

## **Re-conceptualized ancient wisdom of Zero waste Garment making in collaboration with handweavers in India: “Pitambar” - An unconventional design journey**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The design approach followed by the fashion industry post- industrialization has drastically affected consumer mindsets, choosing “Quantity” over “Quality”. The easy availability of raw materials like yarns, fabrics, trims etc, has made designing less mindful and more profit driven for scaling businesses. This overconsumption mindset has led to fast fashion taking over the market by mass produced goods. On tracing back fashion history, one can see how mindful the art of garment making was pre-industrialization, when fabric was handwoven on a handloom, making it precious and of high value. The fashion industry back then valued raw materials and followed a zero waste design pattern making technique. The present paper explains a re-imagined unconventional design journey of “Pitambar India”- A Culturally Sustainable zero waste design startup clothing brand, re-exploring ancient garment making techniques in collaboration with indigenous communities and hand weavers in India, who are the custodians of the Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs) to craft a better future in harmony with nature. The present paper explains the design intervention through co-designing, including difficulties faced and solutions devised on making zero waste garment patterns in collaboration with handloom weavers in Kutch, Gujarat after conducting on ground cluster visits to first-hand understand and co-create a design process that aims for systems change in the fashion industry by being a working example of a more purpose driven and conscious design approach to craft a better future for the fashion industry. The present paper throws light on the industries need on having constructive dialogue between the weavers, designers, pattern cutters, cultural mediators, tailors etc. to bridge the gap between the industry and every individuals contribution in the supply chain to solve bigger problem like cultural appropriation, textile waste, inefficient design practices resulting into exploitation of natural resources. The learnings from this research will not just open doors to the zero waste design possibilities, but would also be immensely helpful for researchers, designers and other industry professionals to holistically understand Cultural Sustainability in Fashion.

### **Keywords**

Re-exploring; Techniques; Collaborations; Conscious; Cultural Sustainability

### **Sub-theme(s)**

**Change in Demand-** Slow Fashion, Future of Fashion, Social Entrepreneurship for sustainable impact, Startups and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Conscious Consumerism, Consumer behaviour, Culture and consumption

**Change in Supply-** Industry practices, Waste management, Sustainable production, Carbon footprints, Supply chain management, Crafts & Sustainability

**Change in Policy-** Women led businesses, Creating an ecosystem, Socio-economic impact

