



Role of Fashion Industry and Its Impact on Economy

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether a greater understanding of the detrimental environmental repercussions of fast fashion and its possible influence on college students' future shopping behaviour are related. In order to achieve this, we carried out a survey analysis of students' buying habits, taking into account the frequency of their clothing purchases, the popular brands they choose, and impact on environmental and their wardrobe choices. We examined results and their correlations with the fashion motto and their connectivity with clothing purchases, investigated their fast purchasing patterns, and the fashion chosen by individuals. According to our findings, a large number of people are unaware of the negative environmental effects that major brands have unless they are specifically educated about the matter.

KEYWORDS: Environment, Renewable Resources, Non-Renewable resources, Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Fast fashion entails the rapid production of affordable, fashionable clothing that rapidly transitions from fashion shows to retail stores to satisfy consumer preferences. This model emphasizes quick turnover and low prices, allowing fashion retailers to respond swiftly to the latest trends. However, it often involves the use of cheap labour, environmentally harmful practices, and produces a large amount of disposable clothing, contributing to environmental and social issues. The fast fashion industry typically prioritizes speed and cost efficiency over sustainability and ethical considerations.

2. COSTS OF FAST FASHION

Beyond the environmental repercussions of climate change and global warming, an often overlooked yet urgent threat to the environment is the phenomenon of 'fast fashion'. Fast fashion faces noteworthy challenges, particularly in terms of environmental impact. This industry contributes significantly to pollution, such as emission of greenhouse gases and waste, consuming substantial amounts of natural resources such as water, energy, and raw materials in the production of clothes.

According to UN Environment Programme (UNEP), there are massive environmental costs associated with the fast fashion industry. This industry is a second biggest consumer of water and 10 percent of global carbon emissions. The report highlighted that crafting a pair of jeans, from cotton production to the final product's retail delivery, requires 3,781 litres of water—equivalent to the amount an individual typically drinks over three years. The global textile industry emits more greenhouse gases than the emissions generated by shipping and international air travel together. Another estimate by UNCTAD reports that the fashion industry utilizes approximately 93 billion cubic meters of water annually, a quantity sufficient to satisfy the requirements of five million people. Additionally, about half a million tons of microfiber, every year, an amount equivalent to 3 million barrels of oil is being released into the ocean.

Fast fashion extracts a human toll as well. Textile workers, predominantly women in developing nations are the main victims, often settling for the meager wages and hefty hours that too under distressing conditions (UNEP, 2018; WRI, 2019). In addition, the chemicals used in clothing production raise serious health concerns



for both industry workers and consumers. This environmental and social toll of the industry calls for an urgent reconsideration of fast fashion and signals the adoption of more sustainable business models and practices.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Paper by Ren (2022) pointed out that the fast fashion industry, while transforming consumer habits and significantly impacting the economy and e-commerce, is associated with adverse effects, particularly in terms of water use. In his paper he illustrated, particularly pertaining to the garment industry that in producing one cotton shirt requires 3,000 liters of water, while one kilogram of cotton demands 10,000 liters.

According to Niinimäki *et.al.*, 2020, cotton demand, driven by global factors, has led to significant water losses, such as the 20% decline in the Aral Sea attributed to EU cotton consumption. Research indicates that the textile and clothing sector attributes 7% of local groundwater and drinking water losses, particularly in water-stressed regions like China and India. In the same paper, authors mentioned that the garment industry not only contributes to local water resource issues by generating wastewater and exacerbating water scarcity but also Untreated wastewater entering local groundwater poses a severe threat to ecosystems due to the toxicity of manufacturing chemicals. Unfortunately, some wastewater is so contaminated that it cannot be effectively cleaned. The fashion industry in Cambodia, for example, causes 60% of water pollution and 34% of chemical pollution. This industry dominated 88% of all industrial production in the country as of 2008.

A study by Brewer (2019) pointed out that fast fashion is recognized for its substantial carbon footprint, accounting for 17-20% of global water pollution and necessitating 20,000 liters of water to produce 1 kg of cotton. According to a Forbes energy study, fast fashion has a notable environmental impact, utilizing 70 million barrels of oil annually and contributing to the depletion of 70 million trees each year for essential fiber production in clothing and these fibers, take 200 years to decompose as per Conca (2015).

Given these massive environmental costs, it becomes all the more imperative to curtail emissions and other pollutants in the fashion industry. There's a need to shift from high manufacturing volumes and the production of polyester to embracing renewable plant-based textiles. Additionally, efforts should be directed towards minimizing non-renewable energy consumption, and adopting sustainable practices in clothing production and shipping. . To address the issue of chemical pollution,

there is a requirement for increased oversight and regulation of the usage and measurement of chemical dyes by authoritative bodies. Simultaneously, there's a necessity to enhance public awareness regarding safety and environmental concerns.

4. OBJECTIVES

- i. To understand what exactly is fashion sustainability.
- ii. To identify the ground cause and barriers to incorporating sustainability in the fashion industry.
- iii. To amalgamate the field to identify opportunities for societal impact.

5. METHODOLOGY

The research paper used normative and utilitarian constructs. Every characteristic was measured using the Likert scale paradigm, which goes from "fully agree" to "do not agree." We have taken socio-demographic variables, frequency measures related to the scope and opportunities provided by the Fashion Industry in India. In order to analyses the contributions made by the Fashion Industry to promote sustainability; secondary sources will be used such as data collected from official websites and articles of major Fashion brands in India.

The research methodology used for this study is descriptive based on primary data, collected through a survey conducted across individuals having experience in trends of fashion such as fast fashion and the implication it causes on the economy through various economics principles such as supply, demand, scarcity it causes on resources, etc. who belonged to different age groups. More than 70 questionnaires have been filled to evaluate the impact of Fashion Sustainability on our Indian Economy. There was also usage of the secondary data that includes published reports, published research papers in national and international journals, and existing literature to study the role of the government of India to promote economic growth in the Fashion Industry and concerns for the sustainability of resources, various policies from official government sources will be studied.

Consumers nowadays reply their purchasing decisions not just on the product's appearance or exterior features, but also on the production cycle. Sustainability in a product is one such feature that has become increasingly important for consumers when determining what to buy and what not to buy in recent years.

Priorities for sustainability transcend age, region, product category, and, in certain cases, even socioeconomic classes. Such customers are eager to "transform ideas to practices" with regard to comes to long-term viability changing their habits, and sometimes willing to pay more

for organizations who do it appropriately. They choose products depending on whether or not they align with their personal convictions. As a result of their increased attention to sustainability, consumers are switching to new forms of consumption and purchases, which presents challenges to many established companies and opportunities for new ones. Given how important sustainability has become in consumers' decision-making, companies and retailers should indeed expand their attention and improve their capacity to match these needs. This allows competitors of all sizes to gain credibility, especially among purpose-driven customers.

As a result, it's crucial to examine how consumer purchasing patterns and behavior have changed in response to various fashion brands' strategy and sustainability approach.

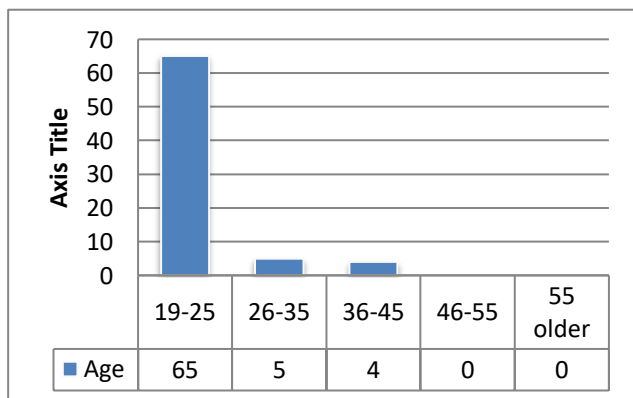
Recruitment Survey

Students that were enrolled at Delhi University were used to recruit the sample. Students at Delhi University conducted surveys beyond regular class hours, with the researcher sending survey links to them via email. 75 students from a variety of campus groups and organizations took part in the poll. The survey was distributed to a number of disciplines in an effort to obtain a varied viewpoint and a fair distribution of male to female responses.

Age Data

The mean age of the 65 participants who answered the age question, with a range of 19 to 25, was 18.629, rounding up to 19 for those who completed the survey.

Figure 1: Age of the Respondents



Sources: Author's calculation

Gender

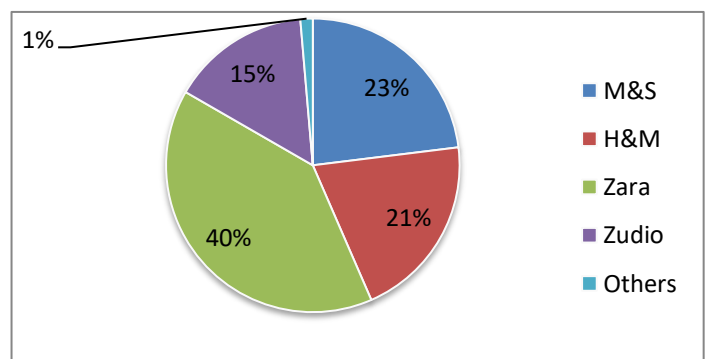
Since women represent more than half of the consumer market for fast fashion and purchase more of it than men do, they ought to be in charge of finding solutions.

Figure 2: Gender of the Respondents



Sources: Author's calculation

Figure 3: Variation in Buying Patterns in Relation to Brand Preference



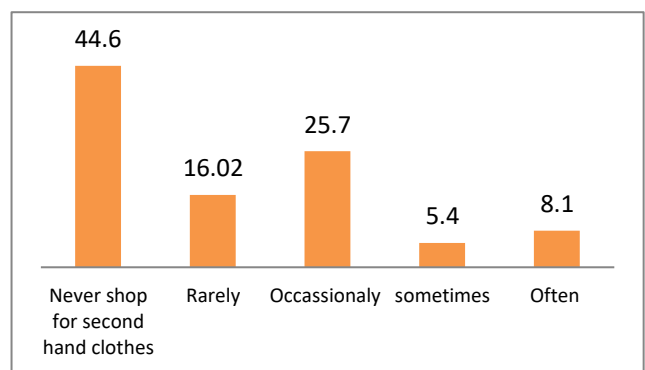
Sources: Author's calculation

Because they follow trends and receive a lot of support, brands like the ones mentioned above are regarded as being particularly trendy for women in the 19–25 age groups.

Circular Fashion Flow

Shopping for second hand clothes/Vintage collection to save and recycle the production in order to save plant from fast fashion and modify the consumption preferences. As figure below expresses that the 44.6 percentage of college students do not want to purchase the second-hand clothes and only 8.1 % believes in recycling the current fashion.

Figure 4: Circular Fashion collection of the respondents



Sources: Author's calculation



Alternatives to Fast Fashion for Slower Sustainable Style

Since supply chains utilize oil-based insecticides, pump enormous quantities of water to irrigate cotton plantations, and employ other practices that worsen pollution, the fashion industry is accountable for 8% of carbon emissions.

There is a requirement to find solution and alternatives to fast fashion in order to maintain environment friendly products. As per our sample survey, 38% of our responses believe in local shopping and creating their own fashion statement. Our sample also suggested some alternatives of fast fashion as explained in table 1.

Table 1: Alternatives to fast fashion

Alternatives to Fast Fashion	Outcome
Shop Local	37.30%
Ethical made clothing	10%
Invest in timeless pieces	8%
second hand clothes	12%
Rented clothes	11.25%
Sustainable material	12.25%
Exchange of clothes	9%

Sources: Author's calculation

6. CONCLUSION

The phrase "fast fashion" has come to represent a frenzied cycle of wasteful consumption. A race to the bottom has resulted from high-street stores' ruthless desire to provide the newest fashions at deeply discounted costs, with disastrous effects for the environment and workers in textiles. However, as consciousness of these issues rises, a new wave of ethical and environmentally conscientious shoppers is rebelling and looking for fast fashion substitutes that put ethics and sustainability first.

An answer to the fast fashion industry's unsustainable tactics, it is important to spread awareness about sustainable fashion, recycled design and fabrics and use of alternative fashion in order to save our earth. There is a need to promote eco-friendly materials, moral production practices, and classic design. Fundamentally, slow fashion encourages customers to make more deliberate, long-lasting choices by placing an emphasis on quality over quantity. Customers may support fair labor practices and lessen their environmental impact by purchasing long-lasting, well-made clothing.

These solutions help the environment to minimise the impact of fast fashion and recycle the existing material to efficiently utilise all resources.

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