



TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE TEXTILE INDUSTRY: A PRELIMINARY STATUS QUO ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTILE WASTE MANAGEMENT IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Textile industry plays an important role in global economy. At the same time the generation of large amount of textile waste creates tremendous environmental problems. Textile waste management is a challenge in Sri Lanka due to the lack of sustainable waste management solutions. The main objective of this study is to present a preliminary status of the QUO analysis of Sri Lankan textile industry using Integrated Sustainable Waste Management Model (ISWMM) as a theoretical framework. Data were gathered through a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews with the relevant persons in the sustainability divisions of the textile companies. The survey and interview data were cross-checked with reports submitted to other organizations. Twelve large scale textile industries were selected for the survey in the present study. The field observations and the analysis confirmed that the trends and practices in the textile waste management in Sri Lanka were not different among medium to large scale textile companies. The findings revealed that the Sri Lankan textile industry mostly use synthetic fabrics or the mixtures. Waste generation occurs at different stages of the manufacturing processes including cutting, knitting and finishing. A majority of raw material related waste mostly consisted of fabric offcuts, trimmings, rejected products and fabrics. Reusing and recycling of textile waste is given a priority and up cycling practice was also identified as a new trend to manage textile waste. Enabling aspects of the waste management were found to be technical, environmental, socio-cultural, financial and economic, institutional, political and legal aspects. The authors highlight that sharing these findings could assist more textile companies in the country and in the region to evaluate their current practices and identify best practices that could implement in transitioning to a sustainable textile sector.

Keywords: Textile industry, Textile waste, Sustainable waste management, ISWMM, Sri Lanka