

## #ORGANISING

### Five Easy Ways to Hide Cords and Cables in Your Home

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Despite the prevalence of wireless devices, wrangling cords and cables in the home is still a pain point for most people. If you own your home, you might be able to hide your wires inside the walls, but if you rent or simply don't want to drill into or open up your walls, that isn't ideal. Besides, there are many much easier ways to hide them without needing to learn drywall repair.

#### Behind furniture

One of the easiest ways to hide your cables is to clip them behind conveniently placed furniture. Adhesive clips stick to the legs and backs of tables and consoles and secure all those wires in place. If you're neat about it, you can magically make those wires invisible without touching your walls, and the clips can be removed any time if you change your lay-

out or move to a new place. You can also leverage a key piece of furniture, your couch or sofa. Mounting a shallow shelf behind the couch (flush with the top of its back) or buying a narrow console table, that fits behind it, lets you attach wires underneath for perfectly hidden wiring. Plus, it adds a bit of storage to your space for an extra win.

#### Cable Management Boxes

If your cables only bother you when they expose into a mess in one spot (like where they have to leap off the floor to connect to your TV or computer), a cable management box is a decorative way to wrangle them without mess-

ing around with a large-scale organization project. You can find them in a variety of finishes and looks to match your existing style, and they keep all that cable chaos hidden from view with zero DIY work on your part.

#### Cable Covers

If you need to run your wiring a fair distance around the room, paintable, no-drill cable covers will hide the wires and blend them into the background. Once painted, these covers won't be noticeable at all. You can also get 'raceway' crown or baseboard molding,

that will hide your cables in a completely unnoticeable way, though they will require a bit more work to install. If you already have baseboards in the room, you can get quarter-round channels that mount right up against your existing trim for a seamless look.

#### Wall panels

A slightly more involved project doesn't open up your walls, but does require a bit of DIY skill. You can add wall panels to hide cables and wiring.

- **Wainscoting.** A classic look, installing wainscoting isn't terribly difficult as long as you're patient when measuring and cutting. It doesn't require opening the wall, but it does require some drilling, nailing, and sawing skills. The key here is to bump your wainscoting out about an inch from the wall, with some

one-inch furring strips to allow room for wires to run behind it, then, cap it with some molding to cover the gap.

- **Accent panels.** You could also add an accent wall using a wall panel behind the television or your desk. Bump it out an inch from the wall and run your wires behind it for a neat, seamless look that adds some drama to the room. Wall panels can mimic wood, brick, stone, or tile, or simply be a pop of color in an otherwise neutral room.

#### Decor

Finally, the easiest, cheapest, and least invasive way to hide your wires and cables is to run them behind stuff you already have. A row of books or potted plants, for example, can pro-

vide ample camouflage for a few bundled wires. Anything that can sit on a shelf in a pleasingly curated way can hide some wires, with no drilling or furniture re-arranging required.



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## Hospitality is a State of Heart



Mirza Yawar Baig  
Naturalist and Wildlife Conservationist

It was a very hot day in May, 1991. Very dry, at the peak of summer, with the monsoon another month away. I was driving through Thirunelveli district on my way back from Madurai, where I had gone to attend a Labour Court hearing. These were the days before air-conditioning in India, so the car was a moving oven. Suddenly, the moving oven stopped moving. One of the rear tyres was punctured. My driver Santiago pulled over to the side. I got out of the car as it was simply too hot to sit inside.

Santiago didn't need any help, he said, so I looked around. I saw that I had stopped by some fields, which, in the monsoon, would be planted with rice, but

which, at this time, were simply baked, dry clay fractured into pieces, according to whatever natural law was at work. There was not a blade of grass or anything green in sight. Except that is, for two small *Neeem* trees, which had been planted by the roadside. Beside the trees, with its back to them and facing the field, was a mud hut. It must have been about twenty feet long and had a grass thatch roof. Between the trees, which were at either end of the hut, the ground had been swept clean and sprinkled with sand. Under each tree, in the scant shade was a stone bench. It was really a stone fence post, laid flat on two short raisers about two feet in height. I was intrigued to say the least about how this whole thing was obviously planned and prepared. Who would bother to make this seating arrangement and why?

I sat on one of the benches to see what would happen. In a little while, a young boy came out of the hut with a brass water pot and a steel tumbler, and poured me a tumbler full of tepid water. I had many thoughts about the origin of the water and its hygiene, but didn't want to interfere with whatever was at work, here. So, I accepted the water and drank it. The boy went to Santiago and poured some water for him also. Then, he set the pot down and sat with Santiago to provide him with moral support in changing the tyre of the car.

A couple of minutes later, his mother called him. He took his pot and departed, only to emerge with two glass tumblers of tea. His mother came out as he finished giving the tea to me and Santiago, with a plate of *Murku*, the twisted savory snack, that is very popular, all over Tamil Nadu and South India. I thanked her and took one, thinking all the time that the mystery had been solved. We had been fortunate enough to break down near a tea-shop, and so, we were now being served.

We finished our tea and the tyre was changed. I got up and asked the boy how much money I owed them for the tea and snack. He looked at me in surprise and said, "Onnum illayinay." (Nothing, Sir.) He used the respectful form of address, which, given the difference in our ages, our mutual social positions and the culture of Thirunelveli, was natural. I thanked him but told him to

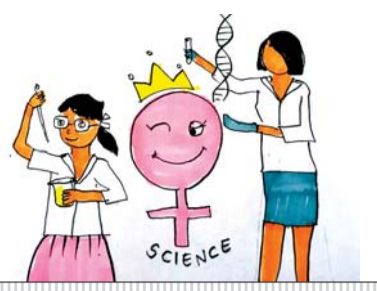
## #THE EDUCATED



was among the poorest in the world, deprived, discriminated against, so-called lower caste. Yet, their hearts were full of compassion, generosity and abundance, bereft of the very education so well propagated. What is it that they can see in another person? The M. B. A. degree, the Doctorate, the *Zamindari*? All these adornments that we hold precious and want to be recognized by? What is the secret of this abundance in this uneducated, socially nowhere, poor mother and child?

It is to see another human being as a human being. Not our titles and labels. Just another human being. This is what I too learnt. This is the secret of putting out fires and of survival. This is our lifeline.

Today, we live in a world that seems to be pushing more and more towards majoritarian, authoritative societies. This is lethal because if there is anything that history teaches us, it is that it is only through mutual respect and acceptance that we can build compassionate, caring, sustainable cultures. Never through discrimination, hatred, arrogance or predatory capitalism. The problem is that attitudes are imbibed



## International Day of Women and Girls in Science

Women have been interested in and dabbling in science for centuries, from ancient female chemists mixing perfumes to women astrologists learning about planets and stars. But, sadly, over the years, women have not been given equal opportunity for education or jobs in science, many times working without ever receiving credit for their discoveries. International Day of Women and Girls in Science seeks to balance out the gender gap by raising awareness and promoting the benefits of women and girls who participate in science.

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with mother's milk, practically during infancy and earliest childhood. And then, they are notoriously difficult to change, especially because discrimination comes from arrogance and a sense of superiority ensures that you live within the walls of your mental fortress and never have a chance to compare your beliefs and prejudices against real people. You never meet real people. Only the fantasy that someone filled your mind with.

So, what we must do is to monitor conversations, at home, in the workplace, especially in our schools and in public. It is 'domestic legends,' which shape our worldview from a very early age. We need to reflect on how we were conditioned and become conscious of how we are conditioning our children, albeit unconsciously. Most conditioning is unconscious and extremely powerful and very difficult to undo, unless we make a serious effort. Monitoring conversations will give us diagnostic evidence of the degree of change we need to make. It is important to do this objectively with a no-praise-no-blame mindset. The idea is to see how serious the terminal disease which afflicts us is, and see

what we need to do, to cure it. For terminal it is. Hatred is fire. All fires burn and the result is always ash. Then, we need to create civic spaces to meet in and practice being civilized. We need to develop the skills to speak about each other, our beliefs, culture, customs and traditions with respect. We must visit each other, participate in each other's lives and do it with respect and without being judgmental. We must ask questions respectfully and strongly oppose all mockery of people different from us, even if and especially when it is done in the name of 'humour.' Laughing at someone is not humorous. We need to become open-minded enough to try to understand the reason why other people do things differently from us, and not only accept that but appreciate it as another way of life, which has an equal right to exist.

Let us take charge of our lives and our present. For on that, depends our future. To be rich and abundant, because we have a heart large enough for it and a fellow human being, close enough, although, I never saw them before.

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## #ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD

# Clothing Industry An Overlooked Source of Plastic Pollution

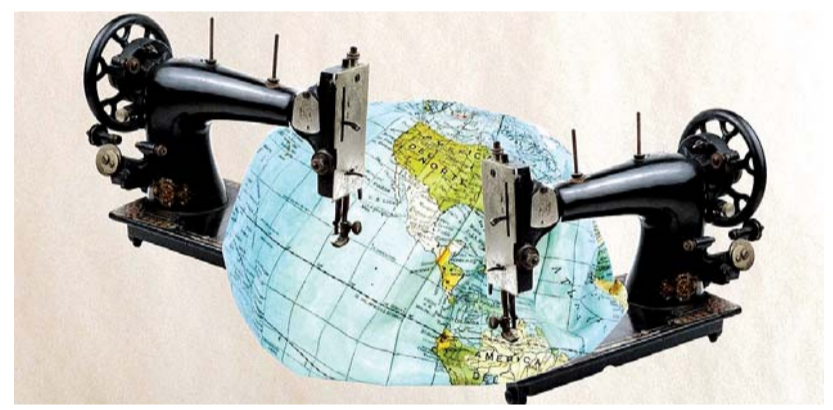
Plastic leakage from the apparel industry is completely dominated by synthetic clothes, reaching the end of their useful lives and not being disposed of in a responsible manner.

Researchers have discovered that waste from the global apparel industry is leaking millions of tons of plastic into the environment each year and may be getting worse over time. We don't often think of our clothing as plastic, but much of it is. Polyester, nylon, acrylic, and other synthetic fibers are commonplace in the blended fabrics that we wear every day. As a result, textiles have become an overlooked source of plastic pollution.



The new findings are detailed in a recent study in *Nature Communications*, which found that global apparel consumption resulted in over 20 million tons of plastic waste in 2019.

Around 40% of that waste may have been improperly managed and become environmental pollution, a process known as 'plastic leakage.' "I knew from my previous research that the apparel industry is a major consumer of synthetic polymers, aka plastics, but I was taken aback by how much synthetic apparel waste ends up in the natural environment," says co-author Roland Geyer, a professor at University of California, Santa Barbara's Bren School of Environmental Science and Management.



In the study, textile waste was divided between two sources, clothing made from synthetic materials and clothing made from cotton and other natural fibers. The researchers looked at plastic waste generated across an apparel product's 'value chain,' which refers to the entire lifecycle of a product, including not only the piece of apparel itself, but the plastics used to wrap it, for example.

"We analyzed data on imports, exports, and apparel production in countries all over the world," says co-author Richard Venditti, a professor of Paper Science and Engineering at North Carolina State University. "Then, we compared that to existing global information on different stages of the apparel value chain to estimate how much plastic leaks into the environment at each of those points." "Plastic leakage from the apparel industry is completely dominated by synthetic clothes, reaching the end of their useful lives

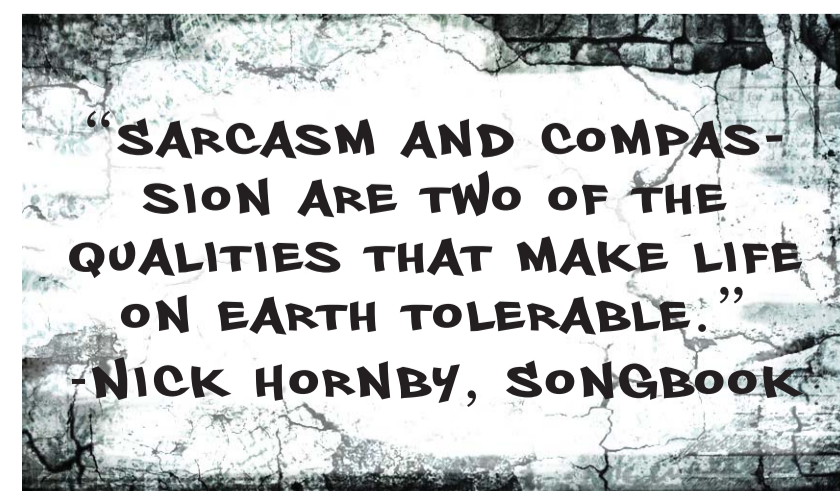
and not being disposed of in a responsible manner," Geyer says. "There is also waste from manufacturing, packaging, and even from tire abrasion during transport," Venditti adds, "as well as microplastics, which get pulled into the water when we wash our clothes." The researchers found that synthetic apparel was, by far, the largest source of plastic waste. The synthetic value chain accounted for 18 million tons of waste in 2019, making up 89% of all plastic waste from the global apparel industry that year. Of that, the researchers estimated that around 8.3 million tons may have leaked into the environment. Meanwhile, cotton clothing accounted for 1.9 million tons of plastic waste, with the final 0.31 million tons coming from fibers other than synthetic textiles or cotton. As opposed to the end-of-life plastic waste created by discarded synthetic apparel, plastic waste from cotton and other fibers came almost entirely from the



plastic used in packaging. Where apparel was sold didn't necessarily match where plastic waste ended up, according to the researchers. For clothing, originally sold in high-income countries, like the United States and Japan, most of the resulting pollution happened in lower-income countries where these pieces of clothing might be sold in the secondary market.

This finding points to a major concern with how people in higher-income countries consume apparel. "The economic and environmental burden of unsustainable apparel falls disproportionately upon the developing economies of the world," Geyer says. "What we're seeing is that in countries like the United States, we have a 'fast fashion' culture, where we buy a lot of clothes and don't keep them for very long," Venditti says. Discarded clothes either go into landfills or end up in thrift stores. "Some of the clothes, that go to these stores, are sold in the US, but often, they end up going to other countries that do not have waste management systems robust enough to handle that kind of volume. That is where you end up with a large amount of plastic leaking into the environment." The study concludes that significant changes in the apparel sector need to be made to move the industry towards a more circular framework, where materials are recycled and do not become waste. The study also recommends increasing the use of renewable, non-synthetic textiles. Geyer is currently studying the relationship between social and environmental sustainability of the apparel industry.

## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman