



**DESIGN TRENDS – Global and Indian  
Research, Analysis & Implications**

**2009**

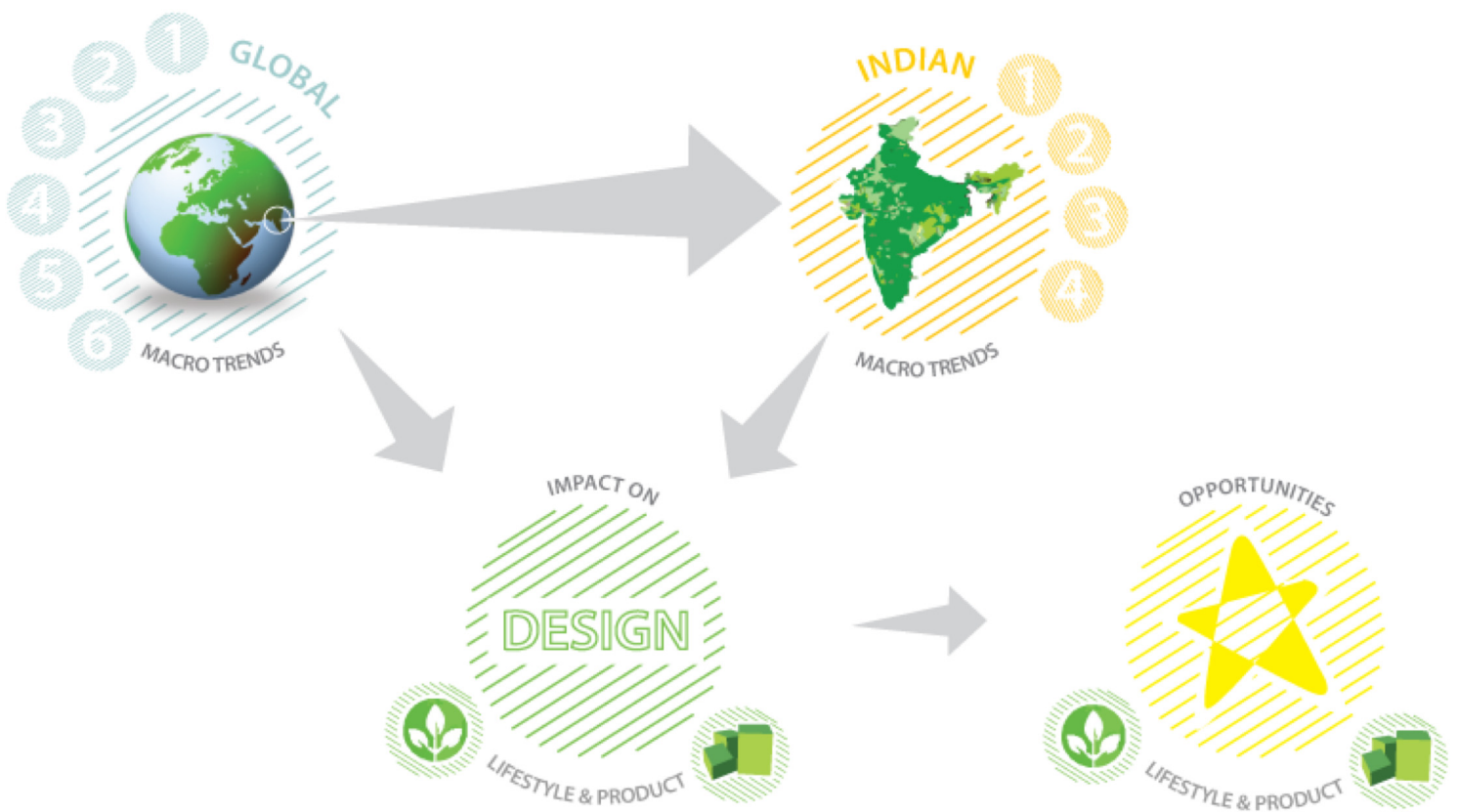
**Lifestyle & Product**

# CONTENTS

REPORT NAVIGATION	1
GLOBAL OVERVIEW	2 - 4
GLOBAL MACROTRENDS	
Trend 1	5 - 7
Trend 2	8 - 10
Trend 3	11 -13
Trend 4	14 -16
Trend 5	17 -19
Trend 6	20 -22
INDIAN OVERVIEW	23 -25
INDIAN MACROTRENDS	
Trend 1	26 -30
Trend 2	31 -34
Trend 3	35 -36
Trend 4	37 -38
ANALYSIS, INSIGHTS & IMPLICATIONS	39 -40
CONCLUSION	41
ABOUT US	42

## REPORT NAVIGATION

Global Macro Trends-Indian Macro Trends; Their impact on Lifestyle & Product design



## GLOBAL OVERVIEW

A general overview of consumer and industry trends globally



Before we start with the general overview of the global consumer and industry trends, here is our understanding of what trends are or are supposed to mean. **Trends are a manifestation of new enablers unlocking existing human needs.** Human needs are constantly changing with time. Some core needs remain constant throughout whereas others evolve in alignment with external variables.

Some trends remain, only modifying themselves along the way whereas others disappear, making way for newer manifestations. Global events give rise to global trends, which are fluid in terms of their dynamics and which most certainly affect all kinds of businesses.

### Buying the Experience

With the growing trend of consumerism, people or consumers are more aware of what they get for the money they spend. They are demanding more value for their money and with that, equally high quality of products and services. There has been a considerable shift from buying products to buying the product experience. Consumers pay for the whole experience today, which has led to a major shift in the positioning paradigm for brands and businesses. Now, more than ever, consumers need to be satisfied with not only the tangible aspects and functionality of their products but also the soft aspects and intangible benefits that the brand delivers, at every stage of the buying process.

### e Conversations

Consumers are actively engaging in conversations with brands and are openly expressing their disappointment, satisfaction and suggestions on any avenue available and accessible online. The internet has become one giant platform for consumers and businesses to interact and exchange ideas and opinions. More and more people are using the online platform to stay connected, share and exchange life stories and more importantly to make themselves heard. Online information sharing provides for an 'eternally updated' encyclopedia of individuals, which will live on forever. In order to get first hand and honest consumer feedback and gauge the consumer pulse, brands will most certainly have to be more Twitter, and Facebook savvy. Some brands have already taken the cue and set up units which focus only on participating in blogs, forums and conversations online, thus resolving any issues consumers might have with their brands.



## The Innovation Boom

The world is getting smaller and smaller and much smaller as we speak. Globalisation has raised the bar. It has given rise to standardization of products all over the world. Brands feel the need to give the consumers a sustainable proposition based on innovation. Consumers today are global citizens. More exposure and more

expectations, out of standardisation. The recession has hit everyone and hard. People have stopped spending on unnecessary products and have gotten back to basics. Innumerable small innovative businesses have popped up identifying this shift. Niche businesses are increasingly appearing to cater to rational, practical, current needs and not based on traditional luxury, splurging and upgrading. Quirky, niche, hard-to-find products are excellent to sell during recession at reasonable prices.

## Evolution of Design

It's no longer about looking good and dressing well alone. You will need more than that to get attention. Design has evolved from being just a logo or a few colors thrown in to make something look beautiful to being a whole process which creates a sustainable ecosystem for the brand. More importantly, design has become consumer-centric. Every product or service created today absolutely needs to be designed around the end user. It is becoming more intuitive, interactive, friendly and multi-sensorial. Integrating the various aspects of anthropology, ethnography, demography, technology and business amongst others, Design facilitates meaningful innovations to give business that upper edge. Brands like Philips, Sony, Samsung and Apple, which are already design-centric organizations, are finding it easier to develop more meaningful product experiences for their end users. Many locally bred brands like Asus and Creative are also following suit. More and more companies are creating specialised Design Research and Innovation cells within their organisations in order to predict future consumption and lifestyle scenarios for their brands. With recession at its worst, companies are making the most of this situation by investing in Design and Research faculties. Once the market starts looking up, all the hard work will start paying off as well.



## Global Citizens

With globalization, more and more students are traveling out of their countries to study and seek international exposure. This has impacted the way the next generation thinks and lives life. Today students are more aware of international affairs and politics and most definitely have a say and an opinion on every global topic of discussion.

Unlike the earlier generation, this generation knows exactly what it wants and goes for it. Deeply rooted in their own culture and knowing exactly where they come from, students know what to imbibe from foreign influences and what to ignore. This has given rise to sensible products and services targeted towards this more than before. We see most eco-friendly, energy-saving, sustainable products being targeted to this audience. It seems as though they are the only ones who have it in them to bring about a meaningful change. Again, they cannot be fooled, so the proposition had better be authentic.

Let's take a closer look at some of the major global trends and their implications on products and lifestyles.

## INDIAN OVERVIEW

A general overview of design trends in India



India, the country of infinite opportunities. It's a country that has infinite resources of its own, which, if put to good use can do miracles for its development. In fact, that is exactly what is happening in India today.

India is a huge conglomeration of diverse cultures, religions and traditions. It has an unmatched history and a deep-rooted belief system.

India is also often referred to as the land where one can attain spiritual wisdom. Wisdom, whether spiritual or otherwise definitely seems to have dawned upon the design industry in India today and we are extremely happy to be able to research this evolution.

### Use Local Resources

Raw material, cheap labour and other resources required for manufacturing and production are available in abundance in India. Each geographical pocket has a different story to tell in terms of the materials available, the food produced and the socio-cultural dynamics. Since resources are in abundance, they also come cheap. Not only has the international market started tapping these resources for their own reasons, but we also see tons of domestic and local Indian businesses cropping up to do the same. Going absolutely local has never been as rewarding. A huge domestic market for anything and everything that emerges has, in turn, reduced the dependency on imported goods and services, and there is very little need for exports, at least as of now.

The most important local resource is people. The younger generation is getting smarter and more aware of globalisation. More awareness and exposure has led to a brighter and sensible India, be it in the rural or the urban pockets. Indian students today are as capable or, in some cases, much more so than their Western counterparts. And most importantly, unlike in the 90's, when there was a huge trend of migrating to the West, students are applying their skills, their international exposure and knowledge to the ripe Indian market. Realising the huge potential that India has, the global shift from West to East, everyone seems to be gravitating to this land of infinite opportunities!



## Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

The stage is set and we see more and more smaller players entering the arena. Mini entrepreneurs and small scale businesses catering to niche markets with niche products and services, are cropping up everywhere. It's not much of a risk to start off provided the infrastructure and logistics are well in place. A good, reliable infrastructure is what India lacks at this stage, so

what one needs to look out for is whether these businesses will be able to sustain themselves in the longer run. With so many different socio-cultural shifts in different parts of the country, one can easily tap into any one of the trends to start a business.

## Rural & Urban split

More than 70% of India is still rural. Limited water supply, electricity and below average living and working conditions. It's only in the metro cities that we see most of the urban development taking place. Having said that, a lot of initiatives have been undertaken to improve the infrastructure and standard of living in the rural areas. They serve as unadulterated grounds to develop meaningful innovative services geared towards improving the living conditions of the people there. Transport, Lifestyle, Urban planning, Social services are some of the fields, in which we notice a lot of development. The thing to keep in mind is that the basic fundamentals for a rural setup differ massively from that of an urban setup. Businesses should be well aware of these conflicts and maybe hire a good research agency before taking any initiative.

## Young Minds

With the steady increase in the number of students studying abroad, there has been a vast shift in the way they think and act. Absolutely aware of global issues and happenings, these bright youngsters offer fresh perspectives to solving any problems. We see this not only amongst Indian students, who study abroad but international students who come to India to apply their knowledge and skills to the ripe Indian market. A full basket gives them immense opportunities to experiment and develop products and services without having to worry about costs. There is a lot of talent, incredibly good at that. We can see it in action now. It's only a matter of time before India sees the results.



### Design as a Facilitator

Design in India has evolved from being just something that makes a product or service look good to an industry or a process that facilitates development; to improve infrastructure, lifestyles, socio-cultural issues, education, literacy - the list can go on.

Design is slowly being seen as a tool in developing products and services, that add meaningful value to the lives of people. Although this is just the start, more and more businesses and small enterprises are looking at design as a whole process than just a tactical tool. Investing in research and strategic design faculties is a growing trend in the Indian design industry. It uses Indian sensibilities and socio-cultural trends and incorporates them into it's process in a smart and acceptable way. It is also about having fun.

Let's take a look at the major design trends in India and their impact on products and lifestyles.



## Trend no. 2: Innofusion

Innovate fusing Indian and western sensibilities. More and more products reflect international influences. And why not? Young fresh minds come back to India after higher education and indulge in opening their own small setups and studios. The foundation is already there. International experience and exposure fused with Indian sensibilities has given rise to lot of innovative concepts and designs. While Indian design goes global, it also strives to retain and preserve its Indian-ness. Some of these Innofusion products are characterised by vibrant colours, Indian mythological depictions, and the ever evolving street culture.



## Innofusion – Product



### Furniture reflecting culture

Bangalore based designer Aarohi Singh is a product designer developing kitschy home décor items for her clients. Her Indian sensibility is seen in her products (prices vary between Rs 2,000 and Rs 40,000) which are drenched in loud colours and have funny names like the Singh Is King kettle (infused with Sikh symbolism) the Nazar battoo series on kettles (inspired by the black dot put on kids' cheeks to ward off the evil eye) and the 'item bomb tables' (painted Bollywood item dancers and Bharatnatyam dancers) or the trunk which has a face of a Kathakali dancer on it. She retails mainly from her home studio and also from design stores like Levitate in Bangalore.



### Intriguing thematic prints

Interesting prints reflecting cityscapes and culture add a dash of storytelling to the products. Very cleverly incorporated and marketed, these pillows inspired by the theme of the city Mumbai, designed by Krsna Mehta for Wee Papa Girl Chakra. Also very original.

## To conclude

The trends give us a general idea of the direction in which things are moving, how the consumers are behaving and the reasons for their behaviour. The essential point is to figure out how these trends are impacting or might impact the industry you are in: What can be extracted out of the dynamics and how can it be used to your own business advantage?

It therefore makes sense to look at the bigger picture after having studied the smaller parts of it. To be able to arrange the various parts in order for them to make sense is of vital importance. Once that is done, the possibilities and opportunities are endless. One can then link them, re-arrange them or use them according to one's own business requirements.

Collaborations, brand extensions, using technology to facilitate new ventures, re-vamping brands, outsourcing options, mergers and acquisitions are few ways to link the various parts to form a picture you like to see.

This is where strategic design thinking comes into play. It's a process that carries out each and every step required to give a bird's eye view of the scenario so that strategic decisions can be made.

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## ABOUT US

Insight Instore is a trend research and retail shopper marketing consultancy. We study trends and shoppers. We see the shop as our laboratory. Our aim is to create impact instore, through insight and innovation.

Our areas of work include shopper research and instore consulting, design consulting, trend research and forecasting.

Our solutions are driven by a combination of various skills and disciplines, coming together on a vibrant and receptive platform. Research forms the basis of our consulting work. Consulting for us does not stop at developing a strategy, but extends to helping our clients to execute and evaluate the strategy. We also use this entire experience for trend research and forecasting.

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