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## With Style Up, Aditya Birla Fashion eyes shoppers in small cities

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**A**ditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd (ABFRL), which retails brands such as Louis Philippe, Allen Solly, Peter England and Van Heusen, is eyeing shoppers in India's small cities with Style Up, a chain of large-format value fashion stores that it started last year as an experiment. ABFRL plans to add another 10-12 stores this year before it reaches size and scale where it can expand the business, said Ashish Dikshit, managing director of the company.

Currently Style Up runs 16 stores in places such as Deoria and Robertsganj in Uttar Pradesh, Bhabua, Begusarai, Lakhisarai and Gopalganj in Bihar, and Gulbarga in Karnataka. The move is in line with the company's plan to expand its reach to the masses beyond the brands it sells. ABFRL retails



Ashish Dikshit, managing director, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd (ABFRL).

brands such as Allen Solly, Forever 21, apart from running Pantaloons.

"As a company we have a long-term vision of being able to address consumer segments across various price points in this country," said Dikshit.

"When we look at what we already have today, we find that

most of our portfolio lies between mid-premium to premium segment but when we look at where the consumers in India reside and the consumers we don't reach, there is a very large market in tier-4 and 5 cities, and there are 100s of such towns," he said.

Style Up typically operates

large format stores, sized between 6,000 to 8,000 sq. ft, selling ethnic and western apparel and accessories for men, women and children priced at an average of ₹500-₹600.

The retailer has been working on fine-tuning the right proposition for these stores

over the last one year, Dikshit said.

"We have tried to find what fashion stays and what consumer behaviour operates in these smaller towns, and what would be the right economic model," he said.

The company will take a call on what format, size, and model works best for the brand, he said. The market for value fashion retail formats in India's small cities and towns has been built over a period of more than 10 years with regional and national retailers such as V-Mart,

I-India Family Mart and Vishal Mega Mart that sell value fashion and other consumer goods in these markets. Their offerings are directed at frugal shoppers in cities and towns such as Bulandshahar, Farrukhabad,

Kannauj, Badli and Almorah that are seeking the latest fashion but at lower price points. Shoppers in these places are not brand conscious but style and value conscious, said Ankur Bisen, vice-president, retail and consumer products, Technopak Advisors.

A large company such as Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd looking at smaller cities is an interesting trend, as metros are set to reach a saturation point for branded apparel and competition from online retailers heats up, he said.

Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd operates more than 2,700 stores in India apart from retailing its brands in 18,000 multi-branded outlets. In fiscal year 2019, the company posted a turnover of ₹8,118 crore.

### VALUE FOR MONEY

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