

The Environmental Impact of Fast Fashion

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INTRODUCTION

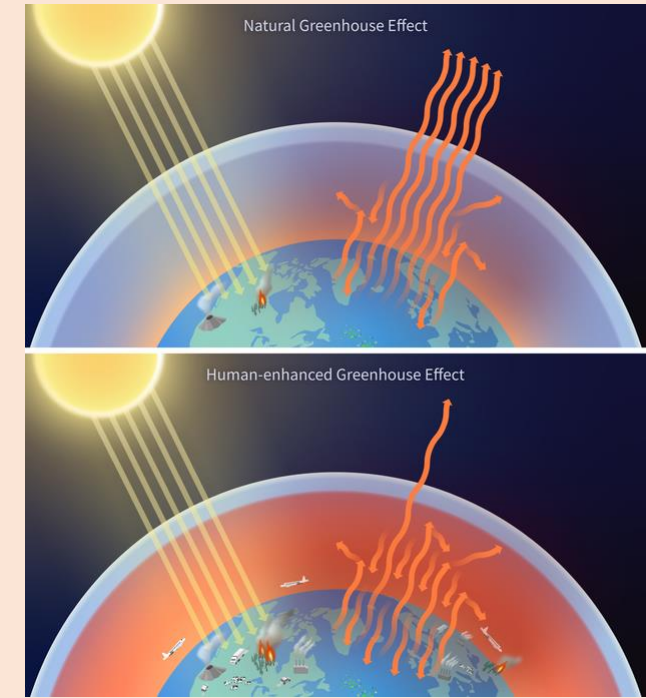
WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

- long-term changes in global temperatures and weather patterns
- human activities - main cause of climate change

HOW IT WORKS?

The burning of fossil fuels —→ coal, oil, gas —→ greenhouse gases —→ carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄). —→ Trap heat and warm the planet

- Major sources of emissions include energy production, transportation, industry, agriculture, and deforestation.



What is Fast Fashion?

- Business model —→ Rapid production
- Cheap and trendy clothing, sold at low prices
- Clothes follow the latest fashion trends depending on the season that's why social media influencers play an important role in promoting. (tiktok, Instagram Youtube)
- New collections are released frequently (every week- even every few days)



Why is Fast Fashion Popular?

Olivia Knapp – writer of the article “Why does Everyone Pay for Fast Fashion” in the online journal of Michigan

In the past, clothing was considered a long-term investment because of its quality and durability.

Consumers spent a larger percentage of their income on clothes compared to today.

People owned fewer clothing items, but the clothes lasted longer.

Fashion choices were more limited than they are today.

Why is Fast Fashion Popular?

- It offers fashionable clothes at low prices.
- Consumers can easily follow the latest trends without spending a lot of money.
- New collections are introduced very frequently, keeping customers interested.
- Social media and influencers strongly affect consumer buying habits.
- Online shopping allows people to quickly access fast fashion products worldwide.

Environmental Effects of Fast Fashion

- Fast fashion increases air pollution and contributes to climate change.
- A lot of clothes are thrown away, creating large amounts of waste.
- The production of clothes uses huge amounts of water.
- Factories release harmful chemicals into rivers and oceans.
- Synthetic clothes release tiny plastic particles called microplastics and usually they do not break down naturally after they are thrown away. (polyester)
- Transportation and mass production produce high carbon emissions.

Social Impact

- often relies on low-paid workers in developing countries
- Many workers face poor and unsafe working conditions
- Employees may work long hours for very low wages
- In some cases, workers' rights are not properly protected
- The pressure for cheap and fast production can lead to worker exploitation
- Fast fashion companies often prioritize low costs over workers' wellbeing
- The industry contributes to social inequality in many parts of the world



Sustainable Alternatives

- Buy fewer clothes and choose quality over quantity (as it used to happen in the past)
- Support sustainable and ethical fashion brands
- Shop second-hand or vintage clothing
- Reuse, repair, and recycle clothes instead of throwing them away
- Rent or swap clothes for special occasions
- Adopt a “slow fashion” mindset by buying only what you need



Conclusion

Fast fashion has transformed the way people buy and consume clothing, but it comes with significant environmental and social costs.

The industry contributes to pollution, excessive water consumption, textile waste, and climate change, while also raising concerns about working conditions and labor rights.

Adopting more sustainable habits, such as buying fewer and higher-quality clothes, supporting local brands, and recycling or reusing garments, can help reduce these negative impacts.

Both consumers and companies have an important role to play in creating a more sustainable fashion industry.

Citations

Text

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