

Chapter 4

Development of a Sustainable Alternative to Fast Fashion: A Case Study of Crafts of Keylong, Himachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Ever-increasing consumerism and disposable fashion culture lead to immense waste generation, high resource consumption, and ethical concerns in production resulting in massive impact on environmental degradation. Fast fashion features low-cost clothing, mass production, rapid turnaround, and disposability at a faster pace leading to overconsumption. Sustainable alternative to fast fashion requires responsible consumption, ethical production, environmental friendliness, and to be designed for longevity. Handicrafts being one of the alternatives to fast fashion promotes local artisanal skills with the usage of sustainable materials and consideration to the preservation of local heritage. Indian crafts have always been regarded as a repository to rich cultural heritage of India and women artisans play a very important role in preserving and developing the crafts of different regions within India. Their involvement in crafts enriches the continuity of age-old practices and helping in cultural preservation. National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) being a premier institute in the field of fashion is known for its extensive work in

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handicrafts. NIFT emphasizes the importance of traditional crafts and artisanal skills in the context of fashion through research, training, and collaborative projects. NIFT promotes practices that safeguard these crafts from extinction and also play a significant role in contemporizing the crafts through appropriate design interventions. This in turn helps the artisans financially and also encourage the promotion of sustainable slow fashion thereby revitalization of rich heritage of Indian regions and also making these crafts relevant in the global context.

INTRODUCTION

NIFT, Kangra took one such initiative for Keylong region of Himachal Pradesh where the artisans of the region are known for craft heritage that include knitting and weaving. Keylong is the administrative center of Lahaul-Spiti district in Himachal Pradesh, India with harsh cold weather and shorter summers. NIFT collaborated with artisans and local communities to understand the demographics, type of crafts, techniques, and significance of these crafts. The quantitative analysis based on 50 local artisans provided in this chapter reveals craft identification and mapping, skill assessment, and market analysis. The data was used to structure training programs and appropriate design interventions to increase awareness about the region's crafts. The survey aimed to capture a comprehensive view of the craft landscape in Keylong, providing valuable information for preserving and modernizing such sustainable crafts as alternative to mass produced fast fashion. The trainings followed were based on sustainable initiative framework that is capacity building and skill enhancement, possible design interventions, market development and promotion, artisan awareness and education and briefing on relevant policies. The chapter thus, lists the diagnostic study of artisans followed by efforts undertaken by NIFT, Kangra for the skill upgradation and development of artisans of the Keylong region as a sustainable alternative towards fast fashion.

Indian crafts play significant role in rural development by providing employment and income opportunities, promoting social and economic inclusion, and preserving cultural heritage. Indian crafts are repositories of cultural heritage, and fashion plays a pivotal role in preserving and advancing these traditions. Sustainable Fashion imbuing crafts ensures the continuity of age-old practices, thus contributing to cultural preservation. Indian crafts empower artisans economically, fostering self-sufficiency and reducing financial disparities. Sustainable fashion in Indian crafts often extends beyond individual success to uplift entire communities. These ventures promote community development, fostering collaboration, and shared prosperity, and align with the principles of sustainable development goals (SDGs). Sustainable fashion and Indian crafts embody a powerful force that contributes to economic

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