

The Neo Agility

Post COVID Consumer Mindsets and Design Direction

3rd June 2020: This webinar was organised in course of IFJAS Virtual 2020 and was attended by over 200 member exporters from PAN India basis including Mr. Ravi K Passi, Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Raj K Malhotra, Vice Chairman, EPCH; Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director, EPCH; and Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Joint Director, EPCH. Also present were, Mr. Vineet Bhatia, President, IFJAS Virtual 2020 and the fair's Vice Presidents- Ms. Nupur Batra and Mr. Anshul Gola. The expert panelist was Dr. Kaustav SenGupta, Futurist & Academician

Dr. Kaustav SenGupta, Futurist & Academician, in his presentation of 2021 trends, spoke of life changing philosophies and mind sets that this pandemic has brought upon. With change in social norms and habits, need for space within spaces, virtual becoming more real, etc. people will incline towards things that will take time to create like handmade, hand painted, handcrafted, etc. With focus on jewellery & accessories, he



THE NEO AGILITY
POST COVID-19
CONSUMER MINDSETS
AND DESIGN DIRECTION

Prof. Kaustav SenGupta
NIFT, Chennai; Consumer Futurist,
Color Analyst, Fashion Forecaster,
Youth Marketing Expert, AI Enthusiast

As the minuscule virus takes over our consciousness and creates havoc, the impact will be visible in all domains of human-need, including handicrafts and lifestyle products. The fear, the uncertainty would impact the consumer mindsets globally. Yet positivity will bloom over recession and slowdown, as "hope" will take over 'fear' and the world will find 'neo-agility'.

6 broad consumer mindsets will be of significance in 2021 for Jewellery & Accessories : Explorer, Homers, Empaths, Hyperlocals, Rejuvinists and Neo Sensualities

indicated 6 broad mindsets that will be of significance in 2021, the design directions and inspirations with case studies and design ideas that can be taken forward. The mindsets :

- **EXPLORERS** - Group of consumers which like to explore and like products which are exploratory in nature. This mindset has two sub categories-Artistic and Grounders.
- **REJUVINISTS** are the bigger mind-sets where the individuals look for products which will help them rejuvenate or make happy. This has four sub categories-Escaper and The Slo-Li tribes, Mood Positives and Sleep Santuarists.
- **HOMERS** are keen on homely and comfortable products.
- **EMPATHS** incline for products which are empathetic in nature or provide empaths.

- **HYPERLOCAL** is a mindset where individuals look for the local. It is produced locally and sold locally.
- **NEO SENSUALITIES** is a mindset is a subtle sensual products.

Dr. Kaustav SenGupta further elaborated that the inclination will be towards products that are intellectually artistic as people are overcoming fear & anxiety through crafting. So, crafty products with customised embroidery, etc. (kiddish, youth like) come under this category. 70s will be major source of inspiration here as that was the era when the youth culture flourished. Florals are going to come everywhere including food products and jewellery (use of actual flower petals); frames of glasses; in forms in patterns in bags and in abstract geometrics in many



Artistic



Florals



Escaper



Grounders



Slo-Li tribes



With excess stock issues affecting nearly the whole industry, post-production techniques such as over-dyeing, bleaching or laser treatments come to the fore. Use short-lead time product types such as jersey to create new drops from existing stock, with sales reactions translated for other areas where applicable. Take inspiration from this A-Cold-Wall* tee and get creative wherever possible to bring newness to consumers whilst also acting responsibly with stock already produced

lifestyle products. Another pattern will be of mushrooms, maybe because they are symbolic of life, hope and rejuvenation. Doodle like prints and asymmetric patterns can be explored. Lot of jewellery with hand crafted looks will appear. Anarchaic products will appear too. In the Indian context some graphics would come up indicating women power. Jewellery too is getting influenced by feminism. The Grounders mindset will look for multifunctional products that will serve many purposes like a table that turns into a home gym equipment; toe rings that can indicate the heart rate, how well the wearer has slept, etc. Also in this category will be bags that have in-built

features/designated compartments, belts that can have a sanitiser carrier, jewellery with a sponge for hand washing, a bracelet that can have a glove within. There will be demand for truthful products-products that carry all information about the product. Jewellery with terrazo and concrete mix, those combined with precious metals will also be in trend.

Escaper is a mindset that will want to hire a van to go away from their localities and put up a tent somewhere. Small products can be made to cater to them, like cheerful camping products that have inbuilt products, like a



Swiss knife with a fire generator, power generator that can be carried on such trips, mini fridge, military grade back packs specifically designed to travel during COVID with breathable properties and anti-bacterial coating, sustainability minded bags with certified recycled polyester. Masks are here to stay and are the new T-shirts. Even expensive footwear are getting converted into masks

to spread awareness about respiratory illness. This category can be explored with new innovations.

The Slo-Li tribes is a group that will look for slow products. Stock lots can be reworked and launched for this category - goods that were not sold last season are reused. If one has a brand, one can encourage customers to bring back already bought products for rework on them with dyes, etc. Example- Natural dip dyed shoes using onion dye. Sea-weed is an important new material that can be used instead of paper (in papier mache items). Home accessories can be made using this material. Repurposed wood is used for accessories like watches.

For the Mood Positive mindset simple basic accessories can be made to comfort the mind, remind of childhood, bright coloured & kiddish. Eyewear and shoes will come in bright colours. Journals as well as mood lifting basic shawl pins in animal as well as bird shapes will be popular.

Dr. Kaustav SenGupta also indicated of a consumer segment that will be about 'conspicuous existence', i.e. a group of individuals who will be prominent in the luxury domain. So, some amount of luxury items in clothing, make-up and jewellery will

Mood Positive



sell. He went on with an advice for deep-dive research on local craft recipes, use them and tell stories about them. Stories about our years old heritage define our strength. The expert faculty also urged the sector to come together and create a 'circular industry' where components and relevant ancillaries are available within reach. He also suggested that grassroots industry can be used and trained for packaging. Finally, he pointed out to the strength of India's domestic market and its consumer segments. He also urged the handicrafts fraternity to stay in their domain and work on improving that. In conclusion, the expert faculty shared several key takeaways of product development and design development like:

- Collaborative Initiatives
- Aseasonal products
- Functional
- Multipurpose
- Sensual and Safety
- Truthfull, sustainable and locally produced
- Colour scheme ■