



SUSTAINABILITY OF GREEN FASHION

Dr. Surabhi Mahajan

*Punjab Agricultural University, College of Home Science, Department of Clothing and Textiles,
Ludhiana Punjab (India)*

surabhimahajan@yahoo.com, surabhimahajanct@pau.edu

Abstract: Fashion is the prevailing mode of expression. Fashions change more quickly than the culture as a whole. The present paper aims to explore the ways and means to popularize green clothing in fashion and make it a way of life. It is based on a survey of two of the leading textile manufacturing units and responses of 200 customers selected from all zones of Ludhiana city in Ludhiana in the year 2009. The results show that while manufacturers have the constraint of cost and acceptability by the customers, more than two-third customers lack awareness about green clothing. They also suggested that the awareness about green clothing, their ready availability and affordable cost may make them popular among the common people. It is suggested that government should organize informative programs to make the public aware about green clothing and should provide liberal subsidies to units engaged in manufacturing them.

Keywords: Fashion, style, green clothing, synthetic clothing, natural fibers, ecological problems, environmental hazards, subsidies

1. Introduction

Clothing (also known as dress, garments or attire) is a garment made from various kinds of materials and taking several forms used by men, women and children to cover their body. These garments may be made from woven materials (silk, polyester), animal skin (leather and fur) or from elaborate and exotic natural and synthetic materials. In fact, clothing can and has in history been made from a very wide variety of materials. Today, there are many materials with which clothes are made. A person can choose from purchasing clothes made from natural origin materials (like silk, wool, and leather), but may also select one for the man-made fibers extensively used in clothes manufacturing (like nylon, polyester etc.).

The wearing of clothing is exclusively a human characteristic and is a feature of nearly all human societies. The human beings across cultures universally wear clothing on the body in order to protect it against the adverse climate conditions. In this sense, clothing is a socio-cultural artifact as bearing clothes is learnt among human beings according to socio-cultural norms of every society. This is the reason that clothes vary across cultures and the amount and type of clothing worn also depends on socio-cultural considerations besides functional considerations (such as a need for warmth or protection from the elements). In some situations the minimum amount of clothing (such as covering of a person's genitals as was done among the primitive people or even among some of the tribes even today) may be socially acceptable, while in others much more clothing is expected. Similarly, in most cultures, gender differentiation of clothing is considered appropriate for men and women or male and female babies. These differences may be in styles, colors and fabrics. Besides gender differentiation, clothing may be used to indicate rank or social status in different societies. Clothing has been regarded as one of the best ways to distinguish social classes, sexes, occupation, marital status and ethnic or religious affiliation.[1]

Many cultural and sociological theories have frequently tried to give oversimplified explanations of the motives of human clothing. Clothing or dress is not motivated only by modesty, adornment, and protection, or even—a still more one-sided theory offered by Freud—by sex alone. Clothing appears to be motivated primarily by the environment. Although the purposes of clothing are determined by environmental conditions, its form is determined by man's own characteristics, and especially by his/her



mental traits. It is not only a kind of covering but also a kind of mimicry through which man expresses many of his subjective social sentiments. In the thousands of years that humans have spent constructing clothing, they have created an astonishing array of styles, many of which have been reconstructed from surviving garments, photos, paintings, mosaics, etc., as well as from written descriptions. In fact, the world of clothing is fast changing, as new cultural influences meet technological innovations enhancing fashion in clothing very rapidly.

Fashion is the prevailing mode of expression. We choose a piece of garment because we may love the colour, or like how it drapes beautifully to our body or feel that it screams our personality. While fashion in clothes unites us, style sets us apart from others. Fashion has allowed wearers to express emotion or solidarity with other people for millennia. Style is what we choose to wear from all the clothes that are available to us. The combined sense of unity, individuality and being the most newly informed gives us a small sense of power or confidence. Our sense of style expresses our individualism as well as our personality. Fashions change more quickly than the culture as a whole. They are not only the relief from boredom, but are also related with glamour and style.

2. Statement of the Problem

Customers purchase clothes according to their requirements and they generally go after the prevailing fashion which is considered the prime force. Various shops and company outlets store clothes not only according to the season, but also according to the latest trend and fashion. The salesmen are often seen trying to convince the customers that their stock is of latest design and fabric. Customers are generally unaware about the process of making various kinds of textiles and the environmental hazards involved therein. For example, while purchasing a shirt, jeans or dress for children they usually choose them among the available stock in shops and stores according to their need and taste unaware about the harmful chemicals and bleaches used in clothes, which can cause long-term damage to their health and the environment. They are unaware that textile industry is one of the most ecologically harmful industries in the world. The eco-problems in textile industry occur during some production processes and are carried forward right to the finished product. Many of the chemicals used in manufacturing fibres cause irreversible damage to people and the environment. The bleaching, dyeing, sizing and finishing of textiles all result in large quantities of effluent, often containing highly toxic heavy metals that pollute the soil and water and damage aquatic life. Add to that the carbon emissions and impact of growing non-organic cotton, which uses petrochemical fertilizers and leads to reduced soil fertility, soil erosion, water pollution and reduced biodiversity which are highly vulnerable environmental hazards. It has been shown that the children and infants are highly sensitive to chemicals that are used in synthetic material. Vapors from these chemicals can aggravate symptoms in older people and those with respiratory problems.

Not only this, the customers, by and large, are not aware about the alternate clothes, i.e., eco-friendly textiles which are devoid of harmful chemicals and dyes and instead are very comfortable and give a soft touch for body. The use of chemicals and pesticides in eco-friendly textiles required for green fashion is minimum. They use best land management practices, sustainable farming practices and the production adheres to fair trade practices. These textiles are not only eco-friendly, but are also animal friendly. They carry eco-friendly certification (i.e. EU-Eco label certification). John Elkington, Julia Hailes, and John Makower [2] have discussed several characteristics that a product must have to be regarded as a 'green' product. They contended that a green product



should not: endanger the health of people or animals; damage the environment at any stage of its life, including manufacture, use, and disposal; consume a disproportionate amount of energy and other resources during manufacture, use, or disposal; cause unnecessary waste, either as a result of excessive packaging or a short useful life; involve the unnecessary use of or cruelty to animals; and use materials derived from threatened species or environments.

An increasing number of people in advanced countries of the world are becoming exceedingly particular about what happens to people and the environment as a result of the production of the clothes and fashion accessories that they wear. The resultant of this consciousness is the prevalence of green fashion or eco-fashion trend in these countries. It is not that Indians are not aware about environmental hazards, but they don't know that even clothes which are the major part of their life—7 days a week and for 24 hours a day are harmful for them in long run. Lack of consciousness is due to proper warning which is not attached with the clothes by the manufacturers as such measure may hamper the sale of their products and ultimately affect their business badly.

Fabrics required for green fashion are readily available in India. For example, we have organically grown natural fabrics (cotton, hemp/linen, merino wool, cashmere, ahimsa silk, etc.), fabrics made from recycled synthetic fibres, including plastics (viscose and nylon, etc.), fabrics made from natural materials like soya, sea cell, bamboo, sasawashi, tencel, etc., fabrics dyed with natural dyes or non-polluting dyes, unbleached fabric, and handloom fabrics. Why the textile manufacturers and customers don't make use of them and help in the healthy growth of nation? Manufacturers do owe a social responsibility for protecting the life of customers and controlling environmental hazards. These are very important questions in the present scenario which require answer through a systematic investigation.

If customers are made aware about green fashion which is based on the production of smart, high-fashion clothes that are sensitively produced without the use of pesticides, unfair labour, sustainable fabric and practices, they will definitely go far these clothes. They would never like to endanger their life as well as that of their nearer and dearer. Here comes the question of sustainability of green fashion in India which is the focus of this paper. Should the textile industry be allowed to flourish only to earn the profit and play with the lives of the customers? Should the textile industry be allowed to take advantage of lack of governmental control or any other fear of penalty? Should the textile industry be allowed to shrink its social responsibility towards customers/consumers? Should not government intervene timely to protect the citizens to which it is duty-bound constitutionally and take concrete steps to promote green fashion? These are very important questions which require systematic investigation.

It is in this context that the present paper attempts to explore the ways and means to popularize green clothing (also known as natural clothing, eco-friendly, alternative and organic clothes) in fashion and make it a way of life among people of different ages irrespective of any caste, creed, race or religion. Its specific objectives are as follows:

1. To find out the extent of awareness about green fashion among customers of a metropolitan city;
2. To investigate the reasons for non-popularity of green fashion among metropolitan consumers; and
3. To suggest the ways and means to popularize green fashion among metropolitan consumers so that they can give a lead to their rural counterparts.



3. Methodology

The methodology adopted for fulfilling above objectives is divided into two parts: *first*, investigating the view point of manufacturers on fibres being used by them vis-à-vis green fibres and *second*, getting responses of customers regarding various dimensions of green fashion. Accordingly, attempt has been made firstly informally interview two of the leading textile manufacturing units in Ludhiana, which is one of the leading metropolitan city as well as industrial cultural hub of Punjab and secondly to elicit responses of 200 customers selected from all zones of Ludhiana. Ludhiana city covers a total area of 120 sq miles or 310 sq km and according to the population estimates in 2010, the population of Ludhiana is 1,740,247. The density of population of the city is 14,540 /sq mi or 5,614 /km². The population of the city rises significantly at the time of crop reaping because of influx of manual workers from states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh (the eastern provinces), Delhi, and Orissa. The city is regarded as a famous NRI district in the state with a considerable number of people staying overseas in countries like the United States, United Kingdom and Canada.

The customers for this study were selected through purposive sampling in 2009 from different shops and company outlets. The age group of customers selected is up to 30 years (43.0%), 31 to 45 years (33.0%) and above 45 years (24.0%). More than half of the customers (55.5%) are females and remaining less than half (44.5%) males. The break-up of their educational level is: less than high school (4.0%), high school (36.5%), graduation (43.0%) and above graduation (16.5%). As regards their monthly family income, they fall in the income bracket of less than Rs. 30,000 (12.0%), Rs. 30,001 to 50,000 (48.0%) and above Rs. 50,000 (40.0%). A little less than one-fifth selected customers (18.5%) are unmarried, less than three-fourth (72.5%) married and remaining one-eleventh (9.0%) either widows or widowers.

4. Results and Conclusions

Green fashion provides consumers with healthier and more eco-friendly apparel choices. This is the reason that green clothing is hitting the runways, not only as a fashion, but as a way of life in many countries of Europe as well as USA. Synthetic fabrics and clothing fibers processed with heavy chemical agents are facing a declining popularity there because of the harmful and enduring effects on the planet and people's health. Concerned consumers are also becoming increasingly health conscious and actively support greener lifestyles. Global pollution and increased awareness are prompting consumers to seek healthier living choices including clothing in these countries. However, the same has not happened in India. Neither textile manufacturers are doing much for sustaining green fashion, nor the lack of awareness about green fashion among customers driving them to go green not only in their own interest but also in the interest of environment.

Contrary to the rapid progress made by the textile industry in advanced countries in their efforts to minimize ecological destruction and offer consumers natural products choices, with reduced or eliminated highly toxic ingredients, not much has been done by the textile industry in India. While going green can be a worthy endeavour for any textile industry, there are drawbacks to opt for green fashion and help the green movement in the interest of nation. The story of those concerned with textile industry is quite simple. The business interests of these manufacturers act as deterrents for going green. They say that they need to look at all sides of this issue including the end cost of the process. The areas to look at include not only the cost, but also time and even pollution levels caused by the transition to green.



The results of this study may be summarize under following three sub-heads according to the three objectives of study:

Extent of Awareness among Customers about Green Fashion

The extent of awareness regarding green fashion among Indian citizens is considered to be quite low. This is the reason that green fashion has not become sustainable in India in spite of the increasing awareness about environmental degradation, environmental pollution and its hazardous effects on the health of the people. The following table gives the break-up of selected customers on the extent of awareness about green fashion among them:

Table 1: Percentage distribution of customers according to their age group and awareness about green fashion

Age Group	Awareness about Green Fashion			Total
	Fully aware	Somewhat aware	Not aware at all	
Up to 30 years	41.9 (36)	38.4 (33)	19.8 (17)	100.0 (86)
31 to 45 years	31.8 (21)	36.4 (24)	31.8 (21)	100.0 (66)
Above 45 years	6.3 (3)	25.0 (12)	68.8 (33)	100.0 (48)
Total	30.0 (60)	34.5 (69)	35.5 (71)	100.0 (200)

(Actual figures are shown in parentheses)

Chi-Square = 36.023*; DF = 4; Significance Level >.01

Contingency Coefficient = .391

It may be seen from the data presented above that only a little less than one-third customers are fully aware about green fashion, whereas, more than one-third is quite unaware about it. Remaining little more than one-third is only somewhat aware and if we club them with those who are quite unaware, the proportion of customers who are not fully aware about green fashion comes to more than two-third (70.0%). The proportion of fully aware customers decreases significantly with the increase in their age group, whereas, it shows significant increase with age in the third category of awareness, i.e., not aware at all. It means that younger customers are more aware than those more in age. It is quite clear that more than two-third customers above 45 years of age are quite unaware against only one-fifth who is up to 30 years of age. Age and awareness about green fashion among customers seem to be significantly associated to each other as the calculated value of Chi-square is much higher than its table value (13.277) at 4 degree of freedom.

Sex and awareness about green fashion are independent of each other as male and female customers don't have much difference in all the three categories of awareness. Contrary to this, awareness about green fashion seems to be significantly associated with level of education of customers ($\chi^2 = 25.094^*$; DF = 6; Significance Level >.01) as the proportion of those who are graduates and above is much higher in the category of fully aware than those who are only matriculates or less than matriculates. Similarly, the financial position of family is also significantly associated with customers' level of awareness ($\chi^2 = 22.265^*$; DF = 4; Significance Level >.01) as the proportion of customers in fully aware category shows increase with the increase in monthly income (13.3%, 31.7% and 55.0% respectively). The case of marital status also shows same results ($\chi^2 = 40.437^*$; DF = 4; Significance Level >.01). Here unmarried customers seem to be more aware than those married as well as widows/widowers. Thus, the empirical findings on awareness about green fashion among customers show that it varies according to their age, level of education, financial position of the family and marital status. Only sex cuts across the differences in awareness about green fashion among them.



Though more than two-third of the customers are not fully aware about green fashion, still an attempt was made to find out their level of awareness about properties of eco-friendly fibres or green fashion vis-à-vis non-eco-friendly fibres just to supplement their responses on awareness about green fashion. The following table contains data on this aspect according to the age group of customers:

Table 2: Percentage distribution of customers according to their age group and awareness about properties of eco-friendly fibres or green fashion

Age Group	Awareness about Properties of Green Fashion			Total
	Quite aware	Somewhat aware	Not aware at all	
Up to 30 years	32.6 (28)	41.9 (36)	25.6 (22)	100.0 (86)
31 to 45 years	16.7 (11)	33.3 (22)	50.0 (33)	100.0 (66)
Above 45 years	14.6 (7)	62.5 (30)	22.9 (11)	100.0 (48)
Total	23.0 (46)	44.0 (88)	33.0 (66)	100.0 (200)

(Actual figures are shown in parentheses)

Chi-Square = 20.268*; DF = 4; Significance Level >.01

Contingency Coefficient = .303

It may be seen that the proportion of customers who are quite aware about the properties of fibres used in green fashion decreases with the increase in their age group. More than half in the age group up to 30 years (60.9%) are quite aware as against only less than one-fourth (23.9%) in the age group of 31 to 45 years and less than one-seventh (15.2%) in the age group above 45 years. As the calculated value of Chi-square is much higher than its table value (13.277) at 4 degrees of freedom, the association between age group and awareness about properties of eco-friendly fibres or green fashion seems to be highly significant.

Similar trend is evident in case of educational level ($\chi^2 = 14.093^*$; DF = 4; Significance Level >.01), financial position ($\chi^2 = 62.001^*$; DF = 4; Significance Level >.01) and marital status ($\chi^2 = 30.765^*$; DF = 4; Significance Level >.01). Only sex of the customers cuts across the difference in awareness about properties of eco-friendly fibres or green fashion ($\chi^2 = 2.437$; DF = 2; Significance Level <.05).

Some of the other findings related to awareness about green fashion among customers are as follows:

1. One-third customers (33.0%) choose their clothes keeping in view the good quality of the fibre used; another less than one-third (31.5%) according to good fibre as well as design and remaining more than one-third (35.5%) keep in mind the appeal and fashion, i.e., they prefer those clothes which are more appealing and in accordance with the fashion.
2. Almost half of the customers (49.5%) are not aware about the hazards that the textile industries are posing to the environment against less than one-third (31.0%) who know a little bit about harmful dyes and chemicals used in fibres by textile manufacturers. Only one-fifth customers (19.5%) are quite aware about the dangers to environment by the textile industries.
3. Only less than one-third customers (30.5%) know fully about eco-friendly fibres like organic cotton, organic silk, organic wool etc.
4. Less than one-fourth customers (23.0%) are aware about the differences between eco-friendly and non-eco-friendly fibers.



Reasons for Non-popularity of Green Fashion

The reasons for non-popularity of green fashion have to be looked into two different lines—*firstly*, why textile industry is not prone to green fashion and *secondly*, why the customers are not giving preference to green fashion. Those concerned with textile industry are quite aware that this industry is the most ecologically harmful industry in the world. The eco-problems in textile industry occur during some production processes and are carried forward right to the finished product. In the production process of bleaching and then dyeing, the subsequent fabric makes a toxin that swells into our ecosystem. During the production process controlling pollution is as vital as making a product free from the toxic effect. The control over this industry to have safety measures for checking the pollution is not very effective. Textile industry owners are also quite aware that the utilization of rayon for clothing is adding to the fast depleting forests in India.

So far the textile industry is concerned for non-popularity of green fashion; the major drawback in going green for it is the cost. In some cases, using green products and materials will cost much more than using conventional materials. They fear that the increase in cost will make clothes more costly and beyond the reach of ordinary middle class families in India compels them for using conventional material. Moreover, Time is another area where going green is a disadvantage according to textile manufacturers. The textile industry that goes green needs to spend time researching the best ways to make the transition to green. In addition, the industry needs to locate sources of green material and green products and make sure that personnel are properly instructed in the use of the new products.

Though the fear in textile industry is quite realistic, still the initiatives are not many. Garment manufacturers in Punjab, who initiated an awareness campaign on the ill effects of cotton cultivated with toxic chemicals, have started launching exclusive garments made of organic cotton. One Ludhiana based garment manufacturer namely, Venus Group marketing its products under 'UV&W' brand announced its foray into the domestic market with the launch of first ever organic cotton-based apparels in 2008. These organic garments are certified by the Global Organic Textile Standards and Organic Exchange standards. Although the organic cotton yarn prices are 40 per cent higher than the regular cotton, the company claims to have reasonably priced its products. The initial response which was quite slow has gained momentum within few years touching 40 million dollars recorded turnover in one year. It is worth noting that Venus Group, which was earlier exporting its garments to leading brands such as Gap, Wal-Mart and Carrefour, is today offering organic clothing for customers in India. Previously, this textile industry has done something which has not been good for environment. These are some corrective measures taken by this industry under increasing pressure of socially aware people who want to opt for skin-friendly garments. This shows that the fear about cost and its acceptability by the customers is not always true.

Another reason for non-popularity of green fashion among the customers is not only the lack of awareness, but also the non-availability of eco-friendly clothes. We have already seen that more than three-fourth selected customers are not aware about eco-friendly clothes or green fashion, environmental hazards posed by textile industry and they also don't know the difference between eco-friendly and ordinary clothes which are not eco-friendly. None of the shops or company outlets displays green fashion separately and prominently for the convenience of the customers. Even the exclusive shops or outlets of green fashion are totally absent and are still to make their appearance even in metropolitan cities.



Let us analyze the views of consumers about green fashion. Customers selected for the present study were asked to state their preference between eco-friendly and non-eco-friendly clothes if they are to choose for themselves. Their responses are shown in the following table:

Table 3: Percentage distribution of customers according to their age group and preference for eco-friendly fibres or green fashion vis-à-vis non-eco-friendly fibres

Age Group	Type of Preference			Total
	Definitely eco-friendly	Eco-friendly if they are not costly	It hardly matters	
Up to 30 years	23.3 (20)	51.2 (44)	25.6 (22)	100.0 (86)
31 to 45 years	28.8 (19)	54.5 (36)	16.7 (11)	100.0 (66)
Above 45 years	16.7 (8)	60.4 (29)	22.9 (11)	100.0 (48)
Total	23.5 (47)	54.5 (109)	22.0 (44)	100.0 (200)

(Actual figures are shown in parentheses)

Chi-Square = 3.598*; DF = 4; Significance Level <.05

Contingency Coefficient = .133

It may be seen that only less than one-fourth customers are ready to prefer eco-friendly clothes or go for green fashion. Such customers belong to all the age groups. More than half of the customers are ready to go for green fashion if the cost involved is not much, i.e., the clothes made of eco-friendly fibres are not costly as compared to other clothes. More than half of such customers in all the three age groups fall in this category of preference. Going green hardly matters for more than one-fifth of the customers and they also belong to all the three age groups. As the calculated value of Chi-square is much less than its table value (9.488) at 4 degrees of freedom, the association between age group and preference for green fashion seems to be insignificant. It means that the preference for green fashion cuts across the age group of customers and they may be easily motivated to go for eco-friendly clothes if they are made aware of positive effects of these clothes for them as well as for the environment. The preference for green fashion is influenced by the educational level of the customers, the financial position of their family, marital status and sex as all these four variables show significant association for preferring eco-friendly clothes or go for green fashion.

Just to confirm the above findings, the selected customers were told that green fashion is safe not only for their body, but also for the healthy environment. In such a situation, would they like to spend more money for green fashion or not? Their responses to this query are shown in the following table:

Table 4 : Percentage distribution of customers according to their age group and views about paying more price for eco-friendly fibres or green fashion

Age Group	Views about paying more Price			Total
	Yes, definitely	Yes, if the difference is not much	Not at all	
Up to 30 years	50.0 (43)	40.7 (35)	9.3 (8)	100.0 (86)
31 to 45 years	36.4 (24)	43.9 (29)	19.7 (13)	100.0 (66)
Above 45 years	16.7 (8)	66.7 (32)	16.7 (8)	100.0 (48)
Total	37.5 (75)	48.0 (96)	14.5 (29)	100.0 (200)

(Actual figures are shown in parentheses)

Chi-Square = 16.815*; DF = 4; Significance Level >.01

Contingency Coefficient = .278



It may be seen from the data presented above that more than one-third customers are sure and ready to pay more for green fashion for the sake of their health as well as for controlling environmental hazards of textile industry. Here the proportion of customers shows significant decrease with the increase in age group. Another little less than half are ready to go for green fashion if the difference between eco-friendly clothes and non-eco-friendly clothes is not much. It also means they are ready to pay a little more for green fashion. Only one-seventh customers are not at all ready to pay more for green fashion. It is also evident that those who are definitely ready to pay more for green fashion have more proportion in the age group up to 30 years (57.3%) followed by those between 31 to 45 years (36.4%) and even those who are above 45 years (16.7%). It is noteworthy that nearly three-fourth customers in the age group of 45 plus are even ready to pay little more for green fashion. These are very significant reactions of the customers regarding green fashion. As the calculated value of Chi-square is more than its table value (13.277) at 4 degrees of freedom, the association between age group and paying more for green fashion seems to be significant.

Educational level of the customers, financial position of their family and marital status do play an important role in motivating them to pay more for green fashion as is evident from the Chi-square values ($\chi^2 = 19.245$, DF = 6, Significance Level $>.01$; $\chi^2 = 17.008$, DF = 4, Significance Level $>.01$; $\chi^2 = 28.896$, DF = 4, Significance Level $>.01$ respectively). For example, only one-fourth customers (26.7%) who have education up to matriculation are ready to pay more for green fashion as against nearly three-fourth (73.3%) who are graduates or even more educated. Similarly, only one-eighth customers having monthly income up to Rs. 30,000 (12.0%) are ready to pay more for green fashion as compared to one-third in the income bracket of Rs. 30,001 to 50,000 (33.3%) and more than half having income of more than Rs. 50,000 (54.7%). Less proportion of widows/widowers (6.7%) and unmarried customers (36.0%) are ready to pay more for green fashion as compared to those who are married (57.3%). However, the sex of the customers is independent of their stated position to spend more on green fashion ($\chi^2 = 3.864$, DF = 2, Significance Level $<.05$) though the proportion of male customers (53.3%) is bit higher than that of female counterparts (46.7%).

Ways and Means to Popularize Green Fashion

Worldwide evidence indicates people are concerned about the environment and are changing their behaviour accordingly. As a result there is a growing market for sustainable and socially responsible products and services. Though the green trend is more discernible in the developed countries, it has slowly started gaining ground in the developing countries as well. In India too, concern for the environment has considerably heightened in recent years and this is evident from the increasing enactment of environmental legislations and judicial activism. Business firms have also started turning 'green' and embracing green marketing practices to conform to green pressures and environmental legislation.[3] In fact, with the threat of global warming and ecological degradation looming on our heads, eco-friendly products including green fashion have to find a favour amongst the coming generations in India also. However, it is not necessary that increased awareness about environmental degradation may change consumers' behaviour for going green. For example, a study conducted by Banumathi Mannarswamy has shown that although the customers in a city like Coimbatore are aware of environmental problems and green products in the market, but their attitudes and the behaviour towards the green purchase has not improved.[4] In fact, till sometime back, the term 'eco-friendly clothing' or 'green fashion' was completely alien to India. Though the concept has long been popularized in the West, India caught it not too long back and



hence its sustainability in India requires systematic campaign in its favour without which neither the textile industry nor the customers in large number will go for green fashion.

The results of this study show that customers can be motivated to go for green fashion by increasing their level of awareness about the merits of eco-friendly clothes on the one hand and environmental hazards of the production process involved in non-eco-friendly fibres. This can increase the demand for green fashion in the market which may put pressure on textile industry to opt more for eco-friendly fibres. Clothing labels generally reveal what fibers are used to make a garment and how to clean it. However, those labels don't outline all the chemical finishes applied to the garment or the environmental impact of the manufacturing process. If it is made mandatory for the textile industry to specify clearly and prominently the adverse affect and hazards of environment on non-eco-friendly clothes, people will become aware themselves and don't go for clothes made of such fibres.

There is need to develop environmentally-responsible or 'green' marketing in India and intensively campaign for it. Green marketing is a business practice that takes into account consumer concerns about promoting preservation and conservation of the natural environment. Green marketing campaigns highlight the superior environmental protection characteristics of a company's products and services, whether those benefits take the form of reduced waste in packaging, increased energy efficiency in product use, or decreased release of toxic emissions and other pollutants in production. This campaign along with the ready availability of eco-friendly clothes and their affordable cost may help sustaining green fashion in India. This study has highlighted the fact that health conscious customers are even ready to pay more for green fashion in their own interest and in the larger interest of the nation.

It should be insensibly advertized that the green fashion is environmentally friendly clothing. Audio-visual media of mass communication like Television and print media should be used for advertising green fashion. It should be brought to the notice of people at large that fibers making up the green fashion are derived from the earth's natural environment without depleting limited natural resources. They inflict minimal harm to human and environmental health as they implement improved manufacturing measures and eliminate contaminated waste to a large extent.

An overwhelming majority of the customers showed their awareness about environmental protection and felt a strong need for taking stringent measures to save the environment. As they are not aware about the adverse impact of chemicals and dyes used in textile industries on their lives and environment, they are opting for clothes made of non-eco-friendly fibres. The increased awareness among people can help sustaining green fashion. It must be remembered that the future belongs to clothing that is kind to both the environment and people, and labels with high standards in both respects.

Farmers should be encouraged to grow organic cotton and other eco-friendly fibres. As the growth process of the harvested fibers does not involve chemicals, harvesting such fibres will reduce the cost. Government should purchase these fibres for onward supply to textile industry and give incentive to textile industry for giving due cast of these fibres to the farmers. Checks should also be made on synthetic fabrics, such as polyesters, nylons, and acrylics which have adversely affect human body and help in degrading the environment. Animals are also another source of natural fibres. Fibres derived from various animals such as rabbit, sheep, llama, goats, etc. is also used for green fashion and such animals also need legal protection for availability of fibre in large quantity. Farmers should also be encouraged for helping in such fibres.

In the light of empirical evidence, it is suggested that government should organize informative programs to make the public aware about need for green clothing, processes



and dyes used in other clothes that adversely affect the nature, their processing with heavy chemical agents which are not only harmful and have enduring effects on environment but also on the health of people. In the larger interest of a nation and its people, government should provide liberal subsidies to units engaged in manufacturing green clothes and should adopt stringent measure to control the use of harmful chemicals and dyes in textile industry.

In order to make the textiles totally environment friendly, not only the final product to be used by the consumer should be eco-friendly, but the production technology, packaging and disposal after use should also be eco-friendly. Therefore, the production ecology, user ecology and disposal ecology must be taken into consideration. Government should discharge its duty in convincing textile industry to consider all these factors and if the industry does not fall in line, stringent legal measures should be adopted to have control on the industry in the larger interest of the people and the environment.

References

1. Mahajan, Surabhi : Origin and Functions of Clothing: A Note, *Journal of National Development*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer), 2011, pp. 239-244, ISSN 0972-8309.
2. Elkington, John, Julia Hailes, and Joel Makower : *The Green Consumer*, Penguin Group USA, ISBN: 0140177116, 1993.
3. Jain, Sanjay K. and Kaur, Gurmeet : Green Marketing: An Indian Perspective, *Global Business Review*, Vol. 5, No.2, 2004, pp. 187-205, ISSN 0972-1509.
4. Mannarswamy, Banumathi : A Study on the Environmental Awareness and the Changing Attitude of the Students and Public in Coimbatore towards Green Products : *Research Journal of Social Science and Management*, Vol. 1, No. 7 (November), 2011, pp. 75-84, ISSN 2251-1571.