



MONSOON READY

Changing seasons mean a change in the wardrobe. And if it is the monsoons, it is all the more reason to own a waterproof wardrobe. **Bindu Gopal Rao** discovers several new age innovations being seen now in the monsoon wear space. Read on...

For monsoons, besides the fabric, it is the waterproof technology that is widely adopted in the garments that create a barrier between the body and rain. Unlike earlier times, brands these days are bringing different features to match with the weather conditions. Different coatings inside the jackets that dry the garment quickly without compromising on the comfort, keeping the breathability factor as the top most priority, have been the game changers in the market.

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NOW TRENDING

The most important trend during monsoons, which is changing every year, is that of breathable jackets and rainproof bags. Similarly, a simple plain transparent poncho is the talk of the town for college students and office goers. "It is imperative that you switch to darker colours and play with a palate of strong shades. Wear a cool rain poncho to beat the chill and keep dry. Soft denim is an absolute talk of the season and the trend is here to stay till the monsoons. Women are drooling over dresses and tops in soft denim fabrics. The material is summer friendly and quick drying, and should last the monsoon as well," says Aanchal Saini, Co-Founder & CEO, Rent It Bae. Vinyl and PVC finishes have proved to be monsoon wear favourites over the past few years. This was a predominant trend on the catwalk as seen by Burberry, Fendi and Chanel and is the clear choice for inclement weather. Esha Gupta, Founder, House of Zeniaa, says,

"Plastic is having a real high fashion moment for Monsoon '18, appearing everywhere from the functional raincoats at Burberry back in London to Valentino's futuristic moto jackets and Chanel's glamorous capes and boots in Paris. Hooded rain capes, denim jackets and skirts trimmed with plastic fringe and the house's trademark cap-toed, demi-heeled boots are on trend."

IN VOGUE

Playsuits in printed floral patterns, mid length skirts, culottes and shorts are always a hot trend for the monsoon game, every season. This year cotton shorts and lighter comfortable fabrics are in vogue. 'Athleisure' being the biggest trend of the season can be well played in the monsoons, wearing Dri-FIT mechanised clothes as they are comfortable and dry off quickly. "In the monsoons, a roomy chiffon 'bell sleeved dress' is functional and oh-so-chic. Summer capes in a bright colour paired with frayed denim shorts is



a great in-between drizzle outfit. Vibrant hues of indigo, green and blue and electric fluorescent mix in cotton and rayon hold good for the monsoons. Crop pants are all new regulars even during the heavy downpour, making a perfect combination with trendy t-shirts," says Ritika Taneja, Head, Categories Management, ShopClues. There are not many options for men in formal wear during monsoon, hence they should stick to cotton fabrics and suits made of synthetic fibres.

INNOVATION MATTERS

Waterproofing textile materials are being introduced using nano waterproofing technology. Softshell jackets are designed to keep the rain at bay. They look extremely snazzy, unlike the popular rain friendly materials. They are made out of smooth polyester; making them uber comfortable too. Nanotech clothing fabric 'never gets wet'. The secret to this incredible water resistance is the layer of silicone nanofilaments, which are highly chemically hydrophobic. "The spiky structure of the 40-nanometre-wide filaments strengthens that effect, to create a coating that prevents water droplets from soaking through the coating to the polyester fibres underneath. Combination of water-repelling substances and tiny nanostructures is responsible for many natural examples of extreme water resistance, like the surface of lotus leaves,"

explains Gupta. Many designers and technology firms have collaborated on designer tech-advanced clothing like 'Rain Palette' by London based designer Dahea Sun. This acts as a pH indicator in the rain and the in-built app suggests the acidic component in the rain.

TECH TALK

Wildcraft has always been a pioneer in using HypaDry technology for their apparel. "The HypaDry technology keeps you dry while also allowing your skin to breathe. The breathable nylon fabric has nano-pores that mimic the skin; small enough to keep the rain out, but large enough to allow sweat to evaporate. Tailored with nylon and powered by DryVent technology, our range has superior waterproofing



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THE BIGGEST MARKETING CHALLENGE LIES IN CHANGING THE MINDSET OF PEOPLE. BRANDS FACE A LOT OF RIGIDITY WITH INDIANS.

same time for the monsoon season,” says Mithi Kalra, Designer.

CHALLENGE FACTOR

No matter how waterproof the fabric, the stitching seams are still vulnerable to water seepage through needle holes. “However, Wildcraft ensures the seams on these products are 100 per cent sealed using seam-sealing tapes to cover the needle holes. This extra measure ensures that there are no stray water droplets seeping in through the seams,” adds Singh. The biggest marketing challenge lies in changing the mindset of people. “Brands face a lot of rigidity with Indians. A majority of Indians find investing in monsoon apparel a wasteful task. Manufacturing is a game of understanding demand and supply. If the demand drops, the products automatically become costlier, or they would go out of production if it drops drastically,” opines Saini. Mehra adds, “Challenges for manufacturing these clothes include aspects like energy-intensive manufacture, uncertain demand, increased costs as laboratory test for breathability is required and dyeing such fabrics becomes an issue. Some of the garments are recyclable and non-biodegradable; hence, intensive care is required in its manufacturing and disposal.” Again, with the kind of technology involved in

making monsoon friendly clothing, there is very less awareness among the common public which makes marketing the product harder too. “It is a high investment and production category and requires an advanced manufacturing process with skilled labour that further increases the cost of the product. Hence, waterproof clothing is still under the category of less demand and due to its regional and seasonal factor marketers find it difficult to build long term business solutions around this segment,” says Taneja. Again, with the trend to go eco-friendly, using plastic in clothes may not be a wise idea either. ■

TIPS

- Use synthetic clothes as they dry easily.
- Heavy materials like silk and jute should be avoided as they take a long time to dry.
- Cotton clothes are also very breathable which makes them super comfortable during monsoon.

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