

Role of Circular Economy in the Sustainable Development of Fast Fashion Industry



Fast Fashion industry

The fast-fashion industry has the market for rapidly selling apparel and clothes. It is a trend for shops to make replicas of the outfits worn by celebrities and models. These are the outcomes of the latest fashion trends going on (Niinimäki, and et al., 2020). The stores in this industry have to replenish their stocks with the new collection as soon as they have been seen on the ramp. These are generally designer dresses made from synthetic fabrics rapid. This industry produces the articles massively which are also bought within a week of their launching.



Fig 1: Fast Fashion Industry Wastage
Source: Copeland, 2022

Global Fast Fashion industry

According to the reports, the fast-fashion industry has created a value of \$68,634 million in 2020. This has been estimated to grow at a rate of 19% and grow to \$163,468 by 2025. Furthermore, it has been assumed that the CAGR rate of growth will be 5.3% by 2025 (Cision PR Newswire, 2021). Furthermore, the amount anticipated from this industry for the year 2030 has stood at \$211,909 million. The majority of this industry is for female fashion which is accounting for 60.3% as of 2020.

This segment is going to grow very fast and the CAGR rate has been determined to be 20.3% from 2020 to 2025. Based on the age factor, there are large markets for adult clothes in the global context. This accounts for 85.9% of the total for the year 2020. However, with the shift in the trends, teens wear is likely to surpass the adult clothes market in this industry by going at a CAGR rate of 23.6% from 2020-to 2025 (Cision PR Newswire, 2021). It is estimated to increase by over \$39.84 billion by 2025 (Title Press, 2021)

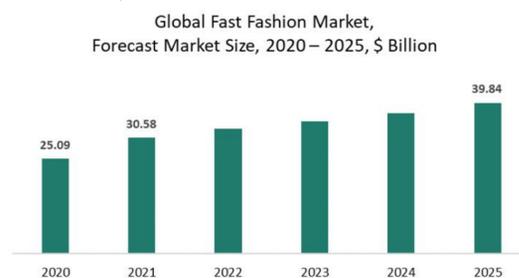


Fig 2: Global Fast Fashion Industry estimated growth
Source: Title Press, 2021

Environmental Impact of the Fast Fashion Industry

The Fast fashion industry is considered bad for the environment because of more than one reason. Firstly, it needs huge gallons of water to meet the demands of the customers. As per the reports, this industry consumes about one-tenth of all the water that is used in running factories and cleaning the products in the industry. For instance, 10,000 liters of water is required for producing only one kilogram of cotton (Ngan, 2020). Secondly, synthetic materials are used for speeding up production. This contributes to 35% of all the microplastics generated from these materials. Thirdly, it is increasing the landfills with the clothes.

In the year 2019, 62 million metric tons of apparel were consumed worldwide. This includes the clothes that are priced cheaply and worn once or twice and then thrown away. This is leading to more landfills. About 57% of discarded clothes resulted in landfills (Ngan, 2020). Apart from these issues, rayon or viscose is also being used widely which is an alternative to cotton. It is being manufactured with the use of chemicals that are harmful to the environment. This could lead to health issues for the people working in the factories producing these materials. It also emits a huge amount of carbon gases.

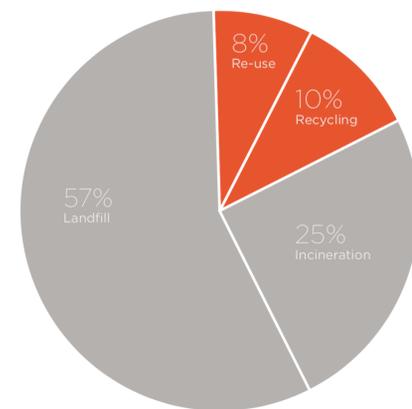


Fig 3: Clothing waste per year

Source: CO, 2018

Concept of Circular Economy

Regular activities such as using the environmental elements to produce the products and discard them after some time increasing wastage on a global scale. In the circular economy, the main aim is to produce waste (Camacho-Otero, Boks, and Pettersen, 2018). It works on three core principles such as eliminating waste and pollution, circulation of the materials and final products and regenerating nature. It is a solution to some big environmental issues such as climate change, waste, biodiversity, and so on.

The first principle can be achieved with the use of innovation and embracing the friendlier materials for the products. The second principle focuses on the effective measure taken for reducing the waste by circulating them (Morseletto, 2020). This will eventually reduce the waste and landfills. The last principle is about providing nutrients to the soil can help nurture nature.

Role of circular economy in the Fast Fashion industry

The circular economy is imperative in the fast fashion industry for redesigning the future. As the amount of landfills waste due to fast fashion has already been discussed, it is now the time to reduce such waste. Therefore, a circular economy helps in the sustainable production and consumption of clothes in this industry (Schroeder, Anggraeni, and Weber, 2019).

One of the most used materials in the fast fashion industry is polyester which is highly harmful to the environment. Therefore, with the application of a circular economy, this fabric can be reused instead of thrown to increase the waste. The material used will be recycled in a manner that can be used to make an entirely new outfit. This will work on the model "recover-recycle-reuse" (Hysa, and et al., 2020).



Fig 4: Circular Economy in Fast Fashion

Source: Seguar, 2019

Challenges and their solutions in circular economy in the Fast Fashion industry

There could be several challenges such as the price of the materials may be little more than the current clothes in the fast fashion. Also, the use of a new model which states the reuse may not be easily accepted by the customers (Rajput, and Singh, 2019). In the context shops and retailers, they are likely to avoid using any such model.

Furthermore, the time is taken in making the products could be little longer. Therefore, these and other related issues can be resolved by making circular economy a law. In addition to this, there should be increased awareness about the positive changes in the environment with the use of this concept.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the fast fashion industry is extremely bad for the environment. It is adding more and more waste and contributing to misbalancing nature. Therefore, it is important to switch to a new model which is a circular economy.

It is effective in reducing the wastage caused by the fast fashion industry. It is also beneficial for the sustainability of fabrics for a longer period of time without causing harm to nature.

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