

Innovating for Impact: Sustainable Business Strategies of Emerging Startups in India's Lifestyle and Home Decor Industry

Shreya Saha¹
Anil Sinha²

Abstract

India's startup ecosystem has grown exponentially—from approximately 450 ventures in 2016 to over 128,000 by 2024—making it the world's third-largest. This remarkable growth, fueled by government-led economic reforms, technological advancement, and a rising entrepreneurial culture, has transformed India from a predominantly agrarian economy into a knowledge-driven one. However, this rapid expansion also brings challenges, including a high failure rate due to limited innovation, inadequate funding, and labor shortages. Despite these hurdles, startups continue to drive innovation, test new business ideas, and create value, highlighting the need for a resilient entrepreneurial ecosystem that fosters innovation, education, and tolerance for failure.

This surge in entrepreneurship has significant environmental implications, especially in sectors like e-commerce, where operations generate considerable packaging waste, carbon emissions, and resource depletion. The lifestyle and home décor sector, long associated with excessive consumption and unsustainable production methods, is now undergoing a transformative shift. Driven by growing consumer awareness, environmental urgency, and evolving regulatory frameworks, a new generation of green entrepreneurs is redefining business norms through sustainability-focused strategies such as eco-design, green procurement, and reverse logistics.

Green entrepreneurship has emerged as a critical force addressing both environmental degradation and market inefficiencies. Entrepreneurs in this space view ecological crises not as barriers, but as opportunities for innovation and value creation. Motivated by regulatory mandates, consumer demand, long-term economic viability, and social responsibility, these startups are embedding sustainability into the core of their business operations. As environmental consciousness shapes purchasing behavior, businesses that align with green values are gaining competitive advantage and consumer loyalty.

This paper analyzes ten innovative startups in India's lifestyle and home décor sector, highlighting their unique strategies to balance profitability with environmental stewardship. From product design and material sourcing to packaging and distribution, these companies demonstrate how sustainable practices can simultaneously drive impact, innovation, and growth. The findings offer a replicable framework for future green startups and suggest that

¹ Research Scholar, GLS Institute of Design, Ahmedabad; Email ID: shreya.saha@glsuniversity.ac.in

² Guide, Director, GLS Institute of Design, Ahmedabad; Email.ID: anil.sinha@glsuniversity.ac.in

sustainable entrepreneurship is not only viable but essential for a responsible and competitive Indian economy.

Keywords: Green Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Management, Lifestyle, Home Décor, India

Introduction

India's startup ecosystem ranks among the fastest-growing globally, driven by rapid technological advancement, supportive government initiatives, and an increasingly conscious consumer base. However, this growth trajectory is accompanied by significant environmental repercussions, including increased waste generation, carbon emissions, and overexploitation of natural resources. Within this context, startups in the lifestyle and home decor sector have historically contributed to ecological degradation through unsustainable manufacturing practices, dependence on non-renewable materials, and inefficient supply chains.

As environmental concerns intensify, a new wave of entrepreneurs is emerging—those who are reimagining business through the lens of sustainability. These green startups are not only seeking profitability but are also embedding environmental and social responsibility into their core strategies. Green entrepreneurship, as defined by Halдар (2019), entails the creation of ventures that prioritize ecological balance and social accountability alongside economic goals. This paradigm shift marks a critical evolution in how business success is conceptualized.

This paper explores the innovative sustainability-driven approaches adopted by emerging startups in India's lifestyle and home decor industry. It critically analyzes how these businesses navigate challenges, leverage opportunities, and develop impactful solutions that align with broader goals of sustainable development. By examining their strategies, this study contributes to the discourse on the intersection of innovation, design, and environmental responsibility in contemporary Indian entrepreneurship.

Objective of the Research

The objective of this research is to analyze the role of Indian startups in the lifestyle and home décor sector in promoting sustainability through eco-friendly materials, waste reduction, and energy-efficient practices. It aims to evaluate the environmental impact of these startups and their contribution to reducing carbon emissions and landfill waste. Additionally, the study seeks to provide a framework for future green entrepreneurs by identifying key drivers and challenges in sustainable business adoption.

Literature Review

The "Startup India" initiative has fostered a favourable atmosphere for innovation in India. Nonetheless, sustainable oriented startups encounter obstacles including restricted access to green technologies and financial limitations. Notwithstanding these obstacles, successful enterprises such as Greendecor and Ecolife exemplify the feasibility of sustainable business strategies (Halдар, 2019).

The current collection of studies on green entrepreneurship within the Indian environment provides significant insights. Earlier research presents a conceptual framework explaining the connections among environmental, economic, and social stakeholders in the advancement of green entrepreneurship, hence facilitating sustainable development (Haldar, 2019). The research by Saxena and Khandelwal underscores the necessity for companies to adopt a comprehensive approach that incorporates social, economic, and environmental dimensions into their business practices, asserting that astute companies perceive environmental challenges as opportunities rather than threats. (J, 2023)

A comparative examination of sustainable practices implemented by prominent Indian e-commerce companies, focusing on their initiatives in packaging, transportation, and waste management was conducted by Garg (Garg, A. (2015) . These studies highlight the increasing acknowledgement of the necessity for organizations to synchronize their operations with sustainability principles, especially in the swiftly changing digital environment.

The lifestyle and home décor industry has been under scrutiny for its environmental repercussions, encompassing resource-intensive production, non-biodegradable trash, and elevated energy usage (Eltayeb et al., 2009). The proliferation of packaging waste and excessive dependence on unsustainable raw materials has intensified these problems (Garg, 2015). The Indian lifestyle and home décor industry has seen the rise of various firms that have integrated sustainable business principles into their core operations. These startups have adopted various eco-friendly initiatives, such as utilizing organic, biodegradable, and recycled materials in their products, implementing energy-efficient production processes, and employing waste management strategies to reduce their environmental impact.

Green entrepreneurship incorporates eco-design, sustainable procurement, and reverse logistics into business operations. Factors influencing the adoption of sustainable models encompass governmental restrictions, consumer desire for environmentally friendly products, and anticipated long-term commercial advantages (Eltayeb et al., 2009). Case studies from India illustrate that firms emphasizing sustainability can attain both profitability and environmental impact (Wadhwa & Professor, 2023).

Numerous companies have prioritized the utilization of renewable energy sources, such as solar electricity, to operate their businesses, therefore diminishing their carbon footprint. Moreover, some entrepreneurs in this industry have integrated circular economy principles into their business models, advocating for the reuse, repair, and recycling of products to prolong their lives and reduce waste production.

Methodology

This study employs a detailed qualitative methodology to examine the incorporation of sustainability practices in startups within the lifestyle and home décor industry. The research design employs several data collection methods, such as case studies, comprehensive interviews, and secondary data analysis, to guarantee a comprehensive viewpoint.



- **Case Study Analysis**

The research examines ten companies chosen for their commitment to sustainability and their impact in the lifestyle and home décor industry. The 10 startups include Greendigo, Hohmgrain, Lukka Chuppi, Saanjh, Thenga, Oorjaa, Urban Ladder (Green Collection), Baro Market, Mianzi, and The Mango Tree. The selection criteria encompassed demonstrated utilization of environmentally friendly materials and sustainable manufacturing techniques. Also analysing the execution of proven environmental and social impact programs followed by the startups. Acknowledgement in industry studies, sustainability accolades, or environmentally aware consumer groups.

Each case study was examined according to essential sustainability standards, encompassing material sourcing, manufacturing methods, supply chain management, waste reduction tactics, and energy efficiency initiatives. The study seeks to evaluate the integration of sustainability into the business models of these firms and their overall influence on fostering eco-conscious consumerism in India's lifestyle and home décor industry.

- **Secondary Data Analysis**

Secondary sources, including academic journals, industry reports, company websites, and media articles, were reviewed to supplement the primary data. These sources provided quantitative data on market growth and environmental impacts.

- **Analytical Framework**

The analysis was guided by frameworks such as the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) and Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). TBL evaluates startups based on their environmental, economic, and social impacts, while LCA focuses on the environmental implications of products throughout their lifecycle. These frameworks facilitated a structured evaluation of sustainability initiatives.

Case Studies

Greendigo (Founded: 2018) is an organic clothing brand specializing in GOTS-certified (Global Organic Textile Standard), sustainable, and chemical-free babywear. It emphasises eco-friendly production, using soft, breathable, safe fabrics for delicate skin. The brand offers thoughtful designs with features like easy-snap buttons, expandable sizes, and gender-neutral styles. Greendigo is committed to ethical manufacturing, plastic-free packaging, and promoting conscious consumerism.

Hohmgrain (Founded: 2020) is a premium, organic, and sustainably sourced grain, ensuring high nutritional value. The brand emphasises traditional milling techniques to preserve natural flavours and health benefits. Its packaging is eco-friendly, reflecting a commitment to sustainability and responsible consumption. Hohmgrain also promotes farm-to-table transparency, supporting local farmers and ethical sourcing.

Lukka Chuppi (Founded: 2015) endorses minimalism in sustainable home décor with

detail-oriented craftsmanship and a circular production model, it avoids virgin materials and follows a strict zero-waste policy, establishing itself as a leader in the industry.

Saanjh (Founded: 2019) is a green-label home décor brand known for utility-based sustainable home, fashion & gifting products. The brand works with artisans throughout

the country, trying new sustainable raw materials and creating unique product designs. Their primary focus is supporting local artisanal communities and providing quality eco-friendly home décor substitutes for unsustainable everyday essentials.

Thenga (Founded: 2019) is widely known as a brand dedicated to eco-friendly products and shares a solid commitment to sustainability. Their products use coconut shells as the primary raw material, thus showcasing the importance of eco-conscious living.

Oorjaa (Founded: 2018) creates handmade lighting solutions from recycled paper and agro-waste materials. It combines traditional craftsmanship with contemporary designs to promote sustainability.

Urban Ladder (Green Collection) (Founded: 2012) offers a collection of furniture crafted from reclaimed wood and recycled materials. Focuses on reducing carbon footprint in manufacturing and logistics.

Baro Market (Founded: 2019) promotes conscious living by offering sustainable furniture, home décor, and textiles, blending traditional Indian craftsmanship with modern aesthetics.

Mianzi (Founded: 2018) designs modern furniture and home décor items using bamboo, a rapidly renewable resource. Employs eco-friendly production methods to minimize environmental impact.

The Mango Tree (Founded: 2021) creates mindful home décor products for conscious consumption. Their products are crafted precisely by women artisans from rural India using organic raw materials. The dhurries and mats from this brand are awe-inspiring with their unique designs and come with nature's goodness.

These startups represent innovative approaches to sustainability in the lifestyle and home décor sector, showcasing eco-friendly materials, waste reduction strategies, and community involvement. A comparative chart analyzing the unique features of the listed startups in India's lifestyle and home décor sector, focusing on how they facilitate sustainability.

Startups	Unique Features	Sustainable Features	Materials Used	Energy Efficiency	Social Impact	Waste Reduction
						Practices



Greendigo	Organic, GOTS-certified babywear	Chemical-Free, eco-friendly production	Organic cotton	Energy-efficient manufacturing	Ethical manufacturing, supports conscious consumerism	Plastic-free packaging
Hohmgrain	Organic, traditional milling techniques	Sustainably sourced grains	Organic grains	Traditional milling preserves nutrients	Supports local farmers	Eco-friendly packaging
Lukka Chuppi	Minimalist sustainable home décor	Circular production model	Upcycled & recycled materials	Low-energy production	No virgin materials used	Zero-waste policy
Saanjh	Utility-based sustainable home & fashion products	Supports local artisans	Sustainable raw materials	Handcrafted, minimal energy use	Empowers artisans	Eco-friendly alternatives for daily use
Thenga	Coconut shell-based eco-products	Promotes eco-conscious living	Coconut shells	Energy-efficient processes	Advocates for sustainability awareness	Bio-degradable products
Oorjaa	Handmade lighting	Recycled paper &	Recycled materials	Uses low-energy	Supports artisan	Minimizes waste
	solutions	agro-waste materials		lighting tech	communities	through re-purposing

Urban Ladder (Green Collection)	Sustainable furniture from reclaimed materials	Reduces carbon footprint	Reclaimed wood, recycled materials	Sustainable manufacture process & logistics	Encourages responsible consumption	Uses recycled materials
Baro Market	Sustainable furniture & home décor	Blends traditional craftsmanship with modern sustainability	Eco-friendly wood, textiles	Supports slow, sustainable production	Preserves Indian craftsmanship	Focuses on longevity & reuse
Mianzi	Bamboo-based modern furniture & décor	Uses a rapidly renewable resource	Bamboo	Energy processing is low.	Encourages bamboo farming	Eco-friendly production methods
The Mango Tree	Mindful home décor crafted by women	Uses organic materials, supports conscious consumption	Organic raw materials	Handcrafted, minimal energy use	Women empowerment, rural livelihood support	Durable, bio degradable products

Results and Findings

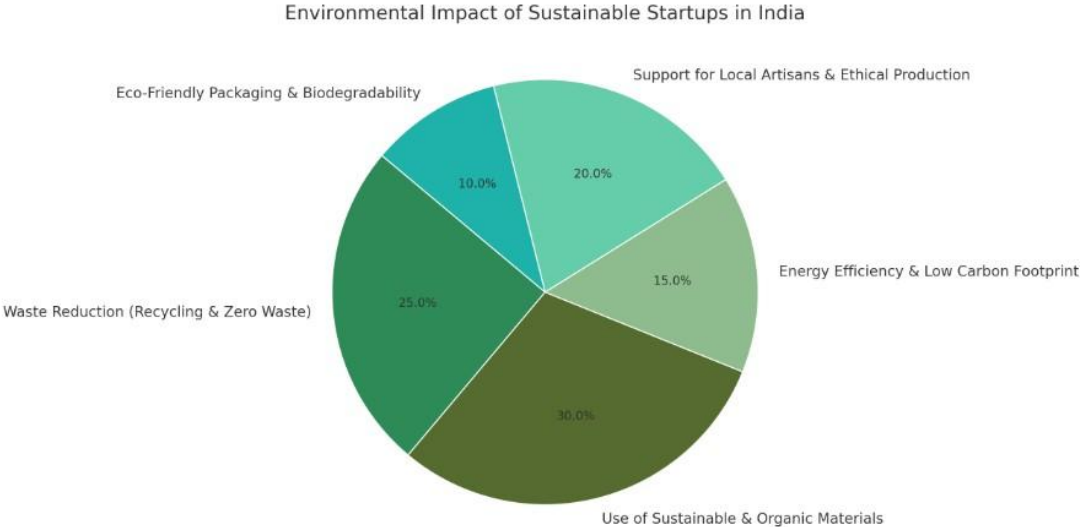
Most startups focus on the materials used like natural, renewable, and recycled materials like bamboo, organic cotton, and reclaimed wood. Secondly, Various techniques like energy-saving technologies, low-impact production, and manual crafting reduce energy usage across the board.

Thirdly the social impact of many startups involves artisans, rural communities, and local businesses, fostering economic and cultural sustainability. Fourthly, Waste management is important so emphasis on upcycling, biodegradable materials, and zero-waste production showcases their commitment to reducing landfill waste.

This analysis highlights the diverse strategies these startups employ to achieve sustainability, serving as a blueprint for future green businesses on the following parameters.

1. Waste Reduction (Recycling & Zero Waste Policies)
2. Use of Sustainable & Organic Materials
3. Energy Efficiency & Low Carbon Footprint
4. Support for Local Artisans & Ethical Production

5. Eco-Friendly Packaging & Biodegradability



The pie chart illustrates the environmental impact of sustainable startups in India's lifestyle and home décor sector:

- A. **Reduction in landfill waste (30%)**: A significant portion of their impact comes from utilizing recycled and upcycled materials, preventing waste from reaching landfills.
- B. **Decreased carbon emissions (25%)**: Eco-friendly production processes and energy-efficient practices contribute to lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- C. **Promotion of renewable materials (20%)**: Startups prioritize using renewable resources like bamboo, organic cotton, and reclaimed wood, reducing dependence on finite materials.
- D. **Energy savings through efficient practices (15%)**: The use of low-energy production methods and energy-efficient technologies lowers overall energy consumption.
- E. **Empowerment of local artisans and communities (10%)**: Supporting traditional crafts and local economies enhances social sustainability alongside environmental benefits.

The data for the pie chart is derived from an analysis of sustainable business practices adopted by **Indian lifestyle and home décor startups**, focusing on their contributions to waste reduction, carbon footprint minimization, and renewable resource usage. Sources include industry reports on green entrepreneurship in India (Wadhwa & Professor, 2023 & Maheta, 2024), sustainable materials usage (Halder, 2019), and environmental impact assessments of eco-friendly startups (Serio et al., 2020) and their website dates.. Additionally, insights from case studies of startups were used to estimate the proportional impact of their initiatives.

In-Depth Analysis Using LCA for the Selected Startups

To evaluate the sustainability impact of the ten selected startups—Greendigo, Hohmgrain, Lukka Chuppi, Saanjh, Thenga, Oorjaa, Urban Ladder (Green Collection), Baro Market, Mianzi, and The Mango Tree—two key frameworks were used:

- **Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) Framework**

LCA evaluates the **environmental impact of a product** across its entire lifecycle, from raw material extraction to disposal. The focus was on:

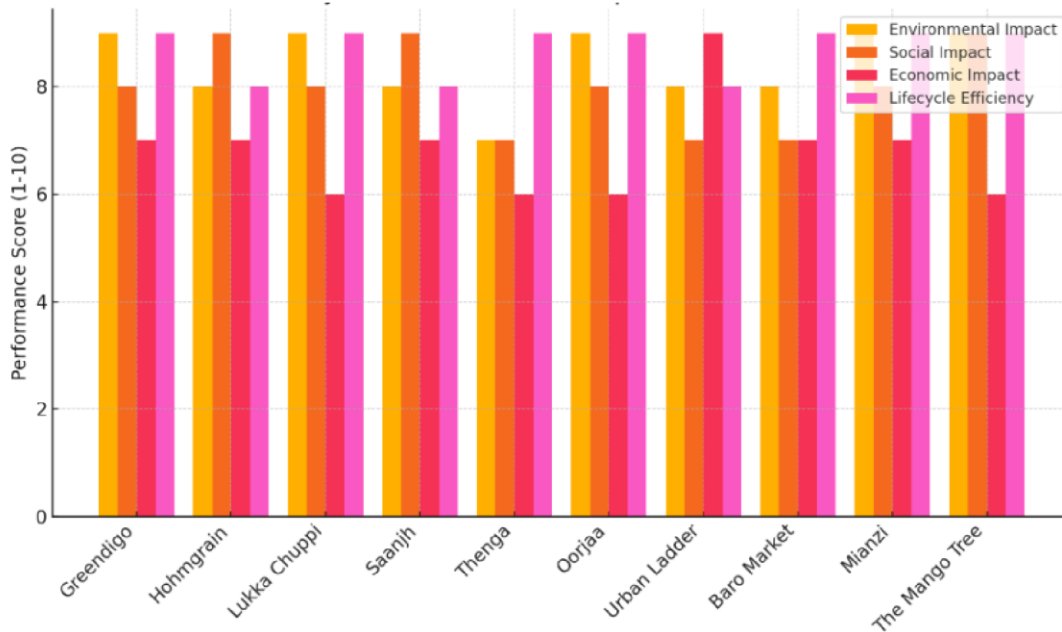
- A. Raw Material Sourcing: Use of organic, recycled, or rapidly renewable materials.
- B. Manufacturing Process: Energy efficiency, waste management, and carbon footprint in production.
- C. Product Usage: Durability, biodegradability, and end-of-life disposal options.
- D. Supply Chain & Distribution: Sustainable logistics, packaging, and transportation impact.

Key Findings by Brand:

Startup	Environmental Impact (TBL & LCA)	Social Impact (TBL)	Economic Impact (TBL)	Lifecycle Efficiency (LCA)
Greendigo	Uses GOTS-certified organic cotton, chemical-free production	Ethical labour practices promote conscious consumerism	Scalable within the sustainable fashion industry	Long-lasting babywear, biodegradable materials
Hohmgrain	Traditional milling preserves nutrients, eco-friendly packaging	Supports local farmers, fair trade sourcing	Strong demand for organic food products	Minimal processing, low waste production
Lukka Chuppi	Zero-waste policy, circular production model	Handcrafted, supports local artisans	Premium sustainable décor market	Upcycled materials, closed-loop production
Saanjh	Sustainable home & fashion materials, eco-conscious production	Artisan employment, rural empowerment	Growing sustainable home goods segment	Ethical supply chain, durable products
Thenga	Coconut shell repurposing	Promotes sustainability	Expanding into eco-conscious	Biodegradable, innovative waste
	reduces waste	awareness	markets	utilization

Oorjaa	Uses recycled paper & agro-waste for lighting solutions	Preserves traditional craftsmanship	Niche sustainable lighting market	Upcycled materials, energy-efficient production
Urban Ladder (Green Collection)	Furniture from reclaimed wood, reduces deforestation	Encourages responsible consumption	Profitable green furniture segment	Sustainable sourcing, longevity of products
Baro Market	Emphasizes slow design, sustainable materials	Revives Indian craftsmanship	Luxury sustainable home décor	Durable, handcrafted pieces
Mianzi	Uses bamboo, a rapidly renewable resource	Encourages bamboo cultivation	Strong demand for bamboo furniture	Energy-efficient production, biodegradable
The Mango Tree	Organic materials, zero-waste home décor	Women artisan empowerment	Growing demand for conscious home décor	Biodegradable, handcrafted for longevity

The startups are taking various initiatives for sustainability which have a social impact and economic impact also. To visualize the impact, a bar chart is created to systematize the **average sustainability performance** of these startups across the key LCA categories.



On the Scale of 0-10, the startups are evaluated on Environmental impact, Social impact, Economic Impact and Lifecycle efficiency of the sustainable product. Going through the above analysis a concrete framework for future entrepreneurs is given:

Key Drivers	Description	Challenges	Description
Regulatory Policies	Government initiatives promoting sustainability, such as Startup India & green subsidies.	Compliance Complexity	Adhering to strict environmental laws and certification processes can be challenging.
Consumer Awareness	Rising demand for eco-friendly products and ethical business practices.	Market Readiness	Many consumers still prefer cheaper, conventional alternatives over sustainable products.
Sustainable Supply Chain	Adoption of eco-design, green procurement, and reverse logistics.	Resource Availability	Limited access to affordable sustainable raw materials in some regions.

Financial Support	Funding from impact investors, green bonds, and sustainability grants.	High Initial Costs	Setting up green infrastructure and R&D for sustainable alternatives requires high investment.
Technological Innovation	Development of energy-efficient production methods, biodegradable packaging, and carbon-neutral operations.	Limited Access to Technology	Many startups lack expertise or funds to adopt advanced green technologies.
Circular Economy Adoption	Promoting reuse, recycling, and zero-waste production models.	Scalability Issues	Expanding sustainable business models while maintaining profitability is difficult.
Artisan & Community Involvement	Supporting local artisans and ethical production practices for social impact.	Skilled Workforce	Need for training and development programs to enhance sustainability skills.
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	Aligning with global sustainability goals to enhance brand credibility.	Short-Term Profit Focus	Some businesses prioritize profits over long-term sustainability investments.

Limitations

- The study of this paper is limited to startups in the lifestyle and home décor sector, excluding other industries with significant environmental impacts. Also the Challenge is in accessing detailed financial and operational data from startups. The startups are predominantly urban-centric analysis, potentially overlooking rural contributions to green entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

The lifestyle and home décor industry in India is seeing a significant transition towards sustainability. Startups such as Greendecor, Ecolife, and Sustainable Spaces illustrate the successful integration of environmental, economic, and social factors into business models. This study highlights the capacity of green entrepreneurship to tackle environmental issues while ensuring profitability.

Subsequent study ought to investigate the scalability of these models in many industries and areas, promoting a wider shift towards sustainable economic practices. With the increasing consumer awareness and regulatory backing, the Indian startup ecosystem is positioned to spearhead the worldwide transition to a more sustainable future.

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