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## Awareness of consumers regarding recycled textiles

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### Abstract

Recycled textiles sustainably play a crucial role by reducing waste, conserving resources, and minimizing environmental pollution. These textiles are created by repurposing discarded fabrics, used clothing, and manufacturing scraps, thereby promoting a circular economy in the apparel industry. With the rapid growth of fast fashion, textile waste has become a significant environmental concern, making recycling an essential strategy for sustainability. This study investigates consumer awareness and preferences regarding recycled textiles among undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students at CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 50 respondents, revealing that 78% were aware of recycled textiles, while 74% preferred recycling. Clothing was the most commonly preferred category for recycling (74%), followed by handloom (20%). The study also found that 64% of UG and 52% of PG students preferred purchasing recycled textiles at half price, with 70% favouring a price range of ₹12-15 per item. Despite growing awareness, 74% of students were unaware of textile recycling brands, indicating a gap in market accessibility and consumer knowledge. The increasing environmental impact of the textile industry makes it crucial for individuals to adopt sustainable practices like recycling and reusing textiles. Greater awareness and accessibility of recycled textiles can significantly reduce landfill waste, conserve natural resources like water and energy, and lower the carbon footprint associated with textile production. Governments, industries, and educational institutions must work together to encourage sustainable consumption through targeted awareness campaigns, innovative recycling technologies, and policy support. Moreover, incorporating sustainability into fashion choices and making recycled textiles more affordable and accessible can drive greater adoption among consumers. By promoting the circular economy model in the textile sector, society can move towards a more responsible and environmentally friendly future, ensuring long-term benefits for both the planet and future generations.

**Keywords:** Recycled textiles, consumer awareness, sustainability, circular economy, textile recycling

### Introduction

In 1943, Maslow recognized clothing as a fundamental necessity, positioning it alongside vital needs such as food and shelter, underscoring its indispensable role in human survival. However, in contemporary industrialized societies, clothing has increasingly been influenced by fleeting fashion trends, resulting in a dramatic reduction in the lifespan of garments before they are discarded. This rapid turnover propels the growth of the textile industry, driving overconsumption, squandering of resources, and a substantial escalation in textile waste (Maslow, 1943) <sup>[12]</sup>.

Textiles are created to fulfill a variety of functions and are made from a wide range of fibers blended in different proportions. It is well-established that the textile industry generates a significant amount of waste each year. The economic consequences of textile waste are directly tied to the volume of textile production-the higher the output, the greater the waste produced. Apparel manufacturing results in substantial material waste, much of which ultimately ends up in landfills, despite its potential for repurposing. Recycling this waste material can provide a viable solution to tackle numerous economic, environmental, and social challenges. (Aluigi *et al.*, 2008) <sup>[1]</sup>.

The rapid expansion of the clothing and textile industry, alongside the rise of the fast fashion phenomenon, has led to a dramatic increase in textile waste worldwide, now a prevalent element of municipal solid waste (MSW). Globally, 75% of textile waste is disposed of in landfills, while only 25% is recycled or repurposed.

The practice of landfilling textile waste is unsustainable, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced reuse and recycling technologies to divert a larger portion of textile waste from landfills. Reuse is often regarded as the more favorable option compared to recycling, and various innovative technologies for textile reuse and recycling continue to be developed, particularly to handle blended fabrics more effectively. (Juanga-Labayen *et al.*, 2022) [9].

The environmental and resource-related challenges brought on by the textile industry, amplified by the fast fashion trend, are profound (Franco, 2017) [4]. The shift towards a circular economy presents a promising approach to tackling issues related to resource depletion and waste management (Galvão *et al.*, 2018) [5]. A critical step in the recycling process is the sorting and identification of textile materials for separation, given the complex composition of textile fibers (Hussain *et al.*, 2021) [8]. The incorporation of Internet of Things (IoT) technology has significantly enhanced management in this domain (Fatimah *et al.*, 2020) [3]. Identifying textile materials remains a major challenge in the recycling process, especially due to the intricate nature of fabric structures. Blended fibers, such as cellulose-polyester mixtures, commonly found in modern garments, are selected for their specific attributes like moisture absorption, wrinkle resistance, and comfort. (Haslinger *et al.*, 2019) [7].

Textiles can be recycled through a variety of methods, including mechanical, thermal, and chemical processes. Textile recycling primarily involves reprocessing pre-consumer or post-consumer waste fabrics to produce new textile or non-textile products. These recycling techniques encompass the dissolution of natural fibers, chemical degradation of polymeric fibers, mechanical treatment (pretreatment), and thermal treatment (Spathas, 2017) [18].

A circular economy is a concept that redefines material production by utilizing resources in ways that prioritize reuse and recycling. It aims to minimize waste through the efficient use of resources across their entire lifecycle (Shirvanimoghaddam *et al.*, 2020) [17]. The circular economy model is based on environmental, industrial, economic, and ecological principles (Winans *et al.*, 2017) [19]. However, implementing a circular economy widely in the fashion industry faces challenges due to the diverse range of fashion styles, aesthetics, and consumer preferences. Overcoming these barriers requires the establishment of strong

environmental regulations and sustainability policies (Manglani and Hodge, 2019) [13]. Moreover, the textile industry has been found to have a harmful impact on society, consuming substantial amounts of resources like oil, carbon, and water (Kazancoglu *et al.*, 2020) [10]. By embracing circular economy principles-such as extending product lifecycles and repurposing materials-the industry can reduce waste and enhance the value of products (Shirvanimoghaddam *et al.*, 2020) [17].

The circular economy is propelled by three core strategies: reduce, reuse, and recycle. These principles are in line with traditional waste management practices, which are increasingly being adopted within the textile industry (Manickam and Duraisamy, 2019) [11].

## Methodology

**Location of the Study:** The Hisar district was selected purposively for the present study because of its proximity and familiarity with the district. The current study was conducted in I.C College of Community Science and College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology, Haryana Agriculture University, Hisar

**Development of Questionnaire Schedule:** The development of a Questionnaire schedule was done to obtain the desired information for the collection of data from respondents. They were selected randomly and the information was collected on various aspects related to recycled textiles. The questionnaire schedule consists of questions related to the personal profile of respondents. Awareness, purchase and preference about recycled textiles and the use pattern of consumers.

**Collection Data:** The required data was collected through a personal interview technique using a structured questionnaire. Students were selected from CCS Haryana Agriculture University, Hisar for the present study.

**Data analysis:** Coding and tabulation were done using Microsoft Excel software. Data analysis was carried out using mean, frequency and percentage on the computer. Data interpretation was done with the study's aims.

## Results

The result of the study is presented under the different headings after analysis of data was collected through questions. The findings revealed varied levels of awareness and perceptions regarding recycled textiles among students.

**Table 1:** Personal profile of the respondents (n=50)

| Sr. No. | Variable        | Criteria | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------|-----------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1       | Age(years)      | 18-22    | 28        | 56.00      |
|         |                 | 22-26    | 15        | 30.00      |
|         |                 | 26-30    | 7         | 14.00      |
| 2       | Gender          | Male     | 1         | 02.00      |
|         |                 | Female   | 49        | 98.00      |
| 3       | Education       | UG       | 25        | 50.00      |
|         |                 | PG       | 25        | 50.00      |
| 4       | Family type     | Joint    | 25        | 50.00      |
|         |                 | Nuclear  | 25        | 50.00      |
| 5       | No. of Siblings | 1-3      | 42        | 84.00      |
|         |                 | 4-6      | 8         | 16.00      |
| 6       | Background      | Rural    | 47        | 94.00      |
|         |                 | Urban    | 3         | 06.00      |

### Personal profile of the respondents: the data present in Table 1 is remarked by the consumers

Table 1 provides an overview of the general information of the respondents that includes independent variables such as Age, Gender, Education, Family type, No of Siblings and Background. The majority of the respondents fall within the 18-22 and 22-

26 age range. Both UG 1st-year and Final-year students show a 50% distribution across different qualification categories. Among Ug and Pg students, 3% are from urban background followed by 47% from rural background.

**Table 2:** Awareness of students regarding recycled textiles (n=50)

| Sr. No. | Variable                               | Group | Yes (Frequency) | Yes (%) | No (Frequency) | No (%) | Maybe (Frequency) | Maybe (%) |
|---------|----------------------------------------|-------|-----------------|---------|----------------|--------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1       | Awareness regarding recycled textiles  | UG    | 20              | 80.00   | 5              | 20.00  | -                 | -         |
|         |                                        | PG    | 19              | 76.00   | 6              | 24.00  | -                 | -         |
|         |                                        | Total | 39              | 78.00   | 11             | 22.00  | -                 | -         |
| 2       | Preference regarding recycled textiles | UG    | 20              | 80.00   | -              | -      | 5                 | 20.00     |
|         |                                        | PG    | 17              | 68.00   | 7              | 28.00  | 1                 | 04.00     |
|         |                                        | Total | 37              | 74.00   | 7              | 14.00  | 6                 | 12.00     |
| 3       | Purchase regarding recycled textiles   | UG    | 12              | 48.00   | 13             | 52.00  | -                 | -         |
|         |                                        | PG    | 14              | 56.00   | 11             | 44.00  | -                 | -         |
|         |                                        | Total | 26              | 52.00   | 24             | 48.00  | -                 | -         |
| 4       | Information about designer or brand    | UG    | 5               | 20.00   | 20             | 80.00  | -                 | -         |
|         |                                        | PG    | 8               | 32.00   | 17             | 68.00  | -                 | -         |
|         |                                        | Total | 13              | 26.00   | 37             | 74.00  | -                 | -         |

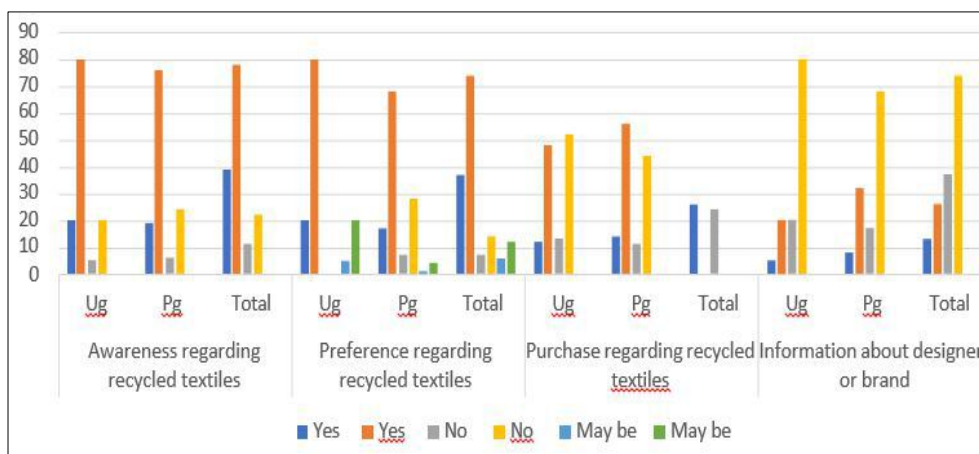


Table 2 shows Awareness and preferences regarding recycled textiles, 80% of Ug and 76% of Pg students are aware of recycled textiles, 80% of Ug and 68% of Pg students prefer

recycling of textiles, 80% of Ug students and 68% of Pg students are unaware about brands that recycle textile/clothes.

**Table 3:** Preference for textile waste management methods among students (n=50)

| Sr. No. | Variable         | Criteria | Reuse     |            | Donate    |            | Garbage   |            | Others    |            |
|---------|------------------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|         |                  |          | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 1       | Jeans with holes | Ug       | 14        | 56.00      | 8         | 32.00      | 3         | 12.00      | -         | -          |
|         |                  | Pg       | 17        | 68.00      | 4         | 16.00      | 3         | 12.00      | 1         | 04.00      |
|         |                  | Total    | 31        | 62.00      | 12        | 24.00      | 6         | 12.00      | 1         | 02.00      |
| 2       | Undergarments    | Ug       | -         | -          | -         | -          | 19        | 76.00      | 6         | 24.00      |
|         |                  | Pg       | -         | -          | -         | -          | 24        | 96.00      | 1         | 04.00      |
|         |                  | Total    | -         | -          | -         | -          | 43        | 86.00      | 7         | 14.00      |
| 3       | Children clothes | Ug       | 4         | 16.00      | 14        | 56.00      | 5         | 20.00      | 2         | 08.00      |
|         |                  | Pg       | 4         | 16.00      | 9         | 36.00      | 11        | 44.00      | 1         | 04.00      |
|         |                  | Total    | 8         | 16.00      | 23        | 46.00      | 16        | 32.00      | 3         | 06.00      |
| 4       | Handlooms        | Ug       | 8         | 32.00      | 14        | 56.00      | 1         | 04.00      | 2         | 08.00      |
|         |                  | Pg       | 3         | 12.00      | 6         | 24.00      | 13        | 52.00      | 3         | 12.00      |
|         |                  | Total    | 11        | 22.00      | 20        | 40.00      | 14        | 28.00      | 5         | 10.00      |

Table 3 Shows different categories that students prefer to recycle, 56% of UG students and 68% of PG students prefer to reuse the category of jeans with holes, while 76% of UG and 96% of PG students prefer garbage or drop-off bins in the category of undergarments. Paço *et al.* (2020) [14] also

revealed participants showed an ecological willingness to avoid waste, to help others, and to bring about a good impact on the environment-only 1.55% of the participants put clothes in the trash

**Table 4** Student Perspectives on Sustainable Textile Disposal Methods (n=50)

| Sr. No. | Criteria | Economical |            | Biological |            | Environmental |            | Physiological |            | Others    |            |
|---------|----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|         |          | Frequency  | Percentage | Frequency  | Percentage | Frequency     | Percentage | Frequency     | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 1       | Ug       | 10         | 40.00      | 1          | 04.00      | 12            | 48.00      | -             |            | 2         | 08.00      |
|         | Pg       | 9          | 36.00      | 8          | 32.00      | -             |            | 7             | 28.00      | 1         | 04.00      |
|         | Total    | 19         | 38.00      | 9          | 18.00      | 12            | 24.00      | 7             | 14.00      | 3         | 06.00      |

Table 4 shows that 40 per cent of Ug and 36 per cent of Pg students preferred the economic aspect of recycling while 48 per cent of Ug preferred the environmental element and 48 per cent of Pg students selected physiological aspects of recycling textiles. Sowmya and Shashi (2024) <sup>[16]</sup> revealed

how people are concerned about the social environmental and ethical impacts in the fashion industry, 81.8% of people responded with very high and 18.2% responded with high, most people are concerned about the environmental and ethical impacts in the fashion industry

**Table 5:** Recycling Preferences among Students in Different Textile Categories (n=50)

| Sr. No. | Criteria | Handloom  | Clothes    | Lingerie  | Sr. No. | Criteria | Handloom   |
|---------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|---------|----------|------------|
|         |          | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency |         |          | Percentage |
| 1       | Ug       | 5         | 20.00      | 20        | 80.00   | -        |            |
|         | Pg       | 5         | 20.00      | 17        |         | 3        | 12.00      |
|         | Total    | 10        | 20.00      | 37        |         | 3        | 06.00      |

Table 5 Shows 80 per cent of Ug and 68 per cent of Pg students prefer recycling in the Clothing category while 20

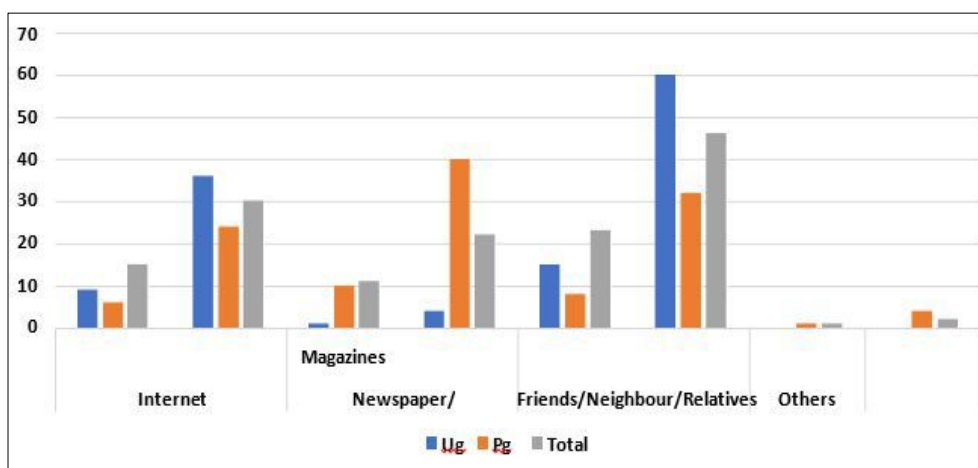
per cent of Ug and Pg students prefer Recycling in the Handloom category

**Table 6:** Awareness channels for recycling textiles among students (n=50)

| Sr. No. | Criteria | Internet  |            | Newspaper/ Magazines |            | Friends/Neighbour/Relatives |            | Others    |            |
|---------|----------|-----------|------------|----------------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|         |          | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency            | Percentage | Frequency                   | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 1       | Ug       | 9         | 36.00      | 1                    | 04.00      | 15                          | 60.00      | -         |            |
|         | Pg       | 6         | 24.00      | 10                   | 40.00      | 8                           | 32.00      | 1         | 04.00      |
|         | Total    | 15        | 30.00      | 11                   | 22.00      | 23                          | 46.00      | 1         | 02.00      |

Table 6 shows that 60 per cent of Ug and 32 per cent of Pg students get information about Recycle Textiles through

Neighbours and Relatives, while 36 per cent of Ug and 24 per cent of Pg students get to know through the Internet.

**Table 7:** Preferences for Sorting and Disposing of Used Textiles (n=50)

| Sr. No. | Criteria | Self      |            | Share with another person |            | Someone Else |            | None      |            |
|---------|----------|-----------|------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|         |          | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency                 | Percentage | Frequency    | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 1       | Ug       | 8         | 32.00      | 5                         | 20.00      | 7            | 28.00      | 5         | 20.00      |
|         | Pg       | 7         | 28.00      | 9                         | 36.00      | 7            | 28.00      | 2         | 08.00      |
|         | Total    | 15        | 30.00      | 14                        | 28.00      | 14           | 28.00      | 7         | 14.00      |

Table 7 shows 32 per cent of Ug and 29 per cent of Pg students prefer to sort/ rid of used textiles by themselves while 20 per cent g and 36 per cent of Pg students prefer sorting with another person. Sowmya and Shashi (2024) <sup>[16]</sup> Revealed how people dispose of their unwanted clothes,

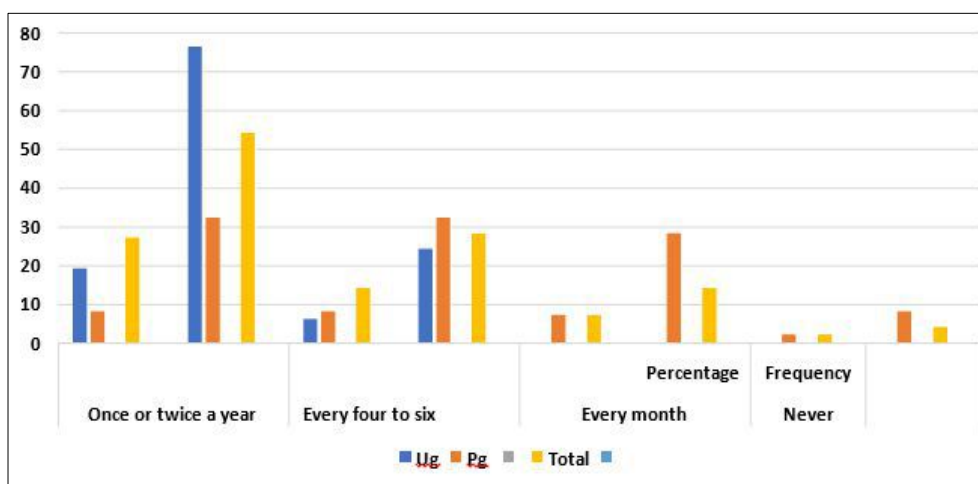
27.3% of the people hand them down to younger family members, and a similar number of people use them as a thrift. 27.3% of people are donating to the charity and the remaining people put it to alternate use and throw it away.

**Table 8:** Redistribution Frequency Trends Among UG and PG Students (n=50)

| Sr. No. | Criteria | Once or twice a year |            | Every four to six months |            | Every month |            | Never     |            |
|---------|----------|----------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|         |          | Frequency            | Percentage | Frequency                | Percentage | Frequency   | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 1       | Ug       | 19                   | 76.00      | 6                        | 24.00      | -           |            | -         |            |
|         | Pg       | 8                    | 32.00      | 8                        | 32.00      | 7           | 28.00      | 2         | 08.00      |
|         | Total    | 27                   | 54.00      | 14                       | 28.00      | 7           | 14.00      | 2         | 04.00      |

Table 8 Shows 76 per cent of Ug and 32 per cent of Pg students prefer to donate clothes once or twice a year while

24 per cent of Ug and 34 per cent of Pg students prefer to donate every four to six months.

**Table 9:** Pricing Trends in the Circular Economy of Textiles (n=50)

| Sr. No. | Criteria | Same      |            | Half      |            | Less than half |            |
|---------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|----------------|------------|
|         |          | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency      | Percentage |
| 1       | Ug       | -         | 0          | 16        | 64.00      | 9              | 36.00      |
|         | Pg       | 5         | 20.00      | 13        | 52.00      | 7              | 28.00      |
|         | Total    | 5         | 10.00      | 29        | 58.00      | 16             | 32.00      |

Table 9 shows the estimated price at which students prefer to buy recycled textiles/ clothes, 64 per cent of Ug and 52 per

cent of Pg students would like to buy textiles/ clothes at half price.

**Table 10:** Student Consensus on Recycled Textile Preferences (n=50)

| Sr. No. | Criteria | 9-12      |            | 12-15     |            | 15-19     |            |
|---------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|         |          | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 1       | Ug       | 1         | 04.00      | 17        | 68.00      | 7         | 28.00      |
|         | Pg       | -         |            | 18        | 72.00      | 7         | 28.00      |
|         | Total    | 1         | 02.00      | 35        | 70.00      | 14        | 28.00      |

Table 10 shows, that 68 per cent of UG students and 72 per cent of Pg students prefer the second category which is 12-15 and 28 per cent of UG and PG students prefer the third category which is 15-19.

## Conclusion

The study highlights a growing awareness and preference for recycled textiles among students, driven primarily by economic and environmental considerations. However, despite this increasing interest, a significant gap exists in brand awareness and accessibility, which may hinder the widespread adoption of recycled textiles. Many consumers still lack information about available recycling initiatives, sustainable brands, and the broader impact of textile waste on the environment. To bridge this gap, targeted awareness campaigns, educational programs, and institutional initiatives are essential. Universities and fashion industries can play a crucial role in promoting sustainability by integrating circular economy concepts into curriculums and marketing strategies. Additionally, making recycling more accessible through

convenient collection systems, second-hand marketplaces, and affordable pricing strategies can encourage greater participation. Policymakers and industry leaders must collaborate to implement stronger incentives for textile recycling, such as tax benefits, subsidies, and stricter regulations on waste management. By fostering responsible consumption, promoting innovation in sustainable textiles, and encouraging behavioural shifts, the fashion industry can transition toward an eco-friendlier and more circular economic model. This will not only help in reducing textile waste but also contribute to a more sustainable and resource-efficient future.

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## Annexure

- General information
- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Education
- Ethnicity
- Marital status
- Income
- Family Type
- No of siblings
- Background

### 1. Do you know about recycled textiles?

- Yes
- No

### 2. Do you prefer recycling of textiles?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

### 3. How did you come across the information about recycling of clothes?

#### Mass media

- a) newspaper
- b) magazine
- c) internet

#### Locality source

- a) Friends
- b) Relatives
- c) Neighbors'

#### Cosmopolite source

- a) Workshop
- b) Fairs
- c) Others

### 4. Choose the statement that best applies

- I am the person in my household most likely to sort/ get rid of used textiles
- I share the responsibility of sorting with another person
- Someone else in my household is more likely to sort/ discard used textiles
- No one in my household would sort/ discard used textiles

### 5. Have you ever bought recycled textiles/clothes?

- Yes
- No

### 6. How often do you donate clothes?

- Once or twice in a year
- Every four to six month
- Every month
- Never

### 7. Do you know any brand or designer who recycles clothes?

- Yes
- No
- If yes which brand

**8. What type of textile do you recycle?**

- Handloom
- Clothes
- Lingerie
- Other

**9. At what price you would like to buy recycled clothes?**

- Same as non-recycled clothes
- Half of non-recycled clothes
- Less than half

**10. Which one of these aspects do you think is positive about buying or selling recycled clothes?**

- Economical
- Biological
- Environmental
- Physiological
- Other

**11. How you discard each of the following items:-****1. Jeans with holes**

- reuse or give to someone you know
- donate
- garbage
- others

**2. Undergarments**

- reuse or give to someone you know
- donate
- garbage
- others

**3. Children clothes**

- reuse or give to someone you know
- donate
- garbage
- others

**4. Handlooms**

- reuse or give to someone you know
- donate
- garbage
- others

**12 Do you Agree/Disagree with each statement Agree Disagree?**

- I want to get rid of stuff as fast as possible.
- I can't be bothered taking these things to a Charitable, drop-off bin or donation centre.
- Items that are worn out or stained should not be donated.
- There are no convenient options for me to drop donations off.
- I would rather give my stuff to people I know who can reuse it. (hand-me-down)
- A lot of household textiles are so cheap and wear out so fast that they belong in the garbage.
- I am confused about what items are acceptable for donating.
- It is easy to find information about what used textiles can be donated and where to donate them.
- I am selective about what I donate to save the charity work/expenses.