

Khadi – Awareness and Promotion among Youth

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Abstract - Khadi is very closely associated with India's freedom movement and it's a matter of pride for every Indian. The khadi movement aimed at boycotting foreign goods including cotton and promoting Indian goods. Even after the independence khadi was associated with politics. Only political leaders and followers of Gandhiji were use to wear khadi. Khadi also known as 'Khaddar' is hand-spun and hand-woven material. Khadi was meant to become a supplementary industry to agriculture, a crucial element in a self-sustaining economy. It greatly supports the rural artisans to earn their livelihood; thus strengthening the rural economy. Though it is remembered as a fabric of freedom, it is still perceived as unfashionable by many especially youth. Acceptance of khadi as fashion fabric by well known fashioners like Sabyasachi Mukherjee, has forced youth to take note of khadi fabric. Therefore in this paper attempt has been made to discover the awareness about khadi among college youth and also to promote khadi as a fashion fabric. A small survey was conducted for teen agers and fashion show performed by students where the materials were sponsored by KVIC, Vileparle, Mumbai. Garments were designed and stitched by students which were well appreciated. From the responses that are received from survey, it was observed that khadi can no more be neglected and it is soon becoming a fashion symbol.

Key Words: khadi, awareness, youth, promotion, revival, fashion fabric

1. INTRODUCTION

Khadi is an Indian fabric. Khadi is very closely associated with India's freedom movement and it's a matter of pride for every Indian. This fabric gives us independent National Identity [1]. Khadi also known as 'Khaddar' is hand-spun and hand-woven material. The yarn which is used for weaving of khadi is spun on the spinning wheel called charkha. Khadi is a versatile fabric. It has the unique property of keeping wearer warm in winter as well as cool in summer season. It is woven in such way that it provides passage of air circulation in the fabric. Khadi movement was started by the father of nation, Mahatma Gandhi. It was introduced in 1920 as a political weapon for the boycott of foreign goods; cloth in particular and stimulated a desire for independence as well as attitude of self-discipline in every Indian [2]. This movement of khadi manufacturing and weaving started as symbol of defiance to discourage the Indians from wearing the foreign

clothes. Khadi before Independence was considered as the fabric for the political leaders and rural people. It remained associated with politics for long time [3]. Over time, khadi's quality has improved tremendously. Khadi fabrics are not just restricted to cotton and have many aspects. Khadi blends with other fibers such as silk, wool, polyester etc. Its easy adaptability to a range of designs makes it amenable to both formal and informal look. Also suitable for both Indian and Western styles [4].

1.1 ADVANTAGES

- Handcrafted self textured designs make it unique
- Light weight and airy and lasts long
- It is used to make casual as well as formal wear
- Keeps wearer warm in winter as well as cool in summer season.
- Now as a fashion fabric too
- Can be blended with other fibers so that variety of blends with better properties can be produced
- Most importantly the production process of khadi involves no environmental pollution; hence extremely eco friendly
- It greatly supports the rural artisans to earn their livelihood
- Available not only in the form of cloth but also in the form of Apparels, Personal wear and home textiles, furnishing, rich elaborate occasional wear etc.

1.2 DISADVANTAGES

- Khadi gets easily crumpled.
- Khadi cotton is required to be starched
- Requires maintenance and care
- Expensive
- More demand and less production
- Shrinkage and bleeding of colors



Fig -1: Showcasing Khadi as Fashion Wear



Fig -2: Youth Promoting Khadi

1.3 REVIVAL OF KHADI

After independence, the Government of India took the responsibility of bringing the development of Khadi and Village Industries within the overall framework of the Five Year Plans [5]. In 1957 Government of India set up a statutory commission named as Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) to promote and encourage the development and trade of khadi products in India. The Khadi and Village Industries Programme is a joint effort of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, which is an apex organization at the Central level and the State Khadi and the Village Industries Boards (KVIBs), functioning in various states and Union Territories. The functions of the KVIC are generally to plan, promote, organize and assist in the implementation of programmes for the development of khadi and village industries [6].

Though KVIC was engaged in its activities, khadi was still not receiving the attention of a large number of consumers. Meanwhile various Indian designers realized the potential of khadi and its use; they started experimenting with this freedom cloth to give it a fashionable and glamorous look. Designer Devika Bhojwani pioneered the Swadeshi label of Khadi in 1985 which were distributed through nearly 5000 Khadi Emporia. This was the first step towards changing Khadi's

earlier image of being unfashionable. Some of such efforts are mentioned in Table 1.

Table -1: Efforts taken for revival of Khadi

Year	Endeavour for promotion of khadi
1985	Swadeshi Label of Khadi by Designer Devika Bhojwani
1989	Fashion show by KVIC, displayed 85 dazzling khadi garments created by Devika Bhojwani
1990	Ritu Kumar presented her first Khadi Collection
Sept 2000	Vasundhara Raje (Minister then, for Small Scale Industries) initiated movement to revive all 7000 shops of KVIC in India
May 2001	KVIC set their first air conditioned shop in New Delhi
January 2002	High profile textile exhibition on khadi designed by leading Indian fashion designers
October 2012	Narendra Modi (then Chief Minister of Gujarat) appealed to all to buy khadi and promote khadi culture (<i>Speaking on the eve of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary</i>)
2014-15	Khadi production and sale grew by 6%
June 2015	With the collective efforts of government, KVIC and independent labels like Gaurang Shah, Sabyasachi, Fayakun, Red Sister Blue, Cotton Rack and many others started making khadi garments with a contemporary style with international standards of quality
December 2015	Air India places order of worth INR 1.21 crore for their uniforms
January 2016	Promotion of Khadi by Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi through 'Man Ki Baat'
July 2016	IIT Bombay placed the order of 3500 robes for their convocation ceremony, inculcating the feeling of Nationalism among students

Though it is remembered as a fabric of freedom, it is still perceived as unfashionable by many especially youth. Acceptance of khadi as fashion fabric by well known fashioners like Sabyasachi Mukherjee, has forced youth to take note of khadi fabric. Indian designers taking such promising steps to make khadi a brand that not only inspires but aspires the youth seem to be successful. Therefore today, Khadi is attracting small upcoming fashion labels who are exploring possibilities to reinvent

the intricate handspun fabric and keep it relevant in an industry driven by experimentation [7].

At the same time various studies are under taken to create awareness about khadi among youngsters. Government has introduced various schemes to revive status of khadi. Many organizations and researchers are working with KVIC to bring it in main stream fabrics. Also impressive advertisements and marketing strategies are planned to promote khadi. Majority of khadi sale is during month of October due to various offers and schemes introduced by government to promote khadi. It is also interesting to know that the types of garments are no more restricted to kurta or jacket. Variety of garments like salwar, kurti, shirts, articles like wall hangings, purses, etc are manufactured under KVIC and Handloom industry. IJREAT (International Journal of Research in Engineering & Advanced Technology) has under taken various projects in popularizing khadi. Market surveys are also conducted to find out % sale of khadi as well as awareness [8]. Today khadi which was seen as a cloth worn by the poor, has become quite glamorous, with growing awareness about natural and handmade products, it has cut across class, age and income groups. Also it is gaining a global recognition with the courtesy of Indian fashion industry that promotes the fabric on a global platform, thus grabbing the attention of international fashion designers too [9]. Many Indian celebrities are also promoting the Khadi apparels through various fashion shows.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the knowledge and awareness about khadi among youth
- To study the acceptability of khadi by youth
- To encourage youth to design garments of khadi and present it
- To create publicity and awareness about khadi for its promotion among youth

3. METHODOLOGY

- **TARGET GROUP-** 50 Students of 16-22 years of age group as respondents for survey.

In this particular study a survey was conducted to evaluate the awareness about khadi fabric and its related aspects (basic information) among youth. Questionnaire of around 12 questions was circulated among the target group and their responses were studied.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data collected through the survey was analyzed and represented in the form of percentage of respondents. It was discovered from the data that was collected regarding the use khadi, 66 % of the respondents said that they use

khadi in some or the other form, whereas 34 % of the respondents did not use khadi at all. Surprisingly it was found that 20% (each) of the respondents thought that major application of khadi is for home textiles and furnishing, followed by 18% of the respondents for apparel & 8 % of the respondents considered khadi to be used for any other application.

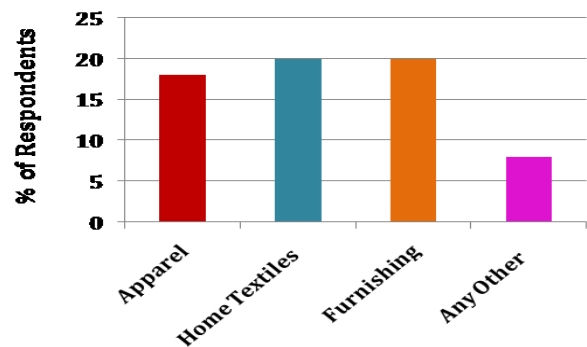


Chart -1: Applications of Khadi

As long as identification of khadi is concerned 76% of respondents could identify it just by feel or texture as it has a special texture. Followed by appearance or look was 16% and 8% of respondents said that they could identify just by color. 82% of the respondents knew the khadi a symbol of freedom where as 18% did not know it.

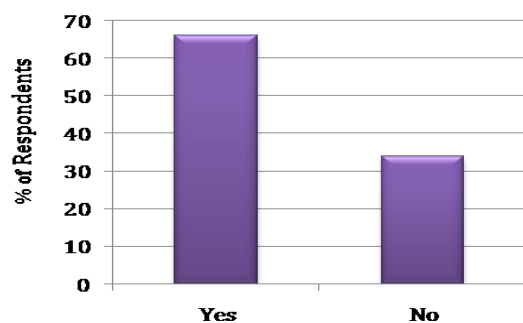


Chart 2- Use of khadi in any form

Nearly 82 % of the respondents were aware of varieties of khadi materials available in market but 18 % were not aware that various khadi materials available in the market. It was very encouraging to know that nearly 95% of respondents knew that khadi is an eco friendly fabric as it is hand spun and hand-woven.

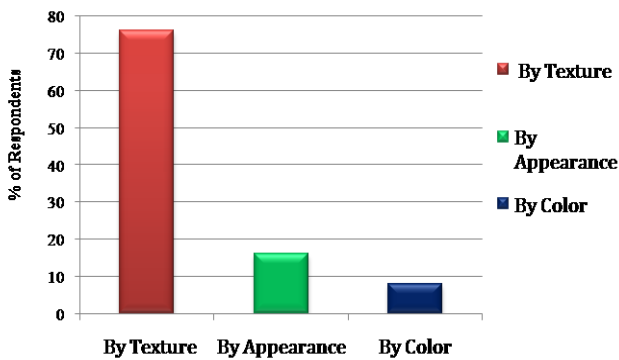


Chart- 3. Identification of Khadi

When asked regarding awareness about the range of khadi materials available in the market, 60% of the respondents knew only about Cotton khadi fabric, 20% of the respondents knew Poly-khadi and 20% knew about Silk khadi. Khadi is commonly considered as fabric for special occasions but the reply of respondents proved it wrong. About 40 % (each) of the respondents considered khadi can be used as occasional as well as for casual wear whereas only 20% of the respondents felt that khadi can be also used as a fashion fabric.

When it comes to actual consumption or usage of khadi fabrics/apparels 40% of people don't use khadi at all even though they are aware of khadi. 10% of the respondents have more than 5 apparels of khadi and 6% have around 3-5 garments in their wardrobe. Whereas nearly 45% of the respondents have at least 1- 2 garments of khadi in their wardrobe. Even though the data was collected from today's youth generation, 90 % of the respondents confidently knew that khadi movement was started by Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

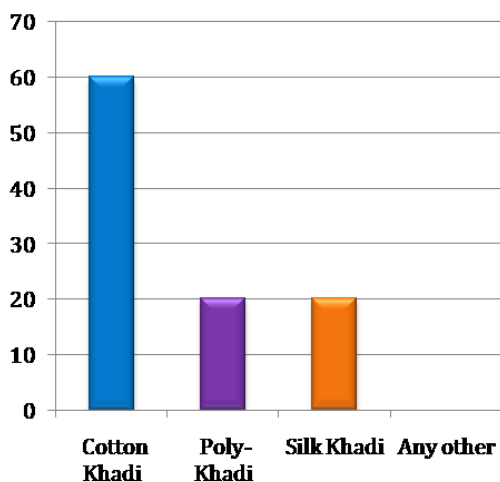


Chart- 4. Awareness about Varieties of khadi

To check whether they were aware of other name of khadi fabric, it was very encouraging to know that more than 80% the youth of today knew that khadi is also known as Khaddar. But at the same time 10% of the respondents said it as cotton and 2% as silk.

To check their awareness about the occasion when consumers get discount on khadi or various schemes offered by KVIC for khadi, 82% of the respondents were aware that discounts are offered on 2nd October (on occasion of Gandhi Jayanti) and may continue for a week or month. 10% said that it is given during 15th August and around 8 % of the respondents said that discount is given on 26th January.

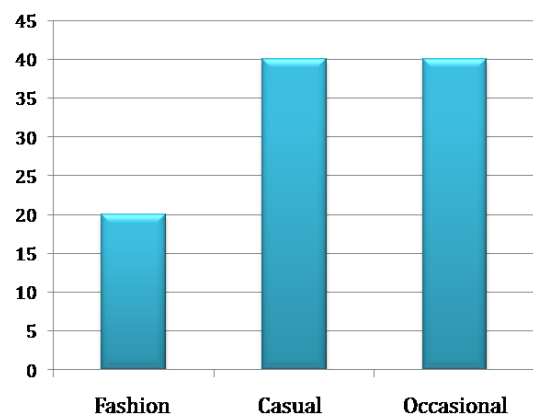


Chart- 5 Consideration of Khadi as

Regarding the general opinion of today's youth about khadi, 40% of the respondents felt it is costly and that is one of the reasons that it is used by limited people. 40% of the respondents also felt that there is a limited variety is available in khadi for consumers may be due to limited colors and designs. This kind of consumers' opinions about khadi is leading to the non-acceptance of khadi as a regular wear.

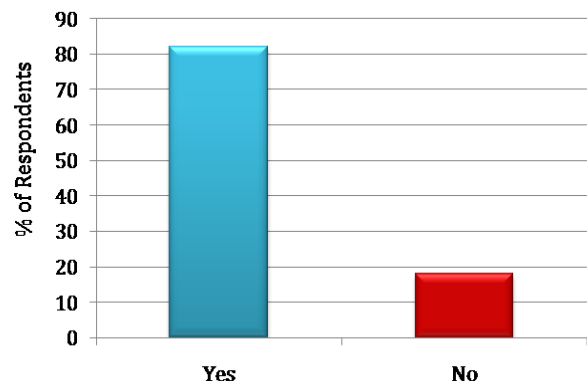


Chart - 6. Awareness about khadi as a symbol of Nationalism

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information of various research papers and above survey it can be concluded that the people do know about khadi and why this movement was started, who initiated it and its impact. Though the pace of technological development in rural cottage and village industries including Khadi sector in India has been extremely slow [10], KVIC has to play an important role in constant promotion of khadi especially among youth. KVIC should further take initiatives through research and development to modify the techniques for improving raw material, invent newer blends which will overcome the problem of maintenance and cost as it will encourage the consumers to buy and wear khadi. Substantial efforts need to be taken in order to reduce the cost and make it more consumer friendly for its awareness and promotion.

As far as young generation is concerned, they are aware about khadi fabric but not really ready to accept it as major part of their wardrobe. This is mainly due to limitations like less availability of colors, prints, textures etc. However khadi is immersing as a fashion fabric, leading Indian designers like Sabyasachi indulges with khadi, is forcing fashion world to take serious note of it in India as well as abroad. Therefore the study like this show a lot of further scope for research which can be carried out, may be by researchers as well as by designers to make khadi more popular which would help building this cottage industry well in our country, India.

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BIOGRAPHIES



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