

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW
MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

Volume 5 | Issue 2

2022

© 2022 *International Journal of Law Management & Humanities*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://www.ijlmh.com/>

Under the aegis of VidhiAagaz – Inking Your Brain (<https://www.vidhiaagaz.com/>)

This article is brought to you for “free” and “open access” by the International Journal of Law Management & Humanities at VidhiAagaz. It has been accepted for inclusion in the International Journal of Law Management & Humanities after due review.

In case of **any suggestion or complaint**, please contact Gyan@vidhiaagaz.com.

To submit your Manuscript for Publication at the **International Journal of Law Management & Humanities**, kindly email your Manuscript at submission@ijlmh.com.

Impact of Second-Hand Clothing Waste in Ghana

AYUSHEE PRIYA¹

ABSTRACT

Fast-fashion is a clothing designs that are cheap, trendy and quick. Fast-fashion industry has expanded rapidly over the years and generated thousands of jobs for the people of Ghana but it has also turned Ghana into a toxic landfill where the journey of world's unwanted clothing ends. The 40 percent of the second hand clothing from the western world arriving in Ghana are unacceptable and results in complete waste. The accumulated textile waste washes into the ocean bed and chokes the aquatic life creating enormous environmental impact. The people of Ghana are enforced to live such waste which is turning their life miserable.

This paper deals with impact of second hand clothing waste in Ghana. The paper will highlight the issue of waste accumulation in the city of Accra, the capital of Ghana and the second the hand clothing market which gives employment to the many Ghanaians for their livelihood. This paper also highlights the issue of environmental disaster it has due to the world's unwanted clothing culture. It also highlights the effect it has on human beings in terms of child labour and forced labour. This paper altogether focuses on the issue of exploitation of human beings and environment due to the second hand clothing culture.

Keywords: *Ghana, Fast-fashion, accumulated waste, environmental impact.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Fast fashion is a type of clothing which is a process of easily made inexpensive clothes that fits the changing trend of fashion. Apps like Instagram and retailers advertise these clothes. The fashion industry is growing continuously which has resulted in growth of landfills charged with unwanted clothing that is no longer in the trend. As per the studies, 10,000 articles of second hand clothing are sent every five minutes by United Kingdom, which are ultimately dumped in Accra due to its damaged and low-quality clothes.

The goods that are shipped to Ghana are effecting the business in the Kantamanto market. The traders rely on countries like Europe, America and China for second hand clothing which is either donated or recycled. According to the reports approximately 15 million second hand

¹ Author is a student at KIIT School of Law, KIIT-DU, Bhubaneswar, India.

clothing arrive Ghana every week. The Kantamanto market which is also called as home for second hand clothing is livelihood for most of the many Ghanaians. The second hand clothing market has created thousands of jobs due to its increasing size and value as provides people to earn some money to feed their family. Many Ghanaians Kayayei women are displaced from their villages due to unemployment or conflict and end up working in Kantamanto market for their livelihood.

The fast fashion items which arrive are most of the items damaged or cannot be sold. In 2013, Accra opened a landfill in Kpone with the motive of accepting 700 tonnes of waste every day. The local Government and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) was also assigned to pick up 70 tonnes of second hand clothing waste from Kantamanto market and Accra every day. The procedure started in 2016 and after four years, Kpone was overloaded with waste. Due to insufficiency of funds, Accra Metropolitan Assembly could not transport waste from Kantamanto market. Consequently, the waste is swept into waterways which chokes the fish and marine life in the ocean. These tangled up waste can cause floods and diseases like cholera and malaria. This fast fashion clothing from western cast offs is creating environmental disaster leading to fatalities. This is the reason fashion is considered as top polluters of the world.

II. FAST FASHION AS A GLOBAL PROBLEM

The apparel industry has become the second most polluting industry in the world with 80 billion items are produced every year. This category of waste is the fastest growing category of waste in the world. As per the studies, the global clothing sales could increase triple by 2050. The impact of fast fashion on environment is massive. Fast fashion has enormous outcome on environment and the people as well.

The trend for cheaper clothing can be made by using cheap labour and cheap materials. The rise in use of polyester is harmful on environment as well as human as it made from polluting plastic from fossil fuels. Firstly, polyester is non-biodegradable and as result every piece of polyester that has ever been made is still on earth, so with billions of fast fashion clothing being produced every year, it is degrading the environment. Secondly, the micro plastics that comes out while washing the polyester fabrics are entering the water systems and finally into oceans which are consumed by fish and ultimately by human, degrading our own health. Thirdly, polyester is non-breathable unlike natural fibres. Fourthly, it is made of a very high-intensity product which taking a lot of energy which is charge for 10 percent of the total carbon output for the entire world.

It is not just environment who is effected by the fast fashion but also the human beings into

terms of forced labour and child labour. According to the reports, one in the sex people around the world work in the apparel industry among them 80 percent are women and 98 percent are not getting living wage. There is negative impact of forced labour and child labour on the economy of the country. Child labour effect the mental health of a child. It results in sexual, economic exploitation and slavery. Fast fashion is not only destroying the environment but also the life of human beings.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF FAST FASHION

- **Water usage:** During production of garment, nearly 93 billion cubic metres of water are used in the garment industry every year. Nearly 20% of the world's wastewater is directly the consequences of fabric dyeing and treatment which is charged into the water systems polluting its content with heavy metals and toxins. Therefore, effecting the aquatic life in the ocean as well as humans.
- **Textile waste:** Each year, 92 million tonnes of textile waste is generated. According to the reports, 17 million tonnes of textile waste in 2018 was dumped into landfills which will take 200 years to decompose. In United States of America, unsold clothes are shipped to under developed countries. So, whatever is not sold becomes a waste creating threat to environment and ecosystem.
- **Carbon emissions:** Fast fashion industry release approximately 1.2 billion tonnes of carbon effecting the environment adversely and creating environmental disorder.
- **Air quality:** Due to the increasing amount of waste, people are burning second hand clothing waste in order to deal with increasing waste but it is continuously degrading the quality of air that we breathe and as a result harming the natural environment.

IV. FAST FASHION DURING PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have stopped second hand clothing. The COVID-19 pandemic has constrained retailers that help second hand clothing to shut down their stores. Less individuals are buying clothing on the web because of the topic of when they will actually want to wear them. Places like H&M, an enormous retailer for second hand clothing, have likewise been impacted by COVID-19 prompting the end of 250 stores around the world. Also, clothing deals out and out have dropped by 34 percent, delivering the topic of what the eventual fate of second hand clothing will mean for locales like West Africa. So, as a result there are less second hand clothing shipped which ultimately reduced the amount of waste in Accra. The waste accumulation in Accra reduced due to which there was less waste charged into ocean which was not much harming the fish and marine life in the ocean. The effects of COVID-19

appear to be both positive as well as negative.

V. ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS FAST FASHION WASTE IN GHANA

Approximately, 7800 women and men come together in 2020 so as to achieve the aim of recycling and collecting the waste in Kpone. These are workers who need employment and are paid off for their efforts. As per reports, these workers have collected 60 percent of the recyclable waste. Regardless of the efforts made by the people they are consistently met with harassment. Due to the poor sanitation, these people are also facing health problems near landfills. The Government is trying their best to establish health post and impose sanitation rights. This move was taken by the local government due to increasing problem of waste management in the Accra, the capital of Ghana because most of the fast fashion end up being dumped into the landfills.

VI. CONCLUSION

The impact of fast fashion on environment is massive as fast fashion gives rise to waste, pollution and planned obsolescence because of its manufacturing method and cheap materials. Consequently, every week nearly 6 million unsaleable clothes are cleared and bundled into sacks as waste and as a result developed Ghana into toxic landfill. This throw away culture is fastest growing category of waste in the world as western consumers buy 60 percent more clothing than 15 years ago. Consequently, as per reports by 2030, the textile industry will enlarge by a further 60 percent effecting the environment as well as the human beings.

Though fast fashion has created enormous job opportunities for thousands of peoples due to its increasing size and value but it has a massive effect on the environment. Many precautionary measures have been taken by the Ghanaians government to ensure proper control of the waste but the outcome is not effective. The impact of fast fashion on environment is massive and is creating environmental catastrophe. Therefore, the people should be aware about the consequences the fast fashion is creating on the environment and take some precautionary measures to ensure healthy and safe environment for both the human beings as well as plants, animals and marine life.

VII. REFERENCES:

- Asheigh Jimenez, The effects of Fast Fashion in West Africa (2016).
- Gloria Makifui Mifetu, Possible ways of Minimizing Fabric waste: A case study of Kad Manufacturing Limited, Ghana (2021).
- St. John- James, A. and Kent clothing sustainability and cycling in Ghana (2019), *Fashion Practice*, 11 (3), pp. 375-396.
- Adam Hayes, Fast fashion (2021).
- Linton Besser, Dead white man's clothes (2021).
- Environmental Catastrophe in Ghana Fuelled by Fast Fashion in Western Countries (2022).
- Fast fashion in the U.S. is fueling an environmental disaster in Ghana (2021).
