

“WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS CREATING INNOVATION & SUSTAINABILITY IN FASHION INDUSTRY”

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ABSTRACT:

This paper focuses on how some Women Entrepreneurs have changed the fashion game by bringing innovation & sustainability into our fashion industry. The fashion industry is one of the most polluting in industries globally leaving a huge amount of carbon footprint behind. But some entrepreneurs have taken this into consideration & have adopted some sustainable measure in designing & creating innovative fashion choices that are benefitting for the consumers as well as the planet. This paper highlights some major issues that the planet had been facing due to the traditional & outdated method of running the apparel industry. How some women entrepreneurs have turned the future of the fashion industry & what were the challenges faced by them while doing so. This paper will also appreciate the work of few Indian Women Entrepreneurs who have introduced innovation & sustainable clothing choices. Some well-known brands have also inculcated the habit of being more environmental friendly. They have not only included eco-friendly packaging but are also promoting sustainable clothing on various platforms.

KEYWORDS:

Sustainability, Innovation, Women Entrepreneurship, Development, Green Marketing, Sustainable Clothing, Carbon Footprints.

INTRODUCTION:

The market value of the apparel & fashion industry in India was 80 billion U.S. dollars in the financial year 2021 & is estimated to reach around 190 billion U.S. dollars by the year 2026. The apparel market size is estimated to be around Rs.20,000 crore from which the branded apparel stands at one fourth of the value. The fashion industry is amongst the most polluting industry in the world, leaving a huge amount of carbon footprint behind. But some entrepreneurs have taken this into consideration & have adopted some sustainable measure in designing & creating innovative fashion choices that are benefitting for the consumers as well as the planet. Our increasing shopping habits have been leading to a greater degradation in our environment. But few women entrepreneurs are helping us make a difference by providing us alternatives to undo the damage caused by our buying habits in the past. Now due to such entrepreneurs, the consumers are more aware about their fashion choices & are looking forward to purchasing environment friendly alternatives. These sustainable clothing's are made using a wide varieties of materials that are environmental friendly, reduced usage of plastic in packaging & labelling. In the recent times we have seen successful ecommerce brands such as Nykaa and Myntra switch completely to a plastic free packaging by increasing the use of paperbags for delivery of their products.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objective of this article was to explore the studies related to Women Entrepreneurship and Innovation in India and also to understand how innovation in Entrepreneurship leads to success and growth of an enterprise. The complete research work is based on secondary data. For secondary data, relevant Books, Journals, Magazines, Internet, Newspaper have been used.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

A literature review is a comprehensive summary of previous research on a topic. The literature review surveys scholarly articles, books, and other sources relevant to a particular area of research. The review should enumerate, describe, summarize, objectively evaluate and clarify this previous research. It should give a theoretical base for the research and help (the author) determine the nature of research. The literature review acknowledges the work of previous researchers, and in so doing, assures the reader that the work has been well conceived. It is assumed that by mentioning a previous work in the field of study, that the author has read, evaluated, and assimilated that work into the work at hand.

- Hemantkumar P. Bulsara, Jyoti Chandwani, Shailesh Gandhi – Women Entrepreneurship & Innovation in India : An Exploratory Study. This paper focuses on studies that signifies success & growth of an enterprise that are related to the Women Entrepreneurship & Innovation in India. Indian Women, despite all the social hurdles stand tall from the rest of the crowd and are applauded for their achievements in their respective field. The transformation of social fabric of the Indian society, in terms of increased educational status of women and varied aspirations for better living, necessitated a change in the life style of Indian women. This paper endeavours to explore studies related to Women Entrepreneurship and Innovation in India. Few examples from Gujarat, India have been taken to understand the study in a better way. (Hemantkumar P. Bulsara, 2014)
- Janice Brodman - Transforming Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs. This articles highlights various approaches that can help give equal opportunities to women entrepreneurs such as Policy Level, Industry Level & Enterprise Level. It also highlights e-Biz: it's a new approach used to strengthening Women- Owned Enterprise & innovative ways in serving women entrepreneurs. It shows the e-BIZ approach delivers concrete improvements to the competitiveness of SMEs owned by women, run by women, or both. Moreover, the scale of the impact was remarkable: 66% of women respondents re- ported that an e-BIZ Center services improved their businesses. A spectacular 87% found e-BIZ Center services “useful” or “very useful,” and an additional 10% found the services “a little useful.” Impacts included enhanced marketing, advertising, or promotion; better customer care; improved product design; improved production; reduced costs; and faster response time. – (Brodman, 2007)
- Ademola Samuel Sajuyigbe, Isaac Olugbenga Fadeyibi - Women Entrepreneurship And Sustainable Economic Development: Evidence From South Western Nigeria. This paper shows that socio-demographic profile of women entrepreneurs brings out the fact that most of the women ventured into entrepreneurship in their mid-age of life and their involvement have significant influence on economic development. Results also indicated that majority of women have been empowered by voting in elections, have access to education, and they have benefited from empowerment training. The study also revealed that to have control over their life, to have freedom and self-respect and to develop greater self-confidence are the most significant factors motivating women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Furthermore, the result also showed that lack of access to finance, work/home conflict and lack of moral support from family are major challenges facing women entrepreneurs. The study indicates that majority of female entrepreneurs face both psychological and social challenges in their

daily struggles to make ends meet. These include low self-esteem, poor relationship with friends, relatives, workmate and negative community perception. (Ademola Samuel Sajuyigbe, Women Entrepreneurship And Sustainable Economic Development: Evidence From South Western Nigeria., 2017)

Priyanka Sharma – Women Entrepreneurship Development in India. This paper highlights that Entrepreneurship among women, no doubt improves the wealth of the nation in general and of the family in particular. Women today are more willing to take up activities that were once considered the preserve of men, and have proved that they are second to no one with respect to contribution to the growth of the economy. Women entrepreneurship must be moulded properly with entrepreneurial traits and skills to meet the changes in trends, challenges global markets and also be competent enough to sustain and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial arena. (Sharma, 2013)

- Tulus Tambunan- Women entrepreneurship in Asian developing countries: Their development and main constraints. The main issue of women entrepreneurship development discussed in this paper is the main constraints facing women to become entrepreneurs or existing women entrepreneurs to sustain or grow. SMEs are of overwhelming importance in Asian developing countries, as they accounted, on average, for more than 95% of all firms, thus the biggest source of employment, providing livelihood for over 90% of the country's workforce, especially women and the young. Women entrepreneurs are mainly found in MIEs that is, traditional and low income generating activities. They choose MIEs simply because this economic activity is characterized by an easy entry and exit, and low capital, skills, and simple technology requirements. Majority of women entrepreneurs in the region were not drawn to entrepreneurship by "pull" factors, such as the need for a challenge, the urge to try something on their own and to be independent, to show others that they are capable of doing well in business, to be recognized by the society (self-esteem), hobby, or to use spare time, but by "push" factors such as poverty, unemployment, the need to have more cash income to support the family daily expenditures, and precaution motives (anticipation if husband is laid-off or unemployed, and other emergency needs). This may suggest that when women in the region are better educated and have greater well-paid employment opportunities, their participation in SMEs may decline. (Tambunan, 2009)

Saskia Vossenbergh - Women Entrepreneurship Promotion in Developing Countries: What explains the gender gap in entrepreneurship and how to close it? This paper aims to contribute to this emerging research agenda by pointing out the need for a systematic impact analysis of women entrepreneurship promotion policies and practices. There is a need to better understand and determine whether and if so, how support programs and policies can impact on economic growth and beyond that, generate the kind of social change required to change the gender bias in entrepreneurship. Such an impact analysis, entails a multi-level framework of analysis based on consistent and reliable gender-segregated data, that pays due regard to the extra-economic, legal-, normative- and cognitive context of entrepreneurship, considers the work-family interface, and that takes on a feminist perspective on gender. It needs to encompass both the short-term and long-term economic and social effects (positive and negative) a) at the level of the household as well as nationally; b) identify effects on the legal-, normative- and cognitive context of entrepreneurship; c) address the work-family interface; and, d) pay due regard to the gendered and biased intersections that contribute to experiences of oppression and privilege. (Vossenbergh, 2013)

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS:

Women now have become aware about their roles & rights at work place but they still face certain challenges which employees of the different gender do face that often. Even though fashion is considered to be majorly for the female population but the creators of these fashion tend to face certain challenges. In India, a female faces various difficulties when she decides to work. Various societal & family pressures, many women even today fear of non-acceptance from the society. There are few challenges that are common in women at all level at work such as socio-cultural barriers, confidence level, financial support, mobility, male – female competition at work, knowledge of the latest changes in technologies, education level, knowledge requirements. These are few challenges that a women employee or entrepreneur faces at work place but there are more challenges depending on their individual background.

INDIAN ENTREPRENEURS WHO ARE INCULCATING ECO-FRIENDLY & SUSTAINABLE FASHION TO INDIAN CUSTOMERS:

According to McArthur Foundation, in 2015, textiles production led to 1.2 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, more than that of maritime shipping and international flights combined. In fact, textile dyeing and associated activities contributed to 20 percent of all industrial water pollution. While some brands are taking a step towards providing sustainable fashion, about 60 percent of millennials are also inclining towards shopping sustainably, as per the findings by Fabrik Brands. Here are five women entrepreneurs that

are innovating and upskilling to revolutionise sustainable fashion in India and the world over.

Twirl. Store by Sujata Chatterjee: Sujata Chatterjee started her store in 2017 with an aim to reduce cloth wastage, conserve natural resources such as water & encourage women empowerment. Her brand signifies retail as a sustainable lifestyle & circle. She upcycles clothes by collecting them from people & providing redeemable points & then further donating those clothes to various NGOs. She supports women from West Bengal who manufacture fabric using handloom.

Premal Badiani : She is a US based Indian fashion designer who designed clothes to honour breast cancer fighters & survivors at The Valentia Collection & became a global attention in 2018. She has received the American Academy Global Award in 2019 & is recognized for introducing the concept of 360-degree virtual eco-friendly runway at the New York Fashion Week. She has also been awarded by Fortune Magazine for being a pioneer in promoting sustainable fashion in luxury clothing. She's a fashion designer, Hollywood costume designer, writer, certified life coach & mentor board of some esteemed fashion institutes.

Bunko Junko by Bhavini N Parikh: Bhavini started her sustainable fashion brand Bunko Junko in the year 2017 with the purpose of rebranding pre-consumed apparel waste & create new products for daily usage such as dresses, kurtas, jackets, rugs, wall hanging, earrings, bangles, clutches & laptop bags. She has worked with over 1000 women employees that belonged from socio economic challenging groups. She has collaborated with such women to serve big brands such as Shoppers Stops. She has a aim of reducing the carbon footprints from the apparel industry to zero.

Madhurima Bhattacharjee by Madhurima Bhattacharjee: In 2019, Madhurima Bhattacharjee had been named as one of the top sustainable labels to wear by Femina Magazines. She was an engineer by profession but she quit that to follow her love & passion for fashion. She initially showcased her pieces at pop up events, melas & exhibition & then was approached by The Woven Thread.

Garo and Tahweave by Sweta Tantia: Sweta Tantia pursued a formal education in fashion from NIFT, Kolkata & then later completed her masters from the London School of Fashion. She's a well known fashion designer & has worked with celebrities such as Dia Mirza, Madhuri Dixit Nene & Sania Mirza. She has represented her brand at the Lakme Fashion Week for 5 consecutive years. She supports livelihood of weavers & part of her sales is spend on the betterment of people involved in the weaving industry in West Bengal, this was recognized by the Textile Minister of West Bengal Government.

CONCLUSION:

Fashion Industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world, around 20% of waster wastage comes from dyeing of clothes. Fashion is our daily choice but this choice is harming our planet more than we are even acknowledge about. But we as consumer are now aware about how much damage we have caused to our environment & we now have alternatives that can help us reduce the damage caused. Through this paper we have highlighted the amazing work done by some wonderful women entrepreneurs but now its time for us to act smart as a costumer & invest in fashion that is sustainable, eco-friendly & innovative.

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