

A new star in fashion is born!



Natural...Fluid...Fashion. After two years of intense research, Grasim's Cellulose Division has breathed a new lease of life into viscose staple fibre (VSF) with the launch of a new revolution in fabric christened LIVA. It was one of the grandest moment in the history of the Aditya Birla Group – and was aptly likened to some of its historic

launches in the past including IDEA in telecom and Ultra Tech in cement.

KK Maheshwari, Group Business Director – Fibres and Textiles, and Managing Director, Grasim, spoke eloquently addressing the press a few hours before the launch of brand “LIVA” stating that the launch of LIVA was “indeed a





defining moment for us as we take another major step forward in the continuing journey of Birla Cellulose towards achieving greater heights of excellence and growing leadership globally.” He said that the business, long-term, has a great future and that VSF once reckoned as a commodity was increasingly moving to raise its share of value added products and solutions.

Kumar Mangalam Birla, the Group’s Chairman states that “the pulp and fibre business is an integral part of our Group. Over the years, it has contributed significantly to our growth and has taken a remarkable position in terms of global presence. We enjoy a leadership position with over 20 per cent of the world market share. Over the last three years alone our investments have been in excess of Rs 4,300 crore and our capacities have scaled close to 1 mtpa. Let me add that, as a Group, we have always been customer-centric and VSF continues to move ahead of the times.”

“As a Group, we believe the customer at is the core of how we operate. You would be surprised to know that our consumer brands are over Rs 60,000 crore, larger than that of many leading consumer brands put together. With the launch of LIVA, our endeavour is to establish the same connect with the end consumer (who in the VSF business is several steps removed from our operations) and while doing that take the entire value chain along with us.” avers Birla.

Maheshwari highlighted the

criticality of the consumer connect, emphasising that to win with end-consumers consistently, we needed to do several things. Commented Maheshwari, “Firstly, we needed to create a distinctive and relevant end-consumer promise. With years of experience and several intense rounds of understanding consumers, we have found one that we believe resonates strongly with their desires and beliefs. Not only does it fully satisfy them on the aspect of being a natural product, it also delights them on the distinctive aspect of the product which is its soft drape, or “fluidity”. I am delighted to announce that we are launching this product under the brand name “LIVA” with the very simple but very meaningful and attractive proposition of “Natural, Fluid, Fashion”. He launched the beautiful LIVA logo.

The second major step taken was the setting up a strong Design Studio backed by a powerful Technical Research and Development Centre. They are geared to work with the value-chain to bring forth every season, new innovations that are in trend and which consumers and trade-partners will see as being really “in fashion”, remarked Maheshwari. Elaborating further, Maheshwari spoke of how the Birla Cellulose team has been working closely with a large number of value-chain partners, including spinners, fabricators and processors.

“We have created a new partnership concept, called the LIVA Accredited Partner Forum, or LAPF, that is an integral part of this ingredient brand. While these partners work on continuously improving their quality and service to brands and retail, on our part we are working closely with them in



PANCHTATVA walks the ramp

LIVA's consumer appeal is being topped with a brand ambassador – a renowned fashion queen. She epitomises in many ways the brand's essence of natural fluid fashion – Kangana Ranaut.

Hosted by KK Maheshwari, the evening saw leading fashion designers and industry stalwarts from textile and retail gather under one roof to experience the world of natural, fluid fashion.

The fashion show at the launch of LIVA at JW Marriott near Shara Airport in Mumbai was one of the most splendid and awe-inspiring shows.

The evening saw a beautiful amalgamation of the five elements to bring out the essence of LIVA, in a fashion showcase titled 'Panchtatva'.

Renowned designer James Ferreira, known for his subtle non-literal infusion of Indian elements, presented the LIVA Collection themed AIR; Puja Nayyar, known for her unique ideation towards experimentation in design, used EARTH as an element to showcase the expanse of the fabric LIVA; Narendra Kumar, well known for his structured silhouette and sharp tailoring displayed the fluidity of the fabric, using WATER as the inspiration and Anita Dongre, who is known for her wide range -prêt to couture, traditional to contemporary, classic to avant-garde and desi to global, took inspiration from FIRE to bring alive the fiery fluidity of LIVA. The highlight of the showcase was show stopper Kangana Ranaut,



walking the ramp in a gorgeous LIVA creation.

Speaking from the venue, actress Kangana Ranaut said "When I saw the fabric I was really surprised at how flowy it was. It draped my body in just the right way, wasn't too boxy nor too tight. The fabric moved as I moved. I think it's the kind of fabric that can go well with any clothing and occasion. Moreover, I personally feel that LIVA is going to play a very important role in the world of fashion. People always want something new; something exciting and I can see it happening with LIVA. The collections seen tonight are very much testament to the great potential the brand has for women's wear. It feels great to be here tonight with the wonderful design team of LIVA, and of course, the absolutely brilliant designers who have showcased their collections."

LIVA livens up fashion

LIVA is a new age fabric made with natural cellulosic fibres of Aditya Birla Group. It gives a beautiful flow to the garments and enhances ease of movement. It takes the shape of body giving you a perfect look. It does not tug out like other stiff fabrics. It is extremely soft and has a great feeling on the skin. It also has a natural shine that makes it look dressy unlike other fabrics. And finally, it has great breathability and it is extremely comfortable to wear.

What is LAPPF?

LIVA Accreditation Partner Forum (LAPPF) is a group of spinners, fabricators and processors who have developed the capability to offer good quality & products (yarns, greige & finished fabrics) made up of BC fibre. The fabrics made by such partners/value chain would be termed

promoted and marketed to garment manufacturers, retailers & brands and consumers as LIVA. It is an ecosystem which has its genesis on consumer need for ensuring quality fabrics to

fulfill the LIVA promise, linking different parts of the fragmented garment supply chain.





DESIGNER SPEAK

“LIVA is really cool. You move it moves. Blends very well with whatever you want to create. It’s a truly fluid fabric. Love LIVA.”

- Anita Dongre



“LIVA as a fabric is very romantic and sensuous, that flows beautifully. It’s one of the most fascinating fabric and we love working with LIVA.”

- Pooja Nayyar

areas of technical support, design development, supply chain and market development. We have over 250 partners now in the Forum”, informed Maheshwari.

Furthermore, he spoke about the various ways in which LIVA would strengthen the value proposition of multiple brands and retail, enhancing their fashion quotient. LIVA will be available with leading brands and retail like Van Heusen women, Allen Solly women, Global Desi, Chemistry, F-109, Pantaloons and Lifestyle. In the first season of national launch, LIVA will reach over 50 cities and 1,000 outlets with approximately 2 million garments, tagged with LIVA.

Grasim has ambitious plans for its new plant in Vilayat, Gujarat, which has gone on stream for producing high quality viscose staple fibre for the domestic as well as export markets. This plant will focus on value added and speciality products. Grasim has also been expanding its plant in Indonesia. Besides, all the other plants are being modernised, disclosed Maheshwari. Its textile research & development centre in Kharach, Gujarat is recognised as one of the best centres for R&D worldwide. “We had expanded our vision by acquisitions in Canada and Sweden.” said Maheshwari.

Grasim will be working with a number of value chain partners who include fabricators and processors to ensure that the innovations reach the consumer in proper shape.





“VSF has strong value proposition as a fashion fibre”

- KK Maheshwari, Group Business Director –
Fibres and Textiles,
and Managing Director, Grasim

Editor: *In the recent times, countries like US, Europe and Japan have almost quit viscose fibre production. At such a juncture, what are the reasons for Grasim to raise its stake in this industry?*

KK Maheshwari (KKM): Most of the producers in US, Europe and Japan quit viscose fibre production long back due to their relatively small size and therefore a choice we had to make in terms of:

- Investing more to increase the size.
- Invest for improving the environmental footprint.
- The shift of the textiles market to Asia.

The decision by Grasim to continue to invest in Cellulose fibre is based on the belief that this fibre is natural, eco-friendly and will always be in demand due to its intrinsically good properties of fluidity, being natural and may be ideally suited for fashion due to the vibrant colours that we provide. Based on this belief, Aditya Birla Group has continued to invest both in growing the size of the business and improving its environmental footprint. Also, the shift of the textile industry to Asia fits very well with Aditya Birla Group's strong presence in the textile value chain in Asia.

Editor: *How has VSF moved up in value chain transforming itself from being a mere commodity to a new concept, as far as Grasim is concerned.*

KKM: Intrinsically every brand is a commodity. The promise of a superior experience while using a particular commodity and the repetitive living of that good experience by the consumers helps create a brand. We

believe that VSF has a strong value proposition as a fashion fibre and goes extremely well for women's wear due to the fluidity it provides and the grace with which the women can wear it. The fact that it's coming from wood and is biodegradable also meets the expectations of customer's desire for a natural product. There have been two challenges:

- Ensuring that the customers understand the benefits that comes with use of VSF, and,
- Ensuring that they can experience the same in its fullness

The textile industry downstream of fibres is extremely fragmented in India e.g. the 200,000 tonne spindles is considered a large capacity for a spinning mill in India whereas the other countries' spinning capacity of about 500,000 spindles is very normal. Therefore, Grasim had to work with the value chain to ensure that the consumers can really experience the full comfort and beauty of Liva by getting the fabric through an accredited value chain. To ensure that consumers are able to link with the same, we have therefore launched the brand, Liva so that consumers can easily identify the experience that they would get through Liva.

Editor: *Is Liva a blendable product? How has research contributed to its success?*

KKM: We would prefer Liva to be used in its pure form, which goes extremely well for women's wear. However, there are applications like men's suitings or men's clothing and some other applications where Liva's blend with other

fibres would work very well. We would work on that at a later stage.

Our efforts on R&D and Business Development are focused on improving the quality of fibre and yarn and also ensuring that the entire value chain processes deliver the right experience of Liva to the end consumer. We have also worked on developing further variance of our fibre, which would provide greater comfort to the consumer.

Editor: Can you give us some details of your partner programme in the value chain and how you plan to promote it in a big way?

KKM: We are working through a large value chain of spinners, weavers, knitters, processors and fabricators who will partner with the retails and brands to showcase the benefit of LIVA.

For this, LIVA Accredited Partner Forum (LAPF), a community of accredited partners (spinners, fabricators & processors), was formed with the objective of creating an ecosystem of like-minded partners to deliver LIVA-assured quality, ensuring brand recognition, business growth & consumer delight echoed in LAPF brand promise.

The partners get a range of value-added benefits—

support in sourcing, technical area, marketing, innovation and sustainability aspects—to service brands.

Editor: If Liva is the beginning of a new revolution in promoting VSF, what's next on the agenda?

KKM: Our present focus is on building the brand Liva and ensuring that the customers experience it in its fullness. Liva would be available in over 50 cities and 1000 outlets this year and we intend to scale up the availability of the same to 2,500 outlets in 63 cities in the next three years.

Editor: What are the strategies to boost Liva in the domestic as well as international markets?

KKM: Obviously, this will be an ongoing sustained effort and therefore, we will certainly share with you the next stages on developing Liva at appropriate time.

The need for Liva was far more acutely felt in the Indian markets due to the fragmented nature of downstream industry. Therefore, clearly Indian market would be our focus in the initial stage.