

# Attaining Sustainability - One of the Biggest Challenges of the Fashion Industry

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**Abstract:** *India is a developing country with development occurring in all the disciplines. This development is on a very fast pace due to globalization. Globalization makes the whole world a small place. Every human being of any corner of the world is aware of the happenings of the exactly opposite corner of the world as a result of globalization. Fashion industry is also one such industry that is developing at an extremely fast rate. People around the nation try to keep in pace with the global fashion and so there is a constant growing demand in fashion industry. This increase in demand leads to more production and sales and more dumping and more creation of waste. This is why sustainability needs to be followed by the fashion designers and the fashion industry. But it is not easy for the masses to follow the steps of sustainability as far as fashion industry is concerned. This is a review study of previously done work to discuss the major challenges this industry faces in following sustainability on a regular and daily basis. Secondary data is collected and analysed and then results are drawn. Certain suggestions are discussed to overcome these challenges and conclusions are drawn. More work can be done on this topic as it is a vast subject and there are many aspects that can be studied for an overall change in the fashion industry*

**Keywords:** Fashion Industry, Sustainability

## I. INTRODUCTION

In this modern and rapidly developing world sustainability is a major goal which all the communities and governments are thriving to achieve. Attaining sustainability can be defined as developing ourselves and at the same time not disturbing the ecological limits. It simply implies to continue developing with a concern for the environment, society, and economy. Any country or community can grow only when all the sectors of the society we live in are in complete harmony with each other. Fashion industry is one such sector of the modern society that is developing at a very fast rate and so it needs to develop in a very sustainable manner. This sustainability can be achieved when all the member so the society that is the designers, industrialists, workers, and consumers all make collective efforts to reduce the use of natural resources and opt to follow the path of sustainability. The fashion industry should follow sustainability so that they can set a good example for the upcoming generations and for the other sectors of the society. As the fashion industry is one of the fast-changing industry a lot of waste is generated by it and a huge number of natural resources are utilised. And so alternative technologies and materials that are sustainable, production and promotion methods must be evolved. All the traditional methods and techniques that are utilizing a large quantity of natural resources and are producing a huge amount of pollution must renovated and reprocessed to attain the sustainable goals. It's high time that the fashion industry needs to follow the path of green sustainable development.

### 1.1 Fashion Industry

Fashion is the clothing and accessories styled by people, it can be luxurious high end designer brands, or it can be mass produced routine wear. Fashion industry comprises of manufacturing, distribution, advertising, retailing, marketing, and promotion of designer brands to daily wear clothing, apparels, and accessories. It is a modern-day industry that has flourished because of globalization, invention of sewing machines, more establishment of factories and departmental stores. Fashion industry involves basic four levels, i) raw material production, ii) fashion goods production, iii) advertising, and iv) retail. The fashion industry includes fashion designers, tailors, factory workers, skills embroiderers, models, pattern makers, textile manufacturers, sketch artists, the press, publicists, and salespersons.

### **Sustainability**

The word sustainability means to satisfy the needs of the current generation without compromising the needs of the future generations. Following sustainability requires proper decision making, planning, and execution. It is to understand the interlinkage and interdependency of the social, economic, and ecological systems. Sustainability is basically a concern for the prevailing environment and mother earth. The government and society should take constructive measures to develop an understanding and empathy for the human life, environment, and nature. For this the government along with the help of the society should run sustainability drives so that the youth can be educated and trained, public can be made aware, knowledge, skills, perspective, and values can be developed in the citizens to conserve the nature.

### **II. METHODOLOGY**

This is a review-based study and for this research 19 research papers were studied. These previously done research works are based on the fast-changing fashion industry, the various ways in which sustainability can be achieved in the fashion industry and the challenges faced by the industry in following sustainability. These research papers were collected, studied, analysed, and then results were extracted. Research gaps were searched, and conclusions were drawn.

### **III. RESULTS**

It becomes very difficult to follow the path of sustainability if the technology and infrastructure is not developed accordingly. All the further research and study in all the disciplines must done keeping in mind the concept of sustainability. One of the major challenges is lack of funds and awareness. After studying the research works the following results related to the challenges faced by the fashion industry were extracted.

- *Constant Demand for Unique Products:* Due to the fast-changing fashion trends there is a constant demand for unique products. Every consumer wishes to wear outfits that are not common in the market, and this leads to more production and more waste.
- *Frequent Change:* There is a frequent change in the fashion, this can be due to the change in the season or change in the occasion or change in the geographical location. But fashion keeps on changing very frequently and so the old clothes and accessories are being dumped creating more wastage.
- *Availability of Wide Range:* Every clothing or accessories that is available in the market must be made in a variety of designs and patterns, as every consumer has their own set of choices and preferences. The designs and patterns that are widely accepted are being used by the consumers, the others are again thrown to the dump yards.
- *More Production:* As there is a constant demand in the fashion world for new clothing and accessories more production must be done to meet this demand. More production houses are being established for this purpose. This leads to more air and water pollution.
- *Lack of Awareness Amongst the Consumers and Society:* Society as a whole is not well aware of the sustainable goals and the ways of achieving it. It is very difficult for a common man to incorporate the habit of sustainability in their daily life routine if they are not well educated and made well aware about the sustainable development.
- *Lack of Reusing, Recycling, and Refurbishing the Fabrics and Garments:* Not enough technology, awareness, and acceptance has been developed amongst the industries, retailers, wholesalers, and the consumers regarding the reuse, recycle, and refurbishing of the garments and fabrics and so the used articles are directly dumped.
- *Lack of Awareness related to Sustainable Manufacturing and Marketing:* The modern fashion industries and fashion marketing is not aware of the various ways in which production and marketing can be done in a sustainable manner. They are still following the conventional ways of manufacturing and advertising their products that are consuming a lot of energy, resources, and time.

- *Rigid Mindset of the Labors:* The labour that is working in the fashion industries is not well educated and trained for following the new sustainable ways of manufacturing. Their mindset and working pattern are age old which are very time consuming and less productive.
- *Shortage of Sustainable Raw Materials:* There is a very little awareness regarding sustainability and sustainable raw materials in the market. So, there is a very little amount of raw material available in the market that is sustainable, and this little amount is not sufficient to meet the demand of the fast-growing fashion industry. Also, the machinery and labour are not apt for this sustainable raw material.
- *Lack of Interest of Entrepreneurs and Investors:* Majority of the investors and entrepreneurs are busy making business and profit with their fashion houses. They are not much interested in bringing a positive reform in the fashion world by incorporating sustainable techniques and methods in their business.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

As attaining sustainability is the only way left for the current and future generations for their survival, few ways of achieving sustainability in the day-to-day life of human race are discussed.

- *Raising Public Awareness:* Every individual should be aware of the choices they make. Their choices should be sustainable and for that they should be aware of what exactly sustainability is all about. These aware individuals can then enforce the government and society to implement the rules of sustainability. Awareness amongst the individuals can be spread through verbal and written media, speeches, rallies, and movements.
- *Conserving the Resources and Eliminating the Waste:* The natural resources are getting exhausted and polluted. Air, water, and soil pollution is increasing with the increase in the human development. These natural resources need to be conserved for the future and the best way to conserve them is to reduce waste and reduce the consumption of unnecessary products and services. Thus, constructive measures must be taken for the conservation of the natural resources.
- *Increasing the Business and Government Investment:* Humans can develop modern technologies and infrastructures in a sustainable manner. These technologies and infrastructure can be developed in a way that they utilize less resources and produce less waste and cause less harm to the environment. This is only possible when the government imposes such laws and rules on the society. This is also possible when the big business houses and the government together invest in developing such sustainable and eco-friendly technologies and infrastructures.
- *Promoting Education:* Government should strictly follow the act of right to education. Equal education rights should be given to the girl and boy child, to the poor and the rich, and to the rural child and the urban child. Educated youth can make the right choice of choosing the sustainable path and bringing about a positive change in the society. It is only through education that the world gets creative, productive, and well-informed citizens that can shape the world into a greener and healthier place to live in.
- *Re-evaluating the Values:* Bringing positive changes in the human behaviour and actions is the need of the time. This will help in providing a better and healthier future to the youth with ample number of natural resources for their survival and development.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The present world is progressing in all the streams, but this progress is harming nature and the environment. This is leading to non-reversible problems like climate changes, global warming, water, soil, and air pollution. To slow down these problems or stop them the world needs to follow the sustainable path of development. New technologies and infrastructure must be evolved for the production of raw materials and to reuse, recycle, and refurbish the old materials. This will be very helpful to future generations. Humans should try to reduce pollution by reducing waste and reusing it. This can be achieved by using locally made organic materials. Durable and sustainable materials need to be circulated in the fashion market so that used materials are dumped less, in return this will bring an economic balance in society. Reduction of the production of products must be done so that the labor is not forced to exert themselves for nominal wages, this will bring a social balance in the society. And lastly it can be concluded by stating that giving back to nature

and society is being sustainable. Every individual should donate a part of the earned profit to societal welfare, be it education or health or civic purposes.

There are very many challenges that the modern fashion industry is facing in following sustainability, but small and affirmative steps can be taken by each designer, industrialist, retailer, and the consumer as well towards a sustainable tomorrow.

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