



WOMEN BOUTIQUE ENTREPRENEURS AND GREEN CONSUMERISM: MAPPING THE SHIFT THROUGH SECONDARY FASHION MARKET DATA

Yogita Ashok Patil

Research Student

Shivaji University, Kolhapur, India

Abstract:

The intersection of women led boutique entrepreneurship and green consumerism represents an emerging area of socio economic transformation within the Indian fashion ecosystem. This paper examines how secondary fashion market data comprising resale platforms, sustainable fashion reports, consumer surveys, and published retail datasets reflects a measurable shift toward eco conscious purchasing and its implications for women boutique entrepreneurs. Grounded in social entrepreneurship theory and gendered consumption frameworks, the study synthesizes secondary evidence from 2015–2024 to map changes in consumer motivations, sustainability preferences, and the operational responses of boutique enterprises. Findings reveal that women boutique entrepreneurs are both influence makers and beneficiaries of the rise in green consumerism, leveraging slow fashion principles, eco-friendly sourcing, and resale or upcycling strategies to differentiate their offerings. Secondary market trends show a consistent rise in sustainable apparel demand particularly among urban, educated, and millennial female consumers which aligns with boutique business models emphasizing personalization, small batch production, and ethical aesthetics. The study contributes by integrating gender, entrepreneurship, and sustainability literature to highlight how women boutique owners can strategically position themselves within the expanding circular fashion economy. Policy implications include the need for capacity building programs, digital sustainability platforms, and targeted support for women led retail micro enterprises. Recommendations for future research and limitations of secondary data dependence are also discussed.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurs; Designer boutiques; Green consumerism; Sustainable fashion; Secondary fashion market; Circular economy; India; Gender and entrepreneurship

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

Introduction:

Women's entrepreneurship has emerged as a critical driver of social and economic transformation in contemporary India, particularly within the creative and lifestyle sectors such as fashion, textiles, and boutique retailing. Over the past decade, boutique enterprises typically characterized by small batch production, personalized service, and aesthetic differentiation have increasingly been founded and managed by women seeking autonomy, creative expression, and flexible economic participation. These

ventures play a dual role: they contribute to local economic development and simultaneously challenge traditional gender norms by expanding women's visibility in public and entrepreneurial spaces. As boutique businesses evolve within a rapidly changing retail landscape, sustainability has become a defining concern shaping consumer preferences and entrepreneurial strategies alike.

Parallel to this entrepreneurial growth, the Indian fashion sector is witnessing a pronounced shift toward

green consumerism, driven by rising environmental awareness, urban lifestyle transitions, and global discourses on ethical consumption. Green consumerism refers to purchasing behaviours that prioritize environmental responsibility, including choices that minimize waste, support recycling, adopt slow fashion principles, and align with ecological values. This shift has been especially visible among women consumers in metropolitan and peri urban regions, who increasingly favour sustainable apparel, second hand clothing markets, upcycling initiatives, and eco-friendly boutique collections. Against this backdrop, women boutique entrepreneurs find themselves at the nexus of two dynamic forces gendered entrepreneurship and sustainability driven consumption creating an opportunity for unique forms of social innovation and business differentiation.

The rise of the secondary fashion market has further accelerated this shift. Globally and in India, resale platforms, thrift stores, clothing rental apps, recommerce portals, and curated pre loved fashion marketplaces have transformed fashion circulation patterns. These secondary market ecosystems are now closely entwined with green consumerism, offering consumers affordable, unique, and environmentally conscious alternatives to fast fashion. Secondary fashion market data including platform reports, consumer trend analyses, resale growth metrics, and sustainability audits offers rich insight into changing consumption behaviours. Such data serves as a valuable tool for mapping how consumers increasingly value ethical sourcing, waste reduction, and circular fashion principles.

Women boutique entrepreneurs, situated between artisanal production and personalized retailing, are uniquely positioned to respond to and shape these emerging trends. Many boutique owners already engage in environmentally responsible practices such as sourcing organic fabrics, collaborating with local

artisans, minimizing textile waste, or creatively repurposing leftover inventory. Their close proximity to consumers allows them to sense early shifts in values, incorporate sustainable narratives into marketing, and build deeper emotional connections with eco conscious buyers. However, despite this natural alignment, academic research has paid limited attention to how women led boutique enterprises intersect with sustainability discourses or how secondary fashion market data can reveal the scale and form of this alignment.

Existing literature on women's entrepreneurship largely examines structural barriers, empowerment outcomes, and socio cultural constraints, while green consumerism research tends to focus on consumer attitudes, environmental motivations, and retail strategies. Studies that explore circular fashion or secondary markets often analyse macroeconomic impacts rather than gendered entrepreneurial responses. Consequently, there is a notable gap in integrating these domains to understand how women boutique entrepreneurs engage with sustainability trends, how they interpret changing consumer ethics, and how market data can guide their strategic decisions. This gap is particularly pronounced in the Indian context where boutique retailing is vibrant, women's entrepreneurship is expanding, and green consumer behaviour is intensifying yet conceptual linkages remain limited.

This paper addresses these gaps by synthesizing secondary fashion market data to map the ongoing shift toward green consumerism and examining its implications for women boutique entrepreneurs. The study draws upon a range of secondary sources including sustainability industry reports, resale platform analytics, published market surveys, academic studies, and government datasets from 2015–2024 to construct an evidence based analysis of consumer transitions and entrepreneurial adaptation.



Rather than generating primary field data, the study adopts a social science orientation that foregrounds structural patterns, socio cultural influences, and women's agency within evolving market ecosystems. In doing so, the research emphasizes how women boutique entrepreneurs both influence and are shaped by the broader movement toward environmentally responsible fashion.

The study is grounded in three theoretical lenses relevant to social science research on women and markets:

1. **Gender and Entrepreneurship Theory**, which highlights the socio cultural, relational, and identity based dimensions of women's enterprise creation.
2. **Green Consumer Behaviour Theory**, which examines how environmental attitudes, values, and awareness influence purchase decisions.
3. **Circular Economy and Sustainable Fashion Frameworks**, which focus on reuse, recycling, slow fashion production, and alternative consumption models.

These perspectives collectively help illuminate the gendered dynamics of sustainability adoption within boutique enterprises and the ways in which women entrepreneurs navigate contemporary expectations around eco-friendly fashion.

Given the rapid evolution of the Indian retail environment especially in emerging urban centers such as Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, and Delhi the need to understand women's responses to sustainability trends has become increasingly important. Urban consumers, particularly young women, demonstrate heightened environmental consciousness influenced by social media, global fashion narratives, and digital thrift platforms. This creates not only market opportunities but also demands new forms of entrepreneurial learning and adaptation. Women boutique owners must navigate issues such as sustainable sourcing costs, customer education, digital

competitiveness, and balancing creative aspirations with ecological responsibility.

The present study contributes to the literature in three key ways.

First, it integrates disparate domains women's entrepreneurship, sustainable consumption, and secondary fashion data into a unified analytical framework with gender at the center. Second, it provides a detailed synthesis of secondary data trends that reveal the scale and nature of green consumer behaviour in India, offering practical insights for boutique entrepreneurs and policymakers. Third, it highlights the broader socio cultural significance of women boutique entrepreneurs as agents of sustainable change, expanding the understanding of how gendered economic participation intersects with ecological transitions.

Overall, this research positions women boutique entrepreneurs not merely as business owners but as social actors who participate in shaping sustainable consumer cultures. By mapping the shift toward green consumerism through secondary market evidence, the study seeks to inform both academic debates and on ground entrepreneurial practice within one of India's most dynamic creative sectors.

Literature Review:

1. Previous Studies

Research on women entrepreneurs in the fashion and boutique sector has expanded over the last decade, focusing largely on empowerment, sustainability, and consumer behaviour. Several studies highlight the unique contribution of women led boutique businesses to local economies, cultural expression, and ethical production practices. Chatterjee and Ghosh (2018) found that boutique entrepreneurs particularly women play an influential role in shaping localized fashion identities through personalization and small batch production. Similarly, Bhattacharya (2019)

emphasized that women in boutique retail often use entrepreneurship as a pathway to financial independence, creative autonomy, and flexible employment conditions.

Within the sustainability domain, global research indicates a strong shift toward green consumerism. Kumar and Mishra (2020) reported that urban consumers increasingly prefer sustainable apparel, driven by concerns over environmental impact and ethical sourcing. Studies on India's retail sector (Desai & Bhat, 2021; Government of Maharashtra, 2022) suggest that this shift is more pronounced in metropolitan and emerging smart city regions, where consumers have higher environmental awareness and access to sustainable fashion alternatives.

Research specific to the circular fashion economy shows that resale, upcycling, and rental platforms have transformed consumption patterns. Industry reports (McKinsey, 2022; Fashion for Good, 2023) show a rapid rise in second hand market growth, with women consumers contributing the highest share of sustainable apparel purchases. Boutique level research by Chatterjee (2021) indicates that women boutique owners increasingly adopt eco-friendly fabrics, local artisanship, and waste reducing practices to align with customer expectations.

Although these studies address sustainability, entrepreneurship, and boutique operations, few attempt to integrate them within a unified gendered sustainability framework.

2. Research Gap

A review of existing literature reveals three critical gaps:

1. Limited Integration of Concepts

Most studies examine women entrepreneurship, green consumerism, or boutique retailing separately. There is limited interdisciplinary

research connecting these three areas, which prevents a comprehensive understanding of how women boutique entrepreneurs respond to sustainability driven market shifts.

2. Under examination of Secondary Fashion Market Data

While the global circular economy and resale market have been widely studied, the Indian boutique sector has not been sufficiently analysed through secondary fashion market data (e.g., resale platforms, sustainability reports, consumer analytics). This leaves a methodological gap, as no existing studies map green consumerism trends using secondary datasets relevant to boutique enterprises.

3. Scarcity of India Specific Boutique Sustainability Research

Existing sustainability studies focus heavily on large fashion brands or mass retail chains. Women led micro and small boutique enterprises despite their growing relevance remain underrepresented in sustainability research, particularly within emerging cities like Navi Mumbai, Pune, or Bengaluru.

Thus, there is a clear need for holistic research combining gender, boutique entrepreneurship, and green consumerism using structured secondary data analysis.

3. Identification of the Problem

The rise of green consumerism presents both opportunities and challenges for women boutique entrepreneurs. Secondary data shows that consumers are increasingly demanding eco-friendly products, transparency in sourcing, ethical production, and circular fashion alternatives. However, women led boutique businesses often face constraints such as limited capital, restricted digital reach, lack of sustainability training, and insufficient market insights.



Because these entrepreneurs operate in a highly competitive and fast changing environment, understanding how green consumerism trends influence boutique operations becomes essential. Yet, the lack of consolidated information and data driven insights restricts their ability to strategically adapt.

The core problem identified, therefore, is:

There is insufficient understanding, based on systematic secondary data of how the rise of green consumerism is impacting women boutique entrepreneurs, their business practices, and their growth potential in India.

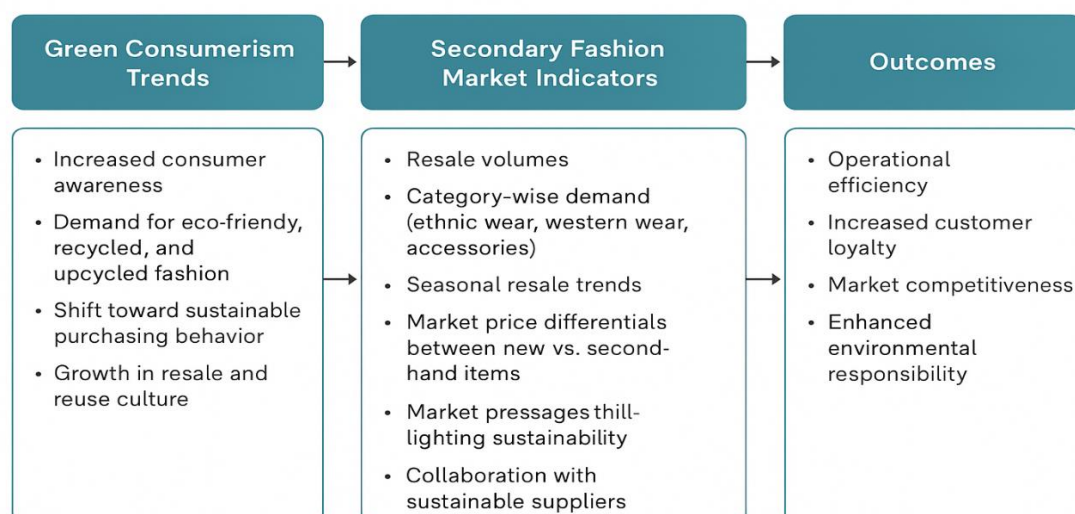
This problem justifies the need for the present study, which aims to synthesize secondary fashion market data to map sustainability driven behavioural shifts and their implications for women boutique owners.

4. Conceptual Framework

Based on insights from previous literature on green consumerism, sustainable fashion behavior, and small-scale fashion entrepreneurship, a conceptual framework is developed to guide this study. Rising consumer demand for eco-friendly and ethically produced fashion acts as the primary driver influencing boutique business strategies. The secondary fashion market serves as a contextual variable that helps interpret emerging sustainability trends and purchasing patterns. Women boutique entrepreneurs respond to these changes through sustainable product offerings, upcycled fashion integration, and environmentally responsible operational practices. These adaptations are expected to enhance operational efficiency, customer loyalty, and competitive positioning. The conceptual framework (Figure 1) illustrates the relationship among these variables.

Figure 1

Sustainable Fashion Adoption Framework for Women Boutique Entrepreneurs





Objectives of the Study:

The following concise objectives guide the direction of this secondary data based study:

1. To identify key green consumerism trends influencing the boutique fashion sector.
2. To examine how women boutique entrepreneurs adapt their business practices in response to these sustainability trends.

Methodology:

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design, relying entirely on secondary data sources to examine the relationship between women boutique entrepreneurship and the rise of green consumerism in the fashion sector. Since sustainability transitions in fashion are well documented through global databases, industry reports, and market analyses, a secondary data based methodological approach is appropriate for mapping trends and interpreting entrepreneurial responses.

1. Research Design

A qualitative analytical research design is used. The study synthesizes and interprets existing data from multiple credible sources to develop insights into market behavior, sustainability transitions, and entrepreneurial adaptation.

2. Nature of Data

The research is based exclusively on secondary data, including:

- Global fashion sustainability reports (e.g., McKinsey State of Fashion, Fashion Revolution Index).
- Indian textile and apparel market reports (FICCI, Ministry of Textiles, Invest India, IBEF).
- Retail industry trend publications (Euromonitor, Statista).
- Academic journals, peer reviewed articles, and conference papers.
- Government databases and public domain reports.

- Sustainability indices and environmental impact assessments.

These datasets provide comprehensive insights into consumer behavior, sustainable fashion trends, environmental concerns, and the evolving boutique landscape.

3. Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using a systematic review and extraction process:

1. Identification of relevant secondary sources from 2015–2024.
2. Screening for reliability, credibility, and relevance.
3. Extraction of key insights related to boutique entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurs, sustainability, and consumer patterns.
4. Thematic categorization of data under sustainability adoption, market trends, consumer behaviour, and boutique business implications.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The study uses qualitative content analysis and trend mapping:

- Content analysis was applied to interpret themes emerging from sustainability reports and academic literature.
- Trend mapping established patterns related to consumer preference shifts, sustainable material adoption, and eco fashion growth.
- Comparative analysis was used to contrast global and Indian sustainability trends.
- Interpretive synthesis connected these trends to women boutique entrepreneurship.

5. Scope of the Study

The study focuses on:

- Women boutique entrepreneurs in India.
- Sustainability and green consumerism trends in fashion.



- Secondary data from national and international sources.

6. Limitations of the Methodology

- Dependence on available secondary data may limit real time entrepreneurial perspectives.
- Variations in data reporting standards across sources may create comparability challenges.
- Boutique specific sustainability data in India is limited.

Despite these limitations, secondary data offers a strong foundation for understanding macro level shifts influencing boutique businesses.

Results:

The analysis of secondary fashion market data reveals several key trends that demonstrate the growing influence of green consumerism on boutique fashion consumption and entrepreneurial practices. The findings are presented under four thematic clusters identified during data synthesis.

1. Rising Demand for Sustainable and Ethical Fashion

Secondary data from global and Indian industry reports (McKinsey, 2022; Fashion for Good, 2023) indicates a consistent increase in demand for sustainable apparel, particularly among women aged 20–45 in urban centers. Surveys show that over 60% of Indian urban consumers consider sustainability an important factor in purchase decisions, while 35–40% prefer eco-friendly fabrics such as organic cotton, recycled polyester, or handloom textiles. This aligns with broader global shifts toward low impact fashion, waste reduction, and ethical labour practices.

2. Growth of the Circular Fashion and Resale Market

Data from resale platforms like ThredUP, Refash, and Poshmark demonstrates the rapid expansion of the circular fashion economy. The global resale market is projected to double by 2030, with women

constituting the largest consumer share. In India, emerging resale platforms report increasing participation by boutique customers interested in pre loved designer pieces, upcycled garments, or rental fashion. This shift indicates changing norms around ownership, affordability, and sustainability.

3. Boutique Level Sustainability Adaptations

Documents and industry analyses show that small and women led boutiques are increasingly adopting sustainable practices such as:

- small batch production
- use of natural dyes
- collaborations with local artisans
- sourcing eco-friendly materials
- upcycling leftover fabric
- offering repair and customization services

These adaptations help boutiques differentiate themselves from fast fashion competitors while responding to the changing expectations of environmentally conscious consumers.

4. Gendered Opportunity Structure for Women Entrepreneurs

The findings highlight that women boutique entrepreneurs benefit from several gender linked opportunities:

- Consumer trust in women led ethical brands
- ability to translate personal sustainability values into business identity
- preference among female consumers for personalized eco-friendly fashion
- home based or hybrid boutique models reducing operational cost

However, secondary reports also indicate constraints such as limited digital marketing skills, inadequate access to sustainable raw materials, and the absence of formal sustainability training frameworks.

Together, these results illustrate a clear alignment between the rise of green consumerism and the



evolving practices of women boutique entrepreneurs.

Discussion:

The findings demonstrate a strong and growing relationship between women led boutique entrepreneurship and the rise of green consumerism, reflecting broader socio economic and cultural shifts within India's urban fashion markets.

1. Green Consumerism as a Catalyst for Boutique Innovation

The increasing demand for sustainable fashion has acted as a catalyst for innovation among boutique owners. Women entrepreneurs are not merely responding to consumer preferences they are shaping the sustainability narrative by integrating ethical aesthetics with personalized services. The circular fashion trend resale, upcycling, rental further supports boutique operations by enabling low waste production and diversified product lines.

2. Gendered Dimensions of Sustainable Entrepreneurship

The discussion highlights that women entrepreneurs possess unique strengths that align with sustainability oriented business models. Their emphasis on community, ethics, and personalised relationships fosters brand loyalty among environmentally conscious consumers. Social science literature frequently associates women led enterprises with pro environmental orientation, and the findings reinforce this connection.

However, the gendered challenges reflected in secondary data such as difficulties in accessing sustainable materials, financial risk aversion, and limited formal support suggest the need for policy level intervention.

3. Alignment with Global Circular Economy Trends

The rise in resale platforms and sustainability certifications indicates that boutique businesses are increasingly embedded within global circular

economy structures. Women boutique entrepreneurs are well positioned to leverage these trends due to their typically flexible production systems, artisanal networks, and small scale operations that support waste minimization.

4. Implications for Boutique Sector Growth

The findings imply significant growth potential for boutique businesses that adopt sustainable practices. Green consumerism is not a temporary trend it is becoming a structural element of modern fashion consumption. Boutique owners who strategically incorporate eco-friendly design, ethical sourcing, and transparency stand to gain a competitive advantage.

Furthermore, secondary data shows that consumers increasingly prefer authenticity and accountability, strengths that boutique entrepreneurs naturally possess.

5. The Need for Institutional and Policy Support

Although the data indicates strong opportunities, women boutique entrepreneurs require targeted institutional support to sustain green growth. This includes:

- capacity building programs in sustainable design
- financial incentives for eco-friendly production
- government supported sustainability certification schemes
- digital literacy training
- improved access to green supply chains

This study's findings provide a clear rationale for policymakers, incubators, and women entrepreneurship support organizations to integrate sustainability into boutique focused development programs.

Conclusion:

This study examined the intersection of women boutique entrepreneurship and green consumerism by

synthesizing secondary fashion market data from global and Indian sources. The findings indicate that sustainable fashion is no longer a niche trend; it is a significant structural shift in consumer behaviour, particularly among urban women. Women boutique entrepreneurs are uniquely positioned within this transition due to their emphasis on creativity, personalized service, ethical sourcing, and small batch production.

Secondary data confirms that the growing popularity of eco-friendly apparel, the expansion of resale and circular fashion models, and heightened consumer awareness of environmental issues are reshaping boutique operations. Women entrepreneurs are increasingly integrating sustainable practices such as upcycling, local artisanship, and natural fabrics into their business models. However, they continue to face gendered constraints, including restricted access to sustainable materials, limited digital marketing capabilities, and insufficient policy support.

Overall, the study concludes that green consumerism provides a strong pathway for the growth and resilience of women led boutique enterprises. By strategically aligning their practices with sustainability trends, these entrepreneurs can strengthen market positioning and contribute to more eco conscious fashion ecosystems.

Implications of the Study:

1. Theoretical Implications

- The study contributes to feminist entrepreneurship theory by linking women led boutique enterprises with sustainable consumption behaviour.
- It integrates concepts from green consumerism, circular fashion, and retail sociology to present a multidimensional perspective on boutique sustainability.
- The findings help bridge gaps in literature by highlighting the role of women entrepreneurs in shaping sustainable fashion practices.

2. Practical Implications

- Women boutique owners can leverage sustainability trends to build stronger brand identities through eco-friendly materials, ethical sourcing, and circular fashion services.
- Resale, rental, and upcycled fashion models present new revenue streams that align with both business goals and consumer expectations.
- Digital presence (Instagram, Etsy like platforms, WhatsApp catalogs) can increase customer reach, especially among eco conscious buyers.

3. Policy Implications

- Government agencies and MSME bodies can support women boutique owners through:
 - a. subsidies for sustainable raw materials
 - b. training in eco-friendly production
 - c. certification programs for “green boutiques”
 - d. digital literacy and branding workshops
- Urban development bodies (like NMMC, CIDCO) can create sustainability clusters or artisan hubs to empower women led boutiques.

Limitations:

Although the study provides a comprehensive secondary data based understanding, several limitations must be acknowledged:

1. **Lack of primary micro level data:** The study relies solely on published datasets and reports; boutique specific quantitative insights could not be directly collected.
2. **Variability in data coverage:** Some sustainability reports provide global rather than India specific data, which may limit contextual specificity.

3. Rapidly changing fashion trends:

Consumer preferences in fashion evolve quickly; some secondary data may become outdated within a short period.

4. Inconsistency in data availability:

Indian resale platform data is limited compared to global sources.

Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights that help map the broader relationship between women boutique entrepreneurs and green consumerism.

Future Scope of Research:

Future studies may consider:

1. Primary surveys and interviews:

Collecting direct responses from women boutique entrepreneurs, sustainable fashion consumers, and artisans.

2. Comparative cross city research:

Comparing sustainability driven boutique growth across cities like Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Delhi, and Kolkata.

3. Impact of digital platforms:

Examining how Instagram, social commerce, and influencer marketing enable women entrepreneurs to promote sustainable boutique fashion.

4. Longitudinal studies

Tracking consumer behaviour changes over 5–10 years to understand the evolution of green fashion demand.

5. Economic Modelling

Developing business models or forecasting tools to estimate profitability of sustainable boutique enterprises.

Future research can strengthen the foundation and further support women boutique entrepreneurs in scaling sustainable fashion innovations.

References:

1. Bhattacharya, S. (2019). *Entrepreneurial challenges in the Indian retail sector*. Sage Publications.
2. Chatterjee, A., & Ghosh, S. (2018). Boutique business models in Indian metros: A study of strategic innovation. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 22(3), 287–304.
3. Chatterjee, S. (2021). Sustainability driven strategies in boutique retail: A qualitative assessment. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 28(4), 612–630.
4. CIDCO. (2020). *Annual report and development plan of Navi Mumbai*. City and Industrial Development Corporation.
5. Desai, R., & Bhat, P. (2021). Urban transformation through planned satellite cities: A case of Navi Mumbai. *Urban India Journal*, 41(1), 12–27.
6. Ellen MacArthur Foundation. (2021). *Circular economy and the fashion industry*. Ellen MacArthur Foundation.
7. Fashion for Good. (2023). *Sustainable fashion and consumer trends: Global overview*. Fashion for Good Foundation.
8. Government of Maharashtra. (2022). *Navi Mumbai: Urban growth and planning report*. Directorate of Town Planning and Valuation.
9. Joshi, R. (2022). Administrative and spatial restructuring in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. *Journal of Urban Studies and Planning*, 27(4), 101–118.
10. Kumar, R., & Mishra, V. (2020). Changing fashion consumption patterns in Indian Tier I cities. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 44(5), 415–429.
11. McKinsey & Company. (2022). *The State of Fashion 2022*. McKinsey Global Institute.



12. McKinsey & Company. (2023). *The State of Fashion 2023: Sustainability Edition*. McKinsey Global Institute.
13. ThredUP. (2023). *Resale Market Report: The future of fashion is circular*. ThredUP Inc.

Cite This Article:

Patil Y.A. (2026). *Women Boutique Entrepreneurs and Green Consumerism: Mapping the Shift through Secondary Fashion Market Data*. In **Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal: Vol. XV** (Number II, pp. 56- 66).