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Khadi: Threads of Dignity,
Freedom & Self-Reliance

Khadi: Innovations
Crafting New Trends

Khadi Strengthening
Rural Economy

Eco-Friendly Khadi:
A Fabric of Hope

KHADI

Weaving Futures

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Khadi: Innovations Crafting New Trends

Khadi, India's iconic hand-spun and handwoven fabric, has undergone profound transformation— from its origins in ancient India to its contemporary relevance in sustainable global fashion. Historically associated with the *Swadeshi* movement and Gandhian ideals of self-reliance, Khadi experienced a period of stagnation. However, it has now re-emerged as a premium, eco-conscious textile embraced by designers, policymakers, and consumers. This article analyses the evolution of Khadi, recent shifts in public perception, and the socio-economic and cultural forces driving its revival.

Rashi Sharma



Khadi—also known as *Khaddar*—is one of the most iconic segments of the Indian textile sector. It is a hand-woven, hand-spun natural fibre cloth originating from the eastern regions of the Indian subcontinent, particularly Eastern and North-Eastern India and present-day Bangladesh. Produced from cotton, silk, wool, or blends of these fibres, Khadi is renowned for its rugged texture, breathable and comfortable feel, and thermal versatility: it keeps the wearer warm in winter and cool in summer.

Khadi also carries unique socio-economic value. Produced through decentralised village-level systems, it contributes to rural livelihoods and is a green product with low production costs. In an era of climate concerns and wasteful fast fashion, khadi's ecological advantages align naturally with global sustainability trends. However, realising its full potential requires systematic modernisation without compromising its handcrafted essence.

Material innovation in Khadi is one of the most dynamic shifts. Blends using linen, Tencel, bamboo, hemp, and natural fibres have enhanced the durability,

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drape, and functional performance. Combined with low-impact dyeing and finishing techniques, these innovations broaden khadi's appeal in apparel and home furnishings. Contemporary designers have also reinterpreted khadi through modern silhouettes—structured jackets, dresses, tailored shirts, and minimalist couture—aligning it with the preferences of younger, urban consumers.

Technological interventions and policy frameworks have been instrumental in Khadi's resurgence. Assisted mechanisation—improved *charkhas*, ergonomic looms, solar-powered dyeing units, and pre-processing tools—has reduced drudgery, improved output, and enhanced quality. These innovations preserve the handmade character of khadi while making production more reliable and scalable. Investments by KVIC and state-level bodies in skill training, design development, infrastructure, and market promotion have created an enabling ecosystem for khadi enterprises. These initiatives have contributed to increasing production, sales, and employment in the sector.

Looking ahead, khadi can emerge as a globally recognised sustainable textile category. Achieving this goal requires a balanced strategy—combining innovation with authenticity, modernity with heritage, and scale with artisanal integrity. With coordinated efforts from government, designers, entrepreneurs, and artisans, khadi's renaissance has the potential to become a lasting movement.

Evolution of Khadi

Historical evidence suggests that Khadi-like fabrics date back to the ancient civilisation of Mohenjo-Daro, where archaeologists have found traces of handwoven textiles resembling its characteristic texture. During the Mauryan era, Khadi enjoyed widespread use and

socio-economic importance. Chanakya's Arthashastra mentions the production of finely crafted cotton cloth by expert artisans, highlighting Khadi's integral role in the economy of the time.

Visual depictions in the Ajanta Caves also show draped garments similar to Khadi, further establishing its ancient heritage. Numerous sources from early Indian history reference handwoven, hand-spun textiles, underscoring Khadi's position as a symbol of India's rich and longstanding textile legacy.

Khadi's modern political significance emerged in 1918, when Mahatma Gandhi initiated the Khadi Movement as a means to alleviate rural poverty and promote economic independence. The movement promoted the boycott of foreign-made goods and encouraged the use of locally produced hand-spun fabric as an emblem of *Swadeshi*. Spinning *charkha* (spinning wheel) became a powerful symbol of self-reliance and resistance to colonial rule.

During this period Khadi served not only as clothing but also as a unifying symbol of national pride and self-determination. Though simple and coarse it embodied Gandhian ideology—representing modesty, discipline, and independence from industrial, foreign-made textiles.

Designer-Led Revival of Khadi

Following India's Independence, the Khadi sector was institutionalised with the establishment of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) in 1957. The objective of the commission is to provide sustainable rural employment by supplying raw materials, improving production techniques, ensuring product quality, and promoting its sale. Despite these efforts, Khadi began to lose favour with mainstream consumers.

However, Khadi gradually became associated with political uniforms and was perceived as outdated or unfashionable. Until the late 1980s, it remained largely outside the domain of India's fashion designers. Few attempts were made to revive interest later—such as Devika Bhojwani's 1989 high-end Khadi fashion show and Ritu Kumar's first Khadi collection in 1990. They explored innovative textures, dyeing techniques, patterns, and silhouettes that appealed to contemporary consumers. But these initiatives did not significantly alter public perception.



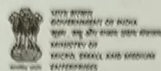
As Khadi entered fashion runways and boutique stores, embraced by celebrities and public figures, it gradually shed its outdated image. Today, designer-led Khadi is positioned as a premium, artisanal, and sustainable fabric. Although high-end Khadi products remain expensive and limited in supply, their growing popularity reflects the rising consumer interest in authenticity, heritage, and eco-conscious fashion. Alongside, government initiatives continue to strengthen Khadi's branding, both domestically and internationally.

Opportunities and Challenges of Khadi Industry

The global fashion industry, valued at approximately USD 1.3 trillion, employs over 300 million people globally and contributes significantly to GDP. India is emerging as major fashion hub due to its expanding middle class and strong manufacturing capabilities. According to McKinsey FashionScope, India's apparel market was projected to reach USD 59.3 billion by 2022, making it the sixth-largest worldwide. Key drivers of India's fashion growth include:

- rapid urbanisation
- rising disposable incomes
- technology-enabled fashion retail
- increased brand penetration in Tier II and III cities
- growing demand for affordable yet aspirational apparel

As fashion businesses seek differentiation, Khadi offers a distinctive narrative rooted in craftsmanship, heritage, and sustainability. Product diversification across womenswear, menswear, luxury, accessories, and lifestyle segments presents vast untapped potential. Fashion is also one of the world's most polluting industries. By 2030, its water consumption is expected to rise by 50%, carbon emissions by 63%, and waste generation to 148 million tonnes. Global awareness of environmental degradation has catalysed a shift towards sustainable fashion. Khadi naturally fits into this framework because:



Achievements

- ◆ There is more than 6-fold increase in the Khadi Sales in the last 11 years which is to the tune of Rs. 7145.61 crore in FY 2024-25 as compared to Rs. 1170.38 crore sales in FY 2014-15



Figure: Sales of Khadi

- ◆ There is over 4-fold increase in the Khadi production in the last 11 years i.e., Rs. 3783.36 crore in FY 2024-25 as compared to Rs. 879.98 crore production in FY 2014-15

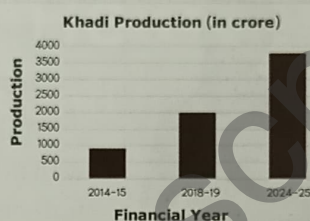


Figure: Production of Khadi

- it uses minimal electricity
- its carbon footprint is extremely low
- its supply chain supports rural artisans
- it uses natural fibres and dyes

Despite its advantage, khadi is faced with several challenges. The availability of cheap and machine-made fabrics poses stiff competition to Khadi in terms of affordability and availability. Even though Khadi is consumer friendly and unique, it has struggle to achieve widespread market. Rapidly changing fashion preference, inadequate marketing and poor branding and limited infrastructure further weaken the sector. Lack of infrastructure and technology in handloom sector reduces productivity and quality that hinder khadi's scalability. Additional obstacles such as global competition, high production costs and challenges with the distribution of khadi. Protecting traditional knowledge and the environmental concerns add further complications. A very big challenge for the artisans is the seasonal demand of khadi for only specific or festive periods. Therefore, to address these challenges, the continuous support of government and consumers is required to promote sustainability and preserve cultural significance of khadi.

KHADI IN FASHION



Growth of the Khadi Market

The Khadi and Village Industries have achieved a historic milestone in 2024–25, recording a turnover of Rs. 1.70 lakh crore—a landmark in India's journey toward self-reliance. Over the last decade, the sector has demonstrated extraordinary growth: production has risen almost fourfold from Rs. 26,109.07 crore in 2013–14 to Rs. 1,16,599.75 crore in 2024–25 (347% increase), while sales have surged nearly fivefold from Rs. 31,154.19 crore to Rs. 1,70,551.37 crore (447% increase). Employment has also grown by 49.23%, now supporting 1.94 crore people compared to 1.30 crore in 2013–14. In 2024–25, Khadi garments recorded exceptional performance, with production rising 366% to Rs. 3,783.36 crore and sales increasing six-fold to Rs. 7,145.61 crore. Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan New Delhi alone achieved Rs. 110.01 crore in turnover—double that of 2013–14. Additionally, over 10 lakh units established under PMEGP have provided employment to 90 lakh individuals.

KVIC has further strengthened rural livelihoods through the Gramodyog Vikas Yojana, doubling its

rural employment budget to Rs. 60 crore for 2025–26 and distributing 2,87,752 tools such as pottery wheels, sewing machines, beehives, and sandalwood machines, thereby enhancing self-reliance. A significant achievement has been the empowerment of women artisans: among 7.43 lakh trainees in the past decade, 57.45% were women, and women constitute 80% of the 5 lakh Khadi artisans. Artisan wages have risen by 275% over the last 11 years, including a 100% increase in just the past three years. This growth is driven by:

- KVIC's branding and marketing campaigns
- large-scale exhibitions across India and abroad
- collaborations with corporates/private players
- rising global demand for handmade, eco-friendly textiles
- expanding designer participation

The alignment of Khadi's original *swadeshi* ethos with modern initiatives like Make in India and Skill India further strengthens its relevance and potential.

Conclusion

Once a symbol of resistance and rural empowerment Khadi—has undergone a remarkable transformation in the modern era. Its revival, driven by sustainability movements, designer innovation, government initiatives, and evolving consumer preferences, has positioned it as a premium textile with significant economic and cultural value.

As India's fashion industry expands rapidly, Khadi presents unmatched opportunities by uplifting rural artisans, promoting sustainable development, and strengthening the country's global textile identity. Its eco-friendly production processes and rich cultural heritage align closely with modern consumers' growing demand for authenticity, ethical craftsmanship, and environmental responsibility. In this evolving fashion landscape, Khadi stands poised to bridge tradition and modernity while contributing meaningfully to inclusive and sustainable growth.

While Khadi has yet to reach its full potential, improvements in quality, design innovation, and product diversification can unlock significant opportunities in both domestic and international markets. With continued support, Khadi will not only preserve India's textile heritage but also lead the future of sustainable fashion. □



Khadi Reinvented

Start-Ups, Enterprises and India's Sustainable Future

Khadi has evolved into a dynamic economic movement driven by start-ups that merge traditional heritage with modern innovation and global sustainability. Supported by robust government schemes and improved wage reforms, the sector has recorded exceptional expansion—sales have risen by 447% between 2013–14 and 2024–25, with the overall turnover touching Rs 1.7 lakh crore. Looking ahead, the vision for Khadi centres on innovation, integration, and internationalisation, aiming to strengthen rural livelihoods—particularly for women—and establish India as a global leader in ethical and sustainable fashion.

Dr Nimish Kapoor

Khadi is no longer just India's historic handspun cloth. Over the decades it has transformed into a dynamic economic movement that blends heritage with innovation, rural empowerment with entrepreneurship and craftsmanship with global sustainability. For today's young entrepreneurs, designers, technologists, and rural innovators, Khadi is not merely a fabric but a catalyst for future-ready enterprise. This transformation is supported by the rapid rise of Khadi-based start-ups and a new entrepreneurial generation that views handmade, eco-friendly textiles as both a moral responsibility and a strategic business opportunity. Strong institutional reforms, modernised production practices and enhanced artisan earnings have accelerated this momentum.

The Khadi ecosystem of 2025 represents a seamless convergence of rural craftsmanship, urban creativity, digital marketplaces, and sustainability-driven consumer behaviour. Artisans are now connected to national and global markets, while start-ups innovate with contemporary silhouettes, natural dyes, premium branding, and export-led business models. Khadi's remarkable rise in the modern economy is the result of years of foundational work by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), which sustained livelihoods and preserved craft traditions across rural India. The *Khadi Vikas Yojana* 2025 and *Gramodyog Vikas Yojana* provide artisans with equipment, training, design upgrades, and digital tools, turning Khadi into a cornerstone of India's inclusive economic growth.

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The Data Story: A Decade of Extraordinary Growth

The rise of Khadi start-ups and entrepreneurs is anchored in one of the most remarkable growth phases the sector has ever witnessed. The past decade shows an extraordinary expansion in both production and sales, marking a radical shift in consumer preferences towards handspun, natural fabrics and ethical production. According to KVIC and MSME annual reports, Khadi sales increased by 447% between 2013–14 and 2024–25, while Khadi production grew by 347% in the same period. The sector's turnover touched Rs. 1.7 lakh crore in FY25, the highest in its history. Khadi clothing production rose 366% to Rs. 3,783 crore, and garment sales surged 561%, reaching an impressive Rs. 7,145 crore. This unprecedented expansion reflects a widespread demand for sustainable, handcrafted products that align with modern environmental and ethical values.

The sector's impact is equally significant in terms of employment and social change. Khadi remains one of India's largest rural employers, with overall employment rising 49.23% over the past decade. In 2025, nearly 1.94 crore jobs are supported by KVIC. Strikingly, over 80% of Khadi artisans are women, highlighting its crucial role in empowering women through dignified, home-based and economically viable employment. With strong linkages to rural livelihoods and community resilience, Khadi's entrepreneurial ecosystem has become a vital source of income, inclusion and social upliftment.

The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) has emerged as the backbone of rural enterprise creation. Since its inception, 10.18 lakh new units have been established under PMEGP, generating more than 90 lakh jobs. Subsidies, digital toolkits, improved machinery and simplified processes have made entrepreneurship accessible even to first-generation business owners.

Wage reforms have further strengthened the workforce in the sector. Artisan wages have seen a historic 275% increase in eleven years, followed by an additional 20% wage hike from April 2025, making the sector more financially viable and attractive to new workers. Under the Khadi Vikas Yojana, Rs. 32.73 crore in Modified Market Development Assistance (MMDA) grants were distributed to 3,817 artisans in 2025 to enhance productivity and sustain livelihoods. These interventions have reduced attrition, ensured artisan retention, and encouraged new entrants into the start-up ecosystem.

With a nationwide network of 2,981 registered Khadi institutions supporting livelihoods for more than 4.99 lakh artisans, Khadi has become a powerful generator of non-farm employment that offers local livelihoods without migration, while initiatives such as the PMEGP, with its support to 9.87 lakh micro-enterprises, along with KVIC's collaborations with District Industries Centres for production, marketing, and enterprise-building, collectively strengthen rural families, stabilise village economies, promote self-reliance, and reinforce the socio-economic fabric of rural India.

Khadi as a Start-Up Opportunity

Khadi undergoing a historic transformation, and 2025 marks a definite turning point. A supportive and forward-looking policy ecosystem has been central to making Khadi one of India's most entrepreneurship friendly sectors. At every stage, from setting up a micro-enterprise to scaling production, Khadi entrepreneurs now benefit from several dedicated schemes. The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) offers vital financial assistance to establish micro-units, while the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) strengthens cluster-based infrastructure and productivity.

The Modified Market Development Assistance (MMDA) scheme supports Khadi institutions, artisans and entrepreneurs in marketing and competitiveness, while ASPIRE (A Scheme for Promotion of Innovation, Rural Industries and Entrepreneurship)— particularly through its Livelihood Business Incubators— facilitates innovation, skills, and enterprise creation in rural areas. In addition, the Khadi Vikas Yojana modernises Khadi activities through technology and process upgradation, and the Gramodyog Vikas Yojana enhances rural industry ecosystems through training, innovation and capacity building. Together, these initiatives create a solid foundation for growth and sustainability across the Khadi value chain.

Digital transformation has further accelerated Khadi's evolution. E-commerce platforms like eKhadiIndia.com, social-media storefronts, and digitally enabled cooperative networks now enable Khadi artisans and entrepreneurs to reach domestic and global markets instantly. Blockchain-enabled traceability is improving transparency, authenticity and brand trust for conscious consumers.



Financial and Infrastructural Support for Khadi Enterprises

KVIC sustains the entrepreneurial ecosystem through a mix of financial and infrastructure support. In 2023–24 alone, the Khadi sector received large-scale financial support through the disbursement of Rs. 267.52 crore as Modified Market Development Assistance to 1,088 institutions. Rs. 37.36 crore under the Interest Subsidy Eligibility Certificate (ISEC) scheme, which offers concessional credit at just 4% interest to reduce borrowing costs—benefiting 1,097 institutions and significantly strengthening artisan earnings, reducing capital burdens, and fuelling entrepreneurial momentum across rural India.

In addition, the Work-shed Scheme for Khadi Artisans provides financial assistance of up to Rs. 1,20,000 to build or improve worksheds. By December 2024, 1,305 artisans benefited from this scheme, enabling safer, more efficient working conditions that directly enhance productivity. To strengthen marketing networks, KVIC manages 8 departmental Khadi India outlets, 18 KVIC branches, and 8,035 institution-run sales outlets, giving Khadi products nationwide reach and brand visibility.

Khadi continues to register consistent, high-growth performance. In 2023–24, Khadi production stood at Rs. 3,206.24 crore, while sales reached Rs. 6,496.01 crore. Projections for 2024–25 show further expansion, with expected production reaching Rs. 3,686.90 crore and sales growing to Rs. 7,470.40 crore. Up to

December 2024, 54,632 trainees were trained and KVIC employment reached 187.31 lakh persons in 2023–24. It is further projected to rise to 196.05 lakh in 2024–25—strengthening Khadi's role as a major driver of rural livelihoods and inclusive entrepreneurship.

Start-up Models and Innovations

Young entrepreneurs and established brands are revitalising Khadi through innovative business models and modern aesthetics. Tech-inclusive weaving practices and online marketplaces including eKhadiIndia.com are expanding the sector's visibility and especially among the discerning millennial and Gen Z.

Despite rapid progress, Khadi start-ups face several challenges. Traditional *charkhas* and manual weaving processes often limit production speed. Yet, these challenges are counterbalanced by strong government support, technology modernisation, rising ethical consumerism, and expanding export opportunities.

Several success stories in Khadi demonstrate commercial potential. Leading Indian apparel brands have integrated Khadi into premium collections, promoting it in luxury segments while supporting artisans. Khadi Gram Udyog Bhawan has recorded sales exceeding Rs. 1 crore per day during festive seasons, driven by brand value, marketing campaigns corporate partnerships.

The key success factors across the Khadi start-up ecosystem include strategic use of government subsidies, especially PMEGP margin money and KVIC marketing support modernising product lines to appeal to youth, integrating Khadi with MSME networks for scalability, and leveraging digital commerce for market expansion.

In essence, the modern business story of Khadi is one of revitalisation and reinvention. Start-ups, designers, artisans and corporates are coming together to transform Khadi into a high-growth, high-impact entrepreneurial domain. With strong policy support, digital tools, creative design ecosystems, and rising global interest in sustainable fashion, Khadi is firmly positioned as one of India's most promising start-up opportunities in 2025.

Institutional Ecosystem and Expanding Landscape of Khadi Start-ups

Khadi's entrepreneurial growth is deeply rooted in its institutional ecosystem. Over the years, KVIC has

evolved into a dynamic organisation that integrates design development, quality assurance, marketing, skill enhancement, and financial support. This transformation is a key reason why Khadi has transitioned from a niche sector to a vibrant entrepreneurial space.

Design workshops, collaborations with fashion institutes have helped artisans understand changing consumer preferences. As a result, Khadi clothing today includes modern fashion trends, vibrant colours, light weight fabrics, and innovative textures. This design-driven evolution has given start-ups the freedom to create premium collections suitable for both domestic and international buyers.

The rural-urban collaboration creates a thriving value chain where creativity and craftsmanship complement each other. The 'vocal for local' movement has played a pivotal role in creating a positive cultural mindset for Khadi. E-commerce marketplaces have sections dedicated exclusively to Khadi products, enabling artisans and small brands to reach customers across India and abroad.

The Future Khadi – From Heritage Fabric to Global Sustainable Powerhouse

As India adopts sustainability, heritage revival, and circular economies, Khadi stands at a historic turning point. Once symbolised by political resistance and self-reliance during India's freedom movement Khadi has now become a model for ecological responsibility and inclusive entrepreneurship. The future vision for Khadi in India rests on three foundational pillars: innovation, integration, and internationalisation. For start-ups, these pillars represent the roadmap for building robust, scalable and socially impactful enterprises.

Khadi's future extends deeply into fibre research, sustainable chemistry, expanding solar-powered *charkhas*, integrating digital quality assessment tools and ethical production processes. Such innovations will create opportunities for technology-based Khadi start-ups. These ventures could focus on digital platforms for cluster mapping, AI-supported demand forecasting for artisan networks, supply chain transparency tools using QR codes, and online marketplaces specifically curated for handmade textiles.

The second pillar of the future vision is integration. Khadi's success has always depended on the delicate linkage between rural artisans and urban consumers.

Going forward, the integration of design, production, marketing and supply-chain networks will determine the efficiency and profitability of Khadi start-ups.

The third pillar, internationalisation, is where the future of Khadi becomes globally transformative. The global fashion market is undergoing a major shift towards sustainability, transparency, handcrafted textiles and ethical production. International consumers are increasingly prioritising fabrics with low carbon footprints and cultural authenticity. Khadi fits perfectly into this narrative.

For this vision to materialise, branding will play a crucial role. Khadi needs a strong, unified global identity— one that communicates its values of handcraft, purity, sustainability and heritage. Many start-ups are already contributing to this through storytelling-driven branding, packaging innovations and participation in international fairs. With the world searching for eco-friendly alternatives to synthetic, mass-produced textiles, Khadi has the potential to occupy a unique leadership position. The growth of Khadi start-ups directly influences artisan incomes, rural stability and regional economic development. As per gender participation and productivity indicators mentioned in annual records, the increasing involvement of women— both as artisans and entrepreneurs— is one of the most transformative dimensions of the Khadi ecosystem. With India's growing presence in global textile markets, Khadi could become a strategic cultural export, symbolising India's commitment to sustainability and craftsmanship.

For young entrepreneurs, the opportunities in the Khadi ecosystem are immense. They can build niche luxury brands, contemporary everyday-wear labels, eco-friendly home décor companies, wellness product lines, or digital platforms that connect artisans and consumers. They can innovate with fibre blends, adopt zero-waste policies, or focus on circular design models. The Khadi ecosystem supports all these possibilities, backed by institutional networks and rising market demand.

The Khadi movement began as a symbol of freedom, self-respect and national pride. Today, it is becoming a symbol of responsible entrepreneurship, creative innovation and global sustainability. The journey of Khadi start-ups reflects the journey of New India, rooted in tradition, powered by innovation and ready for the world. □



Khadi Strengthening the Rural Economy

Khadi, an essential indigenous medium, is crucial for driving India's inclusive economic development and self-reliance. Khadi has successfully transitioned from being a symbol of the freedom struggle into a modern economic driver. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has spearheaded significant modernisation efforts, resulting in impressive growth. Between 2013–14 and 2024–25, Khadi's production saw an increase of nearly four and a half times, while sales surged by almost six and a half times. This sector presently provides employment to approximately five lakh artisans, with a noteworthy 80 per cent of this workforce being women.

Shishir Sinha

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t a time when India stands among the world's fastest-growing economies and has set ambitious targets for the coming decades: a 5 trillion-dollar economy by 2027, 7 trillion by 2030, 10 trillion by 2033, and a developed nation by 2047. It is essential that development is not confined to numerical achievements alone but also reflects its impact at the grassroots level. This underscores the importance of indigenous means of production—mediums that carry development to every citizen, ensuring inclusiveness and equality. Khadi is one such indigenous medium.

The Meaning of Khadi

To understand why Khadi is considered an instrument of self-reliant development, it is important to revisit its legal and traditional definitions. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956, defines Khadi as "any cloth woven on handlooms in India from cotton, silk, or woollen yarn hand-spun in India or from a mixture of any two or all of such yarns." This definition echoes Mahatma Gandhi's own words: "Any cloth woven by hand from yarn spun by hand, regardless of its fineness, is Khadi. It may be cotton, silk, or wool. The main criterion is that it must be hand-spun and handwoven."

From Freedom Struggle to Modern Growth

Encouraged by Gandhi's ideals, Khadi became a crucial part of India's pre-independence economic fabric. Recognising this significance, post-independence governments institutionalised these efforts through the creation of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) to modernise production, provide raw materials, training, credit, and marketing support— particularly to rural artisans who previously struggled to access markets.

Khadi's Impressive Growth

This effort has yielded significant results. Khadi production has grown from about Rs. 811 crore in 2013–14 to more than Rs. 3,700 crore in 2024–25—an increase of nearly four and a half times. Sales have risen even more sharply— from around Rs. 1,081 crore in 2013–14 to over Rs. 7,000 crore in 2024–25, marking almost six and a half times growth. The Khadi sector presently employs about five lakh artisans, including spinners, weavers, and others involved in garment production, conversion, and marketing. Women constitute approximately 80 per cent of this workforce.

To align with modern retail trends, the Commission is expanding its outreach through 24 centres nationwide and numerous showrooms. Its prime outlet at Connaught Place, New Delhi, is being transformed into India's first Khadi Mall, combining tradition with technology. Spread over 20,000 square feet, this mall will feature an Artificial Intelligence model that suggests suitable clothing colours and styles to customers based on virtual try-ons.

According to KVIC Chairman Shri Manoj Kumar, this mall will embody the vision of Mahatma Gandhi and the idea of a developed India as envisioned by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The Connaught Place outlet alone now records an annual turnover exceeding Rs. 100 crore.

Taking Khadi Global

Efforts to globalise Khadi are equally noteworthy. In July 2017, KVIC signed an agreement with Ahmedabad based Arvind Mills Ltd. to trade Khadi denim fabric globally. Under this, American fashion brand Patagonia placed repeated orders, starting with 30,000 metres of Khadi denim worth Rs. 1.08 crore, followed by

a subsequent order of 17,050 metres valued at Rs. 80 lakh through Rajkot based Khadi *Gramodyog*. Khadi is also exploring store openings abroad; a KVIC delegation has visited Thailand for this purpose. To protect the brand internationally, Khadi has registered trademarks in 15 countries and logos in 31. During 2023–24, Khadi exports stood at Rs. 37.88 crore, mainly to China, Russia, and Tanzania.

Empowering Artisans

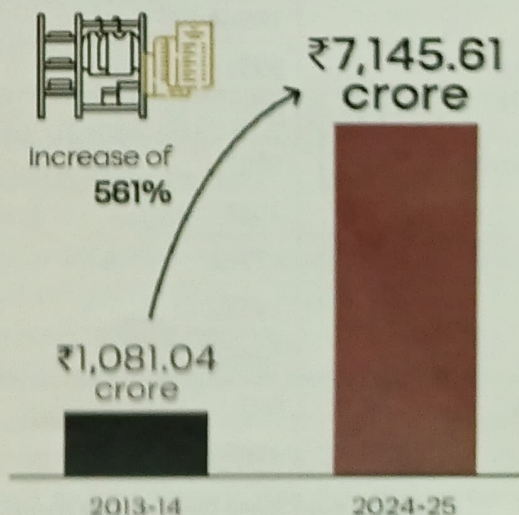
Over the past 11 years, several initiatives have been launched to improve production systems and artisan welfare:

- The wage rate for spinning one hank has been increased from Rs. 10 to Rs. 12.50, and weaving wages for cotton, wool, and *polyvastra* have been raised by 7 per cent.
- Market development assistance now provides a 35 per cent incentive for cotton, wool, and *polyvastra* organizations, and 30 per cent for silk Khadi institutions.
- Under a special scheme, artisans receive 75 per cent of the cost (or up to Rs. 1.2 lakh) for shaded workplace construction; groups of 5–15 artisans

Khadi Clothes Become the New Fashion Statement

There has been a tremendous jump in the sales of Khadi clothes, due to the promotion of Khadi by PM Modi from a larger platform.

Sales of Khadi Clothes:



**Employment in the Khadi Sector
(as of March 31, 2024)**

State/Union Territory	Total Employment
Jammu & Kashmir	21921
Himachal Pradesh	2278
Punjab	5191
Chandigarh	54
Haryana	56085
Delhi	1180
Rajasthan	30651
Uttarakhand	18078
Uttar Pradesh	137149
Chattisgarh	6179
Madhya Pradesh	3707
Sikkim	28
Arunachal Pradesh	31
Nagaland	295
Manipur	168
Mizoram	12
Tripura	25
Meghalaya	59
Assam	5125
Bihar	72755
West Bengal	32831
Jharkhand	1875
Odisha	5347
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	0
Gujarat	18964
Maharashtra	3091
Goa	0
Andhra Pradesh	9092
Telangana	2347
Karnataka	27708
Kerala	14339
Tamil Nadu	20464
Puducherry	465
Total	498594

Source: Rajya Sabha Questions and Answers

receive up to Rs. 80,000 per artisan under similar terms.

- The Khadi Development Scheme offers interest subsidy via eligibility certificates, reducing loan interest to 4 per cent for institutions, with the difference borne by the Government of India through KVIC.
- The struggling Khadi institutions receive Rs. 15 lakh per sales centre to regain stability.

Expanding Markets

In marketing and outreach:

- Benchmark design processes have been established with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) to develop new fabrics, promote standards, rebrand Khadi, and organize fashion shows and exhibitions nationally and internationally.
- E-marketing linkages have been developed through Government e-Marketplace (GeM) and online portals for small and medium enterprises.
- Exclusive Khadi Lounges have been set up in major cities to attract discerning designers and consumers.
- Central ministries and departments are required to ensure that at least 20 per cent of their annual handloom textile purchases are Khadi-based.
- Khadi supplies now cater to institutions like Indian Railways, Defence Services, Health and Family Welfare, and paramilitary forces.

The Changing Face of Khadi

Khadi's perception has evolved over time— it now appeals to every generation and social segment, contributing substantially to India's economic fabric. Appeals from national leaders have further popularised it. Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah urged citizens to buy at least Rs. 5,000 worth of Khadi each year, emphasising that Khadi strengthens both individuals and the national economy. Ahead of Gandhi Jayanti 2025, Prime Minister Shri Modi reiterated the appeal: "Gandhiji always advocated for *Swadeshi*, with Khadi as its symbol. Though Khadi's charm had dimmed after independence, in the past 11 years it has regained immense popularity. Its sale has grown remarkably. I urge everyone to buy at least one Khadi product on 2nd October and speak with pride— this is *Swadeshi*." □



Khadi's Journey : From A Glorious Past To A Promising Future

Khadi symbolises India's self-reliance from the freedom movement to the modern 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) uses technology, skill development, and market diversification through platforms like eKhadiIndia.com and the Centre of Excellence for Khadi (CoEK) to enhance its global appeal and increase sales. Khadi remains a vital source of economic empowerment and livelihood for millions, with government schemes promoting its growth and ensuring the entire family can contribute to the process.

Hena Naqvi

Mahatma Gandhi envisaged Khadi as a symbol of India's self-reliance and dignity of hard work. It is a step towards salvation from slavery and reclaiming the cherished independence. Every strand of this glorious fabric reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of our country.

During India's freedom movement, Khadi and the spinning wheel became symbols of patriotism and economic independence. Household-level production of Khadi emerged as a path towards economic

empowerment for families, aiming to break free from the shackles of foreign rule through self-reliance and *Swaraj*. Freedom fighters, with home-spun Khadi attire and the national flag in their hands, became living mascots of our freedom movement. Later Khadi-clad youth and journalists represented the voices of the masses. Even in recent times, Khadi holds a special place in our hearts through its diverse range of products. Khadi and village industries continue to play a crucial role in creating livelihoods for rural and urban communities, as well as for spinners, weavers, and artisans across the

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Bapu's statue and charkha at Khadi Mall, Patna reflect his timeless Khadi legacy

country. These also provide employment for a broader ecosystem of stakeholders, including suppliers of raw materials, entrepreneurs, marketers, and others who are often invisible in this value chain.

"Khadi for Fashion, and Khadi for Transformation", the *mantra* promoted by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, represents Khadi's journey from a symbol of patriotism to a modern expression of India's journey towards becoming one of the strongest economies of the world. Reflecting the essence of *swadeshi*, India has well-positioned Khadi under 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' as a leap towards the country's comprehensive self-reliance.

A part of the cottage industry, the Khadi sector is governed by the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) serves as the implementing body of the ministry. It is responsible for skill development, technology transfer, research and development, marketing support, and generating employment opportunities in this sector. KVIC has undertaken several strong technological and skill-building measures to strengthen Khadi as a vital constituent of the rural economy.

The most noteworthy technological intervention introduced by KVIC is eKhadiIndia.com, an e-commerce portal launched by KVIC in 2021. The platform showcases a wide range of khadi/associated products, directly linking producers and buyers. The step facilitates faster marketing of products and also

eliminates intermediaries, which is another impactful initiative to ensure producers receive their entitled earnings. Additionally, the 'Khadi News' section on this platform keeps stakeholders informed about recent developments in the sector.

KVIC's another initiative, the Centre of Excellence for Khadi (CoEK) at NIFT Delhi as its hub and seven regional centres, endeavours to position Khadi as a worldwide, enduring, and value-driven brand by upskilling relevant institutions to design, produce, and market high-quality products globally. KVIC has also launched the 'Knowledge Portal for Khadi', developed by the CoEK, to provide design guidance and trend-based insights to khadi institutions. It facilitates effective design interventions that are tailored specifically to enhance the appeal and relevance of Khadi products. CoEK 2.0, initiated by KVIC's recent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NIFT Delhi, aims to enhance the marketability of the Khadi brand through skill development, design innovation, and product diversification.

The development of the Khadi Institutions e-portal, the Khadi Institution Management and Information System (KIMIS), and an online registration mechanism for the Khadi institutions are the key technological initiatives aimed at strengthening the institutional framework of the Khadi sector. These initiatives also reflect the spirit of Digital India by enhancing efficiency, enabling real-time data access and expanding outreach through digitisation.

KVIC also conducts Skill Development Programmes (SDPs) and Entrepreneurship Awareness Programmes (EAPs) across the country and promotional schemes, aiming to equip unemployed youth with the skills and knowledge needed to create self-employment opportunities in traditional industries, including Khadi. The MSME's training programmes under the Skill India Mission provide skill-based competence to the artisans and entrepreneurs with industry's relevant skills, supporting innovation, scale market readiness.

Protect, Promote, and Propel: Three P's of Khadi

MSME runs a wide array of schemes to Protect, Promote, and Propel the Khadi sector. These initiatives focus on modernising production, strengthening infrastructure, diversifying products, enhancing the brand's visibility and expanding market access to ensure Khadi's consistent relevance as a symbol of self-reliance and economic empowerment. Some of the schemes concerning the Khadi sector are:

Khadi Gramodyog Vikas Yojana (KGVY) is an overarching umbrella scheme that encompasses sub-components, including the Khadi Vikas Yojana (KVVY) and the Gramodyog Vikas Yojana (GVY), providing budgetary support for the development of Khadi and Village Industries.

Modified Market Development Assistance (MMDA), a component of KVVY, frees Khadi pricing from fixed cost charts, enabling institutions to improve products and sell them at competitive market rates.

Interest Subsidy Eligibility Certificate (ISEC), another component of KVVY, provides concessional loans for working capital and capital expenditure.

Workshed Scheme for Khadi Artisans, also a component of KVVY, provides financial support for individual and group worksheds.

Gramodyog Vikas Yojana (GVY) focuses on village industries, including those linked to Khadi.

The Khadi Reform and Development Programme (KRDP) aims to revitalise the Khadi sector by renovating sales outlets run by Khadi Institutions, thereby increasing incomes and employment opportunities for spinners and weavers.

Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) aims to create self-employment through micro-enterprise development. Individuals aged 18 years or above are eligible under the scheme.

Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programmes (ESDP) aim to inspire youth from diverse backgrounds to pursue entrepreneurship and build a



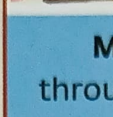
Khadi: A way to self-reliance for the entire family

As every household embraces Khadi's enduring spirit, it collectively contributes to nation building, celebrating India's unity, sustainability and self-sufficiency. During India's freedom struggle, the promotion of Khadi was a powerful tool to break the vicious cycle of 'Begaar' (forced and unpaid labour) and promote economic independence. Mahatma Gandhi patronised Khadi not just as a fabric, but as a symbol of self-reliance and resistance against colonial oppression.

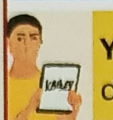
Even today, Khadi remains a source of sustenance for millions of Indians, especially in rural and semi-urban areas. Its production involves multiple stages, such as cotton cleaning, spinning, weaving, dyeing,



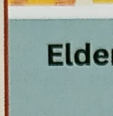
Women contribute to the process by spinning and stitching from home.



Men contribute to the family income through weaving, dyeing, and marketing.



Youth modernise Khadi with new designs and digital outreach.



Elders offer guidance through their experience and traditional knowledge.

stitching, designing, and marketing, allowing every family member to contribute in different ways:

Khadi continues to weave together dignity, livelihood, and community spirit, just as it did during the freedom movement.

robust MSME ecosystem. To promote Khadi as a modern outfit and connect it to all households— domestic exhibitions, expos, and fashion shows are regularly conducted. Dedicated outlets, showrooms, trade fairs, and virtual platforms also connect Khadi products to the masses. The digital platform eKhadiIndia.com, launched by KVIC, has opened up new avenues for Khadi's marketing, expanding its horizon to wider stakeholders.

These efforts have led to a significant rise in Khadi product sales in recent years. The immense potential of the Khadi sector becomes evident when we consider a few sample figures related to its sales performance and employment generation during the financial year 2024–25.

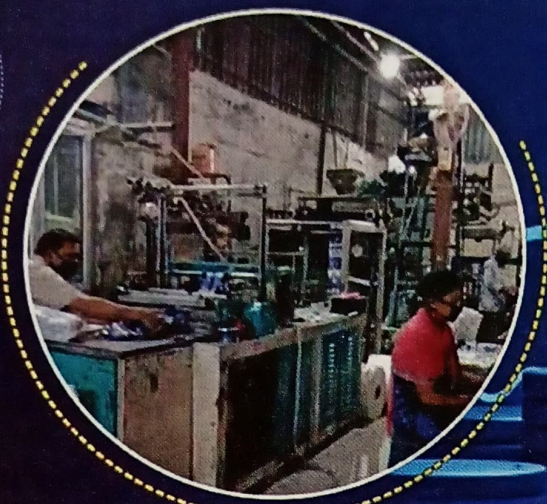
According to the MSME's annual report FY 2024-25, the sales of the Khadi sector (including *polyvastra* and *solarvastra*) rose to Rs. 5,352.00 crores (till December 2024), while 4.99 lakh persons got employment opportunities in this sector.

KVIC also implements its programmes in the North Eastern Region (NER) through State KVIC Boards, registered institutions, cooperative societies, and individual entrepreneurs. Government efforts enabled the region to achieve Khadi, *Polyvastra* and *Solarvastra* sales worth Rs. 1,247.93 lakh, against a production

value of Rs. 1,313.89 lakh in the financial year 2024-25 (till December 31, 2024).

The sector has received adequate attention through Prime Minister Modi's repeated appeals through his radio programme, 'Mann ki Baat'. The campaigns like 'Vocal for Local' and 'Make in India', have given a fillip to the demand for Khadi and village industry products. The Ministry frequently undertakes innovative drives and campaigns to promote and popularise the brand Khadi. Notably, a recent national campaign like 'Make the World Wear Khadi' invited innovative ideas to enhance Khadi's brand image, deepen consumer engagement, and celebrate its global appeal. Another remarkable initiative was 'Khadi Mahotsav' held from September 17 to October 23, 2025, to promote Khadi as a part of the 'Har Ghar Swadeshi, Ghar Ghar Swadeshi' campaign.

Khadi, in today's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' era, is much more than just a fabric; it is a subtle movement that binds the Indians together and embodies self-respect, self-reliance, and quiet patriotism. If promoted and practised through individual efforts, collective responsibility, and long-term commitment, it has the power to instil dignity, empower local artisans, and nurture a spirit of solidarity that connects communities and generations. □



Khadi's Digital Revolution

The digital revolution since 2015 has transformed Khadi from a symbol of tradition into a modern, tech-enabled global brand. E-commerce platforms, mobile apps, and social media expanded its reach to millions, driving exceptional growth in both sales and visibility. Innovations such as AI-driven tools, virtual try-ons, and transparent supply chains have further strengthened efficiency and consumer engagement. During the pandemic, digital agility enabled KVIC to meet rising demand, showcasing Khadi's adaptability and relevance. Overall, Khadi's journey demonstrates how heritage and technology can work together to empower artisans, sustain livelihoods, and build a sustainable future.

Balendu Sharma Dadhich

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hen the Digital India flagship initiative was launched in 2015, Khadi India's traditional fabric—began redefining itself and stepping into the digital era with a renewed identity. A digital revolution took shape that transformed the story of Khadi after 2014. A narrative that was earlier rooted mainly in tradition, patriotism,

swadeshi values, cotton fabric, and historical symbolism has now expanded to include new experiments, innovations, and achievements aligned with a modern and digital age.

Khadi, which once had limited engagement with technology, emerged with a powerful technological expansion. Not only did its business grow at an unprecedented pace, but its image also transformed.

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Shot on



Khadi became both traditional and contemporary.

More than it was about reimagining an entire traditional handloom industry in a new way, where it could establish a strong presence among millions through e-commerce, social media, artificial intelligence, and aggressive digital marketing.

In 2014–15, Khadi's sales were around Rs. 1,000 crore. By 2025, they had soared to Rs. 1.70 lakh crore. It reflects the modernisation efforts of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), the adoption of new-age marketing strategies, the introduction of online sales platforms, and innovative ways of connecting with people.

This digital transformation is not just the story of Khadi's surprising growth in markets and usage. It stands as an excellent example for traditional industries across the world that are Khadi's journey demonstrates how blending heritage with new technology can create fresh opportunities while preserving cultural identity and strengthening rural livelihoods.

How Khadi Secured Its Place in the Digital World

The first major transformation in the journey of India's Khadi industry came in 2016, when the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) launched its official e-commerce portal, "Khadi India Online." For the

first time, a customer in Bengaluru could directly purchase authentic Khadi woven by an artisan in a remote village of Bihar—without the interference of middlemen. This direct-to-customer (D2C) model revolutionised both pricing and accessibility.

The digital platform broke the geographical barriers that had long restricted Khadi to a few government-run stores in select cities. Recognising the rapid rise in smartphone usage across India, the Commission launched a mobile app in 2018, understanding that this small handheld device was now shaping consumer behaviour and market dynamics.

However, KVIC's digital ambitions did not stop at building its own platform. In 2016, it partnered with major e-commerce giants like Amazon India and Flipkart, giving Khadi exposure to millions of online shoppers—many of whom had never visited a Khadi store. Collaboration with Myntra, a platform popular among fashion-conscious youth, opened the doors for Khadi to enter the competitive world of fashion.

Additionally, onboarding the government's e-procurement portal, the Government e-Marketplace (GeM), simplified official purchasing processes. These developments were not just symbolic tie-ups or superficial platform presence. They marked a significant shift in Khadi's market position and its perception as a product—elevating it from a government-promoted traditional fabric to a mainstream consumer choice.

The impact on sales was clearly visible. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–21, when physical stores remained closed, Khadi's online sales grew by 300%. Its geographic footprint expanded from major cities to over 500 districts, bringing Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities—where Khadi once had minimal presence—into its growing market.

The pandemic also witnessed an interesting innovation. As the demand for masks skyrocketed, KVIC quickly started producing Khadi masks, promoted aggressively through digital channels. The initiative

succeeded beyond expectations— more than one crore masks were sold solely through online platforms.

This ability to make timely decisions, implement them swiftly, and leverage emerging market opportunities showcased a new and dynamic side of both the product and the Commission.

How Social Media Took Khadi Into Every Home

In Khadi's technological transformation, the role of social media and digital marketing cannot be overlooked. They offered a powerful platform to reshape and retell the story of the Khadi brand. Instagram emerged as Khadi's visual storytelling space, where modern designs, collaborations with influencers, and stories of weavers and artisans replaced old-style government advertisements. Fashion bloggers and lifestyle influencers began showcasing Khadi in everyday life. Many young professionals were seen wearing Khadi kurtas to their offices or styling Indo-Western fusion outfits to promote Khadi and other KVIC products.

On Facebook, several communities emerged where Khadi enthusiasts shared their experiences and styling tips. Twitter became a channel for real-time updates, announcements, and customer service interactions. Meanwhile, YouTube featured product demos and glimpses into the lives of artisans— videos that added a human and emotional touch to the long process behind Khadi production.

The digital campaign "Khadi for Nation" went viral, watched and appreciated by millions. As a result, Khadi began to be seen not just as a fabric, but as a cultural identity.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, known for wearing and promoting Khadi himself, played a significant role in its rising popularity. Through repeated mentions in his radio programme *Mann Ki Baat*, he encouraged people to embrace Khadi wholeheartedly, further boosting the positive sentiment around it.

Other Dimensions of Technology

Although the general public mainly notices Khadi's promotion, popularity, and rising sales figures, there is much more happening behind the scenes— where technology plays a crucial role. One major development has been the introduction of new experiments based on Artificial Intelligence (AI). With the help of AI, KVIC can now better understand market trends and make informed decisions accordingly.

Not only this, AI has also enabled features like virtual try-on, allowing customers to see how different Khadi outfits would look on them while sitting at home. Earlier, such advanced features were available only with international brands.

Technology has also improved the transparency of Khadi's supply chain. Potential disruptions in supply can now be identified in time and resolved quickly. Similarly, quality control has become more efficient through automated inspection systems, which earlier depended mainly on manual supervision.

Digital payment systems have become widely used for Khadi purchases. Along with UPI, KVIC has partnered with several digital payment gateways and wallets such as Paytm, PhonePe, and Google Pay, making transactions easier and more seamless. Digital methods are also being used for international payments, contributing significantly to the growth of Khadi exports.

Khadi's digital transformation not only expanded its presence within India but also opened global markets that were earlier beyond the reach of our artisans and small entrepreneurs. Partnerships with major international platforms like Amazon Global gave Khadi worldwide visibility and strengthened its global identity. Khadi also aligned itself with the worldwide green movement, gaining recognition as a sustainable and eco-friendly fabric. As a result, Khadi's exports grew from Rs. 15 crore in 2015 to over Rs. 120 crore by 2023, and international orders through digital channels increased by 450%.

Emerging technologies indicate that Khadi's story of transformation will continue. Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), AI-based chatbots, and multilingual web services will further expand Khadi's reach in the coming years.

A key element of Khadi's journey is its ability to embrace both heritage and technology simultaneously. Each has its own importance. While technology has given Khadi a larger market and a global identity, tradition and heritage have kept it authentic and original. On one hand, it has connected Khadi with new generations, new markets, and new societies; on the other, it has strengthened rural livelihoods, preserved traditional skills, and contributed to environmental sustainability. □



Cultural Stories Woven Into Khadi

Khadi is not merely a fabric; it is a living archive of India's cultural memory, aesthetic craftsmanship, and collective resilience. Every hand-spun thread carries within it a story of freedom, dignity, sustainability, and the deep bond between artisans and their land. Though Khadi is often associated with the freedom movement, its cultural roots stretch far beyond into village crafts, community identities, traditional knowledge systems, and the evolving journey of Indian fashion. This article explores how Khadi continues to preserve traditions, reflect social values, and inspire contemporary India, transforming itself from a cloth into a symbol of a constantly unfolding cultural narrative.

Long before Khadi attained national significance, it was an integral part of India's domestic life. In many homes, the rhythmic sound of the spinning wheel was a daily ritual—a symbol of discipline, patience, and responsibility. Women taught their daughters the art of spinning, passing on not only a skill but also the cultural consciousness, aesthetic sensibility, and life philosophy associated with it. The *takli*, the *charkha*, the pit loom, and traditional handlooms were not merely tools; they were cultural markers of families and communities. Their use during

festivals, family occasions, and ceremonial events was considered auspicious.

Different regions of India developed their own distinctive Khadi traditions:

- The strong, breathable *desi* cotton Khadi of Gujarat and Maharashtra
- The lustrous silk Khadi from the Munger region of Bihar
- The coarse, sturdy Khadi suited to the climate of Rajasthan

- The *Eri-Muga* blended Khadi of the Northeast, enriched with eco-friendly processes and tribal motifs

These variations reflect not just differences in fabric, but the deep relationship between land, climate, community, and livelihood. In this way, Khadi becomes a true representative of India's cultural plurality—local in form, yet national in spirit.

Khadi's Role in the Freedom Movement

The most significant phase in the cultural transformation of Khadi came during India's freedom struggle. At a time when colonial industrialisation had devastated the country's cottage industries, Mahatma Gandhi revived Khadi not merely as an economic tool but as a cultural force.

Wearing and spinning Khadi became an act of reclaiming self-respect. Every Indian who spun the *charkha* or wore Khadi became part of a larger cultural awakening. Under Gandhi's leadership, Khadi evolved into a symbol of indigenous pride, self-reliance, simplicity, and disciplined living—rooted in cultural heritage as well as national aspiration:

- A proclamation of *Swadeshi*
- A symbol of self-reliance and dignity
- A thread binding people beyond caste, religion, or class
- A practice of simplicity, service, and spiritual discipline

For many, spinning the *charkha* became a meditative act. Gandhi encouraged students, women, industrialists, and intellectuals alike to spin daily. This practice restored confidence among rural artisans, revived indigenous

knowledge systems, and transformed a simple fabric into the very texture of national consciousness.

During this era, Khadi was not merely a political emblem—it emerged as a vibrant cultural movement and a powerful expression of self-identity.

Community and Social Harmony

A major foundation of Khadi's cultural significance lies in its deeply community-centric nature. Its value chain connects farmers, ginners, spinners, dyeing specialists, weavers, and designers—bringing them together in a shared journey. This interdependence transforms Khadi centres into spaces of social harmony.

In many Indian states, Khadi committees became places where the divides of caste, religion, and gender visibly faded. The Khadi Mandirs of Gujarat fostered cooperation and goodwill between Hindu and Muslim communities. In Rajasthan, women would sit together in open courtyards, spinning the *charkha* while sharing folk tales and songs—thus preserving oral traditions alongside the craft of Khadi.

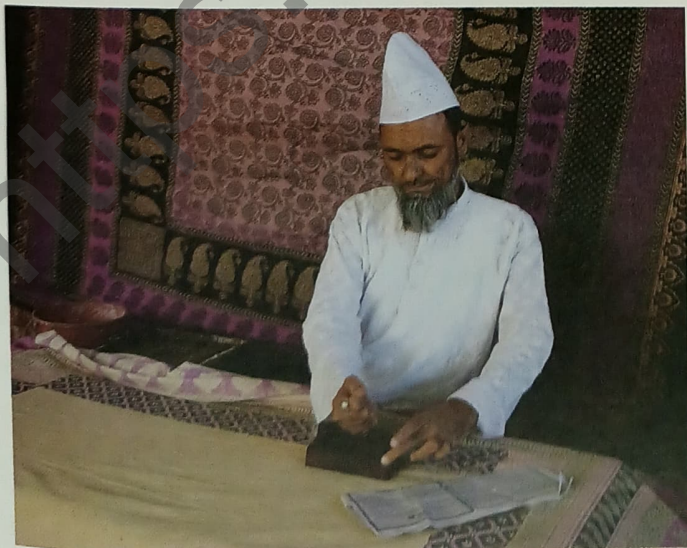
In Northeast India, weaving lies at the heart of tribal identity. Tribal motifs are not merely decorative elements—they narrate stories of nature, myths, and cosmic beliefs. By integrating these motifs into Khadi, artisans ensured that cultural memories continued to live within the fabric itself.

Thus, every thread of Khadi becomes more than the result of labour; it stands as a symbol of community unity, shared effort, and collective memory.

Natural Dyes and Indigenous Knowledge

The colours of Khadi carry their own cultural stories. Long before chemical dyes arrived, artisans across India created natural dyes from local resources—indigo from Gujarat and Bengal, manjistha from Rajasthan, colours extracted from pomegranate peels and onion skins, the vibrant yellow of turmeric, and the deep earthy tones of myrobalan.

These dye traditions emerged from scientific understanding, Ayurvedic principles, and the ecological wisdom of rural communities. Natural dyes were considered skin-friendly, environmentally harmonious, reflective of local ecosystems, and linked to festivals and seasonal identities. Turmeric yellow symbolised auspiciousness, while the deep blue of indigo stood for peace and stability. Earthy



hues derived from soil and tree bark represented a deep connection with the land. In this way, through its colours, Khadi has always narrated stories of its soil, water, climate, and culture.

Designs, Motifs, and Regional Narratives

Although Khadi is often perceived as a simple fabric, it also acts as a powerful visual storyteller through its regional designs and tribal artistry.

- The Bodo and Mising communities of Assam incorporate motifs of nature, birds, animals, and cosmic symbols into their textiles.
- Artisans of Kutch express desert life and folk traditions through mirror-work and intricate embroidery.
- Warli and Gond artists paint their symbolic art on Khadi, turning the fabric into a moving canvas.
- Ajrakh and Bagh block prints stand as evidence of a beautiful confluence of Sufi and Vedic artistic traditions.

These designs encode stories of myth, nature, agriculture, creation, and human life— making Khadi a bearer of visual culture.

Khadi: India's Cultural Ambassador

Over the past few decades, Khadi has emerged as a symbol of India's cultural identity across the world. From diplomatic gifts to international exhibitions, Khadi carries India's heritage, craftsmanship, and commitment to ethical fashion onto the global stage.

Khadi shawls, stoles, and jackets gifted to world leaders are not merely tokens— they represent India's artisanal strength and sustainable vision. 'Khadi India' showcases, G20 cultural events, and global fashion platforms have further expanded international appreciation for Khadi. Indian embassies, too, often use Khadi products as instruments of cultural diplomacy.

On the global map, Khadi's presence strongly reinforces India's image as an environment-conscious, artisan-based, and heritage-rich nation.

Modern Revival: Khadi for a New Generation

Today's young designers are reimagining Khadi by blending tradition with modern aesthetics. Contemporary silhouettes, minimalist fashion, fusion wear, and gender-neutral garments present Khadi with renewed beauty and functionality.

Modern Khadi includes:

- Minimalist and elegant apparel
- Fusion and Indo-Western styles
- Gender-neutral designs
- Zero-waste and upcycled garments
- Khadi denim for the youth
- Eco-friendly Khadi athleisure

Designers like Sabyasachi, Ritu Kumar, Rajesh Pratap Singh, and numerous young startups have carried Khadi from rural looms to international runways. This transformation resonates strongly with millennial and Gen-Z consumers, who value sustainability, authenticity, and ethical fashion.

This revival ensures that Khadi does not remain a relic of the past but continues to inspire the future.

Sustainability and the Future

In an era of global climate crisis, Khadi reminds the world that traditional knowledge is not outdated— it is futuristic. Khadi represents a fully sustainable model:

- Near-zero carbon emissions
- Very low water consumption
- No electricity required for hand-spinning
- Livelihood support for rural women and artisans
- Promotion of slow fashion and mindful consumption
- Harmony with local ecosystems

To preserve Khadi's cultural legacy, strong cooperatives, documentation of regional traditions, digitisation, and youth-led innovation are essential.

As the world moves rapidly toward sustainable fashion, Khadi stands out as India's ethical, eco-friendly, and culturally-rooted answer.

Conclusion

Khadi is a cultural tapestry woven with stories of freedom, identity, craftsmanship, and sustainability. From rural courtyards to global ramps, from national ceremonies to everyday life— Khadi carries the wisdom, patience, and traditions of generations.

Every thread holds a story of a woman spinning, of a weaver weaving, of a community working together, of a season, a landscape, and ultimately of India itself.

Khadi is not just fabric— it is India's living culture, preserving our heritage while guiding us toward the future. □



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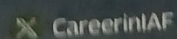
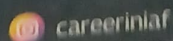
ENTRY BRANCHES	Air Force Common Admission Test (AFCAT) Entry Flying/ Technical/ Weapon Systems/ Administration/ Logistics/ Accounts/ Education/ Meteorology	NCC Special Entry Flying (NCC Air Wing 'C' certificate is mandatory)
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- 📌 AFCAT Entry: Registration mandatory and online exam/ NCC Special Entry registration mandatory and no online exam
- 📌 Registration dates **changed from 10 Nov-09 Dec 2025 to 17 Nov-14 Dec 2025**
- 📌 Aadhaar card is mandatory for online registration
- 📌 For more details, refer to Employment News dated 08 Nov 2025 and for detailed notification visit our website careerairforce.gov.in and afcat.edcll.co.in

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Banks Powering Khadi Through Finance

Banks play a significant role in promoting Khadi and village industries by offering financial support and loans to these small enterprises. This financial assistance not only fosters local craftsmanship but also generates employment opportunities within rural communities. By supporting these industries, banks contribute substantially to village development, thereby strengthening both the local economy and the broader economic landscape.

Satish Singh

The term 'Khadi' represents more than a mere fabric; it encapsulates a philosophy centered on self-reliance, economic independence, and sustainability, a vision ardently championed by Mahatma Gandhi. He regarded the spinning wheel as both a manufacturing tool and a symbol of empowerment for rural communities, aiming to enhance artisans' self-sufficiency and dignity.

In contemporary India, this vision has been reinvigorated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, who sees Khadi as integral to the concept of a self-reliant

nation and has coined the phrase "the new Khadi of a New India." His initiatives, including 'Make in India' and 'Vocal for Local,' promote support for Khadi and other indigenous products, thereby fostering national pride and economic sustainability.

Khadi has undergone a remarkable transformation, blending traditional craftsmanship with contemporary fashion sensibilities. Designers are reinterpreting Khadi, crafting stylish garments that appeal to modern consumers while honouring its rich heritage. This evolution reinforces Khadi's role as a noteworthy symbol of sustainability.

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The Increasing Recognition and Appeal of Khadi

Khadi is transforming its image by enhancing its aesthetic appeal and diversifying its product offerings. Known for its hand-spun fabrics, Khadi now offers contemporary styles, including tailored trousers, elegant kurtas, and vibrant stoles. Additionally, artisans produce home textiles, including decorative rugs and luxurious bed linens, as well as accessories like hand-stitched Gandhi caps. Khadi has ventured into personal care with herbal shampoos and organic cosmetics, along with culinary products such as pickles. This evolution reflects a blend of tradition and innovation, appealing to consumers who value craftsmanship and modernity.

Over the past 11 years, sales of Khadi and related products have increased by 447%. Concurrently, production has expanded by 347%, and employment opportunities within the sector have risen by 49.23%. In the fiscal year 2023-24, sales escalated by 399.69%, while production increased by 314.79% compared to the fiscal year 2013-14.

In FY 2013-14, the production value of Khadi and Village Industry products was Rs. 26,109.07 crore. This figure nearly quadrupled to Rs. 1,16,599.75 crore in the FY 2024-25, reflecting a remarkable 347% increase. Similarly, sales grew from Rs. 31,154.19 crore in FY 2013-14 to nearly five times that at Rs. 1,70,551.37 crore in FY 2024-25, marking the highest sales recorded to date.

There has also been significant growth in the production of Khadi clothes over the last 11 years. Production in this category was Rs. 811.08 crore in FY 2013-14 and surged by 366% to Rs. 3,783.36 crore in FY 2024-25, showcasing the best performance thus far. The sales of Khadi clothes have similarly seen remarkable growth; from Rs. 1,081.04 crore in FY 2013-14, sales shot up approximately 6.5 times to Rs. 7,145.61 crore in FY 2024-25, representing a 561% increase.

Initiatives Undertaken by the Private Sector

Despite the rich heritage associated with khadi, major industrial players are yet to actively engage in its production and related activities. Traditionally, the responsibility of promoting khadi and its associated crafts has primarily rested with government entities. However, a notable transformation is occurring as private enterprises increasingly seek to establish niches

in branding, design, and marketing khadi products. This emerging trend not only revitalises the khadi sector but also attracts a growing number of young entrepreneurs who are becoming aware of the diverse career opportunities available within the khadi industry. This integration of traditional practices with contemporary business strategies indicates a bright future for khadi, as it attracts a modern audience while supporting the sustainability of cultural practices.

Government initiatives to Develop a Comprehensive Ecosystem

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) plays a vital role in advancing the Khadi industry through the Khadi and Village Industries (KVI) initiative. Its primary objective is to boost productivity and income for Khadi artisans. The scheme emphasises the development of rural industries and creation of employment opportunities. It also aims to promote Khadi production, enhance quality, and ensure that its benefits reach the grassroots level. The initiative also strengthens the foundational infrastructure for Khadi production and provides training and financial support to artisans. Similarly, the Gramodyog Vikas Yojana (GVY) is designed to support both established and emerging industries in rural areas, focusing on sectors such as health, cosmetics, leather, plastics, and food processing. This effort ultimately enhances rural industrial infrastructure and generates employment opportunities for rural and semi-urban people.

Financial Assistance for Khadi Promoting

Market Promotion and Development Assistance (MPDA) is a comprehensive initiative in India, initiated by the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME), to foster the growth and development of the Khadi and Village Industries sector. This initiative amalgamates various efforts aimed at publicity, marketing, and market development, with the objective of enhancing the income of Khadi artisans. Within this framework, the term Market Development Assistance (MDA) has been replaced by the Modified MDA (MMDA), which functions as a cohesive programme providing financial assistance equivalent to 30% of production costs to Khadi institutions. This support is instrumental in promoting Khadi products and increasing artisans' earnings. Besides this financial aid is directed towards producers, sellers, and artisans, while also facilitating customer discounts to encourage sales.

Khadi Sector in India

Khadi continues to be a powerful driver of rural employment, enabling artisans to earn a livelihood right at their doorstep with minimal capital investment.

Key Achievements:

- ❖ For the first time, the turnover of Khadi and Village Industries has crossed ₹1.70 lakh crore.
- ❖ Under PMEGP, 10.18 lakh micro-units have been established so far from 2008-09 to 2024-25.
- ❖ Margin money subsidy of ₹27,166 crore has been disbursed against loans worth ₹73,348 crore, creating 90+ lakh direct and indirect jobs.



Progress in the Last 11 Years:

- ✓ 347% increase in production
- ✓ 447% increase in sales
- ✓ 49% growth in employment generation

Strengthening Khadi Infrastructure in Rural Areas

Since independence, loans have been extended to Khadi and Village Industries Institutions, cottage industries, and individual entrepreneurs to enhance Khadi's and other infrastructure in rural areas. Financial assistance is crucial for the growth of any industry. The KVIC, a national nodal agency under the Ministry of MSME, plays a vital role in supporting rural industries and entrepreneurs by facilitating access to loans, training, and various forms of assistance. The implementation of this initiative is managed by the State Khadi and Village Industries Boards (KVIBs) and District Industries Centres (DICs).

The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) is a credit-linked subsidy initiative launched by the Ministry of MSME in the financial year 2008-09, aimed at generating employment in both rural and urban areas across the country. Under this scheme, banks offer loans to eligible entrepreneurs aged 18 and above, with a subsidy upon meeting specified conditions. This programme fosters self-employment are being created by establishing micro-enterprises in non-agricultural sectors, including Khadi and its allied industries, inclusive development across the nation.

Establishing a Resilient Financial Support System through Banking Institutions

Under the PMEGP, loans of up to Rs. 50 lakh are available for the manufacturing sector and up to Rs.

20 lakh for the service sector. Furthermore, businesses in rural regions may benefit from a 35% subsidy for special categories, while those in general categories are eligible for a 25% subsidy. In addition, no collateral is required for loans up to Rs. 10 lakh, which supports the growth of small businesses.

In the financial year 2022-23, a total of 4,71,917 loan applications were submitted under this scheme, leading to the approval of 1,47,200 loans. In the subsequent financial year, 2023-24, the number of applications increased to 5,13,788, resulting in 1,62,325 loans being sanctioned. For the financial year 2024-25, 3,40,348 applications were received, and 1,08,156 loans were approved. As on October 27, 2025, of the financial year 2025-26, there have been 1,04,696 applications and 13,785 loans sanctioned. In addition to the PMEGP scheme, banks are providing working capital, term, and composite loans to Khadi and allied entrepreneurs through MSMEs. Moreover, banks are extending loans to self-help groups, particularly those supporting women in rural areas in the production of various products.

Employment Generation

The primary objective of the KVIC is to generate significant employment opportunities within the rural areas of India. Over the past 11 years, KVIC has achieved notable advancements in this regard. For instance, cumulative employment generated was approximately 1.30 crore in the FY 2013-14. By the end of FY 2024-25, this figure had risen to an impressive 1.94 crore, an increase of 49.23%. Since the launch of the PMEGP, a total of 1,018,185 units have been established across the country. In support of these initiatives, the Government of India has allocated a considerable margin money subsidy totalling Rs. 27,166.07 crore. This financial support has enabled prospective entrepreneurs to obtain loans amounting to Rs. 73,348.39 crore. Consequently, the PMEGP scheme has effectively generated employment for over 90 lakhs individuals, thereby promoting economic growth and sustainability within rural communities.

Challenges Ahead

Khadi's branding is still in its nascent stages, resulting in a limited market share in international markets. Consequently, significant efforts are required

to enhance its presence globally. Currently, Khadi textiles are predominantly produced by micro and cottage industries that need to be elevated to a larger platform. The majority of artisans, entrepreneurs, and workers in the Khadi industry hail from rural and semi-urban areas, which pose significant challenges in market access and product promotion.

Path Forward

To tackle the challenges faced by the Khadi industry, it is crucial to implement a range of measures, including government support, improved market access, product innovation, and improvements in artisans' working conditions. This entails encouraging government departments to purchase Khadi products, elevating product quality and design, expanding export opportunities, and ensuring that artisans receive higher incomes.

Conclusion

Khadi has undergone significant evolution from its traditional textile origins to emerge as a substantial force in modern fashion and design. This transformation

encompasses not only fashionable apparel but also herbal products and handcrafted items that bolster artisans' livelihoods and enhance rural infrastructure. Key organisations, such as the MSME and KVIC, play vital roles in promoting Khadi, nurturing self-reliance in rural areas, and ensuring nationwide accessibility of these products.

Furthermore, financial institutions are increasingly supporting rural entrepreneurs through initiatives under KVIC, MSMEs, and microenterprise programmes. These initiatives not only boost the Khadi industry but also foster job creation and strengthen the rural economy.

Today, Khadi has become a symbol of national identity, evolving into a globally recognised brand embraced by young people, fashion icons, and celebrities alike. This shift underscores Khadi not merely as a textile but as a fusion of style and ethical consumerism. Overall, the future of Khadi appears promising as it continues to attract a diverse audience while championing cultural pride and economic empowerment. □



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Good Governance Day

December 25



Good Governance *Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore*

***Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore* is a national initiative to deliver transparent, accountable, and citizen-centric governance directly to rural communities. Rooted in Gandhian ideals and Vajpayee's vision of *Sushasan*, it strengthens grassroots administration through efficient service delivery and grievance redressal. The campaign has processed millions of applications and documented impactful innovations. By combining digital access and participatory governance, it empowers villages. Overall, it builds a responsive and inclusive rural governance framework.**

Rakesh Kumar Pal



Good Governance is a multifaceted concept encompassing governance, which is accountable, transparent, responsive and free from corruption.

The vision of Mahatma Gandhi about the pastoral life of India captures the heart of our nation, where the rhythm of rural life continues to define India's soul. For a country that thrives on agriculture and community, good governance in villages is not just a policy goal— it is the foundation

of national progress.

Over the decades, many governments have pledged to uplift rural India, but challenges have persisted. Recognising the need for deeper change, the Government of India launched *Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore* on 20 December 2021—a campaign designed to bring effective governance right to the doorsteps of rural citizens. Its goal to reach the last person in the line, bringing administration closer to the people it serves.

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Since 25 December, 2014, former PM Shri Atal Behari Vajpayeeji's birth anniversary has been celebrated nationwide as Good Governance Day (*Sushasan Diwas*). It reminds us that governance is not merely a bureaucratic process but a moral commitment to uphold equity and efficiency. It is also an occasion to reflect on the principle of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance"—a call for an administration that empowers rather than controls.

Honouring a Visionary Legacy

India's governance journey draws strength from leaders who believed that public service must be transparent, accountable, and accessible to all. Among these visionaries, former Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee stands out for his steadfast belief in *Sushasan*—good governance. His leadership between 1998 and 2004 laid the groundwork for citizen-centric reforms that continue to guide governance today.

The Good Governance Day gives us an opportunity to understand its significance, to explore its historical perspective and to study its impact on the democratic values to bring about an administrative system that is not just inclusive but also upholds the principles of minimum government maximum governance (MGMG). It is also one of those days when the spirit of democracy becomes enlivened and the efforts to foster good governance globally get a boost.

The good governance day also gives us an opportunity to focus on economic reforms, infrastructure development and social welfare. The day is an important cog in the wheel as good governance is a fundamental element in the progress of a nation. The celebration of Good Governance Day on the former PM's birth anniversary not only honours his legacy but also aims to reinforce the principles he championed.

Taking Governance to the Grassroots

In the year 2021, the government decided to take the principles of good governance to the grassroot level. Therefore, it decided to launch an ambitious programme christened as '*Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore*' to replenish the already existing Good Governance

initiative. The goal was to bring governance closer to rural areas— both in terms of public grievance redressal and improving service delivery. During the 2021 edition, the District Collectors uploaded "good governance practices" and success stories on the portal. Further, according to NCGG / IIPA data: around 2.89 crore (28.9 million) applications for service delivery were addressed during the week. Subsequent good governance events celebrated between 20-25 December 2022-2024 were also themed as '*Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore*' and also met with similar success.

During the Good Governance Week 2024, celebrated from 19 to 25 December, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) led the landmark campaign *Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore* with noteworthy success. This initiative brought together district administrations, local institutions, and citizens from across India in a united effort to take government services to village doorsteps.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi aptly described it as "a transformative effort aimed at bringing effective governance closer to rural people." The campaign focused on key goals— resolving citizen grievances quickly, speeding up service delivery, sharing successful practices, and shaping district-level development blueprints for the future.

The 2024 edition achieved impressive milestones

Category	Figure
Applications disposed under service delivery	2.99 crore+
Grievances addressed through state portals	15 lakh
Grievances resolved via CPGRAMS	3.44 lakh+
Public service camps organized nationwide	51,000+
Documented innovations in governance	1,167
District Vision @100 documents prepared	272

Source: DARPG (Approximate Figure)

With events spread across more than 700 districts, *Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore* became India's largest people-centred governance campaign. From the plains



Principles of Good Governance



- ⦿ Participation
- ⦿ Consensus-Oriented
- ⦿ Accountability
- ⦿ Transparency
- ⦿ Responsiveness
- ⦿ Effectiveness and Efficiency
- ⦿ Equity and Inclusiveness
- ⦿ Rule of Law

of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to the valleys of Jammu and Kashmir and the hills of Assam, local communities actively participated, making it a festival of citizen engagement and administrative resolve.

Building Strong Foundations for Rural India

At its core, *Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore* rests on five guiding pillars:

1. **Decentralised Governance:** Empowering Panchayati Raj Institutions to make local decisions ensures people's voices shape local futures. Strengthening their capacity and autonomy remains key to sustainable development.
2. **Accessibility of Public Services:** Through Common Service Centres (CSCs) and e-Governance platforms, rural citizens can access services like Aadhaar registration, land records, and welfare schemes quickly and efficiently.
3. **Digital Empowerment:** The Digital India mission continues to transform lives by improving internet access and promoting digital literacy, helping villagers connect with opportunities in education, employment, and entrepreneurship.

4. Participatory Governance: True governance thrives when people participate. Gram Sabhas have become spaces where villagers share ideas, raise issues, and hold authorities accountable—fostering trust and inclusion.

5. Focus on Welfare Schemes: Programmes like PM Awas Yojana, MGNREGA, PM Gram Sadak Yojana, and Jal Jeevan Mission have strengthened the rural economy while improving living standards and community infrastructure.

Actual Effect

Now the question arises whether the programme '*Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore*' is moving in the right direction. When the economics of the programme are taken into account, it is found that it has increased administrative transparency, provided the opportunity to take the governance to the grassroot level, helped in achieving enhanced grievance redressal, institutionalised

good governance practices at the local level and above all decentralised the governance, which has been a long standing demand of the common people.

Given the response of the citizens, the plan is to take the programme to more far-flung areas of the country next year and include more citizen welfare programmes.

The Road Ahead

As India marches ahead, the true meaning of *Sushasan* lies in ensuring that every citizen feels the presence of a responsive government—whether in the heart of a city or a far-flung village. *Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore* has reaffirmed that governance can be both effective and empathetic, combining technology with a human touch.

Good governance is a continuous pursuit of excellence. To realise the vision of *Ram Rajya*—a state of fairness, justice, and prosperity—every official, policymaker, and citizen must share the responsibility of nation-building. When governance becomes a part of daily life, nation building becomes a shared responsibility. □



Khadi as a Driver of Sustainable Agriculture

Khadi, rooted in Gandhian ideals of *Swadeshi* and *Gram Swaraj*, connects rural livelihoods with sustainable production and self-reliance. Its farm-to-fabric value chain supports farmers, women, and artisans through employment, skill preservation, and income diversification. Government schemes and KVIC initiatives strengthen Khadi's role in rural development and the growth of a green economy. Modernisation, digital platforms, and market expansion enhance its relevance. Overall, Khadi drives inclusive, eco-friendly, and resilient rural economic transformation.

Satyam Saxena



Khadi, more than hand-spun fabric, embodies India's spirit of self-reliance and socio-economic resilience. Rooted in Mahatma Gandhi's vision, it symbolises resistance against colonial exploitation and rural empowerment. Gandhi believed Khadi to be an instrumental tool for making India strong and self-reliant, encouraging the *Swadeshi* movement to support Indian-made goods. His concept of *Gram*

Swaraj emphasised village self-sufficiency, where spinning and wearing Khadi enabled communities to earn livelihoods.

Today, Khadi's revival is strategic, offering employment, preserving traditional skills, and fostering inclusive growth. It provides rural jobs, particularly for hand-spinners and weavers, enabling families to earn without migration. Its eco-friendly production using natural fibres and simple tools reduces pollution. Importantly,

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cotton for Khadi comes directly from local farms, creating vital linkages between agriculture and cottage industries. Recent government campaigns like *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* and *Vocal for Local* have repositioned Khadi as both historical symbol and modern choice supporting rural workers, small businesses, and sustainable living.

Historical evolution: From Freedom Symbol to Economic Instrument

This historical foundation laid the groundwork for Khadi's institutionalisation. After independence, the government established the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) in 1957 to promote traditional crafts through training, tools, and financial support. KVIC transformed Khadi from a freedom movement symbol into a structured rural development instrument, systematically connecting it with agricultural livelihoods.

Raw materials like cotton, silk, wool, and jute come directly from farming and animal rearing. Farmers grow cotton, rear silkworms, and raise sheep, which artisans then spin and weave. This agricultural-textile linkage creates employment across both sectors, enabling rural families to maximise local resource utilisation. Over time, this symbiotic relationship has evolved Khadi into a comprehensive rural economic system providing jobs, supporting local businesses, and preserving traditional skills.

Khadi and Agriculture Link: A Symbiotic Rural Partnership

Building on this foundation, Khadi-Agriculture partnership operates through multiple channels. The

sector depends entirely on farm-based raw materials like cotton from fields, wool from sheep, silk from silkworms, and jute plants. This dependency creates a cycle where farming and cloth-making mutually reinforce each other, stabilising rural communities.

Critically, Khadi provides off-season employment when agricultural work is unavailable. For small and marginal farmers, Khadi enables income diversification beyond limited farm revenues. During adverse weather or low yields, Khadi-related activities provide financial support. This diversification enhances livelihood security and reduces vulnerability.

Rural women particularly benefit from home-based Khadi work. Spinning and weaving require no large machinery, making village-based setups feasible. This employment builds women's confidence and independence as household income contributors, creating dignified work opportunities.

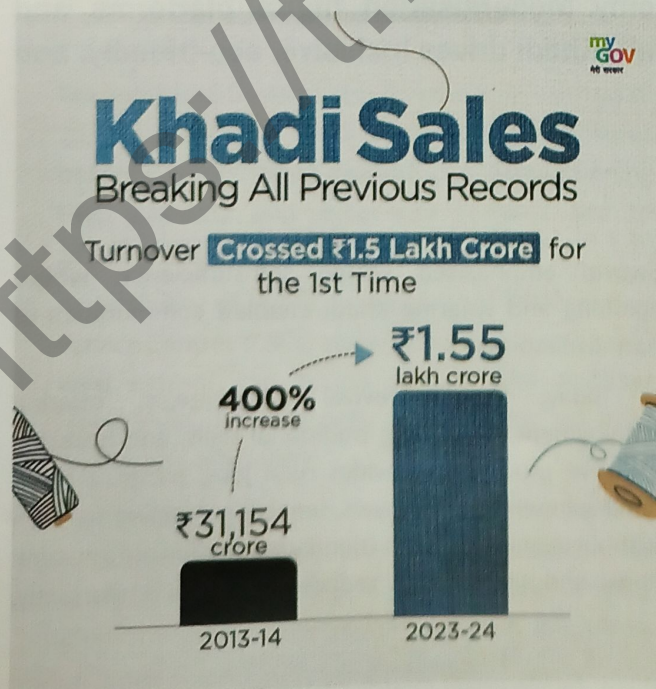
Khadi and Rural Economy: Present Economic Relevance

These individual benefits aggregate into substantial economic impact. In FY 2024-25, Khadi and Village Industries recorded Rs. 1.70 lakh crore turnover, employing approximately 1.94 crore people up from 1.30 crore in 2013-14. This growth provides stable rural incomes and reduces urban migration, significantly contributing to GDP and building self-reliant rural economies. KVIC achieved record performance in FY 2023-24, with turnover crossing Rs. 1.55 lakh crore, a 400% sales increase and 315% production rise compared to 2013-14. KVIC created over 10.17 lakh new rural jobs, showing 81% employment growth over the decade.

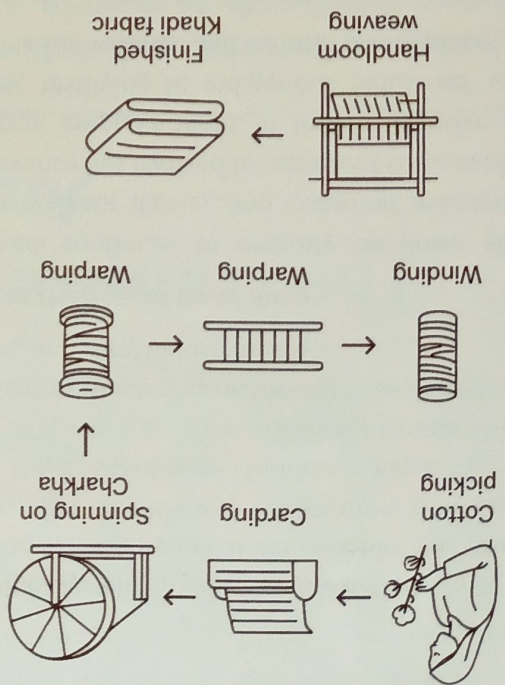
This economic engine drives inclusive growth by employing villagers, especially women and small farmers, while supporting rural industrialisation through small-scale industries using local materials and skills. By reducing urban migration and building village economies, Khadi advances the 'Doubling Farmers' Income Mission'. Linking farming with cloth-making provides farmers additional revenue from cotton, silk, wool, and jute, improving rural living standards through agriculture-cottage industry integration.

Government Policies and Institutional Support

Recognising this potential, KVIC, the Ministry of MSME, and State Khadi Boards implement flagship schemes integrating Khadi with rural livelihoods. The



JOURNEY OF KHADI



Honey Mission trains farmers in beekeeping for extra

income and improved crop yields through pollination.

The *Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana* supports rural

potters with electric wheels and training for

efficient clay utilisation. The Leather and Agro-based

industries scheme encourages farm produce, while

SFURTI scheme (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration

of Traditional Industries) strengthens Khadi

clusters through infrastructure, marketing, and skill

development improvements.

These initiatives align Khadi with national

development frameworks including *Aatmanirbhar*

Bharat, Make in India, and rural industrialisation.

These policies promote local products and village

employment. Khadi's Rs. 1.70 lakh crore turnover in

2024-25 demonstrates how traditional crafts can power

modern economic growth, linking farming, cottage

industries, and entrepreneurship toward inclusive, self-

sufficient development.

Role

Sustainability and Green Economy: Khadi's Ecological

Beyond economic contributions, Khadi plays a

vital role in environmental sustainability. It supports

sustainable agriculture through organic cotton and

natural fibers grown without harmful chemicals.

Digital platforms and export initiatives promote

Khadi as a sustainable textile globally. International

eco-friendly fashion interest showcases Khadi at global

modern lifestyle choice.

Mahotsav and media campaigns boost awareness and

direct artisan-customer sales. Events like Khadi

KVIC's online platforms like *khadiindia.gov.in* facilitate

for 'Local' campaigns promotes Khadi, among youth.

Strong branding through 'Khadi India' and 'Vocal

for Local' campaigns promotes Khadi, among youth.

market readiness.

innovations enhance efficiency, sustainability, and

increasing production in an eco-friendly manner. These

powered spinning wheels, reducing manual effort while

launched by the Ministry of MSME, uses solar-

youth and urban markets. The *Solar Charkha Mission*,

intervention introduces contemporary styles, attracting

sales, expanding artisan reach and income. Design

modernisation. The e-Khadi platform enables online

To remain relevant, Khadi is embracing

Innovation, Modernisation, and Market Linkages

increasing rural incomes.

better nutrition, and environmental protection while

based products, supporting sustainable farming,

and self-help groups help farmers in creating millet-

less water, suitable for dry regions. Khadi institutions

livelihoods. Millets are climate-smart crops requiring

Millet Mission (*Shree Anna*) to promote eco-friendly

Furthermore, Khadi is being integrated with the

employment.

climate action and green development while generating

demonstrates how traditional industries can enable

emissions support India's Net Zero 2070 target. Khadi

use, recycling of natural materials, and reduced

carbon, circular economy models. Minimal electricity

This aligns with India's climate goals through low-

carbon emissions.

eliminate dependence on heavy machinery, lowering

water pollution. Hand-spinning and hand-weaving

dyes and avoiding harmful chemicals, thereby reducing

Production methods are eco-friendly, using natural

incomes while protecting the environment.

reducing pollution while saving water. Khadi producers

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Organic cultivation employs crop rotation, composting,

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events. Designers incorporating Khadi in modern styles attract young, global buyers, positioning India's ethical textile industry internationally. Youth and start-ups are also building careers in rural areas through agro-based Khadi industries.

Challenges

Despite progress, challenges persist. The supply of raw material faces issues like cotton farming struggles with pest attacks, low productivity, and rain dependency, affecting quality and availability. Silk production has limited high-quality supply and rising costs, causing irregular supply and higher prices for Khadi producers.

Skill gaps and limited technology access restrict rural units. Traditional artisans often lack training in modern tools, digital platforms, and updated methods, hindering quality improvement and market competitiveness. The government has launched new skill development schemes under *Khadi Vikas Yojana* to address these gaps through training in design, marketing, and digital tools. Addressing these challenges requires integrating Khadi with agricultural value chains and agri-based clusters. Textile hubs within agro clusters foster employment, resource efficiency, and sustainable practices.

Revitalisation also needs private sector participation, design innovation, and youth engagement. Collaborations with fashion, retail, and technology enterprises can improve marketing, supply chains, and product appeal. Design schools can reimagine Khadi for contemporary tastes while entrepreneurship programmes inspire young artisans.

Positioning Khadi as India's sustainable economy flagship expands global reach. Rising international

demand for eco-friendly textiles creates opportunities. Strategic branding, global trade fair participation, and e-commerce platforms can reach conscious consumers worldwide, supported by export incentives and quality certification.

Strengthening KVIC collaboration with rural skill development initiatives like Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) will train new artisans, upgrade skills, and foster entrepreneurship, achieving coordinated capacity building and rural industrialisation.

Khadi as the Soul of Rural India

Khadi continues to embody Gandhian ethos of simplicity, labor dignity, and economic independence. Its relevance has evolved to represent sustainable living and local empowerment in India's inclusive growth journey, testifying to indigenous industries' value in fostering self-reliance and cultural preservation.

Deeply intertwined with agriculture, Khadi offers a vital farm-to-fabric linkage. Sourcing raw materials locally and employing traditional techniques supports agrarian communities while generating rural employment, strengthening villages' socio-economic fabric and building rural resilience.

As decentralised, labor-intensive industry, Khadi fosters inclusive growth by engaging marginalised communities especially women and artisans in productive activities. Eco-friendly production aligns with sustainable development goals, minimising environmental impact while maximising social benefit. By promoting local entrepreneurship and reducing external market dependence, Khadi builds self-reliant, equitable rural economies.

Toward India@2047, Khadi can play transformative role in realising *Amrit Kaal's* vision of progress and prosperity. Through integration with green technologies, sustainable farming, and rural innovation, Khadi can become flagship of India's climate resilience and inclusive development commitment. Empowering village economies through Khadi preserves traditional knowledge while positioning India as global leader in ethical, environmentally conscious production. □





The Transformation Journey of Juang Tribe

The Juang, an ancient and distinctive tribe of Odisha, are moving from forest-dependent livelihoods to modern, sustainable livelihoods. This journey is driven by the Juang Development Agency (JDA), which implements integrated projects across over 120 villages. Key initiatives include shifting to settled agriculture with irrigation support, establishing women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for market linkages, and improving basic infrastructure like clean energy and access to safe drinking water. This holistic approach is enhancing health, education, and cultural preservation, serving as a model for inclusive tribal empowerment.

Akhil Kumar Mishra
Subhalaxmi Ojha

In the misty Gonasika hills of Keonjhar district in Odisha lives one of India's most ancient and distinctive tribes the 'Juang' community. The word 'Juang' itself means 'man', and they proudly believe that they were the first humans to emerge on earth, right from the sacred origin point of the Baitarani River at Gonasika.

In earlier times, they were known as the 'Patuas' or 'leaf-wearers,' as they wore garments made from leaves. The Juangs lived in deep harmony with forests practicing shifting cultivation, hunting, gathering wild roots, honey, and pulses. They were highly skilled artisans, crafting baskets, combs, and carved wooden items which they bartered in nearby markets.

At the heart of Juang social life stood the *Mandaghar*, the youth dormitory, a vibrant space where songs, dances, and community decisions were shared and young people learned discipline, tradition, and collective responsibility. Their life was simple, rhythmic, and bound to the pulse of nature.

Changing Livelihoods: From Dependence to Diversification

In recent years, the Juang way of life has undergone a steady transformation from subsistence-based forest living to a more diverse and sustainable livelihood pattern. The introduction of community-based forest management, minor forest produce cooperatives, and skill-development programmes has opened new income avenues.

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Many families have moved from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture and horticulture. Farmers now grow paddy, maize, turmeric, and millets with government-supported irrigation and seed distribution schemes. Women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs) supported by *Mission Shakti* and *Odisha Livelihood Mission* are producing leaf plates, baskets, and handicrafts, directly linking them to local and online markets.

Seasonal migration has reduced as rural employment schemes like MGNREGS provide guaranteed work opportunities within their community. With rising literacy and exposure, Juang youth are increasingly seeking vocational training and small enterprise opportunities in nearby towns.

Government Initiatives and Inclusive Development

The formation of the Juang Development Agency (JDA) in the late 1970s marked a turning point in the history of Juang development. Under its initiatives, education, healthcare, and livelihood programmes are now being implemented in over 120 Juang villages.

In recent years, JDA, Gonasika has taken up a series of transformative projects aimed at improving the quality of life in Juang-inhabited regions. Major initiatives include the installation of household solar lanterns and community solar grids, ensuring reliable access to clean energy. Solar-based and diversion-based irrigation projects, check dams, and canals have enhanced agricultural productivity and water availability, while

drinking water supply systems and road connectivity projects have strengthened basic infrastructure in remote villages.

Under livelihood promotion, JDA has supported cashew and mango plantations under MGNREGA, field bunding, land development, and farm mechanisation through tractors and power tillers. The establishment and repair of processing units, market yards, and drying yards have created new avenues for income generation and value addition. Additionally, initiatives like backyard poultry units, goatery units (5+1 model), and community services provider IGAs have diversified household incomes and strengthened local economies.

To preserve cultural identity, the agency has extended support for traditional costumes, cultural equipment, and sacred fencing, alongside creating spaces like youth dormitories and an information-cum-culture centre. Social protection has been ensured through the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and other social security schemes for PVTG households.

Through these integrated efforts, the Juang region is witnessing a visible transformation from improved housing and water access to enhanced livelihoods and cultural preservation. The holistic approach of JDA, combining infrastructure, livelihood, and social empowerment, stands as a model for inclusive tribal development in Odisha.

Health, Nutrition, and Education: Towards Human Development

Healthcare outreach has significantly expanded. Mobile health vans and Mission Suraksha Clinics regularly visit remote Juang habitations providing maternal care, vaccination, and basic health screening. The state's emphasis on recruiting local ASHAs and tribal health volunteers has built trust and improved health-seeking behaviour.

Special awareness drives on hygiene, nutrition, and addiction control are reshaping community habits.

The adoption of clean drinking water systems and solar lighting has reduced disease incidence and snakebite fatalities.

Education, once a major challenge, has now become a community aspiration. With residential schools, hostels, and scholarships, Juang children are entering mainstream education. Digital learning tools and bridge courses have helped first-generation learners catch up academically. Youth from the community are now pursuing higher education in IT, agriculture, and social work, emerging as role models for others.

Empowering Communities and Women

Women empowerment has become the cornerstone of Juang development. Through SHGs and producer groups, women are earning independently, managing finances, and even leading village committees. The Mission Shakti Bazaar initiative provides them with direct platforms to sell traditional crafts and forest-based products.

Community participation in decision-making has increased, with *Gram Sabhas* taking charge of resource management and local planning. Training in leadership, bookkeeping, and environmental management has made these institutions more effective and transparent.

Youth clubs and cultural preservation programmes are reviving traditional songs, dances, and art forms, blending cultural identity with modern aspirations.

Sustainable Growth and Environmental Protection

The Juang region, once marked by deforestation and mining impact, is now turning into a hub of community-led conservation. Under FRA and Ama Jungle Yojana, Juang *Gram Sabhas* are re-planting native species

protecting wildlife corridors, and promoting eco-tourism in the Gonasika landscape.

Watershed development projects, check dams, and rainwater harvesting structures have improved irrigation and reduced soil erosion. Government partnerships with NGOs have introduced solar-powered irrigation pumps and energy-efficient housing models suited to the hilly terrain.

Efforts are also being made to balance mining with ecological restoration. The District Administration has mandated that a portion of DMF funds be used for afforestation and biodiversity conservation in Juang-dominated areas. Local youth are being trained as eco-guides and forest monitors ensuring that development does not come at the cost of nature.

A Vision for the Future: Self-Reliance and Pride

The transformation of the Juang community is a living example of how inclusive policies and grassroots participation can restore dignity and opportunity to India's indigenous peoples.

The next decade's focus is on self-reliance through eco-friendly agriculture, skill-based employment, digital access, and community-led governance. Capacity building programmes are enabling Juang youth to become entrepreneurs, teachers, and health workers in their own villages.

Plans for a Juang Cultural Centre in Keonjhar are underway, a space that will document their history, showcase traditional crafts, and preserve their unique heritage for future generations.

Conclusion

The Juang tribe, once isolated and vulnerable, is now charting a path of progress anchored in tradition and self-belief. Their journey from survival to sustainability reflects the spirit of Odisha's tribal empowerment model that values both cultural roots and modern opportunities. True development for the Juang people lies not in replacing their heritage, but in strengthening it, ensuring that every initiative is shaped with them, not merely for them.

As the hills of Gonasika echo once again with Juang songs of harvest and hope, a new chapter unfolds one where progress walks hand in hand with pride, and where the Juangs stand tall as stewards of both nature and their own destiny. □





Eco-Friendly Khadi: A Fabric of Hope

Khadi is one of the most environmentally responsible textiles in the world. Long before 'sustainable fashion' became a global conversation, Indian artisans were producing cloth that used minimal resources, generated almost no carbon emissions, and supported rural livelihoods. Today, as the world looks for climate-friendly alternatives to fast fashion, Khadi stands out as a natural, biodegradable and low-impact solution rooted in both tradition and innovation.

Low Energy, Low Carbon Footprint

What makes Khadi exceptionally eco-friendly is its production process. Unlike mill-made fabrics that require high electricity and heavy machinery, Khadi is spun and woven manually using the humble *charkha* and handloom. Every meter of Khadi fabric saves significant amounts of energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. In a world where the fashion industry contributes nearly 10% of global carbon emissions, Khadi offers a climate-conscious model that prioritises handmade craftsmanship over industrial consumption.

Natural Fibres and Biodegradability

Khadi is produced primarily from cotton, wool, silk and other natural fibres—materials that are fully biodegradable. When discarded, they return to the soil without releasing microplastics or toxic residues. This stands in stark contrast to synthetic fabrics like polyester and nylon, which release harmful microfibres into oceans and take centuries to decompose. Khadi's organic character ensures that the fabric enriches the environment even at the end of its lifecycle.

Chemical-Free Dyeing and Water Conservation

Traditional Khadi is often dyed using natural dyes extracted from plants, flowers, minerals and seeds. These processes use far less water than industrial dyeing units and avoid the toxic chemicals known to pollute rivers. The slow, controlled dyeing techniques in Khadi clusters keep waste water minimal and harmless. In many regions, natural dye revival movements such as indigo in Kutch and herbal dyes in South India have made Khadi a beacon of eco-safe production.

Sustainable Rural Livelihoods

Khadi is eco-friendly not only in its environmental footprint but also in its social impact. The production chain is deeply rooted in rural India where spinning and weaving provide dignified work to millions—especially women. Because Khadi production is labour-intensive rather than machine-intensive, it generates more employment per unit of investment. This reduces distress migration, strengthens local economies, and preserves traditional craftsmanship—making Khadi sustainable in both ecological and economic terms.

Zero Waste Craftsmanship

The decentralized nature of Khadi production allows artisans to use fibre and fabric waste creatively. Scraps are converted into quilts, bags, accessories and papermaking, ensuring near zero waste. The circularity embedded in Khadi's production— from fibre to finished product— embodies the principles of a modern circular economy.

Global Appeal in the Age of Conscious Fashion

As global consumers become more aware of climate change, ethical sourcing and slow fashion, Khadi has gained renewed attention. Designers in India and abroad are blending the rustic charm of Khadi with contemporary silhouettes, transforming it into a fabric of luxury fashion, home décor, and lifestyle products.



ECO-FRIENDLY KHADI

A Fabric of Hope



LOW CARBON FOOTPRINT

Hand-spun and handwoven, Khadi has zero electricity usage



NATURAL FIBRES

Made from cotton, wool, and silk, Khadi is biodegradable



ZERO WASTE PRODUCTION

Scraps repurposed into bags, paper, and accessories



SUSTAINABLE RURAL LIVELIHOODS

Khadi provides dignified work to millions, especially women



GLOBAL CONSCIOUS FASHION TREND

Designers and eco-conscious brands are embracing Khadi

Its breathable texture, durability and natural aesthetic make it appealing for all climates. Eco-conscious brands now highlight Khadi's traceability, handmade appeal and sustainable origin stories turning it into a symbol of mindful living.

A Climate-Smart Future for Indian Textiles

The future of Khadi lies in combining its eco-friendly legacy with modern innovation. Solar-powered charkhas, natural dye research, and digital marketplaces can further enhance its ecological and economic impact. As governments and consumers seek sustainable alternatives, Khadi is uniquely positioned to lead India's green textile revolution.

Ultimately, eco-friendly Khadi demonstrates that sustainability does not always require new technologies, sometimes the answers lie in age-old traditions. Khadi teaches us that a cloth can be gentle on the environment, support artisans, and still meet modern fashion needs. It is more than fabric; it is a philosophy of harmony between nature, craft and community. □



Khadi Empowering Women Threads of Dignity, Freedom & Self Reliance

Khadi, once the fabric of India's freedom movement, has re-emerged as a dynamic force for rural transformation and women-led development. Beyond symbolism, it now represents a sustainable economic ecosystem where heritage craft, green production and inclusive growth come together. For millions of women, Khadi provides not just income but dignity, freedom and self reliance. As demand for eco-friendly and ethically made textiles rises globally, Khadi stands at the crossroads of tradition and innovation. This article examines how its revival is reshaping livelihoods and strengthening the role of women artisans across rural India.

W

hen we speak of Khadi today, we are not merely talking about a fabric; we are talking about a living ecosystem where craft, community and conscience meet. Its quiet revolution is stitched not in boardrooms but in village courtyards, where spinning wheels turn and hands, mostly women's, convert raw fibre into livelihood. Khadi's revival over the last decade has been far more than nostalgic revalorization of a heritage cloth— it

has become a vehicle of female economic agency, rural resilience and environmentally conscious consumption.

India's recent national-level figures underline how rapidly the Khadi sector has expanded and the scale on which this expansion creates opportunities for women. In the financial year 2024–25 the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) recorded a record turnover (sales) that officials reported as approximately Rs. 1.70 lakh crore, reflecting unprecedented demand and market integration. The same set of releases show

production and sales rising several-fold compared with a decade earlier— a structural shift that has translated into more work, higher incomes and wider market access for artisans.

Numbers alone do not tell the whole story; the human dimension is what makes Khadi's resurgence particularly important for women. Official and industry summaries indicate that a large majority of Khadi artisans are women— recent reporting places the share at roughly four-fifths in many clusters, while KVIC training programmes show that over half of trainees in recent years have been women. This is significant because the sector's growth therefore channels tangible economic gains into women's hands, which in turn changes household decision-making, children's schooling prospects, and social status in conservative rural settings.

The mechanics of empowerment in Khadi communities are multiple and reinforcing. First, Khadi production is eminently local and labour-intensive: it converts modest inputs— skill, time and small tools— into regular income. That labour intensity means that production creates many more jobs per rupee invested than capital-heavy, machine-intensive alternatives. For women who often face mobility constraints, household responsibilities, and limited formal education, home-based spinning, dyeing and weaving provide accessible avenues to earn. Second, declining migration has been observed in villages where Khadi clusters stabilize incomes; staying in the village preserves social support networks even as households gain financial independence. Third, collective institutions— cooperatives, self-help groups and village industry societies— have been central to translating individual labour into better bargaining power, pooled inputs and easier access to training, credit and markets.

Concrete case studies make these processes visible. In the Uttarakhand hamlet often cited by practitioners, women's groups turned small home-based weaving units into a broader livelihood engine, integrating local wool and woollen craft into tourist-oriented sales and cooperative marketing. The shift enabled many women to report reliable monthly earnings and, more importantly, a stronger voice in family decisions and community forums. These real changes in agency— continuing education for

In the sphere of women's empowerment, the past decade has witnessed significant advancements, particularly through initiatives spearheaded by the KVIC. Over the last ten years, a total of 7,43,904 individuals have received training, with women accounting for 57.45% of these participants, totalling 4,27,394. It is also noteworthy that 80% of the 5,00,000 Khadi artisans are women, highlighting their crucial role in this sector. From an economic perspective, wages for Khadi artisans have increased by 275% over the past 11 years, with a remarkable 100% increase in the last three years. This socio-economic progress not only exemplifies the empowerment of women within this traditional craft but also reflects the broader positive impact of sustainable livelihoods within the community.

daughters, delayed early marriage, and investment in household health— are the long-term social dividends of a sustained rural craft economy.

Kutch in Gujarat offers a parallel but distinct lesson. Longstanding embroidery and weaving traditions there were at risk in the late 20th century. Local initiatives such as *Kala Raksha*, combined with design collaborations and market linkages, helped revive traditional textile arts and connect artisan producers to national and international buyers. The outcome has been not just preservation of culture but rising incomes and visible leadership roles for women artisans who now run production units, lead design adaptations and manage exports. *Kala Raksha's* work has illustrated that culturally rooted craft revival, when coupled with professional marketing and value-chain integration, becomes a genuine engine of women's empowerment. Beyond these micro-stories, macro support has helped scale opportunity. Government schemes and institutional interventions— from interest subsidies and training programmes to market promotion assistance and procurement preferences— have lowered barriers for women artisans to enter production and sell at better prices. KVIC's concerted push on branding, digital retail presence and exhibition participation has widened market reach for Khadi producers. Moreover, skill training initiatives have been designed with women's participation in mind; many training centres report that female trainees form a majority, reflecting a deliberate emphasis on

"When we purchase Khadi, we are brightening the lives of the lakhs of weavers who toil day and night."

– Prime Minister Narendra Modi

inclusive capacity-building. The interplay of public support and private innovation has allowed Khadi to move from seasonal, ceremonial demand into year-round retail lines and exportable products.

Yet the road remains uneven. Women artisans still face real constraints: access to working capital, irregular demand cycles, inadequate storage and raw material availability, and the persistent presence of intermediaries that eat into producer margins. Wages in some clusters continue to be modest relative to urban alternatives, and social restrictions—on women's mobility, property ownership or credit history—can blunt the benefits that work alone might deliver. Even as Khadi's turnover has surged nationally, reaching the highest levels on record, ensuring that gains meaningfully increase household welfare for women requires attention to supply-chain fairness, social protection, and direct market linkages that minimize middlemen.

Design and market innovation are a key lever in overcoming these barriers. The most successful artisan enterprises and co-operatives have combined traditional craft with modern design sensibilities, enabling Khadi to move beyond nostalgic white kurtas into contemporary apparel, home textiles and luxury slow-fashion labels. Young designers and entrepreneurs—many of them women—are leading collaborations between rural producers and urban retail channels. Digital marketplaces and social media platforms have reduced search frictions, enabling artisans to reach customers directly, tell their stories, and capture a premium for authenticity and sustainability. The sector's growth figures in the last decade—a multiple-fold increase in production and sales—reflect precisely this shift from local, informal trade to branded, traceable value chains. Importantly, Khadi's ecological credentials amplify its appeal in global markets that increasingly prize sustainable goods. Hand-spun, hand-woven textiles use far less electricity than power-loom production, avoid many chemical inputs, and can incorporate locally sourced natural dyes and fibres. This environmental integrity

resonates with conscious consumers and gives women artisans an additional marketing proposition: their craft is not merely beautiful, it is climate-aware. For many women, this has translated not only into better sales but also into pride and public recognition for stewarding both culture and nature.

To convert potential into durable outcomes for women, several policy-adjacent priorities emerge. First, strengthen last-mile finance: microcredit, timely payments for orders, and working capital solutions tailored to fragile rural enterprises. Second, invest in women-centric infrastructure—child care at production sites, secure workspaces, and transport links—that reduce the social costs of work. Third, deepen design and business training targeted at women artisans so they can lead branding, pricing and quality control. Fourth, formalize supply-chain transparency to ensure a fair share of final value reaches producers; digital traceability tools can help here. Finally, encourage public and private procurement policies that prioritise ethically produced Khadi, thereby creating reliable demand pipelines.

Khadi's renaissance offers a policy and market lesson: inclusive growth is not about creating more of the same factories but about expanding the kinds of economic activities in which women can participate on equal terms. When a village loom spins, it does more than produce cloth—it spins social capital, dignity and hope. Khadi's promise for women is not only in incomes but in the agency that steady work confers: the ability to make decisions, to educate children, to claim public voice.

As India charts its development path, ensuring that the benefits of craft-led revival flow to its primary custodians, women artisans is both practical and moral. The Khadi sector's recent expansion gives us a head start. With targeted finance, better market linkages, design partnerships, and policies that remove social constraints, Khadi can become a mainstream route for rural women to secure meaningful livelihoods and leadership. In that sense, Khadi does more than clothe a nation; it helps remake it. □



Khadi: Preserving Cultural Heritage

Khadi stands at the intersection of culture, livelihood, and nation-building. Rooted in India's freedom movement and strengthened by generations of artisans, it preserves indigenous craft practices while supporting sustainable rural economies. As a tool for cultural heritage development, Khadi reinforces local identity, traditional skills, and self-reliance. This article reviews its cultural significance, the government frameworks enabling its growth, and the key challenges that demand attention.

Khadi originated as a locally spun and woven cloth, made using yarn produced on the charkha and fabric woven on handlooms. Over time, it became a key emblem of the Indian freedom struggle. The movement to spin one's own cloth, boycott foreign-made textiles, and promote swadeshi production transformed Khadi into a symbol of self-reliance and grassroots empowerment.

At the same time, the craft of hand-spinning and hand-weaving embodies centuries-old textile traditions in India—rural spinning, local weaving, indigenous fibre use (cotton, silk, wool), and diverse regional variants. By sustaining these practices, Khadi preserves craft heritage, the traditional knowledge of weavers and spinners, and the cultural identity associated with these occupations.

In contemporary times, Khadi is often described as more than a fabric— it represents sustainability, artisanal dignity, rural employment, and heritage value.

Government frameworks and policy support

The Government of India recognises Khadi's dual role: as a vehicle for rural livelihoods and as a heritage craft. The policy frameworks under the Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) integrate Khadi into heritage, craft, and rural development strategies.

Key schemes and policy instruments include:

- Khadi & Village Industries (KVI) Programme of the Ministry of MSME, which operates the sub-scheme Khadi Gramodyog Vikas Yojana (KGVY). This scheme supports registered Khadi institutions, artisan



training, distribution of toolkits, and grants/subsidies for production.

- The Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI), which aims to organise traditional industries and artisans into clusters to make them competitive, build up innovative and traditional skills, improve technologies, and develop new models of public/private partnerships. Within this scheme, Khadi, village industries, and coir sectors are included.
- The regulatory framework of KVIC, which issues certification and the “Khadi Mark” to ensure the authenticity of Khadi cloth, reinforcing its heritage value and public trust in genuine craft production.
- State-level Khadi and Village Industries Boards, which promote Khadi and village industries, create awareness, generate employment, and implement KVIC schemes at local levels.

Khadi's Role in Cultural and Heritage Development

Here are the main dimensions through which Khadi acts as a tool for heritage and culture:

Preservation of Craft Traditions

The processes of hand-spinning, hand-weaving, the use of traditional fibres, and regional variants (cotton, silk, wool) keep alive skills that would otherwise vanish under mechanised mass production. By supporting Khadi institutions and artisans, the government helps ensure the continuity of these techniques, which themselves are part of India's intangible cultural heritage.

Embedding Identity and Narrative

Khadi is intertwined with India's struggle for independence, particularly with Mahatma Gandhi and the Swadeshi movement. This gives Khadi a cultural narrative beyond mere fabric—an identity of self-reliance, national heritage, and moral economy. Promoting Khadi thereby promotes a cultural narrative rooted in Indian heritage.

Rural Livelihoods and Community Heritage

Many rural artisans and weavers engaged in Khadi production belong to communities with heritage craft practices. By funding clusters, training, subsidies, and marketing support, the government links heritage craft with economic viability. Thus, heritage traditions are not

preserved merely as museum objects but are integrated into living economies.

Sustainable, Low-Impact Craft Aligned with Heritage Values

The hand-spun, hand-woven nature of Khadi implies lower energy use, fewer chemicals, local production, and smaller scale—all aligning with contemporary values of sustainability. Khadi therefore links traditional heritage with modern sustainable values.

Promotion of Cultural Tourism and Heritage Branding

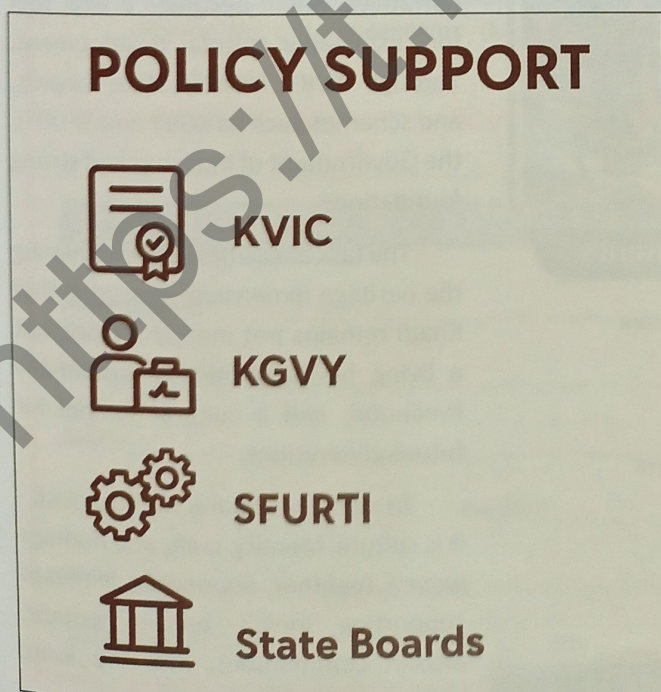
Khadi and its associated tools (such as the charkha) are part of heritage branding. Museums such as the National Charkha Museum and government campaigns emphasise the cultural value of Khadi. This promotes awareness of India's textile heritage, enriches cultural tourism, and helps artisans share their heritage stories.

Intergenerational Continuity and Social Values

Khadi craft traditions involve family occupations, community institutions, and regional weaving clusters. Supporting them fosters continuity of social values, craft communities, and the inter-generational transfer of skills.

Efforts to Preserve Khadi

- The SFURTI scheme envisages setting up “heritage clusters” among traditional industries. Within Khadi



SFURTI

(Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries)

The scheme aims to support traditional industries by providing quality infrastructure to make them competitive, sustainable and ready for the modern market.

Objectives:-

- To provide sustained employment for traditional industry artisans and rural entrepreneurs.

Key Benefits:-

- Financial assistance
- Raw material support
- Technical assistance
- Skill Development programs



and village industries, clusters enable scaling up production, improving tools, and building market linkages while retaining tradition.

- The Centre of Excellence for Khadi (CoEK) under MSME has been set up to innovate in the design of Khadi fabrics, apparel, accessories, and home furnishings—linking heritage craft with contemporary design.
- State boards such as the Delhi Khadi Board emphasise Khadi's role in cultural heritage.
- Policy definitions of Khadi emphasise weaving on handlooms from hand-spun yarn (cotton, silk, wool), providing a basis for classification and heritage authenticity.

These efforts show how Khadi is being leveraged for heritage development—not only preserving older weaving traditions but modernising them and linking them to design, fashion, and global consumption.

Challenges in Khadi's Cultural Development

- Authenticity and quality control: Ensuring that Khadi is genuinely hand-spun, hand-woven, and artisan-made is critical. Mislabelled products undermine credibility and heritage value.
- Modern market competition: Machine-produced fabrics are cheaper and faster, making it necessary for Khadi to compete in design, quality, price, and branding without losing its traditional identity.

To sum up, Khadi is not just cloth - it is culture, identity, craft, and heritage woven together. Supporting it means supporting India's textile heritage, artisan communities, and the living culture of rural weaving. □

The task ahead lies in strengthening the heritage dimension—ensuring that Khadi remains not merely a fabric but a living heritage craft, a sustainable livelihood, and a cultural symbol for future generations.

Through KVIC, MSME, state boards, and schemes such as KGVY and SFURTI, the Government of India has laid strong foundations. The task ahead lies in strengthening the heritage dimension—ensuring that Khadi remains not merely a fabric but a living heritage craft, a sustainable livelihood, and a cultural symbol for future generations.

Khadi represents a unique convergence of textile

Conclusion

artisans' stories, motifs, and regional variations. Community participation and storytelling: Document

Sustainable narrative: Highlight Khadi's eco-friendly, low-impact production.

recognition programmes.

Khadi craft villages in heritage tourism circuits and

Integration with cultural heritage policies: Include

designers.

Market access and global outreach: Improve

online platforms, exports, and collaborations with

recognition for artisan communities.

apprenticeships, training programmes, and

Skill development and youth engagement: Provide

from machine-made imitations.

Khadi Mark to distinguish genuine handmade Khadi

Quality certification and traceability: Strengthen the

continue bridging tradition with modern design.

Design and innovation: Centres like CoEK should

design innovation.

traditional weaving methods while supporting

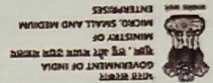
Achievements



Objectives:

Khadi Gramodyog Vikas Yojana

Khadi India



- ◆ To increase productivity and wages of Khadi Artisans and secure livelihood.
- ◆ To improve infrastructure for Khadi Production.
- ◆ Increased Khadi Production, Sales and Employment.
- ◆ Development of Village Industries and increase number of rural artisans.
- ◆ To revive the traditional and inherent skills of rural artisans.
- ◆ To renovate and Modernize Sales Outlets.
- ◆ To promote Marketing and Exports.

- Strengthen clusters with heritage focus: Expand heritage clusters under SFURTI to preserve

- Enhance historical narrative through museums, cultural

- Promote Khadi's historical narrative through museums, cultural

- Enhance heritage branding: Promote Khadi's

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