

Consumer Behavior Towards Sustainable Fashion in India

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Abstract: The fashion business, one of the world's top polluters, exacerbates environmental issues by creating a negative impression. Green fashion is a new approach to "sensible fashion," indicating an increase in the number of ethical fashion firms attempting to attract young mainstream fashion customers by delivering stylish items. increase. Some researchers have clearly highlighted responsible consumer commitments to green fashion; however, others say that environmentally conscientious fashion-conscious customers are not actively participating in green fashion support. There is also one. The purpose of this study is to examine the present level of knowledge of green fashion among these young Indian customers. An exploratory survey was undertaken utilizing a small sample of target groups between the ages of 18 and 31 to examine consumer views of green fashion using online questionnaires, followed by variables that impact customers' purchase decisions. Is examined. This research may inspire fashion businesses to embrace environmentally friendly methods on their own, as well as give marketers and retailers with strategic instructions on sustainable retail practices.

Key Words: —*Consumer behavior, Sustainable fashion, Sustainable, India, Green apparel knowledge, green peer influence, green apparel buying, Indian youth.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the recent decade, the Indian clothing sector has been transformed by a new phenomenon that offers consumers the latest fashions at inexpensive rates. Fast fashion, sometimes known as "fast fashion," is gaining popularity among retailers as more and more chain stores embrace a vertically integrated business strategy based on the "just in time" manufacturing philosophy and quick response. Is on the rise. [1] is the new strategy. Every stage of the clothing product life cycle, from textile growth and production to dyeing and printing, in-store transit and sales, to disposal at the end of the garment's existence, has certain drawbacks. It has an influence on the environment [2].

Many people are unaware of the environmental effect of apparel manufacturing and sales [3]. Despite being uninformed of the unsustainable processes involved in the manufacture of the items they purchase; some garment purchasers are beginning to consider its consequences [4] and are interested in purchasing eco-friendly apparel.

This change in awareness and the associated purchasing behaviour has been investigated in extensive research work in various countries [6–8]. Little empirical research has addressed the Indian market in this regard. Therefore, the purpose of this work was to investigate consumer awareness and purchasing behaviour in India and to find out the impact of demographics on it.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Apparel industry

The fashion business, which is one of the most polluting industries on the planet, contributes to environmental issues by leaving detrimental impressions. Green fashion is a new term for "fashion with a conscience," and it refers to a growing number of ethical fashion companies that offer stylish items in order to attract young mainstream fashion customers. While some studies clearly demonstrate responsible customers' efforts in the area of green fashion, others believe that environmentally conscious fashion-oriented consumers do not actively support green fashion. (Saha and Bhandari, 2019).

Concentrating textile production within environmentally certified or eco-labeled clothes is one way to lessen the apparel industry's environmental effect in India. (Paromita Goswami, 2008). According to the article, Indian consumers are both prices conscious and quality conscious.

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2.2 Sustainable fashion

(Shen et al, 2012) 'Sustainable fashion is defined as garment products made with an ethical consciousness toward labor rights, safety, and working conditions, as well as having a low environmental impact. Green apparel perceived benefits were influenced by past environmental behavior, green peer influence, and green apparel knowledge. Product qualities such as awareness of fair-trade practices, perceived value in buying fair trade clothes, and enhancement of self-image are examples of perceived benefits. (Khare, 2019). Consumers' opinions of green clothing are shaped by their assessments of product qualities and their capacity to give value. It covers not only physical characteristics but also the advantages in terms of environmental protection. (D'Souza et al., 2015; Henninger et al., 2016).

The majority of customers are willing to pay more for a limited number of high-quality, environmentally friendly apparel goods. Consumers with long-term purchase intentions for fashion apparel are encouraged to seek out the store and brand-specific discounts and prices that will help them improve their shopping experience.

2.3 Major influence

Since social influence has been identified as a key determinant of green consumer behaviour, marketers should make extensive use of social media to encourage people to share their experiences with green purchases, products, and behaviours. This will influence others and help promote similar behaviour. Another key factor of green consumer behaviour has been identified as ethics. With this in mind, marketers can select people who are already involved in some form of environmental activism as a target niche for marketing green products. (Gandhi, Sheorey, 2019). Green purchasing behaviour was influenced by attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioural control. Green sentiments in collectivist societies are said to be influenced by group conformity and social acceptance. (Maichum et al, 2016).

Organic clothing was first criticised for its restricted colour palette, informal patterns, lack of variation, and expensive price. (Meyer, 2001). Furthermore, several consumers make purchasing decisions based on criteria other than environmental concerns (such as price, style, and fit). (Butler & Francis, 1997). The buying intention of customers had a beneficial impact on their purchase behaviour when it came to recycled products, according to a study. (Gandhi, Sheorey, 2019). Companies have developed green marketing to promote the impression that they are not affecting the

environment while earning money, recognising the adverse impacts of consumerism and misuse of the ecosystem. (Lasuin and Ng, 2014) Green purchasing behaviour was influenced by environmental concerns and self-image, according to the study.

2.4 Sustainable fashion in India

The Indian apparel business has seen significant changes as a result of changing demographics and the availability of global clothing brands. Green or organic clothing companies are growing increasingly popular among Indians, and they are expected to contribute to the apparel industry's sales. Organic clothing lines have been created by global and national apparel manufacturers to appeal to ecologically conscious consumers. (Khare, Sadachar, 2017). Worldwide eco-apparel market expected to reach \$74.65 billion by 2020 and grow at an annual rate of 11.46 per cent from 2015 to 2020.

Many Indian apparel producers are marketing green clothes to show environmental awareness as demand for eco-fabrics and green apparel continues to grow. (Khare and Varshneya, 2017). Reliance Industries Ltd., Arvind Mills, Alok Industries, Rajasthan Spinning and Weaving Mills, Tirupur Exporters' Association, and Gujrat Garment Manufacturers' Association are among the Indian enterprises that are producing environmentally friendly textiles for both export and local consumption. (Mehta, 2008). In 1991, the Ministry of Environment and Forests of the Government of India (GoI) launched a scheme, which is essentially a scheme of labelling eco-friendly products, to raise awareness about the environmental implications of products. (Challa, 2008).

2.5 Consumers behaviour of Indians

Green consumerism is on the increase in Asian countries (Gurāu, Ranchhod, 2005), supported by a desire among consumers to support and protect the environment. (Harris, 2006). Greenbiz.com (2005) discovered that as much as 71 per cent of internet shoppers in India are willing to pay extra for socially responsible products in order to better understand the extent to which Indian consumers are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. Consumers are gradually becoming more environmentally conscious, and there has been greater recognition of the growing problem of sustainability.

As a result, people are increasingly demanding environmentally friendly items in order to reduce environmental damage. (Gandhi, Sheorey, 2019). (Goswami, 2008) Despite their lack of environmental understanding, they claim high levels of environmental concern and behaviour, are

willing to purchase eco-items but are limited in their efforts due to a lack of such products on the market. It's worth mentioning that respondents' willingness to pay a higher price for environmentally friendly items is low, implying that green marketers in India are likely to pursue cost-cutting techniques. (Kumar, Datta, 2011)

2.6 Objective of the study

The educated Indian consumer is worried about the environment, and these pro-environmental considerations impact their green purchasing behaviour to some extent, resulting in the purchase of eco-friendly items. In this study, we will gather data on how many customers are aware of sustainable fashion and how many of those are aware of the true meaning of sustainable fashion. secondly, we will be gathering data on which are the resources from which customers are knowledgeable about sustainable fashion and which variables are influencing them to buy it. [25]. This will also demonstrate what strategies customers are employing to lessen their carbon footprint in the fashion sector, as well as if they are more inclined to purchase sustainable garments if they are aware of the repercussions of purchasing fast fashion.

2.7 Hypothesis

Prior research has confirmed that an individual's pricing machine influences their decision-making approach [26]. Shen et al. [9] studied customer purchase behaviour based only on demographic characteristics such as age, gender, relationship status, and so forth. While this research was carried out in the United States, little consideration was given to the Indian environment. As a consequence, the following possibilities are proposed:

Hnull: Consumers are not aware about sustainable fashion in India
Halt: Consumers are aware about sustainable fashion in India.

Hnull: Through celebrities and influencers is how consumers are not aware about sustainable fashion
Halt: Through celebrities and influencers are how consumers are aware about sustainable fashion.

Hnull: Competitive prices are unlikely to motivate consumers to buy sustainable fashion
Halt: Competitive prices are likely to motivate consumers to buy sustainable fashion.

III. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was employed in the study article. The goal of this study is to discover so much about the

attitudes and actions of customers who buy sustainable clothing, since despite recognizing the benefits of purchasing sustainable or ethical clothing, the great majority of consumers choose the opposite. The major purpose of the study is to validate the objectives of the study and to build the basis for further research into this abnormality.

The main research objectives for the study is,

- How much consumers are aware about sustainable fashion and out of those how many know the actual meaning of sustainable fashion.
- Which are the resources from which consumers are aware about sustainable fashion.
- What practices consumers are doing to reduce their carbon footprint in the fashion industry.

3.1 Sampling

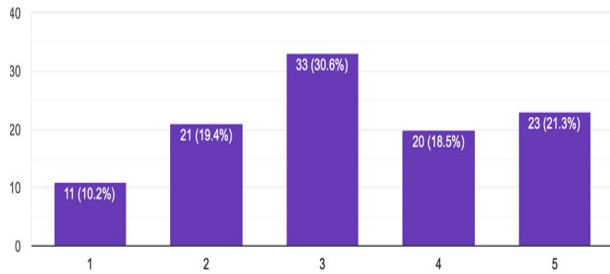
A systematic questionnaire-based survey was used to collect data. Participants in the research are Indian young adult clients here between ages of 18 and 30. We picked this group since they are among the Indians who are aware of current fashion and clothing trends. In order to collect data in India, we adopted a straightforward sampling approach. Male and female customers were included in the study. We used the web, social media platforms, and one-on-one interviews. It's important to keep in mind that there are two types of data collection: primary data gathering and secondary research. English is India's second and most widely spoken language, which included questions regarding "green fashion" knowledge and purchasing decisions.

The primary data was gathered via sending WhatsApp broadcast messages/Instagram stories to students/families/acquaintances/friends via connections. The letter invited them to participate in the study and included a link to an online survey. Survey inquiries were issued to around 500 contacts, ensuring respondents' confidentiality and privacy and informing them that the collected data will be utilised in academic journals. 100 answers were recorded among those 500.

3.2 Measures

The questionnaire included 4 sections, awareness of sustainable fashion along with which sources helped consumers know about sustainable fashion, factors influencing purchasing decision and what practices consumers are doing to reduce their carbon foot print in terms of fashion. Participants were asked to rate the degree of their agreement to the item statements. A five-point Like scale was

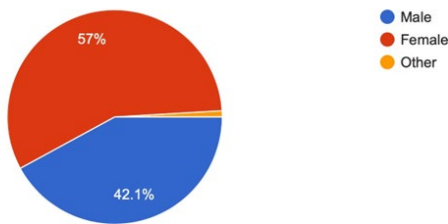
used, in which “1” denoted “strongly agree” and “5” represented “strongly disagree.”



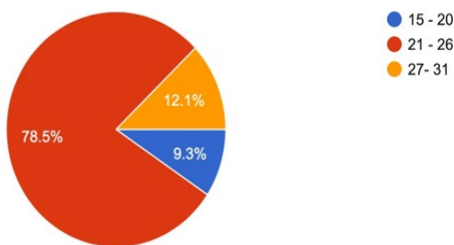
3.3 Demographics

Response analysis shows that 41.5 % of the respondents are male and the rest 57.5 % female. The average age group is 21-26 years with the youngest 18 years old and the oldest being 31. As for the native place belongingness, 100% of the sample are from urban areas.

I identify myself as
107 responses



My age group is
107 responses

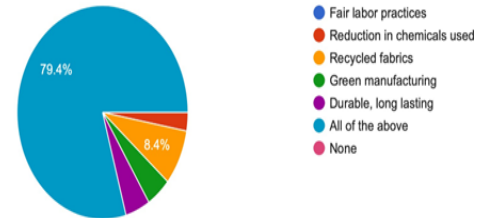


3.3.1 Awareness and understanding of the term sustainable fashion

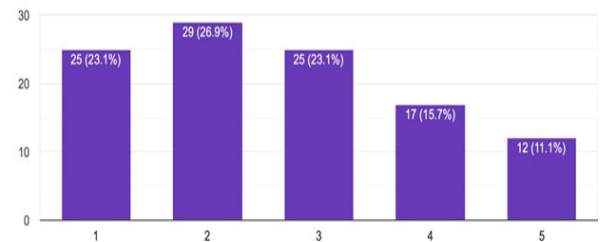
In the beginning of the survey, the respondents were asked if they have heard about sustainable fashion in India where 50% of the respondents have agreed while 26.8 disagreed, the remaining were neutral. Secondly the understanding of the term “sustainable fashion” was asked out of the multiple choices given, 79.4% of the respondents replied correctly “all of the above”. However, there were some 8.4% responses that

referred to it as a recycled fabric. 100% of the respondents knew what sustainable fashion was, as no one chose the option “none”. The results found below directly point to the fact that majority of the participants had the correct understanding of the term “Sustainable fashion”.

I understand what the term "sustainable fashion" means
107 responses



I have heard about sustainable fashion in India
108 responses



3.3.2 Sources of awareness about sustainable fashion

In the beginning of the survey, the respondents were asked if they have heard about sustainable fashion in India where 50% of the respondents have agreed while 26.8 disagreed, the remaining were neutral. Secondly the understanding of the term “sustainable fashion” was asked out of the multiple choices given, 79.4% of the respondents replied correctly “all of the above”. However, there were some 8.4% responses that referred to it as a recycled fabric. 100% of the respondents knew what sustainable fashion was, as no one chose the option “none”. The results found below directly point to the fact that majority of the participants had the correct understanding of the term “Sustainable fashion”.

I got to know about sustainable fashion from my friends and family				
	Value Points	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Strongly Agree	1	11	10.09	10.09174312
Agree	2	21	19.27	29.36
Neutral	3	33	30.28	59.63302752
Disagree	4	20	18.35	77.98165138
Strongly Disagree	5	24	22.02	100
		109		

According to the table above, friends and family influence only 10.09 percent of respondents, while friends and family have no influence on 22.02 percent of respondents.

I am aware of sustainable fashion because of celebrities and influencers				
	Value Points	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	13	11.93	11.93
Agree	2	23	21.10	33.03
Neutral	3	27	24.77	57.80
Disagree	4	23	21.10	78.90
Strongly Disagree	5	23	21.10	100.00
		109		

As per the above table, 11.93 percent of respondents strongly believe that celebrities and influencers influence them, while the rest of respondents have a neutral opinion.

I am highly aware about sustainable fashion from advertisements and campaigns done by brands				
	Value Points	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	10	9.17	9.17
Agree	2	27	24.77	33.94
Neutral	3	33	30.28	64.22
Disagree	4	23	21.10	85.32
Strongly Disagree	5	16	14.68	100.00
		109		

According to the data in the table above, 24 percent of respondents say that advertisements and brand campaigns impact them to become more conscious of sustainable apparels.

I am highly aware of sustainable fashion due to the internet and social media				
	Value Points	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	33	30.28	30.28
Agree	2	28	25.69	55.96
Neutral	3	17	15.60	71.56
Disagree	4	15	13.76	85.32
Strongly Disagree	5	16	14.68	100.00
		109		

According to the last table, the majority of respondents are influenced by the internet and social media, whereas 13.76 percent of the total respondents disagree.

As a result, we may conclude that the *Internet and social media* play a significant role in influencing customers and raising consumer awareness regarding sustainable fashion. Brands can develop and nurture personal connections with a specific audience by using social media to boost brand recognition.

IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The study's goals were to assess consumers' understanding of green fashion, which factors drive customers to purchase sustainable clothing, and if they take any sustainable steps to

reduce their carbon footprint. Customers are aware of sustainable fashion and understand what it implies, according to data collected and analyzed from research of young Indian consumers.

We discovered that the participants were familiar with the term "sustainable fashion." When asked about the limits of sustainable fashion, such as environmental issues in the fashion business and certifications required for sustainable fashion, the responses were a jumbled mix. As a result of the sample size constraints, Indian fashion consumers cannot be said to be completely aware of "sustainable fashion." This conclusion is consistent with Cervellon and Carey's (2007) findings that participants' understanding of environmental fashion was vague

This study gives suggestions for both marketers and designers in India's sustainable fashion industry. Because there is a widespread lack of knowledge about sustainable fashion, marketers may educate their customers by promoting the company's or brand's sustainable practices through influencers. The discrepancy in knowledge across genders and ages gives an opportunity for designers to create sustainable clothing depending on demographic features. The study's results were limited by convenience sampling and a small number of responses. The study's results of meaningful relationships between aspects of awareness level and purchasing behaviour would give more impetus for research in this field.

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