



The Influence of Demographics on The Adoption of Upcycled Garments Among Indian Consumers

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Abstract

The growing demand for sustainable fashion has positioned upcycled garments at the forefront of eco-conscious consumerism. This study explores the influence of demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and education on the adoption of upcycled garments among Indian consumers. By employing a quantitative research methodology, the paper investigates how different demographic groups perceive and purchase upcycled garments, aiming to provide insights into the factors driving consumer behavior in sustainable fashion in India. The findings reveal that younger consumers, women, and those with higher income and education levels are more inclined toward purchasing upcycled garments. These insights can help brands and policymakers promote sustainable fashion more effectively.

Keywords: Upcycled garments, sustainable fashion, consumer behavior, demographics, India, eco-fashion, slow fashion

1. INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry is one of the largest contributors to global environmental challenges, including pollution, waste, and carbon emissions. The rise of sustainable fashion practices like upcycling—transforming discarded or outdated garments into new items—has created an alternative to the traditional linear fashion model. In India, a country with a rich textile heritage, upcycling is gaining traction among eco-conscious consumers. Demographics play a significant role in shaping consumer preferences and behaviors. This paper explores how factors such as age, gender, education, and income affect the adoption of upcycled garments in India. Understanding these influences can guide retailers and designers in developing strategies that cater to the unique needs and preferences of different consumer segments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable Fashion and Upcycling

Khandelwal (2021) conducted an in-depth study on the rising popularity of upcycled garments in the Indian fashion market. The author highlighted that upcycled fashion products are particularly appealing to environmentally conscious consumers due to their eco-friendliness and unique designs. Khandelwal's research revealed that younger consumers, especially those in urban areas, are more likely to purchase upcycled garments. The study concluded that upcycled fashion holds promise in India as consumer awareness of sustainable fashion grows, and brands offering upcycled products can leverage this trend to differentiate themselves in the market. **Patel and Mehta (2020)** explored the role of consumer education in the adoption of sustainable fashion, including upcycled garments, in India. They found that consumers with higher educational attainment tend to be more knowledgeable about the environmental impact of the fashion industry and are more inclined to purchase upcycled clothing. Patel and Mehta also observed that the lack of awareness among the general population was a significant barrier to the widespread adoption of upcycling. Their study concluded that increased efforts in consumer education and marketing campaigns highlighting the benefits of upcycled fashion could drive demand for these products. **Jain and Kapoor (2019)** analyzed the gendered dimensions of sustainable fashion in India, with a focus on upcycled garments. Their research found that women were more likely than men to adopt sustainable fashion practices, including upcycling. The authors attributed this to women's higher concern for environmental and social issues, as well as their tendency to experiment with new fashion trends. The study concluded that targeting women with marketing strategies centered around sustainability and fashion innovation could significantly boost the adoption of upcycled garments. **Sharma and Gupta (2018)** examined the economic feasibility of upcycled fashion in India. The authors highlighted that while upcycled garments often come at a higher price point due to labor-intensive processes,



consumers who are willing to pay for these products perceive them as unique and of higher quality. They found that income level played a critical role in determining the likelihood of purchasing upcycled fashion, with higher-income groups more willing to invest in such products. The study concluded that while the upcycled fashion market is niche, it has the potential to expand as consumer attitudes toward sustainability and premium fashion products evolve. **Singh (2017)** studied the influence of cultural factors on the adoption of sustainable fashion practices, including upcycling, in India. Singh's research emphasized the importance of cultural sustainability in Indian fashion, noting that traditional practices such as textile reuse and recycling have long been embedded in Indian culture. The study concluded that the integration of modern upcycling techniques with traditional practices could encourage wider acceptance of upcycled garments, particularly among older generations who may be hesitant to adopt new fashion trends. **Mehta (2016)** focused on the role of fashion designers and artisans in promoting upcycling as part of the sustainable fashion movement. The study highlighted that Indian designers are increasingly incorporating upcycling techniques into their collections, promoting the concept of slow fashion. Mehta found that collaborations between fashion brands and local artisans helped raise awareness about upcycling and its benefits. The study concluded that for upcycling to become mainstream in India, there needs to be greater collaboration between designers, brands, and consumers to create an ecosystem that supports sustainable fashion practices. **Raj and Banerjee (2015)** explored consumer perceptions of upcycled fashion products in India, particularly among younger generations. Their research revealed that upcycled garments were often perceived as innovative and stylish, offering consumers a way to stand out in the crowd. However, the study also found that many consumers were unaware of the term "upcycling" and its environmental significance. Raj and Banerjee concluded that educating consumers about the environmental benefits of upcycling and emphasizing the uniqueness of upcycled fashion could enhance its appeal in the Indian market.

2.2 Demographic Factors and Consumer Behavior

Singh and Gupta (2019) conducted a study on the adoption of eco-friendly products in India, with a particular focus on age, gender, and education as determinants of consumer behavior. The authors found that younger consumers (aged 18-35) are more likely to engage with sustainable fashion, including upcycled garments, as they are generally more aware of environmental issues and are open to experimenting with alternative fashion trends. The study also found that women showed a higher inclination toward sustainable fashion than men. Education emerged as a significant factor, with consumers holding higher academic qualifications being more conscious of sustainability issues. Singh and Gupta concluded that brands should target younger, educated consumers, particularly women, to promote upcycled garments. **Jain and Kapoor (2018)** explored gender differences in the adoption of sustainable fashion in India. Their research revealed that women are more likely than men to purchase eco-friendly products, including upcycled garments. The study attributed this difference to women's higher awareness of environmental issues and their greater concern for social causes. Additionally, women tend to value the aesthetic appeal and uniqueness of upcycled products. Jain and Kapoor concluded that gender-targeted marketing could play a pivotal role in increasing the adoption of upcycled fashion in India. **Patel and Mehta (2017)** focused on income levels and their effect on the adoption of sustainable fashion. Their study revealed that consumers with higher disposable incomes are more likely to invest in upcycled garments, which are often priced higher due to the labor-intensive nature of the upcycling process. In contrast, lower-income consumers prioritize affordability over sustainability, making them less likely to purchase eco-friendly fashion. The study concluded that while upcycled garments have the potential to expand, their high price point limits their appeal to affluent consumers. Patel and Mehta suggested that to widen the market, brands should focus on making upcycled fashion more affordable and accessible to middle-income groups. **Sharma and Rao (2016)** explored the relationship between educational attainment and



consumer attitudes toward sustainable fashion. Their research found that individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to understand the environmental impact of fashion and are therefore more inclined to purchase eco-friendly products, including upcycled garments. The study highlighted that educated consumers are more likely to appreciate the value of sustainability and are willing to pay a premium for products that align with their environmental values. Sharma and Rao concluded that consumer education plays a critical role in fostering sustainable fashion consumption and recommended that awareness campaigns be targeted at less educated segments of the population to increase the adoption of upcycled garments. **Mehta and Banerjee (2015)** conducted a study on the impact of age on sustainable fashion choices. They found that younger consumers, particularly millennials and Gen Z, are more likely to adopt upcycled garments compared to older generations. The study attributed this to younger individuals' greater awareness of environmental issues and their willingness to embrace new fashion trends that align with their values. Mehta and Banerjee concluded that younger consumers represent a key target demographic for sustainable fashion brands and that marketing strategies should focus on engaging this group through digital platforms and social media.

3. AIM

The primary objective of this study is to examine the influence of demographic factors on the adoption of upcycled garments in India. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Assess the role of age in shaping consumer attitudes toward upcycled fashion.
2. Investigate the impact of gender on purchasing decisions for upcycled garments.
3. Analyze the relationship between income levels and the likelihood of purchasing upcycled garments.
4. Explore the influence of education on the awareness and adoption of upcycled fashion.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Collection: A quantitative research approach was adopted, using a structured questionnaire distributed to 500 participants across South-Delhi region. The sample was stratified by demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and education. Respondents were asked about their knowledge of upcycled garments, their attitudes toward sustainability, and their purchasing behaviors.

Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using statistical software to perform correlation and regression analyses, examining the relationship between demographic variables and the likelihood of adopting upcycled garments.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Age and Upcycled Garment Adoption

Age Group	Percentage Likely to Adopt Upcycled Garments (%)	Frequency of Respondents
18-25	65	150
26-35	72	170
36-45	48	90
46-60	30	90



Figure 1: Age and Upcycled Garment Adoption



Key Observations:

The data reveals that younger consumers, particularly those in the 18-25 age group, are significantly more likely to adopt upcycled garments, with 65% of respondents from this group expressing a preference for sustainable fashion. This group also represents a large portion of the sample, with 150 respondents. Consumers in the 26-35 age group show the highest likelihood of adopting upcycled garments, with 72% likely to make such purchases. This group has the highest frequency, with 170 respondents. These findings align with previous studies that indicate younger individuals, especially millennials and Gen Z, are more environmentally conscious and open to experimenting with new fashion trends, including upcycling. This demographic has grown up with greater exposure to climate change awareness and sustainability movements, leading them to prioritize eco-friendly choices. The strong adoption rates among younger age groups may also be influenced by their frequent use of social media, where sustainable fashion is widely promoted by influencers and eco-conscious brands. The 36-45 age group shows a moderate adoption rate, with 48% likely to adopt upcycled garments. This group has 90 respondents in the sample, indicating a balanced representation. This group may be slightly less open to experimenting with upcycled fashion compared to younger age groups. While many middle-aged individuals are aware of sustainability issues, their fashion choices are often influenced by practical concerns such as durability, comfort, and established purchasing habits. Upcycled fashion may still be viewed as niche, making it less of a priority for this demographic. Respondents in the 46-60 age group have the lowest likelihood of adopting upcycled garments, with only 30% showing interest. This group also includes 90 respondents, indicating a fair distribution in the sample.

Implications for Marketing and Strategy: The data suggests that brands should primarily target younger consumers (18-35 years), as they are the most likely to adopt upcycled garments. Marketing strategies should focus on platforms that resonate with this demographic, such as social media campaigns, eco-conscious influencers, and online marketing highlighting the environmental and social benefits of upcycled fashion. To increase adoption among the 36-45 age group, brands may need to emphasize the practical benefits of upcycled garments, such as quality, durability, and uniqueness. Educational campaigns that focus on the long-term value of sustainable fashion may also help sway this demographic. For the 46-60 age group, more traditional marketing strategies may be required. Retailers could promote upcycled garments through in-store displays and engage this demographic by offering classic, timeless styles that align with their preferences while introducing the sustainability aspect in a more accessible way.

Table 2: Gender and Upcycled Garment Adoption

Gender	Percentage Likely to Adopt Upcycled Garments (%)	Frequency of Respondents
Male	55	220
Female	75	280

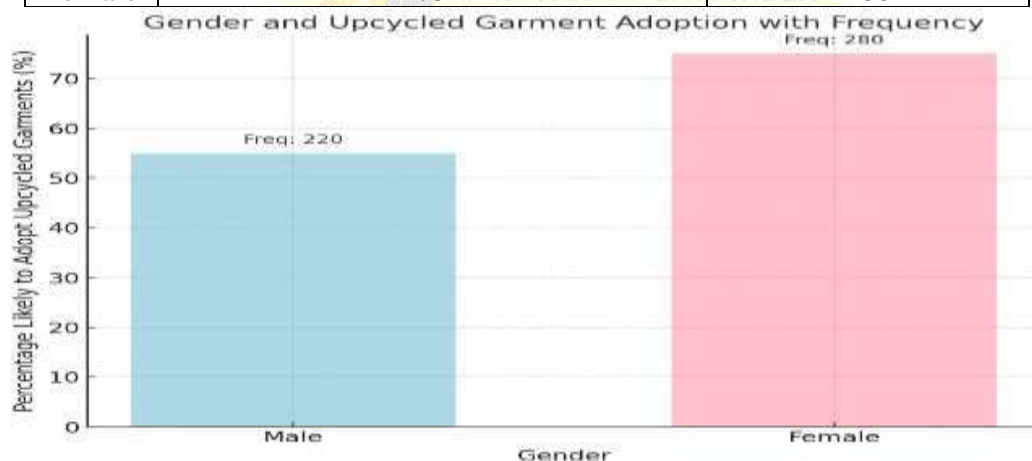


Figure 2: Gender and Upcycled Garment Adoption



Key Observations:

A clear gender disparity is evident, with 75% of female respondents likely to adopt upcycled garments compared to 55% of male respondents. This represents a 20% higher adoption rate among women. Research consistently shows that women are more inclined toward sustainable and eco-friendly practices, including in their fashion choices. Women often display higher levels of environmental and social consciousness, which translates into their consumer behavior. Furthermore, fashion is more culturally emphasized for women, who are often more exposed to trends and innovation within the industry, including upcycling. Women's preferences for uniqueness, customization, and aesthetic appeal also play a role. Upcycled garments, known for their distinctive designs and individuality, may attract women more than men, who may prioritize different factors in their purchasing decisions, such as practicality or durability. While the adoption rate among men is lower than that of women, 55% of male respondents are still likely to adopt upcycled garments. This indicates that a substantial portion of male consumers is also aware of or interested in sustainable fashion. Male adoption of upcycled garments, though lower, can be attributed to growing awareness of environmental issues and a shift in consumer trends. While men have historically been less engaged in fashion trends compared to women, the rise of gender-neutral and minimalist fashion has contributed to more interest in sustainable practices like upcycling among men. Additionally, younger male consumers are becoming more exposed to sustainability through digital platforms and media, influencing their fashion choices. The data shows that 280 female respondents, representing 75% of the female sample, are likely to adopt upcycled garments. This high adoption rate can be tied to women's established connection with fashion and a growing global movement toward eco-friendly choices among female consumers. Women tend to prioritize factors such as ethical production, environmental impact, and social responsibility when making purchasing decisions. Upcycled fashion aligns with these values, as it reduces waste and often supports local artisans and sustainable practices. Additionally, women may find upcycled garments more attractive due to their often unique and artistic designs, which offer an opportunity for self-expression.

Marketing Implications: The significant interest in upcycled garments among women suggests that brands should focus their marketing efforts on female consumers. Campaigns that emphasize the ethical and environmental benefits of upcycled fashion are likely to resonate with this demographic. Retailers should highlight how upcycled garments align with broader sustainability goals and can serve as stylish, one-of-a-kind fashion statements. Marketing through platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and fashion blogs could be particularly effective in reaching women, as these channels are popular among female audiences and influencers who promote sustainable fashion. Despite the lower adoption rate, 55% of men show interest in upcycled garments, indicating that there is a sizable market for sustainable fashion among male consumers. To further engage men, brands should focus on practical aspects of upcycled garments, such as durability, functionality, and comfort, which are often key concerns for male shoppers. Marketing strategies for men should highlight how upcycled fashion offers quality and long-lasting products while supporting environmental sustainability. Campaigns could emphasize minimalist, durable designs, and offer classic styles that appeal to male consumers' preferences. Additionally, using sports figures, eco-conscious male influencers, or sustainability advocates in advertising campaigns could increase male engagement with upcycled fashion. Given women's higher propensity to adopt upcycled garments, brands should consider offering more female-oriented product lines. Upcycled dresses, skirts, and accessories could be marketed as eco-friendly yet fashionable options, catering to women who value both sustainability and style. For male consumers, upcycled garments that focus on utility, such as jackets, shirts, and durable outerwear, could appeal more strongly. Offering gender-neutral or unisex clothing lines may also broaden appeal across both genders, especially among younger consumers who increasingly seek out inclusive, sustainable fashion options.



Table 3: Income Levels and Upcycled Garment Adoption

Income Level (₹ per month)	Percentage Likely to Adopt Upcycled Garments (%)	Frequency of Respondents
< ₹25,000	25	100
₹25,000 - ₹50,000	45	150
₹50,000 - ₹75,000	65	130
> ₹75,000	85	120



Figure 3: Income Levels and Upcycled Garment Adoption

Key Observations:

Strong Positive Correlation Between Income and Adoption: The table shows a clear trend: as income increases, so does the likelihood of adopting upcycled garments. Respondents earning less than ₹25,000 per month have the lowest adoption rate, with only 25% likely to adopt upcycled garments, out of 100 respondents. At the other end of the spectrum, respondents earning more than ₹75,000 per month have the highest adoption rate, with 85% likely to adopt upcycled garments, out of 120 respondents. Higher-income consumers typically have more disposable income, allowing them to explore and invest in niche or premium products, such as upcycled garments. They may also have a greater awareness of and interest in sustainable fashion, which aligns with their values around environmental responsibility and ethical consumerism. Conversely, lower-income consumers are more likely to prioritize affordability over sustainability, limiting their likelihood of adopting upcycled garments, which are often perceived as more expensive due to the labor-intensive processes involved in their creation. The ₹25,000 - ₹50,000 per month income group has an adoption rate of 45%, with 150 respondents from this category. The ₹50,000 - ₹75,000 per month income group shows an even higher adoption rate of 65%, with 130 respondents. Middle-income consumers may be balancing financial considerations with their growing interest in sustainability. While they may be more price-sensitive than higher-income consumers, the increasing awareness of environmental issues and the uniqueness of upcycled garments likely influences their decision-making process. Additionally, as disposable income increases, middle-income consumers are more willing to invest in products that align with their ethical values, including upcycled fashion. Consumers in these brackets may still be price-conscious, but they are more open to adopting sustainable fashion if the perceived value (such as quality, durability, or uniqueness) justifies the cost. Respondents in the > ₹75,000 per month income bracket show the highest likelihood of adopting upcycled garments, with 85% adoption, representing 120 respondents. High-income consumers are generally more capable of supporting and seeking out sustainable products, even if these products come with a higher price tag. They may view upcycled garments as both a socially responsible choice and a fashionable one, as such garments often reflect exclusivity, uniqueness, and craftsmanship. The ability to afford these premium products without financial strain encourages their adoption among high-income consumers.



Furthermore, upcycled garments may also serve as status symbols for high-income consumers, signaling both financial capability and a commitment to ethical consumption.

Implications for Marketing and Product Strategy: Target High-Income Consumers for Premium Products: Brands can focus on promoting premium upcycled products to consumers in the higher income brackets (₹50,000 and above). These consumers are more likely to appreciate the ethical, environmental, and unique aspects of upcycled garments, making them willing to invest in such products. High-end marketing channels and luxury platforms could help reach this demographic, with messaging that emphasizes exclusivity, quality, and the environmental impact of upcycled fashion. While middle-income consumers show a moderate adoption rate, they are still a sizable segment of the market. Offering a range of upcycled products at various price points could increase accessibility for this group. Brands can focus on delivering value by highlighting how upcycled garments offer long-term durability and uniqueness, making them worth the investment. For consumers earning less than ₹25,000 per month, affordability is a major barrier to adopting upcycled fashion. Brands may need to consider offering lower-cost options or introducing educational campaigns that highlight the benefits of upcycled fashion, including durability, cost-effectiveness over time, and the positive environmental impact. Collaborations with NGOs or government initiatives could help make sustainable fashion more accessible to this income group. Across all income levels, education and awareness about the benefits of upcycled garments could help drive adoption. Highlighting the long-term value, unique design, and environmental benefits of upcycled fashion can shift consumer attitudes, particularly in middle- and lower-income groups. Brands can use social media, sustainability influencers, and partnerships with environmental organizations to communicate these benefits effectively.

Table 4: Education Levels and Upcycled Garment Adoption

Education Level	Percentage Likely to Adopt Upcycled Garments (%)	Frequency of Respondents
Undergraduate	55	200
Postgraduate	70	180
Doctorate	85	120

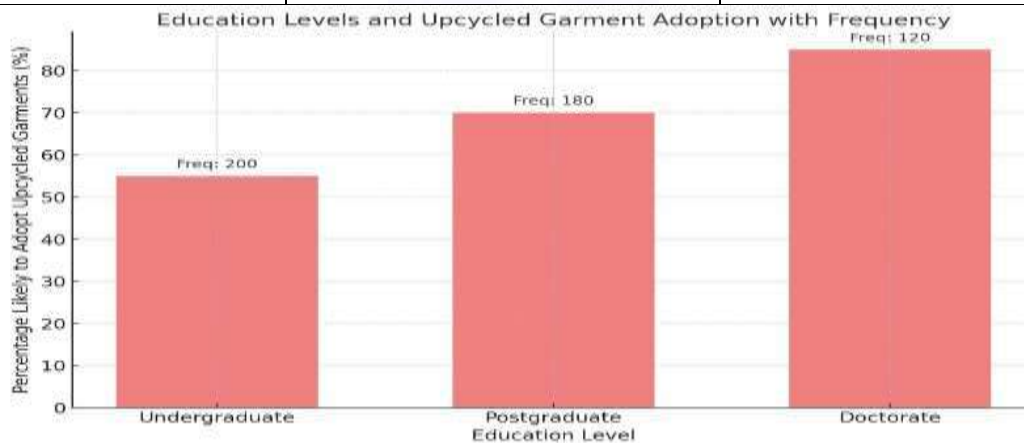


Figure 4: Education Levels and Upcycled Garment Adoption

Key Observations:

Strong Positive Correlation between Education Level and Adoption: The table shows a clear upward trend: as education levels increase, so does the likelihood of adopting upcycled garments. Respondents with undergraduate education are least likely to adopt upcycled garments, with an adoption rate of 55% out of 200 respondents. Respondents with postgraduate education exhibit a higher adoption rate of 70%, with 180 respondents. Respondents with a doctorate have the highest likelihood of adopting upcycled garments, with 85% adoption out of 120 respondents. Higher levels of education are often associated with greater awareness of global and environmental issues, including sustainability. Individuals with more advanced educational backgrounds may have been exposed to topics



like environmental ethics, consumer responsibility, and sustainability during their studies. As a result, they are more likely to adopt eco-friendly practices, including purchasing upcycled garments. Furthermore, individuals with higher education may place more value on the ethical and environmental aspects of fashion, prioritizing sustainability over other factors such as price. Respondents with undergraduate education levels have the lowest adoption rate of 55%, representing 200 respondents. Undergraduate respondents may be less aware of sustainable fashion options, or they may be more concerned with affordability than sustainability, given that this group could include younger individuals, such as students or early-career professionals, who may have limited disposable income. Their decision-making process may be more influenced by factors such as trends, cost, and convenience, rather than ethical concerns or long-term sustainability. The likelihood of adoption increases significantly for those with postgraduate education (70%) and doctorate degrees (85%), reflecting 180 and 120 respondents, respectively. Individuals with postgraduate and doctorate degrees are likely more exposed to global sustainability issues through academic research, professional development, or social networks. These individuals may also have higher incomes, which allows them to prioritize sustainability in their purchasing decisions. Additionally, those with higher education may be more conscious of the long-term impact of their fashion choices, viewing upcycled garments as both environmentally and socially responsible options. These consumers may also be more inclined to support niche or premium brands that align with their values.

Implications for Marketing and Engagement: Brands can focus on consumers with higher education levels as primary targets for upcycled garments. Marketing strategies that emphasize the environmental, social, and ethical benefits of upcycled fashion are likely to resonate with postgraduate and doctorate holders. These individuals are more likely to engage with content that highlights the broader impact of their fashion choices, such as reducing waste, supporting sustainable practices, and promoting ethical production. For consumers with undergraduate education levels, educational campaigns could be key to increasing adoption rates. Brands should focus on raising awareness about the benefits of upcycled fashion, both from a sustainability and financial perspective. Explaining how upcycled garments can offer long-term value through durability, uniqueness, and environmental impact could help shift the attitudes of this group. For all education levels, brands should emphasize the sustainable and eco-friendly nature of upcycled garments in their messaging. This can be done through eco-labeling, storytelling, and transparency about the production process. Partnering with educational institutions or sustainability-focused organizations could also help reach a broader audience of educated consumers. Brands targeting consumers with postgraduate and doctorate degrees might consider collaborations with academic institutions, sustainability researchers, or environmental organizations. Offering lectures, workshops, or campaigns in universities or professional associations could help increase visibility among educated consumers and further emphasize the connection between education, awareness, and sustainable fashion. While price might be a key consideration for undergraduate consumers, postgraduate and doctorate-level individuals are more likely to value long-term sustainability, uniqueness, and ethical consumption. Therefore, brands should highlight these aspects in their product descriptions and marketing campaigns. Upcycled garments should be positioned not only as fashionable but as a conscious choice for those who value the environment and ethical practices.

Table 5: Awareness of Upcycled Fashion by Age Group

Age Group	Awareness of Upcycled Garments (%)	Frequency of Respondents
18-25	85	130
26-35	80	144
36-45	55	96
46-60	40	60

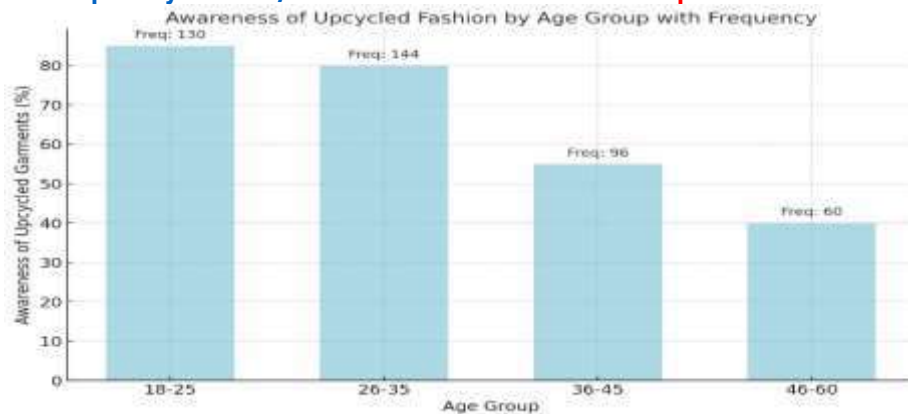


Figure 5: Awareness of Upcycled Fashion by Age Group

Key Observations:

Higher Awareness among Younger Age Groups: The table shows that awareness of upcycled garments is significantly higher among younger respondents, particularly those in the 18-25 and 26-35 age groups. In the 18-25 age group, 85% of respondents are aware of upcycled fashion, representing 130 individuals. The 26-35 age group follows closely, with 80% awareness, representing 144 individuals. Younger consumers, particularly those aged 18-35, are generally more exposed to sustainability trends and upcycled fashion through digital platforms such as social media, online influencers, and e-commerce. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest are commonly used by younger audiences to discover sustainable brands, fashion movements, and trends. Additionally, millennials and Gen Z are increasingly concerned with climate change and environmental sustainability, which makes them more likely to be aware of eco-friendly practices such as upcycling. This demographic is also more likely to seek out and support brands that align with their values, contributing to their greater awareness of upcycled garments.

Moderate Awareness in the 36-45 Age Group: The 36-45 age group shows a noticeable drop in awareness, with 55% of respondents familiar with upcycled garments. This group includes 96 respondents. While this age group is more aware of sustainability issues than older generations, their exposure to upcycled fashion may be more limited. Many individuals in this age range may not actively seek out or follow fashion trends on digital platforms where upcycled fashion is widely promoted. Additionally, this demographic is often more focused on practicality and brand loyalty in their fashion choices, which may lead to less awareness of niche or emerging sustainable fashion practices.

Lower Awareness in Older Age Groups: The 46-60 age group has the lowest awareness of upcycled fashion, with 40% awareness among 60 respondents. Older consumers are typically less engaged with digital platforms where upcycled fashion is most often promoted. Their shopping habits may be more traditional, focusing on established brands and conventional retail stores that do not heavily promote sustainability or upcycling. Older generations may also prioritize functionality, comfort, and familiarity in their fashion choices over emerging trends like upcycling. As a result, they may be less exposed to or interested in exploring eco-friendly alternatives.

Implications for Marketing and Awareness Campaigns:

Given the high level of awareness among younger consumers (18-35), brands can continue to focus on digital marketing strategies to engage this demographic. Social media campaigns, collaborations with influencers, and partnerships with sustainability advocates can help maintain and further increase awareness of upcycled fashion among younger consumers. These campaigns should highlight the environmental benefits of upcycled garments, their uniqueness, and their fashion-forward appeal. Offering educational content on sustainability and promoting responsible consumerism could also resonate with younger audiences. The lower awareness in the 36-60 age groups suggests an opportunity for brands to educate older consumers about the benefits of upcycled fashion. Traditional marketing methods, such as in-



store displays, print advertisements, or partnerships with mainstream retail outlets, could be used to increase visibility among these consumers. Additionally, offering more classic or conservative upcycled designs that align with the preferences of older consumers could help generate interest. Messaging that focuses on the quality, durability, and long-term value of upcycled garments may appeal to this group, which is often more practical in its fashion choices. For the 36-45 age group, combining practical benefits with environmental consciousness in marketing campaigns could be effective. This demographic may be more responsive to messaging that highlights how upcycled garments can provide both quality and sustainability. Educational campaigns that emphasize the long-term savings from durable, eco-friendly clothing could also increase awareness and adoption among this age group.

Collaborations with Influencers and Retailers: Influencer marketing is an effective way to reach younger audiences and maintain high awareness of upcycled fashion. Collaborations with sustainability-focused influencers can boost credibility and visibility among younger consumers. For older consumers, partnerships with well-known retail brands could increase exposure to upcycled fashion. Featuring upcycled collections in mainstream retail stores or collaborating with established designers on sustainable product lines could help bridge the gap between traditional shopping habits and sustainable choices.

Educational Efforts: While younger consumers are more aware of upcycled fashion, there is still room to educate them further about the broader impact of their fashion choices. Brands should provide transparent information about the upcycling process, the environmental benefits, and the social impact of choosing sustainable products. For older age groups, awareness campaigns could focus on practical benefits, such as durability, cost-effectiveness, and the ethical aspects of upcycled fashion. Additionally, using testimonials or success stories from customers who have embraced sustainable fashion could help make upcycling more relatable and accessible to older consumers.

Table 6: Willingness to Pay Premium for Upcycled Garments by Income Level

Income Level (₹ per month)	Willingness to Pay Premium for Upcycled Garments (%)	Frequency of Respondents
< ₹25,000	20	120
₹25,000 - ₹50,000	40	160
₹50,000 - ₹75,000	60	110
> ₹75,000	80	110



Table 6: Willingness to Pay Premium for Upcycled Garments by Income Level

Key Observations:

Significant Correlation between Income and Willingness to Pay: The table clearly shows a positive correlation between income level and willingness to pay a premium for upcycled garments. As income increases, so does the likelihood of consumers being willing to pay more for sustainable fashion. Respondents earning less than ₹25,000 per month show the lowest willingness to pay a premium, with only 20% likely to do so, representing 120 respondents. In contrast, respondents earning more than ₹75,000 per month have the highest willingness to pay a premium, with 80% of respondents from this group indicating their



willingness, out of 110 respondents. Higher-income consumers generally have more disposable income, allowing them to prioritize values such as sustainability over cost when making purchasing decisions. They may perceive upcycled garments as a luxury or niche product, justifying the higher price due to its ethical and environmental value. Lower-income consumers are more price-sensitive, making them less likely to pay a premium for sustainable products, even if they are environmentally conscious. For these consumers, affordability is often a higher priority than sustainability.

Moderate Willingness in the Middle-Income Brackets: For respondents earning ₹25,000 - ₹50,000 per month, 40% are willing to pay a premium, with 160 respondents in this category. This willingness increases further in the ₹50,000 - ₹75,000 income bracket, where 60% are willing to pay a premium, represented by 110 respondents. Consumers in these middle-income brackets are likely balancing financial constraints with an interest in sustainability. While they may not always prioritize paying more for eco-friendly fashion, they are willing to do so if the value (quality, durability, uniqueness) is apparent. Their growing awareness of environmental issues may influence their decision to support sustainable fashion if they can justify the cost.

High Willingness among High-Income Consumers: Respondents in the > ₹75,000 per month income bracket show the highest willingness to pay a premium, with 80% of this group willing to pay extra for upcycled garments. This group consists of 110 respondents. High-income consumers often seek premium or exclusive products that offer more than just functionality. For these consumers, upcycled garments may be perceived not only as sustainable but also as unique and fashionable. The higher willingness to pay can also be linked to social signaling, where high-income consumers use eco-friendly products to express their commitment to ethical and sustainable values. Additionally, high-income individuals may view upcycled fashion as an opportunity to support smaller, eco-conscious businesses or artisan communities, aligning with their values of social responsibility.

Implications for Pricing and Target Markets: The data suggests that upcycled garment brands should focus on marketing premium products to high-income consumers who are willing to pay extra for sustainability. For this demographic, the emphasis should be on the exclusivity, craftsmanship, and environmental benefits of upcycled fashion. High-end marketing channels, such as luxury magazines, exclusive retail outlets, or high-end e-commerce platforms, could help attract these consumers. For the middle-income brackets, where 40-60% are willing to pay a premium, brands should balance affordability with perceived value. Offering a range of upcycled products at varying price points could appeal to these consumers, with affordable entry-level options and more premium, unique designs. Brands can also use education campaigns to highlight how upcycled fashion delivers value through durability and sustainability, justifying the higher cost. For those earning less than ₹25,000 per month, affordability remains a key concern. To increase adoption among this group, brands might consider offering lower-priced options or collaborating with governmental or non-governmental organizations to provide incentives for purchasing sustainable fashion. Additionally, brands could emphasize long-term savings from the durability of upcycled garments, positioning them as an economically wise investment over time. Education plays a crucial role in increasing the perceived value of upcycled garments. While higher-income consumers may already be familiar with the benefits of sustainable fashion, middle- and lower-income groups could be educated on the environmental and long-term financial benefits of purchasing upcycled products. Messaging that emphasizes how sustainable choices align with broader societal values and environmental preservation could resonate across all income groups, fostering a sense of collective responsibility.

6. IMPLICATIONS

For Brands:

- The study shows that younger consumers and women are more likely to adopt upcycled garments. Brands should tailor their marketing strategies to appeal to these demographics



by emphasizing the fashion-forward, unique, and eco-friendly nature of upcycled products. Highlighting these values through digital campaigns, social media, and influencer collaborations can strengthen consumer engagement.

- Lack of awareness remains a barrier to widespread adoption. Brands can invest in educational campaigns that communicate the environmental and social benefits of upcycling. Collaborating with influencers who focus on sustainability can help increase the visibility of upcycled garments and inspire more consumers to make eco-conscious fashion choices.
- For upcycled fashion to reach a broader audience, brands need to consider affordability. Offering a range of products at various price points could make sustainable fashion more accessible, especially to middle-income consumers. Collaborations with local artisans and designers can also create unique offerings that appeal to a diverse consumer base while promoting traditional craftsmanship.

For Policymakers:

- Policymakers can play a pivotal role by providing incentives to brands that prioritize sustainable practices such as upcycling. Tax benefits, grants, or other financial support can encourage more businesses to invest in upcycled fashion and scale their operations.
- To increase consumer awareness about the importance of sustainable fashion, policymakers can initiate public awareness programs. Campaigns highlighting the environmental impact of traditional fashion production, alongside the benefits of upcycled garments, can educate the general public about sustainable choices.
- Encouraging collaboration between designers, artisans, and businesses can help make upcycled garments more affordable and available to a wider audience. By fostering partnerships and creating industry ecosystems focused on sustainability, policymakers can promote economic opportunities for local artisans while expanding the reach of eco-friendly fashion.

7. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the growing potential of upcycled garments within the sustainable fashion movement in India, especially as consumer awareness of environmental issues continues to rise. The research demonstrates that demographic factors, such as age, gender, income, and education, significantly influence the adoption of upcycled fashion. Younger consumers, women, and individuals with higher income and education levels are more inclined to adopt upcycled garments, driven by a greater awareness of sustainability and an interest in unique, eco-conscious fashion. Brands looking to promote upcycled fashion can capitalize on these insights by targeting younger consumers and women through digital campaigns and influencer collaborations. Emphasizing the fashion-forward, customized, and environmentally friendly aspects of upcycled garments can resonate with these demographics. Additionally, ensuring affordability through collaborations with local artisans and offering products at various price points will help expand the market to middle-income consumers. Policymakers also play a crucial role in fostering the adoption of upcycled fashion. By providing incentives for sustainable practices and promoting public awareness campaigns, policymakers can support the growth of the upcycled fashion industry. Encouraging collaborations between designers, artisans, and businesses can create an ecosystem that makes upcycled garments more accessible, affordable, and appealing to a broader audience.

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