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# Here's How Your Favorite Denim Brands Are Making Fashion Sustainable

By [Tanya Mehta \(https://www.grazia.co.in/author/tanya-mehta\)](https://www.grazia.co.in/author/tanya-mehta) | March 19, 2020, 16:08 IST

*Nothing compares to the comforting appeal of your favourite pair of jeans, and a faction of brands are now ensuring that these purchases come with a clean conscience.*

**Styling: SURBHI SHUKLA**

**Photographs: KEEGAN CRASTO**

**Make-up and Hair: ANURADHA RAMAN; Assisted by: KINNARI PISE;**

**Models: ABHAY RAWAT, DIPTI PAWAR and NEELAKSH APTE at ANIMA CREATIVE MANAGEMENT; JAMEELA CALCUTTAWALA at TIMES TALENT;**

**Fashion intern: KATHLEEN LANCELOT**

While much of the sartorial zeitgeist is defined by trends and the everchanging cycle of them, denim as we know it has been a perpetual mainstay. Just the mere mention of it whips up multiple associations – high-octane Calvin Klein ads, Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake infamously twinning in denim looks for the American Music Awards, and the feel-good factor of ‘mom’ jeans. But besides the materialistic ebullience that denim provides, the downside is that approximately 10,000 litres of water is required to grow cotton to make just a single pair of jeans. The crop also requires a heavy dose of insecticides, which in turn proves highly toxic for farmers. In a bid to create high-quality denim with a reduced carbon footprint, a flock of brands are doing their bit to produce more consciously, ensuring that your humble blues come with a green DNA.



From left to right: On Anay: Denim vest, boots, sunglasses, belt, Korra; 'Air Max 97' sneakers, Nike; On Dipi: Cropped denim jacket, Levi's; denim skirt, Korra; 'Planet Chock' heels, Christian Louboutin; stone hoop earrings, Swarovski; On Naalaksh: Denim shirt and jacket, Lee Cooper; jeans, Levi's; sneakers, Nike; On Jameela: Cropped jacket and trousers, both The Ikat Story; 'Levitato' heels, Christian Louboutin; stone hoop earrings, Swarovski

New Delhi-based label, Korra Jeans can be credited for pioneering the movement, being one of the first homegrown brands to exclusively offer customised denim. Korra crafts jeans, skirts and jackets in selvedge and stretch denim in a variety of styles and lengths, an additional incentive is the brand's 'home try-on' service that allows you to get a custom fit while sifting through fabric swatches within the comfort of your own home. Moreover, each piece is made by a single tailor from start to finish, "In all our endeavours, we have tried to imagine how people would buy clothes in the future. There is a strong emphasis on the environment and its sustainability – all our trims are made from recycled materials, ensuring a zerowaste approach, while our fabrics are sourced locally. Each product made is marked with the tailor's signature, and numbered, ensuring traceability. This stems from our desire to build consciousness in the purchase decision and post purchase wear," says Shyam Sukhramani, co-founder of the brand.



Joining the ranks is Chandni Sareen of The Ikat Story, the young stylist and designer who specialises in creating artsy garments from the weave recently collaborated with Pause to create a sustainable denim capsule. “The denim used in the collection with Pause is from TENCEL™, where the fibres are derived from sustainably managed forests and manufactured using a closed-loop process that produces fibres with a significantly lower carbon footprint and, thus, helps lower the ecological balance. Through the process, 100 per cent of the solvent is recycled. Tencel’s high absorption capacity and rapid moisture absorption rate make it difficult for bacteria to grow, and it does so with zero chemical additives,” Sareen explains.





While keeping in line with sustainable production, the designer was also careful not to compromise on design. The collection comprises patch-work cargo trousers, bomber jackets and capes, all spliced with the brand's signature weave and metallic embellishments, evoking modern bohemia.





Sustainability seems to be imperative amongst the larger conglomerates as well, specifically its trailblazer, Levi's, that has been synonymous with the fabric. The brand's 'Care Tag for Our Planet' encourages consumers to wash less, wash cold, and line dry their jeans. The Water<Less™ process reduces up to 96 per cent of the water normally used in denim finishing. So far, the brand has saved more than three billion litres and recycled more than 1.5 billion litres of water through this innovation. It also recently introduced 'Project F.L.X.' (futureled execution), a transformative process for jean finishing that replaces manual techniques with automated digital tools, including laser technology that reduces the number of chemical formulations used in the jean finishing process – from thousands to just a few dozen.



Denim, however, is a highly idiosyncratic affair, and the traditional consumer almost always finds it challenging to shift loyalties, particularly towards an independent brand in a landscape cluttered with fast fashion. For Mia Morikawa, co-founder of 11.11, the foundation lies in creating awareness. “The biggest challenge is that we are

working within an industry that produces products where the form is the same but the value system behind it is completely different. A pair of jeans is a pair of jeans, and no matter how they are made they will have the same form: Two legs – a fly – a waist belt – some pockets. We appeal to conscious consumers who are well informed about how the industrial manufacturing of clothing is ruining the health of the planet, they also appreciate the finer things and want to live artfully. While this audience exists all over the world, our challenge is to build a globally connected network of these individuals and resonant organisations”. The brand creates earthy indigo separates in handspun khadi denim and kala cotton for men and women, aiming to create trusty, long-lasting classics, “Handmade clothing has a special aura – the pieces pass through the hands of many, and accumulate an energetic charge. Clothing made in this way is elevated to the status of an enlivened second skin or even a companion – a lot of our clients really feel that. Denim is a material like wine, leather or wood that gets better with age – it’s the perfect vehicle to communicate the sustainability story, since it is such a democratic garment,” she says.

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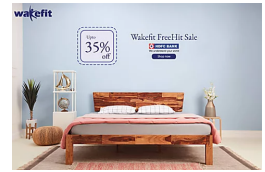
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