

Scope of Khadi in Fashion Industry

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Abstract – Khadi is the heritage fabric of India. In the pre independence era, it was recognized as the fabric of freedom. Post-independence, after the 1990s, many brands and designers started using khadi in new modernized designs making it a perfect choice as a fabric of fashion. The handwoven cloth has various advantages. The paper discusses the present status of khadi in fashion industry. It also aims to discuss the various factors (sustainability, consumer behavior, market) of the fashion industry which can lead to the growth of khadi. It reviews how the consumer behavior has changed a lot over the years. Today's consumers are aware of the trends and are shifting towards conscious shopping. Being a sustainable fabric, khadi has a huge potential of growth. Due to the involvement of KVIC, various designers and brands, the market of khadi has a good scope of increasing economy.

Key Words: khadi, sustainability, growth, consumer behaviour, fashion

1. INTRODUCTION

Khadi or Khaddar is a hand woven and hand spun fabric. It is created by the intertwinement of yarn into filaments on spinning wheel called charkha. Khadi is an adaptable fabric with various unique characteristics. Mahatma Gandhi started the khadi movement and used it as a weapon for boycotting foreign goods. Before independence, it was used as a fabric worn by political leaders and rural people. Today the image of khadi has changed from being the fabric of freedom to fabric of fashion and is no more a poor man's fabric. Khadi is now not only restricted to cotton but available in various blends with wool, polyesters etc. New diversifications, changes, range of designs in the material has given new life to the fabric and has proved to be a canvas for designers and a conscious choice for the upper class. Khadi and village industries is working towards strengthening and developing khadi sector. Being a sustainable fabric, it has a huge potential for growth.

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To review the literature in terms of swot analysis, advantages, disadvantages of Khadi
2. To review khadi in today's fashion industry

3. To review the factors that influence the growth of khadi

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the study, a detailed review of existing literature was carried out on khadi, properties of khadi, khadi's journey in fashion, awareness of khadi, current textile retail trends, market and acceptance of khadi. Various research articles, journals, newspaper articles, articles available in online search engines were reviewed.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 SWOT Analysis of Khadi

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESS
Eco friendly	Lack of appreciation
Reflects Indian culture	Labor intensive
Employment generation	Lack of infrastructure
Fashionable	Lack of awareness
Good comfort	Cumbersome process
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Potential for exports	Competition of sustainable brands
Emerging trends	Survival in fast growing tech world
Generation of employment	Demand for low priced materials
Growing consumer preference	Competition
Growing sustainability	Poor marketing of khadi products
Use of technology	

4.2 Advantages of Khadi

- The hand-woven texture of khadi makes it different from other fabrics
- Khadi is comfortable to wear
- It is light weight

- Khadi allows the air to pass through
- The fabric keeps the wearer cool in summers, warm in winters
- It is a sustainable fabric
- The production of khadi is eco friendly
- Blended khadi provides increased properties
- Suitable for casual, formal wear
- Khadi sector provides employment to large number of artisans
- Varied applications like apparel, home furnishings etc. [1]

4.3 Disadvantages of Khadi

- Khadi is expensive to buy
- It needs a lot of care and maintenance
- Bleeding of color is possible
- As khadi takes a lot of time to weave, production is less
- Khadi can get crumpled [1]

4.4 Khadi in today's fashion

As India entered the twenty-first century, Khadi had begun to make a fashion statement after the 1990s, and a new generation of Indian designers had started experimenting with this adaptable fabric, keeping it in style. A number of top designers have taken on the challenge of turning the ordinary fabric into high-fashion clothing. While modern Khadi products in India are extremely pricey and in short supply, they are not what you would actually term for the masses. Now, fashion designers are creating garments from Khadi that are recognizable to politicians, celebrities, and artists. The government has recently been actively pushing the Khadi industry to turn it into an "Indian brand" and grow the sector's economy.

Over time, Khadi had transformed from a cloth used by freedom fighters to a fashionable apparel. The journey of transformation began with the efforts of many designers, including Devika Bhojwani, who launched the "Swadesi label" in 1985. In 1989, the first fashion show of khadi outfits in Bombay, organised by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, gave khadi in the fashion industry a start. Bhojwani and Jaya Bachande exhibited a fashion display in 2002 that helped the fabric gain new appreciation. In 1990, Ritu Kumar put on a spectacular fashion presentation with eight designs, with khadi standing out as a noteworthy one. As a result, the designer's demonstrations of Tree of Life, Elegance in Khadi, and Khubsoorat Khadi became immensely famous.[2] Khadi has gained popularity in recent years

because of designers like Rohit Bal, Malini Ramani, Jatin Kochchar, and Pranavi Kapur who use it to create a variety of khadi garments that have a modern and fashionable look. [3] The revival of khadi has become a possible phenomenon thanks to the involvement of numerous top designers, including Manish Arora, Sandeep Khosla, Asha Sarabhai, Ritu Kumar, Abu Jani, Abraham and Thakore, Satya Paul, Rajesh Singh, and Raghuvendra Rathod. It also has very good support from its marketing in the exhibitions where khadi produced in various parts of the country is displayed. A very well-known designer, Tara Aslam, has produced an exceptional selection of Khadi clothing, including palazzos, peplum tops, crop tops, and maxi dresses.[4]

4.5 Factors influencing growth of khadi in fashion industry

1. Sustainability

One of the greatest industries in the world that produces pollution is the fashion industry. The sector is expected to consume 50% more water by 2030, reaching 118 billion cubic metres (or 31.17 trillion gallons), while also increasing its carbon footprint to 2,791 million tonnes and producing 148 million tonnes of garbage. [5] Globally, the problem of sustainability in the fashion industry is emerging as a result of increased concern over the negative effects that the fashion business has on the environment. Fashion businesses must increasingly consider their impact on society and the environment in addition to their financial success. The goal of sustainable fashion is to slow down the global production and consumption process in order to create an industry that will be more sustainable in the long run.[6] Departure from the phenomenon of "quick fashion" is based on the notion that clothes might be produced in a way that would maintain "ecological, social, and cultural variety" and promote "new business models." [7]

Sustainability is increasingly being viewed as a key pillar for growth and development in the Indian fashion industry. Even fashion entrepreneurs in India are implementing sustainable company growth strategies. Pratibha Syntex, Arvind Mills, and Madura Fashion and Lifestyle are a few examples of textile enterprises that have begun incorporating sustainability into their primary business strategies in order to expand. Anita Dongre - Grass Roots, Nicobar, Good Earth, Anokhi, No Nasties, Doodlage, Ka-Sha, and Upasana are a few examples of modern fashion and lifestyle brands whose focus is sustainability. There have been numerous worldwide and Indian initiatives to make sustainability a top priority for the fashion business. The government's involvement and pressure on businesses in the fashion industry to embrace sustainable practises is a driving force in India. Additionally, the availability of locally produced sustainable textile materials as well as a variety of sustainable textile processes and techniques in India provides the fashion industry with a significant chance to experiment, develop, and expand sustainable fashion businesses.[8]

2. Conscious consumer behavior

Due to a number of driving forces, the fashion and retail industries are currently undergoing major changes, which have an effect on consumer behavior as well. Today's consumer's decision-making process for purchasing a fashion product is influenced by a variety of factors. Understanding consumer behavior in the fashion sector requires an understanding of the many processes used to meet consumers' expectations in this area. Thus, it can be claimed that the pace of the fashion industry is changing due to today's consumer. Consumers today are more informed and aware.

Gen Z in India are aspirational and spend a lot on fashion products. Not only upper elite class, but the middle-class Indian consumer who is value conscious has also started to look for good quality and designer fashionable products. Working urban women have realized the need of looking better and dressing in a fashionable smart work wear. This increases the opportunities of women western wear market in the industry.[9]

Consumer behavior is changing, and more people are attempting to choose sustainable product options. Recent research has shown that millennials or Generation Y are willing to pay more for sustainable products. Consumers now have two options: reuse what they already have or purchase environmentally friendly products to lessen their ecological impact. This is the main factor influencing customers' conscious clothing choices and eventual shift to sustainable fashion.[10]

This alteration in consumer behaviour is another factor contributing to the rise in demand for Khadi fabric. Choosing a sustainable fashion product is becoming more important to customers as they become more conscientious of their fashion purchasing decisions. Khadi is one of the most environmentally friendly fabric options available in the fashion industry due to its low carbon footprint. Consumers of today are yearning for sustainable fashion that incorporates modern patterns with Khadi cloth. With time, a fabric that was formerly referred to as "poor man's cloth" is now gaining favour with the upper and middle classes.

3. Increasing demand and product diversity

Post -independence, the government of India decided to develop khadi and village industries (KVIC) under the Five -year plan. [11] The functions of KVIC include planning, promoting, organizing and assisting programs for khadi and village industries development. [12]

The fashion industry's Khadi sector has expanded significantly in recent years. Due to the rising demand for handcrafted and environmentally friendly fabric options on the international market, Khadi exports have grown over time in addition to domestic sales. The importance of Khadi in

supporting the Indian economy is evident from the sector's recent rise. KVIC is diligently working to establish Khadi as a global brand through its marketing strategies. Khadi holds a number of exhibitions throughout India and around the world in an effort to increase its consumer base. Additionally, KVIC is approaching schools, colleges, and businesses to explain the value of Khadi in order to promote it among the youth community. Collaboration with major businesses like Raymond, Aditya Birla Fashion & Retail, Arvind Mill, and others is another strategy used by KVIC to promote Khadi. KVIC is primarily in charge of overseeing the complete manufacturing, sales, distribution, and marketing of Khadi in India. By obtaining a "Khadi mark Regulation Certificate" from KVIC, brands are able to utilise the Khadi name on their products. This aids in maintaining control and ensuring the market's supply of authentic Khadi products. Few new labels that are trying to modernise khadi are 11.11/eleven eleven, The Khadi Staple, Akaaro by Gaurav Jai Gupta, Red Sister Blue, Bunosilo, Runaway Bicycle, Brass Tacks, Metaphor Racha, Maati Crafts, Anita Dongre Grassroot, I Wear Khadi etc. Together with KVIC, these companies are trying to increase product diversity and quality while also enhancing designs to reflect current fashion trends.[8]

5. CONCLUSION

Khadi has a lot of unique properties which differentiates it from other textiles. It is a fabric that is synonymous to India and is a crucial part of our rich heritage. Khadi has opened new opportunities for the fashion industry in recent years. It has the potential to meet the needs of modern shoppers who want to make conscious, thoughtful purchases that contribute to a sustainable future. It is an important sector for giving women in particular and rural artisans a fair wage. Additionally, various government efforts are boosting this industry, and as sustainability becomes mainstream in the fashion industry, the Khadi industry becomes even more crucial to achieving business sustainability goals.

Khadi is seen as a symbol of sustainability by Indian millennials who are moving more and more toward adopting sustainable lifestyles. Government efforts like "Make in India" and "Skill India" for the fashion industry can effectively support and reinstate the original idea of Khadi, which began with the "swadeshi" moment to become self-reliant and self-sustainable. Khadi might benefit greatly from improvements in areas such as quality, design, and product variety on the domestic and international markets. So much can be accomplished in the Khadi market by maintaining the original qualities of Khadi while still adapting them to modern living.

Khadi being a sustainable fabric with eco-friendly product can prove to be important aspect of the United Nations sustainable development goals: Responsible Consumption and Production. This goal aims at reducing the use and degradation of resources, along with reducing pollution and

increasing the quality of life. Marketing and advertising of khadi is needed to make it more popular. Lack of technology and infrastructure can pose to be hurdles in khadi's growth. KVIC is working towards development of khadi but the khadi sector still remains unorganized and needs reforms. [13]

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