

**“ Out of 1,500+ team members, over 300 have served for more than five years, 94 for over a decade, and 28 for more than 15 years, reflecting the deep bond of trust built over generations. ”**

- M S Asif Ali, Managing Director, Maharaja Textile.





# Next-Gen Wardrobes

## Decoding India's Fast-Growing Kidswear Market

*TKC's projections show boys' kidswear rising from about ₹41,800 crore in FY2021 to well above ₹1,60,000 crore by FY2030, while girls' kidswear climbs from ~₹28,100 crore to over ₹1,90,000 crore across the same period. This expansion reflects both volume growth and gradual premiumisation, as families trade up from purely unorganised options to national and regional brands in schoolwear, casualwear and festivewear.*

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

India's kidswear market in FY2025 is a structurally strong, fast-formalising segment that combines demographic momentum, education-linked demand, and rising fashion consciousness among urban parents. According to The Knowledge Company, total kidswear (boys + girls) is projected to grow from roughly ₹69,900 crore in FY2021 to around ₹1,69,400 crore in FY2025 and further toward ₹3,57,700 crore by FY2030, implying sustained double-digit growth through the decade.

**Growth Drivers in the Indian Context**

Three India-specific drivers anchor kidswear growth. First, a large child population and higher replacement frequency mean that children's clothing naturally turns faster than adult wardrobes. Second, school uniforms and essential categories create a quasi-annuity demand pool, relatively insulated from short-term sentiment swings. Third, urbanisation and income growth have increased willingness to spend on branded, better-designed kidswear, especially in metros and large tier-2 cities.

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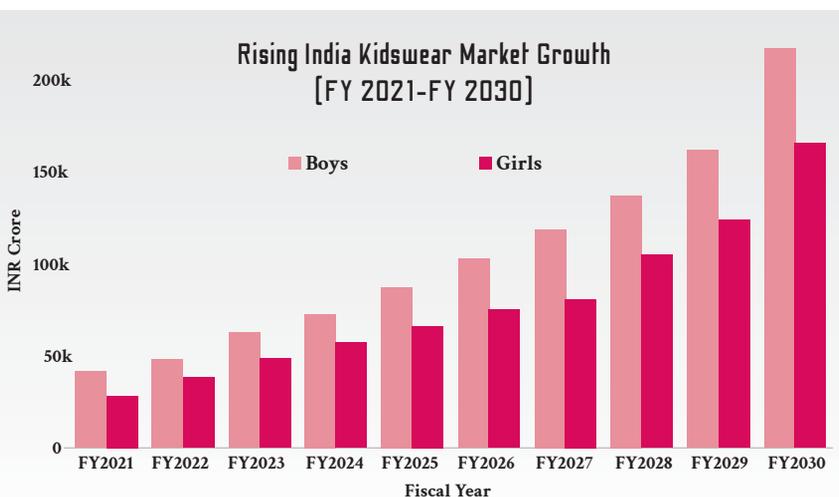
**Analysis of Kidswear Market Size**

From FY2021 to FY2030, total kidswear nearly quintuples, moving from under ₹70,000 crore to about ₹3.6 lakh crore, implying a high-teens CAGR over the decade. The post-COVID recovery is front-loaded: FY2022-FY2025 see especially strong growth as school uniforms, basic tees, and bottomwear normalise and then overshoot pre-COVID levels. Within kidswear, uniforms, T-shirts and bottomwear (for both boys and girls) are the main volume engines, while ethnicwear and dresses contribute more to value and festive spikes.

Boys' kidswear is slightly larger than girls' in absolute value, but growth rates are broadly similar, keeping mix relatively stable over time. As overall apparel grows, kidswear holds roughly a tenth of total apparel market share, but its higher structural growth (demographics, schooling, replacement cycles) suggests a gradual share gain versus adult categories.

FY year	Kidswear Market INR Cr	Notes
FY2021	69,893	Sum of boys (41,769) and girls (28,124) kidswear categories.
FY2022	87,850	Strong rebound year after FY2021 dip.
FY2023	1,18,608	Fast growth driven by uniforms, T-shirts and bottomwear.
FY2024	1,42,211	Growth moderates but stays double digit.
FY2025	1,69,410	Kidswear crosses ~1.7 lakh crore mark.
FY2026	1,98,897	Continuation of high teens growth.
FY2027	2,32,281	Scale benefit; kidswear rising share of apparel.
FY2028	2,68,888	Driven by value fashion + uniforms.
FY2029	3,10,332	Approaches ~3.1 lakh crore.
FY2030	3,57,740	Long-term projection based on kidswear CAGR.

(Rounded to nearest crore for readability; computed from the boys' and girls' "Total" kidswear rows and projected CAGR columns.)



Source: TKC | Boys segment grows faster than girls segment



# Kidswear

## Versatile Nostalgia Meets Sustainable Comfort

*By blending '90s-inspired nostalgia with high-function layering, committing to sustainable mono materials, and championing comfort as a design language, brands can meet the rising expectations of today's parents and tomorrow's young consumers.*

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



**A**s kidswear enters A/W 26/27, the market is being reshaped by climate unpredictability, shifting value perceptions, and a heightened sensitivity to comfort and sustainability. Parents are shopping more intentionally, young consumers are gravitating toward tactile ease, and brands are leaning into design strategies that bridge retro familiarity with modern functionality. The result: a season defined by transseasonal versatility, emotional nostalgia, and elevated material innovation.

### **Versatility Takes Centre Stage: Outerwear Becomes an Investment**

With extreme weather blurring the lines between traditional seasons, outerwear is evolving from a once-in-a-while purchase to a daily essential. Shackets, fleece jackets, and gilets emerge as anchor pieces—easy to layer, easy to live in, and easy to wear year-round.

Smart coats and refined cardigans round off the new outerwear core, delivering both practicality and polish. The data reinforces this momentum: global searches for “kids’ fleece jacket” have surged 78% YoY, signalling strong appetite for plush, tactile layers that feel comforting and durable. To stay competitive, brands must underscore longevity—think reversible constructions, reinforced seams, and quality finishes that withstand play, weather, and time.

### **A Return to the Familiar: Nostalgia with Built-In Function**

The season’s aesthetic direction draws heavily from '90s ease and Britpop revival codes, reintroducing comfort-first silhouettes with a retro twist.

### **Reimagining Retro Essentials**

Tracksuits move into their most elevated phase yet—cleaner cuts, premium materials, and a look that transitions from playground to weekend outings. Heritage favourites

# Tiny Trends, Big Market

## The Rise of Kidswear in India

*The continued expansion of organized retail and e-commerce into Tier II and III cities is further broadening access to contemporary kidswear, positioning the segment as one of the most attractive and defensible growth pockets within India's apparel market.*

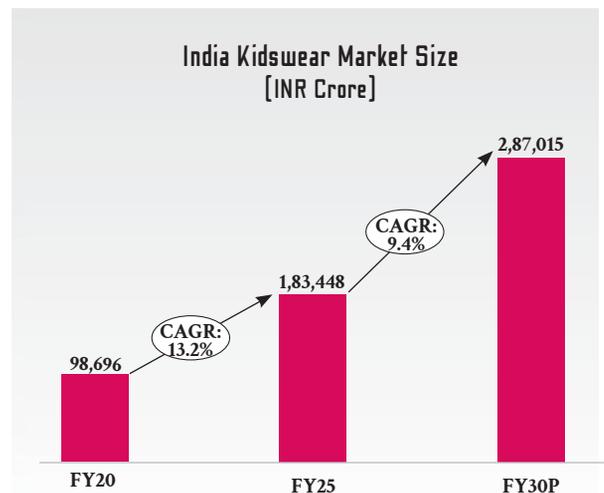
By Ambuj Gupta – Associate Director; Divyansh Tiwari  
– Business Analyst & Priyanshi Mittal – Analyst, 1Lattice

**K**idswear market of India has grown significantly in recent years, moving from a small, overlooked segment to one of the fastest-growing areas in the country's clothing industry. Basic clothing has now become style-conscious and trend-driven, with parents looking for outfits that are comfortable, safe, and well-designed for their children. Millennials are treating children's wardrobes with the same care as their own, choosing quality fabrics, thoughtful designs, and brands that match their preferences. From daily wear and school uniforms to festive and special occasion outfits, kidswear has become a way for families to express lifestyle and personality.

The kidswear market in India is projected to reach Rs. 2,87,015 crore by FY30, showing strong growth over the next decade. This expansion is fuelled by India's large young population, the need to replace clothing as children grow, steady demand for school uniforms and sportswear, and the rise of organised retail and online shopping. With rising incomes and parents increasingly willing to spend on quality clothing for their children, kidswear has become one of the most dynamic and promising segments in the apparel industry, attracting brands, retailers, and investors alike.

### Market Size

India's domestic kidswear market is set for strong expansion this decade, reflecting its rising importance within the country's fashion landscape. The segment is growing rapidly, recording a 13.2% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) in FY20-25 and expected to maintain a steady 9.4% growth rate in FY25-30. This momentum is supported by structurally resilient demand: a base of over 250 million children, rapid size changes that necessitate frequent wardrobe refreshes, and year-round purchases anchored in school seasons and institutional needs. In addition, occasion-led buying around festivals, weddings, birthdays, and school events, coupled with a steady flow of uniform and sportswear orders, creates both predictable volumes and cyclical peaks. On the consumer side, rising double-income households, higher disposable incomes,



# SMALL SIZES, BIG SHIFTS

## Sustainability and Trends Power India's Kidswear Boom

*Once purely practical, kidswear in India is now embracing sustainability, elevated design, and global trends; signalling a shift toward expressive, fashion-conscious wardrobes shaped by modern parenting and playful innovation.*

Sandeep Kumar



# ARPIT AGARWAL

## Redefining Fashion Entrepreneurship Through Relationships And Growth

*With a deep understanding of aspirational India, Arpit Agarwal is delivering premium global brands to the markets driving India's next wave of consumption.*

Sandeep Kumar

**S**uccess is measured not by the distance you travel, but by the number of people who grow with you." This belief defines the leadership philosophy of Arpit Agarwal, Founder of IMAGE Fashion Forever. From a modest beginning in 2009 to building a \$27-million fashion business, his journey reflects the impact of a people-first approach. Arpit maintains that enduring businesses are built on genuine relationships rather than transactional exchanges, a principle that anchors his guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs.

### The Genesis of a Fashion Dream

His credibility lies in visible results. Through consistent commitment to his values, Arpit has reshaped retail access across India's Tier-II and III cities while earning the confidence of over 15 global fashion brands. He often refers to Shoe Dog by Phil Knight as an essential

influence—an entrepreneurial story that mirrors his belief in perseverance, clarity of vision, and lifting others along the way.

The origins of IMAGE Fashion Forever trace back to a simple question: What about towns where ambition is high but access to fashion is limited? For Arpit, fashion symbolised confidence and identity. This passion turned into purpose in 2009 through his first opportunity with Levi's Signature distribution. The brand grew not from a boardroom plan, but from a heartfelt mission to bring premium fashion closer to every consumer.

### Navigating the Rollercoaster of Strategy

Arpit Agarwal's journey has been anything but straightforward. He likens India's apparel distribution landscape to a thrilling yet unpredictable ride, where the toughest task was building trust





# Cotton Casuals

## The Silent Revolution That Redefined India's Kidswear Industry

*Built on early insight, bold manufacturing decisions, and deep market understanding, Cotton Casuals emerged as a pioneering force shaping India's cotton knitted childrenswear industry for 35 years.*

Sandeep Kumar



The story of Cotton Casuals Pvt. Ltd. traces back to 1976, when a 20-year-old Pradeep Arora, fresh out of college was searching for a business idea of his own. A chance opportunity came when a few exporters mentioned that their inventory of men's T-shirts was stuck. Pradeep purchased the entire lot at ₹6 per piece and began retailing it at ₹7 in Cott Counter at first Air conditioned market in Kolkata. This small beginning opened his eyes to the broader potential of the readymade knitted garments market.

Initially, he sold regional brands from Kolkata, but soon discovered that the city was not a true manufacturing hub as most knitted garments were sourced from Bombay and Delhi. Meanwhile, the AC Market in Kolkata

was flooded with imported goods from Bangkok. This raised an important question for him: *Why couldn't these products be manufactured in India, especially when cotton was abundantly produced here?*

Driven by this belief and inspired long before 'Make in India' became a national slogan, Pradeep decided to begin manufacturing locally. The production cost in Kolkata was nearly half of what he paid for goods from Bombay. Realising this profit advantage, he set up his own company. The first milestone was shifting manufacturing to Kolkata; the second was gradually eliminating imports from Bangkok. By doing this, he replaced the imports from Singapore, Italy, and other European markets.

Cotton Casuals soon became the only large-scale producer of knitted babywear in India. This success gave birth to the iconic ZERO brand (named for newborn size "0"), marking a landmark moment for the company. Over the next 35 years, their pioneering efforts triggered a silent revolution—today, more than a hundred companies in Kolkata manufacture infant wear, yet Cotton Casuals remains the No. 1 player in India. Anyone wanting to sell babywear knits in the country inevitably looks to West Bengal.

Founded officially in 1990, Cotton Casuals India Pvt. Ltd., led by Managing Director Pradeep Arora and his partner Panna Lal Arora, a qualified IIT engineer, stands for **quality, value for money, product range, and reliability**. With a mission to build a global kidswear brand rooted in 100% cotton, superior materials, and innovative techniques, the company continues to evolve while staying true to its legacy.

### Primary Product Categories

Cotton Casuals India Pvt. Ltd. operates across a comprehensive spectrum of kidswear categories through its well-defined portfolio of brands. For newborns to 18 months, Zero offers an extensive range of 100% cotton essentials, including vests, t-shirts, bundies, tops, briefs, bloomers, shorts, leggings, baba suits, frocks, night suits designed for comfort, safety, and breathability.

# SIMPLY

**S**IMPLY is a specialised kidswear brand dedicated exclusively to baby girls aged zero to eighteen months. Designed around the needs of early childhood, the range offers 100 percent cotton innerwear and basic clothing essentials that prioritise softness, comfort, and safety. Positioned at a highly competitive price point, SIMPLY combines everyday functionality with thoughtful design, making it an accessible choice for parents seeking reliable babywear without compromising on quality.

The brand primarily caters to parents of baby girls, as well as customers looking for meaningful and practical gifts for occasions such as first birthdays, naming ceremonies, or rice ceremonies. Recognising the emotional value associated with baby gifting, SIMPLY focuses on offering visually appealing yet comfortable clothing in a wide palette of colours and gentle designs. This blend of practicality and presentation has helped the brand build strong recall among both everyday shoppers and gift buyers.

## A Wide-Ranging Product Portfolio

SIMPLY's product assortment includes panties, bloomers, baby suits, mittens, tops, slippers, and coordinated gift boxes. The gift boxes are thoughtfully curated with essential items, making them convenient options for celebratory occasions. Each product is crafted using soft cotton fabrics suited to delicate infant skin, reinforcing the brand's commitment to comfort-first design.



*A key differentiator for SIMPLY lies in its focus on ultra-soft textures and baby-friendly construction, tailored specifically for infant girls.*



## Distinctive Brand Strengths

A key differentiator for SIMPLY lies in its focus on ultra-soft textures and baby-friendly construction, tailored specifically for infant girls. The brand refreshes its portfolio annually by introducing new colours and fabric variations, ensuring continued relevance while maintaining its core focus on comfort and usability.

## Leadership and Vision

The growth of SIMPLY has been guided by Gaurav Arora, who oversees the brand with a strong focus on product innovation and market relevance. His leadership has played a significant role in shwaping the brand's identity, driving successful launches, and establishing SIMPLY as a trusted name among Indian families seeking quality babywear for their little ones. 