



Sustainable Fashion practices: Paving the way for a Greener Future

Prathyusha Kantheti

Asst. Professor, Dept. of Apparel and Textile Science, College of Community Science, Odisha
University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneswar-Odisha-751003
Email id. prathyushak.ats@ouat.ac.in

Abstract

There are measures that have sought to be put in place to solve these negative impacts by encouraging innovation in fashion production process and fabrics to be used. This paper focuses on major sustainability areas that are being implement in the fashion industry and these include the following; organic and biodegradable fibres, water conservation in dyeing, and the recycling and up cycling fashion models. This include slow fashion which hails quality over quantity and moving away from the current supply chain system that has huge or carbon footprints. Also, the position of consumers as decision-makers capable of choosing more sustainable modes of living are also stressed along with new developments including the 3D printing, lack of waste design, and renewable energy usage in production. As a whole these practices offer the map to a more sustainable, ethical and responsible Fashion System that will allow the fashion industry to look at the future and promote a fashion that respects the environment and supports social justice.

Keywords: Fashion, Sustainability, Conscious consumer, recycling

Introduction

Sustainable fashion is a concept of designing, manufacturing and using clothes, which causes little impact on the environment and encourages society's responsibility. This approach focuses on conservation of the environment by incorporating eco-friendly products, reduction of wastage and coming up with products that advocate for reasonable working conditions of employees. This is since it promotes the reuse of clothes through recycling, up cycling and reusing the clothes and at the same time supporting slow production to discourage the rate of production of these clothes. Sustainable fashion focuses on making the consumers more aware



and encouraging them to use their brains on the kind of clothes they are buying and the quality as opposed to the quantity. That drive is faithfully served as the focus shifted toward renewable energy across the globe recognizing principles of ethical production and the inherent responsibility to the environment. Another component relates to the choice of materials, especially the focus should be made on the application of natural fabrics instead of synthetic ones. These natural fibres are bio-degradable and are usually grown, processed and manufactured under standards in the international market governing such products. On the other hand, synthetic textiles usually undergo certain technological processes involving the use of a lot of energy in their production and are in most occasions are associated with negative impacts on the natural environment than natural fibres and therefore are not so preferable in the perspective of sustainable fashion.

Sustainable fashion remains a crucial part to help the clothing industry to improve the ethical production ways such as fair treatment of workers and the help to protect the environment by minimizing water usages. These measures conform to international best practices that are considered as guides to safe production, standards quality and environmental friendly production. They thus include promoting ethical labour relations, the use environmentally friendly fabric like natural fibres, recycling and reuse. It presents a very philosophical opposed to conventional fashion consumption, which is rather associated with beauty, convenience, but often with low quality, unfair production conditions. The commitment towards green production, including the use of renewable energy in the industry also highlights the same. It captures something which is even more futuristic that the clothing that we wear should not only be aesthetically appealing but also one that is environmentally sensitive and creating an awareness of sustainability.

Content

The global fashion industry, which is characterized by incredible fast exterior production times and has very negative effects on the environment, is evolving. Since the climate change and the raise in the social conscience of the impacts of consumerism have been set in place, sustainable

fashion has become a strong call. Sustainable fashion working to transform the fashion system with regard to the design, production, distribution and consumption and post-consumer treatment of clothing in line with sustainable development goals, environmental and social justice, and right consumption.

- **Eco-Friendly Materials:** Sustainable fashion cannot be described without mentioning environmentally friendly fabrics. Natural fibers such as polyester and nylon which are produced from petroleum, are not only energy consuming, but also require approximately 500 years to decompose. Sustainable fashion attempts to reduce this effect through the utilization of natural fabrics such as organic cotton, hemp, bamboo, and linen fabrics since they are biodegradable products with less detrimental impacts on the earth. Such produce as organic cotton are cultivated without the use of dangerous pesticides and chemicals hence helping maintaining soil quality and preventing water pollution. Other sustainable textile is hemp; it can be grown without water and chemical fertilizers making it one of the environmentally friendly fabrics. Also, fabrics like Tencel which is derived from sustainably harvested wood pulp and recycled polyester derived from used plastic containers are other new age fabrics that are accepted in the market as better substitutes for the conventional fabrics.
- **Circular Fashion:** Recycling, upcycling and reusing can be defined as the process of turning waste material into new products that has better value in the market of second use. To be sustainable, circular fashion needs to come into the picture. Instead of the 'conventional "take-make-dispose" approach to fashion production, circular fashion strives for the integration of recycle and product recovery at the end of the fashion product life cycle. It also minimises wastage, prolongs the usage of garments, and lowers call for virgin materials.

- **Slow Fashion (Quantity Over Quality):** Fast fashion has brought dramatic changes into the fashion industry through their short production and supply chain, low cost and easy access to consumer goods but they come at a high cost, to the environment and the world. In return the slow fashion movement stresses on the importance of quality rather than quantity. Slow fashion takes time to produce better quality apparel to endure for longer time and reduces the frequency of purchasing apparels. This practice also includes the concept related to timeless designs and collections that can be used throughout the year; thus, minimizing strategies that require new things all the time and contribute to the emergence of waste. It is for this reason that consumer should opt for quality and flexibility in fashion by purchasing clothes that would last longer and be fewer in number.
- **Ethical Production:** The innovative targeting is based upon what she refers to as the 3R's Respecting People and the Planet. But before ethical production, sustainable fashion entails a process where workers, both human and environmental are treated well. Most of the fast fashion companies take advantage of cheap workforce in the third world countries with very low wages, especially in deplorable conditions. Sustainable fashion for its part calls for the reveal of the supply chain, and the requirement for fair trade practices to be followed. This means that workers are paid a reasonable wage, work under fairly conditions and are given their human rights. Ethical production also means ecological production: environmentally friendly product release. These are reducing water intensity, cutting energy intensity, lowering chemical usage and excluded hazardous pollutants in production. Choosing non-harsh production methods for employees and the environment means that the fashion industry is slowly heading towards fairness.
- **Sustainable Dyeing and Finishing Techniques:** This paper focuses on sustainable dyeing and finishing techniques. Conventional dyeing and finishing are carried out with the use of non-biodegradable chemicals that cause pollution of water sources and the environment. Eco friendly fashion also avoids the use of chemicals or poisonous dyes while also promoting the use of natural dyes, low water and energy methods of dyeing. Other natural dyes include

those sourced from plants like indigo, turmeric and madder among others since they are eco-friendly and do not pose any harm to the surroundings. Yarns with reduced water-consumption technologies and recycling 'loop' technologies where water and chemicals are recycled also dominate markets pioneered by progressive fashion brands. These methods reduce water usage to a great extent and also reduce pollution thus making the dyeing process more environmental friendly.

- **Local Production and Shortened Supply Chains:** The second major factor is what has since been referred to as local production and shortened supply chains. One of the most influential guidelines of sustainable fashion is the focus on local production and on reducing materials' supply chain. If garments are manufactured nearer to the market in which these markets sell them, then the emission of carbon is way less because of transportation. Buying local helps the local artists and industries, hence creates employment and promotes unity among citizens. Those that target local markets tend to have greater supply chain control and hence minimum compromises on use of ethical labour or environmental friendly production techniques. This also enable better accountability since consumers shall be able to make informed decisions based on the information that they receive.
- **Consumer Responsibility: Making Thoughtful Choice:** Thus, it is good to look at brands that spearhead this true change as they work side by side with the consumer, who also has discretion in the fashion industry's future. Example of a conscious decision include consumers purchasing products from to brands that have good sustainability policies, buying pre-owned clothes, deciding to purchase clothes that are of good quality and lasting longer before being replaced. Proper washing and ironing, mending the torn garments without throw them away, and giving away unwanted apparels are some of the practical methods that can be applied for increasing the life span of fashion products. Also, conscious decision making about a clothing purchase rather than making impulse purchases as well as following the less is more mentality will also go a long way in reducing the amount of waste that is created by fashion conscious consumers.

- **Innovative Technologies:** There are new technologies that are coming up that are transforming the sustainable fashion industry. New approaches from 3D printing to biodegradable synthetic fibers and blockchain as a means of identifying supply chains, brands are finding it easier to cut wastage and practice ethical conduct. These technologies give rise to improve the productivity of developing the products through rationalization of material usage, controlling of wastage, and increase in transparency.
- **Zero Waste Fashion:** Zero waste fashion therefore refers to a situation where apparel is designed in such a manner that there is no any generation of textile waste. Designers are more conscious of pattern making processes that have an ability to obtain whole fabrics and are likely to leave no fabric scrap. As well as decreasing waste, this method provides a stimulus for innovation to the materials used. What's more, buying fabrics in large quantities and then repurposing them for new clothing designs can also be considered as zero waste fashion.

Thus, this study aimed at identifying the ways of supporting sustainable fashion.

How to Support Sustainable Fashion

It is not limited to buying and wearing environmentally friendly apparels, but a process that involves making the right choices and the right buying decisions to help improve on the state of the fashion industry. Here are several ways to actively embrace and support sustainable fashion: Here are several ways to actively embrace and support sustainable fashion:

- **Educating ourself:** It is critically important to have knowledge about sustainable fashion and its practices, its materials, and its brands. Educate yourself by reading issues of interests such as organic fabrics, labour rights, and sustainable practices. Get information from reliable sources, read fashion articles and attend workshops or events involving sustainable fashion to make the right purchasing decisions.



Choose Sustainable Brands: Buy products from companies that practise sustainability, are transparent and have good business ethics. You should opt for companies that have got certain labels which include Fair Trade, Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), blue sign system to mention but a few since they comply with environmental and workers standards. These certifications make sure that brands are having real action when it comes to reducing their harms to the environment and being fair to workers.

- **Choosing Quality and Eternity:** Use fabrics that are long lasting and cloths that are not influenced by fashion changes for a short time basis. Hence the practice of going chic or when is referred to as minimalist dressing assists one to have wardrobe basics that does not require one to change them for several years.

- **Shop Pre-owned and vintage:** There's clothing businesses like the thrift store, consignment shops, and different online stores that sell second-hand clothes. Vintage shopping not only offer one of a kind piece of garment but it also reduces the market demand for new clothes hence reducing the rate at which new clothes are produced thus reducing its environmental impact. Purchasing second-hand clothes reduces the consumerism expenditure on seasonal clothing and spreading out waste.

- **Looking after Your Clothes:** This is important so as to ensure the fabric cracks are not made worse off by poor care hence lead to appointment of your clothes. Take proper care and wash garments at lower temperature, air dried instead of dried with machines and if there is a little tear then it should be repaired. People should give unwanted products for donation or sell or even recycle them rather than disposing of them. This enhances the model of circular fashion that prevents wastage.

- **Buy Local and Support Local Artists and Environment Friendly Practices:** It is recommendable to purchase locally made clothes from dress makers or independent designers since this will curb on transportation costs and energy utilization. Moreover, backing sustainable movements such as the new fashion brands provided with renewable energy or upcycled



materials contributes positively to change.

- **Reduce Impulse Buying:** Some things that one may find useful are actually unnecessary so before purchasing, one should take time to think whether the item is useful. In this context, what is suggested is that people should try to prevent the purchase of products based on impulse and other excessively economic behaviours based on fashion. Fashion minimalism also reduces waste and helps with providing more interest and satisfaction in owning fewer better clothes that reflect one's personal ideas and standards.

Benefits of Practicing Sustainable Fashion

Thus, people should practice sustainable fashion as it has such a vast number of benefits that go along with the positive impact on the world and people who live in it. Here are some key advantages: Here are some key advantages:

- **Reducing Environmental Impact:** Closely connected with sustainable fashion, pollution, the consumption of water and energy reduces and the protection of ecosystems minimizes.
- **Supporting Fair Labor Practices:** When you spend your money on ethical brands, you're getting your products through fair means for workers, safety in working conditions and humane treatment of workers which will be socially responsible.
- **Encouraging Conscious Consumption:** It enables consumer to be conscious of what they require and what is available in the market hence they do not consume much and there is little waste.
- **Inspiring Positive Industry Change:** Purchases for sustainable fashion give a signal to



organizations, to make fashion sustainable and friendly to the environment.

- **Fostering Personal Fulfilment:** The process of sustainability inserts your closet with transformative values, and it feels good to know that you are part of a future that's better than the present.

India's Path to Sustainable Fashion: Government Initiatives, Brand Evolution, and Future Trends

- **Government Initiatives:** The government of India has gone on the forefront to undertake measures towards the advancement of sustainable fashion. The 'Make in India' drive facilitates domestic manufacturing therefore cutting down on emissions that result from importation. This is a sustainable development for this company and those effected by this program is move in the right direction for supporting domestic manufacture. Besides this, some policies have also been launched by the Ministry of Textiles like Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS) which aims at modernizing the textile and apparel sector particularly towards sustainable fashion and hence, is in synchronization with the government's policies towards environmental sustainable fashion. Prime Minister of India Mr Narendra Modi has also encouraged people towards sustainable fashion to a large extent by frequently wearing Khadi and hand-woven fabrics which are environment friendly and have cultural value.
- **Rise of Sustainable Brands:** The change of the Indian fashion market to sustainable fashion is catalysed by customer knowledge, changing consumer consumption, and environmentally friendly consciousness. Today's customers are more knowledgeable and demand responsibility in the production, fair treatment of workers, and the use of eco-friendly products. This movement stands for a more permanent change of the Indian fashion with sustainability and responsibility becoming its values. I believe the Indian

fashion fraternity is setting an example for the international fashion community on how one of the largest textile consuming nations can step up its business practices to be more sustainable.

- **Trends Expected for 2024:** With the tendency of sustainable fashion already quite popular in India, it is expected to remain a trend in the future lookout of 2024. There are still massive progressive changes that are yet to be seen in the future and the consciousness towards environmentalism and social causes in fashion will remain to be progressive. It is safe to assume that in the upcoming period, there will be more brands that will follow circular fashion, recycle, and engage zero-waste production. The value of the fashion industry of India of the future can be seen by introducing the native cultural and modern technique of sustainable fashion that may form a basis for the world fashion industry. As this movement expands, India is on the right track of becoming the trendsetter of sustainable fashion, a sign to the world that fashion doesn't and should not have to be exclusive at the cost of the environment. Supported by the government, consumers, innovative brands, India is ready to move forward on its way to making Fashion Industry better, sustainable and ethical for the planet and people who sew and create clothes.

Conclusion

It is critical to achieve sustainable fashion practices for the fashion industry to be appropriately called a force for good. There are ways for brands to take full advantage and work on minimizing the environmental impact in each production; ethical production, the use of environment-friendly materials, the coming of circular fashion, and the integration of technologies. Also the consumer plays a significant part knowingly choosing to purchase products from companies which have sustainable strategies, as well as opting for less consumption in general. It involves designers, manufacturers and consumers who actively work towards a better and healthy fashion industry that has a regard for people, the environment and sustainability.



References:

1. Arasinah, K., Nornazira, S., Rahimah, J., Rodiah, S., & Farah Najwa, A. P. (2018). Environmental Sustainable Apparel: Recycle, Repairing and Reuse Apparel. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, 5(1), 4249–4257.
2. Shim, S., Kim, J. & Na, Y. (2018). An exploratory study on up-cycling as the sustainable clothing life at home. *Fash Text* **5**, 14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40691-018-0129-1>.
3. Deschamps, T. C., Carnie, B., & Mao, N. (2017). Public consciousness and willingness to embrace ethical consumption of textile products in Mexico. *Textiles and Clothing Sustainability*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40689-016-0017-2>
4. Iran, S., & Schrader, U. (2017). Collaborative fashion consumption and its environmental effects. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management : An International Journal*, 21(4), 468–482.
5. Kozlowski, A., Searcy, C., & Bardecki, M. (2018). The Redesign canvas: Fashion design as a tool for sustainability. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 183, 194–207. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.02.014>
6. Mcneill, L., & Venter, B. (2019). Identify, self-concept and young women's engagement with collaborative, sustainable fashion consumption models. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 1–33.