



# From Waste to Reuse: Sustainable Fashion Practice and the Path to a Greener Future

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**Abstract:** Within the recent twenty years, the fashion business has seen significant expansion and prosperity which directly and indirectly hurt the planet to overcome this impact companies introduced so many techniques but still there is a gap between what theories argue and what happens when these theories are put into practice. Most researchers have already explored and acknowledged sustainable fashion models, whose definitions, characteristics, and real-time practice are quite somewhat equivocal. Our study wants to confer and understand the different techniques of sustainable fashion and discusses the opportunity as well as the challenges of implementation of these strategies in business. To do that, we use the systematic retrospection of existing literature to pick out the ongoing models of sustainability in the fashion sector. Our study will enhance the body of literature on sustainable fashion It will also be helpful for start-ups who want to be a part of sustainable fashion in their business.

**Keywords:** Sustainable fashion, circular economy, regenerative agriculture, zero waste, up-cycling, eco-efficiency, digital revolution

## 1 Introduction

Within the recent twenty years, the clothing business has seen significant expansion and prosperity. Because of this, industry's upshots in the economy, ecology, and society are being closely examined. Fast fashion is a business strategy that is highly sought after by consumers and encourages wasteful and impulsive purchasing since it meets the short-cycle fashion needs of many customers with a robust supply chain and minimal cost control [9]. The fast fashion industry's unique characteristics and structure stem from the need for shorter lead times, quicker inventory turnover, and high order fulfillment rates to meet peak client demand [2]. The industry is highly competitive, which drives down costs while simultaneously enabling businesses to provide their clients with the "newest" trend [6]. Most of the overall effect is caused by the stage of apparel creation.

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The high energy and water costs associated with fiber production and treatment, the employment of hazardous substance (for example, in tint procedures), and the social effects of child labor and worker exploitation are the causes of these [21; 24; 32]. As to the United Nations, the inhabitants of the world is expected to reach 8.5 billion people by 2030, and the fashion industry's consumption will grow dramatically from 62 million tons to 102 million tons. Eventually, ecological sustainability will suffer from the pollution brought on by the fashion industry's dirty manufacturing and "disposable construction culture." Fast fashion's main negative effects include unnecessary buying, consumer addiction, increased logistics frequency and therefore carbon emissions, inefficient use of plastic wrapping materials, and environmental contamination of these reasons it is mandatory to Rejecting the rapid fashion trend and following the "conscious fashion" movement is crucial for the planet's and its resources' future [19]. Even while "sustainability" may be grasped intuitively, it might have multiple meanings in the absence of a precise definition. This is also true when talking about sustainable fashion [26]. Sustainable fashion is defined by [15] as long-lasting, locally made, low-volume products made of high-quality, environmentally friendly materials. According to the [7] definition, slow fashion is a philosophy and method of making clothing that goes beyond just shortening cycles of production and consumption. However, an increasing interest in this issue was first noted following several awareness initiatives in the 1980s and 1990s [17; 18]. Fashion companies' attempts to boost sustainable production (such as fair trade, organic, or recycled clothing) and various marketing campaigns propelled conscious fashion from a niche industry to a steady mercantile reality in the early 2000s [3].

Several studies on conscious fashion consumption have been released in recent years. Laundry habits and practices, collaborative fashion consumption [17], clothing recycling and reusing methods, corporate social responsibility models, or how businesses can raise consumers' awareness and adoption of sustainable consumption behavior [43]. Inversely, as far as we are aware, there is no existing study on sustainable fashion taking into account all sustainable practice and their positive as well as negative impact on the environment as well as on industry and consumers. However, these studies concentrated on sustainable fashion practices and the path to a green future in the fashion industry. To accomplish this aim, a systematic literature is conducted [13; 31; 34; 40], driven by this research objective:

### **Research Objective**

To generalize the results into a set of obstacles and chances for creativity and presenting socially responsible business models that could guide scholars and entrepreneurs interested in eco-friendly fashion.

## **2. Literature Review**

Sustainable fashion has gained popularity as consumers work to reduce the environmental impact of clothing production and embrace sustainable consumption habits, such as buying clothing from vintage or second-hand stores, upcycling old clothing, and selecting clothing that is ethically manufactured [10; 25]. A middle class with more disposable income is being created by the fast growth of Asian countries, which also

promotes ostentatious consumerism and luxury products [46]. Younger generations, meanwhile, are favoring eco-friendly products. Recycled clothing adoption may be increased by environmental education and the eco-friendliness of the global fashion business. Sustainable fashion has been normalized by social media and influencers [20]. The impact of sustainability drivers on the nine constituents of a business paradigm—value proposition, consumer segment, delivery channels, consumer relationship, key activities, key resources, value network, cost structure, and revenue streams—as defined by [30] business model canvas was examined. Figure 1 presents the techniques and innovations in sustainable fashion.



**Fig. 1.** Techniques and innovations in sustainable fashion

**Source:** Author's Own

## 2.1 Techniques and Innovations in Sustainable Fashion

### A. Circular Economy

The term "apparel, footwear, or jewelry that are designed, procured, manufactured, and delivered with the motive that they will be utilized and circulated effectively and efficiently in society for the longest duration in their most valuable manner, and then safely come back to the biosphere when they are no longer in human use" is known as "circular fashion" (CF). This word originated from the fashion industry's use of circular fashion. The prevailing economic system of "grasp, build, and eject" is thought to have prompted this response. The circular economy is a broad term that includes various sustainability strategies, including industrial ecology, biomimicry, regenerative agriculture, performance economy, "closed loop" system, and the blue economy [14]. Two key pillars form the foundation of circular fashion practices: how companies respond to this transformation and how customers respond to sustainable fashion items. The necessity for a more thorough study on green consumer profiling to improve advertising strategies was highlighted by [1] to comprehensive knowledge and avoid the misinterpretation of circular fashion. There has been much research done on the factors that

accelerate the adoption of the circular economy and the obstacles that stand in their way [5; 47].

### **B. Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR)**

Green, equitable, and moral consumption are linked to CSR [35; 36]. According to [38], corporate social responsibility (CnSR) refers to consumer attitudes around the acquisition, use, and disposal of goods that are thought to have less of an adverse effect on the environment. The "ethical obligations" of business executives, which demand that they integrate the three-sustainability pier—lucrative, environmental, and societal—into the organization's construction to meet social expectations, are a frequent driving force behind the implementation of CSR. This is particularly true given that social responsibility (CSR) is an "Unquestionable yet controversial prerequisites for continuous corporate development that managers must interact with rather than merely react to" The fashion industry may save natural resources and encourage sustainable practices by integrating CSR policies into the logistic chain process [28]. In the fashion sector, social responsibility is defined by [11] as a extensive concept to comprehend customer interests and judgment toward CSR initiatives. They also highlight how managers can learn about the consumer's interests and behavior concerning ethical decisions made when purchasing fashion items. Company marketing strategy can be developed using this information.

### **C. Regenerative Agriculture**

Regenerative agriculture is an all-encompassing farming method that improves and restores ecosystem health, including soil health, biodiversity, and water cycles, going beyond sustainability [32]. It's becoming more popular as a climate-positive option that can help stop environmental damage while creating wholesome food and raw materials for the fashion industry and other sectors. Plant fibers are becoming increasingly popular for use in textile manufacturing. Due to market demand for sustainable procedures, this has changed in recent years [33; 37]. Due to the heavy reliance on natural resources and chemical products, the textile and agricultural sectors have seen social and environmental problems associated with unhealthy working conditions, soil and water contamination, and biodiversity loss [27].

### **D. Up-cycling and Zero Waste**

Scholars and industry professionals define the fashion up-cycling process, also known as refashioning or remanufacturing, as an upward recycle and reuse of scrape that recovers intrinsic through recycling, recutting, refashioning, and closing the manufacturing system loop [12]. Thus, the supply chain for up-cycled fashion design and production shares inherent similarities with the conventional fashion design and production supply chain, which includes stages of fabrication, distribution, wholesale, merchandise, and buyer purchase, after sourcing from pre-and post-consumer waste textiles [16] Suppressing the remaining textile waste, often referred to as pre-consumption waste, that is created during the cutting process of clothing production is the major goal of

zero waste fashion. In the process of making clothing, the zero-waste concept maximizes the quality and accessibility of materials while producing less than 15% pre-production waste [29]

### **E. Sustainable Material**

Despite the lengthy history of biologically driven renewable stuff in apparel industry, even natural resources are not always sustainable due to the industry's extensive industrialization and globalization. Fibers made of biomaterials may result in less GHG emissions; however, land and water resources are still needed in large quantities for their production. Human creations, such as textiles, have always had a close relationship with nature [39]. After many years of oil-based and industrial models, Moreover, a desire to create within the planet's capacity is driving a rediscovering of natural resources. Organic waste has recently come to be seen by designers as a way of treasuring primal materials that can be used to create new fabrics (such as Vegea and Orange Fiber) by a circular and bioeconomy model [8].

### **F. Sustainable Supply-Chain Management (SSCM)**

Evaluating the elements that make up its integrated structure is often how the concept of SSCM is defined. Product delivery management (PDM) and sustainability are included in SSCM's overall framework. Accordingly, it can be described as "Material, information, and capital flow management, as well as cooperation between businesses along the supply chain, while considering the objectives of all three aspects of sustainable development, which are derived from the needs of stakeholders and customers" [41]. It addresses ethical customers, green distribution, green commerce, sustainable manufacturing, and eco-material preparation [42]. An SF product is produced in a socially and environmentally responsible manner via the supply chain that consists of manufacturing, distribution, retailing, and raw material supply. Materials that can be recycled and reused include bottles, old clothing, and manufacturing waste.

### **G. Technological Innovation**

The potential for digitalization processes brought about by various new technologies amply demonstrates the necessity of a more comprehensive systemic approach that should encompass the entire ecosystem surrounding the plant. Supply chains, retail channels, and even products and end users can all be in real-time communication with the factory thanks to digital networks and engagement. Interact and share information inside the system. The market and consumer demands can therefore better inform decision-making processes, transforming the factory into a complex networked eco-system [22]. Several technologies are altering the fashion industry's production methods. Some of them, like laser cutting and linear digital printing, are already well-established, while others, like additive manufacturing, are becoming more and more important. The majority of commonly used technologies are typically outsourced and rely on costly procedures, like 3D printing, metallic molding, and communication via the intelligent system and the human centric network, which make them more sustainable and transformative [4].

### 3. Methodology

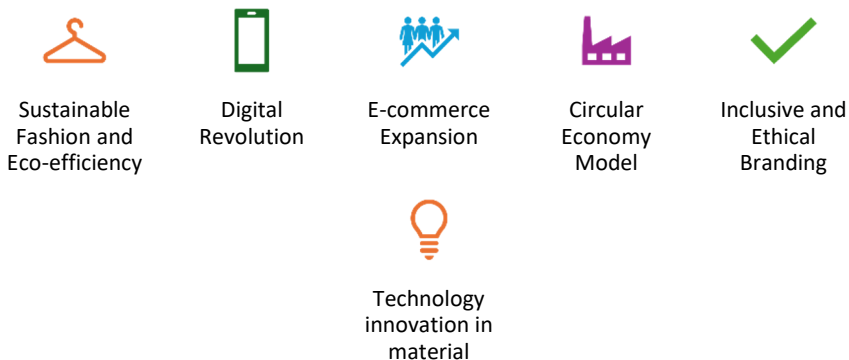
To investigate the Opportunities and Obstacles related to the future expansion of sustainable fashion, this study uses a qualitative research methodology. Using the Scopus database, which offers an extensive collection of peer-reviewed academic articles from several fields, a systematic literature review was carried out.

To the study, relevant documents were identify using keywords related to sustainable fashion, ethical fashion, green apparel, circular fashion, eco-friendly fashion, sustainable apparel, sustainable clothing, sustainable garments. This study used only research articles, ensuring the inclusion of peer reviewed and high-quality scholarly work. Initially authors received 68 papers and after applying inclusion and exclusion criteria and removing irrelevant and duplicate studies the final sample size is 50 research papers for the study. The selected articles were subjected to qualitative content analysis to pinpoint important themes concerning the opportunities and obstacles impacting the advancement of sustainable fashion in the future.

### 4. Result

#### 4.1 Opportunities for Sustainable Fashion

There are thousands of opportunities in the sustainable fashion business that not only protect the environment Furth-more save energy and cost of entrepreneur and customers. Some strategic business choices for promoting sustainable brands that are having trouble attracting consumers include eco-packaging, ecolabelling, design for durability, increasing awareness of sustainable products, and offering exclusive benefits like "green loyalty cards" to entice customers to buy ethically produced clothing again [43]. Figure 2 presents the opportunities for sustainable fashion.



**Fig. 2.** Opportunities for Sustainable Fashion

**Source:** Author's Own

#### A. Sustainable Fashion and Eco-efficiency

Nowadays sustainability is a general trend for people. Customers shift their preferences to fashionable apparel that is also responsible and with consideration of the environment. So, in consequence, fashion brands introduced eco-friendly dyes, zero-waste production, and reuse as well as reproduced methods in textiles. Production systems have been changed for environmental protection by innovation including biodegradable

packaging, plant-based leather substitutes, and low-impact colors. As a sequel, the fashion business is becoming more answerable and forward-looking.

### **B. Digital Revolution**

Due to technology, the fashion industry is transforming. Trend forecasting, inventory optimization, and personalized marketing are made possible by big data and AI. In addition to reducing returns and overproduction, virtual try-on tools, augmented reality shopping, and 3D clothing creation provide customers with immersive experiences. On-demand manufacturing models and digital sampling speed up design and cut down on physical waste. Fashion companies are better positioned to function more effectively and maintain their competitiveness in a tech-forward market if they embrace digital transformation.

### **C. E-commerce Expansion**

Online retail is still expanding quickly, overcoming regional restrictions and giving even tiny firms access to a worldwide consumer base. E-commerce systems enable hyper-personalized buying experiences by offering comprehensive consumer analytics. Brands can scale rapidly and engage directly with consumers because of reduced overhead expenses and access to a variety of markets. This change has been further hastened by the growth of social commerce, influencer marketing, and mobile shopping.

### **D. Circular Economy Model**

Reducing, reusing, and recycling are the foundations of the circular fashion paradigm, which is becoming more popular. Companies are investigating clothes repair services, rental models, take-back programs, and resale platforms. These tactics provide new business models with recurring revenue, decrease landfill trash, and prolong product life cycles. Businesses like Levi's, The RealReal, and Patagonia are establishing standards by incorporating circularity into their daily operations and interactions with customers.

### **E. Inclusive and Ethical Branding**

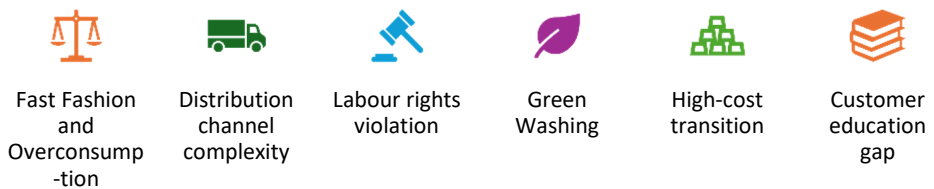
Brands that exhibit inclusiveness and social responsibility are valued more highly by contemporary consumers, particularly Gen Z and millennials. Diverse body forms, colors, genders, and abilities are increasingly reflected in fashion. Trust and loyalty are increased by brands that use gender-neutral lines, inclusive sizing, and ethical labor methods. Transparency, brand activity, and authentic storytelling are becoming crucial strategies for standing out in a congested market.

### **F. Technology innovation in material**

New fabrics that are sustainable and high performing are being developed thanks to advanced research. Viable alternatives to synthetic or animal-derived materials include mycelium-based textiles, lab-grown leather, and spider silk substitutes. In addition to lessening their impact on the environment, these materials give designers more creative freedom. Functionality and fashion are also being advanced by the incorporation of smart textiles, such as responsive, self-cleaning, or temperature-regulating textiles.

## 4.2 Obstacles for Sustainable Fashion

Relationships with consumers provide a significant obstacle for small firms and sustainable entrepreneurs. Due to the vast array of sustainable fashion variations, small business owners and managers find it challenging to predict and align their concepts with the expectations of stakeholders and customers [23] buyers who have stated a desire to buy sustainable eco-friendly do not always behave by this, even when there is unanimity [45]. This attitude-behavior gap is caused by several causes, one of which is the high cost of the products. Therefore, price and expenses also provide difficulties for small business managers and sustainable entrepreneurs. Figure 3 presents the obstacles for sustainable fashion.



**Fig. 3.** Obstacles for Sustainable Fashion

**Source:** Author's Own

### A. Fast Fashion and Overconsumption

Fast fashion, which produces inexpensive apparel that is swiftly thrown away, promotes an excess culture. Overproduction and underuse of clothing result from this model's reliance on low prices, high turnover, and trend-chasing. Large-scale waste, pollution, and abusive working conditions are among the serious environmental and social costs. This problem has been made worse by ultra-fast fashion platforms, which further speed up manufacturing cycles and make it more difficult to practice conscientious consumption.

### B. Distribution channel complexity

Distribution channels in the eco-friendly fashion industry is complex and frequently opaque. The sourcing of raw materials, dyeing, production, and distribution might take place across multiple nations, making it challenging to track a product's whole lifecycle. Accountability for environmental compliance, quality control, and labor rights is hampered by this lack of openness. Global disruptions such as geopolitical tensions or the COVID-19 epidemic further reveal these weaknesses and emphasize the necessity for transparent or localized models.

### C. Labour rights violation

In many nations that produce clothing, exploitation continues despite international monitoring. Workers frequently put up with peril working conditions, long shifts, and little remuneration without benefits or job stability. Forced labor and child labor are

still documented in some areas. Although some firms have made improvements to their labor standards, supply chain visibility issues, and third-party outsourcing mean that enforcement is still uneven.

#### **D. Green Washing**

As sustainability gains traction, some companies engage in a tactic known as "greenwashing," whereby they make false statements to seem more environmentally conscious than they are. Unverified certificates, ambiguous wording, and selective disclosure mislead customers and jeopardize genuinely sustainable projects. Consumers and watchdogs must demand honesty and responsibility because regulatory mechanisms to prevent greenwashing are still developing.

#### **E. High-cost transition**

Clean technologies, ethical work methods, and sustainable materials are frequently more expensive. The shift to more environmentally friendly operations can be financially intimidating for many firms, particularly small and medium-sized businesses. Large sums of money are needed for compliance certifications, research expenditures, and infrastructure improvements. These expenses may deter significant changes in the absence of incentives, subsidies, or long-term planning.

#### **F. Customer education gap**

The ethical and environmental ramifications of the fashion decisions they make are still unknown to many customers. Trends, price, and convenience continue to drive consumer behavior. Using education efforts, open labeling, and sustainable narratives to close the knowledge gap is crucial. Better practices can be demanded by empowered and knowledgeable consumers, who have the capacity to completely transform the sector.

### **5. Implication**

As our study is exploratory in nature. The first was sustainability in the fashion industry is needed for good survival for brands because nowadays people are well-informed of environmental affairs and they want to protect them by changing their shopping and consumption habits our study helps start-ups and entrepreneurs with new ideas and initiatives that they can use in their fashion business. A second implication is technology in helping fashion startups achieve sustainable models. High-tech appears to be useful for drastic rethinking production processes but it is not a necessary condition for a creative fashion business model to succeed. Models' projects with limited technology can serve as a valuable testing ground. However, technology can help expand the firm if a workable model has been identified [44]. Also, this study is helpful for startups who want to work in sustainable clothing as well as enhance the body of literature on sustainable fashion.

### **6. Limitation and Future Scope**

As with most other research, this study has numerous limitations. In our study we talk about some most important imitative techniques of sustainable fashion future study can

use all imitative and future growth of these initiative as well as they can talk about the customers reaction about this technique. The approach which we used in this study is exploratory future researcher can use primary survey as well as secondary record data of brands to find new insights.

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