

## **Fashion Assessment**

The Fashion Industry connects people from across the planet. The fashion industry is one of the most profitable businesses in the world, starting from natural wool or cotton being spun to make cloth, to more man-made materials such as Nylon, Rayon, and Polyester are becoming extremely popular in everyday life and are making the Fashion industry millions. The Fashion industry 'the rag trade' have been an economic activity for years, with Multi-National companies operating across the globe. This is an example of globalisation.

There are many people involved in the production of clothes. The most important are probably the farmer, the factory worker, the manufacturer, the brand owner, the retailer, and the consumer. The farmer is an extremely

Next in the line is the Manufacturer. The Manufacturer produces goods for the Brand-owner, though he must charge as little as possible to ensure a buyer. Low profits mean little money to improve factory conditions, though the Manufacturer tries to keep the 'code of practice for health and safety', inspections are rare. As mentioned above, the manufacturer does allow workers to join trade unions, though he will sack trouble-makers.

Another major part of the chain is the retailer. The retailer sells the products to the public and takes a large percentage of the money made. For example, if an item of clothing £50, the retailer would receive £23 from the sale. The retailer likes to buy goods from the Brandowner at the lowest possible price, so as to get larger profits. Also, they like to buy 'brandname' products such as Nike and Lacoste because they can sell them for more.

In my eyes, the most important stage in the Chain is the Consumer. A Consumer is anybody who buys clothes or Fashion items, like you or me. The consumer will buy the product from the retailer, wanting to pay a small price. The consumer will however pay more if the product has a brand name or is 'in fashion'. If you research Global Fashion, it is clear that many of consumers are concerned about the conditions of factories in LEDCs. Countries have taken out loans to provide basic needs for their people, though poverty is still an issue. Companies such as 'fair trade' are buying goods from factory workers, but are selling them, making sure that the workers get a fairer pay.

As far as I'm concerned, the factory workers are getting the worst end of the deal. Kelly used to be a Factory worker, but is now unemployed. Kelly lives in Cardigan, Wales, and used to work for Dewhirst the UK's top clothing manufacturer. Most of Dewhirst's work was for Marks and Spencers, but as Marks and Spencers entered a difficult time, their profits dropped, meaning Dewhirst's profits also dropped. Because of this, Dewhirst realised that drastic measures were to be taken and they sacked all workers in the UK and build factories in LEDCs such as Monaco, Indonesia, and Malaysia, to cut costs. The Cardigan Factory, however is not the only victim. Since 1998, Dewhirst has closed several factories, with the loss of around 2500 jobs. At the end of July, Kelly was informed that the factory would be closed by December. Apparently, many of the other workers burst into tears upon hearing the news. Not only would Kelly lose her job, but so would hundreds of other workers. For a mother working in a factory, the only money she can attain is from

her job. If your family are only just surviving on the money you earn, what then would you do if you lost your job altogether. Problems may arise.

For example, this will affect Kelly's local economy because she might be more careful about her money, she may spend less in the slightly more expensive local independent shops and go to cheaper places like supermarkets. If most people in the village do this the independent shops will suffer and they may have to close down.

A lot of shoppers do just buy clothes because they're cheap. Maybe a way to overcome this problem would be to sell clothes with a label on them, telling the buyer that buying that particular item will go toward the pay of the worker? Maybe the consumer would spend more money if they thought that they were doing a 'Fair Trade'? To be fair, you can't really blame Dewhirst for closing the factory. If they'd continued the way they were going, the factory would have had to have been closed down anyway because it may have gone bankrupt. Sadly however, Kelly's job will not have been the only job under threat. In 1999, M and S issued a statement saying that they were going to get more clothes made overseas. For years, they had tried to 'Buy British', with 70% of goods being made in Britain, but that number has now dropped to 30% in an attempt to cut costs.

As I explained above, changes in the Fashion Industry means that most of our clothes are made in LEDCs. Rosa works for a fashion manufacturer because her family is very poor and this job promised that it was a good job and would earn money to send back home to her family. Unfortunately this is not the case, Rosa has a horrible time working and she still hardly earns enough for her to live on let alone sending money back to support her family. However, Rosa can't afford to lose her job because there aren't many near her village and at least she earns just about enough for her to survive. Even if she did quit her

Consumers, the people who buy the products are now becoming aware of the bad conditions that the Factory Workers deal with and the bad pay that they receive. There are many ways that people can get their view or disagreement across. Some people simply start petitions or start websites to show what they think. More passionate people however may spray on shop windows/vandalise shops, or even start riots in them. Some people may just not buy clothes from certain retailers that get their goods unfairly made, though it would be extremely hard to get people to stop buying the goods altogether. Also, if a company is 'in fashion', alot of people will buy the goods not caring about how they were made.

And to conclude, In my opinion, any factory worker is a victim. Whether it is because they've lost their job to someone else, work in poor conditions, or just get terrible pay, it is beginning to seem very un-fair. Maybe one day, people working in factories will get what they deserve. After all, what would we do without clothes?