

International Retailing Apparel & Textile Abstract, India

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Intro - International businesses have significant potential as India's apparel and textile industry expands. The country's diversified geography and rich natural resources make it a unique and

potential market for global businesses. After China, India is seen as the second most promising country for economic growth. This is primarily due to its low labor costs and abundant natural resources, particularly in today's global economy. Over time, India has emerged as one of the most desirable markets for clothing merchants. In reality, the garment business is India's second-largest retail segment, with annual growth rates ranging from 12 to 15%. It is expected to control the organized retail industry in the next few years (Tyagi & Rani, 2015). With rich textile materials such as cotton and silk, India is an important player in the garment industry. Western-style malls have popped up in big cities and small villages across India, providing customers with a completely new experience. The country's substantial middle class and mostly unexplored retail sector are significant draws for multinational retailers trying to grow into new markets (Jayasathya, 2015). Furthermore, despite India's vast market potential, there is still a lack of understanding regarding the opportunities and problems that foreign clothing merchants encounter when entering the rapidly growing Indian retail industry. The Indian retail business is poorly managed and suffers from an inefficient supply chain, which harms its entire infrastructure. (Batra & Niehm, 2009). Technological improvements have transformed e-commerce into an effective tool for reaching customers nationwide. The Indian retail sector is changing and challenging, with enormous opportunities for foreign companies to make their imprint in one of the world's largest retail marketplaces.

Geography -



Figure 1: Map of India showing major geographical regions. (National Geographic, 2014)

“India, is a country that occupies the greater part of South Asia. It is made up of 28 states and eight union territories, and its national capital is New Delhi” (Calkins & Allchin, 2018). India’s geography is incredibly diverse, featuring everything from the towering Himalayas in the north to the fertile Indo-Gangetic Plain, the dry Thar Desert in the northwest, and the lush Western Ghats on the west coast. It has a mix of tropical climates with wet and dry areas, and the northern parts experience a humid tropical climate. As National Geographic (2014) notes, India is surrounded by water on three sides, bordered by the Bay of Bengal to the southeast and the Arabian Sea to the southwest, with the Himalayas rising in the north. The central region includes the high Deccan Plateau, while the eastern coast is known for its river deltas and tropical islands like the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. India is flanked by the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean and shares borders with several countries, such as “borders with Bangladesh, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Pakistan in the north” (India: Discover its Diverse Climate and Geography, 2019). The varied landscapes and climatic zones play a crucial role in shaping the country’s agriculture, wildlife, and overall environmental landscape. The diverse landscapes and climate zones are essential in shaping the country’s agriculture, wildlife, and overall environmental conditions.

India's cultural geography and complex economic landscape have a huge impact on global garment and textile commerce. “The Constitution of India recognizes 22 languages as scheduled languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, and others” (Vedanta, 2024). The country is well-known for its vibrant traditions, regional fashions, and different wear preferences, which represent the several states' languages, religions, and customs. Traditional clothing like saris, dhotis, and kurta-pajamas, for example, vary widely between regions, appealing to both local and worldwide markets. In addition to cultural aspects, India's economic geography is crucial to the textile industry. “The buzzing cities of Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, and Delhi contain a melting pot of rapid economic development and technological innovation, with a notable example being the continually expanding telecommunications sector” (Scroope, 2018). The interrelationship of urban areas like Mumbai and Delhi attracts individuals from rural regions seeking opportunities, while those rural areas contribute crucial food and supplies to the city. Economically, India is a member of the G8, and it is widely acknowledged as an active rising market that influences global economic trends essential to the G8. With its rapid economic expansion and large customer base, India has a considerable effect on global economic dynamics. Furthermore, India's participation in sustainable development projects aligns with the G8's priorities for climate change, energy security, and environmental sustainability. Also, different states are interdependent, with industrialized regions relying on agricultural supplies from states like Punjab. This dependency promotes commerce and helps to balance growth throughout the country. With a fast-rising economy, India has emerged as a key hub for textile manufacture and commerce. Vedanta (2024) highlights that regional crops and spices contribute to diverse cuisines. Cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore serve as important centers for fashion and textile commerce, drawing worldwide firms aiming to reach a large consumer base. The economic variety between urban and rural locations impacts purchasing behavior, with premium companies catering to rich consumers in cities and more economical options accessible in smaller towns.

Natural Resources - India is rich in natural resources and has seen steady GDP growth of around 5.8% for 20 consecutive years. The service sector is crucial to GDP (Fiksel et al., 2021). Indian It companies provide services worldwide. Agriculture provides food and employment for

many of the population (Kumar et al., 2020). Indian Textile Corporation is one of the largest textile companies in the world, with operations ranging from fiber production to ready-made garments. These include cotton, wool, silk, and synthetic textiles, making them important to domestic consumption and international exports. The balance of payments crisis of 1991 prompted the Indian government to liberalize the economy, moving toward a free market that encourages foreign investment and trade. Some of India's natural resources include, mica, diamonds, natural gas, oil, arable land, and chromite are among the minerals found in the region.

In addition to these products, India has a wide range of indigenous products it can sell to the United States, such as textiles, and wooden crafts. The India textiles segment is estimated at \$ 16 bn, representing about 6% of the global market. In addition to highlighting Indian culture, these products also appeal to consumers looking for sustainability and uniqueness. India can sell products to the United States by expanding trade relations with countries like Bangladesh and Nepal. The existing level of competition in the textile domain between the two countries is high. Collaborating for sustainable fashion initiatives certainly can bring unique products to the market in the United States. With Indian craftsmanship and Bangladeshi manufacturing, both countries can produce environmentally friendly quality clothing. The Partnerships between **The data also showed that the country missed its export target of \$33.785 billion by 6.89%. A category-wise comparison showed that knitwear exports grew 21.94 percent to \$16.960 billion in July 2020-21 as against \$13.908 billion in the previous fiscal, the data showed.**

Technology - **India's IT industry is a key part of the economy, making up 7.4% of the GDP in 2022. It also plays a big role in global outsourcing, providing 56% of the total services.** With cities like Bengaluru often referred to as the "Silicon Valley of India," the country has contributed significantly to information technology, software development, and digital services. India has also arrived in the last few years. The country has made particularly significant strides in artificial intelligence, fintech, and e-commerce, with companies such as Paytm, Zomato, and Flipkart leading the charge. Government initiatives, including Digital India, are pushing up digitization by enhancing digital infrastructure and millions getting access to the tech wave, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The technology landscape in India has been innovative with a sturdy IT sector. Other than this, India is one of those countries that have made most of the

advancements in the field of software development and e-commerce, and today, India is well adapting to the changing era of Artificial Intelligence. The country will be able to have a significant influence on the upcoming trends in the global IT industry.

Political risk - The political risk of doing retail business in India presents numerous opportunities and significant risks due to various political and regulatory factors. The country's regulatory landscape continuously evolves, with frequent policy changes affecting foreign direct investment (FDI), e-commerce, and digital payments. Local sourcing requirements and the push for data localization further increase compliance challenges (Singh & Kumar, 2022). Additionally, protectionism and rising economic nationalism, driven by initiatives like "Make in India" and "Vocal for Local," create barriers for foreign companies, particularly through tariffs and trade restrictions (Sharma, 2021). Both social and cultural norms also play a critical role, as businesses must navigate religious norms, local traditions, and state-level differences, with public backlash as a potential consequence for missteps (Patel, 2023). Regulatory overhauls, such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and labor law reforms, aim to simplify business operations but can introduce complexities during transition phases (Gupta & Rao, 2020). Businesses that succeed in India often do so by adapting to local market conditions, staying attuned to policy shifts, and strategically managing their operations in alignment with both national priorities and diverse regional dynamics (Bose, 2019).

Economic risk - The level of risk associated with an organization based on shifts in macroeconomic forces (Strickler, 2022). Factors such as the Covid-19 Virus and poor economic structure, within the financial district, are causes of economic risk when international retailing in India. As listed on the statistics-based source engine, Statista, the retail market in India was steadily on the rise between the years 2013 to 2018 but took a substantial dip in the year 2020 due to the global pandemic, caused by COVID-19. India's retail market is not projected to reach the same level of affluence as pre-Covid until the year 2026 (Jones, 2023). The crisis of the pandemic led to disruption in the supply chain— “a gap in the free movement of transportation... the retailers faced the challenge of (obtaining) inventory and deliverables of products” (Palavi, 2022). Consumers no longer had a broad spectrum of what they chose to buy. Instead, many opted into strictly purchasing essential items, creating a change in demand (Palavi,

2022). Although India is recorded to have one of the fastest growing markets in the world, because of non-performing assets and bad loans, they are in a position of structural challenges within their economy (Huang, 2023). The risks of international retailing are present in a market that has had great losses by their hand and otherwise.

Climate -

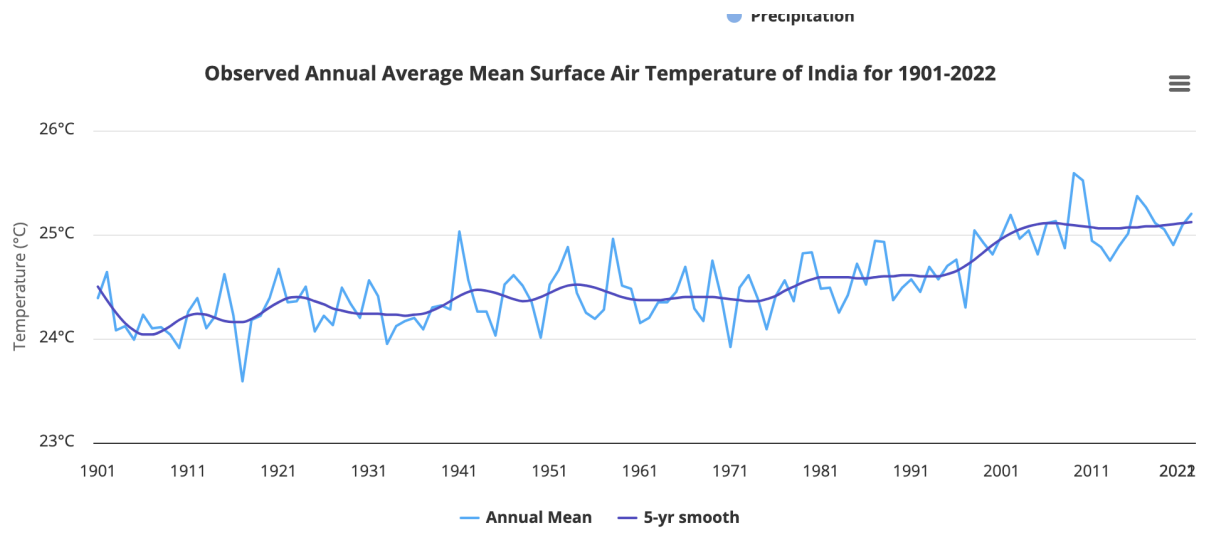


Figure 2: World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal, 2021.

The country has a range of climate zones, from tropical warmth in the south to cold weather in the north. “The northern states of India have slightly higher temperatures than other same altitude areas during the winter season” (A Brief Summary on Climate of India, n.d.). This variability enables the production of a wide range of textiles, including lightweight cotton fabrics for hot and humid climates and warmer woolen materials for cooler northern areas. The monsoon season, which runs from June to September, is significant in agriculture, influencing cotton and other textile crops. “Wet tropical areas are located along the western coast, and a semi-arid climate extends in a strip up the country’s center and across the northwest. Contrary to the stereotypical heat associated with India, the northern mountainous regions, including the cold, arid, and windswept Himalayas, can see extreme cold” (India: Discover its Diverse Climate and Geography, 2019). Cotton is an essential raw material in the garment industry, therefore, the timing and severity of the monsoon may have a significant influence on goods and service levels. In Figure 2, “The country is influenced by the presence of the Himalayas in the northern part of

the country and the Thar Desert in the west. The Himalayan Mountains act as a barrier to winds from Central Asia and China, enabling India's climate to be warmer than other countries at similar latitudes. The northern part of the country is characterized by a continental climate with hot summers and cold winters. The coastal regions of the country, however, experience warmer temperatures with little variation throughout the year and frequent rainfall" (World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal, 2021). Furthermore, climate impacts fashion trends; for example, light, breathable textiles are fashionable during the summer, whereas heavier materials are preferred in the winter. In addition, increased knowledge of sustainable fashion is influencing how customers and merchants approach clothes, particularly as climate challenges become more serious. Brands are increasingly focused on eco-friendly materials that are appropriate for India's diverse climate, attracting environmentally aware customers.

Population - The population of India is over 1.4 billion people, making it the second most populous country. This large population is rich in cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, with over 2,000 distinct ethnic groups and more than 1,600 languages. Rapid urbanization and economic development have led to major demographic shifts, with an increasing percentage of the population living in cities. Although India has made progress in education and healthcare, challenges such as poverty, resource allocation, and environmental sustainability remain, making population management a critical issue for the country's future. Between 1951 and 1961, the Muslim population in India grew by 32.7%, outpacing the overall growth rate of 21.6%. However, the growth gap has decreased since then. From 2001 to 2011, Muslims grew by 24.7%, while Hindus grew by 17.7%, a difference of 7 percentage points. Meanwhile, the Christian population grew the slowest at 15.7% during the same period, significantly lower than the 29.0% growth seen in the decade after Partition.

Demographic - "Of or relating to the study of changes that occur in large groups of people over some time: of or relating to demography" (Britannica dictionary).

As of September 29, 2024, India's population consists of approximately 1.45 billion people. (Worldometer, 2024). The country's demographic as it relates to religion is not far from a monocultural society with over 80% of the population identifying as Hindu and more than 14% as Muslim. India is home to the world's third-largest Muslim population (Statista, 2024).

Projections indicate that India is on track to surpass China as the world's most populous country by 2030, this highlights the ever-growing and ongoing demographic shifts that may influence various sectors (Statista, 2024).

Culture - Indian culture is a reflection of the beliefs, social structure, and religious inclinations of the Indian people. This is because India is a country with a large population and watching movies is a viral trend. Indians are also found to have a highly collectivist culture where individuals work as part of a group and place the needs of society above their own needs (Nelson et al., 2006). As a result, people generally find it difficult to distance themselves from others. Indians are also classified as vertical collectivists, which means they look up to, admire, and emulate successful people such as celebrities (Nelson et al., 2013). India is a culturally diverse country where each region has its own culture, which is reflected in the language, clothing, and traditions of the Indian people. The people of one country are different from the people of other countries in terms of culture, but they follow the same rule of law. Culture is also a window for a country to open up to the outside world. Looking at the different cultures of India, everyone can appreciate their diversity and also learn about the people's religious beliefs and glorious past. For Indians, culture is a way of life and something that is deeply rooted in their hearts.

Labor and Employment Practices - India's labor market is distinguished by a diversified workforce and varying work cultures across regions and industries. "The code also introduces penalties for violations, such as paying less than the minimum wage or gender discrimination in recruitment and remuneration" (India's New Labor Codes Enactment Status and Delayed Implementation - India Guide | Doing Business in India, 2023). Many industries rely significantly on manual labor, which typically entails long hours and difficult circumstances. While traditional activities like hand-weaving are encouraged, workers may confront difficulties such as poor salaries and job instability. Because the majority of the workforce is informal, many employees lack access to fundamental rights and benefits, making it difficult for them to raise concerns or negotiate improved working conditions (Sil, 2022). Furthermore, many manufacturing environments require employees to work overtime without salary, which can contribute to high levels of stress and burnout. "An international labor office would collect statistics on labor issues and enforce the new international laws (LABOUR LAWS in INDIA,

n.d.). This shows that enforcing regulations aims to promote better working conditions, protect workers' rights, and address various labor challenges on a global scale.

“The International Labour Organisation (ILO) was one of the first organizations to deal with labor issues. The ILO was established as an agency of the League of Nations following the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I” (LABOUR LAWS in INDIA, n.d.). The ILO was formed following the Treaty of Versailles, which was the agreement that officially ended the war. The ILO’s mission has been to promote fair labor standards, improve working conditions, and protect workers' rights globally. The Indian government has taken steps to reform labor laws and worker protections through different policies. The 2019 Wage Code intends to secure equitable compensation for all workers, while the Industrial Relations Code strives for easier dispute settlement and protect labor rights (India’s New Labor Codes Enactment Status and Delayed Implementation - India Guide | Doing Business in India, 2023). However, issues remain, such as maintaining compliance in both the formal and informal sectors. “Labour Laws emerged when Employers tried to restrict the powers of Workers Organisations & keep labor costs low” (Sil, 2022). Despite advancements, many workers continue to experience exploitation and poor working conditions. By restricting the power of these organizations, employers hoped to maintain control over working conditions and costs. Labor laws were thus established to protect workers' rights, ensuring they could organize, negotiate better pay, and advocate for safer working conditions. In essence, these laws serve to balance the power between employers and employees, promoting fair treatment and rights in the workplace. The continuous transition to more formal employment arrangements is critical for India's economic growth and labor force well-being, as the country strives to balance traditional customs with contemporary labor rights and safeguards.

Fiber -

Fabric and Apparel Production - India's textile and clothing industry is a vibrant network of centuries-old traditions, innovation, and economic importance. As one of the world's largest producers of textiles, India has a wide variety of materials and products that reflect its

rich cultural heritage. The Indian textile industry is a major player globally, known for its complex weaving, dyeing, and handcrafting techniques. Despite a slight improvement in labor productivity between 1990 and 2000, the industry still needs to improve in scale and capital intensity. It employs 45 million people, creating jobs in its sector and other complementary sectors (Ministry of Textiles, 2013). We recall that the Indian textile industry has historically been an important part of the Indian economy and has played a prominent and promising role in developing the Indian industry.

Consumption and Distribution -

Distribution & Sales Channel For Fashion Brands In India

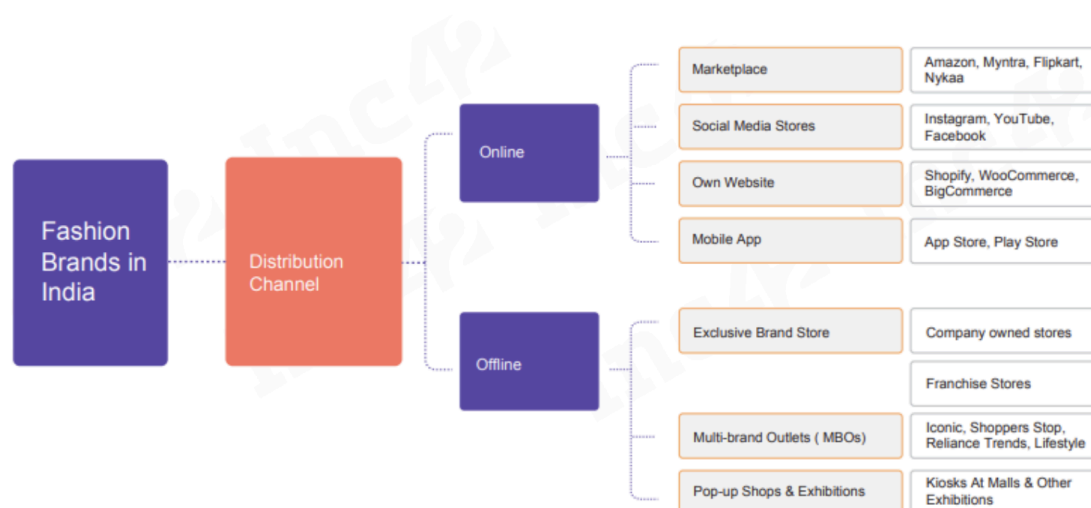


Figure 3: “India's E-commerce Booming: Fashion Leads the Charge.” BHARDWAJ, R. 2024

India's garment and textile business is thriving, combining traditional craftsmanship with modern selling techniques. "India is the 5th largest producer of technical textiles in the whole world with a market size of nearly \$22 Bn, which we hope to build up to \$300 Bn when we turn 100 by 2047" (Invest India, 2022). “To avoid the low-middle income trap, India needs to focus on economic reforms and active and dynamic policy interventions across sectors of the economy” (fibre2fashion, 2024). The expanding middle class and increasing disposable incomes are driving higher demand for both international and local fashion brands. “India’s textiles sector

is one of the oldest industries in the Indian economy, dating back to several centuries. The industry is extremely varied, with hand-spun and hand-woven textiles sectors at one end of the spectrum, with the capital-intensive sophisticated mills sector at the other end” (IBEF, 2022). As consumers become more aware of global trends, they are actively seeking stylish, high-quality clothing, which has spurred the industry's growth. This blend of traditional and modern styles has created a diverse market that caters to a variety of tastes and preferences.

The distribution environment in India is continuously changing, with a combination of physical storefronts and online platforms influencing the retail experience. "E-commerce is revolutionizing the fashion landscape in India, making it more accessible and exciting than ever before. Fashion trends are no longer confined to high-end boutiques in major cities; now, with just a few clicks, consumers can explore and purchase from a vast array of high-end and value brands from the comfort of their homes (Gupta, 2024). Major online shops such as Flipkart and Amazon are gaining popularity, offering buyers a wide range of options and convenience to buyers. “ The Indian online fashion retail market is experiencing significant growth due to increasing mobile penetration and the widespread use of social media. Social commerce, a new e-commerce trend, is revolutionizing the industry by enabling consumers to buy and sell products directly through social media platforms. According to PR Newswire, “AI-Driven Transformation, Online Fashion Retail Market in India to Grow by USD 51.8 Billion (2024-2028) Amid Rising Internet and Smartphone Use” (2024), states that the Indian online fashion retail market is rapidly expanding, and this growth is largely due to increased smartphone usage and the popularity of social media. According to recent trends, social commerce is changing the way people shop by allowing consumers to buy and sell products directly through platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and Snapchat. This makes shopping easier for customers since they can find and purchase fashion items right from their social media feeds. However, actual businesses continue to play an important role, allowing people to try on clothes and experience things directly. Retailers are using technology to simplify supply chains and enhance inventory management, ensuring that popular goods are always accessible. This combination of traditional and modern shopping is pushing forward, setting it for long-term success on a global scale. Figure 3 (India's E-commerce Booming: Fashion Leads the Charge, 2024) illustrates various methods for attracting customers through social media, websites, apps,

and physical stores. If customers receive their items and are not satisfied, they have the option to return them either in-store or by mail. BHARDWAJ mentions that e-commerce fashion brands should regularly monitor and evaluate key performance indicators (KPIs) related to reverse logistics, such as return rates, processing times, and customer satisfaction scores. By carefully analyzing these metrics, brands can identify areas for improvement and take action to enhance their services. This approach allows them to stay in tune with market trends and evolving customer preferences. Regularly reviewing these KPIs helps brands remain agile and competitive in the rapidly changing fashion industry.

Import/Export Trade Policies and Practices

In conclusion, India's unique geography, rich natural resources, and technological advances present both possibilities and problems for foreign apparel and textile businesses. The country's various landscapes and humidity provide a dynamic and profitable environment for fashion firms, with varying fashion preferences throughout regions. India's strong textile industry and expanding e-commerce sector provide new opportunities to engage with customers. To thrive in this wide market, multinational corporations must understand and react to the regional unique features that influence customer preferences.

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Nelema: Intro, Conclusion, Geography, Climate, Consumption and Distribution, Labor and Employment Practices

Angel: Political risk

Tileah: Economic risk, Demographic

Maimouna: Natural research, Technology, population, Culture, Fabric and apparel production,