FACULTY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

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Date of Event: 05 March, 2026

Faculty-in-Charge: Ms. Gigy Johnson

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REPORT

As part of the Faculty Enhancement Programme, a presentation was held on 05 March 2026 at the Seminar Hall, Main Block, from 03:15 p.m. to 04:00 p.m., by Ms. Akhila Thomas, Assistant Professor, Department of HM. The topic of the session was "From Wardrobe Waste to Sustainable Value: Consumer Perception Towards Textile Re-Commerce Platforms in Kerala". The presentation examined consumer perceptions of textile re-commerce platforms in Kerala, highlighting sustainability, reuse practices, and emerging market trends. The session was attended by 42 faculty members from various departments. The session encouraged active participation, with attendees raising questions and engaging in discussion.

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Prepared by:	Verified by:	Approved by:
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FEP Coordinator	Director IT/ HRD Cell	Principal

BROCHURE

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Ms. Akhila Thomas
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Hotel Management

Topic : From Wardrobe Waste to Sustainable Value: Consumer Perception Towards Textile Re-Commerce Platforms in Kerala

DATE : 05 MARCH, 2026
TIME : 03.15-04.00 PM
VENUE : MAIN BLOCK, SEMINAR HALL

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PHOTOGRAPHS









PARTICIPANTS' LIST

PARTICIPANT'S LIST

Name of the Event: FEP - Ms. Akhila Thomas

Date: 5/3/2026

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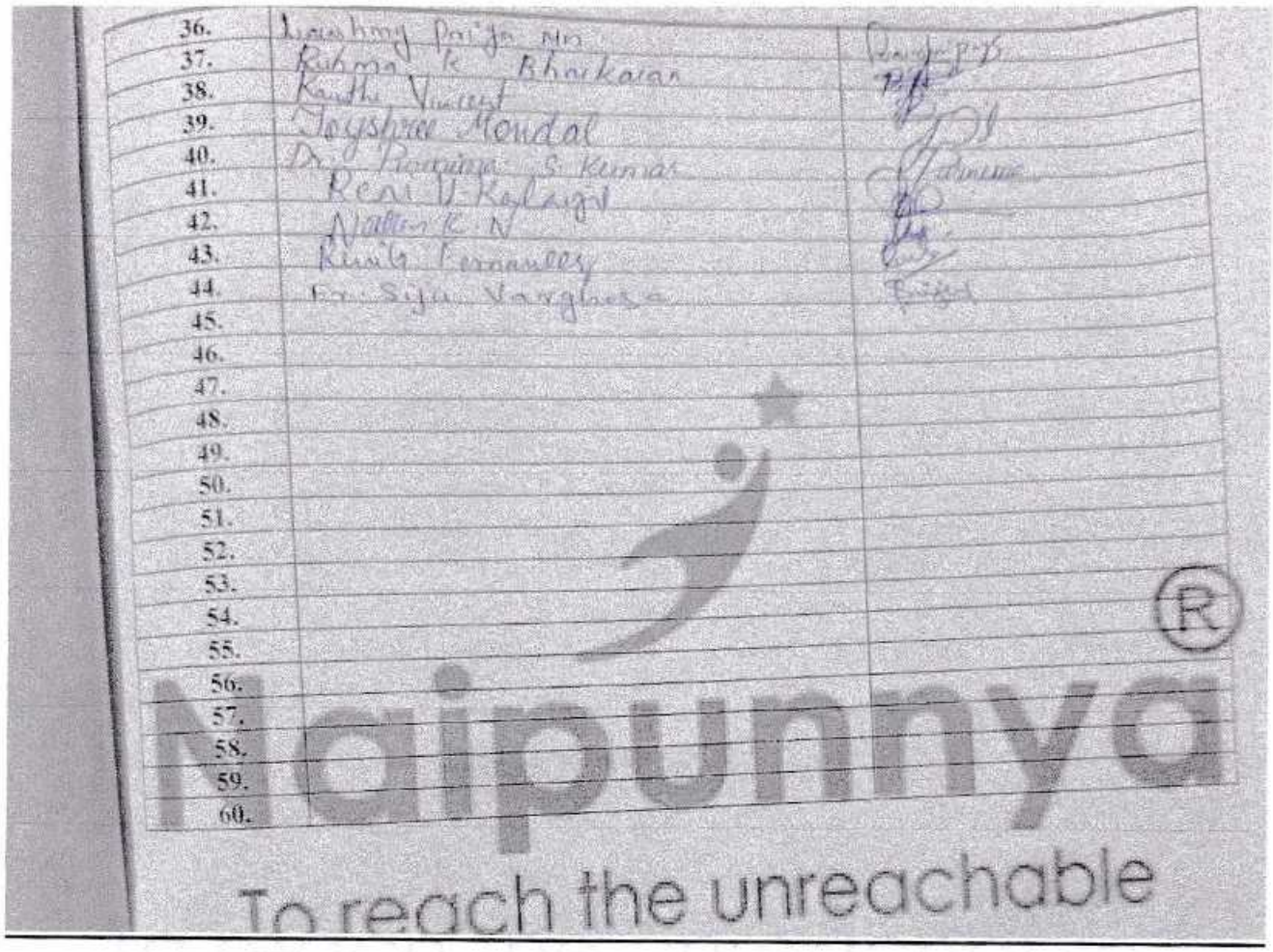

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From Wardrobe Waste to Sustainable Value: Consumer Perception of Textile Re Commerce Platforms in Kerala

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Abstract - Fashion cycles have a direct impact on customer wardrobe preference, which consequently leads to the phenomenon of used, unused, and less used clothes in the households. This excess contributes to domestic textile waste and if managed without responsibility, it worsens the environment. Textile re-commerce, including resale, swapping, upcycling, and recycling of used clothing, has become a promising form of sustainable consumption in the framework of the circular economy. It has become well-established in developed economies, but in Kerala its adoption remains limited due to socio-cultural perceptions, concerns over quality and hygiene, low consumer awareness, and insufficient institutional support. The current pilot study is rooted from this background which aims to discuss the household clothing surplus, consumer awareness, perception and behavioural intention towards the textile re-commerce and the way government support can be used to promote the sustainability and value addition. This research adopts a quantitative descriptive design, primary data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 375 adult household consumers Thrissur district, Kerala. The results reveal that the awareness of organized textile re-commerce platforms is low, showing a clear knowledge gap, though consumers are increasingly open to participation when quality, government approval, and awareness are ensured.

Index Terms - Awareness gap, Consumer perception, Sustainability, Textile re-commerce

1. INTRODUCTION

Textile recommerce refers to the resale of used or refurbished clothing through online and offline platforms, including take-back and trade-in programs that convert garments into cash or credit. With the rapid growth of fast fashion, increasing consumption, and changing lifestyles, textile waste has become a major environmental concern.

India, the world's second-largest textile producer, generates nearly 7.8 million tonnes of textile waste annually. The production of garments is resource-intensive—for instance, a single cotton T-shirt requires about 2,700 litres of water. Additionally, synthetic textiles contribute to micro plastic pollution, while weak recycling systems result in large quantities of clothing ending up in landfills, leading to resource wastage and environmental degradation.

Kerala presents a unique context where households generate significant textile waste in the form of unused and rarely worn clothing. Despite high literacy and digital adoption,

organized recommerce systems remain underdeveloped. Consumers often prefer donation or storage over resale due to factors such as lack of awareness, social stigma, and concerns related to hygiene and quality.

While existing studies on recommerce largely focus on Western markets and established platforms, limited research has been conducted in emerging economies like India. Cultural norms, informal disposal practices, and digital access challenges further influence consumer behavior in such regions.

This study aims to examine consumer perception, awareness, and behavioural intention toward textile recommerce platforms in Kerala. It focuses on wardrobe surplus, disposal practices, and key factors such as quality, hygiene, trust, price, and social acceptance. The findings are expected to provide insights for developing consumer-centric strategies and policy interventions to promote sustainable consumption and support the transition toward a circular textile economy.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The increasing accumulation of unused clothing in households indicates a mismatch between consumption and utilization. While consumers are becoming more aware of environmental issues, this awareness does not necessarily translate into sustainable behaviour.

In Kerala, most consumers prefer donating or storing unused clothes rather than engaging in resale through recommerce platforms. This indicates the presence of underlying barriers that prevent adoption. Social stigma, concerns about hygiene and quality, lack of trust in platforms, and limited awareness contribute to this gap.

Moreover, existing research on textile recommerce is largely focused on developed markets, leaving a gap in understanding consumer behaviour in emerging economies like India. There is a need to examine how local cultural, social, and economic factors influence recommerce adoption.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the extent of wardrobe surplus and clothing disposal practices among households in Kerala.
- To assess consumer awareness of textile re-commerce platforms in Kerala.
- To analyze consumer perception and attitudes toward textile re-commerce platforms based on quality, hygiene, price, trust, social acceptance, and sustainability.
- To examine the factors influencing consumer's intention to participate in textile re-commerce.
- To suggest consumer-driven strategies to enhance adoption of textile re-commerce platforms in Kerala.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant from environmental, economic, social, and policy perspectives.



Environmental Impact:
The study highlights how textile recommerce can reduce textile waste and support circular economy practices. By promoting reuse and resale of clothing, it helps conserve resources, minimize landfill waste, and reduce environmental pollution caused by fast fashion.

Economic Opportunities:
Textile recommerce creates opportunities for income generation by enabling individuals to sell unused clothing. It also supports the growth of resale businesses, startups, and employment in areas like logistics, refurbishment, and digital platforms, thereby contributing to the circular economy.

Social Transformation:
The study addresses the social stigma associated with second-hand clothing. By understanding consumer perceptions, it helps promote acceptance of recommerce as a sustainable and responsible practice, encouraging a shift in consumer mind set toward eco-friendly consumption.

Policy Development:
The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers to integrate textile recommerce into waste management systems. It emphasizes the need for awareness programs, institutional support, and government initiatives to promote sustainable consumption and structured recommerce practices.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Consumer Behavior and Sustainable Practices

Consumer behavior in the context of sustainability has been widely studied, with scholars emphasizing the role of awareness, values, and social influence in shaping eco-friendly choices. Research suggests that consumers increasingly recognize the environmental impact of fast fashion and surplus clothing, leading to a shift toward more responsible consumption patterns (Smith, 2020). Studies highlight generational differences, where younger cohorts demonstrate stronger alignment with ethical and sustainable brands compared to older groups (Johnson & Lee, 2021). However, barriers such as convenience, affordability, and lack of trust in green claims continue to hinder widespread adoption (Patel, 2022).

Recommerce and Circular Economy Models

Recommerce—defined as the resale, reuse, or recycling of products—has emerged as a critical strategy to address clothing surplus. Scholars argue that recommerce platforms not only extend product lifecycles but also reshape consumer perceptions of value and ownership (Kumar, 2021). Digital platforms have accelerated this trend, offering peer-to-peer marketplaces and brand-led initiatives that normalize secondhand consumption (Brown, 2022). Evidence suggests that recommerce contributes to reducing textile waste while simultaneously creating new business opportunities aligned with circular economy principles (Garcia & Chen, 2023).

Clothing Surplus and Environmental Impact

The issue of clothing surplus is central to sustainability debates. Global studies estimate that millions of tons of textiles are discarded annually, with only a fraction being recycled or

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reused (Williams, 2020). The environmental consequences include resource depletion, carbon emissions, and landfill overflow. Scholars emphasize that addressing surplus requires systemic interventions—ranging from supply chain redesign to consumer education (Singh, 2021). Policy frameworks, such as extended producer responsibility (EPR), have been proposed to hold brands accountable for post-consumer waste (Lopez, 2022).

Integrating Sustainability into Consumer Culture

Recent literature underscores the importance of embedding sustainability into consumer culture through education, marketing, and policy. Campaigns that highlight the social and environmental benefits of recommerce have been shown to positively influence consumer attitudes (Taylor, 2023). Moreover, collaborations between governments, NGOs, and industry stakeholders are seen as essential in scaling sustainable practices (Rahman, 2021). The literature collectively suggests that recommerce and surplus management are not isolated phenomena but part of a broader cultural shift toward responsible consumption.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study is grounded in established behavioural and social theories that explain consumer perception and intention toward textile recommerce. These theories provide a structured understanding of how psychological, social, and environmental factors influence consumer behaviour.

6.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**, proposed by Icek Ajzen (1991), is one of the most widely used frameworks to explain consumer decision-making. According to this theory, an individual's behavioural intention is influenced by three key factors:

Attitude toward recommerce:
This refers to the individual's positive or negative evaluation of buying or selling second-hand clothing. If consumers perceive recommerce as beneficial, economical, and environmentally friendly, they are more likely to develop a favourable attitude toward it.

Subjective norms (social influence):
These are the perceived social pressures from family, friends, and society. In the context of Kerala, cultural norms and social expectations play a significant role. If society views second-hand clothing negatively, it may discourage individuals from participating in recommerce.

Perceived behavioural control:
This refers to the ease or difficulty of engaging in recommerce activities. Factors such as access to online platforms, digital literacy, availability of resale stores, and convenience influence this component. Higher perceived control leads to stronger intention and actual participation.

Thus, TPB helps explain why consumers may have the intention to participate in recommerce but fail to act due to social or practical constraints.

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6.2 Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory

The **Value-Belief-Norm Theory** focuses on how personal values and environmental beliefs influence pro-environmental behaviour. It suggests that individuals who hold strong ecological values are more likely to engage in sustainable practices.

Values:
Individuals who prioritize environmental protection and sustainability are more inclined toward recommerce.

Beliefs:
Awareness about environmental issues such as textile waste, pollution, and resource depletion shapes consumer beliefs about the importance of sustainable fashion.

Norms:
Personal norms or moral obligations encourage individuals to act responsibly, such as reducing waste by reusing or reselling clothing.

In this study, VBN theory explains how environmental consciousness motivates consumers to view recommerce as a responsible and ethical choice. However, even when values and beliefs are strong, actual behaviour may still be influenced by external barriers.

6.3 Perceived Risk Theory

The **Perceived Risk Theory**, introduced by Raymond A. Bauer (1960), explains that consumers evaluate potential risks before making purchase decisions. In the context of textile recommerce, several types of perceived risks influence consumer behavior:

Hygiene concerns:
Consumers may fear that used clothing is not clean or safe, which discourages purchase.

Quality uncertainty:
Unlike new products, second-hand items may have wear and tear, leading to doubts about durability and value.

Social risk:
Consumers may worry about being judged negatively by others for using second-hand clothing.

These perceived risks create hesitation and reduce consumer willingness to participate in recommerce. Addressing these risks through quality assurance, sanitization, and transparency is essential for increasing adoption.

6.4 Social Stigma Theory

Social Stigma Theory explains how societal perceptions and cultural beliefs influence individual behaviour. In many societies, including Kerala, second-hand clothing is often associated with poverty, low social status, or lack of affordability.

Consumers may avoid recommerce to maintain their social image

Fear of judgment discourages participation

Cultural norms reinforce preference for new clothing

This stigma acts as a strong psychological barrier, even when consumers are aware of the environmental and economic benefits of recommerce. Overcoming this stigma requires changing societal attitudes through awareness campaigns, influencer endorsement, and normalization of sustainable fashion.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology provides a systematic approach for collecting and analysing data to achieve the objectives of the study. This study adopts a structured method to examine consumer perception toward textile recommerce platforms in Kerala.

7.1 Research Design: Descriptive

The study uses a **descriptive research design** to analyze and describe consumer behaviour, awareness, and perception regarding textile recommerce. It helps in understanding existing conditions such as wardrobe surplus, disposal practices, and attitudes without manipulating any variables.

7.2 Research Approach: Quantitative

A **quantitative approach** is adopted, involving the collection of numerical data through structured questionnaires. This approach allows objective measurement of consumer responses and enables statistical analysis for accurate interpretation.

7.3 Sample Size

The study is based on **100 respondents**, including students, working professionals, and homemakers. This sample provides a reasonable representation of different consumer groups within the study area.

7.4 Sampling Technique: Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling is used to select respondents based on availability and accessibility. This method is time-efficient and suitable for descriptive studies, though it may limit generalization.

7.5 Data Collection Methods

Data is collected using:



- **Structured Questionnaire:**
  Includes questions on demographics, wardrobe usage, awareness, perception, and behavioural intention. A **5-point Likert scale** is used to measure responses.
- **Interviews:**
  Conducted with selected respondents and local stakeholders to gain additional insights into textile waste practices and recommerce awareness.

7.6 Study Area

The study is conducted in **Thrissur and Ernakulam districts**, representing urban and semi-urban populations with diverse consumption patterns and increasing exposure to digital platforms.

7.7 Statistical Tools

The data is analysed using:

- **Percentage Analysis** to show distribution
- **Mean** to measure average responses
- **Standard Deviation** to assess variability

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data is interpreted using percentage analysis and mean values to understand consumer behavior toward textile recommerce platforms.

Demographic Profile

The study sample consisted of 100 respondents. In terms of gender distribution, the majority were female (60%), while males accounted for 40% of the participants. Regarding occupational status, students represented the largest group (38%), followed closely by employed individuals (35%). Smaller proportions were self-employed (15%) and categorized as others (10%).

The age distribution revealed that nearly half of the respondents (45%) were between 18–25 years, followed by 30% in the 26–35 age group. Participants aged 36–45 comprised 15%, while those above 45 years accounted for 10%.

With respect to educational attainment, half of the respondents (50%) were undergraduates, 35% were postgraduates, and the remaining 15% reported other qualifications.

8.1 Wardrobe Surplus

The study reveals that **82% of respondents possess more than 5 unused clothing items**, while only **18% have 1–5 unused items**.

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No. of Unused Clothes	Respondents	Percentage
1–5 items	18	18%
6–10 items	32	32%
11–20 items	30	30%
Above 20	20	20%

Interpretation:
The findings clearly indicate a **high level of wardrobe surplus** among households. This suggests strong potential for textile recommerce, as unused clothing can be converted into economic value through resale platforms.

8.2 Disposal Practices

The analysis shows the following disposal behavior:

Disposal Method	Percentage
Donation (charity/religious)	36%
Given to waste collectors	22%
Stored at home	16%
Given to relatives/others	10%
Burned	8%
Sold via recommerce	8%

Interpretation:
A majority of respondents prefer **donation (36%)** rather than resale. Only **8% actively use recommerce platforms**, indicating **low adoption levels**. This shows that although surplus exists, it is not effectively utilized for economic or sustainable value creation.

8.3 Awareness Levels

Awareness Level	Percentage
Highly Aware	25%
Moderately Aware	30%
Slightly Aware	25%
Not Aware	20%

Interpretation:
Around **45% of respondents have low or no awareness** of textile recommerce platforms. This lack of awareness acts as a major barrier to participation and limits market growth.

8.4 Consumer Perception

Consumer perception was analysed based on multiple factors:



- **Positive Perception:**
  - Affordability of second-hand clothing
  - Environmental benefits and sustainability
- **Negative Perception:**
  - Hygiene concerns
  - Quality uncertainty
  - Lack of trust

Interpretation:
Consumers show **mixed perceptions** toward recommerce. While they recognize economic and environmental advantages, concerns regarding hygiene and quality significantly influence their hesitation.

8.5 Social Acceptance

- **Mean Score: 2.85 (on a 5-point scale)**

Interpretation:
The relatively low mean score indicates **low social acceptance**. Social stigma associated with second-hand clothing is a major barrier, as consumers fear negative judgment from society. Cultural perceptions strongly influence purchasing decisions.

8.6 Behavioral Intention

Response Category	Percentage
Very Likely	18%
Likely	27%
Neutral	25%
Unlikely	20%
Very Unlikely	10%

- **Mean Score: 3.23**

Interpretation:
The results indicate a **moderate level of intention** toward participating in recommerce. While a portion of respondents shows willingness, a significant number remain neutral or hesitant. This suggests that consumers are open to recommerce but require **greater awareness, trust, and social acceptance** to actively engage.

9. MAJOR FINDINGS

The study reveals several important insights regarding consumer perception and behaviour toward textile recommerce platforms in Kerala:

- **High level of unused clothing in households:**
  A large proportion of respondents possess significant wardrobe surplus, indicating

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that households have excess clothing that remains underutilized. This highlights a strong potential for recommerce as a sustainable solution.

- **Low awareness of recommerce platforms:**
  Many respondents are either unaware or only partially aware of textile recommerce platforms. This lack of awareness acts as a primary barrier to participation and limits market growth.
- **Preference for donation over resale:**
  Consumers tend to donate unused clothes to charity or give them to others rather than selling them. This reflects traditional disposal practices and indicates limited acceptance of resale as a viable option.
- **Social stigma limits participation:**
  The study finds that societal perceptions play a crucial role in influencing behavior. Many consumers associate second-hand clothing with lower social status, which discourages them from engaging in recommerce.
- **Hygiene and quality concerns affect perception:**
  Consumers express concerns regarding cleanliness, safety, and durability of used clothing. These perceived risks significantly impact their willingness to purchase second-hand items.
- **Trust in platforms is moderate:**
  While some respondents show confidence in recommerce platforms, overall trust levels are not very high. Issues such as product authenticity, return policies, and transparency influence consumer trust.
- **Recommerce market is in early development stage:**
  The overall findings indicate that textile recommerce in Kerala is still in a nascent stage, with low participation despite high potential. The market requires structured development and awareness initiatives.

10. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the adoption and effectiveness of textile recommerce platforms:

- **Conduct awareness campaigns on sustainable fashion:**
  There is a need to educate consumers about the environmental impact of textile waste and the benefits of recommerce. Awareness programs through social media, educational institutions, and community initiatives can help increase knowledge and acceptance.
- **Improve hygiene standards and quality assurance:**
  Recommerce platforms should implement strict quality checks, proper cleaning, and certification processes to address consumer concerns regarding hygiene and durability. Providing clear product descriptions and images can also enhance confidence.
- **Build trust through transparent policies:**
  Platforms should ensure transparency in pricing, return policies, and product authenticity. Features such as customer reviews, ratings, and secure payment systems can further strengthen consumer trust.
- **Use influencers to normalize recommerce:**
  Influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements can play a significant role in changing societal perceptions. Promoting second-hand fashion as trendy and sustainable can help reduce stigma and increase acceptance.

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- **Encourage government support and incentives:**
  Government and local authorities can support recommerce through policy initiatives, subsidies, and incentives for businesses. Promoting circular economy practices at the institutional level can accelerate adoption.
- **Integrate recommerce into waste management systems:**
  Textile recommerce can be incorporated into existing waste management frameworks by establishing collection centers, sorting facilities, and resale channels. Collaboration with local self-governments can enhance efficiency and reach.

11. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While the study provides valuable insights, it is subject to certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting the results:

- **Limited sample size:**
  The study is based on a sample of 100 respondents, which may not fully represent the entire population of Kerala. A larger sample size could provide more accurate and generalizable results.
- **Restricted geographical area:**
  The research is confined to Thrissur and Ernakulam districts. Consumer behavior in other regions of Kerala or India may differ due to variations in culture, lifestyle, and economic conditions.
- **Use of convenience sampling:**
  The study adopts convenience sampling, which may introduce bias as respondents are selected based on accessibility rather than randomness. This limits the ability to generalize findings to the broader population.
- **Focus only on consumer perception:**
  The study primarily examines consumer perception and does not include perspectives of businesses, platform providers, or policymakers. Including these stakeholders could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the recommerce ecosystem.

12. CONCLUSION

The present study highlights the growing importance of textile recommerce as a sustainable solution to address the increasing problem of textile waste. With the rise of fast fashion and changing consumption patterns, households in Kerala are accumulating a significant amount of unused clothing. This surplus presents a valuable opportunity to promote recommerce as a means of extending the lifecycle of garments and reducing environmental impact.

The findings of the study indicate that while consumers possess a moderate level of environmental awareness, their actual participation in recommerce platforms remains limited. Factors such as social stigma, lack of awareness, hygiene concerns, and trust issues act as major barriers. Cultural perceptions, in particular, play a significant role in discouraging the use of second-hand clothing, despite its economic and environmental benefits.

At the same time, the study reveals a positive outlook for the future. The presence of moderate behavioral intention suggests that consumers are open to adopting recommerce practices if appropriate measures are taken. Increased awareness, improved platform reliability, and changing social attitudes can significantly enhance participation.

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Therefore, textile recommerce has strong potential to transform the fashion industry into a more sustainable and circular system. With coordinated efforts from consumers, businesses, and policymakers, it can evolve into a mainstream practice in Kerala. This will not only contribute to environmental conservation but also create economic opportunities and promote responsible consumption patterns.

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