

TEXTILES & GARMENTS NEWSLETTER



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MESSAGE FROM THE ATGC CHAIR – SHAREENA SAFDAR JANJUA

Dear Esteemed Members,

As Chair of the Asian Textiles and Garments Council (ATGC), I am honored to address pertaining issues of the textile and garment industry of the Asia-Pacific region. As a member of this community, I would like the textile industry to proactively work towards bridging gaps in this region, and improving trade relations in the Asia-Pacific region, thereby increasing economic growth along with sustainability by reducing carbon footprint, shifting legislatively to renewable energy sources and increasing environmental protection.



The textile and garment industry is the largest cornerstone of global commerce, weaving together fashion, functionality, and innovation. The market size of textile in the Asian-Pacific region is US\$ 391.20 billion and encompasses a diverse array of products, from clothing and accessories to industrial and technical textiles. The growth of this industry is fuelled by an increase in consumer spending in fashion accessories, rising population, a growing middle class, rising demand for clothing and home furnishing products, and technological advancements in the industry. China, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Australia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, and Malaysia are some of the giants in textile exports and hold significant position in global textile markets.

The Asia-Pacific region has an edge in the textile and garment production, in terms of cost-effectiveness, availability of skilled labor, production of traditional textile and garments, branding, pricing, distribution network and innovation to attract global brands to establish textile and garment units in the region.

At present, the demand for sustainable and eco-friendly textiles and garments is rising in Asia-Pacific markets, driven by growing environment awareness among consumers. E-commerce and digital economy are transforming the distribution and retail landscape of textiles and garments in Asia.

From the platform of the Confederation of Asia Pacific Chamber of Commerce and Industry, I would like to invite all countries to participate in APTEXPO 2024 to be held in Singapore from 13th November to 15th November 2024, immediately after the 38th CACCI Conference. APTEXPO 2024 will serve as a global platform for industry leaders, stakeholders, and innovators to convene, share best practices, and explore solutions that will drive the region's textile and apparel supply chain forward. This Expo will also provide an opportunity to explore untapped textile market of Asia Pacific in particular and global market in general.

In the forthcoming months, we will expand our activities for the promotion of trade in textile and garment industry in the Asia-Pacific region by organizing webinars, business opportunities conferences, matchmaking activities, and participation in exhibition, among others. We will try our best to promote business opportunities in textile and garments in the Asia-Pacific. Together, we will enhance the share of textile and garment in global production and exports.

Sincerely,

Shareena Safdar Janjua

Asian Textiles and Garments Council

Chair

THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN 2024: MARKET, TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND OUTLOOK

Medium

Priyanka | Writer



The apparel and textile industry stands as a cornerstone of global commerce, weaving together fashion, functionality, and innovation. In the vibrant tapestry of this market, opportunities abound, driven by evolving consumer preferences, technological advancements, and market dynamics.

Apparel and Textile Market Size and Growth Rate

The apparel and textile market encompasses a diverse array of products, from clothing and accessories to industrial and technical textiles. The apparel and textile market in the Asia-Pacific region is experiencing steady growth, with a Textile market size estimated at USD 391.20 billion in 2024. Over the forecast period from 2024 to 2029, the market is projected to reach USD 443.72 billion, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.55%.

This growth is fueled by various factors, including increasing consumer spending in fashion accessories in Asia, rising demand for clothing and home furnishing products, and technological advancements in the industry. The Asia-Pacific region, comprising countries such as China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Australia, and others, holds a dominant position in the global textile market, accounting for a significant portion of global textile and clothing exports.

Apparel and Textile Market Trends and Analysis

In the ever-changing landscape of the apparel and textile industry, key trends emerge, shaping market dynamics and influencing consumer behavior. From the rise of sustainable fashion to the growing demand for high-value fabrics, such as silk and synthetics, the market landscape is characterized by innovation and adaptation.

The apparel and textile industry is a global tapestry woven with innovation, tradition, and ever-evolving consumer preferences. Here's a glimpse into the key market trends shaping its future, along with statistics that illuminate their significance:

1. Rise of the Eco-Conscious Consumer (73% of Gen Z willing to pay more for sustainable clothing)

Consumers are becoming increasingly environmentally conscious, demanding sustainable practices and eco-friendly materials throughout the clothing lifecycle. This is driving a surge in the use of organic cotton, recycled fibers, and innovative dyeing techniques that minimize environmental impact.

2. E-commerce Boom: Convenience Reigns Supreme (Global fashion e-commerce sales to reach \$1.2 trillion by 2025)

Online marketplaces are revolutionizing the way we shop for clothes. E-commerce platforms offer greater accessibility, convenience, and wider product selection, prompting traditional retailers to adopt omnichannel strategies for a seamless shopping experience.

3. Personalization: A Tailored Fit for Every Customer (86% of consumers are willing to pay more for a personalized experience)

Consumers crave a personalized shopping experience. Customization options like made-to-order garments and on-demand printing are gaining traction, allowing for unique and individual expression. Additionally, brands are leveraging data analytics to personalize marketing strategies and product recommendations.

4. Athleisure Takes Center Stage (Global athleisure market to reach \$549.3 billion by 2027)

The athleisure trend continues to dominate, driven by a growing focus on comfort and versatility. Consumers are seeking clothing that seamlessly transitions from workout sessions to everyday wear, blurring the lines between activewear and casual fashion.

5. Technological Advancements: Revolutionizing Design and Production (Global market for wearable technology expected to reach \$81.5 billion by 2025)

Technological advancements are transforming the industry. From 3D printing for faster prototyping to artificial intelligence for design optimization and production forecasting, technology is streamlining processes and creating new possibilities.

6. Ethical Sourcing and Labor Practices Under Scrutiny (70% of consumers are willing to pay more for ethically sourced clothing)

Ethical sourcing and labor practices are becoming increasingly important considerations for consumers. Brands are facing higher scrutiny for their supply chains, with a focus on fair wages, safe working conditions, and transparency throughout the production process.

Apparel and Textile Market Segmentation

Segmentation by Application:

- Clothing segment holding the largest market share of 65% in 2023
- Industrial textiles market expected to reach \$223.4 billion by 2028
- Global home textile market to reach \$210.1 billion by 2027

Segmentation by Material:

- Synthetic fibers expected to dominate the market with a share of 52% by 2025

Segmentation by Geography:

- Asia Pacific expected to remain the dominant market with a share of over 50% by 2027

Future Outlook: A Tapestry of Growth

Global apparel and textile market projected to reach \$1.5 trillion by 2030.

As we peer into the horizon of the apparel and textile market, a landscape of possibilities unfolds. With opportunities for expansion, diversification, and market penetration, the future outlook is bright. By tapping into emerging markets, embracing sustainability, and leveraging technological advancements, industry stakeholders can chart a course towards sustainable growth and prosperity. The overall outlook for the apparel and textile industry is positive, driven by:

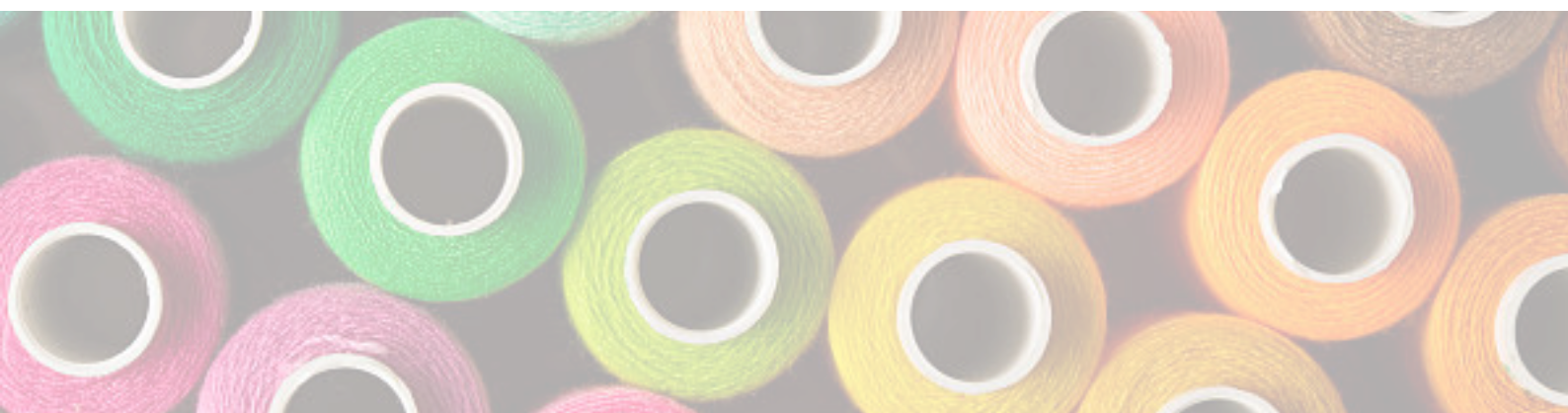
- Rising disposable incomes in developing economies, particularly in Asia, leading to increased spending on clothing and textiles.
- Growing urbanization and a burgeoning middle class globally.
- The increasing popularity of e-commerce, offering wider reach and convenience for consumers.

Challenges in Apparel and Textile Market: Threads of Uncertainty

Despite its promising outlook, the apparel and textile market faces challenges, from supply chain disruptions to changing consumer trends. However, these challenges also present opportunities for innovation and adaptation. By embracing sustainability and digitalization, industry players can overcome hurdles and unlock new avenues for growth. Several key challenges in apparel and textile market loom on the horizon:

- Geopolitical tensions and trade wars can disrupt supply chains and increase costs.
- Fluctuations in raw material prices, such as cotton, can squeeze profit margins.
- Rapidly evolving consumer preferences necessitate constant innovation and adaptability.
- The growing threat of climate change necessitates a shift towards sustainable practices to meet environmental regulations and consumer demands.

Note: This is an abridged version of an article written by Priyanka titled "[The Textile Industry in 2024: Market, Trends, Challenges and Outlook.](#)"



APAC TO DRIVE GLOBAL SPORTSWEAR INDUSTRY GROWTH IN 5 YEARS: S&P GLOBAL

Fibre2Fashion

The global sportswear industry has solid growth prospects, and volumes and product innovation are expected to drive growth this year, with a moderate price contribution as inflation eases, according to S&P Global Ratings.

Demand is underpinned by the increasing number of women in sports, the casualisation of dress codes and continued penetration in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region.

APAC has been the fastest growing region in recent years and will likely remain one of the main growth drivers in the next five years, supported by a growing middle-class embracing global trends such as streetwear and athleisure.

Short-term challenges this year relate to how quickly consumer confidence recovers.

Competitive pressures will remain high; from local brands like Anta in China, newer brands like OnRunning and Hoka, and well-performing brands like Lululemon and New Balance.

A step up in marketing expenses to support previous price hikes and promote new products could weigh on profitability expansion

As inventory levels gradually normalise, S&P Global expects a more subdued promotional environment.

The sportswear industry has a global and complex supply chain with more than 80% of suppliers located in APAC. Geopolitical tensions and conflicts pose risks to the efficient functioning of the supply chain, S&P Global Ratings noted.

The direct-to-consumer channel (including e-commerce) remains a key focus, ensuring brand visibility and proximity to consumers. However wholesale partners have a critical role in attracting a more diverse consumer base and managing high volumes, it said.

Sportswear companies' strategies around environmental and social topics are central to preserving their license to operate and protecting brand reputation.

S&P Global expects an increasing focus on sustainable products, led by eco-friendly materials, while maintaining core competencies based on the performance benefits of sports apparel and footwear.

The global sportswear sector should expand at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 6-7 per cent between 2024 and 2028, by retail value at current prices, according to Euromonitor.

But S&P Global estimates rated entities like Nike, Adidas and VF will grow by the low-to-mid single digits in 2024-2025, due to high competition and soft demand as consumers focus spending on staples, services and travel instead of discretionary apparel and footwear.

The decline in Adidas and Under Armour's market shares is due to increased competition in North America, which the groups intend to face by resetting their product portfolios.

China has seen an increasing preference for domestic brands after the controversy around Xinjiang cotton in March 2021, which saw a backlash from Chinese consumers against foreign sportswear companies.

North America and Europe will continue to grow at CAGRs of about 6 per cent and 4 per cent respectively in 2024-2028 due to the popularity of athleisure, the increasing participation of women in sport and the expansion of the luxury segment as designers include sports elements in designs.

China, forecast to expand at about 7-8 per cent CAGR in 2024-2028 at current prices, remains the largest sportswear market in APAC, but other countries like India are expected to grow slightly faster.

Sports footwear is expected to grow slightly faster than sports apparel, but market segmentation should remain broadly unchanged. Growth in both categories is being driven by outdoor sportswear, which has seen strong gains since the pandemic.

FASHION ECOMMERCE MARKET IN ASIA: THE MARKET COULD HIT US\$1.1 TRILLION BY 2025

ECDB

[Antonia Tönnies](#) | Working Student Data Journalist & Content
Creator at ECDB

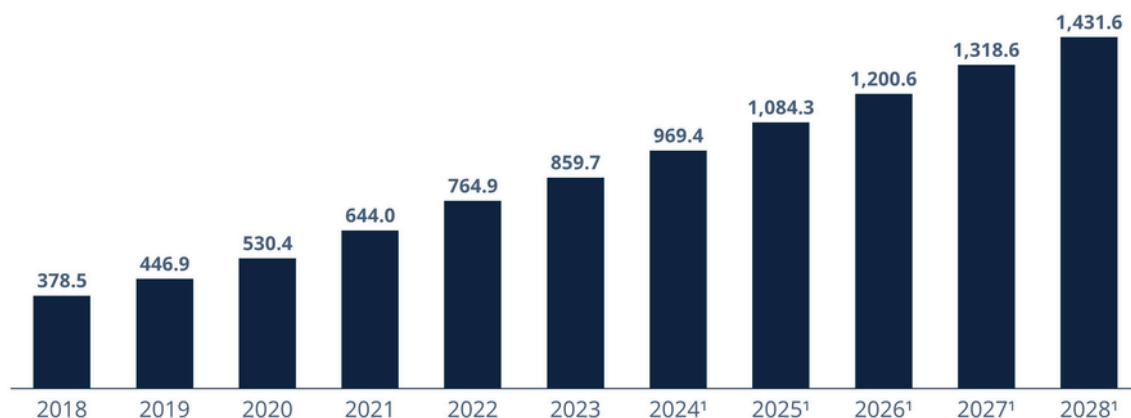
Asia's Fashion eCommerce Market May Reach US\$1 Trillion by 2025

The fashion eCommerce market in Asia is expected to continue its linear growth trend. The online shopping trend is so widespread that research firm Coherent Market Insights predicts it will grow from US\$521 billion in 2023 to US\$985 billion in 2030, at a CAGR of 9.5%.

ECDB's data goes even further: The market will exceed US\$1 trillion in 2025 and reach US\$1.4 trillion in 2028. This represents 73% of the expected growth in global fashion eCommerce revenues.

ANNUAL REVENUE OF THE FASHION ECOMMERCE MARKET IN ASIA, 2018-2028

in billion US\$



Notes: (1) Forecasts.
Sources: ECDB.

[ECDB](#)

According to the Coherent Market Insights Report, reasons for this growth trend may be the increasing urbanization in combination with a rising internet and smartphone penetration. As a result, the number of social commerce and mobile commerce users, which are enjoying increasing popularity in Asia, is soaring as well.

This trend is particularly strong in China, where sales are expected to reach US\$6.2 trillion by 2028. The younger generations, namely Gen Z and Gen Y, who have grown up with the digitalization, use shopping opportunities for fashion more frequently than older generations.

With mobile commerce, or mCommerce, new clothes are just a few clicks away. Ultra-fast delivery and easy returns make the shopping experience even more convenient. There are also shopping assistants based on artificial intelligence (AI), that can tailor offers to the user and improve the customer experience.

China Leads by Far in Asian Fashion eCommerce

Unsurprisingly, Greater China occupies the top spot in the Fashion eCommerce ranking for Asia, with revenues of US\$750 billion. In second place stands South Korea with US\$26.8 billion, which corresponds to almost one-28th of the revenue in China.

TOP 5 FASHION ECOMMERCE MARKETS IN ASIA BY REVENUE, 2023
in billion US\$



Sources: ECDB.

[ECDB](#)

With a smaller gap, Japan follows in third place with US\$22.4 billion. Next in line ranks India in fourth with US\$16.9 billion, followed closely by Indonesia at US\$16.4 billion.

China not only leads in terms of fashion in the eCommerce industry, but also in general the eCommerce market in Asia, with a share of US\$2.2 trillion in 2023. The country has managed to secure a monopoly-like position in the Asian region and is making it difficult for its competitors to even come close.

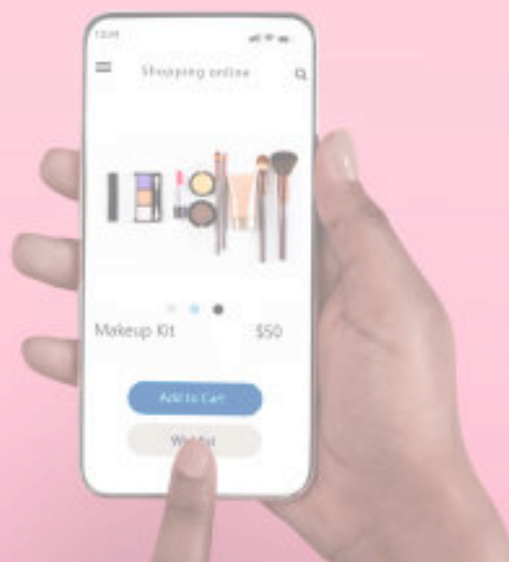
Fashion eCommerce Market in Asia: Closing Thoughts

There is a growing global trend towards more environmentally friendly fashion consumption, such as recommerce. At the same time, the fashion industry continues to thrive on fast fashion, which is known for its negative environmental impact. This presents a paradox, but the situation isn't as contradictory as it seems. Consumers are increasingly demanding sustainability and are willing to purchase it, yet fast fashion remains popular.

Why is this the case?

Sustainability comes at a higher cost and is currently a privilege, while households with average (or lesser) incomes are not inclined to spend their money on what they consider extravagant fashion. In other words, for sustainability to become a more influential force in the fashion industry, it must become more affordable in the future.

Note: This is an abridged version of an article written by Antonia Tönnies titled [“Fashion eCommerce Market in Asia: The Market Could Hit US\\$1.1 Trillion By 2025.”](#)



SMART TEXTILES MARKET GROWTH ANALYSIS WITH INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Newsires

Provided by [TBRC Business Research Pvt Ltd.](#)

The global smart textiles market is poised for substantial growth, driven by advancements in technology and increasing applications across various industries. Starting from \$4.46 billion in 2023, the market is expected to reach \$5.81 billion in 2024, growing at a remarkable compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 30.2%. This exponential growth trajectory is attributed to factors such as strong economic development in emerging markets, expanding internet penetration, a growing millennial population, a favorable low-interest rate environment, and rapid urbanization.

The smart textiles market is forecasted to continue its upward trend, reaching \$16.03 billion by 2028, with a CAGR of 28.9%. This growth will be fueled by the increasing influence of e-commerce, rising demand for sportswear integrating smart technologies, the proliferation of 5G networks, expanding populations, and the adoption of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies. Key trends in this period include advancements in smart fabric technology, the emergence of wearable tele-rehabilitation platforms, ongoing technology developments, digital testing innovations, and the introduction of novel smart garments.

Driving Forces Behind Smart Textiles Market Growth

The textile industry's rising demand and expertise play a pivotal role in propelling the smart textiles market forward. This sector encompasses the development, production, processing, manufacturing, and distribution of textile and fabric materials. Notably, the National Council of Textile Organizations reported that the U.S. man-made fiber, textile, and apparel shipments surged to an estimated \$65.2 billion in 2021 from \$60.8 billion in 2020. Additionally, U.S. exports of fiber, textiles, and apparel grew to \$22.7 billion in 2021, up from \$19.4 billion in 2020. These statistics underscore the increasing importance and demand within the textile industry, which are expected to significantly drive the smart textiles market globally.

Geographical Insights

North America emerged as the largest region in the smart textiles market in 2023, driven by significant technological advancements and early adoption of smart textiles in various applications. Looking ahead, Asia-Pacific is anticipated to witness the fastest growth during the forecast period, propelled by expanding industrialization, rising disposable incomes, and increasing investments in smart textile technologies across countries like China, India, and Japan.

Note: This is an abridged version of an article written by The Business Research Company titled "[Smart Textiles Market Growth Analysis With Investment Opportunities](#)." For detailed insights of the the global smart textiles market, please refer to [original report](#). Charges may apply.

4 INNOVATIONS HELPING THE FASHION INDUSTRY EMBRACE THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

World Economic Forum

[Johnny Wood](#) | Senior Writer at Formative Content

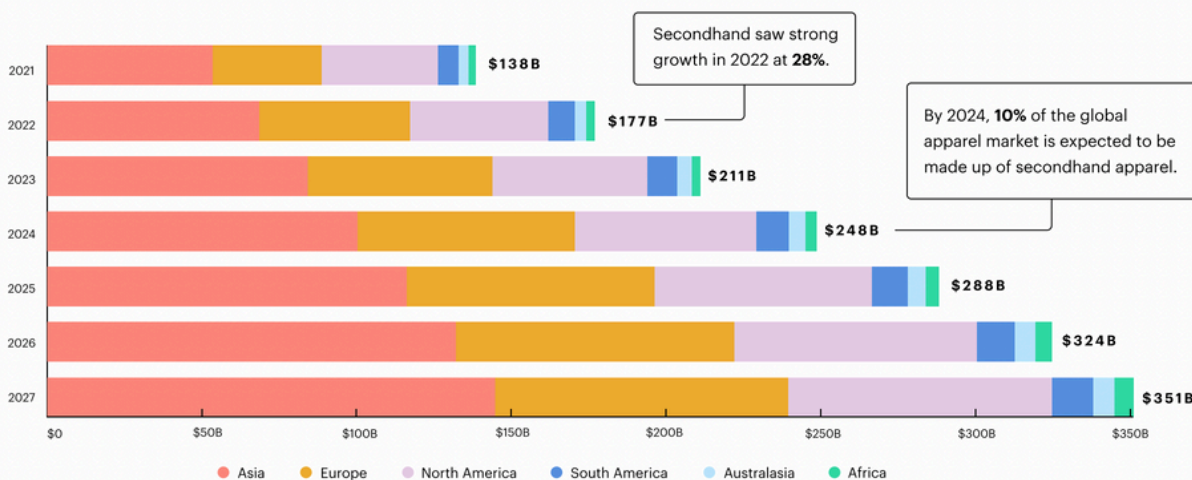


Secondhand clothing has come out of the closet, with the sector on-track to account for 10% of the global fashion market in 2024.

The negative associations around buying used garments are gone, as sustainability, cost concerns and the boom in online shopping make embracing 'pre-loved' clothing something to shout about.

Global Secondhand Market Set To Nearly Double by 2027, Reaching \$350 Billion

The global secondhand apparel market is expected to grow **3X faster** on average than the global apparel market overall.



GlobalData 2023 Market Sizing and Growth Estimates

Global pre-owned clothing sales reached \$211 billion in 2023, a 19% increase on the previous year, with a report by GlobalData for secondhand clothing resale site ThredUp predicting the market could reach \$350bn by 2027. Worldwide secondhand sales are expected to increase three-times faster on average than the overall apparel market by 2027, the report predicts.

Bad news for fast fashion? Maybe, but better news for the planet.

Estimates of the fashion industry's greenhouse gas footprint range from, at the higher end, a 2019 World Bank analysis of 10% of global emissions, to 1.8% according to a 2023 report by the Apparel Impact Institute.

Here are four innovations from World Economic Forum UpLink innovators, which aim to promote the circular economy and help make the fast-fashion industry more sustainable.

Planting leather and textiles

A US-based start-up called Natural Fiber Welding turns plant-based materials into sustainable 'leather' and textiles.

The firm's products meld plant matter into fibres that behave like synthetics, including a plant-based leather called MIRUM that contains no PVC or synthetic binding agents.

MIRUM is created using a natural process that doesn't use harmful chemicals, unlike natural leather, and is not a pollutant, unlike 'pleather' or plastic leather, so it biodegrades back into natural ingredients.

Identifying clothing's circular economy

Eon Group has developed a way to give items of clothing a digital ID known as CircularID, which promotes the circular economy to help make fashion more sustainable.

This digital passport enables brands to sell and resell their garments any number of times, as each item can be tracked and traced over its entire lifecycle, from production, sale, resale to recycling.

The ID holds essential information, such as fabric makeup, which can help recyclers process the garment at the end of its life.

Reducing excess inventory

Waging a war on garment waste, Queen of Raw provides an e-commerce software solution that enables enterprises in the fashion industry to quickly set up and manage their excess inventory.

The company's Materia MX Software as a Service (SaaS) supply chain solution automates buying, selling, reuse and recycling of excess stock, which boosts inventory efficiency, saves money and utilizes would-be garment waste.

Up-cycling old fashion

Another innovator tackling the problem of global textile waste, German company Re-Fresh Global uses 'Smart Textile Waste Upcycling Microfactories' to transform old clothes into fragrances, pharmaceuticals, shoes, fabrics, vehicle upholstery and more.

Re-Fresh collects discarded textile waste at its factories, where machines sort it by colour and material type.

Using a patented biotechnology process, the waste is turned into three biodegradable raw materials: bio-ethanol, nanocellulose and an unwoven textile pulp. These low-cost, high-volume raw materials are used in the construction, automotive, textile and fashion sectors.

These are just a few of the innovators aiming to slow down fast fashion, increase circularity and make the clothes we wear more sustainable.

OVER 62.5 BILLION APPAREL DIGITAL PRODUCT PASSPORTS WILL BE ISSUED IN 2030, TRANSFORMING COMPLIANCE, TRACEABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND PROFITABILITY IN THE GLOBAL FASHION INDUSTRY

ABI Research

The European Union is leading the way with Digital Product Passports (DPPs) to provide comprehensive product data across the value chain. High-impact sectors like batteries, vehicles, textiles, electronics, furniture, plastics, construction, and chemicals are the first to adopt DPPs. Apparel DPPs are gaining momentum ahead of regulations, especially among sports brands. Forward-thinking brands will use DPPs to identify supply chain issues, reduce overproduction, verify compliance and authenticity, and create branded resale ecosystems. According to global technology intelligence firm ABI Research, by 2030, over 62.5 billion DPPs will be globally created for the apparel sector with supporting software & IT revenues of US\$1.59 billion to accelerate traceability and positive change across the fashion industry.

Forward-thinking brands are leading the implementation of DPPs throughout their supply chains, optimizing workflows and boosting profitability. “DPPs encourage OEMs and suppliers to enhance textile efficiency, reduce overproduction, promote product reuse and repair, and demonstrate sustainability, increasing product value. However, practical implementation, data structure, and accessibility are still evolving in this emerging market. DPP solution providers should emphasize the value for suppliers and consumers to scale adoption beyond just meeting regulatory compliance,” explains Rithika Thomas, Sustainable Technologies Senior Analyst at ABI Research.

By 2030, all apparel sold in Europe will require a Digital Product Passport (DPP) due to mandatory regulations, accelerating DPP adoption from 2027 onward. North America, Asia Pacific, and other regions will follow, starting with luxury and big-brand apparel, then expanding to the mass market as suppliers recognize the benefits of data sharing to optimize supply chains. According to Thomas, “DPP tools are being viewed as adjacent software applications which are interoperable and seamlessly extract data from Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Environmental Product Declarations (EPD), and Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)/Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) software and retain supply chain/product data with open accessibility during the product lifecycle.”

As mandatory EU regulations take effect in 2027, DPP solution providers should prepare a competitive pricing model to increase adoption across the supply chain and promote inclusion. “To strengthen DPP offerings, solution providers should identify target customers in relevant vertical ecosystems with industry-specific solutions, adapt to nuances in regional supply chains, offer a robust compliant data structure, provide solid customer support, and furnish incremental updates to cater to the evolving regulatory landscape,” Thomas concludes.

Note: These findings are from ABI Research’s [Digital Product Passports](#) market data report. Charges may apply.

HOW AI IS ‘AMPLIFYING CREATIVITY’ IN THE FASHION WORLD

The Guardian

[Nyima Jobe](#) | The Guardian Foundation 2022/23
recipient of the Scott Trust bursary



The impact of artificial intelligence on the creative industries is a subject that has prompted widespread anxiety about job losses and the death of imagination, and the world of fashion is no exception.

In February, from the 16th to the 20th, London Fashion Week celebrated its 40th anniversary. The event showcased a host of AI-generated outfits, and industry insiders expressed a growing optimism about what the technology can do for the sector – from improving diversity to shortening the path from design desk to shop floor.

The head of London College of Fashion’s Innovation Agency, Matthew Drinkwater, believes AI will prove a “hugely beneficial tool” for creative processes and for the industry as a whole.

“It has opened the door to non-traditional pathways into the fashion industry for people who couldn’t get into it before because, let’s face it, the industry can have a perception of feeling quite elitist and quite exclusive, and an expensive industry to get into.

“But these tools are allowing people from very different backgrounds to begin to have a foothold in the industry. And for me, that feels really new and exciting,” he said.

Brands such as Heliot Emil, Zara and H&M are already using AI to control supply chains, which they say promotes sustainability by reducing overstock and waste. Many brands are also using AI to help the design processes, with images of clothes generated from typed prompts, visualising different materials and patterns. This allows designers to make informed decisions before physically producing clothes.

The consultancy McKinsey predicted last year that generative AI – the term for technology that can produce convincing images, text and audio from simple human prompts – could add \$150bn to \$275bn (£120bn to £220bn) to the operating profits of the fashion and luxury sectors within the next three to five years. Predicting future fashion trends and creating virtual try-ons using AI are also predicted to be just around the corner.

Drinkwater has been working with his team to look at how AI could change the industry, testing generative AI’s ability to create clothing for years. “We were scraping websites to try to get lots of data so that we could create dresses from more than 40,000 images. It was actually really hard work to do four years ago but now we open our laptops, even our smartphones and start generating images very quickly,” Drinkwater said.

“So typically, we take stuff which is maybe three to five years away from commercialisation and begin to show those research projects around where the future of the industry might move to,” he added.

In April 2023 Cyril Foiret’s generative AI studio, Maison Meta, hosted the first AI fashion week in New York, which included a competition for aspiring designers to use AI to create a fashion line. The winners were able to have their collections physically manufactured to be sold online with retailer Revolve. As in other industries, AI has come to be associated with job redundancies and critics argue creative artistry could be wiped out. But Foiret argues that there is little to fear.

“AI is such a powerful tool that is amplifying creativity. People thinking jobs are going to reduce shouldn’t think like that. We all just need to get accustomed with the tools, but if it is just a tool without a person behind it, it’s of no use,” he said.

Arti Zeighami, a former chief data and analytics officer at H&M and now senior adviser in AI for consulting firm BCG, agrees that AI can be used as a force for good within fashion. “Being transparent about AI helps people to not be afraid and allows them to be comfortable and still feel in control, it’s the transformation of the mindset of the human that is important,” he said.

“The AI will evolve as a technology either way we need to evolve alongside with it, but we haven’t come to the terminator stage not yet, at least”.

The TUC’s AI lead, Mary Towers, said AI could be a useful aid for workers in the creative sector, but that it shouldn’t be hijacked to replace human creativity.

“We need new laws to ensure that all workers in the arts – including fashion – are consulted and properly compensated if their work and intellectual property is used by AI,” she said.

“We have already seen performers in the UK having their image, voice or likeness reproduced by AI technology without their consent. We can’t afford for this to become the norm in other industries too. That’s why we urgently need fresh regulation to protect workers’ creativity and copyright.”

Note: The dates in this article have been revised to reflect the current status of the events discussed.

THE ETHICAL FASHION REVOLUTION

Fashion Value Chain

Edited by [Sorelle](#) | PEFC Editor

Our clothing choices are no longer just about trends and affordability. Today, fashion grapples with the environmental and social impact of its practices. Fast fashion, with its emphasis on cheap clothes and constant trend cycles, has been a major contributor to pollution and unethical labour practices. However, a growing awareness is driving a shift towards ethical fashion.

The fashion industry's environmental footprint is alarming. Production processes, transportation, and synthetic materials contribute a staggering 10% of global carbon emissions – four times that of aviation! This is where the good news comes in. Consumers are becoming more conscious, with over 70% willing to pay a premium for sustainable goods, according to PwC.

Ethical fashion tackles this challenge head-on, focusing on both environmental and social responsibility. The Asian market currently leads the ethical fashion sector, valued at \$8.17 billion in 2023 and projected to reach \$12.05 billion by 2028.

Sustainable materials are a key aspect of this change. Brands are moving away from fossil fuel-based synthetics like polyester and embracing plant-based alternatives. Man-made cellulosic fibres (MMCFs) like rayon and lyocell offer more eco-friendly options alongside traditional materials such as cotton, hemp, and flax.

However, MMCFs come with their complexities. While they are better for the planet, sourcing wood pulp for these fibres can lead to deforestation and unsustainable forestry practices. Additionally, their production often involves intricate supply chains, raising concerns about unethical labour practices. A holistic approach is crucial, considering the entire lifecycle of the fibre, from forest to garment.

The human cost of cheap clothes cannot be ignored.

Garment workers often face gruelling hours, low wages, and unsafe working conditions. The 2013 Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh, which claimed over 1,138 lives, serves as a stark reminder of the industry's dark side. Reports of inadequate safety protocols, unfair labour practices, and even forced labour persist in certain regions.

Transparency is key to progress. Consumers deserve to know where their clothes come from and how they were made. A whopping 75% of respondents in a PwC survey valued traceability, indicating a desire for authenticity behind sustainability claims.

Organisations like Fashion Revolution are raising awareness and educating consumers through initiatives like the Fashion Transparency Index. This index holds brands accountable for supply chain traceability and encourages them to actively engage with suppliers, ensuring adherence to international labour standards and fostering open communication.

Here are some key questions driving the future of sustainable textiles:

- **Durability:** Clothes that last longer have a lower environmental impact.
- **Recyclability/Compostability:** We need to divert clothing waste from landfills.
- **Ethical Sourcing:** Consumers are willing to pay more for clothes made with fair labour practices.

With greenwashing prevalent, independent verification systems are emerging to combat misleading sustainability claims. Certification schemes like the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certifications (PEFC) promote responsible forestry practices. However, the question remains: can these standards also address social concerns like worker safety and fair wages? Standards like PEFC do incorporate international labour guidelines.

Consumer awareness is driving change, with buyers increasingly seeking clothing that aligns with their values. However, the industry still relies heavily on labour-intensive production lines, making it a challenge to ensure the ethical treatment of workers across the global supply chain.

MMCFs have the potential to be a game-changer, and consumers play a vital role by demanding transparency on both materials and labour practices. Unlocking this potential requires collaboration – brands, manufacturers, and NGOs must work together to understand the social and environmental realities of their sources, moving beyond cost-driven decision-making.

BANGLADESH'S LEAP FROM POVERTY TO TEXTILE POWERHOUSE OFFERS LESSONS FOR COUNTRIES IN AFRICA

World Economic Forum

Femi Akinrebiyo | Global Manager, Manufacturing Investment & Trade Supplier Finance, International Finance Corporation



Bangladesh's economy was in ruins in the early 1970s. It had just won its independence from Pakistan in a nine-month war. It emerged as a very poor, densely populated country largely dependent on jute production and subsistence farming but struggling to feed its people. In 1974, it fell into a devastating famine. A World Bank economist visiting the western part of the country around that time described it "like the morning after a nuclear attack."

Then, less than a decade later, a government campaign to attract foreign investment paid off and Bangladesh set off on a path that would transform it from an agricultural economy into an industrial powerhouse. Textile and apparel manufacturing sparked what can only be described as a miraculous economic and social rebound that developing countries today try to emulate.

Bangladesh's shift to market-oriented policies, which included privatization of industries and trade liberalization, led to a surge in garment exports. Ready-to-wear clothing became the engine for growth and cotton tee-shirts, pants, pullovers and denim became its sweet spot. During the past 10 years, Bangladesh has grown its economy into the 35th largest in the world, cut its poverty rate in half and put millions of its citizens to work. In the decade before the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy grew at a blistering 7% annually and per capita gross domestic product (GDP) rose to about \$2,500, surpassing even neighbouring India.

The next phase in the apparel industry

That kind of track record is the envy of up-and-coming African economies today. There is no "one-size-fits-all" recipe for industrializing but countries with large, low-cost workforces, ample renewable resources and preferential trade agreements have most of what it takes to build the next generation textile and apparel power.

And – unlike Bangladesh – Africa has the added advantage of homegrown cotton. To put that into perspective, in 2022, Bangladesh manufactured 20% of the world’s exported cotton t-shirts – valued at \$9 billion – even though it grew less than 2% of the cotton that it stamped the “made in Bangladesh” label on.

It’s perhaps a happy coincidence that Africa’s interest in expanding its apparel industry coincides with Bangladesh’s ambition to diversify away from single-sector dependency. Ultimately, Bangladesh aims to graduate into a high-income country by 2041. Right now, though, 84% of Bangladeshi export revenues come from apparel alone. That’s thanks to a remarkably successful industrialization policy that included, for example, allowing duty-free importation of machinery in export zones and negotiating preferential trade agreements with the United States and Europe. The strategy, for which Bangladesh is renowned, led to the creation of a sophisticated garment sector that employs four million people in more than 3,500 factories and exports goods worth \$43 billion to 167 countries.

Cutting, sewing and assembling clothing is hard and tedious and export-led growth models relying on cheap labour don’t last forever. In many respects, it’s time for Bangladesh to pass the apparel ready-to-wear torch – as many countries have done in the past – and climb up the value chain into more complex clothing lines and sophisticated industries that can generate greater wealth and opportunity. Inclusivity has been at the heart of Bangladesh’s success and is baked into its next phase of planning. The apparel industry is dominated by a largely female labour force who have benefited from the economy’s growth far from the factory floor.

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Note: This is an abridged version of an article written by Femi Akinrebiyo titled “[Bangladesh's leap from poverty to textile powerhouse offers lessons for countries in Africa.](#)” The article is part of: [Centre for Advanced Manufacturing and Supply Chains](#)

GREEN JOBS IN TEXTILE CAN BECOME THE LARGEST JOB OPPORTUNITY IN INDIA: ADITYA BIRLA FASHION'S NARESH TYAGI

The Economic Times

Garima Bora | Editor at The Economic Times



For a country which provides 25% of the world's cotton, sustainability has been a long traditional approach. However, as the world and India push the eco-friendly theme towards the mainstream, green skills and talent is on the rise. Naresh Tyagi, Chief Sustainability Officer, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd, gives a view of the existing green talent and jobs in the country's textile sector.

Economic Times: Are you seeing a growing demand for green jobs and green skills in India and how much of that demand is coming from textiles?

Naresh Tyagi: Globally, everyone is now demanding more and more sustainable product and services. There is a big surge in terms of sustainability as a mainstream theme, not as a sideline. India is one of the largest textile manufacturers and at the same time it is one of the largest domestic market consumption for textile. With respect to all these things, there is a lot of demand for green jobs in this sector.

Economic Times: Can you give us some details about the different kinds of green jobs that are coming up or are currently present in textiles?

Naresh Tyagi: For sustainable consumption and sustainable manufacturing, there is a whole life cycle of the product and service, which needs to be done. R&D and product development becomes very important here. Then, there is manufacturing, sourcing, procurement, the way it needs to be ethically manufactured and sourced in that green environment. Garment as industry is still a mix of organised and unorganised. So, how to bring that unorganised sector into sustainability? That systematic change requires that skill set in every domain.

Then, green infrastructure and logistics, because it is also important how you distribute and collect your product. There is demand for jobs handling both downstream and upstream logistics and transportation. And then finally, to do all these things that retail store, you need employees to explain to the consumer about the product's sustainability.

A green job demand is not only for the elite professional or expert, it is even going to be in the unorganised sector for waste management, sorting, segregation, technology, etc.,... Even for general management also, there will be a lot of regulatory issues and compliances that need to be followed.

Economic Times: Can you talk about the role of technology in providing these green skills?

Naresh Tyagi: I think technology is the main enabler here. The way people shop, e-commerce is becoming a key platform. Consumers want to know how that brand and organisation is making the product and we see a lot of demand for that traceability and transparency. They want to have all these information on their mobiles. This is where data analysis can be vital.

Further, every third person and company is now in a digital platform for sustainability related thing- whether it is consumer interface or government regulatory requirement for TCFD (Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures) or BRSR (Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting) for the listed company or even for their internal efficiency improvement to get visibility. I see technology more as an enabler to accelerate the whole transition, whether it is from linear to circular or it is from conventional or traditional. Change will always come through innovation and technology will make it faster.

Economic Times: What are the challenges and limitations that exist in green skills in textiles?

Naresh Tyagi: I think there are a lot of challenges. And for our country, I think a challenge is also an opportunity. One of the first being education. There are many sustainability-related programmes and courses available at university level and graduation level, but not at basic school level. By the time children go to university, it is very late. So I believe basic education on sustainability at the grassroot level is important. There needs to be more awareness, behavioural change in habits and mindset right from the school level.

Another challenge is the unorganised sector, which provides services such as waste management. All the textile, food and electronic waste is collected and segregated by MSMEs or small enterprises in the unorganised sector. They do not get any formal training which can be dangerous for their work. So, the challenge lies in how we create customised training and awareness programme for the unorganised sector, especially MSMEs, who are not part of that formal education ecosystem.

We need to bring these skill sets into the labour force via ITIs (Industrial Training Institute) and other institutes for green jobs.

Economic Times: What are your expectations and projections for green skills in the textile sector in India?

Naresh Tyagi: The themes which will give maximum job opportunity in the next two decades include- changing business model from linear to circular and transition from traditional energy to renewable energy. There is a lot of sustainable finance coming through for renewable energy and waste/water management.

There is also a lot of work and research going on around sustainable agriculture-regenerated cotton and other raw materials in textiles. So, if we see the whole ecosystem, I think this will be the largest job opportunity in India.

CHINA'S NEW FASHION TREND INCORPORATES TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS



Nikkei Asia

Tomoko Wakasugi | Nikkei staff writer

"Neo-Chinese style," a mixture of classical attire and everyday clothes, has become the latest fashion trend in China. The boom is backed by young people's growing confidence in and attachment to their country.

During the Lunar New Year holidays, East Nanjin Road in Shanghai bustled with tourists, with some women clad in traditional skirts called ma mian qun. The long, pleated garment, which dates back to the Song, Ming and Qing dynasties that spanned from the 10th century to the early 20th, is wrapped around the waist. Many feature decorative patterns near the hem.

At a shopping center in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, ma mian qun skirts sold for between 300 and 600 yuan (\$41.50 to \$83). One display featured a skirt with a matching blouse.

The popularity of the traditional garment began growing among young women in 2023. On Taobao, an online shopping platform run by Alibaba Group Holding, more than 730,000 ma mian qun skirts were sold on Singles' Day, Nov. 11, 2023.

Data on China's e-commerce compiled by Tokyo-based Nint in February show the value of sales of womenswear containing the words "ma mian qun" reached nearly 200 million yuan in the two months before the Lunar New Year, more than a ninefold increase from the same period a year before.

The classical skirt is part of the neo-Chinese style, called xin zhong shi. Young devotees of the trend combine jackets made from textiles with traditional patterns and other historically inspired items with casual outfits such as knit tops and jeans.

According to Nint, online sales of merchandize that include the words "xin zhong shi" topped 700 million yuan, growing more than sixfold on the year. Influencers post photos of neo-Chinese style outfits on the video-sharing app Douyin and social media platform Xiaohongshu, often called the Chinese version of Instagram. The boom has spread to the food and interior industries as well.

The xin zhong shi trend follows an earlier boom in the traditional apparel of the Han majority ethnic group. Young tourists wearing rented han fu clothes are often seen taking selfies at World Heritage-registered gardens and other sightseeing spots.

China's iResearch Consulting Group estimates the han fu market was worth 13 billion yuan (\$1.8 billion) in 2023, a 40% increase from 2019. The market continues to expand, driven by demand from young women.

Behind the popularity of classical apparel is growing enthusiasm for guo chao, a "China chic" trend that focuses on traditional culture. Young Chinese are more patriotic and confident as a result of a program of nationalistic education that has intensified since the era of President Zhang Zemin, who came to power after the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown.

When French fashion house Christian Dior unveiled a pleated skirt in 2022, social media users in China complained that the piece resembled ma mian qun and accused the French luxury brand of cultural appropriation. Chinese demonstrators staged protests in France. A Chinese government work report presented at the National People's Congress in March said the government will "foster new areas of consumption growth, such as domestic brands with Chinese design elements." The trend is likely to gain further momentum with backing from authorities.

ABOUT CACCI

The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) is a regional grouping of apex national chambers of commerce and industry, business associations and business enterprises in Asia and the Western Pacific. It is a non-governmental organization (NGO) serving as a forum for promoting the vital role of businessmen in the region, increasing regional business interaction, and enhancing regional economic growth. Since its establishment in 1966, CACCI has grown into a network of national chambers of commerce with a total now of 29 Primary Members from 27 Asian countries and independent economies. It cuts across national boundaries to link businessmen and promote economic growth throughout the Asia-Pacific region. As an NGO, CACCI is granted consultative status, Roster category, under the United Nations. It is a member of the Conference on NGOs (CoNGO), an association of NGOs with UN consultative status.

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