

Apparel Industry and Fashion Education in South Asian Region: A Review

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Abstract

South Asian Region (SAR) apparel manufacturing countries are transitioning from apparel assembly (contract manufacturing) to original design manufacturing in response to global economic policy changes and competition from the low-cost production countries in the apparel value chain. The purpose of this paper is to review the evolution of the Sri Lankan apparel industry and fashion education through the lens of SAR, particularly in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan in order to define the position of Sri Lanka's apparel industry in SAR, and thus identify the country's strengths in the apparel value chain. The study reviews the literature relevant to the SAR apparel industry context, taking Sri Lanka as a focal point. The evidence of the study highlights that in the last decade, the apparel industry and fashion education in Sri Lanka has significantly developed in comparison to the SAR apparel industry and has transitioned from apparel contract manufacturing to provide value-added services, influencing the core competencies of Western buyers and retailers. Given the substantial contribution of the apparel industry to the Sri Lanka economy and employment, continued industrial upgrading through design and value-added services can assist the country to remain competitive in SAR.

Keywords: *South Asia, Sri Lanka, Apparel industry, Fashion education, Industrial upgrading*

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