Emerging Trends in the Indian Home Fashion Textiles Market Post Covid19

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Abstract

Home décor and home fashion textiles, is an umbrella term for products that enhance the appeal of a home that include textiles goods and other decorative products. Under the extended lockdowns during the Covid19 pandemic, home décor acquired significance as people re-looked at their homes. India too witnessed a surge in home fashion, during and after the pandemic, which had traditionally been a product centric market. This paper strives to study the new and persisting trends in the post pandemic scenario of home fashion textiles using recursive abstraction analysis of interview data from 12 leading brand managers and designers across the Indian market and content analysis of social media posts in the three years after the pandemic. The synthesis is a set of major and specific trend directions encompassing consumers, markets and products that have transformed Indian home textiles industry into a consumer-centric market.

Keywords: Trends, home fashion, post-pandemic, home décor, recursive abstraction

Introduction

Home décor and Home Fashion is a general descriptive term for the products that enhance the aesthetic appeal of a home. It includes home textiles as well as a variety of decorative products like upholstered or non-upholstered furniture, accessories, enhancements like ceramics, accent pillows, basketry, plants, works of art, wall covering and tableware that is flatware, glassware and dinnerware(Diamond and Diamond, 2013).

Home fashion and home décor are thus umbrella terms used for the segments of home furnishings and home accessories. However, fashion trends are more often seen to influence the soft goods and home furnishing lines, like bed, bath, and table linens; curtains and draperies; upholstery fabric; and area rugs (Stone, Elaine, 2018; Abrahart and Whewell, 2021). **Home fashion textiles can be understood as the popular, decorative and trendy products in the range of home textiles.** Just as we dress in fashionable clothes, our homes are dressed up with home fashion textiles. Interior design imbues meaning, relevance and heart to a space, while home fashion textiles provide personality, character and atmosphere (Kilmer and Kilmer, 2014, pp. 409–422; Karthik and Gopalakrishnan, 2020).

The incidence of the worldwide pandemic re-defined the home into a haven and transformed it into a co-living and co-working space for inhabitants throughout the lockdown periods in India and the rest of the world. Within the confines of their physical houses, people designed and decorated their spaces for multiple uses. As the home has become the centre stage of human activity, the emphasis shifted to relooking at the house and its decoration. The global home textiles trade has gathered full momentum after the pandemic period and stood at US\$60 billion in2021. It is expected to reach US\$85 billion by 2030 at a compound annual growth rate of more than 4% (Fibre2Fashion, 2023; Wazir Advisors, 2023).

The domestic home textiles market in India valued at more than US\$9 billion in 2022-23 is expected to outperform the global growth at a CAGR of more than 7% during the period 2023-2031(Imarc, 2023; Wazir Advisors, 2023). Home textiles as a segment is growing by leaps and bounds, therefore an understanding of the scenario in the home fashion textiles after the pandemic acquires meaning and relevance.

Trends in Home Fashion Textiles

The term trend in fashion refers to a current style, and preference and connotes general direction or movement (Stone, 2008; Kim, Fiore and Kim, 2011; Rousso and Ostroff, 2020).

Initially, a nautical term, the meaning of the word trend became broader in the 19th century to refer to a "general tendency" and by the middle of the 20th century, the word became associated with fashion in the context of preference for a dress by a majority of people at a given time and place (Mackinney-Valentin, 2010). Other terms associated with trends are style, fad, taste, craze, look and vogue.

In the context of home fashion textiles, trends can refer to the prevalent drifts in products, consumers and markets. Product trends may include a specific product, style, material, colour, pattern and finish. Consumer trends can be about the

consumer profiles, demographics, psychologies while market trends can be about distribution channels and retail environments.

It is commonly understood that design trends in the home follow the apparel trends with a lag of about a year, though "previous years' fashions are not completely replaced by new offerings" (Stone and Farnan, 2018). However recent studies have not been able to establish definite sequential relationship in home furnishings and apparel (Johnson and Ulrich, 2018). Thus, home fashions have their unique trends that may or may not be influenced by fashion in apparel.

Some important historical trends in Indian home textiles, in terms of material, product range and imagery, are discussed by McGowan (2016). The research talks about the expanding use of curtains, table linen, pillows and furnishing fabrics made in khadi, mill cloth and traditional handlooms like brocades during the first half of the twentieth century in western India (McGowan, 2016).

Globally, the pandemic has ushered trends in home fashion focussing on nature, ecofriendly materials and hygienic finishes which may continue in the long run (Bansal, 2021; Choudhary and Vasudha, 2021; Imm cologne, 2022). The trend towards online shopping which had started before the pandemic accelerated during the lockdown (Beckers *et al.*, 2021; Koo and Youn, 2021) and has become a permanent reality (Gupta and Mukherjee, 2022)but its impact on high tactility based semi durable products of home textiles is not fully understood.Further specific studies for the Indian market are scant. Thus,this study attempts a systematic study of trends in Indian home décor and fashion textiles, after the pandemic scenario.

Methodology

Many trade articles have discussed the resurgence in the home fashion textiles but an in-depth understanding is non-existent. This study was conducted by interviewing 12design consultants, designers and brand managers of major home textile brands in the organised market known for home textile products and having an all-India presence in terms of stores or online deliveries. The brandstogether representing both mass and premium markets were chosen on the basis of purposive sampling. The details of the experts are given in table1.

Sr. No.	Code of the	Designation	Brand	Years of	Home	
	Interviewee			Experience	Textiles '	
					Product	
					Range	
1	Aı	Senior	D'Décor	9	Bedding	
		Manager			products -	

Scope Volume 15 Number o1 March 2025

		Design Dept.			bedsheets
					and pillow
					covers,
					curtains,
					and
					upholstery
					fabric,
					cushion
					covers
2	B2	Senior	Swayam	8	Bedding
		Manager	,		products -
		0			bedsheets,
					throws,
					dohars and
					pillow
					covers;
					Cushion
					covers,
					table linen;
					curtains
	Ca	Doputy	Poutique		
3	C3	Deputy General	Boutique Living	11	Bedding
			Living		products -
		Manager			bedsheets,
					comforters,
					dohars and
					pillow
	D		C 1		covers
4	D ₄	Design	Spaces by	15	Bedding
		Head,	Welspun		products -
		Domestic			bedsheets,
		Division			throws,
					dohars and
					pillow
		-		-	covers
5	E5	Senior	Fabindia	6	Cushion
		Textile			covers,
		Designer			table linen,
					bedding
					products
6	F6	Design	India	12	Cushion
		Manager	Circus		covers,
		1	(1	(

Scope

Volume 15 Number o1 March 2025

					table linen
7	G8	Design Head	Nesterra	10	Home
					furnishing
					yardages
					and
					bedding
					products
8	H9	Design Head	Pure Home	15	Home
			Concept		furnishing
					yardages,
					cushion
					covers,
					bedcovers
9	J11	Design Head	Maspar	20	Bedding
					products,
					table linen
10	K12	Creative	Portico	20	Bedding
		Head	(Reliance)		products,
					table linen,
					kitchen
					linen
11	L13	Design	Multiple	25	Home
		Consultant	brands		furnishing
					products
12	M14	Senior	Floor and	12	Cushion
		Designer	Furnishings		covers,
					bedding
					products,
					curtains,
					home
					furnishing
					yardages

Table 1: Summary of the designers and managers interviewed from leading home furnishing and home fashion brands

The experts were given a background of the research objectives and consent was taken to record the interviews that lasted 30-40 minutes followingan open-ended format where they were asked questions about the emerging trends and new innovations in home fashion as well as encouraged to shareprofessional insightsonthese trends after the pandemic both at a general and specific level. The audio interviews were transcribed verbatim using an AI software and re-read multiple times to rectify the errors in translation, colloquial terms, duplicate or repetitive words without losing the meaning of the dialogue.

Next, phrases and sentences of interest with respect to the common questions were selected from the transcribed textual data and transferred in a table following the steps of recursive abstraction(Polkinghorne and Arnold, 2012; Polkinghorne and Taylor, 2022).Figure1 shows this initial data collation from the interviews of all the experts which wascolour coded according to emerging categories.

	Designer responses	B2				F6		Н9	111	K12	1	M14
Common questions What have been the major consumer trends after pandemic	Consumers are increasingly looking for eco-friendly and sustainable bedding	# home textiles not seen as necessity	G	D4 # people are more aware # people are looking for products that are more than just pretty # people are aspirational products as well as comfort # people are looking for quality	ES # high interest in home textiles # aesthetically people pay more attention	10	G8 # people are looking for functional fabrics in home - water repellant, stain repellant	In a consumer knows, what design and what quality, what color should look nice in my home	# Now they are seeing that the home is also a part of living	# move to being sustainable	L13 # People have realised importance of home after covid # way the home looks has become very important # consumer have aspiration # major consumer time spent on social media # consumer in tier 2 and tier 3 cities and tier 3 cities	# Now they want to achieve a look not just buy a curtain # everyone doing own research # everyone makes moodboard on Pinterest # very much inspired by western culture # earlier clients
What are the prominent product trends after 2021-22	# People don't prefer styling in printed bedsheets # Geometrics and	brights are also doing good # color shift to pastel and sober colors # order for fitted bedsheets has increased	# best selling for us is small floral print on cotton		# best selling are bold fiorals and geometrics # bold scale post pandemic - more visible # sheers in curtains work for us (cutwork applique) # running look does not work- at should not look like we made it from a yardage of apparel - it should be layouted # layering in bedding	colourful, vibrant products # we are shifting our design language to subtle colors and away from funky # we are moving to sustainable ranges	going towards muted, neutral tones # there is demand for bling as well as natural looking - feel	# design is more modernised and has western look and feel # big demand for recycling	colors are doing well # slowly we see	# lot of earthy tones away from bright colors # biophilic is a major trend - nature as inspiration # organic and fluid, not sharp # very raw and textured finishes from nature		# people are looking forward to colourful prints and florals
What are the major market trends after pandemic?	awareness of hygiene, leading to a demand for antimicrobial and hypoallergenic bedding products	# online buying has increased # social media engagement has become important # competition has intensified		# explosion of demand from tier 2 cities			# there is influence of pinterest		# lot of marketing through website # Cotton linen natural material sustainable is another talking thing in the market.	# slow shift towards new fibers	# consumer centric market # B2C is very strong	# market moving towards neutral textures
New products or finishes that the brand has introduced	the Domestic market, D'Decor has introduced Linen in the Bedding which is	# we get lot of enquires about linenand and bamboo #people are demanding suede and velvet in home textiles #jute like material is doing well for living rooms # new finishes like fire retardent are not doing well	# we do innovative fabrics like bamboo cotton and cotton tencel.		# linen in bedhsee	# we are venturing into heavy textured cotton and jute # there is demand for wider widths		# we have	# we give cool temperature finish in bedding	# we are doing bamboo and linen in our collection # we are working with using high quality yarn from cotton waste # We also have this new pateneted technology which helps in Regularizing your blood circulation, And that helps to, make your sleep better. It helps you rejuvenate your entire body.		

Figure 1: Responses for the initial set of questions colour coded according to broad emerging ideas.

Scope Volume 15 Number 01 March 2025

The coloured content was paraphrased to make it concise making sure that the original response of the interviewee remains true to the original. Questions and content were combined under similar themes for all the interviews. Table 2 shows the broad themes and codes after applying the steps of recursive abstraction (Polkinghorne and Arnold, 2012; Polkinghorne and Taylor, 2022). About eight themes emerged from the interview data which was compared with the second data set of social media posts.

Them	Comments (paraphrased)	Codes
es		
	 Not just seen as necessity 	• Home decor as
	 Home as part of living entity 	part of living
	 Realised importance of home after Covid 	
	 High interest in home textiles 	
	 Awareness to buy for "my" home 	• Awareness about
	 People are more aware 	home
	 Awareness of what would look good in home 	
Home	$\circ~$ They want to achieve a look not just buy a	Aesthetically
and	curtain	attentive
Self	\circ Looking for products that are more than just	Achieve a look
	pretty	
	 Aesthetically more attentive 	
	• Way the home looks has become very important	
	• People are aiming for aspirational products as	Aspirational
	well as comfort	buying
	• Consumer have aspiration - want to achieve	
	luxury feel in their house	
	• People do lot of online research for offline	Online research
	buying	of products
Onlin	 Everyone doing own research 	
e	 Online buying has increased 	Online buying
buyin	 Online is more about younger crowd 	
g and	• Social media engagement has become important	• Social media
engag	 Major consumer time spent on social media 	influence
ement	• There is influence of pinterest	• Social media
	 Everyone makes moodboard on Pinterest 	engagement
	 Lot of marketing through website 	Website
		marketing
Sustai	 Consumers prefer 100% cotton 	Cotton and jute

			1	
nable	0	Slowly we see the cotton and the natural material		
	0	Venturing into heavy textured cotton and jute		
	0	Cotton, linen natural material sustainable is		
		another talking thing in the market.		
	0	People are diverting from polyester-y shining	•	Linen and
		thing to natural like bamboo and tencel		bamboo
	0	Have introduced Linen in the Bedding which is	•	Blends of natural
		really doing good.		materials
	0	Get lot of enquiries about linen and bamboo		
	0	Doing linen in bedhseets		
	0	Bamboo and linen in our collection		
	0	We do innovative fabrics like bamboo cotton		
		and cotton tencel.		
	0	We are moving to sustainable ranges	٠	Sustainable
	0	Big demand for recycling		ranges
	0	we have introduced lots of recycled fabric	•	Recycled material
	0	We are working with using high quality yarn		
		from cotton waste		
	0	Demand for antimicrobial and hypoallergenic	•	Health related
		bedding products and consumers are willing to		products
		invest more in products which are health	•	Well-being
		centric.		enhancing
	0	We also have this new patented technology		
		which helps in regularizing blood circulation		
Healt		and make your sleep better. It helps you		
h and		rejuvenate your entire body.		
well-	0	People are demanding special finishes like anti-		
being		bacterial and anti-viral		
	0	We give cool temperature finish in bedding		
	0	Products that help regulate body temperature,		
		such as cooling sheets and mattresses with		
		temperature control features, have become		
		popular.		
	0	Hygro-cotton is one of our bestsellers		
	0	Geometrics and abstracts are doing well, not just	•	Apart from floral
Net		florals		patterns,
Not	0	Best-selling is small, bold floral print and		geometrics and
just florele		geometrics		abstracts are
florals	0	Geometrics and abstracts are more in demand		gaining ground
		than florals		
	· · · · ·		I	

	0	People are looking forward to colourful prints			
		and florals			
	0	Need engineered patterns	•	Layout pattern	IS
	0	Running look does not work		in products	
	0	It should have layout according to product			
	0	Sober and non brights are also doing good	•	Move toward	ls
	0	Colour shift to pastel and sober colours		muted and	d
	0	Vintage muted colours are doing well		neutral tone	es
Color	0	Move towards muted, neutral tones and textures		away from brigh	nt
Colou	0	Shifting our design language to subtle colours		colours	
r shifts		and away from funky	•	Bright colour	S
sints	0	lot of earthy tones away from bright colours		also exist in som	e
	0	Large shift moving away from bright colours, of		trends	
		course there are trends about bright colours			
	0	trend towards colourful, vibrant products			
Towar	0	Biophillic is a major trend - nature as inspiration	•	Nature inspired	d
Towar	0	There is demand for bling as well as natural		textures	
ds Natur		looking - feel and texture			
	0	Very raw and textured finishes from nature			
e	0	Earthy textured cotton linen bed linen does well			
Other	0	People are looking for functional fabrics in home	•	Functional	
		- easywash, stain repellent		finishes	
trends	0	There is demand for wider widths	•	Wider widths	
m 11					

Table 2- Themes and codes from the interview data

The second data set comprised of the social media posts from the period 2022 to 2024 across popular product categories of home textiles like bedding, curtains, table linen and cushion covers that represent trends (Stone, Elaine, 2018)- in 4 pan-India brands in each category. 12 posts of each brand were chosen across the three-year period, with 48 data points in every product and 192 posts for all home fashion textiles. The criteria for selection of posts were presence of a clear image of the product with description and non-negative comments on the post.

The images for each product category were carefully observed for drawing inferences about colour, patterns,style, techniques, season and any special features (if available). Table 3 contains an example of the content analysis of one of the product categories.

Conter	Content Analysis: Bedsheet posts										
Colo		Colour		Pattern		Pattern	n Pattern			Main	
ur		palette				Scale		Forms		Technique	
famil											
у											
neutr	4	contra	3	engineer	11	small	5	architectu	1	dyed	3
al		st		ed				ral			
multi	3	dark	2	all over	3	mediu	2	cupcakes	1	embroider	1
colou	0	tone			4	m	7			ed	
r											
red	4	mid	14	solid	3	large	13	ethnic	8	printed	4
		tone									4
pastel	3	muted	13			NA	3	floral	19		
		neutra									
		1									
blue	3	pastel	3					geometric	9		
green	2	vibran	13					paisley	2		
		t									
coral	1							none	3		
brow	1							stylised	4		
n											
								textured	1		
	4		4		4		4		4		4
	8		8		8		8		8		8

Table 3: Content Analysis of the bedsheet social media posts collected from the period 2022 to 2024

The content analysis was then aggregated for all the four product categories by adding the percentages of the findings. An average percentage was calculated for all the posts under each of the observed sets. The aggregate figures are presented in table 4.

Scope

Volume 15 Number o1 March 2025

Param	Colou	r	Patter	'n	Patte	ern	Main O	rname	ntation
eter	Palett	e			form	S	Technique	e	
	Vibr	Mut	All	Engine	Flo	Non	Embroid	Print	Wove
	ant	ed	over	ered	ral	floral	ered	ed	n
		and							Jacqu
		neut							ard
Produc		ral							
t \									
Catego									
гу									
Bedshe	27	27	69	25	40	46	2.08	91.67	0
ets									
Curtain	21	54	83	4	40	44	27.08	20.83	31.25
S									
Bedsh	24	41	76	15	40	45			
eets									
and									
curtai									
ns									
Table	60	17	42	50	40	52	6.25	85.42	0
Linen									
Cushio	75	15	19	73	69	25	62.50	27.08	0
n									
Covers									
Table	68	16	30	61	54	38			
linen									
and									
cushio									
ns									
All	46	28	53	38	47	42			
Averag									
e									

Table 4: Aggregate figures of the content analysis of social media posts

The emergent information categories from both the interviews and social media posts were put together to formulate the overall trend scenario discussed in the next section.

Results and Discussion

The major general trends with respect to consumers, products and markets are discussed below, followed by more specific and micro level trends in home textiles that have emerged from the data sets in the post pandemic scenario.

I buy for MyHome

A major shift in the Indian home (residential) textiles sector is the high interest in home and its aesthetics which has led to attentiveness towards these textiles. In the words of leading home textile brands' designers. "There is awareness to buy for "my" home" and "now they (consumers) are seeing that the home is also a **part of living**....." At the same time, home textile products are no longer a "necessity". "Now they (consumers) want to achieve a look not just buy a curtain." So aesthetically consumers are more aware and the way the home "looks" has become very important. During the pandemic, online interactions made everybody's homes visible to the rest of the world and from there the need was felt to make the rooms reflect an image and decorate it accordingly. The time spent at home also made everyone aware of one's surroundings and the desire to make them better. This has become a continued phenomenon and the home textile brands are seeing an explosion of demand specially from the teir-2 and tier-3 cities of India where the maximum number of working youngsters from metro cities migrated back during pandemic. Revival of tourism, foreign holidays and the growing presence of social media has kept this interest in home textiles buoyant. The consumers are demanding luxury and styles consistent with western sensibilities. The "aim is aspirational products as well as comfort" and "they want to achieve luxury feel in their house."

Online Buying and Engagement

A major shift in the market has been towards online shopping and research. Ecommerce has seen a major boost during and after pandemic(Koo and Youn, 2021) and home textile sector is riding that boost. But what is distinct about this shift in homebased textiles is that, consumers are using the social media to get more information about these products before in-store purchases.

"People are that much more aware and educated about things like thread count, fabrics when they pill, things that earlier only people who worked with textile knew. But today, the awareness is there, thanks to the internet." Online buying according to some experts is "more about the younger crowd" and "people who don't have time". But "everyone is doing their research and everyone makes their mood-board (for interior looks) online."

Brands have responded by enhancing their online presence in terms of direct-toconsumerwebsites as well as social media visibility. Social media engagement has become very important as major consumer time is spent there -"*Now, these days, if you* post a photo, they (consumers) might not even see that...versus if you post an engagement reel on the social media so the engagement is better over that." A lot of marketing happens online and social media influence is palpable. In other words, the home textiles have become a very consumer centric market with B₂C engagement where competition is intensifying.

Demand for Sustainable Materials

The trend towards becoming sustainable or the necessity of embracing natural fibers(Heimtextil, 2024) is highlighted by leading trend forecast agencies globally and domestically (Housley and Team, 2021; Asian Paints, 2023)This definite trend towards sustainability is reiterated by almost all experts during the interviews as well. According to a design manager with more than 20 years of experience in the domestic Indian market and exports talks about a "diversion towards natural material away from polyester-y shiny material." The demand for100% cotton has increased and so has the demand for recycled material even in the non-premium segments. Furnishing and home textile brands have introduced innovative fabrics with blends of cotton with Tencel or bamboo as well as linen as a material in their collections. Efforts are under way for developing material and products from high quality natural yarns derived from textile waste. Though organic cotton has not done so well, the adoption of othernatural fibres and blends is positive.

Not just Florals

In terms of specific trends, florals continue to be bestsellers (specially in bedsheets) but there is a growing demand for geometrics and abstracts patterns in soft home furnishings which was not the case before 2020. The Instagram posts also corroborate these findings. In soft furnishing lines of bedding, curtains and table linen, the florals are as visible as abstracts and geometric designs.

Another tendency is incorporating nature into home décor by way of organic forms, raw textures and nature inspired looks. This preference for biophilic and bringing nature in homes is a worldwide trend (Riberti and White, 2022; Asian Paints, 2023). Consequently, the product offerings in India have incorporated lot of raw and natural looking looks - heavy textured cotton, natural jute as well as jute-like surfaces.

At the same time, "engineered patterns" are preferred to "running look". In the words of a designer form India's niche apparel and home fashion brand, "It should not look like we made it (product) from a yardage of apparel - it should be layout-ed."The placement or engineered patterns are not very evident in bigger products like bedsheets and curtains but the social media posts show the predominance of layouts in products like table linen and cushion covers.

Colour Shifts

The colour preferences in home textiles are surely and steadily moving towards neutrals, sobers and pastels. Brands that earlier did funky or bright colours are *"shifting design language to subtle colours and away from funky."* According to a brand managerdealing with soft furnishing products, *"Earlier we used to do around 80 percent of the collection as bright. These days we have divided it into 50- 50. The reason being that a lot of inquiries have, started coming that we need sober patterns. We are not only looking for the brighter ones."*

"People are going towards muted, neutral tones" and there are "lot of earthy tones away from bright colours." The bedding and curtains reflect this muted colour palette trend in social media posts as well but for textile products like cushion covers and table linens, vibrant colour palettes prevail. This can be explained by the fact that cushions and table linens are more of accent products that are used to add interest and a contrast of colour in an interior.

Health and Well-being

Another notable trend after the pandemic has been a focus on health and wellbeing. This is reflected in the wide availability and demand of special anti-bacterial and anti-viral finishes in home textiles. There is *"demand for antimicrobial and hypoallergenic bedding products and consumers are willing to invest more in products which are health centric."* Brands are also incorporating novel technologies that help regularize blood circulation for better sleep, or material that helps regulate body temperature. As a consequence of this trend cooling sheets, temperature control mattresses and well-being pillows have become popular.

Other trends

Some other trend and shifts are in terms of demand for functional finishes like easy care and stain repellent. There is also a demand for very wide widths of fabrics (more than 8 feet) specially in curtains.

Conclusion

Trends by nature are transient but this study has been a first attempt to bring out some of the peristing trends in India after pandemic that have transformed home fashion textiles forever and shall form the benchmark for all future developments. Today's trends are seeds of evolution for tomorrow's fashion and trends(Kim, Fiore and Kim, 2011, p. 4). Transformed into a consumer centric market, home textiles are witnessing a surge in demand and intensified competition for all the market players. The brands and manufacturers are trying to engage consumers, in the new online formats, while the consumers are much more informed about home textiles and its products.

378 www.scope-journal.com

Indian home fashion textile market has historically been discount-oriented but now there is a consumer willingness to spend beyond budgets and discountsif it ensures comfort, quality, health and well-being at both mass and premium levels. These insights are of value to the designers and managers targeting home fashion textile business.

The desire to decorate one's homes according to an aspirational look or intended luxury is the new normal.

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