ANDROGYNOUS SEXUALITY AND FASHION

CYBER WORLD AND FUTURE IN MAKING

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CYBER WORLD AND FUTURE IN MAKING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

LIST OF FIGUERS

LIST OF TABLES

DECLERATION

I, Kripal Thapa, hereby declare that the work presented herein is genuine work done originally by me and has not been published or submitted elsewhere for the requirement of a degree programme. Any literature, data or works done by others and cited within this dissertation has been given due acknowledgement and listed in the reference section.

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ABSTRACT

The research paper on "Androgynous sexuality and Fashion: Cyber world and future in making" would identify the shaping of androgynous fashion via internet as a medium and identify future prospect for the androgynous fashion market to grow among millennials. The major gap area is identified the perception of androgynous fashion in the internet culture among the millennials and how will it shape the market growth of androgynous fashion.

Objectives: The purpose of the research paper is to find the perception of androgynous fashion via internet among the millennials and how it shapes the future of the market.

Scope of the project: The scope of the project is to recognize the reason is there still the prevalent notion of gender orientation when it comes to clothing among the millennials. The scope is to learn about how internet culture has given millennials the idea of what androgynous fashion is and will it shape the future of the market.

Methodology used: A simple random sampling survey is done among the millennials on their usage of internet, browsing, ideas on androgynous fashion using images as reference and their future preference. The sample size is millennials age 18-35 from Darjeeling Hills. The participants were told about introduction, demographic questions, and androgynous fashion.

Major findings and conclusions: The results were in coded distribution, the lifestyle, internet usage and browsing content, understanding androgynous fashion through pictures or had prior knowledge, conceptualizing style and future preference. From the survey, it has been seen that would prefer to opt for androgynous fashion in the future.

Major recommendations or suggestions for improvement: The project could be expanded by considering millennials from different parts of India with different backgrounds, ideas on clothing and their perception of androgynous fashion. This could give us a clear perception of what will be the future of androgynous fashion among millennials in India.

Keywords: *Androgyny, Androgynous fashion, Internet culture, Queer/Queerness, Heteronormativity, Stereotype, Gender Construction, Norms and Millennials.*

Introduction:

Androgynous is a term that has had kaleidoscopic variations over the years. The etymology is from Ancient Greek: ἀνδρόγυνος, from ἀνήρ, stem ἀνδρ– (*anér, andr-*, meaning man) and γυνή (*gunē, gyné*, meaning woman) (What is the origin of the word androgynous, 2018).

The word also has it connection in Latin where it means *having two sex, being both male and female* (What is the origin of the word androgynous, 2018). *Hermaphrodite* is the first to be noted in *Greek, Roman and Latin* religious sacraments and texts, where concept of man and woman being as one soul, or a complete entity is described, it is the first to be noted where androgynous figure appear (Rodriguez, 2018). Hermaphroditus is one of the early figures in the Greek mythology. Hinduism has also reflected to the subject of androgyny, a deity called *Ardhanarishwar* who is the merger between the all mighty destroyer Shiva and his wife, Parvathi (Khatani, N/A).

The early subject matter of the word androgynous has relations with mythical or deity like figures. Hence, in its early form the word was loosely based on gender-orientation, to describe deities or figures who possessed both the qualities of *both man and woman*.
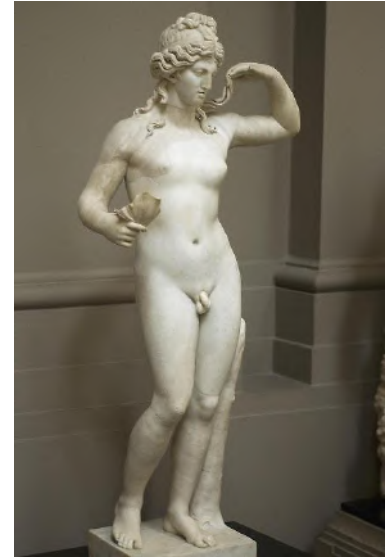
Fig. 1.1 Hermaphrodite (Source: Pinterest)

Androgynous fashion and Rebel of the norms:

There is never an exact point as to when did the androgynous fashion originate or grew. Men in the 16th century would dress flamboyantly, put on make-up, and wear ruffles, laces, petticoats and birches (Townson, 2016). But that was the norm of the time. Androgynous fashion was about defying the normative structure of society, i.e., rebelling against the given norm of *what a man should wear and what a women should wear, the colour code for each gender, the structure of the garment, the style and the choices.* The most prominent figure was a French women named Amatine Lucile Aurora Dupin who scandalized the 19th century Paris when she entered a men sporting club in a two piece suit (Townson, 2016). This broke the convention of the rapidly progressing Europe. Soon Hollywood actress took the league in breaking barriers in gender structured clothing.

Actress such as Marlene Dietrich, Audrey Hepburn were the top league names who made their silver screen appearance in the most unstructured fashion.

Fig. 1.2 Amatine Lucile Aurora Dupin (Source: Pinterest)

Fig. 1.3 Marlene Dietrich (Source: Pinterest)

The first one to do so is Marlene Dietrich (Komar, 2016) who was a German born American actress who would sport a menswear specifically trousers, waistcoat and a fedora in her movies and even on the set.

After the World Wars, due to rationing women soon began to adopt menswear which prompted in sub-cultures as Zoot, Mod and Teddy Boys, which deconstructed the myth as women opt out of free flow structured garments and opted for trousers and blazers donning an androgynous look.

In the late sixties, after the Stonewall Riots in New York where we could see gender fluidity out and open, as queer people gathered there was a surge of the androgyny. Only after the Queer Liberation movement, androgyny gained a surge among the general diaspora as gender fluidity and gender expression gained mass acceptance. Late David Bowie's alter ego Ziggy Star was quite famous androgynous figure in 70's (Russell, 2020). Musicians along with the queer folks began to break stereotypes on structured clothing. Along this time, the structured clothing notion broke and designers would experiment to create more androgynous line like Yves Saint Laurent '*Le Smoking Suit'*, Rei Kawakubo Unstructured Designs, Yohji Yamamoto's *ANDROGINY* (Russell, 2020).

Throughout the fashion context, androgyny evolved as a form of expression rebelling against the dogma of what a man should wear and what a woman should wear. Many artist such as Boy George, Late Prince, and Madonna would prance along the stage in either in their androgynous alter egos where they would wear either bright colours with floral sleeves or dark blazers and woodland boots or lumberjack shirts.

Fig. 1.4 Ziggy Stardust (Source: Pinterest)

A look at "fish and drag" cross dressing and androgynous fashion:

Androgynous fashion has always been conceptualize as "fish-drag" cross dressing (Arnold, 2001). The notion started with the structured breakdown of normative styles of clothing in a heteronormative society. The former always had a sense of fashion, the latter carried a *kink,* (Rodriguez, 2018). The main theme lied in the confusion of "what would men wear" if women wore suits and pants (Russell, 2020). The context seem to be more vivid, when ideas of sexual exploration began in the late 17th century in the French court of Mary Antoinette, where she would prefer to her male lover to adorn feminine lingerie, specifically gossamer (DeRoux, 2009), further research showed "ideas of cross -dressing" as an idea of sexual exploration more than fashion. The transvestites' community in the 70's and 80's, and Rupal's Drag were famous for cross dressing with elaborate make-up, and flamboyant show-girl couture (Macidian, 2000). The androgynous fashion has a different distinction in regard, as it was more over a manoeuvre exploration on how to deconstruct the norms of the society to fit all (Komar, 2016).

A brief look into the history of androgynous fashion in India:

Androgyny always existed in India starting from Indus Valley Civilization, where the main agenda was to cover their body, how to cover the body was a personal choice but a common culture was followed among men and women. The men wrapped a cloth around their lower body and fastened it at the back, the women did the same with reduced length till knee leaving the waist bared (Khatani, N/A).

One thing that was common among both the genders was the fondness of jewellery. The ornaments include necklaces, bracelets, earrings, anklet, rings, bangles, pectorals, etc. which were generally made of gold, silver, copper, stones like lapis lazuli, turquoise, amazonite, quartz, etc. Many of the male figurines also reveal that men at that time were interested in dressing their hair in various styles like the hair woven into a bun, hair coiled in a ring on the top of the head, beards were usually trimmed.

During the Vedic era, the style of clothing changed but the idea remained the same which was to wrap the cloth around the body. Orthodox males and females usually wore the uttariya by throwing it over the left shoulder only, in the style called upavita.

There was another garment called pravara that they used to wear in cold. This was the general garb of both the sexes but the difference existed only in size of cloth and manner of wearing. The only difference was in the type of fabric used by different class of people where lower class preferred loincloth the elite class opted for muslin, linen, silk, flax and the way they draped the cloth was different from the other class to show their opulence.

Sari was a style of draping the cloth which was very common among the women's and later during this era the blouses to cover chest were introduced.

The Mauryan and the Gupta period followed the same ideology, however with the discovery of new silhouettes and fabrics, the styles of wrapping the cloth changed. In the Gupta period the stitched garments became the statement of elite class. The Ajanta painting are the evidence of the anatriya worn by women changed into gagri, which has many swirling effects exalted by its many folds. The men and women usually covered there lower body and the upper body was left open at times, even after the emergence of blouses/choli's the women left the bust part bare. (Dhamija, 2009)

The change and the separation of clothing according to gender came into play with the Mughal's conquering India. The common public had a natural tendency to look upon the king's and queen's and their clothing styles and innovation in the dressing styles came with changing periods of rule. The Mughal ruled India for approximately 200 years and influenced the dressing pattern of common public to much extend. The crucial reasons of change to gender oriented clothing from androgyny was Mughal rule.

The Indian Millennials, the Internet Era and Androgynous Fashion:

The term internet culture is not restricted to one connotation, it has variations as do its aspects, sources and touchpoints. The word *Cyber Culture* was born when the advent of computers took over the demanding human needs but it also refers to the changes impacted by computer and computer based technologies on subjects such as art, hobbies, fashion and lifestyle (Cengage, 2020).

1990s saw the boom of internet and worldwide web when it became commercialized and available to public at low costing, the massive spread made connectivity convenient. This boost the availability of information and the surge of Google there were plethora to fill and browse what information was need to suit the need of the user. Internet consumed the world and new generation called Gen E was born out of it (Cengage, 2020).

The term new generation, called Gen E is often referred to as Generation Y or Generation X. The term to incorporate all these new *generation of people born* between the late 1989 and early 2000s are called *Millennials* (Martin, 2017).

The Indian Millennial diaspora is no stranger, since they were born in the period of transition of the country to globalization, liberalization and privatization. The Indian Millennial grew with the knowledge of what is going in the rest of the world, and following what the most acceptable westernize fashion could be for them.

The internet era coincided with the liberalization of the Indian policies and globalization of the Indian market forces. Hence, the millennials were paved to a wide scope of opportunities to understand the world from a new perspective.

The juxtaposition of Indian fashion with its largely conceived notions of orthodox, religious sentiments is still prevalent in the mainstream society. This opposes the idea of something such as Androgynous fashion to retain a bold hold in the general diaspora. Indian fashion scenario still largely consist of the masculine feminine structure.

In the recent years, Indian runways has seen an increase in the androgynous style in the runway, where *angrakhas and kediyu* were styled to perceive models as androgynous looking during the Lakme Winter Fashion Week-2018 (Sarkar, 2018).But there is a stark contrast in what walks down the runway and what walks on the street.

Most of the Indian millennials are less fashion conscious, adopting a style which does not define their societal trait, i.e., being masculine and feminine, is a hard fact to digest. Androgynous fashion is still an unexplored avenue in the Indian diaspora, and even among the millennials who are somewhat largely shaped and influenced by the structure of the society.

The Statement of Problem:

Through research there is a gap area on the developing relation of androgynous fashion and internet culture and how it has impacted the life of people. The developing fashion trend have shifted from a structured looks for both the genders to more unconventional narratives of loose silhouettes, the influence of internet as a medium on people choosing the unconventional than conventional and how far have they understood androgynous fashion. Is it shaping our new future that consists of internet conscious people?

The Objective of the Study:

The objective of the study is find the relationship between the internet culture and how it has developed androgynous fashion and impact the Generation E (Cengage, 2020) and their lifestyle. The focus of the study will be the Generation E, i.e. in the age gap of 18-35 years of Darjeeling. Through this research it is clear that with the surge of internet there were plethora of information available to its users, hence it is to establish how the generation Z was exposed to androgynous culture through internet as a medium and has it impacted their lifestyle and market choices.

Importance of the Study:

The importance of the study is to understand the pivotal role of androgyny and internet in developing fashion whilst finding and analyzing the relation between gender, fashion and the internet. The study is also to find the relevance of the internet culture among Generation E

and has androgynous fashion shaped their market choices and lifestyle. It is tom understand how relevant will androgyny be in the future of fashion.

Chapter Summary:

The chapter is to give a brief introduction to origin of the word from Greek where it means a combination of both man and woman, even in Latin there are roots of the words which meant the same. The structure of idea of androgyny has few mythological perspective as to sex, i.e., a combination of both male and female.

There were loose androgynous figures in the early 1600s where men would put loose garments such as stockings and make-up which were later seen to be bit more androgynous. There still was no formidable approach until late in the 19th Century when structured garments segregated men and women. In the late 19th Century and 70's androgyny became adopted by actress, musicians as their alter ego to define and shape their career. Fashion played a pivotal role in defining their alter egos and screen characters.

It is still not clear among masses the distinction of androgynous fashion and cross-dressing, which still largely shapes the former and brings out outdate notion about androgyny.

The chapter also briefly looks into India in the ancient time, where there is unconsciously androgynous structure in the society.

Taking the focus group millennials, i.e. 18 to 35 years the purpose of the study is understand how androgyny has developed in this era, its impact on their lifestyle, choices and future.

Review of Literature

Fashion, Androgyny and "The Mainstream Circus of Androgynous Fashion"

Fashion defines gender, and renders it visible (Buckley & Fawcett 2002, 7), but it is the media that shapes the body by addressing it as a social agent, creating and recreating beauty ideals of the period it depicts. The rise of fashion media in the last century brought with itself standards in terms of gender roles, fashion, trends and numerous different issues.

During the last two years the "gender bending" motion has reached its pick in fashion media, from cover pages, to editorials and advertising campaigns for recognizable fashion brands. Wilson (1992, 34) notes that many of us may feel threatened and insecure related to gender bending, but Barnard (2002, 117) sees the going against the grain of one's sex as the most refined form of sexual attractiveness. This can be seen in recent representations of androgyny and dandyism in fashion magazines in western society. According to Shinkle (2008,13) the fashion image is an interface between lived body and the visible, public body, which gives better understanding of gender differences through conveyed images in fashion magazines.

Articles associated with the new androgynous fashion describe pairs of jeans as boyfriend jeans and t-shirts as tomboyish, they teach women how to wear masculine clothes and look sexy and feminine rather than "mannish", or suggest they wear their androgynous coats without their arms in, so that it will look like it was draped on them by their man (*Vogue* September 2011).

Androgyny often becomes also a means for the display of social status. Diana Crane (2000) writes that the "principal messages [of fashion] are about the way in which women and men perceive their gender roles or are expected to perceive them", moreover "fashionable clothes are used to make statements about social class and social identity". (Crane 2000: 16). If we assume that (a) clothing is used as a means through which to indicate one's gender identity and (b) at the same time, clothes are also markers of a particular position in the social hierarchy, then we can presuppose a connection between particular gendered clothes, in this case androgynous ones, and social class.

In the 1960s' New York underground scene, a powerful example is represented by Andy Warhol's rejection of traditional masculinity through the use of particular clothes, wigs, bags, make-up, as well as his work with trans-women from disadvantaged backgrounds which elevated them to the status of superstars, without forgetting his own occasional cross-dressing. Glam rock hit 1970s Britain with a wave of androgynous male musicians, among which David Bowie as Ziggy Stardust, who wore platform heels, glitter and garish camp outfits. As Auslander (2006) notes:

"By asserting the performativity of gender and sexuality through the queer Ziggy Stardust persona, Bowie challenged both the conventional sexuality of rock culture and the concept of foundational sexual identity (Auslander2006: 106)."

Even though women's androgynous style did not gain the same amount of cultural prominence, during the 70s, feminists often adopted an androgynous style characterised by "flat shoes, baggy trousers, unshaven legs and faces bare of make-up" a look meant to "combine practicality with a strong statement about not dressing for men" (Blackman and Perry 1990: 68). It must also be noted, however, that this style was more about anti-fashion rather that fashion, which was perceived as an evil of patriarchal capitalism.

Clark (1991) also talks about the phenomenon of female androgyny turning mainstream during the 1990s in terms of 'commodity lesbianism' and the problematic democratic assimilation of

non-normative sexualities into the dominant discourse. A similar point is discussed by queer theorists associated with the anti-social turn (Bersani 1996, Edelman, 2004, Halberstam 2008). Reflecting on the relationship between queer politics and the mainstream, they argue that the increasingly widespread visibility of queer people and symbols in culture is not matched by an equally widespread acceptance of alternative forms of gender and sexuality. The disruptive power of queerness and its own intrinsic features are lost when it is democratically assimilated by dominant society, where the ideal queer becomes a gender-normal, respectably desexualised, middle-class, content individual embracing the dreams and the values of the heteronormative community (Bersani 1996, Edelman 2004, Love 2007).

This tension between greater mainstream visibility and the repression of queerness unsettling potential emerges as a constant in examples of popular culture even the1990s, throughout the 2000s and in the present day. Focusing again on the particularly relevant case of female androgyny in the contemporary context, Reed (2011) interprets Ellen Degeneres's own androgyny as a post-gay lesbianism that erases lesbian sexuality. Ellen, Reed argues, is completely desexualised and, after coming out as a lesbian, moves beyond gay, in order to appeal to the liberal heterosexual public that is open to homosexuality as long as it does not disturb heteronormativity. Dove-Viebahn (2011) talks about the fashionable normativity of the highly-stylised lesbian characters in *The L Word*, and, citing Dittmar, (1998) states:
"Through lesbian chic, a fashionable alternative that rendered common markers of a minority identity mainstream, lesbians are cunningly redefined to fit the parameters of a suburban, middle-class ideal of normalcy and decency (Dove-Viebhan 2011: 76)."
Finally, Gever (2003), noting again how androgynous and lesbian visibility only exists for those who are white and middle-class, argues that ambiguity is still used as a marketing tool and no unambiguous reference to lesbianism can yet be found in the mainstream. Passing through years of homophobia, silence and being turned into a spectacle, thus, from the years 2000s, androgyny starts witnessing a process of severe normalisation and assimilation into dominant society and culture.
In recent years androgyny has been inflected in the mainstream culture, because of fashion re-occupation with this trend that initially was introduced as fashionable during the 1920s. Due to its recent popularity the visibility of „androgyny" has caused difficulties for the ones who want to convey messages referring to sexual preferences by using recognizable details common for its presentation. According to Entwistle and Wilson (2001, 217-218) although feminist lesbians visibly fought fashion as a constraining and feminizing force of 14 capitalism and "*heteropatriarchym*",fashion has always had an important role to play within lesbian and bisexual culture. It is in the beginning of the 1990s when the situation started to be more complicated due to the media passion with "androgyny" often referred as "lesbian chic" (Vänskä 2002, 9). The result was "androgyny" with elements of dandyism present in every corner of the mainstream popular culture, which in turn led to a situation of another re-interpretation of its signification.

Silverman (1986 cf. Entwistle and Wilson 2001, 218) explained that postmodern fashion puts quotation marks around the garments it revitalizes, allowing them to be re-read in a space of ironic distance between the wearer and the garment. This opens up a space for "playing" with fashion, which is the antithesis of being its victim, and thus the feminist arguments about the regulation of women's bodies through fashion decline in importance (Ibid.). To "dress right" in sense of highlighting the intentionally constructed messages around sexuality, gender and class has caused some difficulties (possible misreading) in the post-modern society.
There is one aspect in the whole story that remains unchanged; androgyny has always been referred to as the "*comfort zone*" for women wanting to express their "natural self", beyond

constructed ideals for femininity. In this context comfort can be taken to embody resistance to the hegemonic discourses of "proper" feminine or masculine behaviour and attire (Entwistle and Wilson 2001, 222). According to Evans and Thornton (1989 cf. Entwistle and Wilson 2001, 222) looking for an expression of an authentic "natural self", women based their appearance on the masculine model (short hair, trousers, no make-up) or an infantile model (coloured dungarees and lace-up shoes).

The "comfort zone" can also signify the ease one might feel from the degree of fit between the outside of one's body and its inside (the imagined self). According to Entwistle and Wilson (2001, 222-223) it can also be explained as wish to close the gap between performance (acting) and ontology (being), a desire to be self-present to both oneself and others. The choice of comfortable clothes proposes identity as a "natural" phenomenon – giving identity an essentialism, which therefore assists heterosexuality in retaining a false binary (Ibid, 223). It covers up the „construction" of identity and therefore masks its historical roots as a discourse, closing down other potential positions or movements within that discourse (Entwistle and Wilson 2001, 223). Comfort in androgyny was and can be read as recognizable queer sign to both oneself and others, a way in which identity is mapped onto the body.

What is being represented with androgyny in postmodern society can be interpreted as manoeuvre of its "*performativity*". From a signifier of homosexual identities androgyny became appropriated by the mainstream popular culture and the fashion industry itself, and thus gained many other meanings. In light of the more recent developments, there is already a discussion about a possible change in the whole discourse. The crucial question refers to the current meaning of this trend in postmodern fashion, and whether "androgyny" that reached the mainstream level still signifies "hidden" unconventional sexual preferences or there is already a need for establishing new dress codes.

In the 1960s, mods confronted the conventional style of the dominant classes taking the elegant and decent suit-and-tie look to the extreme, and wearing suits and accessories that were perceived as too elegant and too garish both to be appropriately masculine and to be worn in ordinary settings. The skinheads, on the other side, accentuated the stereotypical look of the working-class worker with shaved heads, braces and sturdy boots. The youth subculture associated with glam rock, Hebdige argues, turned instead to a fantasy world, escaping from class and gender through the adoption of David Bowie' signature sexually ambiguous look. The punks rejected the safe dominant culture by wearing dirty clothes made of cheap materials and in vulgar and excessive styles, paired with outrageous objects that had nothing to do with the common-sense wardrobe, such as safety-pins, razor blades and chains.

A feature from *Vogue* (July 2011) focuses on British model Stella Tennant, described as "the queen of punk androgyny". The use of the adjective punk, besides making reference to the transgressive subculture, is made even more meaningful by the androgynous quality that punk style itself had and still has. Differently to the fashions and attitudes of other youth subcultures, punks adopted unusual hairstyles with Mohawks and extravagant hair colours, without particular distinctions of gender; even make-up was used by both men and women and their clothing was fairly unisex. Arnold (2001) underlines how "[whereas] previous subcultures had usually cast women as marginal figures, […] punk allowed young women a strong, if intimidating dress code" (Arnold 2001: 46). In the picture of Tennant, which occupies a good part of the left side of the page, we see her clothed in black leather boots, black tights, and a dirty-looking blue dress worn untied and over a greyish shirt with the sleeves rolled up. Her face, unusually for a model in a photo-shoot, and unusually for *Vogue*, appears to be completely make-up free, and her black hair is cropped short and uncombed. Her scruffy and unkempt look, represents a different take on the androgyny trend and a break from all the examples previously looked at. Here, androgyny has apparently nothing to do with the display of a

wealthy lifestyle, spotless bourgeois taste, and ambiguous sensuality and so on. Instead, as the association of 'androgyny' with 'punk' already indicates, it is clearly intended to make a reference to the subcultural style of the streets and the ordinary people. This is also connoted by the background: a stained brick wall. Through these elements, Tennant's full-length portrait recalls working-class subcultural style, and hints this way at a history of contempt for dominant society and conventional morality. The connection with androgyny, moreover, takes gender ambiguity itself to the same level of provocation and rebellion to the mainstream, which failed to transpire from the readings of other material.

From the analysis of Stella Tennant's *Vogue* "Style File", therefore, emerges the way in which both punk and androgyny are appropriated and stripped of their disruptive potential. Instead of challenging dominant views on the appropriate way of dressing, the hierarchical legitimacy of the culture of the dominant classes, and normative expectations about gender, they are used, through a soft, and non-threatening version of them, to communicate an edgy and hip style. Commenting on a similar phenomenon, Barnard (1996) reflects on how much tamed and 'domesticated' versions of punk hair may be found in eminently respectable places today, [...] watered-down versions of [Vivienne Westwood's] work are to be found in every 'Top Man and 'Chelsea Girl', [and] what started as a challenge to [the dominant] system and those classes is rendered harmless to them (Barnard 1996: 132).

In other words, by entering mainstream fashion, the androgynous look becomes associated with young, alternative and even radical lifestyles, and is turned into an emblem of the hip and cool. However, its meanings are removed and substituted with an artificial and safe version of them: the style is thus still able to align itself to the ideals and values of the dominant society, while alternative subcultures are incorporated into the mainstream. This also appears clearly, for example, from the 'Denim' newsletter by the fashion brand *Free People*, which targets young, bohemian and free- spirited female customers. Here, the model is wearing tomboy clothes and even though in this case as in many others, they have nothing truly masculine about them, they represent a departure from Free People's usual style characterised by lace maxi dresses and floral patterns.

This kind of clothing is justified by the presence of a boyfriend. A caption, in fact, probingly asks "who's your boyfriend?", while another describes the style as "borrowed from the boys". Androgyny is therefore made safe by coding it as heterosexual.

Internet Culture and Millennials

The Internet, the way it looks today, is extremely multifaceted and diversified, which makes it difficult to define and label. Here we face a choice between different roads – concerning how to describe the parts that together make up the Internet. One approach is to describe the parts as different communication media, and the Internet as something that reflects its overarching structure. For example, the Internet has been called a "super-medium" (Jansson, 2002), a "meta-medium" (Fagerjord, 2007), or a "hybrid-medium" (Sveningsson, Lövheim, & Bergquist, 2003) in descriptions of a large and overarching structure that hosts many different underlying media forms. Others have argued that the whole of the Internet should be seen as one single overarching Panel Discussion II: Culture and Media Technology 86 Malin Sveningsson Elm medium, and thus understood the different underlying parts that make up the Internet as different communication modes, or genres (Finnemann, 2007).

According to Malin Sveningsson Elm in his journal "Understanding and Studying Internet Culture(s) Hybridity and Interdisciplinarity", talks about Internet culture, understanding the

culture in the sense of "a whole way of life". This thus concerns culture in the sense of ways of living, ways of thinking, and having something in common – a mutual world of symbols and shared perspectives (cf. Storey, 1993). "In my view, Internet culture is then about the shared values and perspectives that are created and maintained in various online settings, perspectives that guide norms and ideals for how to act and interact with other individuals. Consequently, doing research on Internet culture means studying these norms, ideals, values and perspectives – what people do online, what they think about what they do and what underlies their online actions and interactions" (Elm, N/A)

So, Internet culture clearly poses some challenges. How are we to study something that is so diverse and multifaceted? The fact that environments and groups of users are so diverse probably means that we must assume different perspectives and use different research methods – and do research differently according to what kinds of material and users we are studying. We may also have to combine several methods in order to study different aspects of specific Internet sites. In other words, we need to be creative and make our own bricolages of methods. Being a hybrid medium, the Internet requires hybrid methods (Sveningsson et al., 2003)

In Web 1.0 the Internet was offering broadcasting platforms only to those that had the necessary knowledge in the field. Internet was accessible only to the companies and the people who had technology knowledge, and the communication was slow and quasi inexistent. The term Web 2.0 started to be used in 2003 and the first conferences that were held on Web 2.0 were held in 2004. Tim O'Reilly, the thinker and promoter of the concept of Web 2.0 defined it as "the business revolution in the computer industry generated by the internet's transformation into a platform and an expectation of understanding of the rules in order to ensure the success of this platform". (Tim O'Riely, 2009)

The emergence of Web 2.0 is in the opinion of many authors and specialists the most important next step in the development of the Internet, except maybe its appearance. Web 2.0 encompasses all current opportunities to surf the Internet easily, create different profiles, accounts, to access certain sites, forums etc. Also, Web 2.0 means democratization of information generated and distributed in public space, through traditional mass media. Until Web 2.0, the capability of creating and distributing mass information was restricted to people and organizations that owned very expensive facilities: television (to create and distribute video materials), printed press (to create and distribute text). (Ibidem, p.18)

The '90s generation is probably the luckiest. The children of the 1990s were born just in time, to live an authentic childhood, without Internet and mobile phones, and to equally live their teens by discovering and going through each stage of the World Wide Web development. It is important to know that the young generation is divided into several categories, strategically named by scientists depending on the birth year and the impact that technology has on their existence.

For example, the Millennials Generation represents those born between 1978 and 2000, and it currently includes over 100 million young people maximum30 years of age. This generation is writing history in the book of humanity, because it is a generation of incredibly well prepared people, with extraordinary abilities to overcome the challenges and the changes in society. Presently, this generation is strong enough and spread enough, that it could become a political force that might dominate all the other institutions of the State. (Erci Greenberg, 2008)

Gap Area:

Through the literature of review, we can access that androgyny has been mainstream but it is at the same time associated a whole lot with queer culture and queerness. There has been a lot of research on androgynous fashion being mainstream in Hollywood and how has queer culture impacted it. At the same time, the researchers also debate on the inter-changeability of the term androgyny and *being androgynous in fashion,* which various patterns of deconstruction of gender in the heteronormative society through constructed ideals of clothing's (DeRoux, 2009).

In this research paper, we keeping all the ideas in mind of what androgynous fashion is, there is a missing link to understand how internet culture has influenced the perception of *androgynous fashion,* especially among millennials. Since, millennials were largely shaped by the surge in the commercialization of the internet and advent of World Wide Web, their doors were open to plethora of information. The paper seeks to analyse and understand what millennials perceive of the androgynous fashion in India and how likely is it to affect the market.

Chapter Summary:

In this chapter, we understood how fashion has perceived bodies and how it pays an important role in the ideas of androgyny. Celebrities have adorned androgynous sexuality to suit their alter ego, whilst at the same time it became a crucial part of the queer culture and queerness.

How mainstream androgyny has inflicted fashion into perceiving unstructured ideals be it in fashion or movies and celebrate the androgynous fashion and its figurines. The idea of androgynous fashion in the mainstream is imbibed with queerness of the context and many queer idols patronize this ideas.

The internet culture is not one but of many components and is a dominant global force in changing the face of anything. It has surge the usurp power of being an all information centre where one can rely on and commercialization during the starting phase of millennials gave them the opportunity to obtain plethora of information and ideas on various subject matter and discourse.

METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this paper is to obtain knowledge about how androgynous fashion has been perceived by the millennials by the internet culture. On the basis of literature review, following question needed to be addressed:

- To understand what millennials would understand by the term androgynous fashion?
- How did the internet culture influenced the idea of androgynous fashion among millennials?
- Would there be a relevant market structure in the future for androgynous fashion?

From the literature review, it has been noticed that there is not enough information about androgynous fashion among millennials influenced by the internet culture. Therefore, a survey has been done for the collection of the current data androgynous fashion perceived by the millennials, influenced by the internet culture. Such information has been used to analyses the different types of problems and the perception towards identifying androgynous fashion and the question of its adoption by the Indian millennials. The test has been done to analyse the various aspect that shape the in the internet culture that shape the Indian millennials perception on androgynous fashion. The results of such analysis may be further used to improve the knowledge of androgynous fashion in India among millennials and for its study in the market.

The study on which the survey has been done is focused on the research questions such as:
i. The internet usage and its content

ii. Using images to conceptualize androgynous fashion.

iii. The knowledge about androgynous fashion.

iv. Obtaining views on the future market structure of androgynous fashion.

The survey consisted of 12 multiple choice questions and 8 question with a 5-likert scale question with the use of images from Pinterest. The aim was to conduct the survey with the target market of millennials in Darjeeling hills. Millennials are the people from the age from 18-35years born in the year 1990 to 2000s. Such target group is highly influence by fashion and largely dominate the fashion scenario.

A simple random sampling done on the survey who are randomly selected where a subset of individuals were chosen form the population. This is an unbiased surveying technique, so there is a same probability of each individual to be chosen.

Limitations and Weakness: The use of simple random sampling can lead to bias in the sample set of the larger population which is not inclusive enough, representation of the full population is skewed and requires additional sampling techniques. (Horton, 2019)

GRAPH OF THE COLLECTED SURVEY:

The following data is collected through survey done on the basis random sampling.
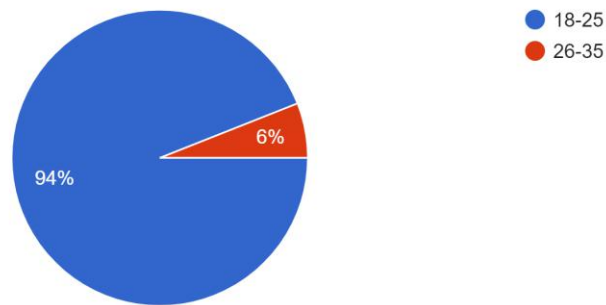
1.AGE
100 responses

Fig. 1.5: Age response pie-graph
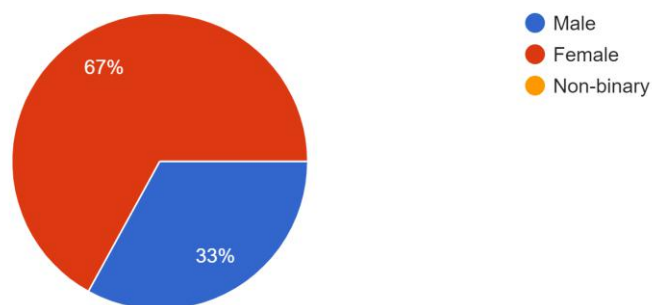
2.GENDER
100 responses

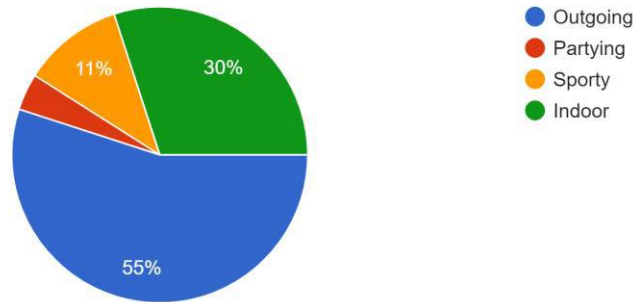Fig.1.6 Gender Response pie-graph

4.LIFESTYLE
100 responses

- Outgoing
- Partying
- Sporty
- Indoor

Fig. 1.7 Lifestyle Response Graph

5.How much time do you surf the internet?
100 responses

- An hour a day
- Two hour a day
- Taking breaks in between every hour
- Other
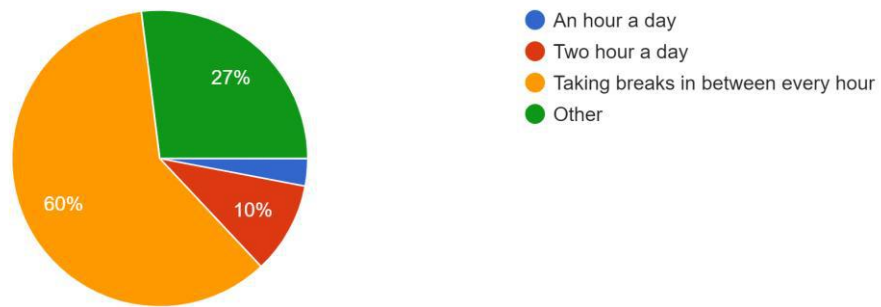
Fig. 1.8 Response on surfing the internet

6.What do you surf most on internet?
100 responses

- Academic related matter
- Social Media
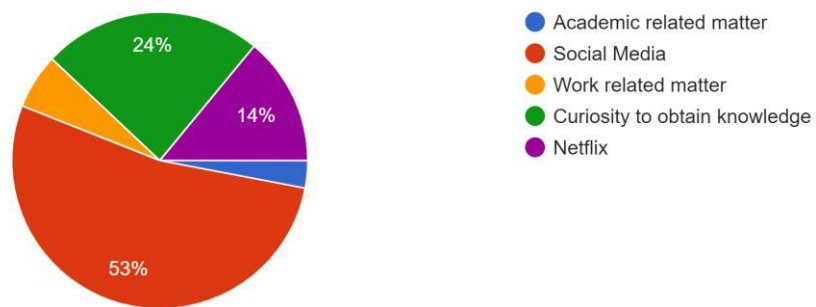- Work related matter
- Curiosity to obtain knowledge
- Netflix

Fig. 1.9 Response on the cotent surfing in the internet

7.How much fashion related content do you browse in the internet?
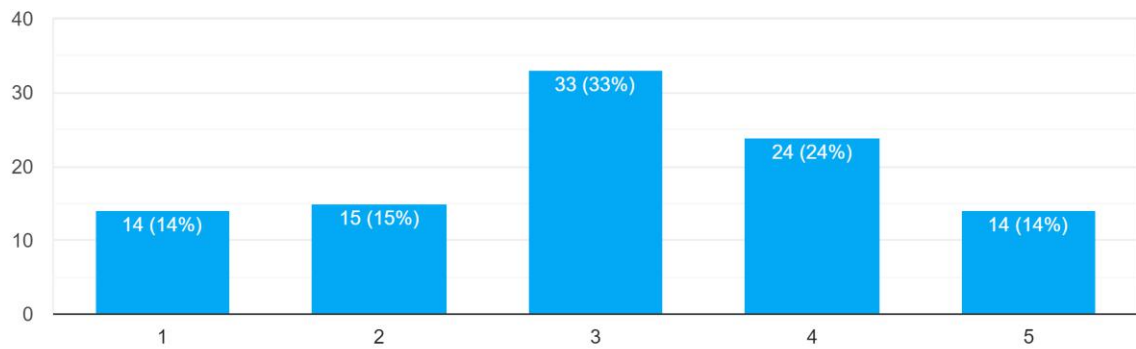100 responses

Fig. 2.0 Response on fashion-related content

Source: Pinterest

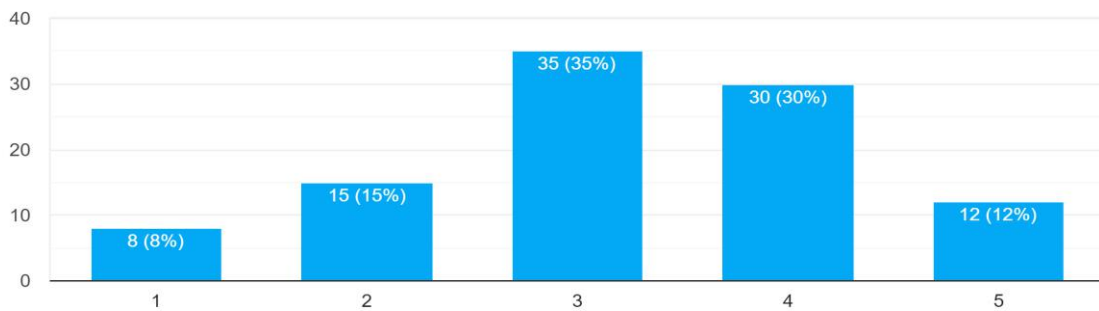Fig. 2.1

8.Rate the Image
100 responses

Fig. 2.2 Response on when asked to rate the given image from casual to androgynous.

Or

(Source: Pinterest) Fig 2.3

(Source: Pinterest) Fig 2.4

9.Which one would you call androgynous fashion?
100 responses

- Timothee Chalamet
- Cody Fern

69%

31%
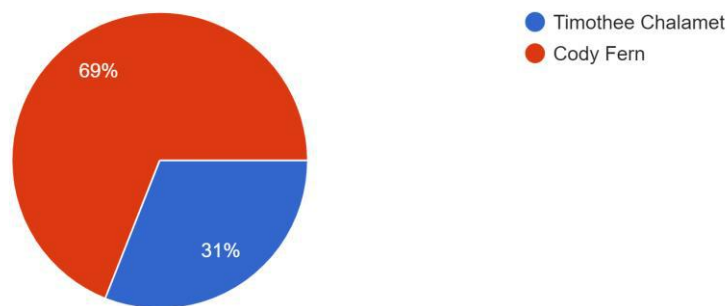
Fig 2.5 Responses for which celebrity is donnig androgynus fashion.

10.From the above given pictures, what is androgynous fashion?
100 responses

- Break down of gender coded colours
- Adoption of the unconventional structure
- Neither of the option
- Both of the above mentioned option
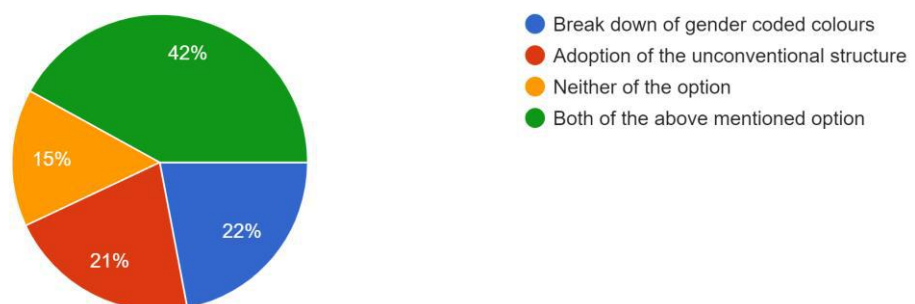
42%

15%

22%

21%

Fig. 2.6 Responses on what would androgynous fashion would be?

11.How often have you come across androgynous fashion?
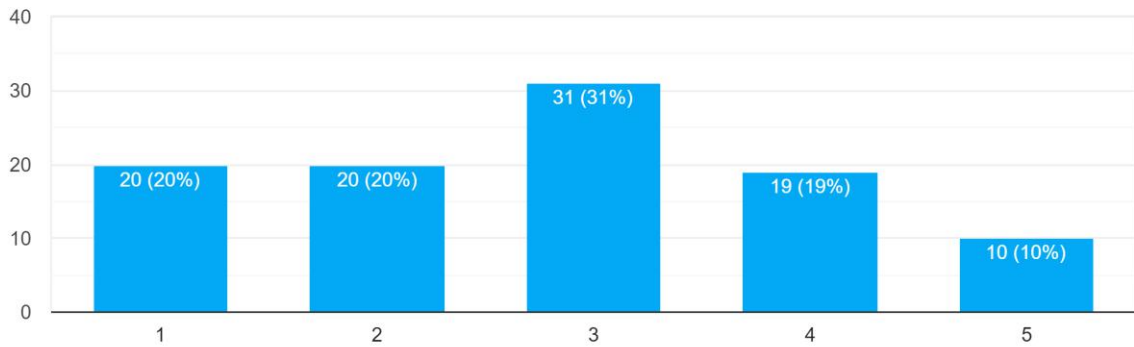100 responses

Fig. 2.7 Responses on how often do they come across?

12.If you have heard of the term androgynous fashion in the internet, where have you heard it from?
100 responses
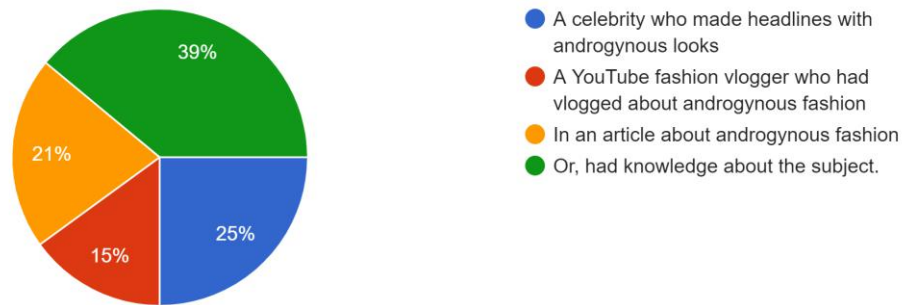
Fig. 2.8 Response where they have heard the term in the internet?

13.What is androgynous fashion according to you?
100 responses
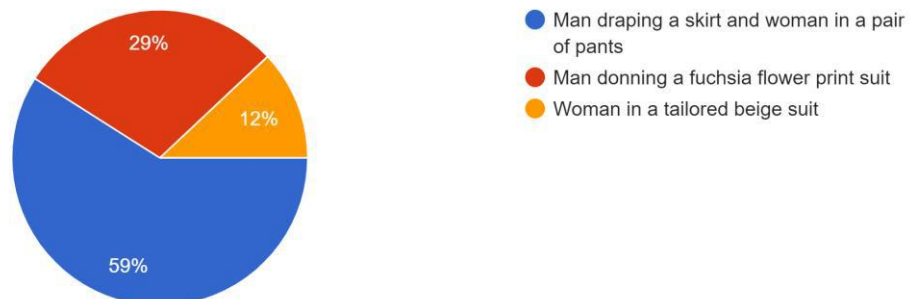
Fig 2.9 Response on what they think is androgynous fashion?

14.How conscious are you in your choice of clothes?

100 responses
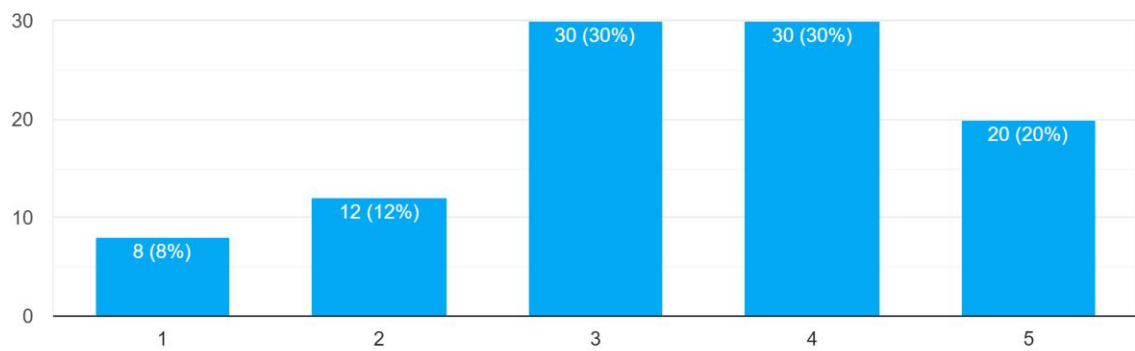
Fig 3.0 Response on how conscious are people are on their choice of clothes.

(Source: Pinterest) Fig. 3.1

15. Rate this image on the basis on suitability.

100 responses
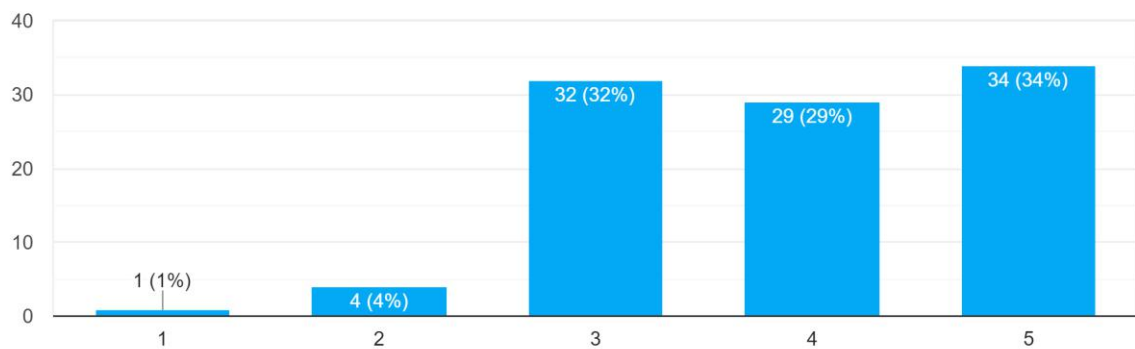
Fig. 3.2 Response on the given image, 1 being feminine and 5 being androgynous.

(Source: Pinterest) Fig. 3.3   Or   (Source: Pinterest) Fig. 3.4   Or

(Source: Pinterest) Fig. 3.5

16.Given the option would you prefer androgynous style or casual style?
100 responses

- Androgynous
- Casual (male)
- Casual(female)

49%
28%
23%
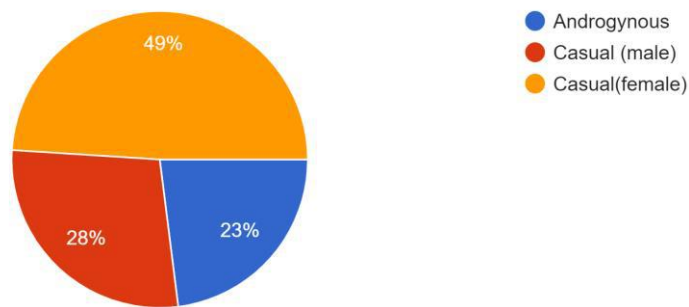
Fig. 3.6 Resopnse on preference of style.

(Source: Pinterest) Fig. 3.7

18. How likely are you to purchase this jacket?
100 responses
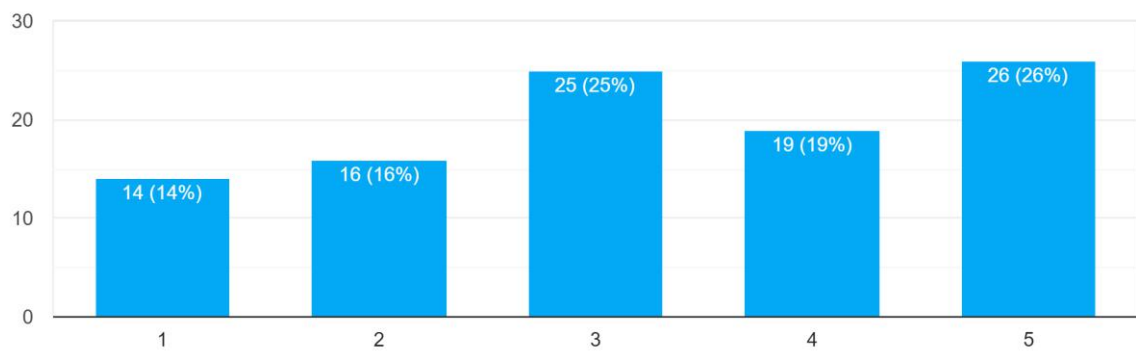
Fig. 3.8 Responses on how likely to purchase the jacket, 1 being least and 5 being most.

19.How often are you going to wear an androgynous style?
100 responses
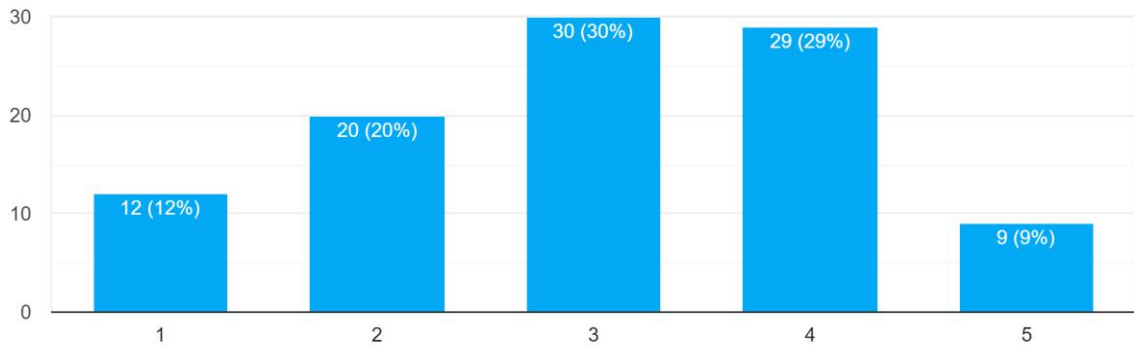
Fig. 3.9 Responses on how often they wear an androgynous style clothing.

In future would you like to purchase androgynous clothing?
100 responses

- Yes, I'd like that.
- No, not really my taste.
- Maybe I'm somewhere in between.
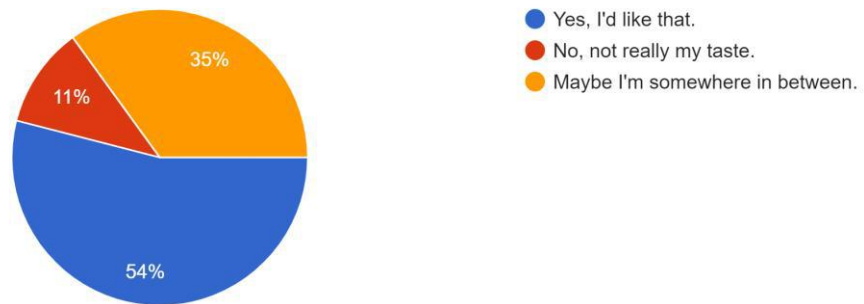
Fig. 4.0 Responses on would they like to purchase androgynous clothing in future.

ANALYZATION OF THE SURVEY AND GRAPH

The survey graph was collected using random sampling, to understand the matter on how their concept of androgynous fashion has been influenced or developed by internet culture? Millennials were the appropriate selection for the study, as they mark the phase of transition and the advancement of internet culture with the development of World Wide Web.

The following table denotes the first part of the survey, the demographics of the millennials.

Demographics	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Total Respondents
Age	18-25 (94%)	26-35(6%)	N/A	N/A	100
Gender	Female (67%)	Male (33%)	Non-binary(n/a)	N/A	100
Education	Undergraduate (63%)	Post-graduate (19%)	High School (18%)	N/A	100
Lifestyle	Outgoing (55%)	Partying (4%)	Sporty (11%)	Indoor (30%)	100

Table 1.1 Demographic response on the millennials

In the first table 1.1, the study reveals that the sample population who responded were aged between 18-25 age gaps, 94%, i.e., the late millennials, where the early millennials aged, 26-35 were 6% of the total respondents. In the gender spectrum, 67% of respondents were females out of 100, while only 33% males responded. In the education, 63% of the respondents were pursuing undergraduate, while 19% were pursuing post-graduate, and 18% were high-school students out of 100 respondents. The lifestyle of 55% respondents are outgoing, 30% are indoor, 11% are sporty and 4% are partying lifestyle out of 100 respondents. The first survey is to understand the sample's early factor which influences their choices and knowledge about the subject matter.

In the second table I have tabulated the internet usage on time basis, and content surfing.

	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Total
Intent Usage	An hour a day (3%)	Two hour a day (10%)	Taking breaks in between every hour (60%)	Other (27%)	N/A	100
Content Surfing	Academic related (3%)	Social Media (53%)	Work Related (6%)	Curiosity to obtain knowledge (24%)	Netflix (14%)	100

Table 1.2 Internet Usage and Content Surfing in the internet

From table, it is clear that 60% of the respondents take breaks in between every hour while they surf the internet. The majority of the respondents 53% surf Social Media, i.e., social media preoccupies the time of the respondents.

When inquired about how much fashion related content do the samples browse in the internet, the following graph was obtained:
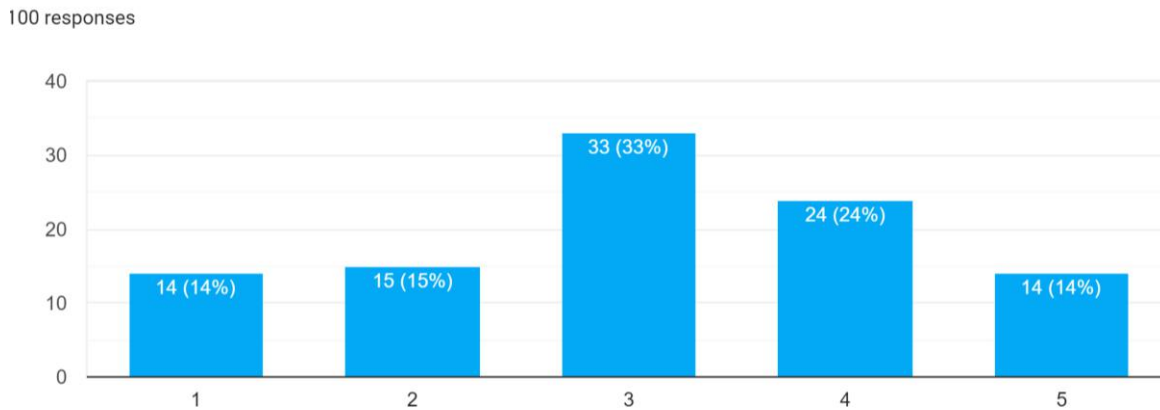
100 responses

Fig. 2.0 Histogram on browsing content on fashion

The mode being 3, where the frequency is 33 respondents who prefer neutral, where they browsing maybe occasionally but not much or regularly. While 14 responders are the statistical number for 1 being the least browsed and 5 being the most browsed.

From the above table and graph it is clear that majority of millennials engage in social network, taking breaks in between every hour. The majority of millennials falling in the range where they may browse fashion related content or not.

Since finding relevant data on their internet usage, I progressed to understand their perception of androgynous fashion using images. In the chapter Graph, Fig. 2.1, there is an image of a model in trousers and shirt. I wanted to understand would the respondents think it as casual fashion or androgynous fashion. The mode attained was 3, frequency being 33 respondents who thought that it was neither casual nor androgynous. Further, in Fig. 2.3, I used the pictures, of two actors, Timothee Chalamet in Fuschia suit and Cody Fern in black off -shoulder shirt, to understand which image would they pick as an androgynous fashion. Majority of respondents, 69% chose Cody Fern's outfit as androgynous, whereas 31% chose Timothee Chalamat's outfit as androgynous. The catch was both the outfit was androgynous, in the sense that they broke the gender stereotype of colour and structure. In Fig. 3.0, the respondents were asked according to suitability if the floral printed blazer was either "too feminine" or "androgynous", 34% of respondents said it to be androgynous, while 32% respondents perceived it maybe androgynous or feminine, while 29% respondents perceived it to be somewhat androgynous.

The use of these image was to interpret the data on what they would understand androgynous fashion to be. Using the context of Fig, 1.7, I asked them what they understood by androgynous fashion:

Breakdown of gender coded colour	Adoption of unconventional structure	Both of these option	Neither of the option
22%	21%	42%	15%

Table 1.3 Response on understanding androgynous fashion

Further to elaborate and understand their conception of androgynous fashion, I asked where they had heard the term before in the internet:

A celebrity who made headlines with androgynous looks	A YouTube fashion vlogger who had vlogged about androgynous fashion	In an article about androgynous fashion	Or, had knowledge about the subject
25%	21%	15%	39%

Table 1.4. Response on where had they heard the term before.

And given the option, what would androgynous fashion mean to them,

Man draping a skirt and woman in a pair of pants	Man donning a fuchsia flower print suit	Woman in a tailored beige suit
59%	29%	12%

Table 1.5 Response on what would androgynous fashion mean to them?

This conceptualized that majority of respondents had knowledge about the subject matter, which is shown in Table 1.3 and Table 1.4 respectively. But they failed to understand the difference between cross-dressing and androgynous fashion, perceiving it as both.

At the end of survey, I wanted to understand would people purchase androgynous fashioned clothes, In Fig. 3.8I found out the 26% of respondents would like to purchase the jacket given in the image, when asked how often would they opt for androgynous style 30% respondents in Fig. 2.7 responded neutral, whereas 29% responded would most likely wear it often. At the end, would they purchase an androgynous clothing? 54% respondents said they would like that, whereas 35% respondents were somewhere in between, i.e., they may purchase if they like it or may not.

Chapter Summary

In the chapter, while analyse I see a pattern of remaining neutral during likter scale question. Majority of responses has been neutral regarding androgynous fashion, but they seem to have had certain context in their about what androgynous fashion is about, and are willing to purchase it. The majority of respondents are open to the idea of androgynous fashion and would like to give it a try it seems from the study. But there are several limitation which bound us to derive a proper conclusion of the study.

CONCLUSION & MAJOR FINDINGS

There is still a gap in understanding the difference between androgynous fashion and cross-dressing. Even with the prevalent of internet, and having prior subject knowledge about the matter, gender construction is strongly embedded in the India society. The millennials are still largely counter policed by the enforced gender norms on *what a man should and what a woman should wear.* The constructed idea and moral policing of genders still largely dominate the Indian diaspora and millions are no stranger to such ideas.

According to history of Indian clothing one thing becomes visibly clear that androgyny has always existed in India. Inspired from ancestors where men had always wore skirts, naming it lungi or dhoti, today's youth (both men and women) has tried their hand in this style of dressing but on special occasions, typically under ethnic wear. Where anarkali's have dominated Indian female market for over a decade now the domestic designers have brought the same line for men. But it is expected to be a fad where metrosexual men may try it in search of something new and different to wear but further acceptance from the millennials can be a question mark.

Androgyny which is considered to be a fashion in west may not grab as much attention in India in near future since the consumer differ a lot, niche population will try it but can face rejections as being categorized as *homosexuals*. Another reason could be that women here are still miles away from the women of west in terms of freedom & opportunity, few sectors of India look down to women as inferior and this has been the era few decades back, situations are different now but primarily for metrosexual women, rural sector still continue with same set of thoughts thus in such a scenario a male dressing in feminine silhouettes raises a question of him being part of "being look down" society i.e. women questions his masculinity and we being human beings always look up to follow.

The acceptance of dhoti/lungi over sarongs or kilts since they are also form of skirts is because these we have acquired from our ancestors and millennials won't lag behind trying out fashion cycle keeping societal norms in mind. Henceforth these norms are expected to break and to some extend generation Y has tried breaking but the strength is limited. Women nowhere has lag behind adopting menswear, where men hesitate to adopt feminine dressing considering it to be inferior, women don't mind ditching their traditional silhouettes.

In overall, the adoption of androgynous fashion is still a far away. They may adorn the runway of fashion weeks in India as experimental style but the mass acceptance seems to lag when it comes to dressing in silhouettes that does not remain true to their gender. Largely because of the biases perception of the women, the misogynistic ideals and cultural values that largely prevail dominant *toxic* masculinity. Even though internet culture brought in liberalisation, large sections of the society remained unaware of the fact. The millennials in India are enforcing new ideals but as how far is it gender ambiguous is still a persistent question to be pondered upon. This makes, androgynous fashion, as a market choice a still questionable portion as long as we are enforced by the *ideal gender norms* of the society.

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APPENDIX

ANDROGNOUS SEXUALITY AND FASHION

This is a survey questionnaire for the completion of my Masters. The following survey is to understand how the androgynous fashion has been shaped by internet in the millennial era. Androgynous fashion, there is formal way to breakdown, but it is the deconstruction of the normative stereotypes of the society through the means of clothing. It is not necessarily gender specified fashion. The more common term is Unisex.
*Required

1. **1.AGE** *

   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) 18-25

   ( ) 26-35

2. **2.GENDER** *

   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) Male

   ( ) Female

   ( ) Non-binary

3. **3.EDUCATION** *

   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) High School Graduate Undergraduate

   ( ) Post-graduate

   ( )

4.   4.LIFESTYLE *

Mark only one oval.

( ) Outgoing

( ) Partying

( ) Sporty

( ) Indoor

5.   5.How much time do you surf the internet? *

Mark only one oval.

( ) An hour a day Two

( ) hour a day

( ) Taking breaks in between every hour

( ) Other

6.   6.What do you surf most on internet? *

Mark only one oval.

( ) Academic related matter Social

( ) Media

( ) Work related matter

( ) Curiosity to obtain knowledge

( ) Netflix

7.   7.How much fashion related content do you browse in the internet? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
The least	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	The most

7.   7.How much fashion related content do you browse in the internet? *

8.   8.Rate the Image *

Mark only one oval.

            1   2   3   4   5

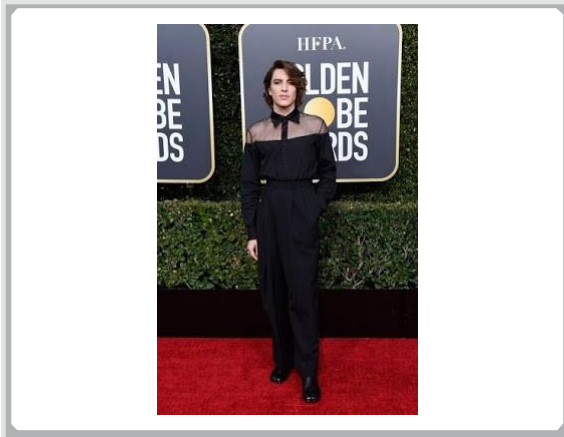| Casual Look | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Androgynous |

9.   9.Which one would you call androgynous fashion? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Timothee Chalamet   ◯ Cody Fern

10.   10.From the above given pictures, what is androgynous fashion? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Break down of gender coded colours Adoption of

◯ the unconventional structure Neither of the option

◯ Both of the above mentioned option

◯

11.   11.How often have you come across androgynous fashion? *

Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Sometimes | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | More often |

12.   12.If you have heard of the term androgynous fashion in the internet, where have you heard it from? *

Mark only one oval.

    ( ) A celebrity who made headlines with androgynous looks

    ( ) A YouTube fashion vlogger who had vlogged about androgynous fashion In an

    ( ) article about androgynous fashion

    ( ) Or, had knowledge about the subject.

13.   13.What is androgynous fashion according to you? *

Mark only one oval.

    ( ) Man draping a skirt and woman in a pair of pants Man

    ( ) donning a fuchsia flower print suit

    ( ) Woman in a tailored beige suit

14.   14.How conscious are you in your choice of clothes? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Most	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Flexible

15.　　　15. Rate this image on the basis on suitability. *

Mark only one oval.

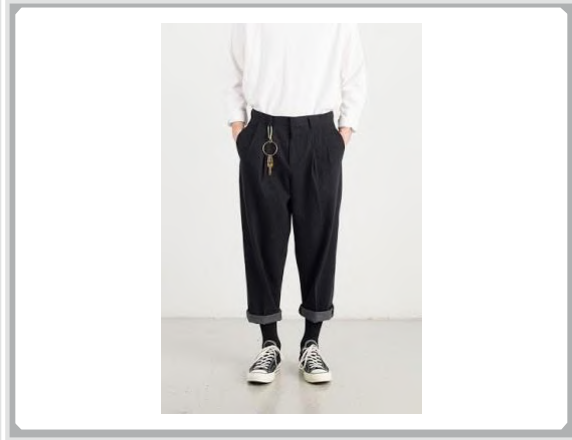|	1	2	3	4	5	
Is too feminine	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Androgynous

16.   16.Given the option would you prefer androgynous style or casual style? *

Mark only one oval.

○ Androgynous

○ Casual (male)

○ Casual(female)

17.   17. Rate this look on the basis of style. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Least preferred	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Most preferred

18.   18.How likely are you to purchase this jacket? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Least	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Preferably

19.   19.How often are you going to wear an androgynous style? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Least likely	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Most likely

20.   In future would you like to purchase androgynous clothing? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes, I'd like that.

◯ No, not really my taste.

◯ Maybe I'm somewhere in between.

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