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A SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT THROUGH SLOW FASHION; “KHADI CLOTH AND BEYOND”

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ABSTRACT

India holds many crucial challenges for the global fashion industry with changing geography of production, falling prices and intrinsic values, climate and demographic changes, new technologies, and paradigm shifting the global economy. Future fashion trends over the next 20 years would bring unprecedented scenarios with innovative business, understanding of new consumers, and changing role of fashion industry with focus on sustainable manufacturing on apparel/fashion/lifestyle products. For example, sustainable development of “fibre to fashion” chain must reduce damage and stress to the environment and improve the live hoods and welfare of communities. The definition of the fashion industry today goes beyond simple clothing to express identity, the apparel and fashion provide a sense of wellbeing, advance creativity and connect global communities; the flip side of large scale of global fashion revolution has been characterized at its worst by factories exploiting workers (including child labour), generating throw away fashions, wasting and polluting resources and encouraging unsustainable consumption. The future of fashion is likely to be dramatically different from today. It is intended to be plausible, coherent, challenging descriptions of possible future worlds. Sustainable fashion will move as core element to inspire companies rooted in innovating the future to help plan “better future.” The fashion industry can play a vital role in delivering sustainable development. Not only does it create jobs and contribute to the economy, it also has a huge influence over society and the economy through its marketing, regular customer transactions and complex, globalized supply chains. The industry has already demonstrated and impressive capacity to adapt and create space for change. People will always need clothes and want to express themselves, their identity through what they wear. If industry can harness collective energy, adaptability and capacity for innovation, it can play an important role in creating a sustainable, fair and low-carbon footprint world. As consumers, have become increasingly aware of how their food is produced, demand has grown for healthy food, fair-trade and organic products. There would be similar trends in the fashion world as well where consumer opinion is arguably more important. Keywords: Khadi fabric, sustainability, slow fashion



INTRODUCTION

At this time when lot of noise is made about eco-friendly stuff, Khadi is the right solution. Khadi stands high on the platform of solutions to development issues where employment generation, capacity building, sustainability and resource- efficiency are the requirements. It is also an answer to a spiritual and sustainable way of life.

The production of this fabric is done keeping the environment in mind.

Khadi is a term used for fabrics that are hand-spun and handwoven, usually from cotton fiber. However, contrary to popular belief, *khadi* is also manufactured from silk and wool, known as *khadi* silk or woolen *khadi* respectively.

The fabric is known for its rugged texture, comfortable feel and ability to keep people warm in winter while keeping them cool during the summer.

Broadly speaking, *khadi* is manufactured in steps:

1. Farming : Cotton Balls are picked from the Farms
2. Cleaning : Separation of the fibers from the cotton seeds is done using sharp com like objects oftenly known as Fish Jaws
3. Carding : Through a process called 'Carding' the final traces of trash from fibers are removed completely and the carded material is collected as 'Sivers'
4. Spinning : The Sivers are then spun into yarn on a spinning wheel 'Charkha' where

they are thinned out and twisted at the same time to strengthen it

5. Reeling: The spun yarns are then wounded into reels making it easy to transport to the weavers

6. Weaving: The reels are then hand woven into fabrics by skilled artisans As there is no nature harming process involved in making of Khadi it is a Sustainable Fabric

7. Dyeing : The fabric made is sent to skilled laborers for dyeing, done with organic vegetables without the use of chemicals to keep the process natural and pollution free

8. The finish fabric is now ready to e sold by registered Khadi Distributors.

SUSTAINABLE AND ECO FABRIC

Khadi is the most sustainable and eco friendly product which does not use any electrical support. It is the only textile activity which does not utilize fossil fuel .Production of one meter khadi fabric consumes three litres of water while a conventional textile mill would need fifty five liters.

The production of khadi does not generate any toxic waste products. It is produced by avoiding all chemicals in the process of farming of cotton, weaving and dyeing.

Khadi – the word conjures up images of *Mahatma Gandhi* and the *Swadeshi movement* he led. For a long time khadi was associated with the country's freedom struggle and politics.



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Khadi has its potential as a tool to being self-reliant, independent and bringing villages back to life.

In Mahatma Gandhi's words-

'The spinning wheel represents the hope of the masses. The masses lost their freedom, such as it was, with the loss of the Charkha. The Charkha supplemented the agriculture of the villagers and gave it dignity.'

However, it was soon understood that more than the production and sale of this handwoven fabric, it's the acceptance of the very fabric in our own daily lives that will bring the change. Gandhi made the Swadeshi Movement synonymous with khadi. He promoted its simplicity as a social equalizer and made it the nation's fabric.

'If we have the 'khadi spirit' in us, we would surround ourselves with simplicity in every walk of life. The 'khadi spirit' means illimitable patience. For those who know anything about the production of khadi know how patiently the spinners and the weavers have to toil at their trade, and even so must we have patience while we are spinning 'the thread of Swaraj.'

Thus, Gandhiji promoted khadi then because he saw it as a way to increase employment in the non agriculture sector. He wanted to make Indians understand that they could be self reliant on cotton and be free from the high priced foreign goods.

Present Scenario:

Fashion designers have found *khadi* their canvas as imaginative creations. It is a ripe for re-incarnation as a livery of young surging India. A rising number of young

fashion designers are seeking out local fabrics, craft and technique to give expression to this trend. The products made out of this versatile fabric are unique in the sense that they are one of a kind besides being truly "cottage" or "hand-spun" and "hand woven". They are "flawed" and are not mindless creation of machines. Each piece of khadi is different. It gets softer with each wash which makes it ideal tropical fabric. India's thriving population has today started looking inward for the style cue and design mantra.

This versatility makes it an all season fabric. Institutes like "Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Rural Industrialization" have developed special soft and stiff finishes for Khadi that can greatly enhance its end use applicability.

It is the handmade quality of the fabric with its inherent unevenness that is the beauty of Khadi. All these qualities make Khadi non-replicable and it is this exclusivity that should be the identity of Brand Khadi and make it stand with the Haute Couture Fashion.

At the same time Khadi should be made into products that are relevant in today's fashion scenario. This needs a careful study of national and international trends in colours, styles and silhouettes and their interpretation for Indian and international consumers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Khadi is an Indian fabric par excellence. Hand-made from start to finish, harvesting the cotton, silk or wool fiber to the finished fabric. It has been the livelihood of rural communities since



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centuries. With Gandhi, Khadi was a symbol of Indian Independence and it was proudly worn as “made in India”. Khadi lost its indigenous touch and popularity over a period of time with the youth. Khadi became a thing of past. Khadi, in short is suffering from a outdated reputation as a low quality fabric. Old fashioned image associated with this fabric needs a repositioning. Industry is on a decline, stocks remain unsold and many rural communities that historically lives from the trade subsist in the harshest poverty. Most of those affected deepest are women working from home. Only recently, new quality Khadi clothes coming in the market and fashion designers taking a liking to the original beauty of the traditional Khadi fabric, the tide seems to be changing its course. Notably, the rising demand for sustainable fabrics as triggered as increased interest in Khadi.

With the new ecological and ethical awareness, and emphasis on reducing carbon footprint by the use of low energy alternatives, the time has come to review the role and context of Khadi in the current times. A paradigm shift is required for seeing this fabric in a new light.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Khadi needs today is a repositioning. It is ripe for reincarnation as the livery of young surging India. New woven designs, new colours, new finishes and treatments need to be introduced in this ideological fabric without losing the identity of Khadi. New yarn experiments, blends need to be incorporated. Khadi cannot and should not compete with the mill made fabric but should create its own niche with its unique

charm of naturally occurring weave errors, yarn faults and raw look.

Research Objectives:

To evaluate the growth –Global and Indian scenario towards sustainable products

To gain in-depth knowledge about the current status of Khadi

Repositioning Khadi fabric as the most eco friendly and sustainable fashion textile product accepted into modern lifestyle not only through apparels and home furnishings but also accessories

Significance of the research:

This will enable the producers to strategies the marketing of their product thus sale rise in the sale of Khadi products. It will be also benefitted by other brands to revamp and relook Khadi as a pure sustainable product and use it for the growth -

The importance of Khadi as a symbol of the freedom struggle in India and its failure to compete with mill made fabrics.

The nature of competition faced by Khadi from mill made fabrics and imported fabrics and the reason for its declining sales.

The strategies adopted by KVIC to revive the fabric and the future of Khadi.

Limitations of the research:

The study was limited to Delhi area

The respondents were approached at the convenience of the researcher

Limitations of the respondents as they were reluctant to answer the questions asked



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During the survey, Customers were at times not honest and felt it was unnecessary

Government will do and work at its own pace.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Objective 1: To evaluate the growing demand for sustainable products with respect to Global scenario and Indian Scenario

RESEARCH DESIGN: DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH

DATA COLLECTION METHOD-

PRIMARY –QUANTITATIVE

CLOSE END SURVEY SAMPLE SIZE
250 RANDOM IN DELHI

SCALING TECHNIQUE –LIKERT AND RANKING

SECONDARY-
WEBSITES/KVIC/PERIODICALS/RESEARCH

PUBLICATIONS/JOURNALS/REPORTS OF KVIC

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY

The term sustainable is used in the context of both social and environmental issues. In 1989; the Brundtland Commission articulated what has now become a widely accepted definition of sustainability. "[to meet] the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A business or initiative is not sustainable unless the triple bottom line is integrated at the core of business practices and policy, from board level to studio, shop or factory.

1) Social –Increasing the capacity and wellbeing of the people behind it. In a broader context, poverty and exploitation of the human workforce behind fashion affects the stability of the industry itself.

2) Environmental –minimizing the environmental impact of all business operations, throughout the supply chain. Creating and acting upon opportunities to reduce environmental issues beyond the immediate operations-such as awareness raising, investment in and support of environmental initiatives .

3) Commercial –without a robust business model, none of the above can be achieved. Good intentions without an effective business structure can backfire. A sustainable approach includes quality products or services that meet market needs and demands.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE FASHION – SUSTAINABLE GARMENT PRODUCTION AND UTILIZATION

Sustainable fashion, also called eco fashion, is a part of the growing design philosophy and trend of sustainability, the goal of which is to create a system which can be supported indefinitely in terms of human impact on the environment and social responsibility.

Sustainable clothing refers to fabrics derived from eco-friendly resources, such as sustainably grown fiber crops or recycled materials. It also refers to how these fabrics are made.



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There are many factors when considering the sustainability of a material. The renewability and source of a fiber, the process of how a raw fiber is turned into a textile, the working conditions of the people producing the materials, and the material's total carbon footprint.

Natural fibers-Fibers which are found in nature and are not petroleum-based. Natural fibers can be categorized into two main groups, cellulose or plant fiber and protein or animal fiber. Uses of these fibers can be anything from buttons to eyewear like sunglasses.

Cellulose-*Cotton* is one of the most widely grown and chemical-intensive crops in the world. Conventionally grown cotton uses approximately 25% of the world's *insecticides* and more than 10% of the world's *pesticides*. Other *cellulose* fibers include: jute, flax, hemp, ramie, abaca, bamboo (used for viscose), soy, corn, banana, pineapple, beechwood (used for rayon).

Protein-Natural protein fibers include: wool, silk, angora, camel, alpaca, llama, vicuna, cashmere, and mohair.

Manufactured-Fibers manufactured from natural materials include: lyocell and polylactic acid (PLA).

Recycled fibers-Recycled or reclaimed fibers are made from scraps of fabrics collected from clothing factories, which are processed back into short fibers for spinning into a new yarn. There are only a few facilities globally that are able to process the clippings. Variations range from a blend of recycled cotton fibers with added RePET yarns for strength to recycled cotton fibres with virgin acrylic fibers which are added for color consistency and strength.

Upcycled fibers-Upcycled fibers are made from materials that are not originally used to make fibers, or they were thrown away being considered trash from origin.

Research Objective 2:

To gain in-depth knowledge about the Status of Indian Khadi Industry

RESEARCH DESIGN : EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

SECONDARY- WEBSITES/KVIC/PERIODICALS/RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS/JOURNALS/REPORTS OF KVIC ON THE GROWTH OF KHADI INDUSTRY



Table 1:

Performance of KVIC Sector

YEAR	PRODUCTION (Value in ₹ crore)		SALES (Value in ₹ crore)		CUMULATIVE EMPLOYMENT (in lakh persons)	
	KHADI	V. I.	KHADI	V. I.	KHADI	V. I.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
2012-13	761.93	23262.31	1021.56	26818.13	10.71	114.05
2013-14	811.08	25298.00	1081.04	30073.16	10.98	119.40
2014-15	879.98	26689.39	1170.38	31965.52	11.06	123.19
2015-16*	903.25	26964.80	1218.04	36424.20	11.06	143.78

*upto 31 January 2016

Research Objective 3: To Reposition Khadi as a sustainable fashion textile product and make it fit into modern urban lifestyle of the Indian consumer

RESEARCH DESIGN : DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

PRIMARY –QUATITATIVE METHOD

Observations , In-depth Interviews Number of Interviewees- 50

Discussion Area: Delhi NCR

SECONDARY– WEBSITES/KVIC/PERIODICALS/RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS/JOURNALS

REPOSITIONING OF KHADI BRAND

What is Brand Repositioning ?When sales of a company decrease over a time ,then the

need is to implement changes within the company .Brand repositioning is when a company changes a brands status in the market .This includes changes in marketing of -

Product

Place

Price

Promotion

Repositioning is done to keep up with consumer wants and needs.

Khadi should be face of modern India development. It should be positioned as "modern India fashion for all " and it should represent itself as an Indian brand of better quality.

Table 2: SWOT Analysis

STRENGTH	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREAT



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Eco friendly	Lack of Appreciation	Potential for Exports	Competition
Reflects Indian culture	Labor Intensive	Emerging trend	Survival in fast growing technology
Versatility of Khadi	Lack of Infrastructure	Capturing untapped markets	Legislative Impact
Tax Exemptions	Lack of training in business methodologies	Generation of Employment	
Economic Growth	Lack of awareness	Growing Consumer Preference	
Low cost			
Employment Generation			
Fashion			

OBSERVATIONS - Two of the Khadi selling stores in Delhi were observed to understand the Positioning of Khadi. The stores popularly called as ‘Khadi Gram Udyog’ are located in Delhi majority of them in busy markets. The stores sell Khadi and are owned by Khadi and Village Table 3: Observation Analysis

Industries Commission. The appearance of the stores across Delhi is not very attractive and do not have a common visual aesthetics.

Observation FACTOR	Central Delhi-Busy Market	North Delhi-Busy Market
Infrastructure	Well maintained , newly built , Air conditioned	Not well maintained, Old construction, non-air conditioned
Consumers at the time of Observations	Approximately 20-22	Only 3
Variety	Good	Not enough – not even white Khadi Kurta Pajama were sufficient
Consumer Age Group	Consumers of all age group	Consumers around the age group of 45-50 years
Designer Khadi	Available	Not available
Khadi Fabric	2-3 consumers found in the section	No consumer

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) The foremost task required by the government is to communicate the brand

value of khadi .This includes educating and motivating the masses, producers, weavers and distributors.

2) The branding and promotion should be strong enough that consumer accepts khadi



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as a next generation fashion like various other international brands.

3) The product should be more improvised in terms of designing .A modern image should be emphasized.

4) Improvising the working conditions of artisans and weavers.

5) Digitalization of economy, ensuring proper cash flow.

6) Advertising and promotion of this brand should be through integrated marketing channels which includes all types of media

Social Media facebook ,instagram ,youtube

Traditional Fairs –Surajkund ,Kumbh

Fashion Weeks /Government Functions like Make in India etc.

Khadi should be promoted like an entity.

7) KVIC should supply Khadi products to other stores on the basis of need and popularity .

8) Opening and revamping of Khadi specific Khadi gramudyogs.

9) Use of E-commerce platforms to sell and enhance visibility.

10) Investment should be done in developing various brands within Khadi for targeting various segments(demographic and Geographical)

CONCLUSION

The “khadi spirit”means fellow-feeling with every human being on earth .It means a complete renunciation of everything that is likely to harm our fellow creatures and to cultivate that spirit amongst millions of our countrymen .Khadi should be more than a fabric ;it should be a way of life and symbol of going back to basics .

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