

AD

Home (<https://www.grazia.co.in>) > Fashion () > There's No Room For Greenwashing With These Planet-Positive Brands

# There's No Room For Greenwashing With These Planet-Positive Brands

By [Shriya Zamindar](https://www.grazia.co.in/author/shriya-zamindar) (<https://www.grazia.co.in/author/shriya-zamindar>) | July 5, 2022, 12:36 IST

The abridgements of the sustainability fight, its plans, and its many indexes are countless. Like solving a Rubix cube, the ever-changing terms that mean conscious and climate-friendly and the derivative solutions have been twisted and touted, rotated, and reintroduced in the fashion industry ever since the climate crisis became a global concern. Initially, the push to become sustainable within the local scene meant adopting a new style where an all-natural clothing treatment was encouraged.

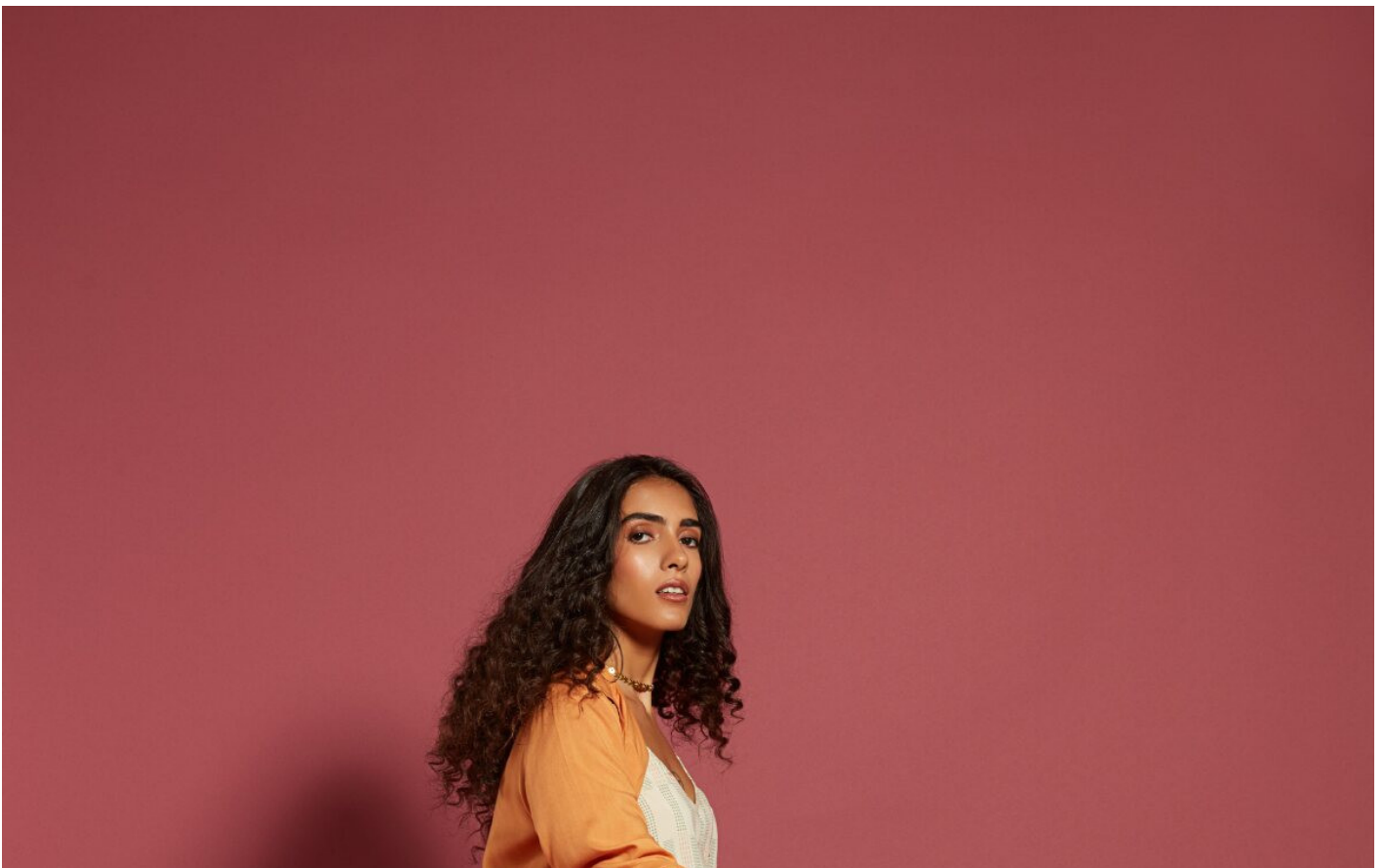




Roma Narsinghani

Till a few years back, being sustainable was never as fashionable as, one could say, being vegan. It lacked a certain grasp on trends, which consumers are inherently obsessed with owning. Now the world's largest online-only company, fast-fashion giant Shein, can attest to that. Things have changed ever since the pandemic when halted supply chain and production made the system adapt with new modifications to production practices. According to data published by McKinsey & Company, in 2018, the fashion industry in its entirety was recorded as a producer of more greenhouse gases than the economies of Germany, the United Kingdom, and France combined.

But even wearing organic fabrics made from bamboo – or cotton and khadi, is perhaps just the bare minimum, a scratch on the surface compared to the collective impact of utilising this foundational manner of taking part in the climate-conscious movement. With the lack of research on how to preserve resources and loosely termed promises of eco-friendly and a conscious approach, today, it could just be deemed as an attempt at “greenwashing.”





Roma Narsinghani's newest collaboration with label Pause explores a new demand for climate-conscious fabrics.

Fashion has become more cyclical ever since. The Met Gala saw Billie Eilish wearing an upcycled Gucci gown. While fashion as a community has always reflected the moods governed by societal changes, being climate-conscious has had a slower uptick – seeing the breakneck pace with which trends and seasons move. However, with the return of nostalgia fashion and the rise of thrift and vintage styles, being sustainable has automatically taken a new shape. It's a step further from just switching to organic materials and using eco-friendly packaging, which was once the way to go.

Now more than ever, homegrown labels offer modern aesthetic sensibilities and keep their production processes conscious by taking a research-based approach to what it means to be sustainable today. However, the underlying issues in the local scene still stem from the quick satisfaction provided by fast fashion, mainly due to its lower price points and a quick ascension to “trendy,” which would need a complete rehaul every fortnight. “The price is the biggest issue when it comes to upcycled products; the general Indian consumer is not evolved enough to pay a premium fee for a product that is thoughtfully designed and has given a new life to a material that would end up in a landfill,” says Akanksha Kaila Akashi, founder of Refash, an upcycle-only retail marketplace, the first of its kind.



Pukhraj Ranjan, the founder of planet-positive, Helsinki-based Indian label Moi Namaste, echoes the concern. “There is a growing culture of disposability. India has a history where our mothers and grandmothers have shown us how to get the most out of the resources in our lives – which means turning a sari into a kurta or using old fabrics as rags and dusters. She explains that this amazing resourcefulness is slowly getting lost in the desires for Instagram likes, Tiktok followers, and fast fashion hauls. “As a country of over a billion people, we cannot afford to rely on cheap, disposable clothing and need to support ethically created high-quality fashion,” says Ranjan, whose brand image strongly advocates for sustainable and ethical fashion practices.

### THE GREENWASHING HOLDUP

Ranjan, who started her fledgling label as a passion project to harness her voice for sustainable and conscious fashion through activism, has already gained traction in the international market, largely due to the transparent and intensive research-based blueprint of her brand. “Some brands obnoxiously continue to use greenwashing marketing campaigns, whereas others, especially small brands like us, continue to be extremely critical of what we do and how we do it. I honestly think we need a standardised dictionary for sustainability in the fashion industry with recommended limits,” she muses.



Heisinki and India-based label, Moi Namaste champions a planet-positive approach towards fashion.

The industry noise around this buzzword treatment is like clickbait. But consumers have now started questioning the bang for their buck, demanding designers, and labels to back their statements. "Consumers are much more aware of the harmful effects of the fashion industry and appreciate brands that adopt environmentally friendly practices," says Akashi. Like her and Ranjan, designers that may have originally taken a different path in their field are inclined towards climate-friendly fashion. New efforts, such as the recent collaboration between jewellery designer Roma Narsinghani and RTW label Pause for a conscious capsule collection of everyday wear, encapsulate that sentiment. "Our target audience is an eco-conscious consumer, a rising demographic, and they are more interested in aligning their values with the brands they buy from. Suppose consumers are aware that we are mindful of our impact on society and the environment. In that case, it positively impacts their repeat purchasing behaviour and gives us a competitive advantage," says Narsinghani.

### SYSTEMIC CHANGE

With the platform Refash, which stocks up to 100 brands, Akashi, a London College of Fashion graduate with a degree in fashion design and marketing, has developed a formulaic protocol to ensure the brands she brings on board are genuine in their upcycling efforts. She carries out detailed discussions with the brand's team to ensure their processes align with her ethos. "We also ask for creative material to support the same if we are not fully satisfied with their responses. We also ask for suppliers' references from where the brands source the pre-loved or surplus materials," she explains. Purely working on a system of upcycling, Akashi's research concludes that repurposing textiles can save almost 53,000 litres of water and around 19 kgs of carbon emissions, "By not creating a single new piece of clothing, a consumer saves about nine grams of pesticides being released into the soil," she reveals.





Online marketplace Refash works on an upcycle-only formula.

New fabric innovations have also provided a solution for repurposing materials to refashion them as new. “The collection is created using fabrics from Tencel and 100 per cent eco-friendly viscose twill/cotton twill. They require less energy and water than conventional cotton. It isn’t mixed with synthetic fibres like nylon when it comes time to dispose of the garment,” says Narsinghani on the new materials she has worked with for the collection.

With innovations in technology and developing awareness around the globe to condense the traditional framework of fashion, there are multiple ways to create an environment-friendly system. Ranjan’s latest plan to spread the message is to highlight the need to include human rights like fair trade, safe and ethical working conditions, and capacity building within the fashion industry, which was also a primary subject of discussion during the Fashion Revolution Week held in April. Whereas for Akashi, the plan is to take her marketplace to a global audience. She hopes to introduce upcycling services and fabrics that designers can make collections with and a list of collection centres for consumers. A defining characteristic that deserves merit is that these conscious fashion businesses showcase an acute awareness of results, not just empty vows of change.



Refash retails close to 100 upcycling brands.

Tags -

Fashion (<https://www.grazia.co.in/search/fashion>) | homegrown (<https://www.grazia.co.in/search/homegrown>) | greenwashing (<https://www.grazia.co.in/search/greenwashing>) | jewellery (<https://www.grazia.co.in/search/jewellery>) | Refash (<https://www.grazia.co.in/search/refash>) | Moi Namaste (<https://www.grazia.co.in/search/moi-namaste>) | Roma Narsinghani (<https://www.grazia.co.in/search/roma-narsinghani>)

SHOW COMMENTS