



Sustainable Fashion

For Prelims: Slow Environment Movement, United nations Sustainable development Goals (SDG)

For Mains: Need of sustainable fashion for a healthy and inclusive environment

Why in News?

Responsible production and consumption — [the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 12](#) — has become an increasingly important conversation within the 'slow fashion' movement, especially since the 2013 **Rana plaza Tragedy** in Bangladesh.

- On 24th April 2013, the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which housed five garment factories, **killed at least 1,132 people** and injured more than 2,500. It brought the attention of the international community and consumers towards the conditions of workers and sustainable fashion.

What is Slow Fashion Movement?

- Slow Fashion is **an approach to producing clothing which takes into consideration all aspects of the supply chain and in doing so, aims to respect people, the environment, and animals.**
- It also means spending more time on the design process, ensuring that each piece of apparel is quality made.
- Fast Fashion retailers have taught us that more is better, and thereby have created a huge consumption issue. The fast fashion industry is driving down quality, exploiting the environment and their workers to create cheap garments that do not last.
 - Slow fashion is the exact opposite of this. It's about creating mindful, curated collections based on quality finishes, versus pumping out large quantities of seasonal and trendy clothing.

What is the significance of Sustainable Fashion?

- Textiles and clothes contribute **USD 2.4 trillion to global manufacturing.**
- It provides **employment to 300 million people** worldwide along the value chain around the world, many of them are women.
- It is responsible for **2-6 % greenhouse gases emissions** of the world.
- It **consumes around 215 billion litres of water** per year.
- It **faces annual material loss of USD 100 billion** due to underutilization.
- Textiles account for approximately **9% microplastics losses to the ocean.**

What are the Initiatives for Sustainable Fashion?

- **At Global level:**
 - **United Nations Alliance for Sustainable Fashion:**
 - It is an initiative of [United Nations](#) agencies and allied organizations designed to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals through coordinated action in the fashion sector.
 - Specifically, the Alliance works to support coordination between UN bodies working in fashion and promoting projects and policies that ensure that the fashion value chain contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals' targets.
 - **Traceability for Sustainable Garment and Footwear:** As part of this initiative, UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) has launched "The Sustainability Pledge" inviting governments, garment and footwear manufacturers and industry stakeholders to pledge to apply toolkit of measures and take a positive step towards improving the environmental and ethical credentials of the sector.
 - **World Cotton Day (7th October):** It creates awareness of the need of market access for cotton and cotton-related products from least developed countries, fosters sustainable trade policies and enables developing countries to benefit more from every step of the cotton value chain.
- **At National Level:**
 - **Project SU.RE:** SU.RE stands for 'Sustainable Resolution'. It is the first ever holistic effort towards gradually introducing a broader framework for establishing critical sustainability goals for the Indian textile industry. It was launched in 2020.
 - Objective: The project aims to move towards sustainable fashion that contributes to a clean environment.
 - **Khadi Promotion:** Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) promotes khadi products. They have tied up with leading brands—Arvind Mills and Raymonds—and are also working with Air India to promote khadi products.
 - **Bamboo Promotion:** NITI Aayog's Forum for North East has highlighted the role of bamboo in development of the North East region. Over 60% of India's bamboo is grown in the North East.
 - **Brown Cotton:** Brown Cotton, is a local (to Karnataka) indigenous variety of desi cotton that is recognised for its natural brown colour. This effort is a larger encompassing exercise that involves the environment, the economy as well as local communities.

What are the challenges associated with sustainable Fashion?

- Economic and financial barriers.
- A new categorization of barriers: human perceptions, resource constraints and weak legislation.
- Issues in finding an eco-friendly and ethical alternative to the standard manufacturing process.
- Lack of Technological advantage.
- Increase in cost of manufacturing due to increase in investment in environment saving efforts and hike in wages of labourers.
- Eco-Friendly brands find it challenging

Way Forward

- **Environmental awareness:** The people all around the world should be made aware that climate change is a reality and not a hoax, so they should understand their responsibility of protection and conservation of environment.
- **Public Campaigns:** There should be public campaigns by the environmentalists against the companies which do not adhere to environmental standards and should refrain from purchasing any product manufactured by them.
- **Increase in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** The governments around the world should increase the [CSR](#) which companies need to pay on causing harm to the environment. This will prompt them to adopt sustainable practices.

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