

Positive Impacts of Fashion

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There is no uncertainty that the fashion industry has reformed society over centuries, but has its impact been positive? Fashion affects the social aspects of life, and it can be argued that the fashion industry has a negative consequence on people. However, on the positive side, the fashion industry has evolved tremendously and became influential. Fashion is an art, which enables people to express themselves. It gives a sense of freedom to be whoever one wants to be with their choice of fashion. One of the most significant aspects of fashion, it displays one's identity, background, and culture. This paper discusses the positive aspects of how this multi-billion-dollar industry enrich our lives economically, psychologically, and creatively.

The fashion industry employs over 300 million people globally that may otherwise be without work. It has been estimated as the second most significant worldwide economic exporting and trade business operating over 57 million workers in developing countries. The vast majority of these employers are women. The fashion industry moreover perceived as frivolous, vain, and ephemeral industry. However, fashion matters to the economy, society as well as to every individual on a personal level. Many fail to acknowledge its value and the importance of this industry truly is.

Globally fashion industry is valued at three trillion giving employment opportunities to those helpless women in developing countries, where women are viewed as a "burden." Although relating it to many other global industries, fashion also has its dark side. Issues within the industry and are often mentioned; exploitation of garment workers, lack of diversity, and environmental damage. Nevertheless, this vast creative industry has initiated significant change throughout the years.

The major culprit in the fashion industry known as “fast fashion.” When the Rana Plaza garment factory collapsed, 1,130 people outside Dhaka, Bangladesh, were killed. A harsh global spotlight displayed the garment industry chaos, rife with horrifically unsafe conditions, corruption, low wages, and child labor within the country. Apparel companies such as the Walt Disney Company have responded to such disasters by pulling their business out of Bangladesh. However, that does nothing to improve the lives of workers there (Bain & Avins, 2015). These workers depend on the garment business to make ends meet. Garment workers in Bangladesh make around \$96 per month and are primarily women. While the industry relied upon the exploitation of women for cheap labor, it is not the clothing itself that is the issue. In developing countries, these jobs are a powerful tool for women to improve the lives of their families and communities. Nonetheless, the industry has acknowledged these issues, and consumers are starting to perceive the positive transition of the industry.

Sustainable fashion has made a significant impact environmentally and continues to grow. Rent the Runway, and Gwynnie Bee are companies that support reuse instead of rapid and irresponsible consumption. Patagonia is also among one of the most financially successful companies executing controversial, unconventional methods. Patagonia provides a network to explore and become mindful of being no longer a passive consumer. Today consumers are more conscious about our planet and catching on to the new trends in textiles and technology. They are choosing garments/ materials that are sustainable and will last longer by ditching cheap synthetics such as polyester, nylon and spandex (Colter, 2019). These fibers aren't grown naturally. Instead, they come from chemicals and polymers. Sustainable fashion has impacted the life cycle of a garment from where to how it is made and when it ends up in our landfills.

As the U.S. economy continues to grow and evolve, the fashion industry enriches our lives creatively. It is among the many bright spots of our new creative economy. More than 200 schools across the country offer fashion-related programs and prepare students for high wage jobs in the fashion industry. These programs develop skills that are marketable not only in fashion but across various categories (Pg 4, 2015). According to Whitney McVeigh's project, 1000 Coats, The project consists of 100 women from different backgrounds, each sewing ten coats. Within this activity, there are workshops teaching women to sew, providing them with new skills and encouraging them to work together as part of a community. This is a great example of fashion's role in psychological aspects as well as developing relationships with different communities.

Clothes are vital to our most basic needs, however the fashion industry drives innovation that benefits us in a multitude of ways. For instance, Social media has influenced the fashion industry more than any other industry. It enabled the industry to connect with consumers using the latest social networking technology. The fashion industry is using social media to study trends and predict fashion behaviors. The most important impact, that it generated job opportunities. Whether it is working with designers or agencies, social media has brought diversity to the industry. People of color, plus-sized, different ethnicities and lifestyles, it is much easier to find people whom one can relate to. The influence of Social Media on fashion industry is undeniable today. By taking the creativity of fashion and applying them to environmental and social issues, fashion truly enriches lives. The world is vast, filled with diversity and culture. Fashion is that one language that everyone can understand. It connects people internationally.

Today's fashion industry looks very different from years ago. Fashion design schools strengthen graduates with the advertising, design, web, and other skills needed to compete in this rapidly changing global fashion industry (Pg 6, 2015). Fashion can change and shape lives through its connection to every individual. We all wear clothes, and every piece of clothing we buy represents a personal choice. Many people see fashion as ephemeral and frivolous. However, Fashion is as a creative, enterprising, multifaceted industry that is vital to our economic and personal well-being. Fashion really does matter.

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