



Where are the plus sized clothes in a thrift shop?

NADEEMAHAFROSE MONDOL

Thrift shops or vintage stores are getting a lot of hype presently in Bangladesh. Personally, I love seeing people thrift shopping and truly admire the fits they put together. However, as a person whose shoulders aren't exactly a size 14 and whose waist isn't a "perfect" 36, I can't help but notice the disappointing lack of plus size friendly clothing in the online boom of Bangladeshi thrift shops.

If we look closely into these marketplaces, it can be observed that most of their clothes, from dresses to pants, are suitable for petite females who have smaller waist and bust sizes. It seems impossible to find clothes in L or XL, let alone XXL, even for men.

Similar circumstances are seen in the case of thrifted shoes. To find shoes for chubby feet in Bangladesh is like finding rare gems.

Unavailability of and inconvenience about clothing create difficulties for many people. Clothes for plus size men and women cost much more than regular clothing as they are found mostly in exclusive stores. Not every obese person can afford high-end clothing, so it is clear that plus sized people with affordability concerns face various issues while shopping.

So, why exactly is plus sized apparel so hard to find in thrift shops?

To answer this question, the first thing that pops into mind is the lack of plus size clothes in the overall clothing market in Bangladesh. In spite of holding the third position in the world garments manufacturer ranking, the garments in Bangladesh are not quite accessible for all types of bodies.

The big brands which import our manufactured clothes are not plus size friendly, except for some aspects of their business which are performative. As a result, among the clothes that are left behind to sell in the local market for us to wear, finding plus size fits can be very hard.

Therefore, when plus sized people do buy outfits that fit them, perhaps they do not consider donating their clothes because they want to wear that outfit as long as they can. If you want to donate your clothes to a thrift store, it cannot be in a worn out condition which means the lack of availability is the reason why pre-loved plus size clothes are given away for thrifting so rarely.

In addition, thrift shops in Bangladesh have little diversity in general and not all of the clothes are pre-loved in these shops either. This is mostly because people often confuse reselling products with thrifting as well as think of thrifting like distributing winter clothes to charity. As thrifting is a newly emerging industry, the condition may improve but keeping in mind the matter of body diversity, local thrifting really needs to reinvent itself soon.

Nadeemah always wraps her head around what she's going to eat next and thinks that the glass at her bedside table is half- full. Say hi at nadeemahafrose13@gmail.com

Everything wrong with teen TV shows

MASHIYAT NAYEEM

What do Gen Z kids and adolescents of generations past have in common? From early 2000s shows like *Gossip Girl* and *Pretty Little Liars* to newer shows like *Riverdale* and *Euphoria*, the problems in these teen dramas continue to persist to this day. Drawing from my experiences of watching this genre for several years now, my observations are as follows.

USING ADULT ACTORS

It is no secret that the actors parading around are not actual teenagers in real life. While there are very practical reasons for employing adults to play the part of children, such as increased working hours and prevention of minors from being groomed and exploited, 20-somethings effortlessly navigating high school while looking put together enforce a skewed perception of how teenagers should behave or what they should look like.

TOXIC BODY IMAGE

The vast majority of teenagers are far from the unrealistic supermodel depiction of the characters in these shows. The actors are almost always airbrushed to perfection, which is a strong contrast from adolescents who have to deal with acne and body hair. Body positivity is yet another element missing, with the women being slim figured and the men having a toned muscular body, thus perpetuating body image issues in a demographic already prone to low self-esteem and eating disorders.

HYPERSEXUAL COSTUMES

One would think the clothing would at least would reflect the settings of these shows (i.e. high school). Instead, the costumes are used as tool to hypersexualise the supposedly teenage characters. Sparkly and skimpy ensembles much

better suited to clubs, runways, and special occasions dominate the screen that do nothing to add to the plot, and just further instils a false sense of appearance in the minds of impressionable viewers.

HARMFUL RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS

While dating is a huge part of the lives of those with raging hormones, TV shows tend to portray it as their only purpose in life. A commonality is the male characters in relationships being drenched with toxic masculinity and the girls going out of their way to impress these boys, often succumbing to mistreatment. Some shows go as far as screening teacher-student relationships, which is not only illegal, but promotes unfair power dynamics and grooming of minors.

OVER GLAMORISATION OF DRUGS AND SEX

A recurring theme in almost every high school show is drug peddling. When the main focus of the age group should be academics, extra-curricular activities and hobbies, it is entirely replaced with the obsession to try out exciting drugs and engage in sex. The problem lies in the fact that the false, overly glamorised portrayal of sex instils certain expectations and misleads viewers, who are probably just hitting puberty, to think that it is the focal point of high school.

While casting older actors makes way for directors to sexualise the portrayal of characters and incorporate mature themes, teen shows set in high school is not the place to do so. Perhaps, they are better suited to a college campus setting because adolescents are anything but passive consumers of media.

Mashiyat Nayeem is mourning the end of online school and the extra hour of sleep. Send her condolences at mashiyat.nayeem@gmail.com

