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Driving Green Fashion: The Role Of Social Media In Influencing Sustainable Consumer Preferences For Ethnic-Wear

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Abstract: Social media has a huge impact on consumer tastes in the context of green fashion, especially ethnic wear. Social media-driven trends on platforms such as (Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest) are slowly affecting the fashion sector. These media often believer for concepts such as traditional expert craftsmanship, equitable production, and environmentally friendly practices. This has increased public consciousness regarding environmental concerns and encouraged sensible shopping behaviour. Brands and influencers use social media to promote sustainable causes like locally supporting designers, using organic products, and conserving resources. The purpose of the research is to understand the influence of social media on consumer awareness and choice towards sustainable ethnic wear. This openness generates trust and influences consumers who value ethical clothing. The "Theory of Planned Behaviour" (TPB) framework found that perceived behavioural control mediates the link between awareness and purchasing behaviour. Using a descriptive design and secondary data, the study shows that engagement, influencer content, and sentiment affect consumer decisions and support ethical fashion choices.

Index Term: Green economy, consumer preferences, social media platforms, sustainable development, gen z

INTRODUCTION:

Social media has influenced the consumers to interact with fashion in recent years, particularly in terms of sustainability. Social media platforms such Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest are growing as important inspiration sources, encouraging consumers to make greener decisions Gilmar Faria(2025). Sustaining fashion is gaining ground day by day, especially ethnic wear, in view of increasing awareness about damage to the environment and unethical modes of production (Smith, 2020). Social media have the perfect ground for many fashion influencers, designers, and consumers to express themselves in order to select 'ecofriendly clothing', ethical production, and ancient clothing. These designers, sites, apart from projecting the charm of ethnic wear, also let consumers know what it means to sustain. Because of unethical production techniques and rising concerns about environmental damage, there is a greater demand for sustainable ethnic wear (Fletcher, 2021). This change in preference is driving the future of apparel, thereby making sustainability an essential factor during the decision-making process. Amongst all those factors, the use of social media is indeed playing a massive role in uplifting the need for green fashion, particularly in the ethnic wear, as awareness continues to shape trends. (Khan, M. S., & Khan, R. R., 2022).



Fig1: Word Cloud related to Sustainable consumer preferences

Source- Originally created by Author

Driving Green Fashion:

In the digital era, with the impact of social media on fashion trends and even on the way fashion is produced, used, and viewed, has change the green fashion. More than being a source of communication among the millennials, through their highly engaged engagement on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest, social media also affects their other preferences, including fashion. This is particularly true for ethnic fashion, as social media reshaped trends and reimagined old designs Guest Author(2024).

Case Study. Influence of consumers and Social media platforms on Green apparel in India: A study by Khare, Sadachar, and Chakraborty examined how and celebrity endorsements impact on "Indian consumers" engagement with green apparel. The research found that both social media platforms and influencers significantly influence consumers' involvement with sustainable apparel, subsequently affecting their purchasing attitude. This suggests that social media platforms, through influencers interactions and celebrity endorsements, can effectively promote sustainable fashion choices among Indian consumers. Khare, A., Sadachar, A., & Chakraborty, S. (2022).

The Role of Social Media Platforms:

Social media such as (Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube) have transformed into massive outlets for sustainable fashion. The three platforms highlight ethnic wear for consumers and sustainable modes of choices which, in turn, encourage consumers to make a decision that favours the environment. Li and others, 2021. Fashion influencers, designers, and brands use social media to raise awareness about the environmental impact of Green fashion. The impact of different social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Pinterest, on sustainable ethnic-wear choices is not well explored. Research should analyse which platforms are most effective in promoting eco-friendly ethnic fashion and why. They highlight the benefits of choosing sustainable ethnic wear, such as supporting traditional craftsmanship and Business practices (Bazi et al., 2020). These platforms also allow brands to connect directly with consumers, sharing information about materials, sourcing, and sustainability efforts. This transparency helps to build trust and encourages people to make more conscious fashion choices. As awareness grows, social media continues to play a key role in shaping sustainable fashion trends (Smith & Galbraith, 2022).

Sustainable Consumer Preferences:

Consumer preference in ethnic wear reflects a growing trend where individuals are increasingly drawn to traditional and culturally significant clothing. Ethnic wear, encompasses outfits such as sarees, Lehenga, Dhoti Kurta, and Suit represents not just fashion but cultural identity and heritage. This revival in interest can be attributed to various factors, including globalization, cultural pride, and notably the influence of social media (Patel & Roberts, 2023). Customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences in ethnic wear. It measures how well a product meets or exceeds expectations, influencing repeat purchases and brand loyalty (Taylor & Martin, 2022). Most studies focus on sustainable fashion in general, with limited

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research on how social media specifically influences consumer preferences for ethnic-wear. There is a need for targeted research on this sector.

Social media has significantly better consumer experience to ethnic wear by showcasing diverse styles and trends through platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube. Influencers and fashion bloggers often feature ethnic wear, thus shaping preferences and driving demand from the social media that not only influence but broadens the reach of ethnic wear and also impacts consumer expectations regarding quality, price, and shopping experience. Understanding these changes helps in understanding, how social media shapes contemporary fashion trends and consumer preferences(Smith & Lee, 2024).

 To identify the impact of social media on consumer awareness and preferences for sustainable ethnicwear.

Case Study-Promoting Indian Ritual Attire through Social Media: A case study explored in the International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology highlights how social media influences the promotion of Indian ritual attire. The study found that digital platforms have transformed perceptions, choices, and adoption rates of traditional clothing in culturally rich states like Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. Social media serves as a dynamic space for personal narratives and cultural conversations, encouraging engagement with traditional attire through virtual try-ons, storytelling, and online marketplaces. IJISRT

Consumer Preferences Influenced By Social Media:

Social media plays a key role in promoting sustainable consumer preferences, Platforms like Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest help educate people about the issues related to fast fashion, encouraging them to seek more sustainable options (Harrison, 2021). Influencers share their experiences with eco-friendly ethnic clothing, making it relatable and appealing to their followers (Wang & Kim, 2020). Social media also fosters communities where individuals can exchange tips and support each other in making sustainable choices. Brands utilize these platforms to showcase their sustainability efforts by sharing behind-the-scenes content that builds trust with consumers by emphasizing the cultural significance of ethnic wear and connecting directly with shoppers, brands can respect traditions while promoting eco-conscious practices (Tham, 2019). The effectiveness of various social media marketing strategies, including influencer collaborations, interactive live sessions, and green fashion challenges, in promoting sustainable ethnic-wear needs further investigation. Understanding which strategies resonate most with consumers can help brands refine their marketing approaches. As trends around sustainability grow, social media motivates people to adopt practices like upcycling and thrift shopping, making ethnic wear more attractive and accessible (McNeill & Moore, 2015). In short, social media is a powerful catalyst for shifting consumer habits toward more responsible choices in ethnic fashion. Social media plays a crucial role in communicating and interacting with people globally. The nature of social media makes it especially effective for the fashion industry, which uses various online platforms to connect with and engage customers. Recent studies have highlighted how the fashion industry leverages social media to analyze evolving trends and predict fashion behaviors (Smith & Galbraith, 2022).

 To analyse how influencers and brands on social media shape consumer preferences for eco-friendly ethnic wear.

Case Study- Social Studies E-Commerce Platform: The launch of "Social Studies," a sustainable e-commerce marketplace, demonstrates how social media can drive consumer interest towards eco-friendly fashion. Founded by Jessica Gangoso and Daniel Lewis in 2023, the platform curates fashion pieces from brands that prioritize ethical materials and community support. By leveraging social media for promotion and engagement, Social Studies simplifies the process of shopping sustainably, encouraging consumers to rethink micro-trends and fast fashion. Teenvogue (2024)

Influence of Gen Z on Sustainable Fashion in Ethnic Wear:

Generation Alpha refers to the generation born between 2012 and 2024; they are the first one to have grown up social media platforms, so that this landscape of social media is somewhat tremendous in determining their preference in consumption. While this generation looks more concerned about sustainability than any of its elder peers, evidence suggests that an immense 72% of Gen Z consumers are concerned enough about environmental issues (Schneider & Lee, 2022).

This generation values sustainability and is going to be more likely to promote ethnic wear that supports this. They are going to actively seek information about the sustainability practices of the consumer they

influence from, and they are particularly being aware of needs and concerns,. Using social media as a driving force, Gen Alpha is highly influenced in their fashion lifestyles. Studies show that a high proportion of Gen Alpha buyers find interest in buying from social media information, and influencers and online groups influence their perceptions regarding "Green Economy" and "Ethnic wear" (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). This generation is most likely to discuss issues concerning sustainability with peers, thus underlining the commitment towards sustainable fashion. Purchase decisions for Gen Z consumers also involve supporting brands that take a stand on social and environmental issues (Deloitte, 2022).

• To evaluate the Gen Z's engagement with social media impacts their tendency toward sustainable ethnic wear.

On the other hand, social media gives a selected social media platform like Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest for promoting sustainable fashion but is unfeasible for ethnic wear. Growing consumer demand for greater transparency requires evidence for consumer preferences require evidence to change to sustainability trends that attempt to prove their green credentials are likely to become victims of "greenwashing" that once appreciated may mark their reputation and break consumer trust (Kang & Kim, 2017). Therefore, companies have to explain their sustainable practices to be transparent in their activities, for instance, by describing the process of extracting raw material from their source and the method of producing products with efforts to eliminate the waste. They also have to come prepared with contingencies when making such claims because consumers are sceptical about non-supported environmental claims (McNeill & Venter, 2019).

Challenges have to be overcome while finding the right middle ground in which demand is met on the production of products that are eco-friendly along with being able to provide profitability in production. Sustainable clothing is not expensive, thereby making some forms of eco-friendly products unaffordable. Yet still, if there is a chance for such a trend as sustainable fashion, then market growth could provide an open opportunity, as consumer preferences is showing increased interest for sustainable fashion (Smith & Galbraith, 2022).

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES:

The study on sustainable consumption especially related to the scenario examined under the scope of consumer preferences, cultural influence, and the use of Social media. Here's an explanation:

Consumer Preferences:

- Postmillennial Influence: The postmillennial generation in India, such as the cities of Delhi & NCR, is getting more aware of sustainable practices. However, there is still a manifest unwillingness to participate in environmentally friendly purchasing behaviours, as shown in the study. There is a gap between awareness and accomplishment in their needs to be bridged.
- Social Values: The research revealed that social values affect the use of social media powerfully, which in turn determines the SCB. In a place, where influencers and social cooperation play an important role, using social values can lead to strengthened promotion of sustainable practices.

Cultural Influencers:

- Ethnic Wear Preferences: In Ghaziabad, ethnic wear is culturally significant, which makes the transition to sustainable fashion a bit complicated. Consumers may prefer traditional aesthetics over sustainability, and hence, brands need to find a balance between cultural relevance and eco-friendliness.
- **Social Media Engagement**: The function of social media is important for the development of consumer preferences. The study showed that although SME has a positive impact, the relationship of functional and emotional values with SME was found to be non-significant. This implies that brands should instead work on making emotional connections by storytelling and cultural narratives to drive sustainable choices.

Development Opportunities:

• **Influencer Marketing**: Partnering with local influencers who share the cultural values of Delhi & NCR that help to promote sustainable fashion. The influencers educate their audience on the value of sustainable options while promoting ethnic wear.

- Free Offers: Setting up free offers that encourage sustainable practices will instruct the culture of sustainability. Workshops, social media campaigns, and local events can engage consumers and encourage them to adopt greener habits.
- Social media for immediate feedback: Reliable feedback for brands to shape their offerings to consumer preferences; responsiveness can actually help consumers to find right product with rising trend for sustainability in ethnic wear.
 - In brief, though it is challenging to promote the consumption of sustainability in ethnic wear, there lies a huge deal of opportunity with social values and social media engagement.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK:

Consumers generally have a positive view of sustainable products and are willing to spend money on them (Chen et al., 2021). However, there is often a gap between their beliefs and actions, making sustainable choices challenging (Joshi & Rahman, 2015; Park & Lin 2020). Using rational choice theory, influencers can analyse the factors that shape consumer preferences and align their strategies accordingly. Key influences on green purchasing decisions include product knowledge, price, and perceived value (Chen & Deng, 2016; Wang et al., 2022). Social media Platforms improve their image, gain loyalty from consumers, and support the sustainability of both the consumers and society by matching their goods and services to the preferences and values of their consumers (Yang et al., (2019) Gelderman et al., 2021).

Consumers and Influencers play a significant role in addressing consumer concerns about the environment (Parker et al., 2023). To appeal to environmentally conscious consumers, Influencers can emphasize the positive environmental influence of products and trends while also raising awareness of environmental issues (Chen et al., 2022).

Theory of Planned Behaviour(TPB)

The use of social media has been suggested to have an encouraging influence on consumers' intentions to make green purchases. Because social media is an important theory included in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), our model therefore conceptually adds to the physicality of previous studies. Mason (2014) believes that social media platforms are an useful platform that cannot be avoided. Social media is largely used on internet platforms and has grown in popularity. Thus, our suggested conceptual model integrates the TPB theory, The model provides essential conceptual insights into a time when social, technical, and environmental factors are all changing. This approach will advance knowledge of consumer behaviour and social media's role in promoting sustainability in the ethnic fashion. Green and sustainable stands need to understand that the social media can motivate consumers to make sustainable purchases. The results of this study on the visual and written elements of advertising for brands on social media made it abundantly evident that the brand's image and captions aligned with its identities and sustainability objectives, and users were more engaged with posts that featured directive and expressive acts (L. Zhao et al., 2022).

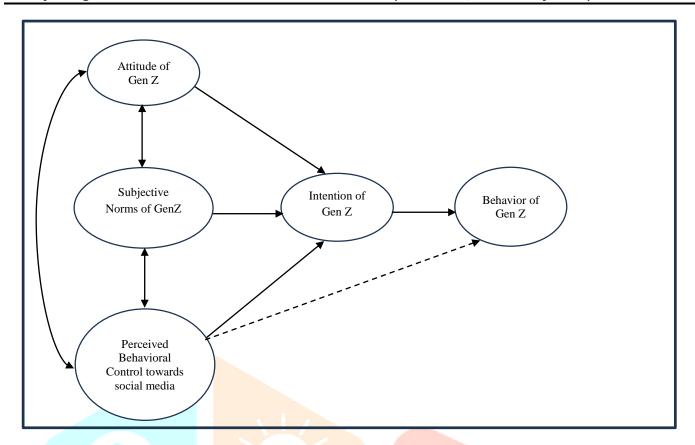


Figure 1. The Theory of Planned Behaviour model adapted Source: Ajzen 2005 with modification

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study will adopt a descriptive research design using secondary data. The approach applies because it is appropriate for describing existing information on a research topic and eliminating the need to collect primary data.

Data Collection Source:

Secondary data includes insights from academic journals, industry reports, books, and reputable websites. Social media analytics provide information on engagement, sentiment, and influencer activities related to sustainable ethnic-wear. These sources help to analyse the social media influences sustainable consumer preferences in ethnic-wear.

DISCUSSIONS:

The results of this study show that social media plays a major role in shaping people's decisions about sustainable ethnic wear. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest not only show fashion trends but also help people learn about sustainable clothing. Nowadays, many young people care more about the eco-related and labor effects of their clothing, and social media has a part to play in influencing these attitudes. Fashion bloggers and influencers play an important role. Through the support of eco-friendly ethnic wear, they show that ancestral clothes can be trendy as well as green. This helps people undertake more eco-friendly actions while promoting a sense of pride in culture. But when regular consumers post and comment on eco-friendly fashion, it supports trust. Some of them would be able to find and champion green labels with relative ease. Yet it is important to acknowledge that the chance to merely find posts in social media sites may not be enough. One may wish to buy environmentally-friendly clothing but get deterred by high prices, limited styles, or by problems in accessing them.

In summary, social media is an influential way of creating understanding and interest in sustainable ethnicwear. Brands can utilize this by promoting authentic, creative content that intertwines environmental care with cultural commemoration.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDIES:

To gain more detailed understanding of consumer preference, future research may concentrate on specific characteristics of social media influencers that effectively promote sustainable behaviours. Quantitative approaches can be used in this direction. Adding cultural settings to the model enables the exploration of cocreation and social media Platforms that differ across demographics. Longitudinal study can measure the sustainability of green practices over time and give a better understanding of how the effects of social media change. The addition of more theory of Planned Behaviour to improve our understanding of the consumer's preference in the context to sustainability and results in a stronger framework for future research. Consumer preferences and Sustainability would inspire greater engagement and struggle for ecologically sustainable living by judiciously utilizing the social media tools to exhibit consumer preferences, contributing eventually to a better future.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, addressing these research gaps that are significantly enhance the understanding of consumer preferences related to green products. It will also contribute to developing more effective marketing strategies and communication approaches that resonate with target audiences, ultimately encouraging sustainable consumption practices. Further empirical studies, particularly those leveraging diverse methodologies and contexts, are essential in closing these gaps and enhancing the existing body of knowledge. The increasing demand for sustainable fashion is growing in the industry; it has been due to increasing awareness among consumers of the issues connected to environmental degradation. Social media helps create a platform between the brands and consumers for engagement, thus helping promote the adoption of eco-friendly practices. These platforms will lead the industry to more ethical, inclusive, and eco-friendly solutions. As consumers are guided towards eco-friendlier choices, the businesses connecting to that vision will not only contribute to a better world but also to more loyalty and a much stronger consumer base.

Author's Contribution

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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- Jessica Gangoso and Daniel Lewis co-founded Social Studies; a sustainable e-commerce marketplace aimed at simplifying eco-conscious shopping

