



"Rhetoric or Reality?" *Assessing The Progress Of Sustainable Fashion Practices*

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Abstract: To determine the development of sustainable fashion practices, the study analyses the roles and viewpoints of designers and customers. "Assessing the Progress of Sustainable Fashion Practices" responds to the issues brought up by Rina Singh, the creator of the brand Eka, who feels that the term "sustainability" has become overused in the fashion business. According to Singh, the majority of Indian fashion firms should adhere to sustainability as a basic philosophy rather than just as a marketing strategy.

The study examines the idea of sustainability from both the standpoints of designers and consumers. In an effort to bridge the gap between modern and traditional Indian components, designers have been shown to embrace a design approach. By including classic styles that may be worn repeatedly, this method discourages mindless consumption and indicates an intentional effort to encourage sustainable practices.

Additionally, consumers are essential to the development of sustainable fashion. The article stresses the significance of mindful consumption and exhorts readers to make careful, long-term clothing purchases. Consumers may substantially help the fashion sector adopt sustainable methods by adopting this mentality.

The implementation and effects of sustainable fashion techniques are generally critically evaluated in this study, taking into account the views of both designers and consumers. The research highlights the need for ongoing efforts to close the gap between rhetoric and reality while also shedding light on sustainability's difficulties and successes.

Keywords: *Sustainable Fashion Practices, Conscious Consumption, Modern and Indian Tradition, Fashion Industry*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the fashion business, sustainability has become a crucial issue, requiring both customers and designers to reevaluate their actions and decisions. It's critical to evaluate the advancements made in incorporating sustainable fashion practises into the design and production processes as the concept of sustainability gains popularity. By analysing the statements and behaviours of designers and customers within the framework of sustainable fashion practises, this article seeks to close the gap between rhetoric and reality. This study aims to offer an objective evaluation of the degree to which sustainable principles have been adopted in the sector by looking at the perspectives, difficulties, and motives of various stakeholders.

1. OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze how customers understand and perceive sustainability, as well as how willing they are to participate in and support sustainable fashion initiatives.
- Examine customer perceptions and attitudes toward sustainable fashion as well as their purchase patterns, paying particular attention to products that are both environmentally and socially responsible.

- Determine the aspects of cost, quality, design, and brand reputation that affect consumers' decision-making when selecting sustainable fashion options.
- Discover the limitations and difficulties that consumers have while promoting and adopting sustainable fashion practices, and suggest possible solutions.
- Examine how claims made by consumers align with the actions and behaviors taken in practice, comparing and analyzing their rhetoric with reality.

2. AIM OF THE STUDY:

This study's objective is to analyze the claims made about sustainable fashion techniques and their practical application in the context of customers. The goal of the study is to determine whether the claims of sustainability made by the fashion industry are consistent with the measures that customers, designers, and other stakeholders have actually implemented. The study seeks to promote sustainability while bridging the gap between traditional and contemporary Indian design sensibility. The goal of the research is to find any discrepancies between stated objectives and actual actions in the fashion sector by assessing sustainability rhetoric and examining its implementation and to provide an unbiased assessment of the development made in integrating sustainable principles into the fashion industry by studying the viewpoints and practices of both stakeholders.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

This study's scope covers a thorough analysis of Indian-specific sustainable fashion methods. The study will look into the methods used by designers to include sustainable principles into their creations. Additionally, it will examine consumer motives, difficulties, and preferences as they relate to sustainable fashion habits and attitudes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

As sustainability has grown in importance over the past few years, the world fashion industry has experienced a huge paradigm change. This review of the literature analyzes studies that probe the development of sustainable fashion practices and explores the contrast between verbal commitments and practical activities.

Consumer Mindset Shift in India: Arora, N. (2023) investigates the change in Indian consumers' attitudes toward sustainable fashion techniques. The survey indicates a rise in interest in and knowledge of sustainable fashion, highlighting the need of comprehending the forces behind this transformation. The work of Arora lays a foundation for comprehending how the consumer landscape is changing in a significant market like India. [1]

Drivers and Barriers in Spain: Riesgo, S.B., Lavanga, M. and Codina, M. (2022) make a contribution by contrasting sustainable and non-sustainable customers in Spain. The study clarifies the intricacies of consumer behavior in various categories by analyzing the factors that drive and hinder the purchase of sustainable fashion. The knowledge of the uptake of sustainable fashion is furthered by this comparative method. [6]

Influence of Voluntary Simplicity and Activism: Campos et al. (2023) look at the impact of environmental activism and voluntary simplicity on the desire to buy sustainable clothing. By analyzing how activism and individual lifestyle choices affect consumer intentions, this study broadens the conversation and sheds light on the larger sociocultural setting of sustainable fashion. [2]

Argumentation from Example in Activists' Social Media Posts: Greco, Mercuri, Cock, and Schär (2023) delve into the role of argumentation from example in activists' social media posts on sustainable fashion. By exploring communication strategies, this research highlights the importance of narrative and exemplification in advocating for sustainable practices. The study contributes to understanding the discursive aspect of sustainable fashion promotion. [3]

Fast Fashion vs. Environment Debate: Papasolomou, Melanthiou, and Tsamouridis (2023) focus on the fast fashion vs. environment debate, examining consumers' awareness, feelings, and behavior within the fast-fashion sector. This research addresses the tension between consumerism and environmental concerns, offering valuable insights into the challenges of promoting sustainability in a sector often characterized by rapid turnover. [5]

Media Discourse and Public Perception: Paljor's (2019) article, "Sustainability is a much-abused word these days," adds a critical perspective on the media discourse surrounding sustainability. Although not a scholarly paper, it raises important questions about the credibility and potential misuse of the term "sustainability" in the fashion industry. It prompts a critical examination of how sustainability is communicated to the public. [4]

A thorough knowledge of the rhetoric and reality surrounding this developing topic is provided by this literature review, which integrates a variety of studies and viewpoints on sustainable fashion methods. These works jointly contribute to a detailed appraisal of the advancements and difficulties in developing sustainability within the fashion business, from consumer attitude alterations in India to the influence of activism on social media.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative approach and a survey that was sent to a target population of 100 people working in the fashion business and consumers. The questionnaire asked questions about industry commitment, communication tactics, consumer preferences, and sustainable practises. 70 responses were gathered and examined from the desired sample.

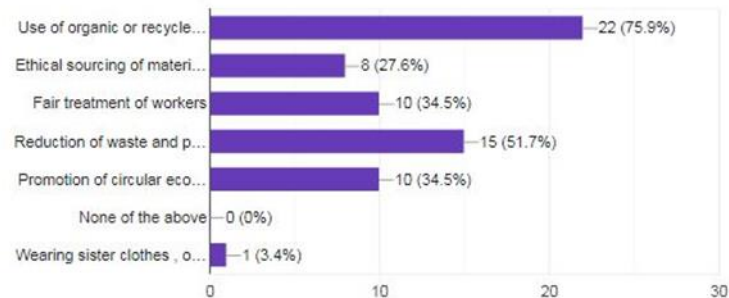


Fig. 1 Incorporation of Sustainable Practices:

The survey results indicate a notable inclination towards sustainable practices in fashion design and production. A significant majority of respondents expressed interest in incorporating organic or recycled materials (75.9%), highlighting an environmentally conscious approach. Other important sustainable practices include ethical sourcing (27.6%) and fair worker treatment (34.5%). Waste reduction and pollution mitigation (51.7%) and promoting circular economy practices (34.5%) also emerged as significant concerns.

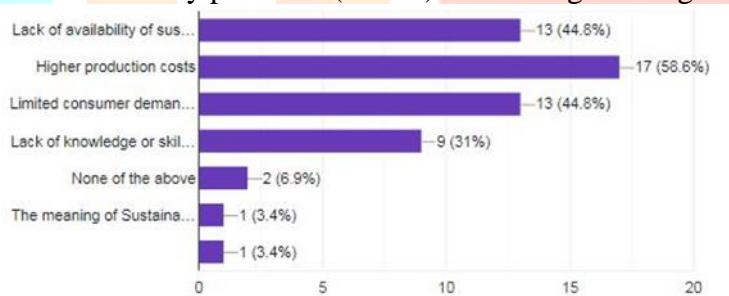


Fig. 2 Challenges in Adoption sustainability by Fashion designer:

The challenges of adopting sustainable fashion practices are apparent. Higher production costs were cited by 58.6% of respondents, underlining the economic aspect of sustainability. Limited availability of sustainable materials and consumer demand (44.8%) pose hurdles, emphasizing the need for increased accessibility. Inadequate knowledge and skills (31%) highlight the role of education in driving sustainable practices.

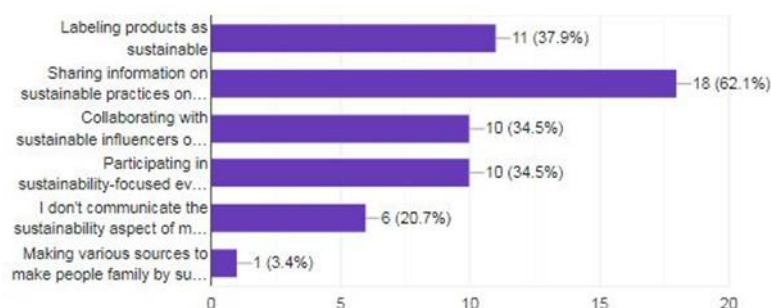


Fig. 3 Communication Strategies:

Fashion brands communicate their commitment to sustainability through various means, including product labels (37.9%), online platforms such as websites and social media (62.1%), collaborations with influencers or organizations (34.5%), and participation in events (34.5%). These diverse strategies underscore the growing importance of transparency in conveying sustainable practices.

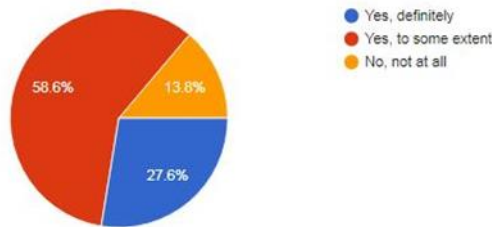


Fig. 4 Consumer Willingness to Pay:

Views on consumer willingness to pay a premium for sustainable fashion vary. A majority of respondents believe that consumers are willing to pay extra for sustainable fashion products, either unquestionably (27.6%) or to some extent (58.6%). This willingness is indicative of the increasing eco-awareness among consumers.

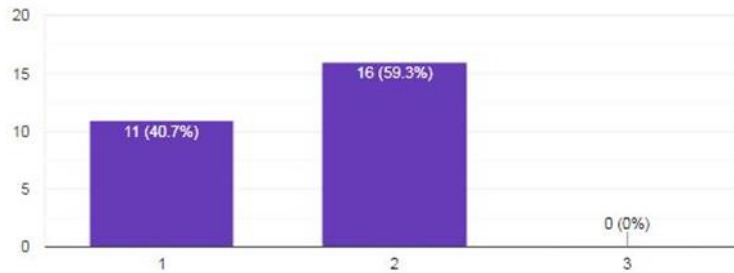


Fig. 5 Perceptions of Industry Transparency:

Perceptions regarding transparency in the fashion industry's sustainability claims vary. While a significant portion of respondents consider the industry to be transparent (59.3%), a substantial minority believe it lacks transparency (40.7%). Enhancing industry-wide transparency can foster trust and encourage genuine sustainability efforts.

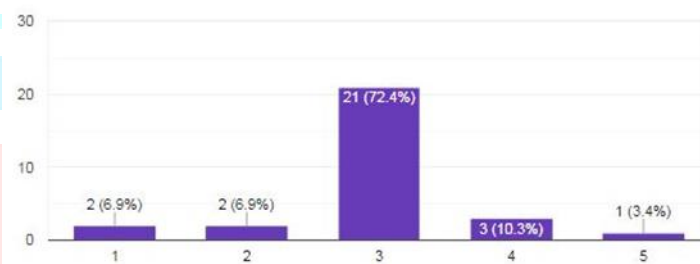


Fig. 6 Consumer Demand Shift:

The data reflects a significant shift in consumer demand for sustainable fashion in recent years, with 72.4% of respondents indicating a notable rise. This shift suggests that the industry's focus on sustainability is gaining traction among consumers and influencing their preferences.

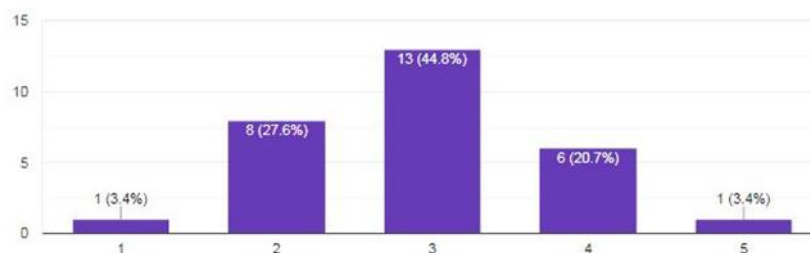


Fig. 7 Industry Commitment to Sustainability:

Perceptions of the fashion industry's commitment to sustainability are diverse. While 44.8% view the industry's dedication as moderate, 27.6% rate it as somewhat committed. However, 24.1% perceive a low commitment, indicating room for improvement in aligning industry practices with sustainable ideals.

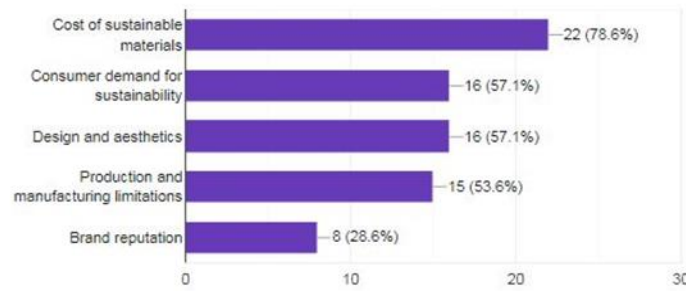


Fig. 8 Factors Influencing Designers' Decision-Making:

Designers consider several crucial factors when creating sustainable fashion options. The cost of sustainable materials (78.6%), consumer demand for sustainability (57.1%), design and aesthetics (57.1%), production limitations (53.6%), and brand reputation (28.6%) all influence their decisions. These findings emphasize the complex interplay of economic, market, and creative factors.

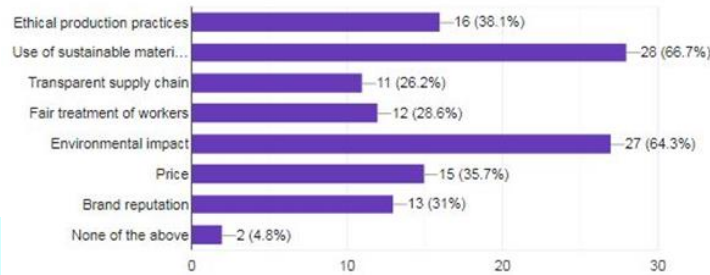


Fig. 9 Factors Influencing Consumer Purchases:

Consumers are influenced by sustainable materials (65.2%), environmental impact (63%), ethical production practices (41.3%), and fair worker treatment (32.6%). While price (34.8%) also plays a role, these findings underscore the significance of ethical and environmental considerations.



Fig. 10 Encouraging Active Support:

Respondents identify several factors that would encourage them to support sustainable fashion practices more actively, including increased access to sustainable solutions (54.3%), reduced costs of sustainable goods (58.7%), awareness campaigns (63%), and celebrity endorsements (37%). These motivators suggest the potential for strategic interventions to drive greater engagement with sustainability.

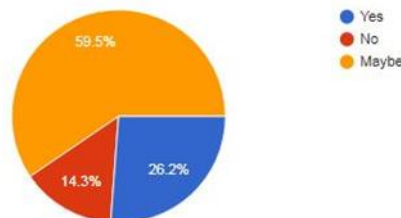


Fig. 11 Credibility of Sustainability Claims:

Views on whether designers and fashion brands make false or exaggerated sustainability claims are mixed. The majority (60.9%) express uncertainty, while a notable portion (23.9%) believe such claims are made. This skepticism underscores the need for robust evidence and transparency in sustainability claims.

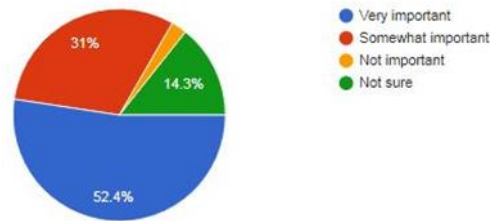


Fig. 12 Importance of Evidence and Certifications:

The study finds that substantiating sustainability claims with evidence or certifications is deemed important by a majority (57.4%) of respondents. This emphasizes the role of transparency and credibility in building consumer trust.

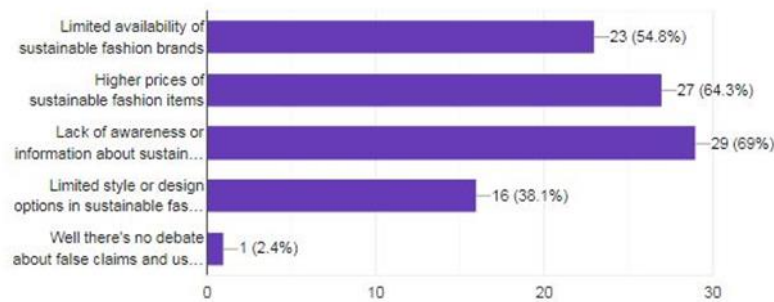


Fig. 13 Challenges or barriers in adopting sustainable fashion purchase

The respondents were asked about the hurdles they face in adopting sustainable fashion practices. The top challenges identified include the limited availability of sustainable brands, higher prices of sustainable items, and lack of awareness or information about sustainable brands, all ranging between 64.3% and 69%. This shows that accessibility, affordability, and awareness are critical areas for improvement.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sheds light on the developments and difficulties related to incorporating sustainable fashion practices in the Indian setting. The results highlight the industry's developing dedication to sustainability, which is seen in the adoption of different practices and methods. To encourage wider adoption of sustainable fashion, issues like production costs, material availability, and customer awareness still need to be resolved. The study sheds light on how customers' and designers' opinions differ, exposing a dynamic environment where rhetoric and reality are still in constant conversation.

This study contributes to a more thorough understanding of sustainable fashion practices by illuminating the consistency between statements and deeds. The findings from this research can help direct future strategies and actions aimed at further encouraging sustainable fashion practices as the sector negotiates the difficulties of sustainability. In the end, fostering a more socially and environmentally responsible sector depends on closing the gap between rhetoric and reality in sustainable fashion.

V. Acknowledgment

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