

# Market Scenario of *Khadi* with Special Reference to Punjab and Haryana

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## Abstract

Khadi is a national heritage fabric of India and has a unique identity. It has been the main source of living for spinners, weavers and artisans at different levels of the manufacturing process of *khadi*. The Indian government has been promoting khadi through various programmes and policies. Despite many initiatives taken by the government, *khadi* is still lacking its place in the market and witnessing several problems for survival. Most of the khadi institutions of Punjab and Haryana are facing problems like shortage of working capital, and financial help for the improvement of retail outlets. There is a need of promoting *khadi* by understanding the problems and challenges faced by the khadi institutions. The present paper tries to study review and understand the market scenario of *khadi* in Punjab and Haryana.

**Keywords:** *Khadi*; Market; Promotion.

## Introduction

India is home to the world's most hand-skilled artisans and has a rich textile heritage. A heritage of high-end quality craftsmanship and diversity ranging from hand embroidery, block-printing, natural dyeing, hand weaving, to the mastery of hand spinning. The roots of the *khadi* fabric can be found in the magical country of India. Traditional *khadi* is hand-spun and hand-woven cotton fabric also manufactured from wool and silk, known as *khadi* silk or woollen *khadi*. The production of *khadi* is an extremely judicious process that focuses on the environment right from the beginning of the yarn spinning to the whole process of weaving.

Before independence *khadi* was considered as the fabric of the political leaders and the rural people. But now it has made a remarkable mark on the wardrobes of fashion-conscious people. Earlier cotton *khadi* was man-

ufactured which has a very coarse texture and feel. Now, many varieties of *khadi* like *khadi* silk, *khadi* wool and *khadi* poly-vastra are being manufactured from wool, silk and blended fibres, which make *khadi* a fashionable fabric.

### **The Making of *Khadi* Fabric**

Firstly cotton is handpicked and the fibre is departed from the seeds by a sharp comb-like device. After that, it is ginned into slivers. With the help of a spinning wheel, these are spun into yarn. This hand-cranked spinning wheel is known as charkha which became an emblem of independent India. Then spun yarn goes into the hands of weavers in the form of reels. With the assistance of handlooms, yarn is weaved into fabric. The marketing and promotion of organic cotton and natural dyes have been done by KVIC. Hand-made paper, leather, pottery, non-edible oils, soaps and processing of cereals and pulses are also handled by KVIC as a part of traditional rural industries. This entire process utilizes zero electricity and is very eco-friendly.

### **The Production Process of *Khadi***

1. **Hand-picking of the cotton bolls** – To proceed to further process hand-picked cotton bolls are collected.
2. **Ginning**- In this process fibre is segregated from the cotton seeds. This is conducted by hand using a sharp comb-like instrument, like a fishbone which also takes out the sizeable pieces of rubbish. A small wooden object with toothed rollers is also another way to conduct this process.
3. **Carding** – The automated carding machine comprises a very fine wire that segregates the fibres individually after that it goes through moving steel bars that evacuate the exceptionally short filaments and tangles. Then slivers are collected from carded material.
4. **Roving and spinning** – To make the slivers more strengthen, drafted slivers are further thinned out and twisted moderately. The procedure of turning the slivers to create yarn, during which the distance across the yarn is controlled and determined, is known as roving. Spinning is prepared after roving is wound onto bobbins. The spinning of fibre into yarn is the most symbolic of textile manufacturing. The yarn is spun using a spinning wheel. However most of the spinning is conducted on the new model charkha (NMC), but in some remote villages, the conventional spinning wheel is still being operated. The spun yarn is twisted into reels of thousand meters each. The spinning process is done by spinners at the

spinning centres so that the entire process is conducted in an arranged and systematic way.

5. **Sizing** - The process includes starching or implementing of sizing solution to the warp before warping or after warping to prevent the weaving abrasion.

6. **Weaving** - It is performed on a pit loom, mainly with a fly shuttle, which is one of the most ancient types of looms.

7. **Dyeing** - To keep the process natural and environment-friendly, dyeing of *khadi* fabric is done with organic vegetable dyes with less use of chemicals.

8. **Finishing:** The finished *khadi* fabric is then sold.

The spinning of the thread is the foundation step on the charkha after that bobbin winder proceeds, then the sized and lastly the weaving process. Under this technique, all the weaving process is conducted at the weavers' place but the spinning activity is managed by the *khadi* Board. Men do the weaving activity whereas spinning is accomplished by rural women and girls. Prices are comparatively more than mill or handloom due to a lot of work performed in this process and that decides its price.

### Characteristics of *Khadi*

*Khadi* is considered comfortable to wear as it is light and delicate. Air pockets are formed while weaving due to that one feels cool in summer and warm in winter. Each *khadi* cloth has identical and luxurious features as it is made by handcrafted self-texture. It is highly durable due to its intrinsic firmness. Mulmul has a fine texture due to its translucent quality. From total *khadi* silk, up to 50 per cent silk is prized for its richness and brightness. Numerous range of *khadi* is produced by different states. Woollen *khadi* is manufactured in colder northern states whereas special weaves such as Tussar Silk are produced in Madhya Pradesh. Different colours are used for dyeing the fabric and beautifying with block prints or it is tie-dyed. Attractive embroidery and mirrorwork are blown up on *khadi* in Gujarat. *Khadi* has travelled an extended distance from the times of identified with freedom fighter fabric. With time, it has changed into fashion attire. Once it had been reserved as a cloth for the farmer and therefore the rural wearer. Now millions of weavers are everywhere in India, and still, demands are never matched. *Khadi* gets softer with each wash which makes it a perfect tropical fabric.

### *Khadi* and its importance

In India, *khadi* is not only identified as a cloth, it is known for the movement started by the father of the nation “Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi”. “Revival of the hand spinning and hand weaving makes the largest contribution to the economic and moral regeneration of India”<sup>[5]</sup>. The words of Mahatma Gandhi still have the same significance in the current Indian scenario. In the 1920s, for improving the Indian economy, Mahatma Gandhi began to encourage and promote the spinning of *khadi* for rural freelance and self-sufficiency, creating *khadi* an essential division and idol of the Swadeshi movement. To save the future of India, it was important to re-organize the handicrafts and being hand spun and handwoven cloth, *khadi* was chief among them.

The *khadi* movement encourages beliefs, a purpose that Indians could be self-sufficient and independent. The *khadi* development focuses on rejecting foreign products which were produced by buying cotton from India at cheaper rates, exported to Britain where they were manufactured and brought back to India for sale with the huge hike in price. The movement started by Mahatma Gandhi was not only to get self-sufficient but to wear our own manufactured cloth that would show the integration of our country.

In India, *khadi* is a resourceful fashion fabric which had been also used as a tool to fight for its hard-won independence. For the past 72 years, *khadi* fabric contributes to forming a remarkable inspiration for innovative minds all over the world. *Khadi* is not only referred to as the “Fabric of India”, but has proved to be a culture in itself, which precisely speaks the pride of our country’s achievements. On one side, the whole world proceeds towards industrial fashion, but another side *Khadi* the fabric of independence constantly generates income for the rural poor prompting the country of its heritage of sustainable living and self-sufficiency.

### **Supply Chain**

In the present scenario, rules for the *khadi* certifications are executed by KVIC as per sections 15(2) (K) and (I) of the *khadi* and Village Industry Act, 1956 (61 of 1956) of the *khadi* and Village Industries Commission Regulations, 1958. Adequate remuneration to craftsmen with the guarantee of reasonable price and quality to the customers are the three aspects of certification to protect the nature and authenticity of *khadi*. The artisans (spinners, weavers) comprise 65 per cent of female artisans who are undertak-

en by the companies for various stages of manufacturing from *khadi*.

Manufacturing of cotton bale in the farms is the first step in the production process of *khadi*. After that, the cotton bale is taken by the six silver plants of KVIC and *khadi* institutions. In these plants, cotton bales are used for making cotton tapes. Soft and untwisted silver (a loose strand of fibre) is formed by carding machine and is dispatched to *khadi* institutions. Spinners are used to transform the silver into yarns on charkhas. After that, spinners discharged the yarn back to the *khadi* institutions and sent it to weavers for weaving on handlooms. The ready fabric is then sent for dyeing and finishing processes before selling to consumers.

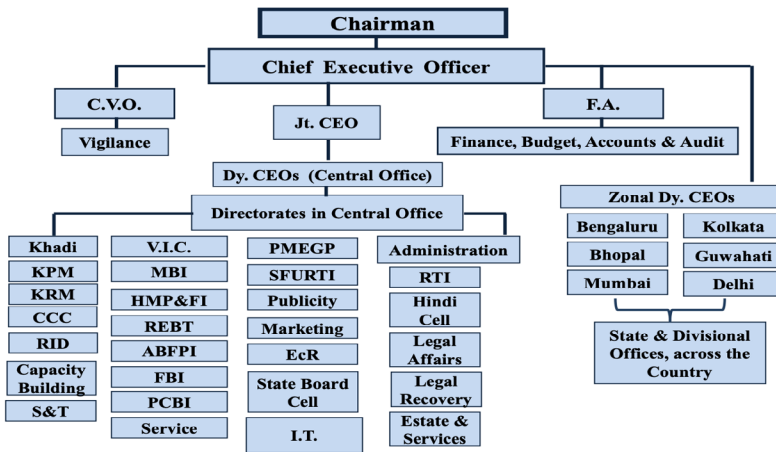


Figure 1.1 Organisational Chart of KVIC

### Studies Related to the Marketing of *Khadi*

Nautiyal and Atre (2020) discussed the evolution and the key factors influencing the growth of *khadi* over the period of time. *Khadi* regained its identity post 90s and started becoming a fashion statement as a lot of experimentation was done by the designers to explore this versatile fabric. In recent years, a speedy increase has been witnessed in growing technology leading to great opportunities to the Indian fashion market of India. The demand of handmade and sustainable clothing is increasing very fast globally. In recent time, *khadi* sector has shown a tremendous growth as KVIC is working hard to make *khadi* get its recognition worldwide. To popularize *khadi* in different sectors, KVIC has join hands with several

national brands like Raymond, Retail Arvind mill, Aditya Birla fashion etc. KVIC has also approached schools, colleges and industries to spread awareness about the benefits of *khadi*. Various exhibitions are being held to gain the popularization of *khadi* globally. *Khadi* has the potential to withstand sustainability which is the need of the hour. Thus, by improving designing, quality and promotional techniques, *khadi* can satisfy the desires of contemporary consumers who are willing to buy sustainable clothing.

Kumari and Singh (2019) in their study throws light on sustainability of *khadi* and its potential for exports and market in today's modern era. By early 1990s *khadi* has marked its position in fashion world. Various renowned designers and brands gave their hands to promote the tradition of wearing *khadi* as a designer wear. The process of making *khadi* does not include any electronic devices and chemical treatments which makes *khadi* an eco-friendly fabric. *Khadi* is not only an eco-friendly fabric but also provides employment to rural people. The growth in production of *khadi* helps in promoting the economic growth. *Khadi* has made a great change in uplifting its image from being dull and bore to modern and contemporary. It has great potential for exports also and various agreements on holding exhibitions in various countries are lined up by the Government. A lot of efforts has been made by Government and KVIC jointly to boost the sales of *khadi* not only in India but to the overseas also.

Srivastava (2017) conducted a study to explore the current market trend and availability of *khadi* fabric in the market. Results revealed that in recent times increase in the variety of *khadi* in terms of wider choices of colours, fineness, and texture makes *khadi* more popular among the young and old generations. Also, there is a bright future ahead for both KVIC and designers as they are taking firm steps to promote *khadi* among the masses.

Aggarwal and Nair (2016) conducted a study in Ahmadabad city to identify social media as a marketing tool for the growth of the Indian *khadi* industry. The results show that majority of people constantly use online shopping portals for purchasing apparel. Seventy-six per cent of people use social media and they get attracted and

influenced by social media advertisements to buy their apparel. It was also suggested that *khadi* should not be limited to *khadi* gram udyog but available online to meet the need of the customer conveniently.

Goel and Jain (2015) in their study attempted to find out the demand and

supply-side problems in the *khadi* industry in India and recommended an action plan for the same. They also try to analyse the reason for the restricted growth of the *khadi* industry, the workings of KVIC - *khadi* and village industry commission and the current marketing strategies of the Rajasthan *khadi* and Village Industry board. A literature review was done to reach effective outcomes. The study reveals that the main problem came across with KVIC products is regarding sales and marketing as the KVIC products are being sold through their network thus finding it difficult to market their products and facing demand and supply-side problems like less awareness of the brand *khadi*, limited working hours of the *khadi* bhandars, uneven quality and limited design patterns, poor marketing linkages, obsolete weaving technology leading to more preference given to foreign brands. It has been suggested that by improving the quality and building an effective marketing plan can spread more awareness of the *khadi* brand to the masses.

Kaur, (2007) carried out a survey on “Rejuvenating *khadi* Marketing”. As a part of the survey, the acceptability of *khadi* for different age groups was found. It was observed that *khadi* is mostly purchased for the old age & adult age group. *Khadi* fabrics & garments are not purchased for school going children because of the non-availability of sizes & styles. Acceptability for designs & prints was also studied. Results showed that the majority of respondents accepted woven designs and combination of different techniques, block printing & overall prints, some like batik, tie & dye, etc. and selection as per fashion trends. To find out the buying acceptance of consumers & problems faced by consumers towards *khadi*, an effort was made to make the dealers aware of changing tastes of consumers and fulfil the demand of consumers. Increasing interest of consumers and implementation of new techniques that can be used to improve the stability & acceptance of *khadi* were also studied.

Trivedi Lisa (2007) presented *khadi* in a different dimension for tradition and modern Indian exposure. From the period of Swadeshi, the annual report of Spinners Associate 1927 revealed a 40 per cent increase in the sale of *Khadi* as compared to 1926. In 1934 the employment created by *khadi* doubled when compared to the initial periods indicating a new phase of development. The study explains the shift of *khadi* more as a symbol of production cost, consumers should be educated and directed on the social responsibility nationalism rather than a product. This literature gave a detailed history of *khadi* and the motto behind the marketing strategy in satisfying consumer preferences. Moreover, *khadi* has been used to propagate the philosophical significance of Gandhiji’s Swadeshi movement for

self-help. The Spinning association's effort was brought into consideration with the production of *khadi* with regional patterns, prints, and colours that were popular among customers. To increase *khadi* production and satisfy consumers, the technical department increased its efforts to train *khadi* workers by sending demonstration parties to villages. The study stresses on the regular distribution of *khadi* goods with *khadi* production centres in each major region of the subcontinent to facilitate consumers' demand.

*Khadi* goods are not able to resist the competitiveness of the organized textile industries because of their conventional character. It was suggested to follow aggressive marketing strategies while focussing on consumers' preferences and other market factors that are associated with enhancing the production of *khadi*. This would necessitate variegation of markets and also the product mix, establishment of advanced marketing techniques, improve inventory control, improve management applications, etc. Regarding the rebate given on the sales of *khadi*, it was inspected in depth by the Committee led by Shri M. Ramakrishnayya and Shri Abid Hussain. Restructuring of *khadi* silk is to be considered but any decision should protect both handloom and *khadi* industries. In providing force to the *khadi* sector, more focus was given in the Eighth five year Plan for activities for economic viability without the aid of subsidies. To obtain these objectives the study points out the necessity of popularizing the New Model Charkha, transformation in cloth manufacturing to reform its blending with wool, polyester, as well as silk and creating readymade garments in agreement with the taste of the customer and the latest fashion trends.

Verma, (2012) made an effort to mark the Rural Industrialization developed through Gandhian Philosophy. Some particular policy recommendations were also tried in light of the most presiding issues experienced over the last fifty years. The marketing of *khadi* was considered one of the crucial issues. It has been strongly put forward that if there had been the intervention of voluntary agencies, then *khadi* products would have sold in the local markets. Apart from vigorous marketing, considering the consumer's taste, preference, price and different factors related to *khadi* such as its cost, consumers should be directed to think about the *khadi*'s origin, the manufacturing process of *khadi*, the importance of buying *khadi* and its organic importance, etc. The Government should also assist in the advertising and marketing of *khadi* by initiating a bigger dealer than just five per cent specifically in the woollen blankets. The performance of the *khadi* and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) in the technological development section is very lack substandard. It is essential to the advancement



of KVIC. The study insisted on effective affiliation with research organizations, countrywide laboratories, and production establishments for the transfer of technology. This article gave a detailed idea of how *khadi* can improve itself and survive in this modern mechanical environment.

### **Overview of *Khadi* in the Market**

*Khadi* has a very little market catering to a handful of consumers who either trust in wearing good quality cotton clothes and emotionally attached to the *khadi* ideology. Sales of *khadi* and *khadi* products mostly rely on the rebate. Design, colour and type of readymade *khadi* have not witnessed much change. Very few attempts are being made by the *khadi* institutions which are focusing on understanding the present market scenario and building attempts to make products that are more 'in' with the consumer. According to a recently published report, the sale of *khadi* and village industry boosted by 14 per cent to reach 37935 crores during the financial year 2015-2016<sup>[10]</sup>. Presently, the apparel and textile sector is the second-largest employer and developed 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the total export earnings and imparts 4 per cent to the GDP, hence making the apparel and textile industry the largest industry in the country.

### **The Economic and Social Importance of *Khadi***

*Khadi* is known as a lifeline for the cottage industry as it is a major source of sustenance, self-sufficiency and independence movement of India. To facilitate employment generation to the youth of India, setting up an organization was the main aim of the government. Seventy per cent of the Indian population and economy was dependent on agriculture at the time of the freedom movement. After agriculture, the *khadi* industry is the second largest industry to provide employment opportunities to the unemployed and rural people. It not only contributes to the economic development of the country, but it also contributes to the GDP of the country. In India, most of the families including children and women are engaged in making *khadi*. For them making *khadi* is not only the source of their income but it is their lifestyle. *Khadi* has reduced unemployment and poverty in villages. *Khadi* helps in deducting the rate of migrants who came in search of jobs to the cities. The locally manufactured raw material is used for making *khadi* without using chemicals and energy resources which helps in improving the health level of workers and the environment.

### **Challenges Faced by *Khadi* Institutions**

Presently, the *khadi* sector is working under the *khadi* and Village Industry Commission (KVIC), the government of India. Major challenges faced by *khadi* industries are as under:

- To fulfil the requirements of working personnel.
- To reduce the manufacturing cost of *khadi*.
- To clear the unsold stocks.
- Adoption of modern techniques.
- Improvement in working conditions of spinners and weavers.
- Adequate wages to spinners and weavers.
- Identification of customer demand and competition according to the market.
- Promotion of *khadi* through the right channels.

As the world is changing its path towards a more sustainable and eco-friendly environment, it has become imperative to promote more *khadi* products as they are made by hand naturally without using any electricity and other energy resources. In this era of industrialization where technology has overcome hand-made products, it is a big challenge for the government to reposition *khadi* in its way.

### **Status of *Khadi* in Punjab and Haryana**

Punjab and Haryana have rich potential and tradition to promote *khadi* as it is linked with the freedom movement of India and has immensely contributed to the *khadi* movement. In the present scenario, Punjab seems to have failed to match the economics of *khadi* with politics. As a result, more than 20 of the 28 *khadi* trusts running in the Punjab state are reeling under huge debts. The reason behind this is due to the lack of interest of the state government as well as the *khadi* and Village Industries Commission (KVIC). After the year 2000, the production of blanket and hosiery garments dented the *khadi* market and the demand continued to slide. The spinners and weavers started moving to other parts of the country, leaving an impact on the production capabilities of the *khadi* production centres. With the shortage of skilled labours and declining demand for

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*khadi* products in the states, major centres of Punjab and Haryana failed to clear the loans.

Most of the *khadi* institutions are facing problems like shortage of working capital, and financial help for the improvement of retail outlets. The *khadi* sales outlets of Haryana and Punjab are filled with unsold stocks of durries, blankets, khes, towels etc. Only very few manufacturing centres of Haryana and Punjab are producing thick and coarse *khadi* fabrics which are acceptable in rural areas only. Fine *khadi* fabrics are brought from other states like Bengal, Rajasthan; Madhya Pradesh etc. are limited to the reach of urban cities. Readymade apparel like male jackets, shirts, kurtas, etc. which are being made in *khadi* are very limited and manufactured by only very few *khadi* organizations.

### **Customer-attitude towards *Khadi***

Earlier *khadi* was considered as clothing for rural people or politicians, but in today's scenario, fashion designers are promoting *khadi* and have marked the way towards the niche market of India. Nowadays, *khadi* is becoming a fashionable fabric but still, it is not much popular among the mass population, especially youngsters and teenagers. A lot of designers are experimenting with designing in *khadi* apparel such as various cuts, styles and silhouettes, but the unique texture of *khadi* restricts its use in designing. Various studies reveal that designing in *khadi* apparel is limited to its surface embellishment such as patchwork, thread embroidery, use of beads, sequence and application of dyeing techniques. The sales of *khadi* are experiencing low levels of growth despite the increasing demand for sustainable fashion products.

*Khadi* being an Indian fabric lost its indigenous touch and popularity over a period of time. *Khadi* became a thing of the past and has suffered from an outdated reputation as a low-quality fabric. As compared to other fabrics, *khadi* has built an image of being simple, traditional and plain amongst the consumers. In this fast-changing world, where fashion plays an important role in shaping apparel consumerism, *khadi* has kept itself limited in terms of new designs, styles, patterns, and textures. In India, fashion is becoming more diversified. A person's personality is being judged by the way they dress up. Every person has their way of styling and dressing up. The increase in disposable income, access to information through different media and competition in the market have entitled consumers to high expectations and demand. Consumers are no longer forced by their needs for a product but are rather driven by their wants which is quite charac-

teristic of the fashion market.

Decades before the customer was of a view that *khadi* was worn by old aged people, as it was found in light colours usually. The attitude towards *khadi* buying has changed drastically. It is in the trendiest outfit nowadays among the youngsters especially. Customers can fetch any colour of *khadi* from the market or the *khadi* emporium today. Now, the customer is fond of different styles of *khadi* attire. *Khadi* sari, *khadi* silk saris, and readymade *khadi* kurtas are the best selling apparel in the market. Customers of every age can be seen rushing to *khadi* emporium during the sale period, especially on 2nd October. Not only females but also men are fond of *khadi* kurtas and *khadi* jackets. Wearing a *khadi* shows the sign of patriotism and has become the favourite attire of the politicians.

### **Marketing of *Khadi* in Punjab and Haryana**

In this competitive world, the marketing of *khadi* is one of the critical elements. *Khadi* has a very limited market and very few customers visit the *khadi* sale outlets. Opening up new sales outlets and sale bhandars is the common marketing strategy of many *khadi* institutions. Most of the promotional and sales activities are done around 2<sup>nd</sup> October, Gandhi Jayanti by placing old hoardings outside the stores, distributing pamphlets and making loudspeaker announcements in nearby areas. In comparison to today's hi-tech advertising and marketing strategies, there may be no branding of products that could appeal to the customer. The sale outlets of the *khadi* institutions are not managed professionally and they observe government timings that are not suitable for the customers. The products are not being made as per the customer's demand and preferences rather the emphasis is done on the product development. *Khadi* has not witnessed a major change in terms of designing, colour or type of *khadi* readymade apparel manufactured by various *khadi* institutions. There is no training provided to the sales personnel and artisans for the making of new products and running the business effectively. The wages paid to the sales personnel are very low which leads to de-motivation of selling *khadi*.

### **Conclusion**

*Khadi* is a helping hand for cottage enterprise as it is a source of sustenance, self-sufficiency and independence movement of India. Punjab and Haryana have rich potential and tradition to promote *khadi*. The state governments have to take a few steps to rejuvenate the downfall of *khadi* in Punjab and Haryana.

The promotion and branding of *khadi* should be stronger to compete with other international brands. Improvisation in designing, and working conditions of artisans, spinners and weavers should be done to emphasize the modern image of *khadi*. Social influence plays a vital role in promoting *khadi*. Qualities of material and status symbols are the most significant factors which affect the buying decision of *khadi* by the customer. A variety of products, new designs, and quality products have always played a crucial role in buying behaviour of any customer. *Khadi* needs repositioning not only through adopting new marketing strategies but it should be promoted like an entity.

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