

# Do Customers in the Luxury Fashion Sector Care About CSR? A Qualitative Investigation

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**Abstract:** Fashion luxury brands are under growing pressure for CSR practices, considering advanced awareness among consumers on environmental and social issues. Traditional consumers of luxury are guided by exclusiveness, aesthetics, and brand heritage; a shift is, however, present in a generation of younger buyers who address sustainability and ethics as key elements. Even though there is still a niche for the consumer of luxury who places more value on the essence of craftsmanship and prestige over any concerns for CSR, increasingly, consumers expect brands to be socially and environmentally responsible. The ones that will manage to embed CSR into their luxury image might have a higher chance of attracting the more aware and growing consumer base.

**Keywords:** CSR

## I. INTRODUCTION

The luxury fashion industry was traditionally characterized by exclusivity, high-quality craftsmanship, rich products, and display of opulence for prestige and social status. For a long period, the focus of all luxury brands has been essentially on aesthetics, heritage, and prestige of the brand, rather than corporate social responsibility. Nevertheless, in the past two decades, the focus on CSR has become a field of growing concern for many industries, including fashion. This recent shift is partially because people have become more aware of various social and ecological issues arising worldwide, and partially due to changing consumer values.

To that effect, luxury fashion companies such as Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Burberry have moved to incorporate more sustainable approaches in their operations, pledged transparency in sourcing, and taken up philanthropic acts. But one major question still remains: do the customers in this industry really care about these CSR activities?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Kapferer, J. N., & Michaut-Denizeau, A. (2014)

Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau explore the complex relationship between CSR and luxury brands, highlighting that CSR can challenge luxury's exclusivity. However, when done authentically, it enhances consumer trust and loyalty. In the Indian luxury market, CSR has potential but must be balanced carefully with brand exclusivity.

### 2. Janssen, M., Vanhamme, J., & Leblanc, R. (2017)

This study analyzes how Indian luxury consumers perceive CSR in fashion. It reveals that Indian buyers, especially younger ones, are increasingly conscious of ethical issues, favoring brands that incorporate CSR into their core values. CSR can be a strategic advantage in the Indian luxury market.

### 3. McKinsey & Company (2020)

McKinsey's report highlights the growing consumer demand for sustainable luxury globally and in India. Indian luxury consumers, particularly millennials, prioritize eco-friendly practices. Brands in India must integrate CSR into their strategy to attract these socially conscious buyers.

### 4. Danziger, P. N. (2018)

Danziger argues that sustainability is essential for luxury brands to stay relevant. Indian luxury brands are increasingly adopting sustainable practices to align with consumer expectations. Sustainability offers Indian brands a chance to differentiate themselves in the global luxury market.

**5. Kalki Fashion (2021)**

Kalki Fashion reports that Indian luxury brands are integrating ethical practices, focusing on sustainability and preserving traditional craftsmanship. Indian consumers value brands that promote fair trade and support artisans, making CSR a key factor in brand success.

**III. LIMITATIONS AND GAPS**

**Demographic Focus**

It is highly focused on younger consumers—a combination of both millennials and Gen Z—leaving a knowledge gap in understanding how older, more traditional luxury buyers view CSR and the impact on purchasing behavior.

**Longitudinal Studies**

There is a lack of longitudinal studies; much research has been cross-sectional, providing limited insight into how consumer attitudes toward CSR evolve over time, especially in response to brand initiatives.

**Limited Focus on Regional Differences**

Most papers treat India as a homogeneous market, overlooking regional cultural and economic variations.

**Insufficient Focus on Small and Local Luxury Brands**

Most research focuses on large or global brands, with little attention given to how local Indian luxury brands can integrate CSR effectively.

**IV. METHODOLOGY**

**1. Design of Research**

**Embedded mixed-method approach:**

- Quantitative: Survey of the level of awareness and importance of CSR within the purchase decision-making process of consumers.

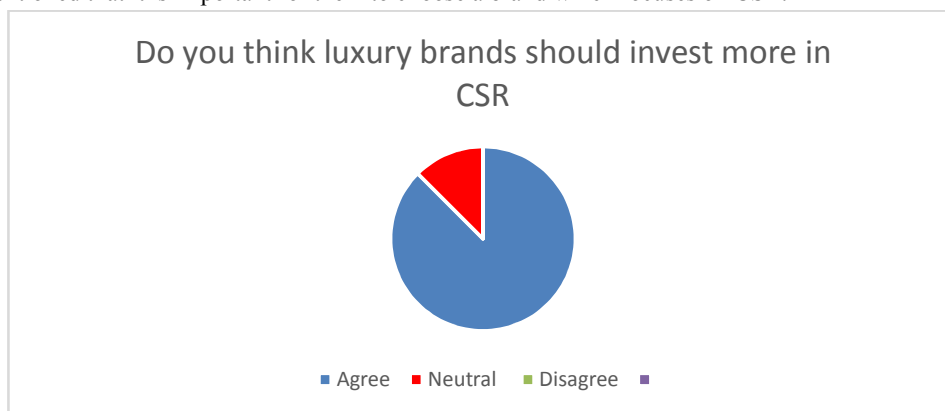
**2. Sampling Strategy**

- Target Population: Most diversified age groups, income levels, and regions of luxury fashion consumers
- Method of Sampling: Random sampling for surveys to get a representative sample.

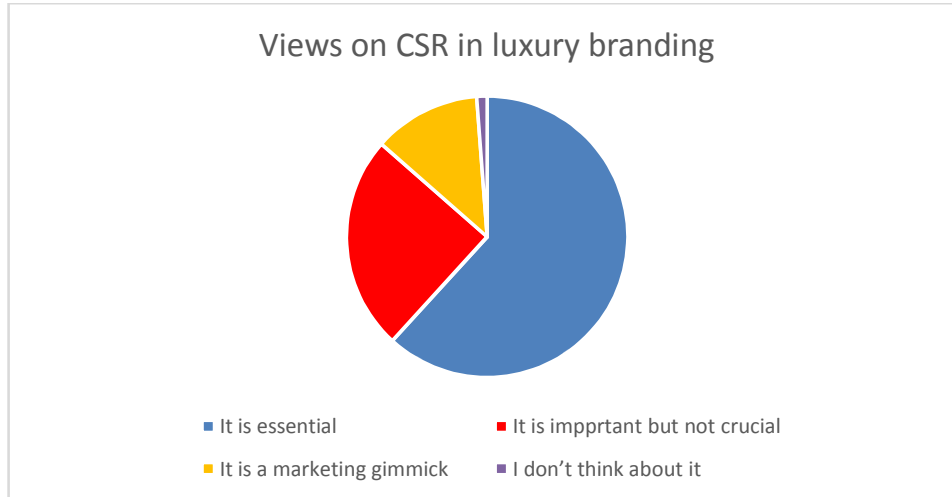
**V. FINDINGS**

In the primary research carried out, the following were the findings

Majority mentioned that it is important for them to choose a brand which focuses on CSR.



- 86% mentioned that Luxury Brands should be even more enthusiastic while investing in CSR.



- 62% felt that CSR is an important part of any brand.
- 25% felt that it is important but not crucial.
- 12% responded saying that it is a marketing gimmick.

### 1. Sabyasachi

- Sustainable Fashion: Sabyasachi has been into the promotion of sustainable fashion. This consists of the use of natural fabrics and support for traditional artisanal techniques. It pledges to pay the artisans a decent wage with improved working conditions.
- Community Engagement: It supports various social causes and often collaborates with organizations involved in women's empowerment and education.

### 2. Kalki Fashion

- Ethical Practices: Kalki Fashion focuses on ethical production and the use of sustainable materials. They minimize waste and improve artisans' working conditions.
- Empowerment Programs: They are involved in several activities in the empowerment of people in rural areas, especially women, through imparting the skills and opportunities in fashion.

### 3. Amrapali Jewels

- Fair Trade and Artisan Support: Amrapali follows the philosophy of fair trade, thereby ensuring that local artisans receive decent wages for their work and at the same time encouraging traditional craftsmanship.
- Social Responsibility: The brand undertakes several social activities relating to education and health, more so in the regions where their artisans are located.

## VI. CONCLUSION

- Consumer Segmentation: A clear segmentation in consumer attitudes to CSR can be ascertained from the results. It would appear that younger, affluent consumers are more likely to be influenced by CSR practices while older consumers place higher importance on traditional luxury values.
- Strategic Implications: For targeting young consumers, the communication of CSR activities, mainly sustainability, should be stressed by the luxury brands. On the other hand, in the case of targeting a larger group of older consumers, the emphasis on craftsmanship and heritage with added value through CSR activity is considered the key strategic implication.
- Brand Positioning: Any brands that can illustrate their CSR activities and not lose their luxury character and history have a broad range of customers they can appeal to. Indeed, highlighting other dimensions of CSR may have greater resonance with specific target groups, depending on the demographic as a means of increasing brand appeal and ensuring customer loyalty.

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