

Retailing: Ubiquitous Experience

Sushila^{1,*} and Sarita Devi²

¹School of Fashion Design FDDI, Noida Campus, India

²School of Fashion Design, FDDI, Rohtak Campus, India

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Abstract

The fashion industry forms part of a larger social and cultural phenomenon known as the “fashion system,” a concept that embraces not only the business of fashion but also the art and craft of fashion, and not only production but also consumption. As consumers have access to multiple distribution channels such as online retailing, telemarketing and more recently, social media retailing. However, the final point to consider concerning omni-channel retailing is that whilst it is seamless and integrated, it is able to provide a ubiquitous experience, as channels can be accessed anywhere and at any time using a variety of devices.

Keywords: Fashion, Consumer, Retailing, Business and Product.

Introduction

The Indian retailing industry, which was traditionally dominated by small and family-run stores, has come of age. The retail sector is the second largest employer after agriculture in the country and also the second largest untapped market after China. There are some 12 million retail outlets in India. Besides, the country is also dotted with low-cost kiosks and pushcarts. Organized retailing is only 2% of the total retail industry.

Over the past couple of years there have been sweeping changes in the general retailing business, mainly in apparel retailing which was once strictly a made-to-order market for clothing, has changed to a ready-to-wear market. Flipping through a catalogue, picking the color, size and type of clothing a person wanted to purchase and then waiting to have it sewn and shipped was standard practice.

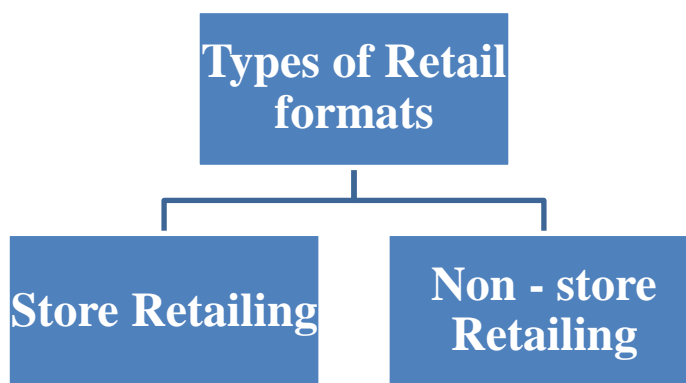
Recently, India is increasingly being looked upon as a major supplier of high-quality fashion



apparels and Indian apparels have come to be appreciated in major markets internationally.

Retail is any business that directs its marketing efforts towards satisfying the final consumer based upon the organisation of selling goods and services as a means of distribution. Retailing includes all activities involved in selling, renting, and providing goods and services to ultimate customers for personal, family or household use. In the channel of distribution, retailing is where the customer meets the product. It is through retailing that exchange occurs.

With the advent of modern format retailers and the growth of plastic cards, affluent urban Indian women are shopping like never before. They spend mornings browsing in stores looking for deals or latest styles. Upper income urban women are adopting ethnic chic. These are designer clothes that incorporate Indian motifs, ethnic fabrics and are a fusion of western and Indian styles.



I. Forms of Store retailing: Fashion retailers selling apparel, footwear, bags and accessories exist in various retail formats. However, all formats of stores may not offer all fashion items. Let's take a look at the most famous ones prevalent at present:

1. **Mom-and-Pop** (Kirana Stores as they call them in India): is a retail outlet that is owned and operated by individuals. The range of products are very selective and few in numbers. These stores are seen in local community often are family-run businesses.
2. **General store** - a store which sells most goods needed, typically in a rural area. It carries a broad selection of merchandise, sometimes in a small space, where people from the town and surrounding rural areas come to purchase all their general goods.
3. **Department stores** - Department stores usually sell products including apparel, furniture, home appliances, electronics and additionally select other lines of products such as cosmetics, photographic equipment, jewelry and sporting goods.
4. **Discount stores** - A discount store is a type of department store, which sells products at prices lower than those asked by traditional retail outlets. It tends to offer a wide array of products and



services, but they compete mainly on price offers extensive assortment of merchandise at affordable and cut-rate prices.

5. **Specialty Stores:** Specialty stores are small stores which specialize in a specific range of merchandise and related items. The pricing policy is generally in the medium to high range, depending on factors like the type and exclusivity of merchandise and ownership.
6. **Hypermarkets:** provides variety and huge volumes of exclusive merchandise at low margins. In commerce, a hypermarket is a superstore combining a supermarket and a department store. Hypermarkets allow customers to satisfy all their routine shopping needs in one trip.
7. **Supermarkets:** is a self-service store consisting of grocery, apparel, home furnishing and limited products on nonfood items. (Wal-Mart, Big Bazaar)
8. **Malls:** It has a range of retail shops at a single outlet. They endow with different products, food and entertainment under a roof. Example: Life style and Sahara mall in Gurgaon.

			
Mom-and-Pop	General store	Department stores	Discount stores
			
Specialty Stores	Hypermarkets	Supermarket	Malls

II. Forms of Non - store retailing- this type of retailing is mainly use new and advance method of retailing.

1. Automatic Vending Machines - A vending machine is a machine which dispenses items such as sanitary napkin to customers automatically, after the customer inserts currency or credit into the machine. This is an automated piece of equipment wherein customers can drop in the money in machine and acquire the products.



2. Direct Mail & Catalogs - Direct mail is a way of advertising in which advertisers mail printed ads, letters or other solicitations to large groups of consumers. A form of direct marketing in which customers order from catalogues which are sent to them by mail; the ordered goods are shipped directly to them.

3. Television Home Shopping- Home shopping commonly refers to the electronic retailing/home shopping channels, which includes such billion-dollar television-based and e-commerce companies as HSN, and Amazon.com. It allows consumers to shop for goods from the privacy of their own home, as opposed to traditional shopping.

4. Online Retailing & Telemarketing - The customer can shop and order through internet and the merchandise are dropped at the customer's doorstep. Example: Home shop 18, e-bay, amazon.com). Telemarketing is a method of direct marketing in which a salesperson solicits prospective customers to buy products or services, either over the phone or through a subsequent face to face or Web conferencing appointment scheduled during the call.

			
<p>Automatic Vending Machines</p>	<p>Direct Mail & Catalogs</p>	<p>Television Home Shopping</p>	<p>Online Retailing</p>

Conclusion

As apparel retail is led by fashion, a player needs to keep a close watch on fashion amongst teenagers as they are the trend setters. Role of Bollywood in spreading fashion needs to be understood. Seasonal variations on stocking pattern and need to clear inventory at the end of season should be understood by apparel retailer. Typically, once an item is sold from the outlet, retailer ensures that there is no repetition of same. It gets replaced by different design, style and colour.

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