

Title: - Ethical and Eco-Friendly Fashion: An Evaluation on Cruelty-Free Clothing.

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Abstract: - *The significance of Ethical fashion can be precisely stated in several ways, but as it is core, it refers to clothing, accessories, and other articles that are produced in a way that is considered to be environmentally and socially accountable. This includes products that are made from sustainable materials and are produced by fair trade practices. In a way that does not negatively impact the environment. There are several reasons why ethical fashion is valuable. First and foremost, it is significant to consider the impact our clothing selections that have on the environment. It is known that the fashion industry is one of the second largest polluters in the world, and so by choosing to buy ethical and sustainable fashion products, we can help to reduce our environmental influence. It is also essential to understand the social and economic impacts while opting to buy clothing. The fashion industry is one of the largest employers in the world, and so the working conditions and wages of workers in the industry are a major concern. Unfortunately, many workers in the fashion industry are paid very low wages and work in poor environments. By choosing ethical fashion, we can help to improve the working conditions and earnings of workers in the industry. It is also important to consider the impact of our clothing choices on the animals that are used in the fashion industry. These creatures are often treated poorly in the fashion industry, and so by choosing ethical fashion, we can help to reduce their suffering too. Not only about the animal suffering but also not killing the insects with pesticides for growing crops & plants (in concern with natural fibers) and Silk Rearing. The boiling of Silkworm cocoons in the sericulture process has come under severe criticism from individuals and organizations. Campaigns have been formed to protest the inhumane treatment of Silkworms by the People for the Treatment of Animals (PETA). This Chapter is a concern and awareness to consumers, designers, and exporters to have empathy for these living organisms. Adapt the habit of Ethics and Sustainable. Therefore, vegan leather (by non-killing of animals) should be adopted by brands and designers.*

Keywords: -

Ethical Fashion, Environment, Sustainable, Fashion Industry, Vegan leather and Animal killing

Introduction: -

The description of ethical fashion is to describe ethical design, production, retail, and purchasing. This covers a range of issues such as working conditions, exploitation, fair trade, sustainable production, environment, and animal welfare. When ethics are discussed within the context of fashion, it most often refers to the treatment of people in the stages of raw material, processing, and manufacturing. In the most ideal sense, ethical fashion benefits those working along the supply chain and creates a better future for everyone not just for those at the top. Ethical fashion covers a wide range of issues such as living wages, working conditions, health and safety, forced-to-work, and child labor. It means going beyond merely following local labor laws. Ethical fashion can also include fair treatment of animals, vegan, and cruelty-free fashion. (Animal liberation, P Singer 2004). Ethical fashion is a tiny bit different from sustainable fashion, it focuses more on the social impact of the fashion industry, which means "morally right". Most of us know about the tragedy that happened in a Bangladesh garment factory. We started talking about "ethical fashion" a lot after the collapse of the Rana Plaza in 2013, (Reinecke & Donaghey, 2015) as we started realizing the extreme conditions in which clothes are manufactured. In the last decade or so, fast fashion has taken over the industry and left carnage in its path. Large brands have been notorious for underpaying and overworking their employees in factory settings. This has resulted in most people's interpretation of "ethical fashion" as one in direct response to that.

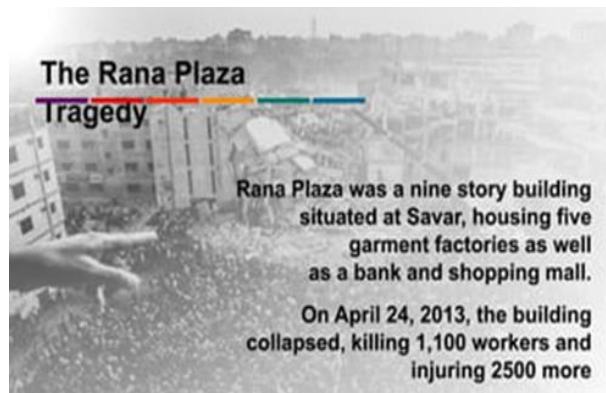


Fig:1 Rana Plaza tragedy in Bangladesh. Source: Google

Research Methodology: -

This paper aims to study the ethical fashion which benefits the entire fashion industry, it consists of designers, brand owners, manufacturers, and consumers. This research paper is based on primary data and secondary data. It is conceptual in nature and is based on the examination of different research that has been done. The sources are taken from journals, books, my dissertation, and other authentic materials. The primary objective of the study is to extend the understanding of sustainable design practices with ethical fashion and shed light on designers' work in a sustainable minded. The following research questions guided the study:

How are sustainability and ethical fashion integrated into the design practices of garment companies?

What role does a clothing designer play in this respect? (Essi Karell & Kirsi Niinimaki , 4th June 2020)

What are the issues and problems faced by the fashion and textiles industries?

These questions help us to discuss what the designers' influences on the environmental and social impacts of fashion are. In this context, a topic that has received much attention is 'sweatshops' (or sweat factories), which refer to workplaces with unacceptable working conditions (Wilson 2003). This topic on cruelty free leather is certainly quite sensitive, as companies may feel that their practices are judged in some way. Therefore, an online survey was done to understand the domain of ethical fashion among consumers and their acceptance of sustainable and ethically made clothing. As we know, leather can be obtained from cows, goats, sheep, pigs, and even alligators, snakes, crocodiles, etc. Killing innocent creatures should be abundant. Nothing can be fashionable for the sake of killing animals for their skin.

1.1 Fashion Ethics: - The rise in demand for vegan leather that doesn't come from animals and doesn't hurt the environment has pushed designers to find sustainable and ethical leather alternatives to keep up with consumer demand.(Anders Haug and Jacob Busch Sept 2015)).The practice of crafting cowhide into wearable leather has been around for centuries (some even suggest since 1200 BC!), but with new technology and innovation, we are using all sorts of resources to make fabrics that act like leather, minus the animal. The three pillars of Ethical Fashion are: - **Social Good , Planet Friendly & Animal-Free**

Social Good :- This means fair wages, fair trade certifications, and access to good working conditions. One brand that is fully committed to doing Social Good for the community in comparison to ethics is Vildnis. They work exclusively with small factories based in Portugal and India. Keeping manufacturing in a few places allows them to visit the factories more frequently and check that the workers are treated well.



Fig2: A woman wearing an organic cotton top Iguazu Top – 100% Organic cotton (Vildnis) Source : Google

Planet Friendly: - The fashion industry is the second biggest polluting industry in the world (Number one being Oil and gas). When people think of sustainable fashion, we think of the environment. By planet, we mean all things earthly, like water, the ground, and the climate. Another one we may have heard of is Slow Fashion. Which is opposite of Fast Fashion, and Fast Fashion is buying and throwing away clothes in landfills. Taking care of our clothes and keeping them in good condition so they can last longer period is a phenomenon of slow fashion. Many innovative ethical clothing brands are reusing old fabrics to make new trendy pieces. Some do great things like these upcycled and recycled clothing brands. Others are making sustainable swimwear made from ocean plastic waste.

Animal Cruelty-Free: - This one might come as a shock to some thinking 'How on earth can clothes harm animals? Animals can get hurt in multiple ways in the clothing industry. According to the Food and Agriculture, an organization of the United Nations, produces over 300,000 tons of goatskins a year. Thankfully, many ethical fashion brands have made positive choices to stay away from such practices. One Animal Cruelty-free fashion brand is ETHICS. This brand is a sustainable fashion brand based in UK and is a Peta Approved Vegan Brand. This means they ensure no animals are hurt during any part of their production or used in their fabrics.

1.2 The Vegan leather industry

Vegan leather is made from many plant-based fibers, including pineapple leaves (Pinatex), cactus (Desserto leather), Apple Peels, Mushrooms, Coconut husks, Mango, Seaweed, and Banana peels. Lab-grown leathers like MYLO, an "unleather" material made from mycelium, are also bursting onto the fashion scene. (Rollin 2005) . As these fibers are often used as a byproducts of food industry, they're not creating a demand for a resource or extracting more from the planet, but rather using up or otherwise been thrown away. The awareness of fake fur as a vegan material and ethical alternative material has increased compared to that in the past however, fake leather is still recognized as an industrial material rather than a vegan material. Ethical consumers consider the environmental effect of purchasing eco-friendly products. (N Sharma, R Saha, VR Sreedharan, J Paul Business Strategy and the Environment, 2020)

The following are cruelty-free vegan leathers used as clothing and accessories in industries.

1.3 Cruelty-Free Leather from Pineapple Leaves



Fig:3 Made from Pinatex, Source: Creator: mikel roberts Copyright: mikel roberts

With people, animals, and keeping in mind about the environment, the quest for sustainable materials, in particular, an animal leather alternative hasn't stopped. Pinatex is a material resulting from 'discarded' pineapple. Pinatex is a new word form from 'Pina' the Spanish word for pineapple and 'Tex' which refers to the texture of pina fibers. Before Pinatex, pineapple leaves were considered rubbish and discarded. The Philippines, Brazil, and Hawaii were throwing away millions of tons each year. Thanks to Pinatex's innovation, these materials have gained a new life. As a designer, one can use it as a cruelty-free (vegan) leather alternative in your fashion creations, looking good while saving the environment, at the same time. The advantage of using the leaves of the pineapple is rescued from waste and turned into resources that fashion brands are into.

1.4 Vegan Fur made from Seaweed.



Fig:4 Vegan fur made from seaweed, Source: Google

Another fantastic material that's making recent waves is Koba. Koba is an innovative type of animal-free fur made from kelp seaweed. The innovation follows in the pace of ECOPEL, the very first bio-based fur company that has made vegan fur for manufacturing of apparel. After fashion houses began to ban animal fur, made from kelp has started to become increasingly popular. Right now, more than 300 leading fashion houses are using Koba fur. This has a great place regarding the future of sustainable fashion made from corn. Koba is far more sustainable than faux fur made from nylon, polyester, and other plastic materials.

1.5 Animal-Free Wool from Coconut Husks



Fig:5 Animal-free wool made from coconut husk, Source: Google

With the rising awareness towards animal cruelty, issues plaguing the industry, and the advent of Coir is the fibrous material found between the hard shell and the outer coat of a coconut. As a natural fiber, coir is used in simple products such as floor mats, ropes, doormats, brushes, and mattresses. According to recent data an animal-free alternative to wool, which is Coir could save over 450,000 tons of carbon emissions on an annual basis. Recent innovations have improved Coir to the point of being used as a wool replacement in fashion and apparel products. Moreover, if blended with other materials, the coconut fabric adds drying fast. That makes this material excellent for fitness gear, as it keeps the wearer cool. Many US brands such as Polar Tec, Orvis, and Marmot have launched their collections of Coir-based brands.

1.6 Apple peel skin:



Fig:6 Apple Peel Skin leather, Source image: Google

Apple leather is a vegan leather-like material that is completely free from animals, making it the perfect material for anyone. The material was developed by Frumat and is made by Mabel, an Italian manufacturer. Relatively new, the material, which is officially named Apple Skin, was first made into bags in 2019. Apple leather is a bio-based material, meaning that it is partly biological: natural, and organic. In the Tyrol region of northern Italy, an enormous number of apples are grown. When making juice or jam, the seeds, stalks, and skins of apples can't be used. These peels are composed of apple skin leather. Today, Frumat collects these otherwise wasted fruit scraps and turns them into fashionable material. The leftovers, like the apples turned to juice, are crushed, and then naturally dried into a fine powder. This powder is blended with a kind of resin that is, essentially, dried and laid flat into a final material -- apple leather.

1.7 Mushroom Leather



Fig:7 Mylo, the Mushroom leather. Source image: Google

Mushroom leather is a vegan-friendly material used as a sustainable and environmentally friendly alternative to animal leather. Mushroom leather is made from mycelium, the vegetative part of a fungus. Mycelium is the network of filaments that form the underground thread-like structure of fungi. It is the branching structure of mushrooms, made from billions of tiny cells.

1.8 Mango Leather

DISCARDED MANGOES USED

- > 50% of mango pulp is combined with biopolymer in liquid and powder form
- > The mixture then undergoes a process to be converted into a sheet like material
- > Finishing is done with surface coating and added design patterns

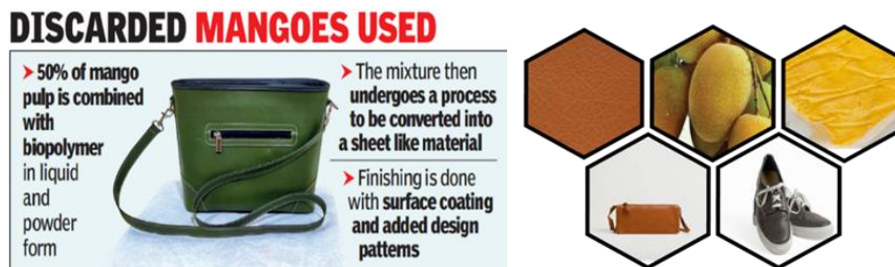


Fig:8 Mango leather, Source: A Dutch company named Fruit Leather is bringing vegan leather from mangoes that would otherwise be thrashed away.

The duo of Dutch Designer, Hugo de Boon and Koen Meerkerk the co-founder of Fruit Leather first came up with the concept for Fruit Leather back in 2015. Hugo and his family have been in the leather business since 1952, but this is the first time they have processed vegan leather. The co-founder's dream is to decrease food waste while making the leather industry more environmentally friendly. The vegan leather is made from thousands of mangoes that would otherwise be thrown away. Now, this waste is used to make jackets, wallets, handbags, and shoes.



Fig:9 Mango leather jacket, Source: Brand -Independence Brothers , USA

1.9 Cruelty-free Silk from Banana Stem

Bananas as we know are one of the most known and loved fruits all over the world. But, apart from being loved for its edible part, it seems that this fruit will soon find love for its stems (abaca) as well. It is said that roughly one billion tons of banana stems are discarded every year. Some researchers have found a way to take these wasted stems and put them to good use – Abaca for fashion. The conversion process requires around 35 kilograms of stems. In the end, about one kilogram of super-soft fiber results, ready to be turned into textiles. Abaca-based fabrics are suitable for both humans and the environment. From all sustainable materials, Abaca requires less land, water, and fertilizers to grow. Moreover, extracting textiles from banana stems requires minimal energy usage and little water consumption.

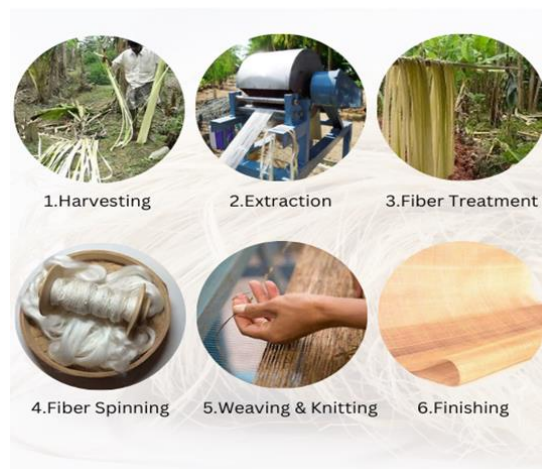


Fig:10 Banana Fiber to fabric, Source: Google

Social awareness: - It is important and mandatory to aware consumers, designers, and people who belong to the Fashion Industry follow the ethical rules. Unfortunately, some people have misunderstood the meaning of fashion. If we look at history, we will find that people of the Prehistoric period hunted animals for their skins and fur. But still in this era surprisingly, even literate people are not aware of the horror animals go through for their skin on the planet.

Conclusion: - As we know most clothing materials today are made of polymer-based petrochemicals and other synthetic-based fibers, which are harmful to the environment and to the human body. To produce Polyester kinds of materials, a lot of energy and other resources are used which are toxic. The alternatives are sustainable and ethically made clothing which is a good choice. Hence, switching to ethical fashion helps us significantly which lowers our impact on the environment. Along with this, eco-friendly fabrics, and accessories sustain for a very long term after which they can be re-purpose and reused. Hence, it

is important to consider the impact of our clothing choices whether the fabrics are made from vegan leather or the animal leather that are used in the fashion industry. As killing and taking the hides of animals are often treated poorly and so by choosing ethical fashion, we can help to reduce their suffering too. Always remember fashion should be delightful and not deadly, certainly not at the cost of speechless creatures.

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Biography



I, Subarna Ghosh Assistant Professor-1 in Amity school of Fashion Technology , Amity University Kolkata. My passion is to explore my knowledge and skills through research work and share among students. I have published numerous articles in e-magazines and published research papers in UGC care journals. My expertizations are in core Fashion Design practical subjects .Received “Bongo Samman” 2019 & 2022 for Fashion Educationin Kolkata. Copy right Published 2023,on “Development of Textile Print:An innovative Aloe prints for Men,s wear”.