

Since India opened its markets in the 1990s, mass consumption has brought about mass waste. The increased waste, which differs from the traditional Indian categories of waste, has created new businesses for waste processing. This study specifically examined flows of used clothes as one new waste flow that has been brought about by globalization. In India, clothes have maintained specific values and functions. Clothes are regarded as a connection and as a barrier between domestic and foreign lands and people. Clothes have been recycled at home over generations and among intimately related people. However, as market economies and globalization expand, such clothes, even from domestic domains, have reached a stage of overflow. Used clothes are now recycled through different processes in different markets that connect and reorganize classes, communities, and regions.

Globalization does not simply bring about “waste” or standardization of clothing markets if one examines local circulation of used clothes in India. Rather it creates diverse markets of recycled clothes that serve different needs of people trying to adapt to new economic circumstances. To understand this flow of used clothes in Gujarat, this study revealed two factors. The first is those who circulate used clothes. In Ahmedabad in Gujarat, they are Devī Pūjak, designated as criminal tribes during the colonial period, and Muslims who have migrated from Uttar Pradesh. Although both communities are marginal in Gujarat, they have been able to respond promptly to niches that have newly arisen in globalization because of their fluid social position, not adhering strongly to traditional jobs or values attached to used clothes. They make the most of their already existing community network and create new markets of recycled clothes. The second is the Indian clothing characteristics. Their significance does not derive only from a ritual value, but instead brings about new values through using recyclable components of different kinds. Their varieties and changeability of size, shape, and components are suitable to globalization, which invariably leads to de-territorialization of goods.