

Vesture

By Vinodhars

Embracing Curves with Confidence

Actress
Vahbiz Dorabjee
highlights the impact
of the body positivity
movement on fashion
and society

Love Thyself

Actress **Raima Sen**
talks about the need
to embrace self-love
and body positivity

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A look at the rise of
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PLUS & PROUD

Plus-size clothing is making fashion inclusive for all without discriminating on the basis of size and is steadily finding its own calling.

Text | Bindu Gopal Rao

When studying in the 80s, a friend who was well-built shared a grouse that she could never find readymade clothes as her size was never available. Today, however, plus-size clothing is a category that is booming. An Alchemy Market Research Report says that the global plus-size women's clothing market size was estimated at US\$181.07 billion in 2019 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 4.6 percent every year from 2019–2028. Other reports say that the

plus-size market in India has a 12 percent share of the overall fashion segment and is projected to grow at 25 percent per annum for the next five years. Plus-size consumers constitute about 67 percent of the population, generating around US\$21 billion in annual sales.

THE PLUS FACTOR

Today, people are becoming comfortable with the way they look, and clothes are being made for all body types. Also, as people are loving their bodies the way they are, many apparel makers are working to



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create garments that fit consumers perfectly. Majestic by Japnah — a brand that believes that fashion is for everybody, irrespective of age, shape or dress size — has a new plus-size collection that includes comfortable, trendy outfits that allow customers to feel their best. “Our goal is to make sure that women everywhere wearing Majestic feel self-confident about their figures and proud of their curves. I feel that we should dress according to our body type and not size. So, classic silhouettes work the best, like wrap dresses; peplum tops along with pencil skirts or boot-cut pants. Lastly, choosing the right fabric is very important. It should be of substance and structured,” says Japnah Gambhir, Founder and Designer of Majestic by Japnah.

CURVE EFFECT

The response to plus-size clothes is undoubtedly great as people with plus-size bodies are also able to enjoy a variety of options that were not available to them so easily. They are getting all kinds of looks that they are looking for. Eliminating this preconceived notion of what one can

wear and what one cannot depending on their size is what is helping everyone gain acceptance of their true self. It is now a shopping spree for every individual, without being conscious or pressurised about their appearance. Unfortunately, earlier there weren't many options for plus-size clothing, but now more brands are becoming inclusive in terms of sizes and drawing a parallel to all the new trends seen in general.

“An increasing number of women are opting for laid-back skirts, line pants and joggers. Comfort clothing and laid-back fashion becoming mainstream, post-pandemic workwear will see the rise of more loose-fitted bottoms. Yoga pants, palazzos, cigarette pants, joggers and comfy linen pants are becoming popular,” says Karishma Choudhary, Founder, Banthan Bano.

SIZE NO BAR

Shristi Chetani, Founder & Head Designer, Label Shristi Chetani, who works on custom collections, says that all their styles are available for plus size. “We like to focus on styles which are worn by all body types and not just focus on a specific category. If we talk about trends, we cannot divide them into standard-size clothing or plus-size clothing. Trends are trends. In fashion, every trend is for everyone and I believe that it is totally on the person as to how they want to carry it. But speaking of the current trend, with all the body positivity campaigns going around, we can see clients being more open to try different styles,” says Chetani.

“Trying to find jeans that fit well, are butt-lifting and flatter your shape in general is hard enough, but it becomes harder for plus-size women to find something that is both flattering and comfortable. It's rare for plus-size women to have a favourite pair of denims, which pushed us as a brand to launch 'Freakins Curve' that aims to listen to our consumers and provide them with denims that fit like a glove, while being trendy and affordable at the same time,” says Shaan Shah, COO, Freakins.

TREND CHECK

As no two bodies are the same, standardised sizes do not generally work and customisation is imperative. Online retail with plus sizes faces a major challenge as curvy women generally like to feel and try on clothes before buying. The fall of the outfit and fabric matters a great deal.

“Plus-size clothing is becoming bold and experimental. Cuts, fabrics, textures, prints — no longer are they boring or sack-like. The response has been fabulous. Since it is a niche market, reaching the correct clientele is important. But we have been through the dark days of curvy fashion where curvy women had limited options. Today, when something is available to them, it is welcomed with open arms,” says Gayatri Singh, Founder, Vixxen.

With plus size being more and more acceptable and encouraged, it must have certain options available for its customer. “For example, with plus-size clothing, you cannot just keep a standard sizing chart since two women from the plus-size section may need very different fits as per their body curves. Therefore, one must always keep customisation open, especially for plus size,” says Sonia Sachdev, Founder of Posette.

ALL ABOARD

Fashion designer Hala Al Mamari adds that she has an all-inclusive collection that is regardless of size, colour and body shape, and every woman would find a suitable piece that will boost her confidence and flatter her body.

“I believe in uniqueness and not following the rules. If I could advise a woman to follow a rule in dressing up, it is that life is short, play dress up, and try different and new things until you find the piece that makes your eyes sparkle. Almost 60 percent of our clients are plus-size, and we love to see them glowing with confidence. They love the pieces and also



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FASHION FORWARD

love how the dresses accentuate their curves. The most important thing that we concentrate on is the support in the underlining; we even use a customised built-in corset for each client when needed. Without the perfect support, the overall look is easily compromised," says Mamari.

MARKET CALL

When brands do add plus-size choices, there are still many ways that they can hit the wrong chord with their target marketplace. Also, not a lot of women realise their body type and look for plus-size clothing, thus creating a smaller section in the market. Choudhary begs to differ, explaining, "There are no such challenges; I look at it as an opportunity instead because I get more fabric to work with and more space for my imagination to just spread. The skills needed to execute plus-size clothing effectively are different from straight sizes."

The main mantra for any trend to spread its reach is to be highly comfortable. Any and every garment that is comfortable becomes the trend of the season. From loungewear to party dresses, comfort has become the priority without a doubt. "Plus size being a highly demanded segment also asks for easy-to-carry clothing to make one look confident and powerful. Nowadays, every single person wants to embrace themselves, no matter what their shape, size or colour is; the only agenda is to feel good in one's own body. And hence, the new trend currently swaying around is to wear fitted/body-hugging jeans, dresses or tops that flaunt their curves," says Sachev.

Plus-size clothes are just the beginning of fashion inclusivity. Soon these sizes will no longer be referred to as plus size and then it will really change how fashion is perceived by all, irrespective of their body. And after all, when fashion is accessible to all without limits, it becomes all-pervasive and signals body positivity too. ■



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