

Recycled Fashion: New Approaches

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ABSTRACT

We live in the fashion World. Fashion industry is exploring day by day with the growing of population. Nowadays fashion industry progressively more concerns about global climate, ethical and environmental issues, due to the lack of resources and energy in the world. Sustainable fashion is emerging as a global trend in the fashion world. Textile and clothing recycling and reuse is an under researched field. Remarkable response was received from different classes and group of people who have shown their keen interest on the products made from the thrown out garments. Design is nothing but responsibilities. Designers have to think about the client's satisfaction as well as the environment. With the limited resources we have to assume recycling otherwise resources will be finished very soon. It is hard time to stand with the ethical aspects. Sustainability is not just a choice and sustainability is needed for better environment. We need to be aware of responsible consumption of fast fashion and promote sustainable and recycled fashion now. Reduce, reuse, recycle, these are the key stones of the research. This qualitative research is about selective reviews of the literature related to recycled, up-cycled, re-used fashion and its necessity for the world.

Key words: Fashion, Sustainability, SDG, Re-use, Recycle, Up-cycle, Carbon Footprint, Environment.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Recycled fashion is one of the easiest way to reduce the amount of waste associated with this culture of fast fashion. Every year we have thrown out clothes only because of old or out of fashion, most of that thrown out clothes are wearable. Recycled fashion uses thrown out or used clothes and convert it to a new product.

Fashion is a particular style when most of the people of a region adopt it for a certain time. Recycling is a method to transform left-over materials into new products. When a fashion product converted after fulfilling all its purpose to a new product is called Recycled fashion.

Recycling is to prevent waste of useful materials, reduce the consumption of raw materials, reduce energy usage and reduce pollutions. Responsible consumption and production is one of the Sustainable Development Goal. (SDG: 12) The fashion industry is the second largest polluter in the world. The environmental damages are increasing as the industry grows. Life below water (SDG: 14) and life on land (SDG: 15) are facing difficulties for the growing fast fashion. It has a very bad impact in the climate. We need to take several action to mitigate these problems and try to find out few solutions and alternatives. Building awareness about the sustainability and recycling is the first step.

AIM

This research aim is to explore more possibilities on sustainable fashion products. Fashion for green, fashion for recycling. It's a mission to develop creativity on recycled fashion garments as well as fashion accessories for aesthetic and commercial uses.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The process of recycling has been set in movement. On an average people from around the world throws away discarded clothing every year, According to the report from the Council for Textile Recycling (CTR) that's approximately billion pounds of waste.

Sustainability is fuzzy and wide concept and the discussion what to sustain continues, the resources or lifestyle. Furthermore how holistically the sustainability should be approached is under discussion. According to the holistic approach for environmental ethics ecosystems and biosphere as a whole should be considered, not individual's rights. Furthermore in ethical discussion the value aspect is most important; what is considered to be valuable and from where value comes from. Furthermore environmental ethics raises deep questions; who

counts morally and why. Moreover the human actions are under evaluation in environmental ethical discussion; “how should human beings act in the nonhuman natural world”.¹

Presently sustainability of fashion in the worldwide is the major considerable issue. The much talked concern is for the favor of fashion's sustainability around the world. Many organizations and fashion conscious personalities have come forward to uphold the further extension of the campaign of good environment for tomorrows. On the other hand, fashion for the morality or ethical issues is one of the key concepts for the humanity and sustainability point of view. Main objectives of this study to justify the sustainability concern of fashion companies and their policy. In this paper concerned brands are focused on the basis of their present activities related fashion from the manufacturing to the marketing process. Most of the cases celebrities are in the forwarded stages for the upheld of the fashion sustainability. For the conservation of the environment, sustainability of the fashion is the utmost need in the present fastest growing world. Nowadays, fashion is considered the vital issue for the ecological aspect with morality concern.²

The fashion industry is the second-largest industrial polluter, accounting for 10% of global pollution, ranking higher than emissions from air travel! When factoring in the entire lifecycle of a garment, from manufacturing to transportation to, ultimately, ending up in landfill, in total, 1.2 billion tons of carbon emissions are released by the fashion industry every year.³

Fast fashion has a significant environmental impact. According to the UN Environment Programme, the industry is the second-biggest consumer of water and is responsible for 8-10% of global carbon emissions – more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined.⁴ Fast fashion has an impact on the environment through carbon emissions. The fashion industry is responsible for 10% of global CO₂ emissions each year, according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.⁵

Fashion and textile products evolve through several processes that involve the conversion of fiber to yarn, yarn to fabric and fabric to garment. During these processes, there are numerous evidences from the past that the fashion and textile producers are not giving much attention to sustainable practices. With the growing global interest on sustainability and increased consumer awareness, fashion and textile industries have taken initiatives to offer sustainable solutions in their production lines. There are a number of approaches taken by the stakeholders in the fashion production starting from fiber production to garment manufacturing even the supply chain management to fulfil the sustainability requirements. Fashion items produced using sustainable practices can contribute to environmental, social, and economic well-being leading to a green earth in the future.⁶

Fashion Revolution revealed that the number of garments produced annually has doubled since 2000. The unsold garments are often burned: in 2017, it was revealed that H&M had been burning 12 tons of unsold clothing every year since 2013. Textile overproduction, and the resulting waste, are harming our planet. It's estimated that 92 million tons of textile waste is created annually by the fashion industry. It's also said that textile waste is to increase by around 60% between 2015 and 2030, with an additional 57 million tons of waste being generated annually, reaching an annual total of 148 million tons.⁷

Waste of the fashion industry is increasing day by day. Frequently lots of rubbish truck load of clothes is burnt or buried in landfill. Waste is prevalent in every part of the fashion industry, as a result of overproduction, over consumption and problematic end-of-life solutions.⁸

Between 2000 and 2014, clothing production doubled with the average consumer buying 60 percent more pieces of garment compared to 15 years ago. Yet, each clothing item is now kept half as long.⁹

1 Niinimäki, K. Ethical foundations in sustainable fashion. *Text Cloth Sustain* 1, 3 (2015)

2 Kaikobad, Najmul & Zafar, Md. & Zobaida, Helena & Daizy, Afroza. (2015). Sustainable and Ethical Fashion: The Environmental and Morality Issues. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. 20. 17-22. 10.9790/0837-20811722.

3. <https://carbonliteracy.com/fast-fashions-carbon-footprint/>

4. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/un-alliance-sustainable-fashion-addresses-damage-fast-fashion>

5. <https://www.treehugger.com/fast-fashion-environmental-ethical-issues-4869800>

6 Nayak, Rajkishore. (2019). A Review of Recent Trends in Sustainable Fashion and Textile Production. *Current Trends in Fashion Technology & Textile Engineering*. 4. 10.19080/CTFTTE.2019.04.555648.

7. <https://goodonyou.eco/waste-luxury-fashion>

8. <https://goodonyou.eco/waste-luxury-fashion>

9. <https://edgexpo.com/fashion-industry-waste-statistics/>

The report by ERM (2007) advises that consumers be better educated about the environmental impact of discarding unwanted clothes and consigning them to the landfill. Indeed consumers are becoming increasingly aware of social/ethical issues.¹⁰

Creating true sustainability in the fashion industry requires reducing the material flow of clothing, addressing both sustainable production and consumption. Clothing producers must shift the focus of their operations from exchange value to use value, which offers opportunities to increase garment quality and reduce quantity demanded through encouraging consumers to engage in fashion through wearing, not purchasing, clothes. Because the success of this approach depends on designing clothes able to satisfy both the functional and emotional values of consumers.¹¹

Since 1996, the Armani Group has made Corporate Social Responsibility, a key pillar of its strategy. Thanks to the first recycled denim jeans, that was displayed at the Innovation Show at the Museum of Science and Technology in Milan. Specific initiatives that have strengthened, rather than diluted, the brand's imagery.¹²

Companies which did not entrust fashion sustainability consultants took such decisions especially because they thought to possess the required competences and to save money (18%). Companies which take advantage of external sustainability consulting firms succeed in reaching high levels of sustainability more easily, and they face cost problems to a lesser extent afterwards. Indeed, fashion companies which entrust sustainability consultants and occupy the advanced level of sustainability represent an additional 56.7% as compared with those which are not supported by experts. Whereas those which are at a basic level of sustainability are 64.1% less. Furthermore, companies which entrusted sustainability experts perceived the cost problem to a 16% lesser extent afterwards, with respect to companies which dealt with sustainability internally. Such results are probably due to the fact that – although relying on fashion sustainability consultants took an economic expense – experts' competences allowed them to easily achieve results and reduced inefficiency costs.¹³

Sweden reveals world's first garment made entirely from recycled cotton. A group of collaborating Swedish companies presented the world's first garment made entirely from recycled cotton, the company that made the pioneering material. "The technology allows us to recycle all materials that contain cellulose."¹⁴

Fabrics made from recycled items are now becoming more commonplace with recycled polyester made from recycled drinks bottles now being made by companies such as Patagonia, Marks and Spencer, and Armani jeans.¹⁵

Increased awareness of the climate crisis leads to sustainability becoming more important to many people as the actions made today will have a large impact on future generations. Generation Z is soon to be the largest consumer group globally, where most people are interested in implementing sustainable lifestyles. Gen Z will soon hold a powerful position as fashion consumers and has the ability to drive positive changes for societies globally.¹⁶

III. FINDINGS

A lot of reasons to recycle fashion and environmental issues are one of the key fact. With the growing fast fashion we are destroying our environment. Landfill sites and its surrounding water supplies pick up hazardous toxic chemicals used in clothing and textiles industries. Re-using existing fibers and textiles can reduce the amount of the pollution caused during manufacturing processes like dyeing, washing, and scouring. We need to aware people about the necessity of re-using and recycled fashion. Recycling is the process of making or manufacturing new products from a product that has originally served its purpose. If these used products are disposed of in an appropriate, environmental friendly way. The world is moving towards high fashion and high consumption. The practice of recycling is very ancient in Southeast Asia, there people are using their clothes for generation to generation. It is a part of their tradition. Daughters are very fond of using their mother's sari. Sometimes they turn their mother's sari into new dresses. Most of the people using their old

10. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261425289_8_th_European_Academy_Of_Design_Conference_-_1_RESPONSIBLE_DESIGN_RE-USINGRECYCLING_OF_CLOTHING

11. Shannon McGrath S. April, Sustainable Fashion, Page 1 (2012)

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14. <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/sustainable-fashion-blog/sweden-recycled-cotton-technology-fashion-composting>

15. <https://www.sundaynews.co.zw/recyclable-material-is-it-feasible-for-the-zimbabwean-industry/>

16. Berthem F. & Mahrs M., Sustainable Fashion: A Generation Z Perspective, *JÖNKÖPING* 05, 2022

sari to make *kantha* (quilt). Like this they just not only recycling the old clothes but also keep the memory alive respect the tradition. This way recycling can benefit our society, our tradition as well as our global environment. Consumers may contribute by recycling, re-fashioning and re-styling existing clothes; they may exchange clothes with friends or choosing to spend in quality rather than quantity when buying clothes.

Recycling has different stages. It's vary on product types. Different product cycles has different but almost similar or related work cycle:

- Collection and processing recycled / leftover / waste Materials
- Manufacturing new products made from recycled Materials
- Display, distribute & sales of new recycled products.

There are lot of ongoing recycling methods are already in our practice. Few recycled products are shown as below:

- Recycled polyester made from used drinking bottles
- Performance Shoes made from Pet bottles
- Sportswear made from recycled plastic
- Active wear made from recycled plastic bottles and eco-rubber.
- Recycling textile made from unwanted factory surpluses
- Using patchwork fabric for restyling a new garment
- Leftover fabrics turned into hand bags, mobile phone cover, bottle cover etc.
- Using leftover fabrics for making quilts, blankets, carpets, rugs and floor mats.
- Discard fabrics are widely used in making mops, padding and home furnishings.

Presently designers and fashion brands are aware of the impact of our clothing and lifestyle industry on our environment, so they are trying to find ways to reduce environmental damages and carbon footprint. There are a lot of recycled clothing brands are leading this recycling movements. They are selecting recycled and sustainable fibers, Textiles and fabrics in their collections. They are using recycling materials and creating new garments from used clothes. They are trying to make a difference and carry on the recycling movements. Some of the recycling brand are as follows:

- Patagonia,
- Re/Done
- Ecoalf
- Planet Warrior
- Urban Renewal
- Pact
- Beyond Retro
- Wolven
- Rapanui
- Mother Earth Garments
- Repainted
- Ruby Moon
- Mara Hoffman
- Zero Waste Daniel

Recycling is one of the best sustainable option for clothing. As our aim is to reduce, reuse and recycle. Recycling clothes can be more constructive and contribute to a sustainable fashion industry as well as for the world and the environment.

There are many significant benefits of recycling.

- Reduces the amount of industrial & leftover waste.
- Saves energy and natural resources.
- Reduces carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reduces disposal cost and provides economic benefits.
- Reducing the need to collect new raw materials and resources.
- Recycling reduces the demand for dyes and fixing agents.
- Reduces pollution (SDG 14: Life below water & SDG 15: Life on land)

- Reduces consumption (SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production)
- Sustain the environment for future generations (SDG 13: Climate Action)

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Recycled Fashion is necessary for the Global Environment. Recycling opportunities vary from country to country. Reusing some of that cloth in remaking fashion goods can save some loads from the earth. Many fashion designers, companies and brands nowadays develops sustainable fashion product. Designer may take recycling initiatives to collect unwanted used garments and cloths and transformed into new fashion products. Recycled Fashion is need to be adopted by the general people as their social responsibilities. We all make it an ethical practice, please before purchasing favorite products please do survey their environmental impact and what their manufacturers are actually doing to reduce their carbon footprint. We need more attention and resources for this Recycling Fashion movement.

We can also take following steps as our social responsibilities (SR):

- Support ethical fashion movement and sustainable brands.
- Encourage fashion designers to create and develop eco-friendly design.
- To give more emphasize on re-cycling education in Institutional curriculum and create awareness among the learners to save our earth.
- Consume less and consider up-cycling, recycling and re-using old garments.
- Promote recycling clothing brands.
- Arrange recycled and sustainable fashion exhibitions and fashion shows.
- Aware general people about recycling fashion by government and non-government organization.
- Aware netizens about re-cycling fashion by Social media activities.
- Appoint sustainability consultants in the RMG industry.

V. CONCLUSION

Fashion industry is exploring recycled fashion as its new wings with the responsibilities. With the ethical mission and vision, recycling fashion movement is for the world, recycling fashion is for the environment. There is a massive prospects to develop, to create more about sustainable, ethical, eco fashion and go on to the long-term future. Recycled Fashion idea can be a gateway of great business if more label or brand come forward to develop specialized in fashion with used cloth. Finally we all need to understand the true fact and work for the all sector of sustainability and recycling. We need to carry on the ongoing Recycling Fashion Movement.

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