



ISSN: 0976-3031

Available Online at <http://www.recentscientific.com>

International Journal of Recent Scientific Research
Vol. 7, Issue, 8, pp. 12820-12823, August, 2016

**International Journal of
Recent Scientific
Research**

Research Article

DENIM: THE FABRIC OF MODERN INDIA

Arya N., Jamal Z and Gupta, R

Department of Textile & Apparel Designing, I. C. College of Home Science, CCSHAU, Hisar

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 18th May, 2016

Received in revised form 10th June, 2016

Accepted 06th July, 2016

Published online 28th August, 2016

Key Words:

Attire, Denim, Dyeing, Spinning, Textile.

ABSTRACT

Denim has a global presence, it not only exists in every country in the world, but in many of these it has become the single most common form of every day attire. It has now become a symbol of modeling and modern culture. Denim is a strong, durable fabric constructed in twill weave. Denims can be classified into several categories according to their dyeing, composition, spinning, finishing and embellishment used. Denim industry like any other textile and clothing products is largely fragmented. While the westerners were the major producers of denim in yesteryears, now Asian manufactures are contributing to about 50% of the world denim capacity. Most of the production in Asia is generated primarily in China and India. Now a day's denim comes in all forms, looks and washes to match with every dress. It would be difficult to believe that the same denim was originally worn by miners on the west coast but in present it is found in everyone's wardrobe.

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INTRODUCTION

The word 'denim' comes from the name of a sturdy fabric called serge, originally made in Nimes, France, by the Andre family. Initially, called *Serge de Nimes*, the name was soon shortened to Denim (www.denimsandjeans.com). Denim has a global presence, it not only exists in every country in the world, but in many of these it has become the single most common form of every day attire. It has now become a symbol of modeling and modern culture. Denim is a strong, durable fabric constructed in twill weave. Classical denim is dyed with indigo. The blue/indigo yarns are the warp threads and the white yarns run across the fabric width. It is special process, in which only the surface of the warp yarn is dyed, the core stays white. This is why the garment subsequently develops the typical and expressly desired- signs of wear. Denim was traditionally woven with 100% cotton yarns however, today it is blended with polyester to control shrinkage and spandex to provide stretch ability. The first jeans, made by heavy cotton fabric and intended as working clothes, produced by Levi Strauss in US, in 1873s. It was thus that the amazing career of denim clothing began.

History

In the 1800s American gold miners wanted clothes that were strong and did not tear easily. To meet this demand from the miners a man called Loeb Strauss started a whole sale business, supplying clothes to people who required it. Strauss later changed his name from Leob to Levi and Levi Strauss brand was created which is extremely successful today. In 1873 the

Jacob Davis found the shortage of quality material for the production of durable trousers for miners. Then he managed to acquire a quantity of denim. During this period Levi Strauss also received a patent for the invention of pocket-rivet idea and began producing copper riveted waist overalls in blue denim fabric. In late 1920s Dude Ranches brand was created to attract the people of eastern states of USA which gave blue jeans a new popularity. Gene Autry a film star of that period also introduced his own brand of jeans. In 1930s the cowboy look was established. Cowboys style jeans often seen in the movies soon became a product of global market. This made jeans become very popular and lead to a huge increase in demand for jeans. In 1936s Levi Strauss sewed a little flag next to the back pocket of jeans. It was the first label sewn on the outside piece of a clothing. During the 1940s fewer jeans were made due to World War-II but American soldiers introduced them to the world by wearing denims off duty as casual clothing. After the war, other companies, like Wrangler and Lee, began to compete with Levis for a share in the international market. In the 1950s Denim became very popular with young people. It was the symbol of the teenage rebellion and some schools in the US banned students from wearing denim on the premises. In 1960s and 1970s manufacturers started making different styles of jeans which included embroidered jeans, painted jeans, psychedelic jeans etc. In the 1980s jeans became a very high fashion clothing. Famous fashion designers like Gucci started making jeans, within their own label. Now jeans became fashionable item of clothing to own. During this period more and more different types and styles of jeans were created. In 1990s youth market was not particularly interested in old

*Corresponding author: Arya, N

Department of Textile & Apparel Designing, I. C. College of Home Science, CCSHAU, Hisar

style of jeans because their parents were still wearing them. Youth turned to other fabrics like Cargo, khaki and branded sportswear. There was a slag period for denims during 1990 to 2000. Levi Strauss & Co. closed 11 factories throughout the 90s due to the sudden decrease in demand for their product (www.denverfabrics.com). During 2000s jeans made a huge come back on the catwalk with big name designers like Chanel, Dior, Chloe and Versace. In 2009 every single brand almost had a denim line. Free lance designers like Chanel and Dior and other brands i.e. Diesel, Rock and Republic, 7 for all Mankind, True Religion, Nudie Jeans, Paige Premium, J Brand etc. started making jeans. Now articles of clothing such as dresses, shirts, shorts, skirts, coats, jackets and even leggings are produced in denim.

Types of denim: Denims can be classified into several categories according to their dyeing, composition, spinning, finishing and embellishment used. These are as:

Dyeing

Blue denim jeans are dyed in blue color using an indigo dye.



Black denim: In black denim warp yarn is black instead of blue and which is also dyed black after weaving. This makes the jeans truly black rather than gray.



Coloured denim: Dyed in different colors, such as red, pink, purple, gray, rust, mustard, and green.



Fabric Composition

1. **Cotton Denim:** Denim made of 100% cotton fabric.
2. **Polycore Denim:** Often found in replica jeans, offers the best mix of strength of polyester core and vintage aesthetic of cotton top thread layer.
3. **Stretch Denim:** Stretch denim incorporates an elastic component, such as spandex. (<http://www.textileschool.com/>)

Spinning/Weaving

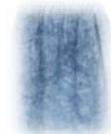
1. **Ring-spun Denim:** The process consists of a ring traveler and a bobbin that rotates at high speed. Ring-spun yarns add strength, softness and character to denim fabric.
2. **Open End Denim:** The cotton fibers are 'mock twisted' by blowing them together. Open End denim is bulkier, coarser and darker, because it absorbs more dye, and wears less well than Ring Spun denim.
3. **Over Twisted Denim:** Made from yarn that is over twisted, giving the fabric a particular crinkled surface.
4. **Jacquard denim:** Produced on jacquard loom and gives different designs to the fabric. With jacquard, any combination of weaves and pattern is possible since each warp is individually controlled with each pick passage. Due to its attractive and decorative appeal it is used in high fashion garments as well as furnishing and upholstery.

Washing and finishing

Stonewashed jeans: Usually accomplished by washing the jeans with pumice stones in a rotating drum to produce a faded worn appearance.



Acid-washed denim: Fabric is washed with pumice stones and chlorine until it is bleached almost white.



Enzyme wash: Laccases enzymes are used to get outstanding contrast look and various effects on denim fabrics.



Sand blast Denim: This effect is produced by use of abrasive blasting material (sand) in granular, powdered and other form through a nozzle.



Embellished Denim

1. Embroidered denim

2. Printed
3. Painted denim



Uses of denims

Denim garments come under category of semi-formal wear. It was initially used by workers who wore denim clothes because of its durability as it was extremely strong and perfect for their daily jobs. Now days, denim is being used in many items like clothing accessories and home textiles.

Present Status of Denim

Denim industry like any other textile and clothing products is largely fragmented. While the westerners were the major producers of denim in yesteryears, now Asian manufactures are contributing to about 50% of the world denim capacity. Most of the production in Asia is generated primarily in China and India. Some of the capacity expansion is taking place in the countries like Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey.

Region	No. of Denim Mills
China	104
Asia	297
North America	9
Europe	41
Latin America	46
Africa	15
Australia	1

(www.researchmarkets.com)

Consumers in India spend approximately 9% of their disposable income on clothing and footwear. In India the demand for the denim jeans has increased manifold and reached to 19 percent in 10 years period between 1998 – 2008. About 49% of market share of jeans goes in favor of the young generation in the age group 15-24 years followed by 25-39 years. The consumption of jeans reduces at a higher age of 60 and above. The women wears segment of denim trouser goes to lower age group as higher age group discard the jeans use very quickly (www.Fibre2fashion.com).

Popular Denim Brands

Indian Brands

- **K-Lounge** was launched by the KewalKiran Clothing limited, in 1989 and is one of the well known denim brands in India. Other brand of this co. are Easies, Killer Jeans, Lawman and Integritti.
- **Spykar** was launched in 1992 by Mr. Prasad Pabrekar. It bring new styles, cuts and fabric to the market.
- **Flying Machine:** The brand with its contemporary styling focuses on the trends and fads of the season. Flying Machine has come up with technological advances like temperature regulation through hot and cold zones. Stain free jeans that can't be spoiled by coffee or wine. Zero odour jeans, Bi-strech jeans that do

not de-shape even after repeated wear and undoubtedly the best skin fit jeans ever.

Other Denim Brands in India are

Terrain Jeans, Sunnex, Express, Ruff & Tuff, New Port University, Excalibur, Cherokee

International Brands

Black Orchid: Introduced by designer JulienJarmounein 2008. This brand was born as a classic line appealing to women of all ages. This is ideal for the women who wants to feel effortlessly sophisticated and fashionable.

Rich &Skinny: Introduced by **Michael and Joie Rucker in 2006**. The popular styles of this brand is slim sleek, super skinny, traditional boot cut rich, and a zipper leg jean. It is found on selected retailers like Neimen Marcus, Nordstrom etc.

Dylan George: was launched in December 2008. It establishes a new standard of apparel by marrying exquisite fabric and handicraft finishes with innovative, fashion-forward designs and an ultra-flattering fit. This is a lifestyle brand that draws its essence from Europe.

Frankie B: launched in 1998 by Daniella. This brand alters designs to fit for early teens. The brand focused on great fit, good pocket placements and slim through the legs.

- **Siwy Denim:** Launched in 2005 in downtown New York City, Siwy offers the ultimate denim collection: vintage-inspired, sexy, fashion-forward designs with perfected finish, detail, and fit.
- **G-Star:** offers a well-balanced range of jeans in various designs, the right range of fittings and attractive washings. Products made for denim connoisseurs by denim connoisseurs.
- **Current/Elliott:** was launched in 2008 by **Emily Current** and **Meritt Elliott**. They are reputed to have started the Boy Friend Denim trend which has been adorned by different Hollywood celebrities.
- **J Brand:** was founded by denim manufacturer **JeffRudesand SusieCrippen**. J Brand introduced skinny straight leg and were the first American-made premium jeans to drive this trend. They also have a maternity line - Mama J. In fall 2008, J Brand introduced a Men's line under the label, J Brand Denim Co.
- **Paige Premium:** was introduced in 2004 by fit model **PaigeAdams-Geller** on the principle that you don't have to be a size zero to look great and feel great in a pair of designer jeans.
- **7 for all Mankind:** Owned by VF Corp. since 2007, 7 For All Mankind was the first company which brought premium denim to their present scale in 2000. Its innovative use of fits, fabrics, and finishes in denim makes it proffered choice.
- **Armani Jeans:** Armani Jeans is a bridge-line collection of denim-related clothing created in 1981 by Giorgio Armani.
- **Luck Brand, Prada, Pepe Jeans, Lee Cooper, Wrangler, Levi's, Numero Uno, Wills Lifestyle (www.fashion-era.com)**

Present Trends

Today jeans are a staple of everybody's wardrobe and often a key element in seasonal trends and fashion around the world. Each season bring with it new cuts, features, treatments and embellishments. Some offices encourage jeans on Friday. *Mufti days* and *jeans for jeans days* are common in many schools in 21st century. 15-17 years old look for different silhouettes such as grippers styles than a 25 year old for comfort and fit. The latest trend is the **raw denim**; jeans which has not been washed or treated with chemicals. They are virgin fabric that comes directly from the loom. Boot legs and boot cuts are all time favorite of men. The straight legged Zip fly is more preferred by people than button fly. Slimmy jeans are fit and give a classic look to the wearer. Loose fitting gap jeans are preferred by both men and women. Back pocket zippers, button flaps, and colorful stitches on front and back also attract the people. Bell legged jeans combined with aqua wash is also in the market. Light weight jeans with multi-directional weave and detailed back pockets give an interesting look to the wearer. Skinny jeans in indigo and black shades with denim tops and jackets are most sought after. Washed denims present a casual mood with intellectual looks and magnetic persona. Now a days; denims are available in rainbow colors to satisfy the needs of the fashion savvy.

Denim Styles

Grippers: have the greatest chance for reaching in youth culture.



Bootleg-17-inch: is coming back by denim designers which is a safer bet in attracting a wider market share (if the price points are on target) because the style is classic and wearable by a greater number of people.



Double Jeans- the jeans over jeans look in case of the women's brand **HellzBellz**, appeals the fashionable females. This style originated in Japan with young people wearing a pair over another and the outer pair unbuttoned and folded down to reveal the layer underneath. (www.Fibre2fashion.com)



Metallic Denim: designers are experimenting on use of silver and gold threads in denim which adds to the bling factor of denim as a canvas of expression.



Agents of Change in Denim

- **Media:** Print and television media are the greatest promoters of jeans as a popular culture. Denim jeans have featured in films since the 1930s. John Wayne, Gene Autrey, Gary Cooper, Hopalong Cassidy, Marilyn Monroe, James Dean and many others have been used to promote the sale of jeans.
- **Technology:** is very effective factor in the promotion of denim. Adoption of global technologies in manufacturing makes denim more popular. The Internet is extensively used to promote the sale of jeans.
- **Marketing:** Popularity of jeans is related to successful marketing strategies. Whether it be the popular brand names, the success of jeans as a popular culture has focused on myths, legends and icons related to Westerns. More recently, jeans have been marketed through *Street groups* and fashion models. (www.denimblog.com)

CONCLUSION

Now a days denim comes in all forms, looks and washes to match with every dress. It would be difficult to believe that the same denim was originally worn by miners on the west coast but in present it is found in everyone's wardrobe. Apart from the normal jeans, various other items like skirts, jackets, caps, wallets, shoes, handbags etc. have also found their way into the fashion world as fashion accessories. Colored Jeans is the most recent trend whereas blue denim has become an evergreen color. The denim jeans industry is the most fragmented out of total apparel industry. A number of technological factors have contributed to making denim the fashion icon that it is today including vast improvements in spinning, weaving, and finishing. The demand of denim has grown at the rate of 20% from 2004. The global consumption of denim garments up to 2017 is estimated at US\$55 billion. The demand is expected to grow at 3-5% over next 5 years.

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