

# **Effect of Fashion on Indian Society: A Socio-Economic and Cultural Study**

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## **Abstract**

Fashion is a dynamic social phenomenon, reflecting changing lifestyles, economic conditions, cultural ideals and technological innovations. The Indian fashion business has evolved from traditional apparel linked to local identities to a worldwide enterprise typified by consumerism, digital media, globalization and celebrity culture. On one hand the Indian fashion business has changed the social behaviour, identity formation and shopping habits and on the other hand it has expanded into becoming one of the primary contributors to economic growth, employment creation and preservation of culture. This paper discusses the effect of fashion on Indian society from the sociological, technological, economic and environmental perspectives of the society. The present study is an attempt to explore the function of fashion in the development of social identity, promotion of cultural heritage, generation of employment, women empowerment and economic progress. The research is based on secondary data from government papers, academic publications, company records and market research. It also addresses themes like quick fashion, environmental damage and changing cultural expectations. Our research results show that fashion is an important engine for economic development and modernization, but sustainable and culturally sensitive policies are needed for balanced social development.

**Keywords:** Indian Society, Fashion Industry, Consumer Behaviour, Job Creation, Cultural Identity, Sustainable Fashion, Economic Development

## 1. Introduction

Fashion is more than just clothes. It is a medium, a means of expressing and reflecting culture. Clothing has through history been used to symbolize social status, occupation, religion, geographical location and financial circumstances. The history of Indian design has been shaped by ancient civilisations, royal patronage, colonial encounters and recent globalisation. Indian fashion industry covers textiles, apparel manufacturing, handlooms, handicrafts, fashion design, retail, e-commerce & luxury brands. As digital technology grows and fashion is shared internationally on social media platforms, Indian consumers are more aware of design trends globally. There is also a rising renewed interest in traditional Indian crafts, handlooms and indigenous textiles in domestic and global markets. Fashion plays a vital impact in creating cultural identities, perceptions of gender, occupational choices, life choices and social ideals. These implications are of significance to policy leaders, corporate stakeholders and researchers who are interested in the connection between fashion and social reform.

## 2) Aim of the Research

The research aims at:

- To critically analyse the impact of fashion on the Indian society.
- Talk about the economic impact of the fashion sector
- Think about how dress helps to preserve culture and encourages the construction of identity.
- Examine the effects of fashion on employment and entrepreneurship.
- To explore issues of contemporary fashion practices.
- Provide measures to foster the sustainable and equitable growth of fashion.

### **3 Methodology of the Research**

This research incorporates secondary data from :

- Scholarly journals and research.
- Publications of World Bank and UNESCO.
- Market research of industrial cluster and consultancy firm

### **4.Indian Fashion –**

Indian fashion has seen significant historical changes:

#### **4.1 Normal Time :**

Traditional dresses like sarees, dhoti, turbans, lehengas and ethnic clothes are indicators of the culture of the region, the climatic conditions and the cultural activities. The handloom weaving and embroidery traditions were promoted by royal patronage.

#### **4.2 Effects of Colonization**

Western attire, tailoring and factory production of textiles were introduced by the British colonial rulers. The result was hybrid dress forms in population of urban regions with some education.

#### **4.3 The Post-Independence Era**

The post-independence era linked fashion with nation-building and cultural identity. Professional fashion education has been aided by institutions such as National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), National Institute of Design (NID)

#### **4.4 Period of Globalization**

The economic liberalization of 1991 brought with it quick worldwide fashion influences, foreign investments and penetration of global brands . Digital commerce has altered how we consume fashion.

## **5. Social-Cultural Impact of Fashion on Indian Society**

### **5.1 Fashion and Identity Construction:**

Fashion is a big part of social and personal identity. Clothing reveals something about a person's age, occupation, social standing, political and cultural loyalties. In a culture where the traditional and the modern are touching each other, the young Indians are more and more turning to fashion to create their own identity.

### **5.2 Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage**

Fashion is a means to maintain old textile processes and traditions. The illustrations are: Banarasi Weaving, Chikankari Embroidery, Kanchipuram Silk, Bandhani Tie-Dye, Kalamkari Art, Phulkari Embroidery. With the growing popularity of ethnic wear, the demand for traditional fabrics and crafts have also gone up.

### **5.3 Impact on Social Norms**

Fashion has shrugged off the old social norms of gender, occupation and lifestyle. More and more varied sorts of garments are being worn, which signifies more changes in urban India. Fashion prompts questions about body image, diversity and self expression.

### **5.4 Youth culture effects**

Youngsters get their fashion sense from social networking sites, celebrities, influencers and fashion bloggers. Fashion influences language, lifestyle choices and customer ambitions.

## **6. The Economic Impact of The Fashion Industry**

### **6.1 Contribution to GDP:**

India's textile and garment sector is one of the largest in the country and the fashion industry forms a major portion of it. The sector contributes considerably to : Production output International trade- Retail sales Value addition. Fashion activities generate a large economic multiplier effect across supplier chains.

## **6.2 Creation of jobs**

The garment industry is labour intensive and gives employment to all levels of ability.

Employment Sectors Textile manufacture- Clothing-manufacturing

Clothing Design-

Retail Administration – Merchandising E-commerce Handicrafts Fashion debate.

Many workers, in particular women and rural craftsmen, earn their living from fashion-related sectors.

## **6.3 Development of Entrepreneurship**

Fashion has become a major area for business. Opportunities include: - High end brands - Specialised enterprises- Sustainable clothing brands- Virtual clothes stores- Fashion Tips For Handloom Businesses Digital platforms have reduced the hurdles for aspiring entrepreneurs.

## **6.4 Promotion of Exports**

Indian fashion merchandise is exported overseas. Major export categories are.- off the rack clothes- Home textile- Hand crafted items Apparel embellishments Traditional dress-up Exporting is an important source of foreign exchange earnings. Fashion is a way women have of making themselves heard, of being part of the public sphere.

## **7. The Role of Fashion in Women Empowerment**

The importance of fashion in the socio-economic emancipation of women has been huge.

Financial empowerment Women are a significant part of the workforce in:-

- Manufacture of garments
- Handloom weaving and embroidery
- Trade- Garments Opportunities to be entrepreneurial

There is a rise in women-led fashion businesses in both urban and rural India. Empowerment Social Fashion provides women with more freedom of expression and participation in public life.

### **.8. Fashion Technology Technological Development**

It has transformed the production and consumption of fashion.

8.1 Digital Fashion Retail Digital retail platforms have transformed how customers shop.

Benefits include : Low pricing and ease Availability of extended goods Tailored recommendations.

8.2 The Social Media Factor Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest are now equally potent instruments for advertising fashion. Influencers have a huge impact on consumers' purchase decisions and trend adoption.

8.3 Fashion and AI Applications of Artificial Intelligence are as follows:– Trend Forecasting – Custom Style- Inventory Management- virtual dressing technology Technology is continually altering the fashion industry

### **9. Ecological and Social Issues**

9.1 Quick Fashion Fast fashion grows quickly, leading to overconsumption and short product life cycles. Implications are: - Overproduction - More textile waste - Resources depletion.

9.2 Pollution of the Environment Causes of Fashion Production:- Chemical toxicity from contaminated water- Carbon Emissions Unstable industrial processes cause major environmental problems.

9.3 Cultural Homogenization Global fashion trends often dominate native style and local attire. A crucial problem is the maintenance of cultural variety.

9.4 Materialism and Consumerism Fashion marketing can encourage overconsumption and status-driven purchasing behaviour, especially among young people.

## **10. The Future of Sustainable Fashion:**

“We need to promote approaches to sustainable fashion, in order to make a long-term beneficial effect on society. The key strategies are: Promotion of Handlooms & Crafts If we encourage the traditional craftspeople it is excellent for the rural economy and it is good for the culture. Circular Fashion Recycling, upcycling and re-using can help to lessen environmental impacts. We need to deal with the supplier chains to ensure fair compensation and safe work environments. Consumer Awareness in Ethical Manufacturing Developing educational initiatives to develop responsible consuming habits. Innovation in Ecology. The utilization of sustainable technology of production and eco-friendly materials is of fundamental importance.

## **11 Findings Research**

It demonstrates that: Fashion is a key driver in creating cultural identity and social expression. Fashion sector is a big source of employment and economic growth. Traditional crafts are being helped by an increasing demand for ethnic and historical clothes.

- Fashion is what drives business and women empowerment. Digital technology has altered the way fashion is produced, marketed and consumed
- Problems with environment and society generated by quick fashion.
- The embrace of sustainable fashion techniques is crucial in aligning economic growth with environmental responsibility.

## **12. Conclusion**

Fashion is a significant aspect in modern Indian society. It affects cultural identity, economic development, employment creation, social values and technical advancement. Globalization and digitalization have opened up new avenues for business but also brought problems of sustainability, consumption and cultural preservation. India, with its rich textile heritage and rapidly rising fashion ecosystem, is uniquely positioned to evolve a fashion model

that brings together tradition and innovation. “Policymakers, educational institutions, industry stakeholders and consumers need to collaborate to promote sustainable, inclusive and culturally appropriate fashion methods. This would ensure that fashion is a constructive contributor to India’s social and economic development while maintaining its rich cultural history.

**Conflict of Interest:** The corresponding author, on behalf of second author, confirms that there are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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