

ECOLOGIC

Reduce Waste Through Sustainable Clothing

Many successful companies are looking to cut down their reliance on resources as there is no guarantee that there will be enough land available to meet the demand for cotton which is the main input for apparels in India. Recycled materials can be used to create yarn

Recycled clothes — always conjured up images of hand-me-downs from my brother, ill-fitting clothes that were not always gender-appropriate growing up. Today, handing clothes from one sibling to another and then finally down to create waste cloth to wipe homes is a practice many of us still follow. Although this can be considered recycling, as the piece of clothing goes through various different roles before breaking down to threads and being completely 'used up', recycled and sustainable clothing is another thing altogether absent in the world today!

Sustainable clothing comes in many forms from being eco-friendly to ethically produced — but the first impression is that it may not be affordable to the masses. However, with the larger number of clothing, jewellery and shoe /accessory manufacturers entering this space, there are definitely many options

available around the world, making conscious consumption more mainstream.

Many successful companies are looking to cut down their reliance on resources, as there is no guarantee that there will be enough land available to meet the demand for cotton, which remains the main input for most of our apparel here in India. Closed loop apparel is fast becoming a need in a world that is increasingly resource constrained. Alternative recycled materials used to create yarn have to be considered in place of raw virgin materials.

Let us look at the single example of plastic — they play such a vital role in our daily life — right from the humble plastic bag up to the medical implants, our usage of plastic is through the roof! It is a



Denims made from recycled plastic bottles ● Express

fact that we now use about 20 times more plastic than we did 50 years ago. Every industry has come to a

point where it has to optimise the lifespan of this material by recycling it and using it over and over

again as many times as possible — due to the fact that an average plastic bottle or bag can take anywhere from 450-1000 years to biodegrade!

Industry has to optimise the lifespan of plastic by recycling it and using it over and over again

Sources indicate that plastic bottles are among the top items that most people recycle with the local kabbadiwalas yet there are millions of plastic bottles that remain uncollected and therefore non-recycled every year. These find their way to our oceans, natural water bodies, streets and of course strewn around amidst our surroundings making them one of the top polluters in the country.

The first appearance of plastics in fashion was in denims. The bottles collected are treated through a series of cleaning and crushing processes turning them into plastic

flakes. These flakes are then further processed to rough polyester fiber that is then turned into a finer final quality material. The yarn can then be used to develop fabrics as well as other elements of apparel such as straps, labels and so on.

Using up to 20% post consumer recycled pet bottles — a popular jeans brand advertised using 8 bottles per pair of denim jeans they produced making a new wave in mainstream fashion — upcycled wardrobe if you please.

Another interesting recycled fashion item uses coffee. The fabric produced from dried out consumed coffee grounds is soft, light and most importantly — UV and water-resistant. Further it also keeps you cool and controls odour — look good and smell good while making a conscious commitment to your new wardrobe!

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