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Revisiting The Indian Ethos of Reuse of garments in Indian households –A comparative analysis of Generation X and Z

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1. Introduction

It can be said that most of the urban cities in India have increased their garbage dumping capacity when it comes to waste from garments. It is a known fact that India generates about 62 million tons of garbage in a year. Of this, about 75% of garbage remains untreated. The landfills in the major metro cities have been increased and the same is causing more pollution and environmental problems. Thus there is an urgent need of waste management specially when it comes to garments. Four per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from textiles. Rapid fashion cycles are making the discarding of garments more common among the generation Z. Thus this has led to a significant amounts of postconsumer textile waste (PCTW) which could be used garments or even second-hand clothing (SHC). Post-consumer textile waste originates household sources. This then consist of the garments or textiles the consumers no longer need. Many solutions to this problem have been suggested like reduce the consumption(anti-consumption) and recycle the garments which will be an initiative by the industries. In this paper there is an effort to stress on the third 'R' which is reuse. A study if the major practice of reuse which are presently prevalent in the Indian household to reuse a garment and delay its disposal have been studied through personal interview with the consumers in the Indian household. The same has been done through a comparative analysis of the generations X and Z.

Review of literature:

Garments in the Indian families in the past have were never discard but passed on as family heirlooms (Weiner 1992; Tarlo 1996), family or emotional mementoes (Stallybrass 1993; Stewart 1993), taken by younger members of the family, donated to servants (Lemire 1991), or reused within the home into some other usable form (Greenfield 1986; Seriff 1996). Other initiatives of reuse in Indian homes have been making an effort of reusing many a products in their house like using reusable cotton bags while shopping. This reuse of old bags for shopping of basic amenities like grocery, garments and fruits and vegetables can lead to a reducing the plastic bags (Norris 2005). Some ready to be discarded garments are also cut into pieces and stitched into patchwork cushions, hangings and bedspreads by the household women in Indian themselves. This is but a practice which is not very prevalent nowadays.

In a survey done by Bairagi(2018),on the subject of reuse on Indian samples, it was found that when it came to Generation X, most of the clothing was recycled in Indian homes like the sarees were converted to salwar, suits or lengas for kids, dupattas were never discarded but used multiple times with different set of suits, dhotis were converted to dusting cloth, wipes and swabs for homes when worn out and old bedsheets were cut to make diapers for infants. Also this generation X in India is known to recycle the old garments into bags, cushion covers, curtains, etc. The pre-owned clothes in Generation X has been sharing their garments with the same generation relatives or has passed down the clothes to the younger ones in the family rather than donating the same. Also the research did show that some of the Indians did want to hold on to certain clothing due to their personal reasons, there was a small percentage of generation Z in India who also wanted to resale their used branded clothes and also volunteered to buy pre-owned clothing through online

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websites like Elanic, Etashree.in and lStylflip.com etc. About 74% of the Z generation discard their clothing by donating. It was found that few respondents prefer upcycling certain clothing individually through professional help. It was also observed that many respondents were not aware about the channels of donation of used clothing or upcycling old garments. It has been seen in the research that Indians generally want to discard the clothes that are no more in use. The donations generally are limited to donating clothes to an NGO. Some other channels where the clothes could be donated for recycling like a community of artisans or to Indian brands which tend to create new designer products by recycling of post-consumer apparel waste is not known to many Indian consumers. Another channel of donating to the small-scale industries who have to capability of converting the post-consumer apparel waste to fibers and yarns is also not known to many consumers in India.

Although reusing and recycling textiles has been a domestic craft in India, the household need to be aware of the textile clusters and small scale industries which do work on second hand imported clothing. These small scale unorganized industries also work on recycled yarns, prayer rugs, blankets and bed linen. The leftover garment pieces from the household could also be sold as industrial wipers for the industries. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to study the reuse of post-consumer apparel waste in India through the consumers in their household itself. This study aims to study through exploratory research through Personal interview as to what are the major methods in which the Generation X and generation Z are trying to reduce waste of textile and garments or trying to reuse a garment to delay its dumping into the landfill. It is hypothesized that the Generation X will have different options of Reuse of garments as compared to the generation Z. The same will be confirmed through the exploratory research.

Methodology Adopted:

An exploratory research design is being adopted for this study. The data will be collected through a PI with the two generations in the Indian households. A sample of 25 samples will be interviewed to do a comparative analysis of how the two generations are dealing with reuse of Garments in India.

Analysis:

The theoretical results will be analyses with the NVIVO software to have a comparative analysis of how the two generations are dealing with reuse of Garments in India. Also the motivations behind the same will be analyzed in detail for the two generations.

Managerial Implications:

There are a number of studies which study the methods of recycling and upcycling these garments which are discarded by Indian household. There was but no research found on what are the major methods in which the discarding of garments could be delayed to save it from getting dumped into the ever increasing landfill in India. Where most of the papers look at the industry's initiative of recycling and upcycling of garments, this study analyses the methods which a normal household could adopt to reuse a "ready to discard" garment.

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