

# *Novel Beachwear Designs for Eco-conscious Wearer*



*By: Geetha Rai*

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## Abstract

*Design of a garment today is influenced by globalization, industrialization, science and technology. The drawing board concept has changed and there has been a shift in the designing field to cater to the needs of the consumer in terms of performance and comfort. Beachwear which is in its infancy stage in the Indian garment industry scenario is the focus of the research and the researcher has attempted to apply innovative concepts such as usage of eco-friendly fabrics bamboo and modal with the application of UV finish and water repellent finish. The collection designed has been derived from out of the box concept to attract the consumer both local and global.*

Design development is an integral part of product development. Design of a garment focuses on 3 important aspects-comfort, fit and aesthetic appeal. Performance enhancement has become a necessity rather than a luxury. The consumer has grown over the period of time and has come out of the 'wear and throw attitude'. Garment designing has scaled new heights. It has come out of the boundaries of just casual wear, formal wear or party wear and reached every sector of garments be it sportswear, intimate wear, beachwear or bodywear.

Swimwear, a decade ago was a taboo and its status in the Indian garment industry negligible. But with the fitness boom, globalization and international exposure, the industry has grown from its infancy stage and taken small steps in the global market. And designing of beachwear, improving its performance properties to cater to the needs of the consumer has acquired significant importance. But in spite of its international demand, it is surprising that not many manufacturers or designers are venturing into designing of beachwear, considering that it is a territory that has very little competition in a country with a climate which is most suited to beach and swimwear.

Beachwear is defined as clothing worn on the beach. It is clothing that is close to the skin or like second skin. A survey conducted by the researcher to study the trends in beachwear in the market for design and use of fabric aspect showed that the most commonly used fabrics were cotton, man-made fabrics and Lycra blend. Today' consumer is eco-conscious and wants to do their bit in reducing the carbon footprint.

So it is not surprising that the word "green" has become the best market gimmick of the present day.

## **"Green is the new gold".**

Eco-friendly fabrics are fabrics that are organic, bio-degradable and not harmful to the environment. There are various kinds that include organic cotton, jute, soy fabric, bamboo, Tencel, modal fabric and so on. The use of eco-friendly fabrics leads to reduced carbon footprint. The use of various chemicals has led to carcinogenic effect on skin. Besides this the affluent produced during textile product manufacture causes considerable damage to the environment. Eco-friendly fabrics have natural characteristics that are user-

friendly; they are less harmful to the environment and hence the demand for it has increased as the consumer becomes eco-conscious.

So faced with this rapid demand of the customer, it is only ideal to use eco-friendly fabrics for beachwear which is worn close to the skin. All these aspects had led the researcher to design a collection of beachwear using bamboo and modal fabric. The benefits of bamboo fabric include:

- Antibacterial-keeps you odor free and feeling and smelling fresh.
- Highly sweat absorbent (pulls moisture from skin for evaporation-moisture wicking) keeps you dry.
- Powerfully insulating-keeps you cooler in summer and warmer in winter.
- One of the softest fabrics on the planet you'll love the way it feels.
- Naturally UV protectant-protect yourself from skin cancer.
- Hypoallergenic-natural bamboo does not cause allergic reactions.
- Most eco-friendly fabric on the planet-help save your planet.

**Modal fabric characteristics include:**

- Soft, smooth and strong silk feeling
- Has silk like gloss
- Still feel smooth and soft after repeating laundering
- Wonderful hygroscopicity and gas permeability
- Flamboyant colour
- No fibrillation

The fabrics were finished with UV finish and water repellent finish which is another essential application to improve the performance of the product.

**METHODOLOGY:**

**Materials and methods:**

For the research, a collection of beachwear was designed using bamboo and modal fabric which was readied with UV and water repellent finish. Both the finish enhanced the surface properties and performance properties of the fabric. The designs were developed to strive to get novelty in terms of fabric usage and design features. In fact, a pilot survey conducted contributed to the finalizing of the fabric and design features. The pilot survey was conducted using a schedule and the data was collected from 20 retailers dealing with beachwear located in Bangalore.

Based on the results of the preliminary survey, a collection comprising of eight designs were developed keeping in mind four important criteria - comfort, functional purpose, fit and appeal. The designs included monokini, bikini, and tankini designs. Monokini is a single or one piece swimsuit. Bikini is a two piece swimwear and a tankini includes briefs with a longer top. The description and appearance of the designs are given below.

**DESIGN 1:**



A two piece Tankini with tie up at shoulders and frill in green at the waistband of the panty.

**Colour:** White and green

**Fabric used:** 100% knitted Bamboo fabric

## DESIGN 2



A two piece Tankini in maroon bamboo Lycra with tie up at the back with halter neck and paneled panty

**Colour:** Black and maroon

**Fabric used:** Knitted bamboo lycra fabric

## DESIGN 3



Monokini with tie up at back neck and yoke in the front. The front has a V neck.

**Colour:** White and black

**Fabric used:** Knitted bamboo lycra and modal lycra

## DESIGN 4



Monokini with tie up at back neck. The front and back has princess line at both front and back with white piping

**Colour:** Black with white piping

**Fabric used:** 100% knitted bamboo fabric

## DESIGN 5



Two piece bikini with halter neck tie up and décolleté neck

**Colour:** Black

**Fabric used:** Knitted modal lycra

## DESIGN 6



Bikini with tie up at back neck and at back and a tie up on either side of waist of the panty.

**Colour:** Maroon

**Fabric used:** Knitted bamboo lycra

**DESIGN 7**



Bikini with ruffles at the back and gathers at the center front. It has a string for tie up at back neck and tie up at either side of waist band of the panty

**Colour:** Green

**Fabric used:** Knitted modal lycra fabric

**DESIGN 8**



Bikini with tie up at the back neck and center back. The panty has tie up at either side of the waist band

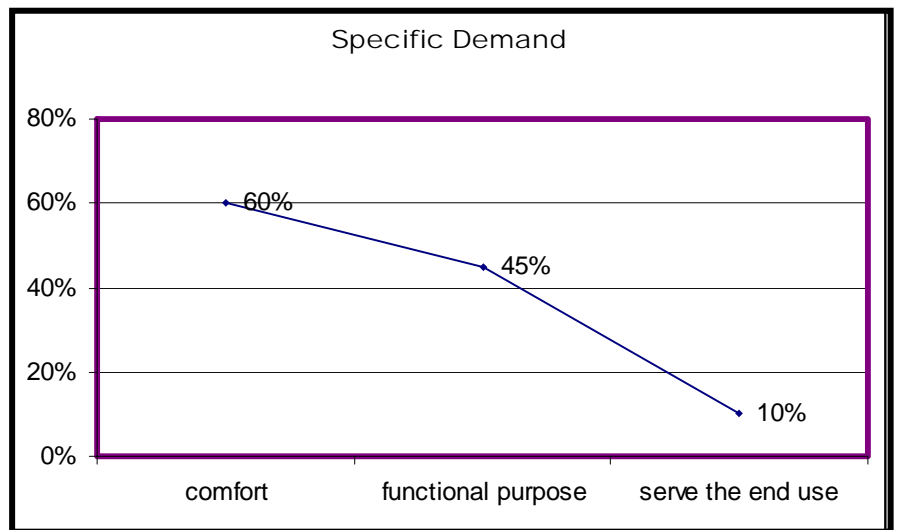
**Colour:** White 100%

**Fabric used:** Knitted bamboo fabric

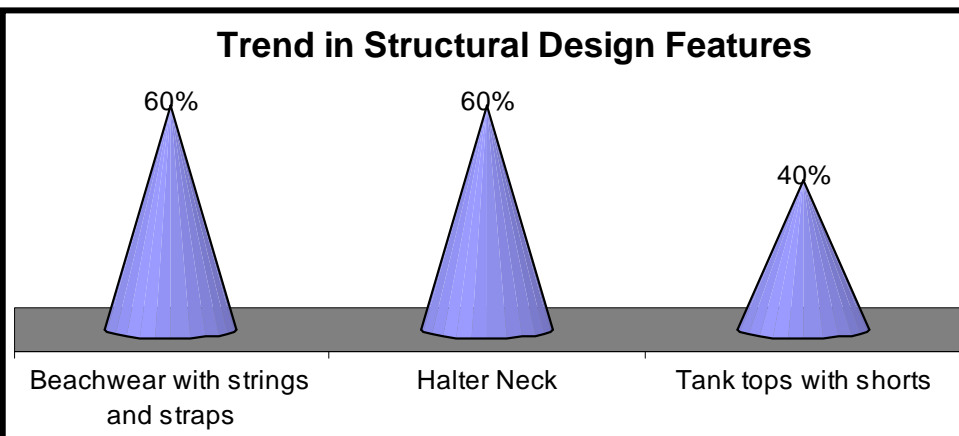
The results of the preliminary survey based on which the collection was developed, showed the following facts.

**Graph 1: Specific demand of the consumer**

The graph depicts that 60% of the respondents felt that comfort was an important demand of the consumers in their beachwear followed by 45% for them preferring functional purpose of the beachwear as important. These factors can be kept in mind when designing and developing a beachwear collection.



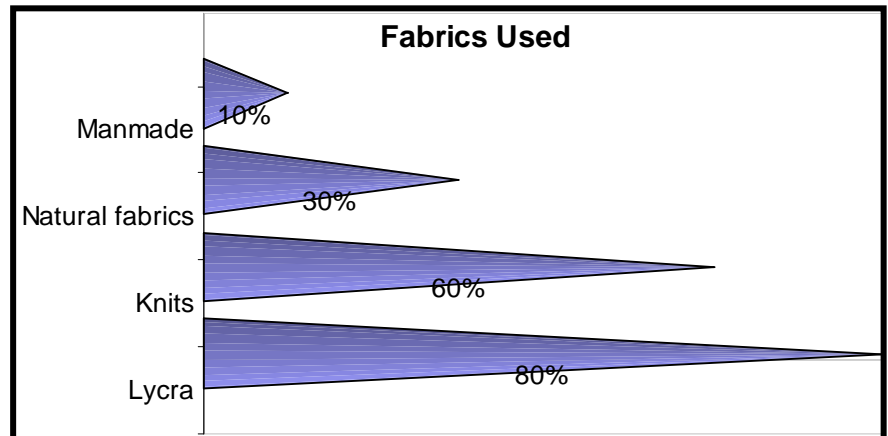
**Graph 2: Trend in structural design feature of beachwear**



The graph shows that the most commonly used features are halter necks, tie ups in the form of strings and straps. Hence it can be concluded that there is definitely scope to impact the global and domestic market with new design features that adhere to the aesthetic and comfort factor as well.

### Graph 3: Fabrics Used for Beachwear:

The graph shows that experimentation with green fabrics has not yet been introduced in to the consumer market and with the consumer becoming more environment conscious, a collection of beachwear in eco-friendly textiles will definitely be well accepted by the global as well as domestic consumer.



### Results and discussion:

The results of the survey showed that design features such as halter neck, tank tops, straps and strings were frequently used. Lycra, knits and natural fabrics like cotton are the commonly used fabrics. Hence it is evident that there is tremendous scope for experimentation and introducing new innovative design features (both structural and functional) and using green fabrics which is the demand of today's 'environment conscious' global consumers. Further any products developed based on the above conclusion will be accepted as well as lead to a definite demand and have an impact on the free trade global as well as domestic scenario.

### Conclusion:

The novelty in the collection developed is the usage of eco-friendly fabrics bamboo and modal applied with UV finish and water repellent finish. The collection developed once introduced to the consumer will be well accepted by them and this point is reinforced by the results of the pilot study which shows that the consumer is starving for something new that meets their performance demands.

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*Image courtesy: <http://imgs.yoox.com/>*