

A Study of Sustainable Initiatives taken by H&M with respect to Pune City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the sustainable initiatives undertaken by H&M within its outlets located in Pune City, India. As sustainability becomes an increasingly critical aspect of corporate operations, the fashion industry has been under scrutiny for its environmental and social impact. H&M, as a global fashion retailer, has been proactive in implementing various sustainability measures to address these concerns.

INTRODUCTION

In India, the Textile and apparel market was estimated at INR 3,20,000 crore (USD 58 billion), in 2013, and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 9% to INR 7,57,000 crore (USD 138 billion) by 2023. It is the second largest industry in India, giving employment to approximately 45 million people.

H&M is a multinational clothing-retail company known for its fast-fashion clothing for men women, teenagers, and children. It is the second largest global clothing retailer, behind Spain-based Zara company. As of November 2019, H&M operates in 74 countries with over 5,000 stores, and also company has also made its online shopping available in 33 countries.

Sustainable clothing uses biodegradable components from natural or recycled fibers. These materials grow with no pesticide or fertilizer use, consume less energy and water, and employ no chemical treatment, thus reducing the overall carbon footprint of these brands.

The brand's sustainability work brings them opportunities to grow and develop their customer offering in new and innovative ways. To make the most of these opportunities, the brand challenges itself, questions old assumptions, and looks for new ways to do business that decouple its growth from the use of finite natural resources. H&M invests in new materials, technology, and business models to drive change in the way the brand makes and remakes the products, and how their customers experience fashion and design.

Sustainability is significantly important for fashion because consumer increase their awareness of the environment. H&M recognizes the importance of sustainability and incorporates green practices into its supply chain.

SUSTAINABILITY OF H&M

H&M's business operations aim to run in a way that is economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable which means that the needs of both present and future generations must be fulfilled. The prime focus of H&M is to serve fashion and quality at the best price in a sustainable way.

- Why is sustainability important for H&M?

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From the resources they use and reuse, to how they work with people and the expectations they set for their suppliers, everything they do creates the social and environmental story of their products.

- What are their focus areas?

Their sustainability work covers three themes – leading the change, circularity and climate, and fairness and equality. These areas are linked and their actions in one area will benefit another. For example, they cut their GHG emissions which will reduce its impact on water resources, help protect biodiversity, and support human rights such as health, livelihoods, land rights, and access to water.

PUNE CITY

Pune is a sprawling city in the western Indian state of Maharashtra. It was once the base of the Peshwas [prime ministers] of the Maratha Empire, which lasted from 1674 to 1818. It's known for the grand Aga Khan Palace, built in 1892 and now a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, whose ashes are preserved in the garden. It is the birthplace of the poet-saint Tukaram (in Dehu) and Jnaneshvara [in Alandi], the author of the well-known commentary 'Jnaneshwari', on the "Bhagavad Gita".

Pune is the second-largest city in the state of Maharashtra after Mumbai and is an important city in terms of its economic and industrial growth.

Pune is a paradise for shopaholics. Right from Paithani Sarees, Maharashtrian Naths, Kolhapuri Chappals, silver and brassware, to cheap apparel and accessories, shopping in Pune is fun. For foodies, there is Bhakarwadi, Mango Barfi, Puran Poli, a variety of Chivda, and other condiments.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study more about the brand [H&M].
- To study the sustainable initiatives taken by H&M.
- To study consumer's opinions about H&M.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study explains sustainability initiatives taken by H&M concerning Pune city. As we all know both H&M's products and packaging are made up of eco-friendly materials which are sustainable in nature for the environment. These are some of the sustainable initiatives taken by the brand, following are some more sustainable initiatives taken up by the brand:

- **Eco-material preparation.**
- **Sustainable manufacturing.**
- **Green distribution.**

LIMITATIONS

Following are some of the limitations that the researcher faced during their time of research:

- Time [It's one of the limitations because there was a limited period for the researcher to complete their research and complete the report.]
- Location [It's one of the limitations because the area of the study was limited for the research.]
- Sample Size [It's one of the limitations because the sample size is not the only constraint while doing the research.]

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Title** - “The Sustainability Claims Impact on the consumer’s green perception and behavioral intention.”
2. **Title** – “Circular economy and sustainability capability: the case of H&M.” – Mohammad B Rana, Syed Ahmed.
3. **Title**- “Brand identity, the integration of sustainability communication: the case of H&M.”- Namoan Jirawongsy.
4. **Title**- “H&M, ZARA, and other fashion brands are tricking shoppers with vague sustainability claims.”- ELIZABETH Segran.
5. **Title**- “Integration of Sustainability into Corporate Social Responsibility and the Fashion Industry: A Case Study on H&M.”- Shweta Nimwal, Ekta Nimwal Korra Anand Nayak.
6. **Title**- “Sustainability in corporate communications and its influence on consumer awareness and perceptions: A study of H&M & Primark”- Lilian Dach, Katrin Allmendinger.
7. **Title**- “Sustainability Scanner: H&M’s Eco-Conscious Shine”- TVOF Team.

DATA INTERPRETATION

Q1- How often do you shop from H&M?

Options given-

Answer options	Percentage	No. of Responses
Every Week	5.9%	3
Every Month	5.9%	3
Every 3 Months	35.3%	18
Every 6 Months	52.9%	27

Q2- How much would you rate H&M?

Options given-

Answer Options	Percentage	No. of responses
Highly Satisfied	19.6%	10
Satisfied	45%	23
Neutral	35.2%	18
Somewhat Satisfied	5.8%	3
Least Satisfied	0	0

Q3- Which of the following sustainable initiatives do you think are the most important for H&M to prioritize in Pune City? [Select all the apply.]

Options given-

Answer Options	Percentage	No. of responses
Use of eco-friendly materials in clothing production	60.8%	31
Reducing energy and water usage in stores	45.1%	23
Implementing recycling programs for old clothing	70.6%	36
Supporting local sustainable fashion brands	33.3%	17

Q4- How aware are you of the sustainable initiatives already implemented by H&M in their Pune city outlet?

Options given-

Answer Options	Percentage	No. of respondents
Very Aware	29.4%	15
Somewhat aware	51%	26
Not aware at all	19.6%	10

Q5- How important is sustainability in your decision to shop at H&M's Pune city outlets?

Options given-

Answer Options	Percentage	No. of respondents
Very Important	27.5%	14
Important	45.1%	23
Neutral	27.5%	14
Not very important	0	0
Not at all important	0	0

Q6- Would you be willing to pay a premium for Sustainability or ethically sourced products at H&M's Pune city outlets?

Options given-

Answer Options	Percentage	No. of respondents
Yes	23.5%	12
No	31.4%	16
Maybe	47.1%	24

Q7- Do you believe that H&M has made efforts to promote ethical and sustainable sourcing of materials for their products in Pune?

Options given-

Answer Options	Percentage	No. of respondents
Yes	56.9%	29
No	7.8%	4
Not sure	37.3%	19

Q8- Do you believe that H&M is making a positive impact on the environment through its sustainable initiatives in Pune?

Options given-

Answer Options	Percentage	No. of responses
Yes	64.7%	33
No	5.9%	3
Not sure	29.4%	15

Q9- Do you think H&M's sustainable initiatives in Pune have positively impacted the environment?

Options given-

Answer Options	Percentage	No. of responses
Yes	58.8%	30
No	5.9%	3
Not sure	37.3%	19

Q10- Do you think H&M's sustainable initiatives in Pune city outlets have influenced your decision to shop there?

Options given-

Answer Options	Percentage	No. of responses
Yes	60%	31
No	13.7%	7
Not sure	27.5%	14

FINDINGS

Following are some of the findings of the study:

- H&M's sustainability performance by Pune city outlets.
- Getting to know H&M's current sustainability initiatives such as the use of sustainable materials, less energy consumption, waste reduction, and ethical sourcing practices.
- Analysis of consumer awareness and perception of H&M's sustainability initiatives, including surveys given to the consumers to understand their attitude towards sustainable fashion and their purchasing behavior.
- H&M has been known for its sustainable initiatives, reducing the use of carbon emissions, use of eco-friendly materials to protect the environment.

CONCLUSION

Taking into consideration that H&M entered India not too long ago therefore the awareness about the sustainability initiatives has not reached the consumers as it should have but, H&M has been developed as a strong and sustainable brand where the product is well adapted to the needs of consumers. They have shown the market through their marketing that fashion is not very expensive, they brought runway clothes into the daily lives of people. H&M uses different marketing strategies to promote its brand to increase sales, but they are slow to adapt to online sales. In the year 2021, their main focus is increasing online sales as people are shifting more towards online shopping. H&M also uses environment-friendly products through their brand they also make their consumers aware about sustainability.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

H&M is a well-trusted brand as we all know, which provides quality products at fair prices. Following are some of the suggestions and recommendations which the researcher would like to give:

- H&M should re-stock their products as soon as possible because they do not re-stock their best-selling products many a times.
- H&M should educate their consumers about the importance of sustainability and provide tips on how they can make more environment-friendly choices when shopping for clothes.
- H&M can pursue third-party certifications and labels to assure customers that their products meet certain sustainability standards. This can include certifications for organic materials, environmental performance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Journals.
- Articles.
- H&M's official website.
- Research Papers.