



IMPACT OF FAST FASHION ON ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT:

Rapidly changing fashion trends is putting a huge pressure on the supply chain practices of textile and fashion industry. Despite of the harmful consequences faced by the environment due to these industries globally, the business of fashion industry is still expanding worldwide. The reason behind this is “**Fast Fashion**”, which means making available cheap cloths with latest trends, low cost of production and with very short duration of garment life. In this article we emphasis on the use of water, carbon emissions, textile waste and colour-chemical pollution, which are some of major concerns in textile and fashion industry. Fashion supply chain is analysed to understand the environmental impact related with key stages in textile industry, i.e., from starting with manufacturing till ending up with ultimate consumer. With critical review of secondary data, we will outline the need for fundamental changes in the fashion and textile industry. This will mainly focus on a slowdown in manufacturing and the implementation of sustainable practices throughout the supply chain practices in fashion and textile industry.

KEYWORDS:

FAST FASHION, TEXTILES, SUPPLY CHAIN, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

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INTRODUCTION

Clothing and fashion industry are among the one of the fastest growing industries in the world. All around the globe people are crazy about fashion trends and new cloth materials. But being said that we cannot ignore the fact that everything comes for a price and in this situation the price is paid by the environment. Every time the fashion industry releases new trends, people are driven to buy more and cheaper items, resulting in an increase of pollution, garbage and carbon emissions that contribute to the global environmental issues. When someone goes to the mall and buys some items, it may be hard to believe how cheaply those cloths are created in such large numbers. Undoubtedly, the speedy fashion sector and its re-lated arteries have discovered a way which is known as “Fast fashion”. With rapidly changing lifestyle, the business which works on fast fashion model are facing huge challenges in terms of high -volume production, keeping low prices and increasing turnover. Expert says, textile industry is water intensive industry, therefore it’s getting polluted with the discharge of toxic dyes, colours, and harmful chemicals. Apart from all this, workers are not getting full payment and are working overtime to meet the bulk production requirement. The results of this can be catastrophic for future generations. Also, with respect to the fast-changing technology, it is evident to see that

industry experts are coming up with various solution to eradicate the effect of fast fashion on environment. With respect to the same this study will try to incorporate various other studies which are done in recent times on fast fashion, sustainability in textile and fashion industries, thereby paving the way to adopt various methods or strategies which could lead to make the apparel industry more sustainable and everlasting.

WHAT IS FAST FASHION?

Quickly produced apparel that follows the latest fashion trends is referred to as fast fashion. The collections typically take inspiration from the looks showcased on Fashion Week runways or sported by famous people. Mainstream shoppers can acquire the latest style or trend at a reasonable cost due to fast fashion. The rise of fast fashion was caused by cost-effective and more efficient production processes, the demand for modern trends from shoppers, and people - particularly young adults - having the buying power to fulfil their immediate needs. Owing to this, fast fashion is disrupting the usual pattern of clothing labels unveiling new collections and lines in an orderly, seasonal way. It is quite typical for quick-fashion stores to bring out fresh item multiple times in one week to remain fashionable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The supply chain of textile and fashion industry is inter-related. It starts from fabric production which uses petrochemicals for producing the fabric to manufacturing and shipping it to ultimate consumer. Every step in the process has a negative impact on the environment due to consumption of water, material, chemical compounds, and energy. A multitude of chemicals used in textiles are hazardous for both people working in factories as well as buyers. Most environmental effects take place in countries where garments are manufactured but waste can be found around the world. The advancement of fast fashion has raised the use of materials within this system; many brands now produce almost twice as much clothing than before 2000. This type of consumption leads to an abundance amounting to most being burned or discarded into landfills or sent away to underdeveloped nations. Every part of the process affects the environment in terms of its consumption of water, materials, chemicals, and energy. Numerous substances employed in the production of textiles can be damaging to the environment, laborers at the factory and purchasers. The countries in which textiles and garments are produced tend to be the most affected by environmental issues, yet textile waste can be found all around the world (Niinimäki, 2020). The "Fast Fashion" system of supplying clothing is designed to ensure that stores are stocked with the latest fashion trends in a timely manner (Byun and Sternquist, 2011; Moore and Fernie, 2004). Large companies such as H&M and Zara have implemented fast fashion by introducing fresh apparel styles to their stores on a regular basis, with new items appearing in store every three to five weeks (Hu et al., 2014). The amount of times clothes is worn is much shorter than the duration for which they could be worn, even if their style has become outdated. Additionally, garments may not be maintained properly and could be discarded without much contemplation. Fast fashion is a major contributor to environmental issues (Roos et al., 2015). Moving toward quick fashion leads to clothing having shorter lifespans for use. Rather than the usual way of buying and owning products, collaborative consumption is an option that can help to lessen the environmental impacts of fashion by extending the usable life span of garments. In the study done by Zamani, they investigated the ecological effects of clothing libraries as a form of collaborative consumption through life cycle assessment and contrasted their benefits and drawbacks to old models of business. Moreover, the study by Zamani explored effect of clothing libraries on environment. Also, the findings in the study were based on the common items which are very basic in clothing terms i.e., dress, jeans, and T shirts (Zamani, 2017). The outcome of the study showed that life span of apparel is increased by incorporating clothing libraries. To make progress towards a healthier environment, it is essential to significantly extend the lifespan of clothing. Additionally, the data presented a numerical indication of the chance of issue displacement:

an increase in customer transit could totally compensate for any gains made from decreased production. This emphasized the importance of considering the details of implementation when using collaborative consumption business models. Around the world, 80 billion items of apparel are bought annually, creating an estimated \$1.2 trillion in revenue for the worldwide fashion industry (Bick, 2018). Majority of which is produced in Bangladesh and China, while the topmost consumer is United States. It is estimated that, in the US alone, 3.8 billion pounds of clothing are disposed of as solid waste each year - equalling around 80 pounds for every American annually (Halsey, 2018). Ready-to-wear garments that are inexpensive and easily accessible have altered the way individuals purchase and discard apparel. Fast fashion has become a prominent way of selling vast amounts of apparel at low costs, resulting in an increase in garment usage. It is often thought that the widespread availability of up-to-date fashion to people from all walks of life is a form of "democratization", yet the potential health risks and environmental damage caused by inexpensive clothing are rarely discussed throughout its entire lifecycle. The environmental and social effects associated with textile production are extensive, including the growth of cotton, which is water demanding, the discharge of untreated water (which includes dyes) into nearby water sources, as well as inappropriate wage rate and unhygienic working conditions for employees. Shoppers can take advantage of the affordability provided by fast fashion, however, those who work in textile factories or live close to them are subjected to a disproportionate amount of environmental health risks. Additionally, higher levels of consumption have caused many fabrics waste to be deposited in landfills and other unmonitored areas. This is especially pertinent for LMICs (Low- and middle-income countries) since a lot of this trash winds up in second-hand clothing stores. Many low- and middle-income countries are often short of the tools and funds needed to create and impose regulations that protect people's health from environmental and work hazards.

There is a significant impact on global health which in turn is associated with low cost of clothing production. While industrial disasters like the 1911 U.S. Triangle shirtwaist factory fire have resulted in improvements in occupational safety and standards, the same cannot be said for the LMIC. After getting attention from the regularities from Europe and US, the unsafe working conditions of the labours have just been off shored rather been eliminated completely.

The social costs are very significant which is directly or indirectly related with associated with the apparel industry and global textile industry. The impact of which is on environment and human body, thereby violating the human rights as well.

The fashion industry is the second most polluting industry, responsible for 8% of all carbon emissions and 20% of global wastewater and is expected to increase its greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 (Bick, 2018). To explore the impact of the fast fashion industry, we

choose 65 publications from 1996 to November 2021 and conducted (i) bibliographic, (ii) text, and (iii) content analyses. In the Bailey's report found that 74% of articles published in the last five years accounted for most publications and citations from China and European countries, indicating a growing interest in research on fast fashion and water quality (Bailey 2022). The summary stated that the production process incorporates deep carbon footprints and there is still lot of scope for research in areas of sustainability of textile production, circular economy, and environmental social responsibility.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the meaning of fast fashion.
2. To identify the radical impact of fast fashion on nature.
3. To study the impact of fast fashion on Low and middle-income countries.
4. To suggest sustainable ways to cope up with fast fashion.

METHODOLOGY

Existing data is summarized and collated to increase the overall effectiveness of the study. Secondary data is mainly collected from published works such as research reports, articles, books, and journals. Critical analysis is done, and summarised outcomes are drafted based on the recent studies.

SOLUTIONS TO COPE UP WITH FAST FASHION

VALUE – BEHAVIOUR GAP

With the rise of fast fashion in recent decades, clothing has become cheaper, less durable, and more commonly purchased. It is also difficult for those who do different decision-making practices and respond differently to social norms. Even the most ethical people engage in 'grey' consumption and are vulnerable to planned obsolescence in fashion cycles (McDonald et al., 2012). Therefore, there is a value-behaviour gap related to clothing, where environmental awareness does not align with behaviour. Based on detailed qualitative research, this article presents a cultural thematic schema (from cultural theory) as a heuristic for coordinating solutions that can narrow the value-behaviour gap related to sustainable clothing use. Recognizing that consumers differ from each other, he proposes to target his three "ideal types" of personalities derived from cultural theory: egalitarian, hierarchical, and individualist. Results show that bottom-up solutions such as manufacturing stations, social marketing, wardrobe audits, and education are key enablers of slow fashion. They work with a variety of industry-led government and top-down policies. The novel application of cultural theory to the problem of fast fashion allowed us to propose bottom-up solutions that could be tailored for maximum resonance with a wide range of people. It was clear that for most of our study participants, social interaction was as important as learning skills in shaping their beliefs and behaviour. It should be emulated in every attempt to

extend or improve it. It is important to find ways to expand the project's work from a small niche market to the mass market (West,2017).

CIRCULARITY SOLUTION

A comprehensive circular model of value chain was analysed of sustainability report of six global players. The model is of 11 steps: Product design, fresh raw material extraction and processing, textile and material production, manufacturing, auditing and certification, packaging and retail, customer use, used clothing collection, textile and material recycling, partnerships, and transparency. Results are reported in five implementation phases: Strategy, research and development, large-scale implementation, quantitative metrics, and targets. Analysis shows that major players in this sector have built complex systems to reduce their environmental impact while imposing strict rules on their upstream supply chain (Dumitru,2022). Downstream, these companies are educating customers about circularity and encouraging consumers to recycle or reuse their habits. This article describes various configurations of circular models implemented by large fashion retailers, along with real-life examples of strategy, product, and process design. Given that fast fashion is viewed to have a bad impact on the environment, the findings have important theoretical, management, and standard-setting implications (Dumitru, 2022)

SHOP FROM SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL FASHION BRANDS.

One of the best ways to ensure your clothing choices don't harm the environment or people is to be mindful of where you shop. This not only keeps our carbon footprint low, but also helps promote fair labour practices for people around the world. According to a 2019 Oxfam report based on interviews with her more than 470 garment workers in Bangladesh and Vietnam, less than 1% of respondents reported adequate working conditions and a living wage. Sustainable brands pay attention to every step of their supply chain, from sourcing recycled materials to ensuring a fair wage for garment workers, in making and selling their products. Before you buy, research your favourite brands' mission and values to see if they share their social and environmental policies, or see how they perform on the Fashion Transparency Index.

BUY OR RENT SECOND HAND CLOTHES

A 2021 study published in the Finnish Scientific Journal Environmental Research Letters suggests that renting clothes is more polluting than throwing it away, given the impact of transport and dry cleaning. However, members of the fashion rental industry have questioned the findings, saying that clothing rental slows consumer consumption and extends the life of clothing that would otherwise end up in landfills, thereby reducing carbon footprint. There is no one single option for making the fashion industry sustainable, but a combination of options can reduce our negative impact on the environment. The creation of online thrift shops and leasing retailers will make it easier for consumers to resist overproduction and reduce their

personal carbon footprint.

RECYCLE TEXTILES AND GARMENTS.

Some fashion retailers are aware of their harmful effects on the environment and are also taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint. Madewell, Levi's and H&M are giving consumers the opportunity to recycle their textiles. Just a few of the brands that offer. Collected old socks and ripped jeans can be reused as new clothing material or used as insulation for your home. Check out used clothing collection points in your area or contact your favourite retailer to see if they are collecting textile donations.

THINK TWICE BEFORE THROWING OUT YOUR CLOTHES

Do not dispose of clothing in regular trash cans. Most of them are made of synthetic, non-biodegradable fibres that end up piled up in landfills.

- Try to repair them. With a little imagination, you might even be able to fix a torn piece of clothing or even change its style.
- Donate your clothes to friends, family, neighbours, or charities.
- Sell on second-hand apps such as Vinted. - Some clothing stores collect used clothes of their own brand or other brands.
- Place in textile recycling bin. The fabric can be recycled to make new clothes.

CONCLUSION

Fast fashion has a significant environmental impact. Fast fashion is damaging the Earth through a variety of socially inappropriate workplace practises to dramatic climatic shifts. To lessen the negative effects that rapid fashion has on the environment and society, we must all do our part. Moreover, the craftsmanship in retail apparel needs to be valued. Cutting back on consumption and choosing to buy fewer things are two ways to achieve this. Additionally, it is beneficial to only purchase clothing from people who are trying to protect the environment. Customers may compel retailers to concentrate on creating high-quality, environmentally friendly apparel by doing this. Reusing clothing, donating it, and supporting local manufacturers are various methods to reduce the impact of fast fashion. Also, it is very important from consumer point of view to do own research on different brands to check whether they uphold ethical standards and are sustainable.

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