

A CASE STUDY ON

S.R.GOPAL RAO OPTICIANS, GREEN INITIATIVES



S.R.GOPAL RAO
OPTICIANS & OPTOMETRISTS



*Landfills in Karnataka in the financial year 2019: 215. Approximately **11,085 tonnes of solid waste** is generated per day in Karnataka, of which 6,817 tonnes per day which accounts for 61.5% is being processed, the Central Pollution Control Board informed the Southern Zone of the NGT.*

The Issue

75%

of adults wear either glasses or contact lenses

3.33 billion

eyeglass wearers

572 million

contact lens wearers

The Vision Council estimates that 75% of adults wear glasses or contact lenses for vision correction. According to Essilor, approximately 64% of them use glasses, and approximately 11% of them wear contact lenses. That amounts to almost 3.33 billion pairs of glasses and 572 million contacts lens wearers worldwide. **Most of the time, our eyewear only lasts us a few years, which causes millions of mixed material eyeglass frames to wind up in landfills every year.** The majority of these eyeglass lenses were originally created of glass. However, as lens technology improved, resin (a form of plastic) replaced glass as the primary material for eyeglass lenses.

Modern lens manufacturers use many high-tech plastic kinds for lenses with varying hardnesses, indices, and demands. This limits the options optical retailers have for being devoid of plastic and more environmentally friendly. Fortunately, the industry is changing with the use and discovery of plant based materials and recycled materials for frames and sunglasses. But, until the ecosystem completely transforms, we have a lot of mixed materials on our hands to clean up!

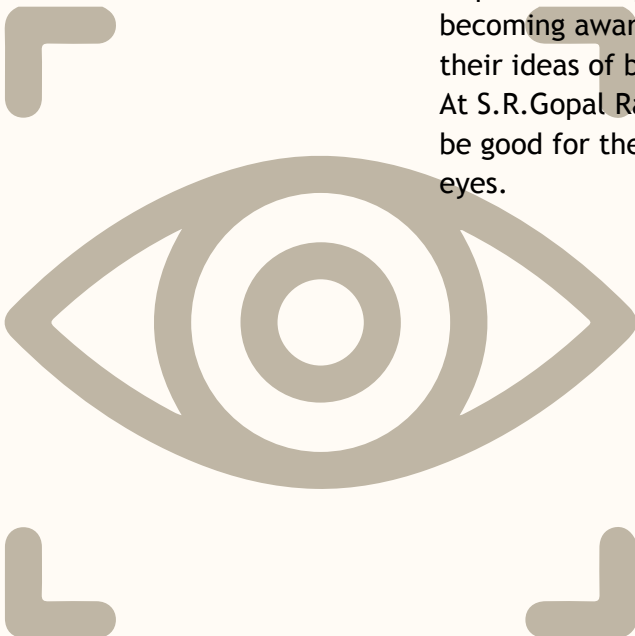


Our Goal

98%

The survey further reveals that 98% of Indian respondents want to spend money on items that will help build low-carbon communities around the world.

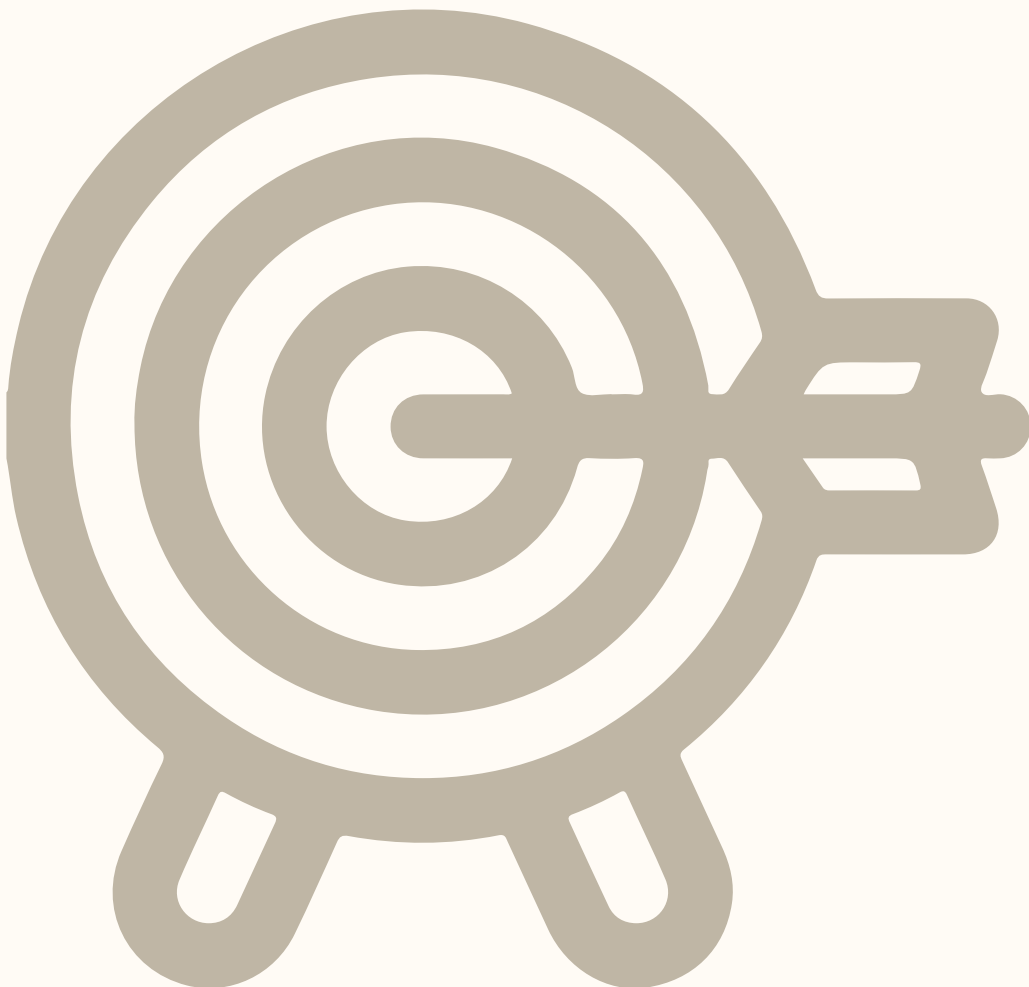
As opticians concerned about global warming and the benefits to the environment, we had to find alternatives and numerous other ways around the limitations placed on the eyewear business by the materials used to make the majority of eyewear; **in order to adopt a more sustainable strategy and become environmentally conscious.** To get the most out of what was within our purview, we partnered with organisations and artists from various geographic places that shared our objectives. Even though we have great clientele and a thriving business, we believed that our firm was still lacking a crucial component that would make it the perfect ingredient. We instantly recognized what was missing and the importance of acting quickly. Since then, S.R. Gopal Rao has prospered by assisting clients in becoming aware of factors that can go against their ideas of being environmentally friendly. At S.R.Gopal Rao, we want every purchase to be good for the environment as well as the eyes.





Objec- tives

To discover a **responsible approach** to dispose of the entire eyewear unit without polluting the environment. To make sure that the purchase is beneficial not only to the eyes but also to the environment.





Re- search

We started our journey in 2019 by doing research on recycling of eyewear, only to realise that recycling is complex! Every recycler is limited to recycling a single type of material and eyewear is made up of several mixed materials like resin, silicon, acetate, metal, titanium, carbon fibre and so on. Thus, we stumbled upon the concept of upcycling and that's where our journey actually began. We started with **The Second Life** first, then **The Wolf-Jaipur**, after which Priya brought on-board - **Kevali, Corugami, and Bell Printers** to help us get better. We had a full team working on making our company greener, but our Industrial Designer, Priya Kini, was the project leader and handled our operations as well as the research. While working on our packaging we had to work around certain constraints to ensure quality and consistency was not compromised; constraints such as durability, sourcing, biodegradability, material source, price, logistics, space and form.

During Priya's research, she discovered alternatives to virgin paper and other packaging materials such as flax-shive, plant-based polymers and recycled wheat fibres, bamboo, wood chips + natural binders, a blend of bamboo and starches derived from natural resources, and so on. Cork and wood filler, recycled plastic from old items, biodegradable TPU, walnut and bamboo complete with wheat straw and biodegradable BPAT, and starches from harvest waste are examples of composite materials. Our final selection had to keep in mind all the constraints listed earlier; before making a decision.



Results

1000 kgs

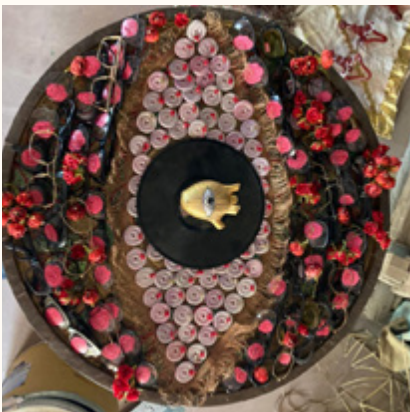
We diverted 1000kgs of non-recyclable, non-biodegradable waste from entering the landfills from 2019-2021

82%

We reduced our packing carbon footprint by 82%

Slow consumption, recycling and upcycling are the only methods to achieve a waste-free future. At S.R.Gopal Rao, to upcycle eyewear waste and all related products; responsibly, we have teamed up with craftsmen, upcycling houses, corporations, and non-profit groups from across the country to give trash a new elongated life in ways that are not destructive to the environment or our surroundings. We donate the waste to them as they make the most of it.

We have spectacle cases made from recycled materials, which are environmentally benign. A collection of our eyewear cases are made from recycled tire tubes that are hand-cut. They have a recycled felt inner lining that offers the spectacles a gentle cushioned support.





We also have spectacle cases that have been refurbished and upcycled from our old ones and we have replaced the material used in our new spectacle cases with that made from rigid board and recycled paper, to ensure that no more trees are harmed in the process.

We also make certain that our packaging not only promotes our class but also supports our principles. Our beautiful tuck boxes are made of recycled paper instead of virgin paper. We also use biodegradable paper stickers for these boxes.

To ensure that we follow through on our commitments, we have fsc (Forest Stewardship Council) recycled and biodegradable shipping labels and packing mailers.

We take our interests and objectives so seriously that we have a collection from our home brand (Getspexy) dedicated to environmental well-being and sustainability called Breathe; this in addition to repurposing and upcycling eyewear. A collection that prioritises the environment while abiding by aesthetic standards. We are completely committed to making our firm as environmentally friendly as possible.



Con- clusion

At S.R.Gopal Rao, we have worked hard to reduce our waste and upcycle the rest. We have minimised our carbon footprint by investing in sustainable, locally sourced materials for our packaging and some of our eyewear. We have opted to use eco-friendly materials for all items that we can make without compromising on quality and longevity. We upcycle our scraps as well as build protective cases for our spectacles. Between 2019 and 2021, we have prevented about 1,000 kg of eyewear waste from being dumped into the environment and we have reduced our packing carbon footprint by 82%.

The steps we have taken to transform trash into works of art or to use it as a design element in concrete floors ensure that they will last considerably longer than being used as spectacles.





Our partner in our green projects, Kaipanee, has found that using eyeglasses on concrete floors can extend their lifespan from the typical 4-5 years to at least 15-20 years.

In accordance with our green effort, we have also chosen recycled and biodegradable materials for our spectacle case and other items to ensure that new garbage generated is not permanently placed in the environment but eventually becomes a part of the soil. In order to give other waste a new, extended life, we have chosen products manufactured from upcycled materials like used tire tubes and refurbished our own discarded specs cases. We have also chosen recycled materials for our carton boxes and brand-new spectacles/sunglass cases.

We have a long way to go before the industry changes to being completely eco-friendly and we, along with several others hope to steer the path in that direction. Going green is a continuous, iterative process and we will continue to do so keeping our goal in mind.

“To ensure that your purchase is beneficial not only to your eyes but also to the environment.”



To know more about our green initiatives visit : <https://www.srgopalrao.co/green-company> and <https://www.srgopalrao.co/single-post/s-r-gopal-rao-a-green-business>

To be a part of our green initiatives visit : <https://www.srgopalrao.co/upcycling-partners-green-initiative> and <https://www.srgopalrao.co/upcycling-intiatives-srgopalrao-goinggreen>

To know more about us visit : <https://www.srgopalrao.co/about-us> | Instagram : @srgopalrao | LinkedIn : S.R.Gopal Rao Opticians & Optometrists

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