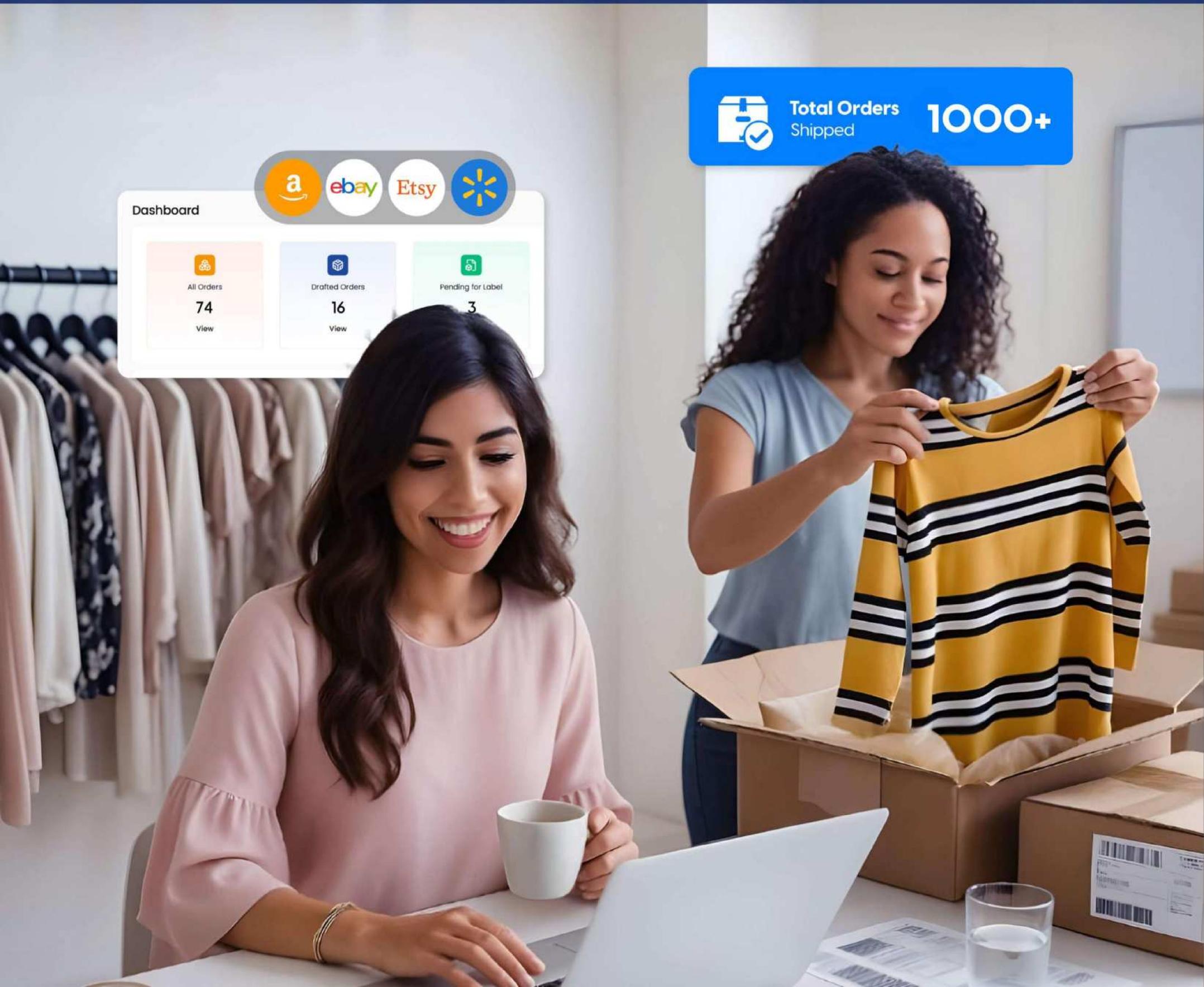
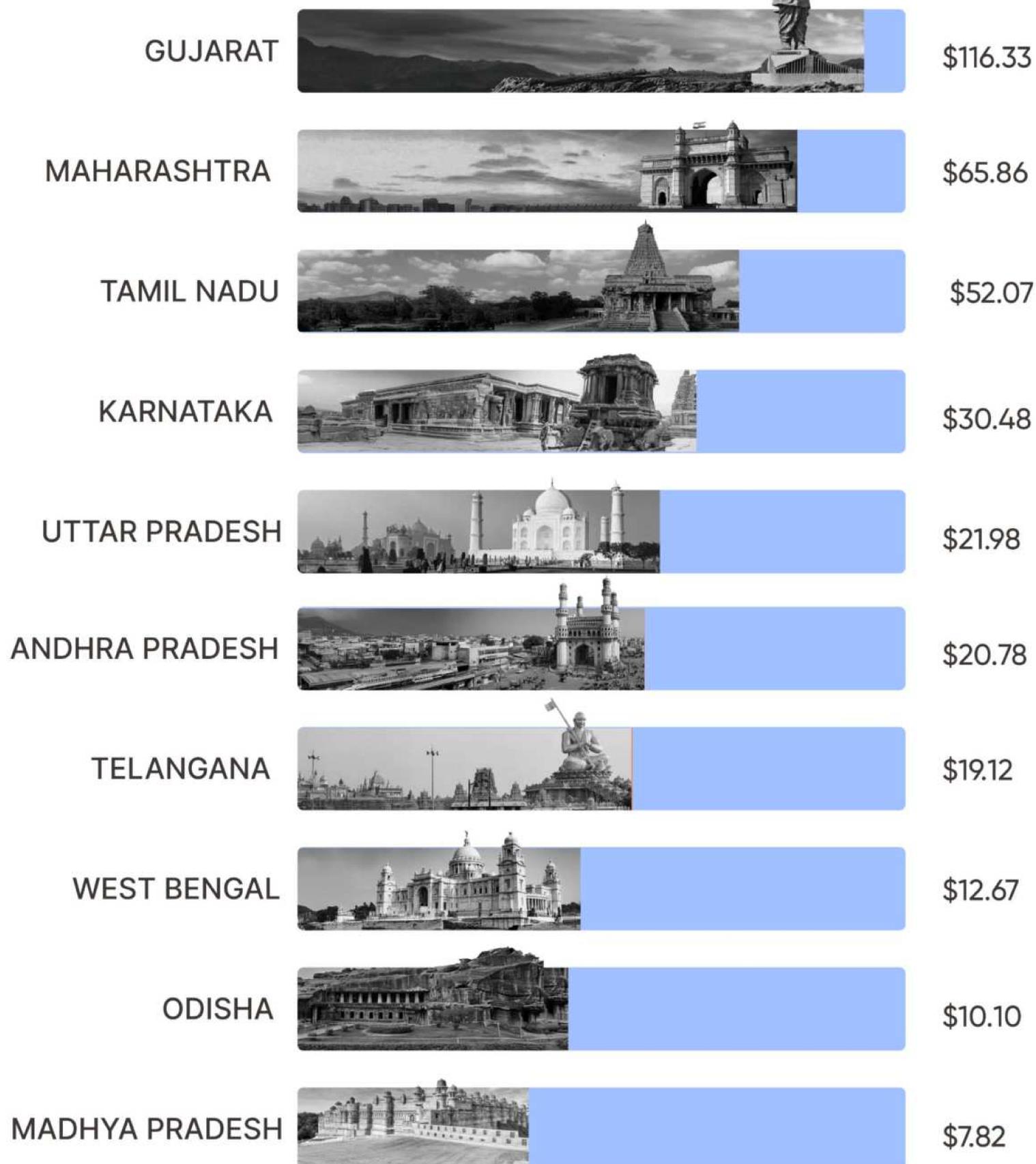


How To Successfully Export Clothes To The USA



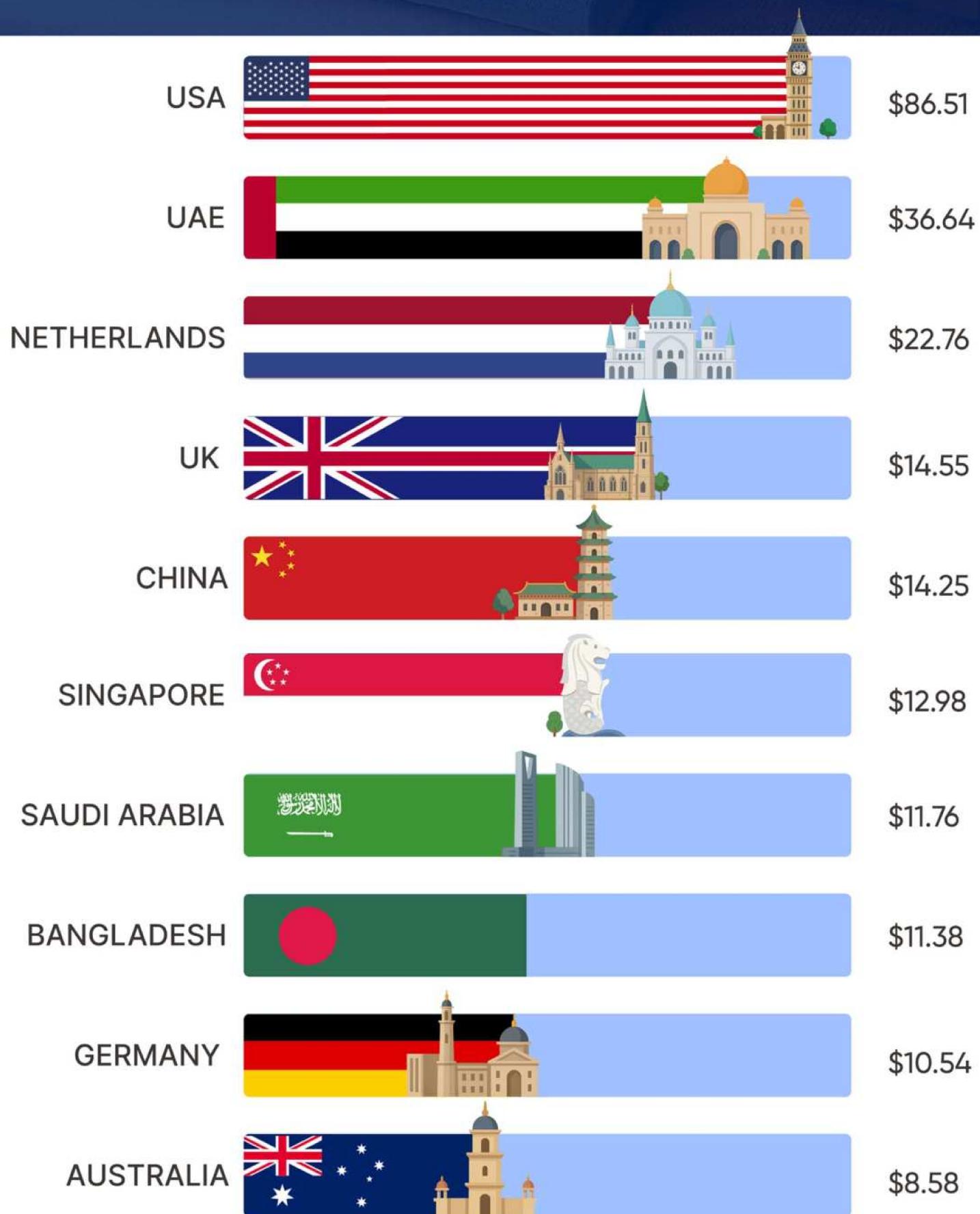
Export Powerhouses

Top 10 States (\$Bn)



Export Hotspots

Top 10 Global Markets (\$Bn)



What the World Buys

Top 10 Exported Products from
India (In \$Bn)



Engineering
Goods

\$116.67



Petroleum
Products

\$63.34



Electronic
Goods

\$38.58



Drugs And
Pharmaceuticals

\$30.47



Gems And
Jewellery

\$29.81



Organic And Inorganic
Chemicals

\$28.70



Others

\$24.47



Ready-Made Garments Of All Textiles

\$15.99



Rice

\$12.47



Cotton Yarn/Fabs./Madeups, Handloom Products Etc.

\$12.06

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Introduction

India's clothing industry is a vibrant and essential part of the country's economy, known for its diversity, craftsmanship, and global appeal. From everyday fashion to contemporary designer wear, Indian clothing brands and manufacturers have steadily gained international recognition. This dynamic sector supports millions of livelihoods across the country and serves as a powerful engine for exports and entrepreneurship.

Among India's many international trade partners, the United States is one of the most valuable and promising markets for Indian apparel. The American consumer landscape is vast, diverse, and constantly evolving, characterised by a strong demand for high-quality, affordable, and increasingly sustainable clothing. For Indian businesses, this represents an exciting opportunity to scale up operations and build global recognition.

However, exporting clothes from India to the USA isn't just about having a great product. It's a multi-step process that requires careful planning, strategic thinking, and compliance with numerous legal and logistical standards. Every detail matters, from securing the right export licenses to adhering to U.S. customs regulations, choosing reliable shipping methods, and ensuring product quality.

This eBook is designed to be your go-to guide for exporting clothing from India to the USA. Whether you're a startup fashion label looking to enter the global market, a growing brand planning your first U.S. shipment, or an established exporter wanting to streamline operations, this guide offers you practical insights, strategies, and expert tips every step of the way



Chapter 1

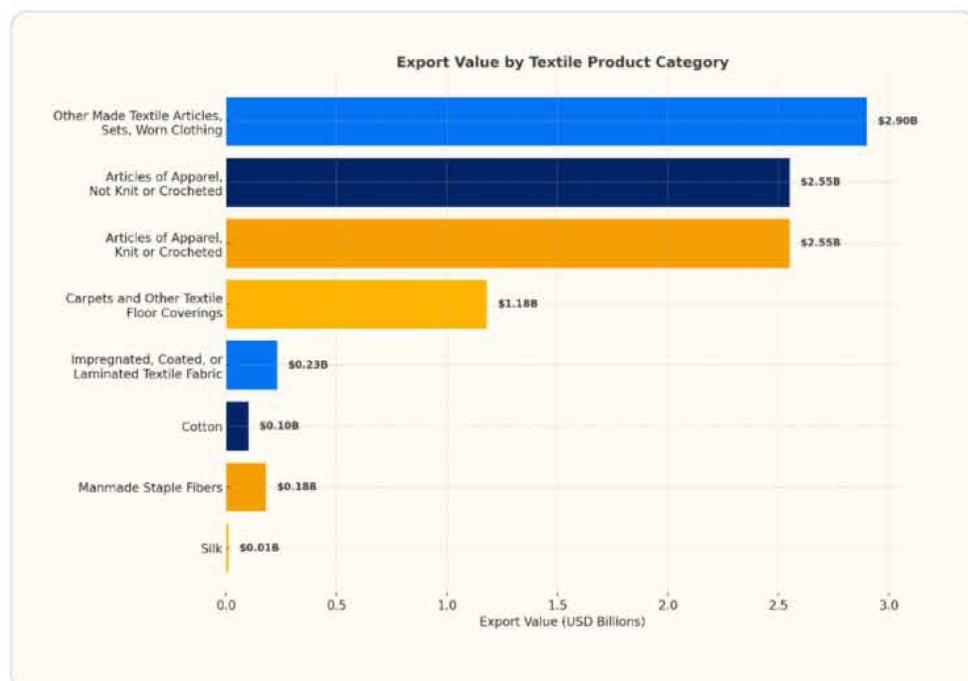
Understanding the US-India Apparel Trade Landscape

India's export relationship with the United States is vast and diverse. In 2024, India's total exports to the US reached an impressive \$79.44 billion. Among these exports, the apparel and textile sectors play a vital role, offering immense opportunities for entrepreneurs looking to export clothing and related products successfully.

Trade Growth Over the Years

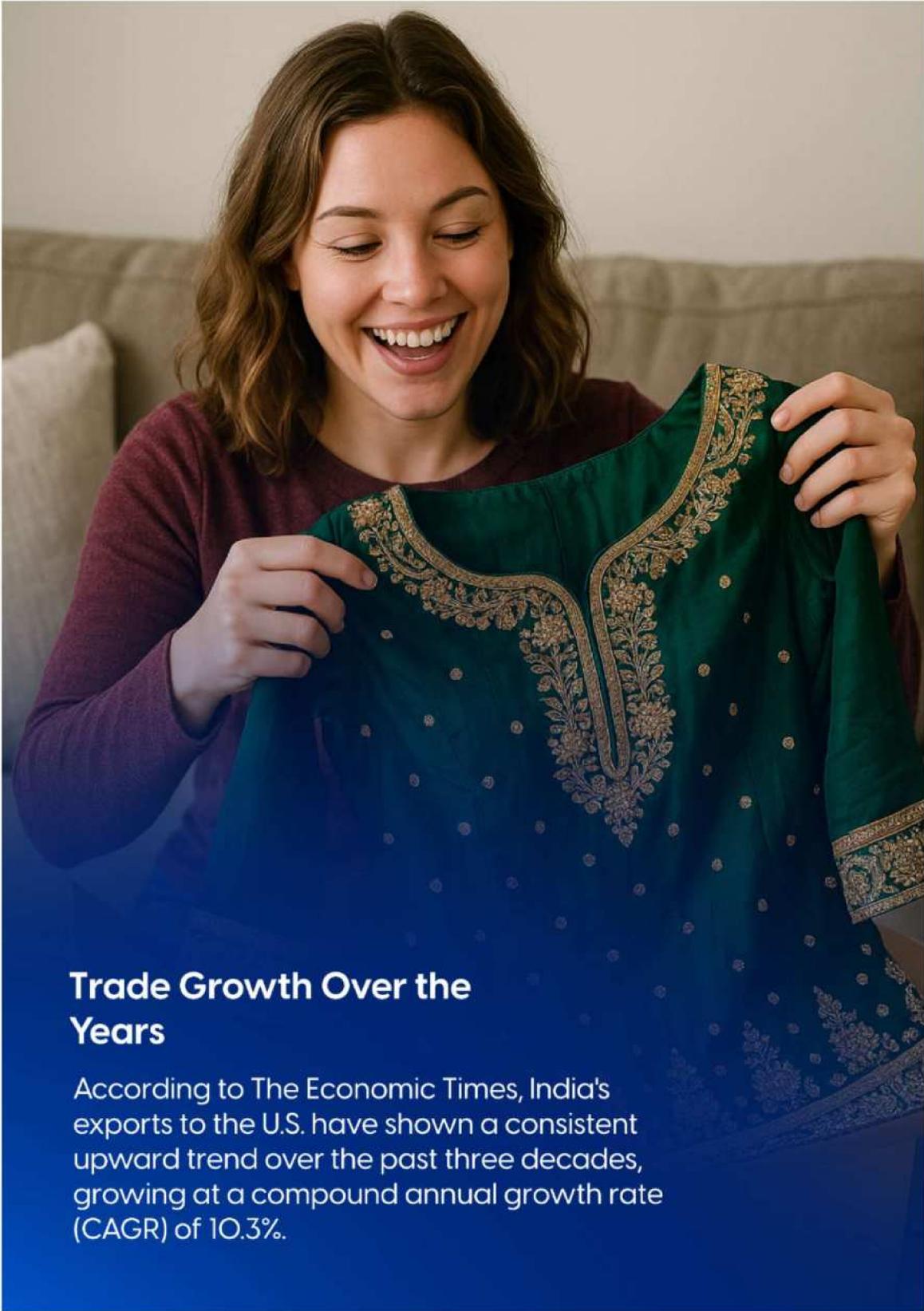
According to the Bank of Baroda, India's exports to the U.S. have shown a consistent upward trend over the past three decades, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.3%.

This chapter breaks down key export categories related to clothes and textiles, helping you understand where the highest value lies and how you can position your products to maximise success.



Key Takeaways for Exporters

- Focus on both knit and woven apparel for balanced market opportunities.
- Consider expanding into related textile categories like floor coverings and specialty fabrics.
- Source high-quality raw materials such as cotton and silk to meet U.S. standards and preferences.
- Use this data to target high-value segments and build a product portfolio aligned with market demand.



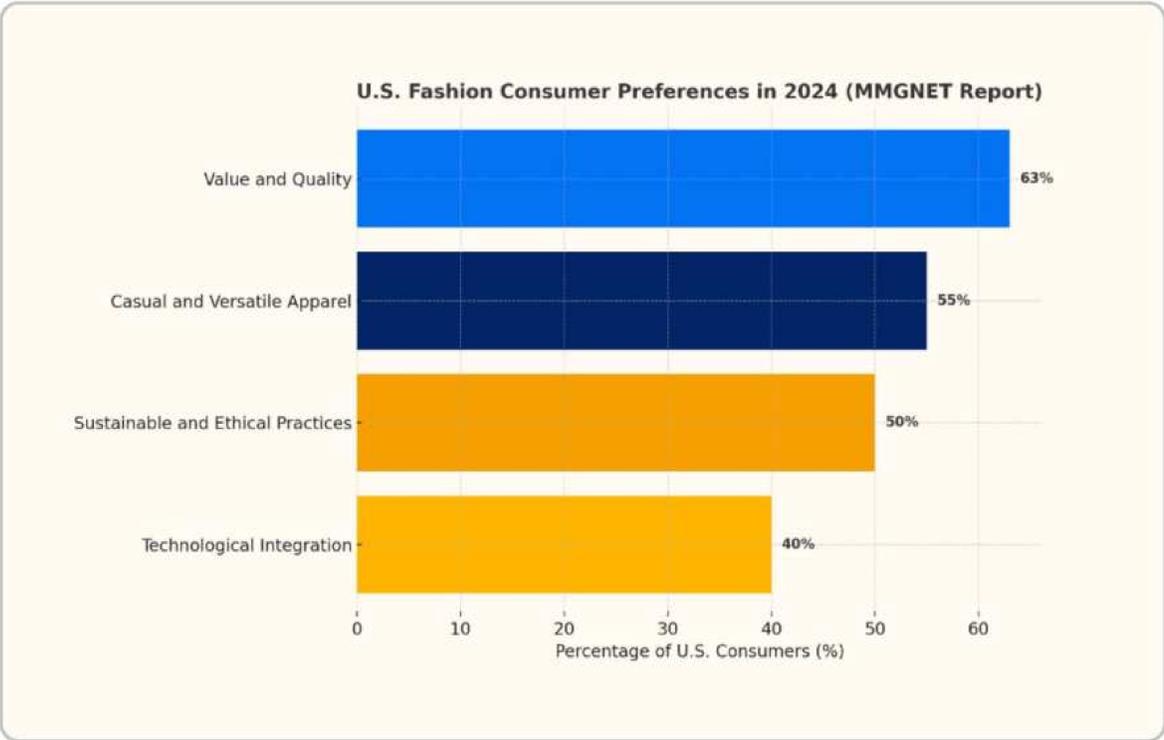
Trade Growth Over the Years

According to The Economic Times, India's exports to the U.S. have shown a consistent upward trend over the past three decades, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.3%.

U.S. Fashion Consumer Preferences in 2024

According to the 2024 U.S. Fashion Consumer Outlook by MMGNET, several key trends are shaping consumer behavior:

- Value and Quality: 63% of U.S. consumers prioritize brands that offer high value for money, emphasizing quality over quantity.
- Casual and Versatile Apparel: The demand for casual sportswear remains strong, driven by hybrid work models and a preference for versatile clothing.
- Sustainable and Ethical Practices: Consumers are increasingly drawn to brands that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and ethical manufacturing.
- Technological Integration: Younger demographics show interest in personalized shopping experiences, including virtual fitting rooms and AI-driven recommendations.



Implications for Indian Exporters

To effectively penetrate the U.S. market, Indian apparel exporters should consider:

- **Emphasizing Quality:** Highlighting the craftsmanship and durability of products to appeal to value-conscious consumers.
- **Offering Versatile Designs:** Creating apparel suitable for various settings, catering to the demand for multifunctional clothing.
- **Adopting Sustainable Practices:** Implementing eco-friendly manufacturing processes and transparently communicating these efforts to consumers.
- **Leveraging Technology:** Incorporating digital tools to enhance the shopping experience, particularly for younger consumers seeking personalization.

The robust trade relationship between India and the U.S., especially in the apparel sector, underscores the importance of the U.S. market for Indian exporters. By aligning with U.S. consumer preferences, focusing on quality, versatility, sustainability, and technological integration, Indian apparel businesses can leverage this opportunity for growth and expansion.



Chapter 2

Getting Started with Apparel Export from India

Before you start exporting clothes, you need to ensure your business is legally registered and compliant with Indian regulations. Here are the key steps:

Registering Your Business – The First Step Toward Global Trade

Before diving into the exciting world of international apparel export, it's essential to build a strong foundation by ensuring your business is legally registered and fully compliant with Indian trade regulations. A properly registered business not only earns trust from foreign buyers but also simplifies every step of the export process, from logistics to payments.

Choosing the Right Business Structure

The first major decision you'll face is selecting the legal structure of your enterprise. Your choice will affect everything from taxation to liability and scalability.

- **Sole Proprietorship**
Ideal for small-scale operations and solo entrepreneurs. It's easy to set up and requires minimal regulatory formalities. However, the owner bears full responsibility for debts and liabilities.
- **Partnership Firm**
Perfect for businesses started with friends or co-founders. A partnership allows shared decision-making and financial input. Ensure that you draft a clear partnership deed outlining responsibilities and profit-sharing terms.
- **Private Limited Company (Pvt. Ltd.)**
Highly recommended for those who envision scaling their business in the future. This structure provides greater credibility, limited liability, and easier access to funding. Although it involves stricter compliance, the long-term benefits far outweigh the complexity.



Consider consulting a chartered accountant or legal advisor to help choose the structure that aligns with your vision.

Obtain Your Import Export Code (IEC)

No matter which business structure you choose, you cannot legally export without obtaining an Import Export Code (IEC) from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT). The IEC is your business's passport to the world of international trade.



1. Visit the DGFT website
2. Submit the application form along with essential documents:
 - PAN card
 - Aadhaar card of the business owner/director
 - Business bank account details
 - Business address proof
3. Pay the nominal application fee.
4. Once verified, you'll receive your IEC electronically.

[Read more on IEC](#) 

Get Connected with Export Promotion Councils

After securing your IEC, it's time to connect with industry bodies that can support your export journey. India's Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) facilitate trade and provide exporters access to global markets, trade fairs, and financial incentives.

Recommended Councils for Apparel Exporters:

- **Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC)**
Specializes in guiding garment exporters and providing market insights.
- **Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)**
A powerful body that connects exporters across industries. Offers trade-related support, networking, and training.
- **The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL)**
Ideal for businesses dealing in cotton garments and raw cotton products.

Why Register?

Membership with these councils boosts your business's credibility and allows you to participate in international trade exhibitions, buyer-seller meets, and government export schemes.

Remember: IEC is a one-time registration—no renewal is required!

Chapter 3

Understanding U.S. Import Regulations for Apparel

The United States is one of the largest importers of apparel in the world. But to sell successfully in the U.S. market, you must understand and comply with its complex import regulations. Compliance isn't just a legal requirement, it's a competitive advantage.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) – Your First Gatekeeper

All shipments into the U.S. must go through Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The CBP is strict when it comes to documentation and compliance, so it's critical to prepare your paperwork meticulously.



Labels should be securely attached, legible, and written in English.

Mandatory Documents for Apparel Exports:

- **Commercial Invoice**
Lists product details, prices, and terms of sale.
- **Packing List**
Describes the contents and packaging for each shipment.
- **Bill of Lading**
Issued by the carrier to confirm that the goods were loaded.
- **Importer Security Filing (ISF 10+2)**
Filed before goods depart India; includes details about the shipper, consignee, and cargo.

Failure to comply with documentation requirements may lead to costly delays or seizure of goods!

U.S. Product Labeling Requirements

Labeling is a big deal in the U.S. market—get it wrong and your products may be rejected or recalled. Your garments must comply with labeling regulations enforced by two key agencies: the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

Labels Must Include:

- **Country of Origin**
Clearly state where the garment was manufactured (e.g., "Made in India").
- **Fiber Content**
Specify fabric composition such as "100% Cotton" or "80% Polyester, 20% Viscose."
- **Care Instructions**
Washing, drying, and ironing directions must be easy to understand and durable.

Product Safety Standards – Protecting the Consumer

Safety is a top priority, especially in categories like children's clothing. U.S. law requires apparel to be safe, non-toxic, and free from harmful substances.

Key Safety Requirements:

- **Flammability Standards**
Must comply with U.S. flammability regulations under CFR 1610.
- **Lead Content Limits**
Particularly relevant for buttons, zippers, and printed areas.
- **Chemical Use Restrictions**
Avoid using banned dyes, formaldehyde, or AZO compounds.

For Children's Clothing:

You must comply with the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA), which includes:

- Testing and certification by accredited labs
- Tracking labels for every item
- Registration cards for infant apparel

Failing to meet CPSIA standards could result in serious legal consequences and damage your brand's reputation!

Tariffs and Duties – Know Your Costs

Before pricing your garments, understand the import duties your buyers will face in the U.S. Each apparel type carries its own tariff under the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) of the United States.

You can find the applicable duty rates by visiting:

Example:

- Knit T-Shirts (HS 6109) may have a different duty rate than
- Woven Shirts (HS 6205) or
- Jeans (HS 6203)

Smart exporters discuss tariff rates with buyers in advance to avoid surprises.

Conclusion: Lay the Groundwork Before You Ship

Success in international apparel export starts with compliance, credibility, and preparation. By registering your business properly, obtaining your IEC, aligning with export promotion councils, and understanding the ins and outs of U.S. import laws, you pave the way for a sustainable and profitable export venture.



Chapter 4

Mastering Shipping & Logistics for Apparel Exports

Successfully exporting apparel is not just about creating great products—it's about getting them to the buyer on time, in perfect condition, and within budget. A well-planned logistics strategy ensures that your garments arrive at their destination efficiently while minimizing risks and unexpected costs.

In this chapter, we'll guide you through choosing the right shipping method, understanding international logistics, and navigating customs clearance procedures, especially in the United States, one of the most regulation-intensive markets.

Choosing the Right Mode of Transport

Selecting the appropriate transportation method for your shipments depends on several factors: cost, delivery timelines,

volume of goods, and the buyer's preferences. In the world of global trade, the two most common shipping modes are air freight and sea freight.

Air Freight – Speed Over Cost

Air freight involves the transport of goods via aircraft and is the fastest method available for international delivery.

Advantages:

- **Fastest Delivery**
Transit time is often just 2–7 days, depending on the destination.
- **Ideal for Urgent Orders**
Perfect for replenishing inventory or sending samples and high-demand items.
- **Less Risk of Damage**
Shorter transit time reduces handling and exposure to environmental conditions.

Disadvantages:

- **High Cost**
Significantly more expensive than sea freight, especially for heavier or bulkier shipments.
- **Weight & Volume Restrictions**
Airlines charge based on weight or volumetric weight, whichever is higher.
- **Best Used For**
Lightweight, high-value garments, time-sensitive shipments, or special product launches

Sea Freight – Economical and Scalable

Sea freight is the transportation of goods via cargo ships. Though slower, it is far more economical and is the standard choice for large and regular exports.

Advantages

- **Cost-Effective**
Ideal for bulk orders, with lower per-unit shipping cost.
- **Large Volume Capacity**
Containers (usually 20ft or 40ft) can hold thousands of garments.
- **Sustainable**
A greener alternative for large shipments due to lower carbon emissions per unit.

Disadvantages

- **Slower Transit Time**
Deliveries can take 3–8 weeks, depending on the port of origin and destination.
- **Complex Coordination**
Requires more detailed planning around schedules, port congestion, and customs.
- **Best Used For**
Large, non-urgent shipments, regular supply chain operations, or when margins are tight.

Tip: Look for freight forwarders experienced in textile and apparel exports. They'll understand the nuances of garment packaging, international standards, and seasonal delivery cycles.

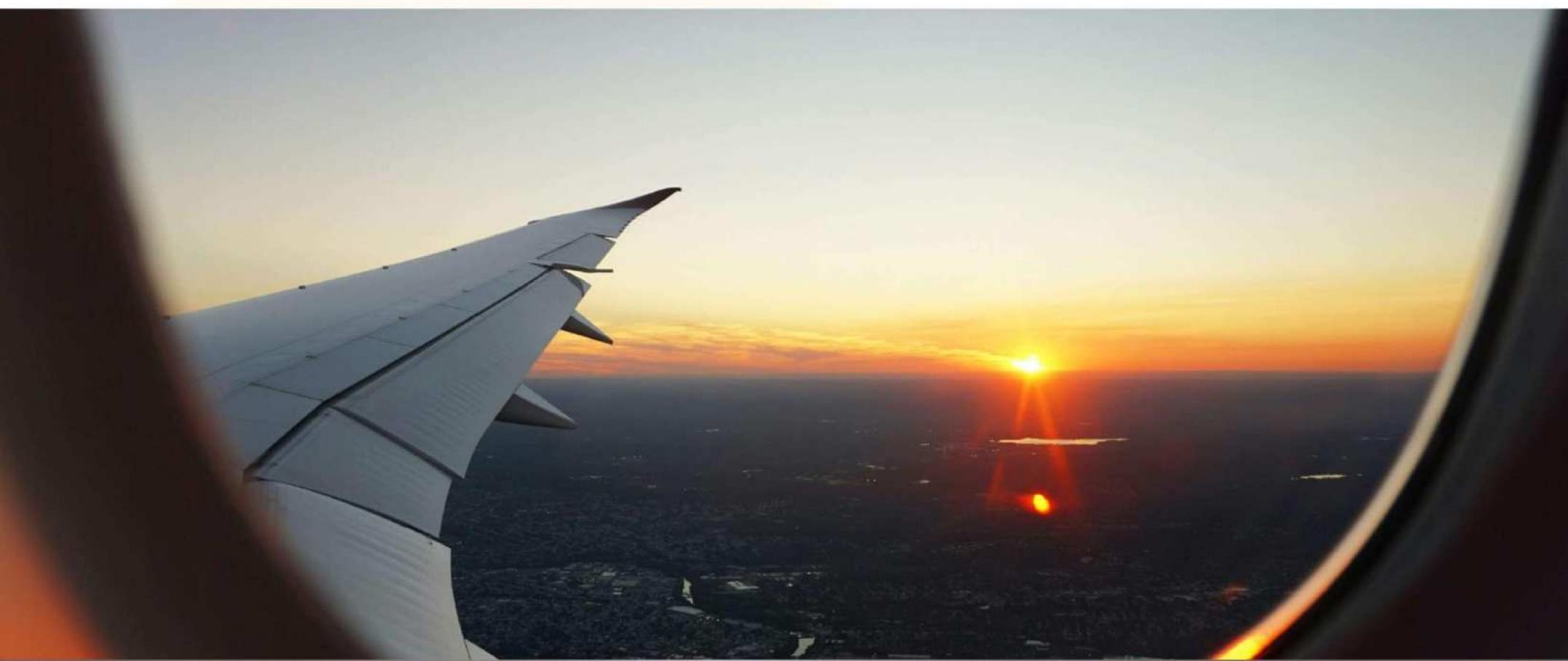
Working with a Freight Forwarder

Managing international shipments independently can be overwhelming. That's where freight forwarders come in—they act as logistics partners who plan and execute the entire movement of goods from your factory floor to the buyer's doorstep.

What Freight Forwarders Do

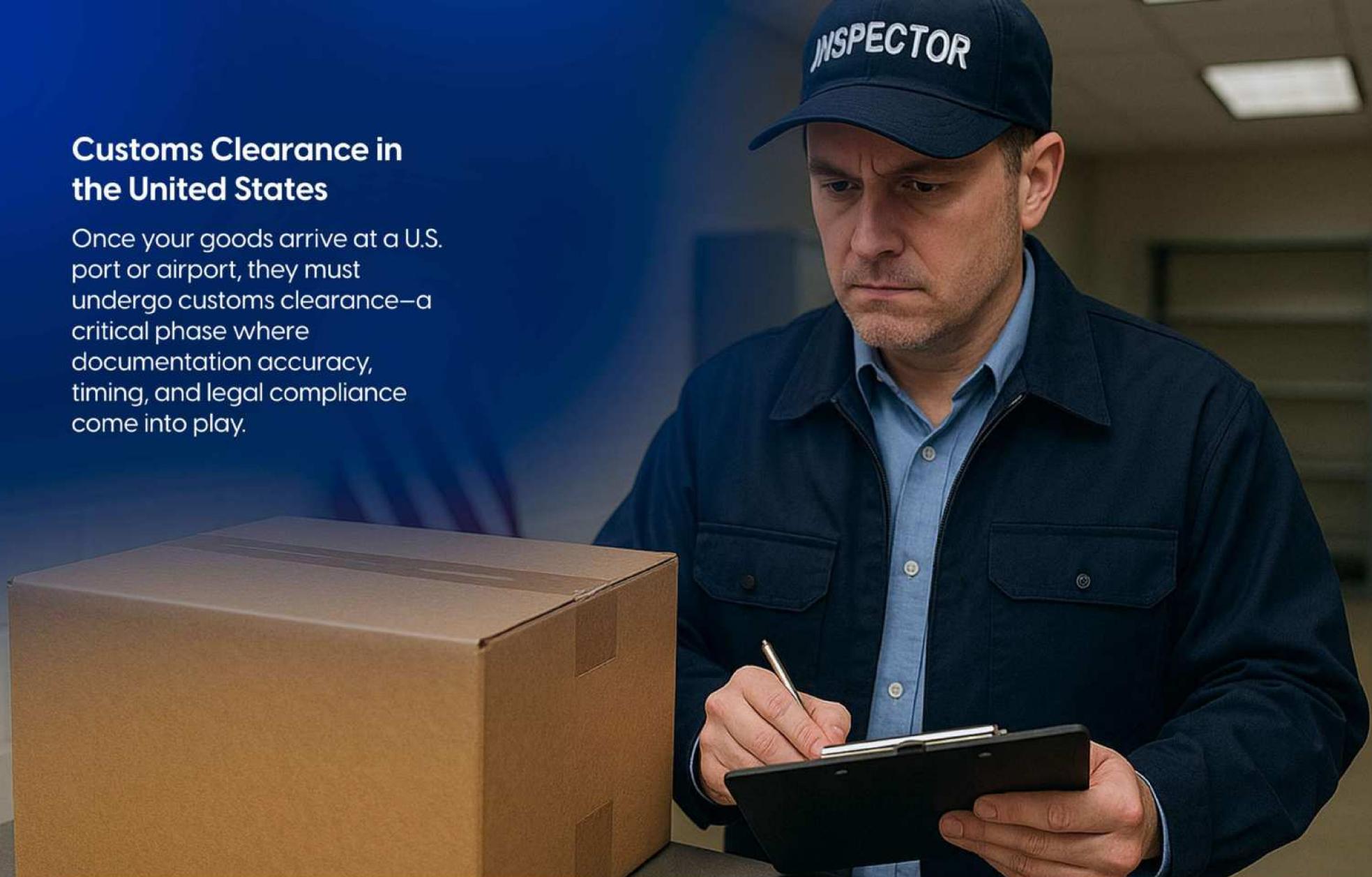
- Arrange transport by sea, air, or multimodal methods
- Book cargo space with carriers
- Handle export and import documentation
- Assist with customs clearance and duties
- Coordinate with shipping lines, airlines, and local transport providers
- Offer tracking, warehousing, and cargo insurance services

Read more on Air Freight
and Sea Freight



Customs Clearance in the United States

Once your goods arrive at a U.S. port or airport, they must undergo customs clearance—a critical phase where documentation accuracy, timing, and legal compliance come into play.



Here's how to navigate this process smoothly:

File the Importer Security Filing (ISF 10+2)

For sea shipments bound for the U.S., the Importer Security Filing (ISF 10+2) must be submitted at least 24 hours before the cargo is loaded onto the vessel at the origin port.

- The "10+2" refers to 10 data elements from the importer and 2 from the carrier.
- This filing is required by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to enhance cargo risk assessment.

Non-compliance can result in severe fines or shipment delays!

Engage a Licensed Customs Broker

Customs brokers are professionals licensed by CBP who specialize in handling the documentation and processes involved in clearing goods through customs.

What They Do

- Accurately classify your garments using HTS codes
- Calculate applicable tariffs and duties
- Submit entry paperwork to CBP
- Coordinate physical inspections (if required)
- Ensure compliance with product labeling and safety regulations

A good customs broker is your frontline defense against delays, fines, and legal trouble!

Use Bonded Warehouses for Hassle-Free Handling

A bonded warehouse is a secured facility where imported goods can be stored without immediately paying duties. Duties are paid only when the goods leave the warehouse for final distribution.

Advantages of Using Bonded Warehousing

- Delays in duty payments, aiding cash flow
- Ideal for quality checks or repackaging before delivery
- Provides time to resolve any compliance issues



If you are sending bulk shipments and distributing within the U.S. in stages, bonded warehousing can be a game-changer.

Packaging and Labelling for Logistics

To ensure your garments arrive in excellent condition, invest in proper packaging and labeling:

Packaging Tips

- Use moisture-resistant poly bags for individual items
- Bundle garments neatly to prevent wrinkles
- Choose sturdy, stackable cartons for bulk packaging
- Include carton markings like PO number, style code, quantity, and destination

Logistics Labeling Should Include

- Shipper and consignee information
- Weight and dimensions
- Carton number (e.g., 1 of 20)
- Handling instructions (e.g., "This Side Up", "Fragile")

Logistics is the Backbone of Export Success

Efficient shipping and logistics are the lifelines of global apparel trade. Whether you're sending a high-fashion sample via air or fulfilling a large retail order by sea, understanding each step of the shipping process, right down to customs documentation and packaging, gives you a competitive edge.

As you build relationships with logistics partners, customs brokers, and warehousing services, you'll not only reduce risks but also boost customer satisfaction with timely, damage-free deliveries.



[Read more on Tips for Packaging](#)



Chapter 5

Ready to Export?

Your Journey Begins Now

Exporting garments from India to the United States is not just a business transaction; it's an opportunity to take your creativity, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurial spirit to one of the largest and most fashion-forward markets in the world.

Whether you are an established manufacturer or an emerging fashion brand, the path to export success is paved with preparation, knowledge, and persistence. With the right approach, exporting to the U.S. can become a sustainable, scalable, and highly profitable business model.

Laying the Foundation for Export Success

The first step in your journey is building a solid foundation. Before you even ship your first consignment, you must ensure that your business is structured for international operations.

Register Your Company Legally

Choose the appropriate business entity—whether a sole proprietorship, partnership, or private limited company—and complete all necessary registrations under Indian law.

Obtain Your Import Export Code (IEC)

This unique 10-digit code issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) is your passport to global trade. Without it, no customs authority will allow the shipment of goods outside India.

Align with Export Promotion Councils

Membership in councils like the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) and the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) provides credibility, access to buyer databases, training,

and even participation in global trade fairs.

Understand the U.S. Market and Import Landscape

Selling to the United States isn't just about shipping your products overseas—it requires a deep understanding of import compliance, safety standards, and consumer preferences.

Comply with U.S. Import Regulations

- Understand the documentation process: invoices, packing lists, ISF filings, and bills of lading.
- Ensure your garments meet U.S. labeling laws, including country of origin, fiber content, and care instructions.
- For children's clothing, be fully compliant with the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA).

Choose the Right Shipping & Logistics Partners

Whether using air freight for speed or sea freight for cost-effectiveness, efficient logistics will help you deliver reliably. Use bonded warehouses, work with customs brokers, and always track your cargo to ensure smooth operations.

Positioning Your Brand in a Competitive Market

Marketing and distribution are where you turn potential into profit. Don't just export—build a brand that resonates with American consumers and retailers alike.

Explore Multiple Sales Channels

- Sell wholesale through B2B platforms, agents, and distributors.
- Go direct-to-consumer (D2C) via e-commerce websites, Amazon, and social media stores.

Emphasize “Made in India” Craftsmanship

Highlight the cultural richness, textile diversity, and artisanal expertise that India is known for. From hand embroidery to sustainable fabrics, these are powerful selling points that create brand differentiation.

Focus on Sustainability and Transparency

Today's buyers care about where and how their clothes are made. Use eco-friendly materials, adopt ethical labor practices, and proudly communicate your sustainable journey.

Build a Scalable Business Model

As you begin receiving orders and building relationships, think beyond the first shipment. Export success isn't just about one-time sales—it's about creating a repeatable system for international growth.

Set Competitive Pricing

Understand duties, shipping costs, and margin expectations to price competitively without undercutting your value.

Manage Inventory and Fulfillment

Develop systems for production planning, order tracking, and timely deliveries—especially if you plan to scale across multiple markets or platforms.

Collaborate with Experts

If you're navigating this journey for the first time, it's wise to:

- Work with export consultants who can assist with documentation, logistics, and compliance.
- Join business networks, chambers of commerce, and trade associations that connect you with mentors, buyers, and funding opportunities.



Step Boldly Into the Global Market

The journey of exporting clothing from India to the U.S. is both challenging and rewarding. With careful planning, high-quality products, and a focus on professionalism, you can turn your apparel business into a globally recognized brand.

The U.S. market appreciates:

- Unique stories
- Cultural authenticity
- Sustainable sourcing
- Transparent operations
- Reliable delivery and customer service

Your success will depend on more than fashion trends—it will depend on how you communicate your value, build trust, and consistently deliver excellence.

So, are you ready to go global?

Start now. Take your first step toward building a thriving export business, one that brings Indian fashion to wardrobes across the world.



Want to Start Exporting?

Join the **Expert** Community!



Visit ShipGlobal.in now!

