

MINIMALISM AND SUSTAINABILITY IN INDIAN FASHION



PROJECT SUBMITTED

**In partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
award of the Degree**

MASTER'S PROGRAMME IN FASHION DESIGNING

BY

**THEJASA NAIR
(Register No. SM23MFD006)**

Under the guidance of

Ms. JESHY VARGHESE

and

Ms. ANITTA BENNY

DEPARTMENT OF FASHION DESIGNING

WOMEN'S STUDY CENTRE

ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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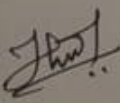
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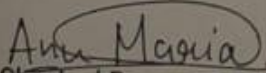
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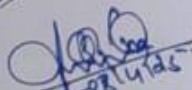
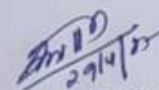


DECLARATION

I, **Thejasa Nair**, hereby declare that the project entitled "**Minimalism and Sustainability in Indian Fashion**" is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master's Programme in Fashion Designing. This record is original research done by me under the supervision and guidance of, **Ms. Jeshy Varghese** and **Ms. Anitta Benny**, Assistant Professors, Department of Fashion Designing, St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam. This work has not been submitted in part or full or any other Degree, Diploma, Associateship/Fellowship of this or any other university.



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ABSTRACT

The growing popularity of minimalism and minimalist fashion in India is linked to the growing demand for a sustainable environment and nation. Since minimalism is an environmentally friendly choice with a little impact, it serves as a remedy for all the environmental risks brought on by the fashion industry. This thesis investigates the environmental benefits of minimalism and the reasons it has grown into a popular fashion trend, particularly among young people. Minimalism is proving to be a timeless fashion trend that is evolving into a way of life rather than merely a passing fad or trend. This study starts by examining the risks rapid fashion poses to the environment and other factors that contributed to the rise of minimalism. The possibilities, qualities, and benefits of minimalist fashion are then highlighted.

An awareness class and a survey method are the two phases of the research method. The audience for the awareness lesson, which was held as a seminar, consisted of first-year undergraduate students. People between the ages of 17 and 65 were the target demographic for the survey. Random sampling was used, and a sample size of 100 was chosen. Before taking the survey, participants received a briefing on minimalist fashion.

The results of the study add to our understanding of sustainable fashion and the ways that minimalist design might assist accomplish it. Also covered are the concept's comprehension and the necessity of fostering it for a brighter future. The adaptability and promise of minimalist fashion as an eco-friendly remedy for the fast fashion dilemma are examined in this thesis.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE FASHION HISTORY

Fashion has always been known as the dilemma between the need to be unique and the need to fit in. The creation of any apparel, accessory or jewellery inspired from different cultural elements and blending them into outfits that represent diverse ways of dressing that symbolises social status, self-expression and group belonging. Fashion being a multilingual term it represents and Industry, Styles, Aesthetics and Trends.

From earliest symbols of status to modern self – expression, Fashion has progressed by being influenced by social movements, technology and global culture. The industry has mirrored the changing factors over the years from the Renaissance's adorned styles to the Industrial Revolution's large production and to the 21st century's tech – driven fashion. AI and Digital innovation are to be the prime fashion trends in future. Fashion more than being just clothes it has always been a reflection of culture, identity and the spirit of the times. The evolution of Fashion is clearly visible from the change of ancient garments that symbolised status and power to trends that are shaped by technology and global influences at present. It functions as a form of expressing oneself and also allowing humans to convey their personality, beliefs and creativity through different styles. Throughout the ages, fashion has been impacted by everything from social changes to technological growth curating a vital and ever – shifting landscape. The industry's journey from being a necessity to an artistic statement proves its growth into a powerful cultural force that goes beyond borders, eras and traditions. During the olden times clothing mainly fulfilled practical purposes such as providing protection to individuals from external factors and also helping in doing daily activities.

The era of Renaissance made an important shift in fashion as garments became more embellished, artistic and also reflected individualism. This period that extended from the 14th to 17th centuries, witnessed a blast of creativity in art, culture and fashion. The increase in tailoring made way for more structured garments that had fitted bodices, voluminous skirts and padded shoulders. Fabrics such as Silk, Velvet and Brocades were used commonly that was decorated with embroidery, lace and jewels. The wealthy people chose bright coloured fabrics as dyes were expensive back then that also mirrored their social status. Gold and silver threads were also used in the embroideries that further underlined the richness of Renaissance clothing. The trends during this time period were also influenced by the European aristocracy. The royal courts were considered as the epicentres of fashion where the bars were set high by the monarchs and nobles. Fashion became a political device that was used to display power and

claim dominance. Elizabeth I was known for her extravagant wardrobes that had gowns decorated with pearls, jewels and intricate embroideries.

Industrial revolution began in the 18th century that brought immense changes in the industry of fashion. Luxury fashion that was once made for the elite gave way to Automated production something that was accessible to the masses. This era gave birth to ready-to-wear clothing on a huge scale that was sold to public. The arrival of machines like the spinning jenny and power looms developed textile production much more, resulting in time and cost reduction that was once required to produce fabrics. Factories started coming up in different parts of America and Europe that produced clothing in bulk which made fashionable apparels available to the masses. Industrial revolution also made the use of cotton global; a fabric that became the centre of the industry. Cotton that was considered cheaper and easily manageable replaced materials like Wool and Silk. When Eli Whitney invented the Cotton gin in 1793, cotton processing became more efficient that led to its dominance in the textile sector. Due to the rise of Industrialisation, design processes developed and designers started depending on new technologies to create patterns that were more precise. The extension of Fashion houses and Departmental stores made it easier for the public to buy trendy products easily that changed the overall view of the industry yet again. These stores became known among the people due to them offering ready to wear cloths adjacent to custom made garments.

The early 19th century was controlled by the rise of “Haute Couture” where designers were celebrated as artists. Coco Chanel progressed the concept of women’s fashion by introducing comfortable, practical and elegant styles. Her iconic “Little black dress” made with jersey fabric replaced all the corsets and layers that was seen before giving women a sense of freedom and a chic alternative. Christian Dior on the other hand reframed femininity after the WWR II with his new designs that showcased cinched waists, full skirts and enhanced hourglass silhouettes that brought back glamour and luxury after the war. 1920s, was known as The Age of Jazz that saw a noticeable change in women’s fashion where in shorter hemlines, loose-fitting dresses and bold accessories. The 1930s and 40s fashion was highly influenced by Hollywood. The era of 1960s was considered as a rebellion and experimental era in fashion that was influenced by different subcultures and the cultural movements back then. Miniskirts were among the garments that was popular that represented empowerment and sexual liberation among the youth. Bold colours, geometric patterns and shorter hemlines were other significant features. The Hippie fashion emerged in 1970s with long dresses, fringes, bell-bottoms and tie-dye that reflected peace and love. Punk fashion on the other hand represented rebellious nature

against the mainstream style with torn garments, leather and heavy makeup. 1980s portrayed excess and power dressing with bold colours, oversized silhouettes and dramatic accessories to go with that defined the entire decade's fashion. Street style also started getting popular that influenced high fashion and with the rise of hip-hop culture trends such as tracksuits, sneakers and gold chains made their way into mainstream fashion.

The 1990s was the period when the idea of Minimalism entered the fashion sector which was in fact a reaction to the excess that had been going on in the 80s. Simple and streamlined silhouettes, neutral colours and the designs that focused on clean lines ruled that decade's fashion. Fast fashion brands such as Zara, H&M emerged during this decade that provided trendy cloths at a cheaper and faster rate. 2000s fashion industry saw celebrity culture, with red carpet events and designer collaborations while the fast fashion brands continued to stand tall in the mainstream sector.

Technology has been used into fashion design and production in a way never seen before in the 21st century, revolutionising the way clothing is made, sold, and worn. Technology has completely changed the fashion business, from the usage of sophisticated software to the emergence of digital platforms. This has increased client involvement, increased productivity and opened up new creative possibilities. The future of fashion is full of fascinating new avenues that will be fuelled by creativity, sustainability and technology developments. Virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI), and sustainable practices are coming together to transform not only the design and production of fashion but also its consumption and experience. These advancements are forming a future where technology and creativity coexist and environmental responsibility is given top priority in the sector.

1.2 THE INDIAN FASHION INDUSTRY

The Indian fashion structure is known for its cultural legacy, elegance and colourfulness. It not only brings out the indefinite details but also the beauty that has stayed with us throughout out innumerable decades. Indian fashion is considered comfortable, sophisticated and also exquisitely beautiful that has progressed over time. The fashion industry in India is considered as a mix of dynamic conventions; be it ethnic or western to salwar kameez or high-end fashion the industry has gone through a lot of change. The industry has also benefitted from the rich tradition that has flowed through the country over the years.

A significant portion of India's capital investment industry is out of the garment sector. A report that was published by the Indian Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), claims that India is the second largest exporter of textiles in the world. During the 50s, 60s and 70s the Indian fashion scene was not like what we see now. There were no proper designers, models stars or any fashion brands that we could boast about. A particular garment's value was judged by its style or by the fabric and not by who made them. 60s fashion witnessed tight 'kurtas', 'churidars' and 'high coiffures' as a trend among the ladies. It was considered as a period filled with mischief and celebration in the world of arts, music and cinema and new materials like plastic films and plastic-coated polyester were famous. The 70s has seen a lot of exports of traditional materials internally and externally in and from India thus making international fashion accessible to the masses long before the MTV culture such as bold colours, floral prints and bell bottoms.

Synthetic fabrics along with the disco culture also affected the fashion in the country. "RAVISSANT" the first fashion opened in Mumbai during the early 80s and garments were sold on a retail basis priced at a good four-figure tag. This period was popular as the period of self-consciousness and American designers like Calvin Klein became popular in India too. The silhouettes seen were more masculine as salwar kameezes came with shoulder pads. With the rise of designer stores in Mumbai, elegant fashion turned out to be a trend among the people and also their heavy prices. In spite of having a heavy price tag people were convinced to buy that garment as they considered that elegant fashion came with a higher price that they had to pay to stay in the lime light. Apparels were sold at unbelievably higher prices just because the designers or the brands focused on getting noticed and also getting connected with the right top shows, celebrities and fashion events. Fashion shows started becoming competitive as each of them wanted to outdo the other on the basis of theme, guest list and media coverage. During the 90s the ethnic wear section faced a sudden decline. This made the designers to push the sales at any cost to stay in the limelight. Due to heavy competition and demands of the clients the price tags that were once heavy had to be toned down. The decline not only affected the price tags but also the business of fashion shows; many models, choreographers and designers also faced the downside in their career and business. But this face of the industry also came to an end slowly. The 21st century brought certain level of steadiness in the industry with the help of new designers, models and sensible designing the industry was back on its feet.

India is considered as one of the largest exporters of fabrics and accessories globally. Indian ethnic designs and materials are of high value and are considered as a significant element for

the fashion houses and textile manufacturers. India is not only known for its traditional output in the industry but also for exporting raw materials globally by being the third largest producer of cotton fibres, second largest producer of silk fibres and the fifth largest producer of man-made fibres around the world. According to the international market the Indian garment and fabric industries have many advantages when it comes to cost effectiveness to produce a raw material, quick adjustments during selling, wide variety of designs in garments like sequin, beadworks, Aari Chikan embroidery etc and also a cheaper skilled work force. India provides these garments to the international markets at competitive prices and at a shorter time duration along with a variety of designs that makes it demandable across the world.

Even though India has always been considered as a one of the highest producers of embroidered textiles globally the changes in prices when rupee is converted to dollars is significantly low which is only beneficial for the international fashion houses especially while getting customised stuff but it has a negative impact on the artisans. The India fabric market can easily attract as well as confuse a buyer. A lot of fabric production happens at a small town of Chapa in the eastern state of Bihar where it is considered as a family industry and the variety of raw silks that are produced are numerous like Tussars, Matka silk Phaswas, etc. Surat in Gujrat is considered as one of the top suppliers of Jacquards Crepes and Georgette sheers all these fabrics are used to make beautiful silhouettes that are popular across the world. Another fabric design that was designed in the fashion history of India is the “Madras check” or “lungi” that is a popular lower garment wrapped around the body in the southern part of India. This product has now made its way into different other apparels such as bandannas, blouses and even home furnishing. Many traditional fabrics, designs and dyeing techniques have made its way back recently when designers started inculcating them in their latest collections making it demandable not only in India but also across the world.

Along with these India also exports fabrics such as Cotton, Silk, Jute and Polyester. Some of the top Indian textile exporters include Arvind Ltd., Raymond Ltd., Alok Industries Ltd., Bombay Dyeing and Manufacturing Company Ltd., Loyal Group and Sutlej Textiles. The export destinations for Indian garment companies include the United States, Bangladesh, the United Kingdom, The United Arab Emirates and Germany. According to the Ministry of Textiles of India, India was the 6th largest exporter of Textiles & Apparel in the world in 2023. The total share of textile and apparels including the handicrafts in India’s exports comes around 8.21% in 2023-24. About 3.9% of the world’s trade in textiles and apparel belongs to India. 47% of our total export share goes to both USA and EU. Exports are based on the demand and supply

of goods and some of the other factors that it depends on are global demand, internal consumption and demand, order flow, logistics and many more. They are also influenced by various geopolitical factors too for example the Red Sea Crisis or the Bangladesh Crisis etc.

The total export of Textiles and Apparel that also involves handicrafts went up by 7% between the months of April - October of FY 2024- 25 i.e., 21,358 USD while it was only 20,007 USD during the same period of FY 2023-24. The ready-made garment sector held the maximum number of shares (41%) of the total export whereas Cotton textiles and Man – made textiles followed at 33% and 15 % respectively. There was significant growth that was seen for all commodities as compared to the last year but Wool and Handloom declined by 19% and 6% respectively. When talking about the imports that happened in the Textiles and Apparel sector then that has also decreased approximately by 15% during FY 2023-24 as compared to FY 2022-23. The total import declined again by 1% between the months of April-October of FY 2024-25. Man-made textiles had almost 34% of the total share that was the highest during the said time period.

1.3 TYPES OF FASHION STYLES

A Fashion style is known as the way of dressing in a particular way that involves clothing shoes and accessories. It is also considered as a medium through which people express themselves. It helps in boosting one's confidence and creativity. Fashion style has different types some that represent a particular Culture or Sub-culture where as some that act as a support to a social movement. The different types of Fashion Styles are as follows:

- **FORMAL FASHION STYLE:**

The Formal style refers to the one where in a person wears outfits that reflect power and the one that sets him/her one class apart from the other people present. This style can be worn for both official and important events. Some of the examples include full suits, pencil skirts well-fitted jackets, trousers, shirt dresses and other dresses along with traditional apparels that gives a professional and decent look to the wearer.

- CHIC FASHION STYLE:

This style focuses on being trendy. It represents fashion as a art. This style is a mixture of being elegant, smart and sophisticated at right proportions along with choosing high quality fabrics and combining more than 2 colours aesthetically. It gives a luxurious and classy feel to the wearer.

- MINIMALIST FASHION STYLE:

This style gives a simple, well put together and an uncluttered approach. It mainly focuses on combining fashion and sustainability in a trendy way. Some examples include a white shirt, slim pants, short dresses and garments with minimal decoration.

- CASUAL FASHION STYLE:

Casual style reflects a relaxed image or at ease that needs little to no extra effort when it comes to looking fashionable. People who have no time or mood to get ready early in the morning usually go for this style or when there is no dressing up required. Some examples include a basic jean, t-shirt, sneaker, a relaxed sweater. This look is meant for everyone at any time which is one of the main highlights of this style.

- BOHEMIAN FASHION STYLE:

This fashion style is everything about being free, creative and being yourself without thinking about the society's rules. This style has simple elements like flowy fabrics, natural colours, patchworks and prints. Maxi dresses, wide-leg pants, fringes, floppy hats and lots of accessories are few of the examples of being a Boho. The main point is there is not a particular garment or accessory that is required to be a Boho it helps one to express them better through their not so common style.

- VINTAGE FASHION STYLE:

Vintage fashion style includes a lot of historical elements but bringing back the classic fashion trends and reusing and recycling garments. The people who follow this style use retro, bold and unique fashion products that bring in the element of nostalgia.

- STREETWEAR FASHION STYLE:

This fashion style includes comfort, style and also a sense of rebellion. Some examples are hoodies, graphic t- shirts, sneakers baseball caps and oversized jackets. This style reflects being youthful and edgy.

- PREPPY FASHION STYLE:

The preppy style is a great blend of contemporary and classical college clothing. Some of its elements include sharp distinct lines, Irish patterns such as plaids and stripes and accessories like caps and neck wraps. Polo shirts, boat shoes, blazers, chinos, and headbands are some of the other examples of preppy design items that are frequently used to project an air of sophistication and affluence.

- ARTSY FASHION STYLE:

The people that wear arty outfits are the creative ones who enjoy expressing themselves and appreciate art. These include vivid hues, odd patterns, and designs that challenge convention. One-sided cuts, vivid jewels, imaginative designs, and serene landscapes can all be used to depict unusual and fantastical clothing.

Fashion serves as a sign of power by allowing you to express your identity, values, and creative abilities. Each strategy offers a unique method for determining which learning style works best for oneself. By putting, having fun and experimenting with different styles helps in finding out what suits the best for oneself. It's about expressing one's thoughts aloud and wearing whatever an individual likes.

1.4 MINIMALISTIC FASHION

Wearing fewer garments and accessories with more focused goals is the lifestyle choice known as minimalist fashion. It's about feeling at ease and building a wardrobe of well-chosen, high-quality items. In contrast to simply purchasing for the sake of it, this recommends people to carefully consider what is actually necessary. Humans may combat the constant discussion of materialism, lower stress levels, alleviate financial strains, and help create a more sustainable future by adopting a minimalist lifestyle.

The mass manufacture and consumption of inexpensive, stylish, and disposable clothing is referred to as "fast fashion." The risks involved with fast fashion are discussed daily the widespread water pollution because of the use of cheap and toxic dyes, heaps of textile wastes, the use of fossil fuel-based materials such as polyester and so many more. The drawbacks of fast fashion are only reflecting the world's demand for more and more products at cheaper prices that are made with cheaper practices. Consumers, employees, and the environment are all harmed by fast fashion. According to a report by the UN, one of the most damaging areas of the global economy is fast fashion. In addition to producing a lot of garbage, pollutants, and microplastics, it uses a lot of energy, water, and chemicals. The garment sector is accountable for 24% of pesticides, 20% of wastewater, and 10% of carbon emissions worldwide. Additionally, rapid fashion leads to the loss of ecosystems like forests, rivers, and oceans.

Sustainability, quality, and simplicity are all embraced by this movement. Those who enjoy minimalist fashion carefully select timeless, adaptable, and ethical pieces for their collections. They withstand the allure of fast fashion, which oversupplies the market with inexpensive, stylish, and throwaway clothing. Fast fashion generates waste, abuses workers, and damages the environment. Whereas, minimalist clothes lessen clutter, promotes fair trade, and honours the environment. Minimalist fashion is a way of life rather than a fad. It is a way of thinking, clothing, and being that prioritises quality over quantity and content over style.

1.5 MINIMALISM AND SUSTAINABILITY

Minimalistic fashion encourages moral and environment friendly manufacturing processes. Customers have become more aware about how their clothing choices are affecting the environment and the society they live in. This has made the fashion companies to re think their strategies and practices, to use environmentally right methods of production and to also take fair labour methods into consideration.

Minimalistic fashion also makes sure that the fashion companies are transparent when it comes to the manufacturing processes. Consumers have also become curious about the origin and production processes of the raw materials and the apparels that they buy. Brands on the other hand have made it compulsory to let their customers know important information when it comes to the sourcing of raw material, manufacturing and their other ethical practices so as to build a trustworthy relationship with them.

The obstructive amount of garment wastes that are seen around us by fast fashion is reduced when it comes to minimalistic fashion as impulsive buys is cut down. This transformation has helped in also reducing the amount of clothes being discarded over time that cuts down on overall fashion waste. The use of toxic raw materials and dyes and also chemical finishes that are given to garments before bringing it into the market has reduced as people have opted for brands that follow ethical practices that are environment friendly when it comes to production. Eco-friendly fibres such as organic cotton, hemp and recycled fabrics are used by the brands that have less or no impact on the environment. Brands and company have also made sure to not use any exploitive methods on their employees by making sure that every employee is treated equally under safe working conditions and are given fair remuneration.

Minimalist fashion is a significant response to the environmental problems caused by the fashion industry's existing practices. Because of its style, minimalist fashion promotes making thoughtful decisions and building an exquisite wardrobe that surpasses trends. This impulsive buying seen among people has affected the industry and also the environment as these cloths are considered disposable only after 2 to 3 wears by the people. All these drawbacks have demanded transparency, moral labour practices and environment friendly products from the brands and also mindful purchases from people. This would help to reduce the harsh impact on the environment and the society. Sustainability cannot be achieved by a 100% but together we can work towards it to build a better world and future for the upcoming generations.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to make people aware of the harm that our fashion choices are doing to the country and to the environment. Minimalistic fashion and sustainability are still new terms for people of different regions and in a diverse country like India, where the population is increasing day by day, it is important to let people know the importance of unwanted purchases and the large landfills that are causing harm to the environment. It is also necessary that the country and the environment is preserved for the future generations. This research study is a medium to let people understand these concepts and the importance of these in our lives. This research study has also made sure that by inculcating awareness on these topics, the want to preserve nature and to boycott brands that practices inhuman and toxic processes would rise in the minds of the masses.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

The methodology part of this research discusses the methods that were adopted to carry this project forward. An awareness seminar was conducted prior to a survey that helped in proper data collection and also to let people know the reason and importance of this research study. The survey forms were then circulated to 5 different age groups starting from 17 to 65. The sample size was 100, and random sampling was the method opted for.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 DEFINITION AND GROWTH OF MINIMALISM

The phrase comes from a group of artists who "rejected the traditional representations in painting and sculpture and chose to pursue the new mode that owed as little as possible to the physical existence of an object" in the 1960s in New York. These artists included Agnes Martin, John McCracken, Donald Judd, and many others. Judd, who drew inspiration from the reductive elements of Modernism, characterised his work as "the simple expression of complex thought," which also encapsulates the aesthetic in fashion. Minimalism has always been a gauge of technical advancement and economic cycles. Even before the minimalist movement was formally founded, we can see how simplicity underpinned practically every societal development in the 20th century. The art of early minimalism chose raw materials above the handcraft heritage. Similar trends were followed in the 1980s by Japanese designers such as Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto, and Rei Kawakubo, who created clothing for the runway using unusual materials like polyester, PVC, Lycra, etc., with baggy silhouettes and layers of distressed fabrics that are uncommon in Western fashion. Haute couture is known for its elegance and artisanal craftsmanship. This decade's minimalism served as a means of avoiding gender norms as well. By exposing or concealing the body in novel ways and questioning conventional notions of attractiveness, it eliminated the concept of gender. The Japanese designers had a significant influence on the minimalism trend; they permanently changed the way we think about clothing and offered a politically relevant substitute for the decade's gloss and glamour. (Sandra Gubenšek, 2017).

The German Bauhaus School had a significant influence on the development of a new design movement in the 20th century. The Bauhaus School was established in 1919 by Walter Gropius with the goal of fusing industry, technology, and art and craft to produce goods that were both aesthetically pleasing and functional. "Form follows function" was the school's slogan, which states that an object's form and appearance should be chosen based on its function and use. In addition, the Bauhaus School promoted industrial materials, geometric designs, primary colours, and sparse adornment. Some of the most well-known minimalist designers of this time period, like Jil Sander, Ann Demeulemeester, Calvin Klein, Martin Margiela, and Dieter Rams, also had an impact on them. These designers produced minimalist apparel and goods that were exquisite, ageless, long-lasting, and useful. Minimalism has gained enormous acceptance as a fashion and lifestyle trend in the twenty-first century. In many fields, including art, architecture, interior design, graphic design, web design, photography, music, literature, and fashion, minimalism has gained popularity. Many people who wish to live more

purposefully, mindfully, and cheerfully have also chosen to adopt a minimalist lifestyle. A philosophy of elegance, practicality, and simplicity is reflected in minimalist fashion. The history and development of minimalism in a variety of design, artistic, and cultural domains have an impact on it. It is distinguished by classic silhouettes, simple lines, neutral hues, and sparse decorations. Curating one's wardrobe and personal style in accordance with one's principles, requirements, and preferences is another aspect of this lifestyle choice.

The idea of minimalist fashion does not mean strict or unchangeable. Different people will understand and modify it differently. Additionally, it can be contrasted or blended with distinct fashions or trends. Expressing one's uniqueness and personality via understated yet elegant apparel that improves one's appearance and self-esteem is the very core of minimalist fashion. Minimalist fashion is more than just a way of life or a fashion trend. It's a statement, too. It expresses a rejection of the complexity and excesses of contemporary society. It is an expression of appreciating the elegance and practicality of simplicity. It is a declaration of living a purposeful, thoughtful, and happy life. (Chopra, S., 2023)

2.2 MINIMALISM IN INDIAN CULTURE

In the years after economic liberalisation, the fashion business in India grew astronomically. A culture of design based on material excess and informed by re-orientalist perspectives, along with a few allusions to India's liberation movement, emerged as a result of the positive outlook that liberalisation brought about. However, the optical exuberance that had come to define Indian couture was rejected by a subsequent generation of designers. However, in their design pronouncements and approach to craftivism, they continue to emphasise Gandhian values and the sartorial geopolitics of Indian nationalism, even as they avoid the visual tropes popularised by the previous design fraternity. However, there is a difference in how these are redefined to support the authenticity, purity, and cultural relevance of the item with a more minimalist design. (Sandhu, A. 2022).

Minimalism has been a strong movement in recent years that has affected many facets of life, especially in fashion. Minimalism, which embraces practicality, simplicity, and awareness, has influenced the Indian apparel market. Minimalism is changing how people view and interact with clothing by emphasising timeless designs, ecological techniques, and quality above quantity. This essay will discuss the advantages of minimalism, its effects on consumer behaviour, and how it is changing the fashion scene in India. Being minimalist does not mean

straying from one's cultural roots. Rather, it encourages people to appreciate their heritage and adopt a simple way of thinking. In the country of India, where traditional garb is very important, minimalism has managed to coexist with traditional wear. Popular minimalist reinterpretations of traditional clothing, such kurtas and sarees, combine cultural depth with simplicity. (Chopra, S. 2023, June 4).

Although India is renowned for its opulent designs and kaleidoscopic colour palette, the design community has just started to carefully dabble in the minimalist field. Interior designers have been keen to combine the two styles because of the present sustainability movement and the great foundation that traditional Indian architecture offers for minimalist décor. Indian minimalism typically uses more comfortable, more rustic wood instead of the more common metal and glass, unlike in the West or even Japan. While the minimalist idea remains in place, the design adopts a more cosy, familiar appearance that is absent from the sterile, glossy renditions elsewhere thanks to the return to natural materials and the incorporation of stone accents. Crew, C. (2017, February 16).

India has always embraced the spirit of minimalism, recognising the beauty in decluttered aesthetics and simplicity. Clean, simple designs have long been a favourite of Indian companies, even as recent movements hail minimalism as a modern trend. They stand out due to the strength of word-of-mouth and the ease with which the general public is drawn to their desi branding. Ideas that resonate deeply and steer clear of overly dramatic designs became the chatter of the town, demonstrating the natural talent and artistry of Indian brand companies. (Creative Gaga. 2023, June 13).

2.3 INFLUENCE OF MINIMALISM ON INDIANS

A new consumption trend that can influence low-carbon innovation practices is minimalism. (Gao, J, Tang, L, & Lyu, Y. 2023). The concept of minimalism originated in artistic endeavours as a genre or approach that emphasised extreme simplicity and sparseness in literature, music, or design. It then developed into a way of life that emphasises purposeful living with fewer belongings and concentrating solely on what you truly need. A minimalist lifestyle is being adopted by more than 20 million people globally. Even while success in modern Indian culture is frequently associated with financial wealth, many of our younger citizens are adopting a more conscientious attitude to consuming. They value experiences, mental health, and sustainability more than material possessions. What used to be a niche idea

is now becoming more popular, especially among startup enthusiasts and young professionals. (Bhardwaj, V. 2024, September 24).

MINIMALISM is a movement that opposes consumerism. India is experiencing a rise in consumer spending. Expensive fashion brands and new technology entice us, and we have been made to feel empty without them. Making other people think we're happy is more important to us than attempting to find happiness for ourselves. Intentional living is necessary for us. In a sense, those who practice minimalism in western countries are emerging from what we are lagging behind. Additionally, I believe that we need simplicity since the wealth gap between those who are wealthy and those who are poor is growing every day. We may implement simplicity in many aspects of our lives. Without a doubt, a shirt or sari that has been in our closet for over 12 months and has not been worn by us would be far more valuable and necessary to someone who is less fortunate. The pandemic we are currently experiencing has severely damaged the Indian economy, with many people losing their jobs due to salary cuts. Living a minimalist lifestyle could undoubtedly improve our ability to deal with the pandemic. I'm not advocating for us to embrace simplicity because we're going through such difficult circumstances, but I do suggest reading more about it. Investing more on memories than material belongings is the main goal of minimalism.

(Shah, V. 2020, September 7).

The minimalist lifestyle is expected to have an impact on many facets of Indian society as it continues to grow in popularity. The emphasis on sustainability, deliberate living, and simplicity aligns with the rising social and environmental consciousness. Minimalism has the potential to become a fundamental aspect of Indian culture, influencing the way citizens live, work, and engage with their environment as knowledge and acceptance grow. (Admin, Rejuvenate. 2024, December 3).

2.4 INDIA AND SUSTAINABILITY

A nation can achieve economic development while protecting its surroundings and natural assets for future generations by following the principles of sustainable development. India has been attempting to strike a balance between the need to preserve its natural resources and its fast economic growth. The nation has implemented a number of programs and laws to support green infrastructure, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy. To guarantee that

generations to come inherit a prosperous and healthy environment, efforts are continuously made to lower poverty and raise living standards. (Annapoorna. 2024, November 18).

The 2030 Program of Action of Sustainable Development, a worldwide plan for tackling environmental and socioeconomic issues, was unveiled by the UN in September 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda has 17 goals, including combating climate change, preserving ecosystems, and encouraging sustainable consumerism. The SDGs are interconnected and necessitate sophisticated promotion tactics. The global significance of India's fashion and textile industry lies not only in their impact on social and environmental issues but also in their contribution to economic progress. (Lal, N., & Dhingra, S. 2024)

The fashion industry faces a number of sustainability issues, including the use of synthetic and natural fibres, raw materials, excessive water and energy use, chemical products, hazardous byproducts, child exploitation, and more. Consumers of today are more conscious of the sustainability issues that the fashion industry faces, which has led to a change in their consumption of fashion as well as in their habits and lifestyles. (Sengupta, M., & Sengupta, N. 2025).

The goal of sustainable fashion is to encourage the use of environmentally friendly resources and manufacturing techniques that lessen the industry's detrimental effects on the planet and enhance the social and economic circumstances of its employees. It has grown in importance as a topic in the global fashion industry. The market for sustainable fashion has grown in India, one of the world's biggest producers of textiles. It is commonly known that the fashion business is one of the most environmentally damaging sectors of the world economy, despite the fact that India's textile and apparel sector accounts for 5% of the nation's GDP. Clothing production and disposal generate enormous volumes of waste and emissions that have an impact on both the ecosystem and human health. Although it is still in its infancy, India's sustainable fashion business has grown steadily in recent years. To solve these problems, a lot of Indian designers and firms have embraced sustainable techniques in recent years. According to an article by ResearchAndMarkets.com, the environmentally conscious clothing market in India is anticipated to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.6% between 2021 and 2026. The report also predicts that the accessibility of sustainable materials, government initiatives, and growing consumer awareness will propel the market's expansion.

Additionally, India's rich textile history offers a favourable environment for the growth of the sustainable fashion industry. The nation's traditional textiles, weaving methods, and handicrafts can be used to create sustainable fashion items that appeal to both domestic and international customers. Numerous sustainable fashion companies in India have currently grasped this chance and are producing unique ethically and environmentally produced goods. (Sankar, S. 2023, April 7).

2.5 EFFECT OF CONSUMERISM ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Increased resource consumption, pollution emissions, deforestation, and garbage accumulation are all consequences of consumerism's role in environment deterioration. Rising temperatures and planetary disaster: Consumer culture's excessive consumption and production are driving factors in climate change. Future planetary catastrophes could result from this environmental hazard. Climate change, habitat degradation, and the buildup of excessive trash are all clear indicators of the ecological effects of consumer civilisation. These endanger biodiversity and ecosystems in the long run. (Manas, D. 2023, July 10).

India faces a difficulty in striking a balance between development and environmental sustainability as it strives for economic expansion to raise the standard of living for its inhabitants. Finding a sustainable balance is necessary to manage India's sociocultural and economic complexity as well as its ranking on the Environmental Performance Index. Nevertheless, consumerism's appeal as a short-term cure to create jobs and enhance financial circumstances can exacerbate inequality and worsen the environment. In recent decades, consumerism—which is defined as the excessive purchase and use of products and services—has spread throughout the world. Its effects on environmental sustainability and economic progress have drawn a lot of attention, especially in developing nations like India where population increase and rapid economic expansion have accelerated consumption patterns. Designing successful initiatives and measures that support a balance between ecological preservation and economic advancement requires an understanding of the intricate relationship that exists among consumerism, economic development, and environmental sustainability. (Singh, A., Nath, G., Kaur, K., Landge, M., Urade, O., & Arya, S. 2022).

2.6 SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN INDIA

By 2047, the Indian economy is predicted to grow to the third-largest in the world, with a GDP of over \$15 trillion. The importance of India's manufacturing sector to the NDCs is demonstrated by the fact that it is predicted to reach a value of \$4.5 trillion in GDP with the correct policies, increasing its proportion to 22%. This transition to sustainable manufacturing involves more than just complying with regulations; it also entails rethinking operational paradigms and business models to balance sustainability and profitability. A robust and ecological manufacturing sector in India is being paved by the use of wind and solar power, the concept of circular economy to waste, and advancements in water conservation. These methods are proving that environmentally friendly production is both practical and profitable. They demonstrate the effectiveness of using engineering, technology, innovation, and strategic alliances to solve environmental issues and promote economic expansion. (Vaidyanathan, R. 2024, February 26)

The topic of sustainable fashion is intricate and multidimensional, involving social, economic, and environmental factors. Even if the idea of sustainable fashion is becoming increasingly popular around the world, there are still many issues that must be resolved if the fashion industry is to have a more sustainable future. Although the textile sector in India makes a substantial economic contribution to the nation, it also presents serious social and environmental problems. The issues facing ethical clothing manufacturing in India are numerous and pressing, ranging from water contamination to abusive labour practices. Many strategies have been put into place to encourage responsible consumption and sustainable textile manufacturing in order to address the issues facing environmentally friendly fashion in India. These remedies include circular fashion, ethical labour practices, and the use of natural dyes and sustainable materials. Additionally, Indian sustainable fashion firms are working with regional craftspeople, promoting sustainable fashion, and using eco-friendly packaging. The Indian government additionally launched a number of programs to encourage the manufacture of sustainable textiles and assist entrepreneurs in the sustainable fashion industry. (*Sustainable Fashion in India: Challenges, Solutions, and Opportunities for Entrepreneurs – Confederation of Indian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises & Connecting people to business.* 2017).

2.7 THE PURPOSE OF MINIMALISM IN SUSTAINABILITY

In sustainable fashion, minimalism is becoming more and more popular. Eco-conscious customers are drawn to simple, beautiful designs that prioritise craftsmanship and quality above over-the-top ornamentation. Understated sarees or exquisitely fitted kurtas are examples of minimalist traditional clothing that adds adaptability and longevity to the wardrobe. (*Sustainable Indian Fashion: Eco-Friendly Choices for Traditional Clothing*. 2024, October 15). Fast fashion has contributed to climate change and an increased carbon footprint by producing short-lived clothing that ends up in landfills. By making life smoother with timeless, essential pieces of clothing, capsule collections and a minimalistic lifestyle can significantly reduce and optimise the use of natural resources in the fashion industry and, eventually, the amount of garbage dumped in landfills. (Ram, A. & Kumar, A. 2024).

Because it promotes thoughtful consumption, lowers waste, and extends the life of garments, minimalism is essential for sustainability within the Indian fashion business. By stressing value over quantity, it opposes impulsive purchases and supports lasting, timeless pieces, which corresponds with sustainable behaviours like restoring, reusing, and transforming clothing. Furthermore, minimalism can encourage a more thoughtful approach to design decisions by taking into account the social and environmental effects of clothing manufacture. (Rakesh Kumar Beuria, Koeswara Rao Kondasani, R., & Jogeswar Mahato. 2024).

2.8 MINIMALISTIC AND SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS IN INDIA

Slow fashion is more than just a craze; it's a deliberate lifestyle choice that promotes sustainability, going beyond fads and mass-produced clothing. In an age where quick fashion is becoming more popular, a new generation of eco-friendly designers and brands is bringing about positive changes for the environment. One sustainable garment at a time, these brands are changing the fashion narrative by choosing small-batch production, adopting organic fabrics, helping weavers, and providing fair compensation to craftsmen. We have the capacity to support slow fashion by matching our purchases with companies that support sustainability as customers. It's about choosing classic pieces that go beyond fads and seasonal trends, appreciating the clothes we already own, and taking a thoughtful approach to recurrent wear. Slow fashion encourages us to adopt a more deliberate, environmentally conscientious style of clothing and to abandon the hectic pace of trend-driven wardrobes. (Gofynd Blog. 2025, April 10).

The brands mentioned below are few examples that practice sustainable and minimal fashion in India.

- ❖ **ANOMALY:** Anomaly was established in 2015 by Medha Khosla, an alumna of the Pratt Institute, and quickly established itself in the nascent Indian minimalism industry. Their brand philosophy is centred on designing clothing that is both utilitarian and stylish. The end product is well-made, practical apparel that balances their primary goals of fostering a practical fashion sense and producing classic style. According to their own statement, "Our brand represents a lifestyle for the contemporary woman & man who value subtle elegance over unnecessary adornment."
- ❖ **BODICE:** "Unassuming yet compelling," Bodice is the epitome of the contemporary minimalist movement and takes pleasure in producing exquisitely detailed apparel, primarily dresses and separates. With their delicate colour schemes and straightforward, uncluttered designs, these separates are incredibly practical and transitional. They collaborate with Indian artisans, employ exclusively regional Indian textiles, and are dedicated to upholding an ethical and sustainable production method. Bodice, which Ruchika Sachdeva founded in New Delhi in 2011, embodies a contemporary, understated, yet distinctly Indian approach to fashion.
- ❖ **SHIFT:** Nimish Shah's Shift collection, which features basic dresses, splits, and jackets made from organic cotton and khadi, two native Indian textiles, epitomises minimalism in its purest form. Shah emphasises the value of eco-friendly apparel and backs up his claims by procuring exclusively from companies that follow strict labour and environmental regulations, as stated in Not Just a Label. Shah worked for brands including Chloe and Burberry after graduation from The London College of Fashion. He also briefly worked for Sabyasachi at his boutiques in Kala Ghoda. His clothing has clean, flowing lines that are genuine to his ethnic identity, reflecting the impact of these events.
- ❖ **MEESHA:** Meesha, a leading brand in the Indian minimalism market, combines French and Indian sensibilities. Their scarves are sold in upscale luxury shops including Saks Fifth Avenue, Le Mill, and Ogaan. Inspired by various cultures and identities,

Meesha Khanna founded the brand with her Parisian friends Magali Charruyer and Catherine Gouin. The brand creates vibrant, patterned scarves that are understated and incredibly wearable. They use authentic Indian fabrics, which Khanna has access to because of her family's textile business in New Delhi, and they merge a very French approach that gives these bold scarves a minimalist edge. The scarves are artisanal, sustainable, and incredibly distinctive because they are all woven by Indian craftsmen who labour all over the nation.

- ❖ **NICOBAR:** Nicobar, a leisure and travel brand for the "on-the-go Indian with particularly basic sensibilities," was founded in 2016 by Simran Lal and Raul Rai. With the exception of a few pops of colour, the clothing is simple and mostly monochromatic. Nicobar designs sophisticated yet understated apparel that will likely go well with your current wardrobe thanks to its many layering choices and unique dresses or separates. Nicobar clothes are ideal for travelling because they are easy to handle during lengthy layovers or commutes. Lal, the CEO - Good Earth, offers Nicobar to clients at a lower cost while maintaining Good Earth's unique, genuine design.
- ❖ **EKA:** Eka, which was started by designer Rina Singh, honours India's rich textile legacy and the wide variety of styles that differ from one state to the next. Eka aims to create simple, practical apparel for the contemporary Indian woman by incorporating the unique West Bengali jamdani method with stealing Gujarati printing block and indigo dyeing techniques. Singh was drawn to the art of clothing creation from an early age, having been born into a Rajput household in Uttar Pradesh. When she married into a Jodhpur royal family, her love of all things fashion was increased even more. Eka's minimalist yet incredibly effective and ageless edge comes from culture, history, and art, as well as her personal philosophy of basic living and modest agricultural origins. Singh frequently travels throughout the nation to gain a deeper understanding of the diverse cultures that shape fashion and integrates these elements into her unique look, creating historically inspired yet contemporary, elegant, and current clothing
- ❖ **RUNAWAY BICYCLE:** In 2013, Runaway Bicycle was founded with the goal of creating art for daily life. The Mumbai-based brand has worked hard to have all of its organic cotton fabric approved by the Better Cotton Initiative, utilises natural colours

for the most part, and works closely with weavers to create their own fabric. Runaway Bicycle's line is wearable art, and they firmly believe that better procedures lead to better clothing. The brand avoids form-fitting styles and instead identifies every piece with the ability to move around as they are creating clothes that flow (and look fantastic).

- ❖ **ANAVILA:** Anavila demonstrates that traditional Indian attire is comfortable by giving the classic sari a minimalist update. Anavila sarees, which are distinguished by their feminine form, free-flowing pallu, and basic, long-lasting linen, promote practicality while radiating sensuality. founded by Anavila Misra, who believed it was critical to alter the way that saris are viewed in contemporary India after working with craftsmen for the Ministry of Rural Development in the past. Originating from an urge to embrace the classic apparel in an easier way, the brand creates flowing saris that are easy to carry and seem light on your frame using 120-count yarn. "I chose linen because it's a very sturdy material with a lot of character, and combining it with my style created something special. In the truest sense, every material used is pure. "With all of our artisans, we work with green formats, such as sustainable employment and sustainable clusters," Misra informed Border and Fall. In addition to the ecological vertical, Anavila contributes to the creation of jobs for female artisans in the nation's rural areas.

(Staff, H. 2021, June 8).

2.9 CHALLENGES FACED

Despite the industry's infancy, India's sustainable fashion business is expanding steadily. Finding clothing for the expanding population while protecting the environment is the industry's largest challenge today. Fashion brands are redefining themselves in order to overcome this difficulty. Sustainable practices are used by eco-fashion brands to improve the quality and lifetime of their clothing while lowering the carbon impact of their output. The fashion brands deal with a number of challenges during this process, ranging from designing to production. The following are some major obstacles that fashion firms must overcome in order to make the industry more environmentally friendly and sustainable:

❖ CHALLENGES IN PRODUCTION AND OPERATION:

Finding sustainable resources is one of the most difficult tasks. Cotton and polyester are two examples of typical fashion materials that are not good for the environment and can be produced using a lot of energy and water. Furthermore, compared to conventional materials, many sustainable resources like organically grown cotton and regenerated polyester fibres can be more costly and more difficult to get. Costs may also rise as a result of sustainable production techniques like the use of non-toxic colours and water conservation. The actual production process is another significant obstacle. Many fashion brands use a fast fashion business model, which puts cost and speed ahead of sustainability. Poor labour practices, waste, and overproduction may result from this. Businesses must switch to a slower, more thoughtful production approach that puts quality before quantity if they want to create sustainable fashion. The third issue is getting rid of fabrics and clothes. The fashion business generates a lot of waste, and conventional disposal techniques like landfilling and incineration are not good for the environment. Fashion brands need to figure out how to cut waste and encourage clothes recycling and repurposing.

❖ CUSTOMER ATTITUDE:

Since many consumers might not be aware of the advantages of sustainable clothing and the detrimental impacts of rapid fashion on the environment, consumer attitude and demand provide significant problems for fashion firms. Considering the Indian clothing market estimated to be valued at \$59 billion by 2022, the country's growing middle class and robust manufacturing sector are likely to fuel the country's fashion industry's expansion while contributing to the international fashion market. Nonetheless, a sizable section of the Indian populace especially members of Generation Z may not completely comprehend the necessity of sustainable fashion because they were raised with quick fashion as the standard. Young Indians might not think sustainable fashion appealing because they believe it to be more costly than quick fashion. They also have trouble recognising and acquiring eco-friendly apparel. Furthermore, Indian youth may find it challenging to comprehend the advantages of green fashion and perceive it as an alternative to fast fashion due to a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the effects of rapid fashion on both the environment and society. Fashion brands must

endeavour to teach consumers and cooperate with retailers, marketers, and legislators in order to encourage sustainable fashion and lessen the negative effects of conventional fashion on the planet and society.

❖ **ABSENCE OF TECHNOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE:**

By creating, sourcing, and manufacturing goods with the goal of being utilised and efficiently distributed throughout the industry, eco-fashion encompasses the recycling of apparel. However, a lack of technical alternatives means that a sizable portion of clothing is not recycled. Manufacturers of clothing find it difficult to use recyclable materials while meeting the need for additional clothing. Ineffective garbage collection, a subpar clothing sorting system, an absence of recycling creativity and a financing shortage for product recycling are some of the obstacles to garment recycling. Eco-fashion manufacturers must overcome these obstacles by encouraging the commercial scale of recycling technology in order to boost manufacturing.

(Sankar, S. 2023, February 7).

In addition to being a major job and economic driver, India's textile sector poses serious environmental and social issues. Untreated wastewater discharged by textile mills is a major source of industrial water pollution, which is a serious concern. The issue is made worse by the industry's extensive reliance on chemicals, such as hazardous dyes and finishes, which contaminate streams and endanger public health. Another significant problem is waste management; each year, enormous volumes of textile waste are produced, much of it is disposed of incorrectly, polluting the environment. The Indian textile sector is rife with exploitative labour practices, such as poor pay, excessive hours, and hazardous working conditions. With so many kids working in the industry, child labour is still a major issue. It is challenging to track the sources of products and effectively address social and environmental issues when the supply chain is opaque.

Consumer awareness and well-informed purchasing decisions are hampered by this lack of visibility. The shift is made more difficult by customers' lack of knowledge about environmentally friendly clothing and its significance. Sustainable brands are at a competitive disadvantage since price sensitivity frequently takes precedence over sustainability considerations. Brands are forced to rely on costly imports due to India's low supply of

sustainable materials, which limits access to sustainable production. Small business owners find it challenging to compete with bigger, more established companies due to the expensive nature of sustainable production, which includes organic ingredients and fair wages. The expansion of the environmentally friendly clothing sector is hampered by a shortage of government assistance in the shape of targeted policies and programs. Lastly, a major obstacle to promoting the use of sustainable techniques is the firmly embedded fast fashion culture, which emphasises trends and quick consumption. (Studio, K. V. 2025, February 19).

2.10 FUTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND MINIMALISM IN INDIA

Sustainability is now a necessity, not just a trendy term. Under the "Make in India" campaign, India, the world's second-largest textile producer, is rapidly emerging as a manufacturing powerhouse. There is a rare chance for the fashion sector to rethink how it approaches sustainability. The government's attitude to innovation, MSME empowerment, and green economy incentives is growing as a result of the recent release of the Union Budget 2025–2026. The market is expected to grow to a size of 350 billion US dollars by 2030, suggesting that environmentally friendly clothing in India has a bright future. Although the Indian fashion sector has long played a significant role in the country's economy, there is no denying its negative effects on the environment. From excessive water use to textile waste, traditional production techniques have presented serious ecological issues. Recent fiscal allotments, however, indicate a radical change. A positive start is the Union Budget's emphasis on promoting creativity, empowering MSMEs, and bolstering India's digital economy. The Rs 500 crore allotted for technological advancement and artificial intelligence (AI) advancement will play a key role in advancing data-driven solutions and AI-led breakthroughs, allowing businesses to grow effectively. Predictive analytics, on-demand production methods, and powered by AI supply chain management will minimise waste and maximise the use of raw materials, opening the door for a more ethical fashion sector.

❖ MSME EMPOWERMENT: THE FOUNDATION OF SUSTAINABLE MANUFACTURING

The foundation of the fashion industry in India is made up of Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs). These businesses support sustainable business models and localised production through artisanal crafts and fabric innovation. The Deep Tech Fund and the government's Rs 20,000 crore innovation investment would encourage the implementation of next-generation production technology, providing

MSMEs with the resources they need to prosper in the long run. MSMEs can grow responsibly in a strong environment that is created by benefits for sustainable manufacturing and increased funding availability for new businesses. It is anticipated that the Rs 10 crore allotted for MSME credit guarantees will support the expansion and financial stability of the sector. These companies may incorporate eco-friendly materials, ethical sourcing, and transparent production processes—all essential components of sustainable fashion—if they receive the proper financial and technological assistance.

❖ **THE COTTON PRODUCTIVITY MISSION FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS**

The Union Budget's five-year Mission for Cotton Productivity is among its most encouraging features. India has long led the world in the production of cotton, and bolstering this supply chain would significantly affect sustainable fashion. The industry will gain from a premium, environmentally friendly raw material base by increasing cotton yield and encouraging organic farming methods. This program is revolutionary for domestic fashion firms trying to meet international sustainability standards.

❖ **A ROUTE TO ZERO-WASTE FASHION THROUGH THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

The trend towards circular fashion, which recycles, repurposes, and reuses materials, is accelerating globally. With more government support, India is also welcoming this change. The necessity of responsible production is reaffirmed by budgetary incentives for circular economy and sustainable manufacturing projects. In addition to reducing their negative effects on the environment, brands that invest in closed-loop recycling systems, biodegradable textiles, and zero-waste design techniques will also establish new benchmarks for the sector. This movement can be further advanced by introducing tax breaks and financing for research and development of sustainable materials. Fashion businesses and textile inventors working together can reduce dependency on resource-intensive materials by accelerating the development of substitutes like hemp, bamboo, and lab-grown textiles.

❖ THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY AS A CATALYST FOR MINDFUL CONSUMPTION

Sustainability and innovation go together. Fashion firms' approaches to demand forecasting, inventory control, and consumer preferences are already being revolutionised by AI and machine intelligence. The amount of Rs. 500 crores allotted for AI-led innovations will promote data-driven manufacturing, guaranteeing little overproduction and cutting down on wasteful unsold inventories. Additionally, e-commerce platforms are essential to the advancement of sustainability. Brands can drastically minimise their environmental impact while providing customers with a flawless shopping experience by utilising digital solutions like virtual try-ons to lower return rates and the blockchain for distribution chain transparency.

India has never had a more advantageous position in the international fashion supply chain. The combination of sustainability-focused legislation, "Make in India," and MSME development is paving the way for India to become a global leader in ethical fashion. Today, India's sustainable fashion future is being written. The industry is in a good position to change its environmental footprint and spur economic growth with the help of the government, MSME empowerment, and technology-driven innovation. In order to create a fashion environment that is both successful and environmentally friendly, cooperation between legislators, businesspeople, and buyers will be essential going forward. (Bureau, B. O. 2025, February 8).

There is a bright and exciting future for sustainable fashion. Sustainable fashion is gaining popularity as customers grow more aware of their influence on the environment. A lot of fashion firms are also changing their materials and production processes in response to the demand for sustainability. More than 90% of fashion industry executives think that sustainability is essential to the sector's future, as reported by the Business of Fashion. Sustainable apparel is also being produced using cutting-edge technologies like 3D printing and AI. These technologies can lessen the fashion industry's environmental effect by allowing designers to create garments with little waste. Furthermore, sustainable fashion is a way of life rather than merely a fad. Sustainable clothing will become the standard as long as customers continue to give sustainability top priority when making fashion decisions. We can improve the future of the fashion industry, the environment, and ourselves by adopting sustainable fashion. (Top and Style. 2023, February 27).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The shift from maximalist fashion traditions to mindful consumption in the Indian fashion industry is directly connected to the increased awareness about minimalism and sustainability. The younger generation's preference for sustainable brands and showing interest in the environment are also reasons for this change. Indian fashion brands are also inculcating sustainable materials, ethical manufacturing practices and minimalist designs that not only attract environmentally conscious customers but also preserve nature.

This methodology section explains the different ways that were used to carry forward this project. The researcher conducted an awareness class for a group of students under the age of 20 so as to make them familiar with the concept of minimalism and sustainability and how it aids in protecting the Indian environment. The main survey that was conducted targeted a larger sample group comprising individuals from various age groups.



Plate. 3.1.1



Plate. 3.1.2

3.1 AWARENESS CLASS

The awareness class took the shape of a seminar. The theme of the seminar was "Minimalism and Sustainability." The session was held on March 20, 2025, at St. Tresa's College in Ernakulam, in room number 21 of the Centenary block. Thirty students in all, all enrolled in the first-year undergraduate program, took part. The pupils learnt about sustainability and minimalist fashion. Additionally, they learnt the significance of each person's dress choices and how they affect the environment.

3.2 SURVEY

The survey was carried out by the researcher with the intention of learning how individuals of all ages felt about sustainability and minimalism in fashion. Through this survey, the researcher gained understanding of the requirements and preferences of individuals from various disciplines, backgrounds, demographics, and walks of life. The purpose of the study was to learn more about their requirements and expectations in relation to sustainability and minimalism in the Indian fashion industry.

The researcher used the survey to determine the level of awareness regarding sustainability and minimalism. In terms of style, selection, and cost, the researcher investigates the contemporary issues and obstacles that consumers encounter with minimalism and sustainable fashion. People were given the chance to share their views, preferences, and ideas regarding this new fashion trend that has been acquiring popularity recently through this poll. I sincerely anticipate that my efforts to raise awareness of this idea will enable people to see the necessity of making the transition to far more sustainable practices. Participants in this study came from a variety of fields, age groups (varying from 17 to 65), and backgrounds. There were one hundred responders.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

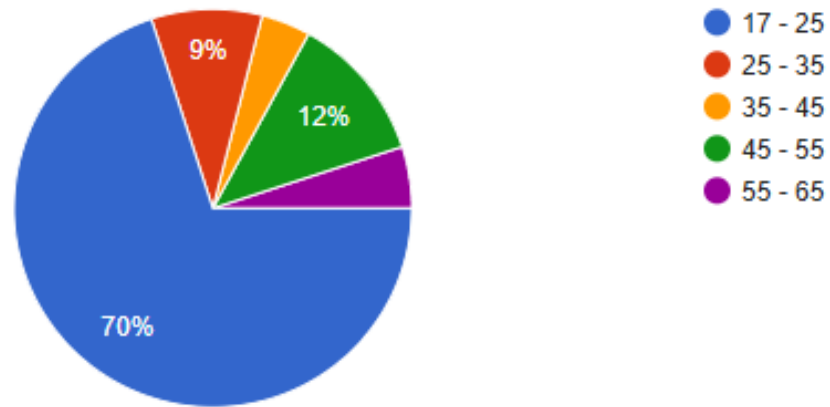
By encouraging a more thoughtful approach to garment selection, lowering total consumption, and emphasising lifespan and quality over quantity, minimalist fashion helps to reduce the fashion industry's negative environmental effects. The goal of the study was to raise awareness of the minimalist movement and how eco-friendly fashion contributes to the preservation of the environment for present and future generations.

A review of the literature, an awareness class, a questionnaire, and analysis were used to determine that minimalism contributes to sustainability. According to the research findings, consumers are interested in moving from fast fashion to this specific kind of clothing because it helps the environment, provided they are properly informed about it. When done correctly, minimalism has been shown to be a component in attaining sustainability. By encouraging individuals to choose quality over quantity and avoid quick fashion, minimalism also contributes to a reduction in the waste generated by the fashion sector as a whole.

In conclusion, this thesis adds to the growing body of knowledge on sustainable and eco-friendly fashion by presenting minimalism as an alternative to the trendy disposable fashion seen nowadays. The findings offer valuable insights to people of different age groups who are interested in switching to minimalism in the future so as to follow an eco-friendly lifestyle. The findings can be summarised as follows:

Age

100 responses



Graph. 4.1

The age group of respondents

The findings from the survey of the age group of the respondents are as follows:

The major portion of respondents comprising 70% are between the age group of 17 – 25. 12% of the respondents fall under the 45 – 55 age group while 9% fall under 25 – 35 age group. The minor portions are 5% and 4% that are the respondents who are under the 55 – 65 and 35 – 45 age groups respectively.

The age distribution shows that the survey surrounds a notable number of respondents who are in their early to mid-adulthood.

1. How would you define “minimalistic fashion”?

100 responses



Graph. 4.2
Definition of “minimalistic fashion”

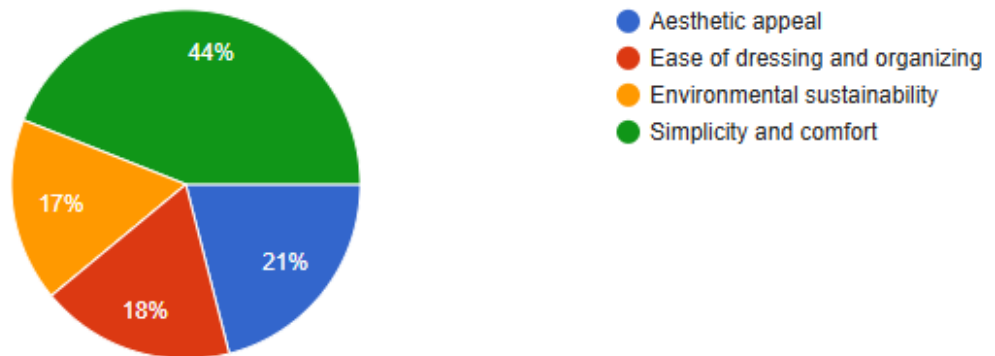
The findings are as follows:

The majority comprises of 73% who said minimalism in fashion means simple and functional clothing choices while 19% said minimalism is wearing a small number of high-quality pieces. The rest 8% of the respondents said that minimalism refers to as clothing with clean lines and neutral colours.

This distribution shows that majority of the respondents are aware of the term minimalistic fashion.

2. What would be your primary reason for choosing minimalistic fashion?

100 responses



Graph. 4.3

Primary reason for choosing minimalistic fashion

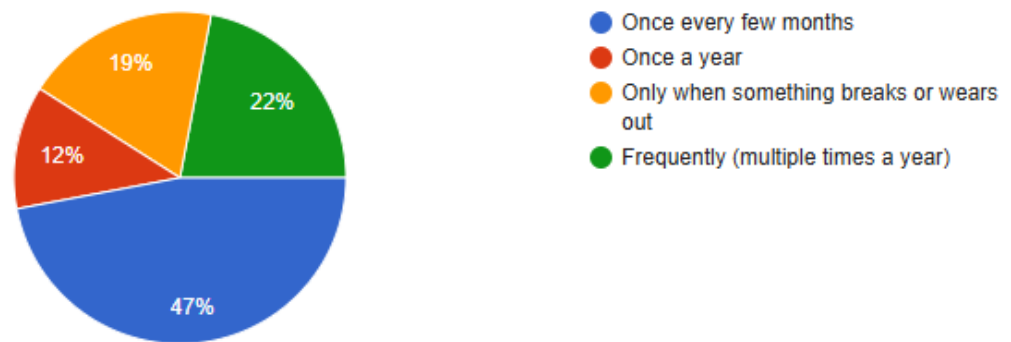
The findings are as follows:

The majority comprises of 44% that would choose minimalism for its simplicity and comfort. 21% of the respondents would choose it for its aesthetic appeal while 18% and 17% would choose it for the ease of dressing and organizing and environmental sustainability respectively.

This distribution shows that only a minority would choose minimalism for its environmental concerns.

3. How often do you purchase new clothes?

100 responses



Graph. 4.4

Purchasing new clothes

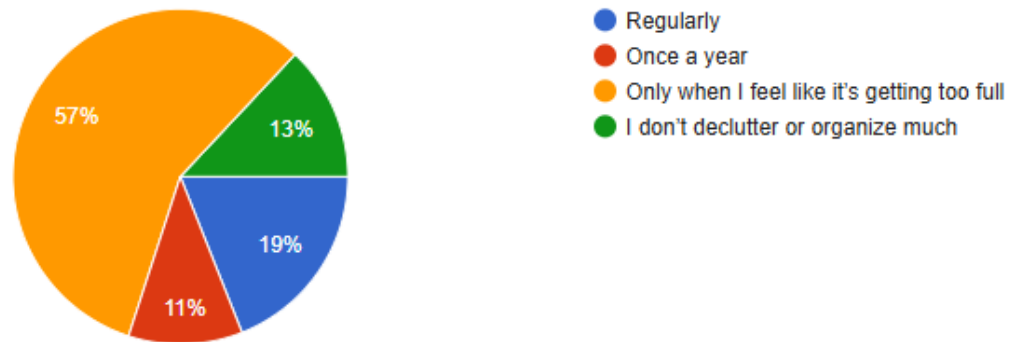
The findings are as follows:

The majority comprises of 47% who purchase new clothes once in every few months. 22% respondents purchase frequently while 19% of the respondents buys new clothes only when something breaks or wears out. The minority comprises of 12% who buys once a year.

This distribution shows that the majority of the respondents are keen about shopping.

4. How often do you declutter or organize your wardrobe?

100 responses



Graph. 4.5

Decluttering or organizing the wardrobe

The findings are as follows:

Majority comprises 57% of the respondents who declutter or organize only when they feel like it's getting too full. While 19% of the respondents declutter regularly. 13% and 11% of the respondents declutter do not declutter or organize much or once a year.

This split shows that there are only few people who declutter their spaces regularly.

5. How do you shop for clothes?

100 responses



Graph. 4.6

Shopping style

The findings are as follows:

The majority comprises of 44% respondents that shop when they feel like it and end up buying what catches their eye. 27% of the respondents rarely shop for clothes and when they do they buy only essentials. 20% and 9% shop intentionally with a list of needs and mostly online with a focus on minimalistic brands respectively.

This split shows that majority of the respondents indulge in impulsive buying.

6. What role does sustainability play in your fashion choices?

100 responses



Graph. 4.7

The role of sustainability in fashion choices

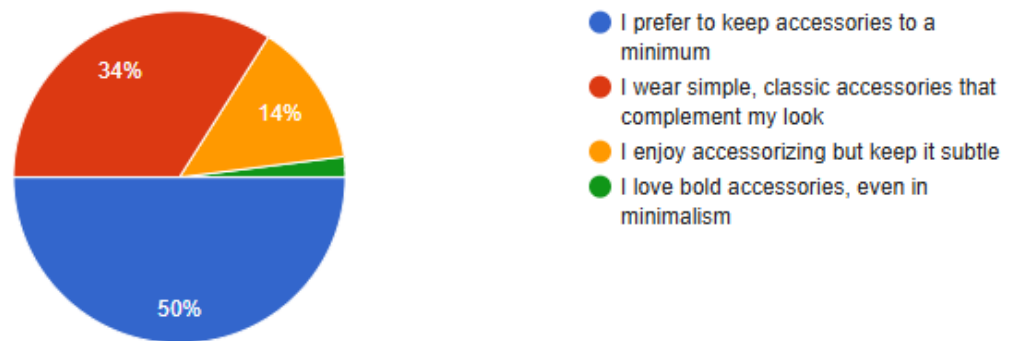
The findings are as follows:

57% majority of the respondents consider sustainability secondary but they try to incorporate it into their choices while 23% of the respondents take it as a major factor. The minority comprises 13% and 7% who have neither considered sustainability nor found it an important factor to them while making fashion choices, respectively.

This split shows that sustainability is yet to make its mark upon many people's lifestyles.

7. How do you feel about accessories (hats, jewelry, bags, etc.) in minimalistic fashion?

100 responses



Graph. 4.8

The thought of accessories in minimalistic fashion

The findings are as follows:

The majority of respondents 50% prefer to keep accessories to a minimum while 34% respondents prefer wearing simple, classic accessories that complement the look. 14 % of the respondents enjoy accessorizing but like to keep it subtle and a minority of 2% respondents love bold accessories even in minimalism.

This split shows that even in minimalism people like accessorizing that go with the outfit.

8. How do you balance comfort and style in your minimalistic wardrobe?

100 responses



Graph. 4.9

Balancing comfort and style in minimalism

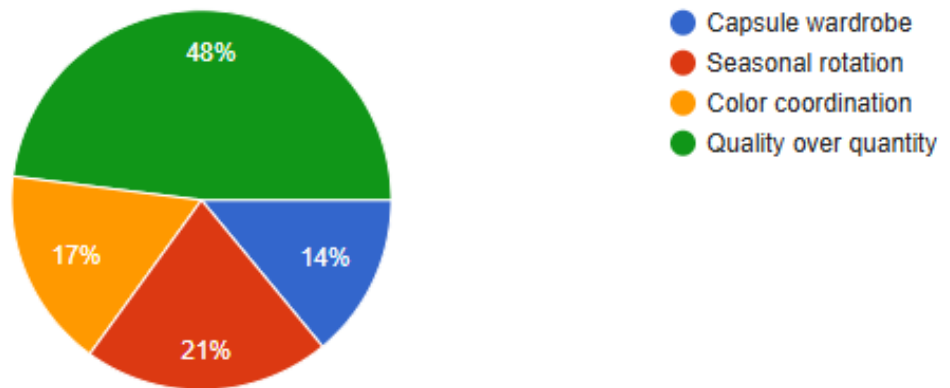
The findings are as follows:

The 46% majority prefer comfort and they focus on simple cozy pieces while 31% of the respondents prioritize style but also ensure that the pieces are comfortable. 19% of the respondents choose pieces that strike a balance between both. A minority of 4% prefer style over comfort.

This split shows that majority prefer comfort more than style and some prefer to maintain a balance between both.

9. What strategies would you use to maintain a minimalist wardrobe?

100 responses



Graph. 4.10

Strategies used to maintain a minimalist wardrobe

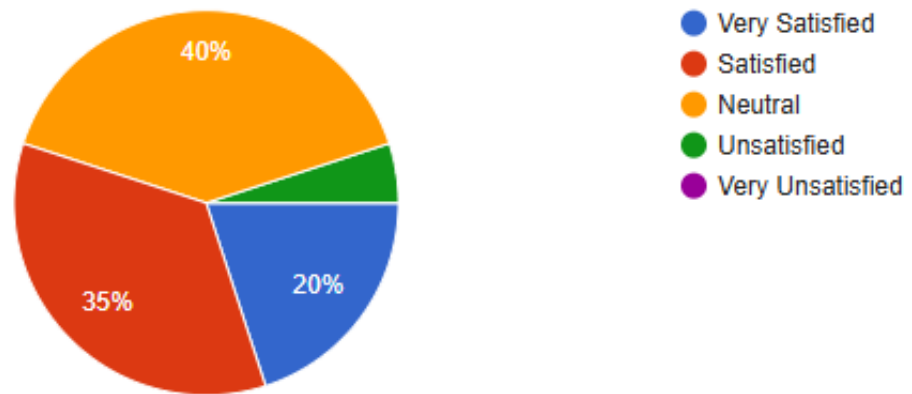
The findings are as follows:

The majority of respondents 48% would prioritize quality over quantity and 21% would do a seasonal rotation. 17% and 14% of the respondents would colour coordinate their wardrobe and maintain a capsule wardrobe respectively.

This breakdown shows that people would choose to maintain a minimalist wardrobe if given proper information.

10. How well are you satisfied with your current Minimalist wardrobe?

100 responses



Graph. 4.11

Satisfaction with the current minimalist wardrobe

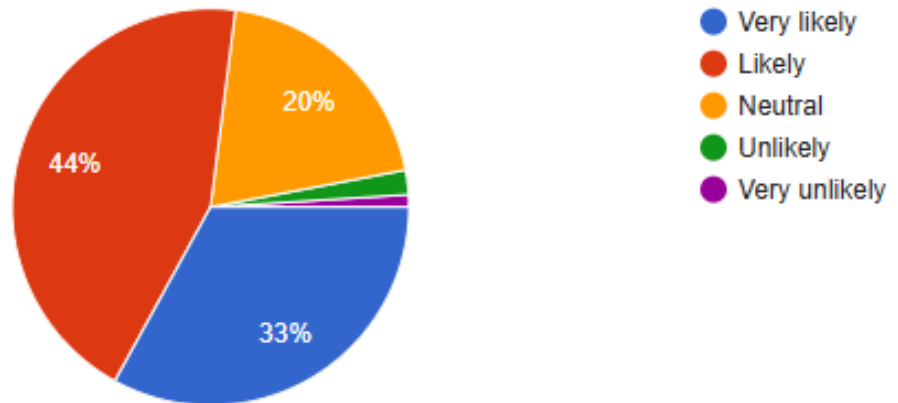
The findings are as follows:

40% of the respondents the majority have opted neutral they are neither satisfied not unsatisfied. 35% of the respondents are satisfied with their minimalist wardrobe while 20% of the respondents are very satisfied. On the other hand, 5% of the respondents are unsatisfied.

This split shows that people want to switch to a better sustainable wardrobe in future.

11. How likely are you to recommend a minimalist wardrobe approach to others?

100 responses



Graph. 4.12

Recommending minimalist wardrobe to others

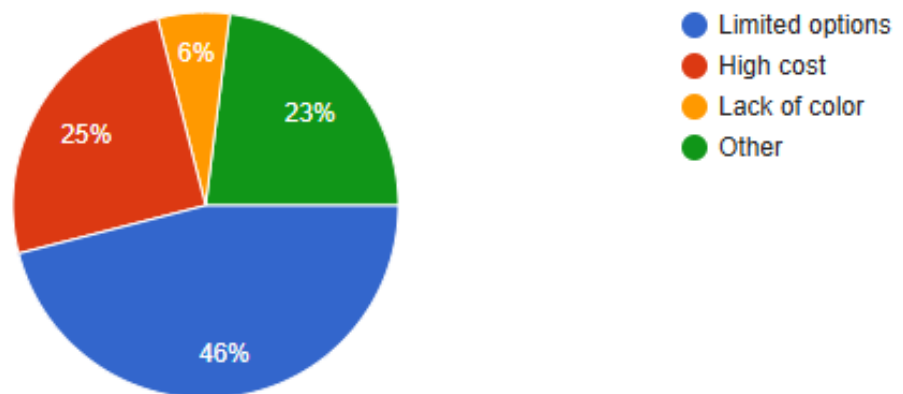
The findings are as follows:

The majority 44% of the respondents are likely to recommend the minimalist wardrobe approach to others while 33% would very likely recommend. 20% of the respondents have taken a neutral stand while a total of 3 % respondents would not be willing to recommend this approach to others.

This breakdown shows that majority would be willing to recommend this approach to others as well follow this approach on their own.

12. What challenges do you face with minimalistic fashion?

100 responses



Graph. 4.13

Challenges faced with minimalistic fashion

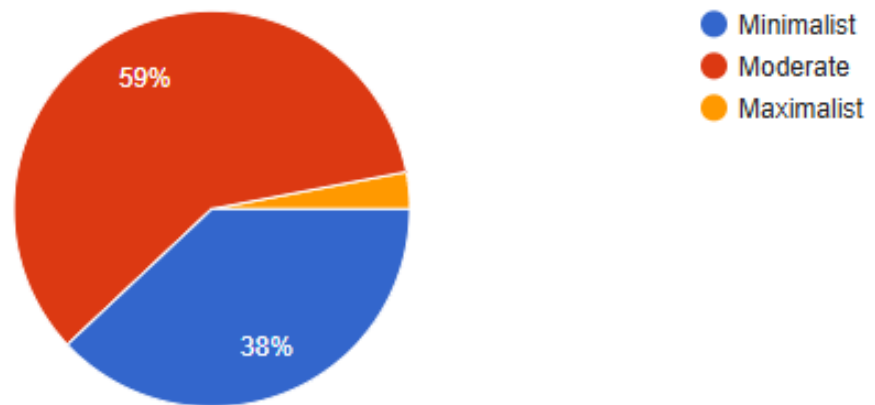
The findings are as follows:

The majority of respondents 46% have said that they face limited options when it comes to minimalistic fashion while 25% and 23% respondents have said that high cost and other are the challenges faced by them respectively. A minority of 6% have said that lack of colour is the common challenge faced by them.

This breakdown shows that people consider sustainable or minimal approach to fashion non budget friendly and less appealing.

13. How would you describe your current lifestyle?

100 responses



Graph. 4.14

Current lifestyle

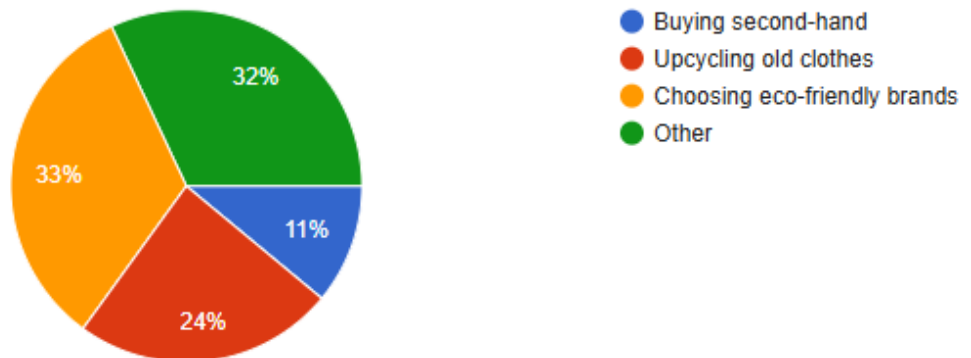
The findings are as follows:

Moderate is the option chosen by majority of the respondents – 59%. 38 % of the respondents follow a minimalist lifestyle and only a minority of 3% respondents have a maximalist lifestyle.

This split shows that these concepts are still new to majority of Indians.

14. What sustainable fashion practices do you follow?

100 responses



Graph. 4.15

Sustainable fashion practices followed

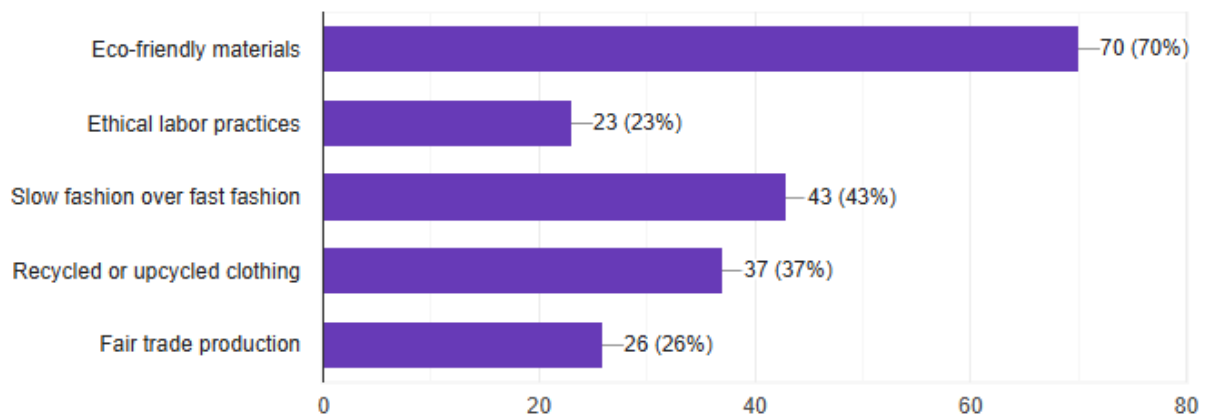
The findings are as follows:

The majority of respondents 33% and 32% choose eco-friendly brands and other to show their support to sustainability. While 24% prefer upcycling clothes as a way of sustainable lifestyle. A minority of 11% prefer buying second hand or thrifting as a way of showing their support to an eco-friendly environment.

This split shows that minimalism and sustainability are gaining popularity among the masses especially due to the younger generation as they have been promoting this lifestyle since a few years.

15. What do you associate with sustainable fashion? (Select all that apply)

100 responses



Graph. 4.16

Sustainable fashion factors

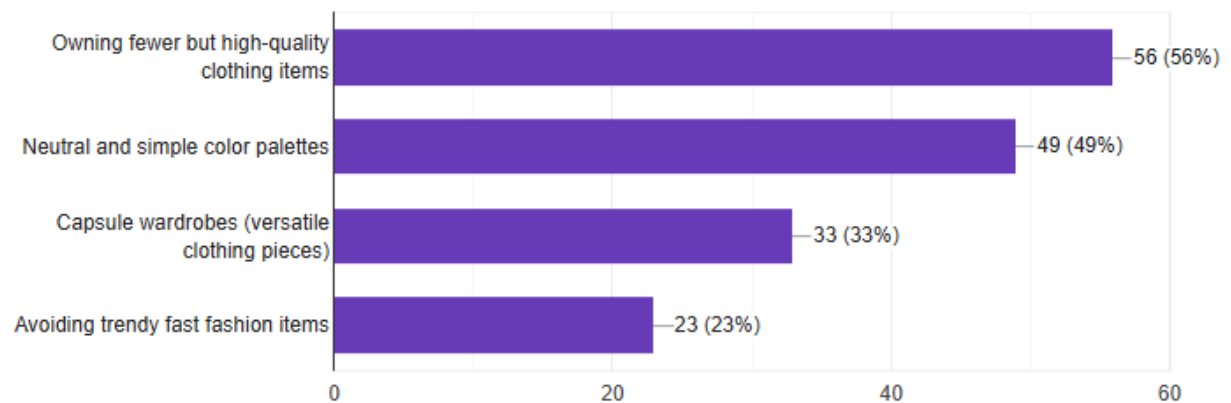
The findings are as follows:

The majority of 70% respondents understand that eco-friendly materials are used in sustainable fashion whereas, 43% of the respondents consider sustainable fashion as the concept that promotes slow fashion over fast. 37% of the respondents understand that sustainable fashion means recycled or upcycled garments. A minority of 23% consider sustainable fashion as the one that promotes ethical labour practices.

This break down shows that everyone has different definition of sustainable fashion and few of them have opted for more than one option.

16. What does minimalistic fashion mean to you? (Select all that apply)

100 responses



Graph. 4.17

Minimalistic fashion factors

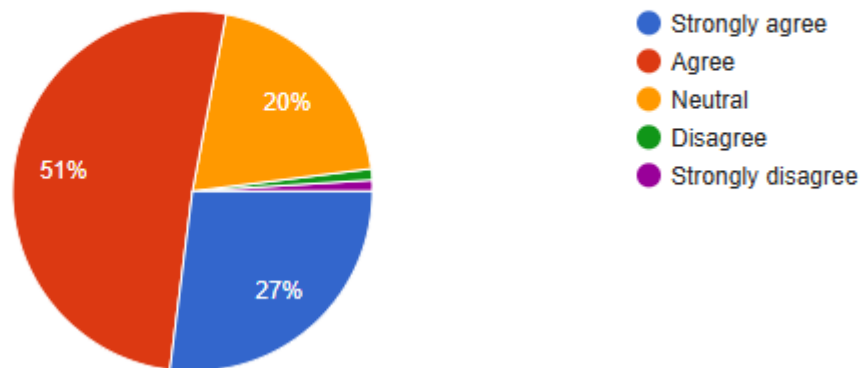
The findings are as follows:

The majority of respondents 56% have understood that minimalistic fashion means to own fewer but high-quality items. 49% on the other hand considers this as a fashion style that has neutral and simple colour palettes whereas, 33% people say that minimalistic fashion refers to maintaining a capsule wardrobe. A minority of 23% people consider minimalistic fashion as the one that boycotts any trendy or fast fashion items.

This graph shows us that there are still few people who do not have a clear idea of Minimalistic fashion.

17. Do you believe that minimalistic fashion can contribute to sustainability?

100 responses



Graph. 4.18

Minimalistic fashion and Sustainability

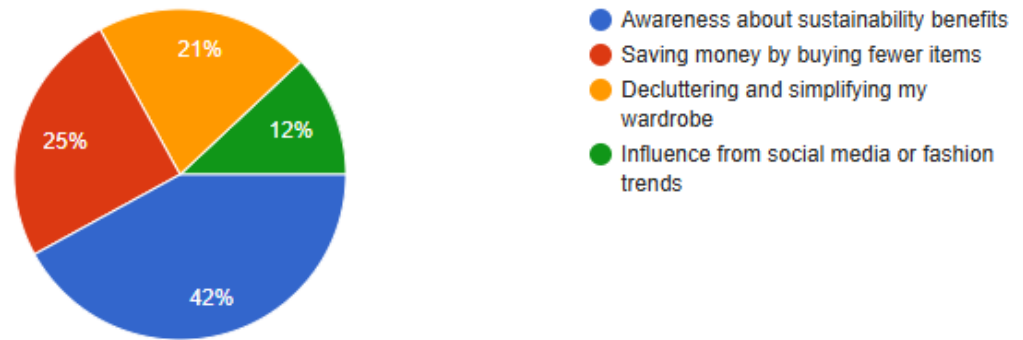
The findings are as follows:

51% and 27% of the respondents strongly agree and agree to the fact that minimalism aids in sustainability whereas, 20% have taken a neutral stand. A minority of 2% have said that minimalism does not contribute to sustainability.

This split shows that even if there is a minority that does not agree to the fact that minimalism contributes to sustainability a majority of the respondents thinks that it strongly does contribute in creating a sustainable environment.

18. What factors would encourage you to adopt a minimalist fashion approach?

100 responses



Graph. 4.19

Adopting a minimalist fashion approach

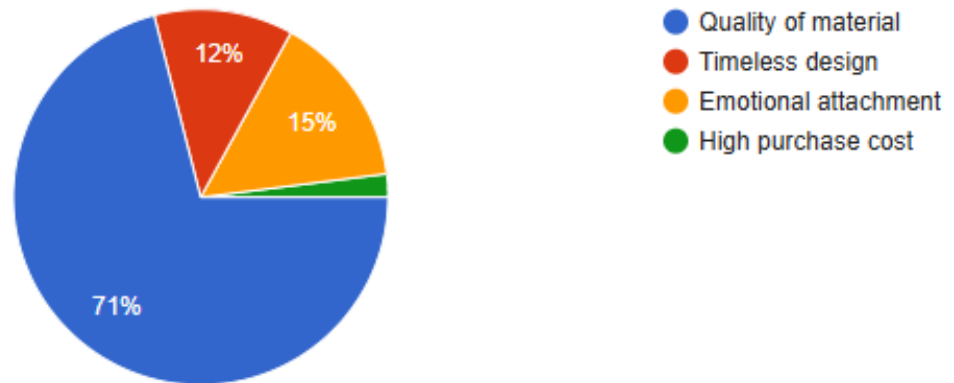
The findings are as follows:

A majority of respondents 42% have said that an awareness about the benefits of sustainability would make them bring a change in their fashion choices. 25% and 21% of the respondents have said that saving money and buying fewer items and decluttering and simplifying their wardrobe would be the two reasons why they would consider a minimalist fashion approach respectively. A minority of 12% would switch their fashion choice under the influence of social media or fashion trends.

This split shows that there are majority of people who consider minimalist fashion as a need to protect the environment and not just as a fashion trend or fad.

19. What factors influence your decision to keep clothing for a longer time?

100 responses



Graph. 4.20

Factors that influence to keep clothing for a longer time

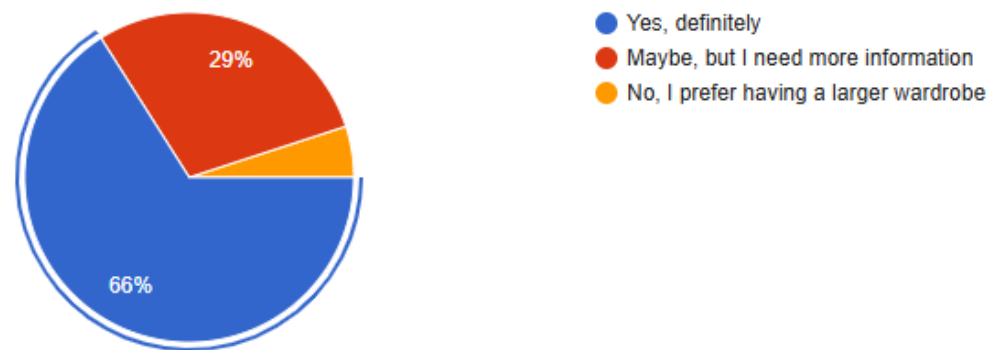
The findings are as follows:

A majority of 71% respondents hesitate from discarding their clothes due to the good quality of the material. 15% and 12% of the respondents keep their clothes because of an emotional attachment or because of its timeless design. A minority of 2% respondents keep their clothes due to a high purchase cost.

This split shows that people tend to keep their clothes for a longer time due to the above-mentioned reasons and that they prefer keeping them rather than just discarding or disposing of them easily, which helps in contributing to sustainability.

20. Would you consider transitioning to a minimalistic wardrobe in the future?

100 responses



Graph. 4.21

Transitioning into a minimalistic wardrobe in future

The findings are as follows:

66% of the respondents have opted that they would definitely consider transitioning into a minimalistic wardrobe in future. 29% of the respondents have said that they would also be willing but they need more information about the concept. A minority of 5% of the respondents have said that they prefer having a larger wardrobe and will not be considering to transition into a minimalist wardrobe.

This split shows that even if there are people who prefer having a maximalist wardrobe there are a majority of people who would willingly want to transition and also recommend this approach to others for a better future.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Minimalistic fashion has been shown to be environmentally beneficial and supportive of sustainability since it entails fewer clothing purchases, which lowers the amount of garbage that is dumped into the environment. This thesis has shown the capacity of minimalism and minimalist fashion to tackle the environmental issues brought on by quick and unhealthy fashion in India by choosing a comprehensive strategy that blends fashion, environmental sustainability, and creativity.

The results of this study have demonstrated that minimalism preserves the planet and that this fashion trend need not be boring or unappealing. In contrast to fast fashion, minimalism is regarded as a far more environmentally responsible choice that contributes to preserving the environment for coming generations. This fashion trend encourages environmental awareness and sustainability among the nation's citizens. People may lessen their impact on the environment and encourage other individuals to adopt sustainable lifestyles by embracing these eco-friendly choices.

But it's important to acknowledge that, in comparison to the rest of the globe, India is still in the early stages of the minimalist fashion movement. To raise awareness of its advantages and the necessity of embracing this kind of dress, more research and development work is required. Working together with artists and designers can help people come to terms with this.

Although the fashion business is one among the biggest and most powerful in the world, it is also among of the greatest harmful to society and the environment. Addressing these problems and establishing a more ethical and responsible industry can be achieved through sustainable fashion. India, one of the world's largest centres for the production of textiles and apparel, has both potential and challenges in advancing sustainable fashion. Despite India's remarkable strides in the direction of sustainable fashion, much more has to be done. All parties involved must keep collaborating in order to create a fashion sector that is more ethical and sustainable. We have an obligation to make sure that the fashion industry's substantial influence on society and the environment is constructive. In India, promoting sustainable fashion has both financial and ethical benefits. All parties involved must cooperate in order to handle the potential and problems associated with sustainable fashion. By doing so, we may establish an increasingly responsible, ethical, and lucrative fashion sector for the future.

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APPENDIX

The questionnaire conducted during the study is as follows:

1. Age:
 - 17 – 25
 - 25 – 35
 - 35 – 45
 - 45 – 55
 - 55 – 65
2. What does "minimalistic fashion" mean to you?
 - Simple and functional choices
 - Wearing a small number of high-quality pieces
 - Clothing with clean lines and neutral colours
 - Other
3. What is your main motivation for wearing minimalist clothing?
 - Aesthetic appeal
 - Ease of dressing and organizing
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Simplicity and comfort
4. How frequently do you buy new clothing?
 - Once every few months
 - Once a year
 - Only when something breaks or wears out
 - Frequently (multiple times a year)
5. How frequently do you organise or clear your closet?
 - Regularly
 - Once a year
 - Only when I feel like it's getting too full
 - I don't declutter or organize much

6. How do you go about buying clothing?
 - I shop intentionally with a list of needs
 - I shop when I feel like it, buying what catches my eye
 - I shop mostly online with a focus on minimalistic brands
 - I rarely shop for clothes but purchase only essentials when needed
7. How does sustainability factor into your wardrobe selections?
 - It's a major factor in my decisions
 - It's a secondary consideration, but I try to make sustainable choices
 - It's not important to me
 - I've never considered sustainability in fashion
8. What are your thoughts on minimalistic fashion accessories like hats, jewellery, bags, etc.?
 - I prefer to keep accessories to a minimum
 - I wear simple, classic accessories that complement my look
 - I enjoy accessorizing but keep it subtle
 - I love bold accessories, even in minimalism
9. In your minimalist wardrobe, how do you strike a balance between comfort and style?
 - Comfort is my top priority, and I focus on simple, cozy pieces
 - I prioritize style but ensure that the pieces are comfortable
 - I choose pieces that strike a balance between both
 - I prefer more stylish looks, even if they're less comfortable
10. What techniques would you employ to keep your clothes simple?
 - Capsule wardrobe
 - Seasonal rotation
 - Colour coordination
 - Quality over quantity
11. How pleased are you with the minimalist clothes you now own?
 - Very satisfied

- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

12. How likely are you to advise others to adopt a minimalist wardrobe style?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

13. What difficulties do you have when wearing minimalist clothing?

- Limited options
- High cost
- Lack of colour
- Other

14. What would you say about your way of life right now?

- Minimalist
- Moderate
- Maximalist

15. Which eco-friendly fashion standards do you adhere to?

- Buying second-hand
- Upcycling old clothes
- Choosing eco-friendly brands
- Other

16. What do you think sustainable fashion entails? (Check everything that applies.)

- Eco-friendly materials
- Ethical labour practices
- Slow fashion over fast fashion

- Recycled or upcycled clothing
- Fair trade production

17. For you, what does minimalist fashion mean? (Check everything that applies.)

- Owning fewer but high-quality clothing items
- Neutral and simple colour palettes
- Capsule wardrobes (versatile clothing pieces)
- Avoiding trendy fast fashion items

18. Do you think that sustainability may be aided by minimalist fashion?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

19. What aspects of minimalist fashion would motivate you to embrace it?

- Awareness about sustainability benefits
- Saving money by buying fewer items
- Decluttering and simplifying my wardrobe
- Influence from social media or fashion trends

20. What aspects affect your decision to hold onto clothes for a longer period of time?

- Quality of material
- Timeless design
- Emotional attachment
- High purchase cost

21. In the future, would you think about switching to a simpler wardrobe?

- Yes, definitely
- Maybe, but I need more information
- No, I prefer having a larger wardrobe