

from one generation to another. We filter many suppliers and work with only those suppliers who provide quality raw materials. Many of our suppliers have been working with us for a few decades. Another point of survival is that Devatha Fabrics used to introduce new products frequently to cater to the consumer's taste which used to change very often. Devatha Fabrics has been known in the market for innovation, starting right from innovation in the fabrics that were used and also in the designs themselves. We were pioneers in branding saris in the wholesale industry in the early 90s and the late 2000s. Branding saris at that point of time was not heard of and we took a big risk in doing this that time and it worked very well for us. The brand was called Peacock Silks and became a pan Indian sari brand.

HOW HAS THE PERCEPTION TOWARDS SILK FABRICS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

Silk, for many centuries, was used by the royals and the aristocrats in the form of clothes, carpets and other forms of home décor. It was also a symbol of prosperity. In India, men, women and kids used to wear clothes made out of silk fabrics. But, over the years in India, silk was being associated only with women's clothes and even in women's clothes it was mainly associated with saris. Recently this trend is changing and more men are interested in buying silk apparel especially for occasions such as weddings. Many brands are working on promoting silk clothes suitable for men and it is getting very popular. Silk has always been known to be a fabric that can be worn only in the cold season, due to which people avoid wearing silk products in the summer. The fact is that silk actually keeps the body cool during the summer since it's a natural fibre. Brands are educating the customer about this property of silk and that's how the customers started purchasing silk products in the summer too. This has been seen in our business since our biggest market is all of the South Indian states (which experience hot weather throughout the year).

YOUR NEW BRAND- 'TATTVA' IS INTO MEN'S ETHNIC CLOTHING, WAS IT A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO EXPAND INTO THIS CATEGORY?

About five years back when we were still wholesalers in silk saris, we were looking at other avenues to diversify our

business. We wanted to work with silk as our base. We noticed that there were many labels which were manufacturing silk shirts for men and these shirts were being sold in many family stores in South India. The consumer, at that point of time, used to purchase a product that was recommended by their neighbourhood family's store salesmen. We saw a big gap in this business and realised that once we make these same shirts under a brand and market it the consumer does not have to rely on the salesmen's recommendation. We did continue our sari wholesale business for three years after starting Tattva by Mark Anderson. But once we started making more products in wedding apparel for men, we realised the potential in this market and we decided to make Tattva our primary business.

WHICH EXPORT MARKETS ARE YOU TARGETING AND WHY? PLEASE SHARE DETAILS.

In the near future we are looking at expanding in Sri Lanka, UK, Malaysia and Canada. We have noticed that the Tamilians in these countries like silk shirts and kurtas and we are already exporting a good number of pieces to these countries. Since there is a good population of Tamils in these countries, there is a ready market available for us to service these markets.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUE OF SILK IN MEN'S CLOTHING?

In India, men's wear has a very limited number of options when it comes to fabrics that are being used to manufacture apparel. It is mainly cotton and linen for shirts and for ethnic wear the main fabrics that are used are cotton and polyester silk. Linen for the weather in South India is no doubt a comfortable fabric to wear but for weddings and other special occasions,