# Mapping The Changes in Job Profiles Due to The Escalation of Apparel E-Tailing

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*Abstract - The E-commerce market in India reached a value of INR 81,525 crores (US $13.5 billion) in 2014; according to the latest report by IAMAI and IMRB International. . The online retail spending in India grew by 67% in 2013, and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of more than 50% between 2013 and 2017.[1] The adoption of devices such as smart phones and tablets, easy availability of internet, advancement in technology has earned India a place among top 20 countries on the global forum & led to the rapid growth of E-commerce and online shopping[2]. India has developed a huge online consumer base as depicted by the major players like Flipkart and Snapdeal. With this growth, it is expected that tons of jobs will be booming in the market in the years to come. New job opportunities are evolving every year. According to Technopak, KPMG, IAMAI study, this rapid growth in E-commerce will create employment opportunities for about 1.4 million job-seekers. The critical requirements of the e-commerce industry today are category managers, digital marketers, web designers, and people with expertise in web analytics, copywriting and content creation.[3] The Apparel E-tailing sector lacks personnel with technical knowledge about Apparel Products since most of the personnel hired in E-commerce companies today are from IT sectors. There is a need for the new upcoming Job titles to have Apparel knowledge besides their basic knowledge.*

*Keywords: E-commerce, E-tailing, Apparel Sector, Job Profiles, Fashion Professionals.*

## I.  INTRODUCTION

Mobile internet users account for more than 60% of the user base in India.[4] The growth of E-commerce industry in India has been very significant because of the rising internet and mobile phones. 8000 new smart phones are sold daily in India.[5]The penetration of smart phones in our everyday life has changed the way we do business and consequently the buying patterns and behaviours of consumers. With approximately 19.3 million Indians shopping online today, the online shopping industry in India is growing rapidly and will continue to see exponential growth. According to a survey done by PwC, 43% of shoppers research about the products online before purchasing.[6] Websites based on deals and discounts attract about more than 7.6 million people.[7] This is a proof in itself of the growing fad for online shopping.

The Indian Online Retail is a prospering sector waiting to be exploited. The ease which comes with online shopping, the power of being able to choose from the wide range of products, etc are few of the reasons leading to the rapid growth of online shopping.

Online shopping in the Indian market saw a growth of 128% in interest from consumers in the year 2014. Of this growth the two categories with highest % of sales was Apparels & accessories [30%] and electronics [34%] among the Indian consumers. Other categories that are popular among the Indian consumers are Beauty & personal care [10%], Home & furnishing [6%], Books [15%], Healthcare [3%] and Baby products [2%]. HomeShop18.com founder said "Apparel, books and lifestyle categories (beauty, footwear and health) will drive E-commerce."ý

This paper is focused on the e-tailing sector which can be defined as the transactions that are conducted through interactive online computers with the help of internet which connects the buyer and the seller, even though they are not present at the same physical location.[8]

However, these companies behave more like technology companies rather than retail organizations and this can be said without doubt that retail skills and competencies are

[1] Forrester Research Inc. India Online Retail Forecast , February 2014 (excludes travel)

[2] Global retail development Index (GRDI) report, 2014

[3] A report by The Financial Express, Saturday May 30, 2015

[4] Ernst & Young, "Rebirth of E-commerce in India" 2012

[5] http://www.fatbit.com/fab/stats-figures-facts-learn-glorious-indian-ecommerce-growth

[6] PWC- Global total retail survey, 2015

[7] http://www.fatbit.com/fab/stats-figures-facts-learn-glorious-indian-ecommerce-growth/

[8] Dawn, Dr.Suman Kumar " E-tailing in India" Vol. 1 Issue 3, July 2011

needed for the success of these companies- this is a business of selling merchandise to end users or consumers.

## II. PREVIOUS WORK

To understand how an e-tailing site works efficiently, Zeithami (2002) has defined that the success of e-tailing depends on the well-organized website design, prompt delivery and effective shopping.

The effect of social media and networking sites on the consumer buying behavior was described in Ratchford et al. (2001). It was said that through internet, consumers or the buyers of today can collect information about merchandise and they can compare a product across suppliers and buy the one available at a low cost.

According to Delone and Reif (2004); the consumers with better experience of online shopping prefer it more than consumers who have no experience at all. It was also found that young adults have a more positive attitude towards online shopping.

Lam et al. (2007) described that the e-tailer controls the representation of the product as the product is not physically present in front of the consumer. Instead, it is on the e-tailers frame of mind how to represent the product and its presence among the other product mix for the site: images, text and hyperlinks among other elements. The e-tailer is highly dependent on the distribution of screen and window size and screen resolution in the target.

## III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

This study aims to analyze and identify the changes occurring in job titles because of the escalation of Apparel E-tailing in India, the new job titles that have come up along with the growth of e-commerce industries in India. The data collection was based around the major e-commerce players especially the ones who deal in Apparel products, e-tailing consultants and the employees of e-tailing companies. The respondents were senior managers, HR managers and partners of E-consultancy firms. The data collection was concentrated on finding the job roles in an E-commerce and different sectors from which these professionals are hired. This was helpful in assessing the percentage of apparel professionals in the e-tailing world those are hired today. Later on the study focused on finding the job roles that can be provided with apparel knowledge so as to work better in the apparel sector.

## IV. JOB TITLES EMERGING WITH THE GROWTH OF E-TAILING

Apart from the Job titles that already exist in the retail world in different departments like Merchandising, Sampling, Quality and Sourcing, the vital requirements of the industry today are Category Managers, Digital Marketers, Web Designers, and people with expertise in Web Analytics, Copywriting and Content Creation. Along with this the various other Job titles that have come up in the limelight are Graphic Designers, E-commerce Manager, Sales Analyst, Content Manager, Product Photographer and Online Retail Merchandising Ma8nager.

## V. RECRUITMENT PATTERN IN E-COMMERCE COMPANIES TODAY

From Undergraduate Colleges: E-commerce companies like Truly Madly, Akosha, Foxymoron, Smartican and many other are hiring people from undergraduate courses at many leading Delhi colleges. These placements have doubled as compared to last year or even tripled in some cases. Roles are opening up at junior levels now as well.

From Design Colleges: Top institutes like NID, NIFT are the top centers for recruitment in E-commerce companies for job titles like Graphic designers, Web app developers, etc. Major players in the market like Amazon, Snapdeal, Flipkart, Jabong, Pepperfry are the many hiring among others. These companies are looking for fresh talents to scale up their in-house design teams.

From IITs: Over 10% of IITians bagged offers from E-commerce companies like Flipkart, Snapdeal, Olacabs, etc..

From B-Schools: E-commerce companies need efficient managers from top B-schools to drive the growth. The offers for the top B-schools are far more than what was offered last year.

## VI. RECRUITMENTS IN E-COMMERCE FROM THE FASHION WORLD

Top recruiters at NIFT include Myntra, Amazon, Flipkart, and Snapdeal in E-retail. Yathindra L, a faculty member at NIFT, Bangalore remarked "IT firms generally turn to design students for either tangible products or hardware design, and intangible products such as software, websites and virtual media." In E-retailing, companies get only a few seconds to grab a consumer's attention when a consumer logs in for the first time. They need visual aids to tell their story or captivate the consumer. "People from coding background like software engineers might find it harder to

connect with their customer base as compared to design students, who have the training to connect companies with customers better", he added.

"At Myntra, design students are hired to work in conjunction with marketing teams, quality control and for the online equivalent of visual merchandising". According to Myntra vice-president- HR, Pooja Gupta, "The big challenge for us is to find people with technology background, blended with creative or design capability or technical knowledge about Apparel Merchandise".

According to the NIFT's Campus Placement Report (2015), a total of 90 companies from the E-commerce world participated and offered placements to 188 students. Job profiles like designing, styling, business development, merchandising, buying, retail planning, etc. were offered.

## VII.    SEGREGATING JOB TITLES ON THE REQUIREMENT OF APPAREL KNOWLEDGE

Out of the above listed job titles; classification was done on the basis of need of Apparel Knowledge as a requirement for that particular Job role.

The intention was to bring out the job titles for which professionals are hired from non-fashion background and to assess the requirement of apparel knowledge in these personnel for working in the Apparel sector. This also helped in finding a skills gap which exists in the Apparel sector of the E-tailing companies. The skills gap exists mainly because these professionals are hired from different educational backgrounds to work in the Apparel sector. Apparel consists of anything that you wear on your body. There is a lot of technical knowledge about garments and accessories that a person must have in order to manufacture or source them. For example, an online merchandiser hired from technical educational background cannot have detailed and intricate knowledge about apparels.

## VIII.   ANALYSIS

The study was done to find out the job titles from the above mentioned, which if provided with adequate knowledge and training materials on apparels, would result in greater productivity. Out of the total sample size 55 % of the respondents believed that Content Writers and Online Retail Merchandisers need such knowledge more than any other personnel. These two are among the few very important job roles currently in the Apparel sector.

During the course  of this study, it was found that of all the content writers interviewed almost 40% of them are intermediate pass, 33% are those who are pursuing bachelor's (have just entered college or are doing some diploma courses) and only 27% of them are graduate. Out of those 40% of people who are intermediate pass almost 83% work on a regular pay basis while 17% work on freelancing. On the other hand, almost 60% of the respondents pursuing bachelors and 100% of the graduate category work on a freelancing basis.

Almost 73% of the Content Managers and Merchandisers interviewed believe that if these content writers are provided with some technical knowledge on textiles or apparels the resultant content would be more crisp and precise. Moreover, it would also reduce some burden from the shoulders of merchandisers who, now, have to constantly guide the writers. When content writers were asked to express their views on the same, 66% responded positively; saying that the knowledge of apparel products would make their everyday work easier and smooth.

People who are currently working as Online merchandisers in other categories of products; when asked whether or not would they like to shift in Apparel sector, almost 60% responded positively. Although they agreed that they would require some knowledge about textile and Apparels before they make this shift.

## IX.   CONCLUSION

With the growth of E-commerce; E-tailing in India has also been growing, Apparels and accessories is the most sought out sector after electronics. This is also leading to the increase in number of demands from companies for professionals with adequate skill set and knowledge to work especially in the Apparel sector and to have the knowledge of rapidly changing technology as well. If people hired from sectors other fashion Background are provided with a little bit of technical knowledge on textiles and apparels, the benefits would be far more than what can be expected. This would not only result in better quality of work but the working flow would be smooth as there would be less doubts and more knowledge about the product a person is working on.

The increasing growth of Apparel sector in E-tailing companies is opening up a new pathway which requires professionals with technical knowledge about software and hardware as well as apparels, both.

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