# Journey of Khadi in India: From Gandhi's Signature Fabric to Fashion Garment

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#### **Abstract**

Khadi phrase reminds us of the freedom struggle, it brings the picture of Charkha and Mahatma Gandhi to our minds. Khadi is not only a few random cloth, it performed a prime position in India's independence have become an image of self-reliance for the Indian pleasure. Hand spinning has been acknowledged to Indians for hundreds of years however Gandhi revived India's flagging khadi enterprise, he made the material the image of swadeshi. He advocated humans throughout the country to boycott British made fabric, spin their own yarn and sport khadi. Nearly after more than seventy years of freedom, khadi maintains to amaze human beings around the world and promoting sustainable style. It acquired a higher degree of interest from the fashion enterprise. The present study takes a look at khadi as a signature material of Gandhi and its place in the independence war. It exhibits that khadi material is an image of freedom that experiences the India's historic weaves, but embraces modern-day India to discover its relevance. The study, at additionally, investigates the growth of the Khadi and Village Industries (KVI) and propose the policy suggestion for the future improvement.

**Keywords:** Khadi, Freedom war, Mahatma Gandhi, Self-reliance, the Fashion enterprise, KVI.

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#### Introduction

Khadi is a word used for fabric which is hand-spun and handwoven, typically from cotton fiber. It is likewise made of silk and wool, regarded as khadi silk or woolen khadi respectively. The cloth is well known for its rugged texture, pleasant feel and capacity to maintain human beings temperature during different seasons. Since Khadi is made at the handloom, the woven designs are distinct, long lasting and smooth to maintain (Jain and Pant,

2015). This cloth is extraordinarily flexible in product creation. In rural India, handloom manufacturing meets the dual goals of sustainable manufacturing and employment creation. This material is alive from historic instances to this contemporary era. Under British rule, India become flooded with cheap cotton items from England in which the adoption of technical invention gave the producers an additional benefit over the Indian weavers, which affected critically the spot of the Indian spinners and weavers. To



triumph over this trouble Gandhi began out advertising the khadi material. Gandhi made the Swadeshi Movement accelerated with khadi. He additionally promoted its simplicity as a social equalizer and made it the nation's material. Over time, khadi's excellent has advanced tremendously. Its smooth adaptability to a variety of designs makes it amenable to each formal and casual appearance which is likewise appropriate for each Indian and Western styles. Today, khadi which changed into visible as a material worn through the politicians, has turn out to be pretty glamorous, with growing awareness about natural and homemade products, it has gone throughout elegance, age and profits groups. Also, it is gaining international popularity with the courtesy of the Indian fashion enterprise that promotes the cloth on the international platform, therefore grabbing the eye of global designers too.

#### **Review of Literature**

An evaluation of crucial literature on the subject is tried to figuring out the research gaps and problems for further study. The issues and problems discussed in these researches by different authors at different times are reviewed in their historical point of view.

Hukkerikar (1960) in his paper tested the expansion of Khadi and Village industries and observed that spinning and weaving of Khadi turned into undertaken through those who couldn't even earn a dwelling salary and who had no different approach of making out of a bare subsistence. The study additionally explains the sooner improvement of these industries and the help the authorities had given during the preliminary years and analysed the threats and uncertainty confronted by this industry.

Joachim Alwa (1960) in his paper defined the aversion individuals had towards Khadi weavers

when Khadi was intoduced and the way it modified over the period.

Somappa. M (1968) in his article highlighted the significance of Khadi and Village Industries in a growing economy like India. He said that even as massive scale industries had an important function to play in the economic growth of India, the Khadi and Village Industries and different small rural based industries additionally deserved to be enlarged and reinforced in view of their potential to offer gainful employment to a huge number of people in rural regions.

Arunachaam.K (1974) in his work mentioned and defined the diverse schemes, plans and efforts made by the Charkha Sangh, the Sarva Seva Sangh and by the KVIC. He additionally commented at the fundamental concept of Khadi and defined the Gandhian technique towards the rural based enterprises and the position of Khadi in economic improvement.

Mishra.S.N and Sharma (1986) in their paper defined rural industrialization, the function of rural industries within the Indian economy and the difficulty of rural industries in the country.

Sinha, D.K. (1991) in his work examined the industrial illness of small-scale industries in India. On the premise of in-intensity case studies, he highlighted the reasons of illness of Small Scale Units.

Vijayagopalan.S, (1993) in his paper studied about the handicrafts sector, which was not only significant in its capacity to earn foreign exchange but was also important as a provider of employment to nearly four million artisans spread mainly in rural and semi-urban areas of the country, who were among the weaker sections of the society and made suggestions for overcoming them.



Muniurdi.K (1996) in his study analysed the massive strides made through Khadi in the technological field. He attempted to discover where Khadi stood at that stage from Gandhi's view and tied to peer in right perspective the function Khadi was expected to play in the 21st century.

Pathak. S.M (1996) examined the relevance of KVI in the present economic system with precise connection with our new economic ocean of liberalization and globalization.

Seerangarajan. R, (1998) in his study pointed the monetary elements responsible for the efficient functioning of KVI institutions. He argued that institutions can enhance their financial health through reviewing their inventory policy.

Balasubrahmanya. M.H, (2004) studied the effect of globalization and domestic economic reforms on small enterprise in India. Globalization has established markets for the small industries which are struggling in the domestic market. For gaining the alternative possibilities, awareness needs to be on the improvement of machinery and growth of monetary infrastructure.

Dipankar Cupta (2005) explained the profound modifications which are taking place in the Indian villages. He discovered that the Indian villages revel in falling prices of boom in agriculture, growing migration of labour from villages to cities and the growing non-farm employment.

Subramanyam Bala (2011) probed into the effect of globalization on exports potentials of the small enterprises. It indicates that the proportion of exporting Khadi products in the whole exports has expanded in safety length however remained more or much less stagnated in the course of the liberalization period.

#### Research Gap

After reviewing above studies, it is found that, most of these studies evaluate the changing pattern of the Khadi and Village Industries only. The present study tried to explain the Khadi fabrics role in the independent struggle and in the modern world and it also examines the growth of the KVI in India over the last seventeen years and introduced some policy implications too.

## **Objectives**

- To highlight the khadi's place in the independent battle.
- To evaluate the changing role of khadi in modern fashion industry.
- To explore the development tendency of the khadi and village industries in India.
- To provide appropriate suggestions for the expansion of country's khadi and village industries

## Methodology and Tools of analysis

The present research is largely dependent on Secondary data acquired from the Annual Reports and other publications of Khadi and Village Industries Commission. After collection of the statistics, it further examined with the help of numerical methods like percentages, mean and standard deviation, cumulative value (CV), rvalue, linear growth rate (LGR) and compound growth rate (CGR).

#### Khadi's place in the Independence battle

Mahatma Gandhi commenced the movement of khadi in 1918 to protest against the western outfit. He dynamically holds up on khadi industry as it is able to resuscitate village weaving and to lessen material imports from Britain. It promoted an ideology that Indians could be self-reliant on



cotton and could compete with overseas material and apparel. The khadi movement meant for boycotting overseas items which includes cotton and selling Indian items, thereby enhancing India's economic system. Mahatma Gandhi started out selling the spinning of khadi for rural selfemployment and self-reliance (rather than the usage of material produced industrially in Britain) in 1920s India, accordingly making khadi an essential component and icon of the Swadeshi movement. Being a political weapon, khadi gave a definite meaning to the Swadeshi Spirit and to refuse overseas items. Khadi provided the possibility for each man and woman to promote the self-discipline and self-sacrifice as part of the nonco-operation motion. During the swadeshi movement thousands of Indians gathered out in the roads and burned their foreign-produced items (Coleman, 2013). It, thus, become an icon of nationalism, equality and self-reliance all through India's freedom war. Khadi turned into the significant center of the formative behavior of the people and mould the Satyagraha powerful towards the British rule (Gupta, Rastogi and Mathur, 2018).

All India Spinners Association (AISA) was created in 1925 which focused its interest on manufacturing sale and propagation of khadi. New sorts of khadi have been positioned within the market and the method of carding, spinning, weaving, dyeing and printing became quite stepped forward. After independence in 1947, All India Spinners Association (AISA) organized a bold plan for meeting the cloth requirement of the country with hand spinning and hand weaving and on the identical time, giving employment to a huge quantity of people in rural regions. Mahatma Gandhi emphasized on khadi made in villages, its fashion and sturdiness to fit the taste of the villagers which will create a higher and more potent bond with the agricultural population. In January 1953 the All India Khadi and Village Industries Board was set up. This Board took over the task of the AISA. Later in 1957, so as to triumph over certain procedural problems which had been hampering the development of KVI, the government programes a statutory frame referred to as the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC). Even after the formation of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, the Khadi and Village Industries Board persisted to be an advisory board of this Commission (KVIC, 2019).

## Khadi as a fashion garment

Nearly after more than seven-decade of independence and a century while Gandhi Ji first started out to spin the enduring material, the arena of Khadi is changing. The layout versions and improved quality of the material have made it a worldwide entity. Khadi is not a poor man's cloth anymore. With a few makeovers from the designers, it has turn out to be a style statement. Today, Khadi is not only the symbol of India's freedom but also to its values, pride and evolution. New weaving strategies and progressive Khadi blends are getting used to provide it a contemporary-day touch. In past few years, we see designers launching Khadi collections effectively at a number of the biggest fashion shows of India just like the Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) and the Wills Lifestyle India Fashion Week (WIFW). Famous designers like Rahul Mishra, Anand Kabra, Ritu Kumar and Sabyasaachi Mukherjee use Khadi widely.

Besides natural Khadi cotton and Khadi silk, their blends with man-made green fibers including 'teens' and 'modal' in addition to Khadi-viscose blends are open-heartedly followed through designers as ideal fabric for each modern-day Indian apparels and Western cuts. These new-age fashion enterprise frequently relate the handspun material with famous movements 'eco-friendliness' and 'rural empowerment'. From the freedom



material to the fashion highlight, Khadi has certainly come an extended way. Earlier, khadi become most effective desired with the aid of using the political elegance however now the usage of khadi merchandise has visible demand from youngsters as well. Its simplicity has made it famous within the new generation. Yet, there are numerous who admire it for its minimalist appears with deep Gandhian creative gaze. Soft pastels did with the help of Ansari artisans in Bihar, and Khadi denim introduced in the markets via the Rajkot based Saurashtra Rachnatmak Samiti (SRS) in the early-2000s stays in the highlights of Khadi fashion. The use of Khadi isn't limited to creating clothes. Beautifully-textured Khadi blends are gaining recognition in domestic décors including cushion covers and couch covers and diverse different crafts.

### Scenario of khadi and village industries in India

Country's khadi and Village Industries are the important factor of the financial and artistic existence of its civilization. There are a lot of narratives in the Indian history about the ability of village artisans in generating good types of products. However, during the British regulation, India's fame decreased to importer of finished goods from an exporter of the same. During the 19th century, with the access of reasonably-priced device made goads at the marketplace scene and

additionally because of the modifications in the behavior of the humans, a phase of Khadi and village industries emerged. Moreover, the schemes and policies regarding the growth of the khadi and village industry commenced most effective after gaining the independence and is cleared from the boom in the khadi manufacturing.

## Analysis of production and employment

Evaluation of commercial activities always includes intensity of production and employment beyond the remainders. These two variables constitute the growth of the economy. Additionally, it will offer a solution to straightening out of the situations in privaling the finance of the industries. The present study, consequently, addressed to examine the growth of the khadi and village industry's production and employment for a duration of seventeen years from 2003-04 to 2019-20.

## Production of Khadi and Village Industries

The Production of Khadi and Village Industries from 2003-04 to 2019-20 is provided in the table 1. The production for these years is given in crores of rupees for comparison. The linear annual growth rate and compound annual growth rate are additionally computed here alone with mean, SD, CV and r-value.



Table I. Production - Khadi and VIllage Industries in India (2003-04 to 2019-20) (Rs. in Crores)

year	Khadi	Village Industries	Total
2003-04	624.1	3895.21	4519.31
2004-05	635.89	4476.48	5112.37
2005-06	551.57	5613.48	6165.05
2006-07	431.57	6491.69	6923.26
2007-08	416.69	7140.52	7557.21
2008-09	443.07	8126.3	8569.37
2009-10	453.5	9228.27	9681.77
2010-11	461.54	10458.89	10920.43
2011-12	468.3	11995.54	12463.84
2012-13	484.18	14264.82	14749
2013-14	543.39	16134.32	16677.71
2014-15	585.25	16753.62	17338.87
2015-16	628.98	17508	18136.98
2016-17	673.01	19198.85	19871.86
2017-18	716.98	21135.06	21852.04
2018-19	569.3	17448.31	18017.61
2019-20	809.7	25298	26107.7
Mean	558.7071	12652.2	13210.9
S.D	112.1331	6382.713	6494.846
CV(%)	20.0701	50.44746	48.84994
r-value	0.5184ns	0.9766**	0.9749**
LGR(%)	2.0607**	9.75689**	9.43142**
CGR(%)	1.97948**	11.6750**	11.037**

Source: Annual Reports, Development of Khadi and Village Industries. \*\* Significant at 1 per cent level.

The Khadi industry registered a manufacture of about Rs. 809.7 crores in 2019-20 as compared to Rs. 624.0 crores in 2003-04, representing a raise of 30 per cent. However, the production in village industries achieved a major boom to about Rs. 25,298 crores in 2019-20 from Rs. 3,895 crores in 2003-04, representing a six times growth during studied period. During the spam of studied seventeen years, the total production of country's Khadi and Village Industries reached to Rs. 26,107.70 crores in 2019-20 as compared to Rs. 4519.31 crores in 2003-04.

### Contribution of Khadi sector

The contribution of khadi segment in terms of share in overall khadi and village industries output is quite different from that of village industries which have a major share in the its total production. The contribution of above segments in the overall production of khadi and village industries for the studied period is given in table 2.



Table 2 Sector-wise percentage share to production in Khadi and village industries

year	Khadi	Village Industries
2003-04	16.02	86.19
2004-05	14.21	87.56
2005-06	9.83	91.05
2006-07	6.65	93.77
2007-08	5.84	94.49
2008-09	5.45	94.83
2009-10	4.91	95.32
2010-11	4.41	95.77
2011-12	3.90	96.24
2012-13	3.39	96.72
2013-14	3.37	96.74
2014-15	3.49	96.62
2015-16	3.59	96.53
2016-17	3.51	96.61
2017-18	3.39	96.72
2018-19	3.26	96.84
2019-20	3.20	96.90
Mean	6.802	93.198
S.D	3.695994	3.695994
CV(%)	54.33687	3.965744
r-value	-0.912**	0.9126**
LGR(%)	-16.84**	1.1953**
CGR(%)	-1.459**	1.22035**

Source: Annual Reports, Development of Khadi and Village Industries. \*\* Significant at 1 per cent level

In the beginning of the study, approximately of 13.81 per cent of the overall khadi and village industries output comes from the khadi segment in 2003-04. But due to the high competition in the fabric market the demand for the khadi products doesn't shows a positive image and this consequences leads to the diminishing production pattern with a consentingly declining share to 8.95 per cent in 2005-06 to 5.17 in 2008-09, and to 3.10 by the year 2019-20. The equivalent contribution of Village manufacture showed increasing trends

from 86.19 per cent in 2003-04 to 96.90 in 2019-20. During the studied period, khadi sector's contribution towards the total khadi and village manufacture has decreased to 17 per cent from 2003-04 to 2019-20. The companding share of Village Industries takes off his 17 per cent share over the same time period.

Employment in Khadi and Village Industries

The details of employment generated by Khadi and village industries are shown in Table 3.



Table 3 Employment in Khadi and Village Industries in India (2003-04 to 2019-20) (in Lakhs)

year	Khadi	Village Industries	Total
2003-04	14.01	42.49	56.5
2004-05	13.85	44.44	58.29
2005-06	12.35	46.88	59.23
2006-07	9.56	50.51	60.07
2007-08	8.48	54.16	62.64
2008-09	8.58	57.87	66.45
2009-10	8.61	62.58	71.19
2010-11	8.64	68.14	76.78
2011-12	8.68	74.09	82.77
2012-13	8.8	79.99	88.79
2013-14	9.16	90.11	99.27
2014-15	9.5	94.41	103.91
2015-16	9.81	98.92	108.73
2016-17	10.51	103.65	114.16
2017-18	10.45	108.65	119.1
2018-19	10.69	111.04	121.73
2019-20	10.98	129.4	140.38
Mean	10.15647	77.49	84.35063
S.D	1.774546	26.94822	23.68229
CV(%)	17.47207	34.77639	28.07601
r-value	-0.30458ns	0.98900**	0.9823**
LGR(%)	-1.05385**	6.811030**	5.7932**
CGR(%)	79595**	7.29398**	6.0039**

Source: Annual Reports, Development of Khadi and Village Industries \*\* Significant at 1 per cent level

Khadi and village industries commission's main objective is to generating employment to the rural people. Thus, the growth of employment in Khadi and village industries is studied additionally in the present section. The Khadi industry gave employment to about 14 lakh labour in the country in 2003-04 and the Village industries was approximately 42.49 lakhs during the same time. The employment in the Khadi industry decreased to 10.98 lakhs as on 2019-20. The decline in employment was attributed to the low wages in the sector and the lack of proper awareness and training facilities available across the different

#### Khadi units in the country.

The Village Industries provided employment to around 42.49 lakh people in 2003-04. This increased to 129.40 lakhs, accounting to more than double the employment in a span of seventeen years. The Khadi and Village Industries sector provided employment to around 56.5

lakh people in 2003-04. This increased to 140.38 lakhs in 2019-20. The employment generation in the Khadi and Village Industries sector increased by one and a half times during 2003-20. The



expansion in the number of industries coming under the category of Village Industries and the various subsidy schemes for the start ups in this sector has resulted in the expansion of this sector and corresponding employment generation under village industries sector.

Contribution of khadi in total employment

Table 4 shows the percentage contribtion of khadi sector in overall khadi and village industries in terms of employment.

year	Khadi	Village Industries
2003-04	32.97	75.20
2004-05	31.17	76.24
2005-06	26.34	79.15
2006-07	18.93	84.09
2007-08	15.66	86.46
2008-09	14.83	87.09
2009-10	13.76	87.91
2010-11	12.68	88.75
2011-12	11.72	89.51
2012-13	11.00	90.09
2013-14	10.17	90.77
2014-15	10.06	90.86
2015-16	9.92	90.98
2016-17	10.14	90.79
2017-18	9.62	91.23
2018-19	9.63	91.22
2019-20	8.49	92.18
Mean	15.551	84.449
S.D	5.578438	5.550673
CV(%)	35.87189	6.605688
r-value	-0.940**	0.9400**
LGR(%)	-11.17**	2.05962**
CGR(%)	-10.98**	2.12041**

 $Source: Annual\ Reports,\ Development\ of\ Khadi\ and\ Village\ Industries\ **Significant\ at\ 1\ per\ cent\ level$ 

The contribution of Khadi and Village Industries in terms of employment is presented in the table 4. The conribution of Khadi in the total employment generated in Khadi and Village Industries sector shows a decline, from 24.8 per cent in 2003-04 to 7.82 per cent in 2019-20. The corresponding

employment in Village Industries records an increase from 75.2 per cent to 92.17 per cent. The increasing figures of rural enterprises over the years and improvement in the functioning of these sector are the reasons for this increased workforce in the village industries sector.



## **Research Findings**

As per the above research, the both main characteristics of industrial sector manufacturing and employment has indicated a diminishing trend in the khadi segment over the studied period. However, the generation of employment is not satisfactory (as shown in table 3). Also, the employment is not permanent in nature. The gradual growth of the Khadi and village industries is because of under-utilization of potential due to insufficiency of working capital, absence of demand, unavailability of resources, poor technology, control of infrastructural centers, such as poor administrative skills. Due to the increasing worldwide competition, the issues of Khadi and village industries segments are possibly to push upword because of its gradually more open to the competition from foreign goods and multinational companies.

#### **Conclusion**

Khadi is the soul of India due to its role in the freedom struggle and for uniting people together. It is vital to recognize the individuality of the material and its affiliation with our nation. The advertising of khadi has given an opportunity to each man and woman to domesticate willpower and selfsacrifice as part of the non- co-operation movement and performed an important character in India's independence battle. This sustainable material is well suited with the cutting-edge tendencies and with its rugged texture, comfortable feel and ability to maintain the warm inside in wintry weather and the cool in summer time season have come to be attractive to the brand new generation (Textile & Fashion, 2018). The designers have integrated the material into their designs to provide it new texture, size and historic worth. It has effectively sustained the wealthy cultural background of India and has nonetheless been capable of maintain the fabric applicable in mordern-day. As the world moves towards the direction of commercial fashion, khadi, the cloth of freedom keeps staying unique in lots of approaches with being the supply of spinning earning for the agricultural workers, the material is a reminder to India of its legacy of maintaining the living and of its self-reliance. The Khadi and Village Industries (KVI) sector performs a pivotal position in the Indian economy in terms of its contribution to the country's Industrial production, employment and the introduction of an entrepreneurial base. Therefore, it's far advised that the government have to formulate needy schemes to compete in the global market.

## Recommendations for the growth of Khadi industry

With having the opportunity and strength of industrialization India can accelerate the slow growth of the khadi industry by incresaing the communication system with the help of IT with various Khadi institutions. There is need to improve the training facilities in the khadi units. Also, Khadi and Village industry Commision (KVIC) should maintain a direct contact with weavers and artisans and should register their grievances because they are working in the field and can generate the clear picture to KVIC officials. Additionally, contribution of local people and other organization will be highly rewarding for the development of Khadi units. Adequate infrastructural facilities like power, water, transport and communication services, research and technological facilities might encourage entrepreneurs to improve the scenario of Khadi sector of the state. The proper channelization and utilization is one of the components for achieving growth economically and also various policies and welfare schemes to safeguard skilled and qualitative workers will cater in long run growth of Khadi sector. In order to protect the interests of the khadi segment and facilities its rapid development,



the government, in pursuance of its politics, should initiates the various support measures timely which include the revision of investment ceilings, modernization, technical up-gradation, marketing assistance, fiscal incentives etc.

#### Limitations

During the research, efforts have been made to remain in the four walls of the objectives framed for the study so as to avoid irrelevant discussion and to concentrate on the nucleus of the subject matter of the study. Brevity thus has been given the importance. However the study suffers from following general and specific limitation:

- The relevant data and information for the study have been collected from the secondary sources. Hence, the study carries all the limitations, inherent with the secondary data and information.
- There was non-availability of some requisite data.
- In addition to the parameters covered by the study, some other parameters may exist which may not have been included in the study.

#### Scope for further Research

The present study highlights the khadi fabric's role and its importance in the daily life of Indian peoples. It also revealed the growth pattern of the khadi and village industry of India from 2003-04 to 2019-20 by evaluating the two important parameters production and employment. The future research can be conducted on the total evaluation of country's khadi industry by including the other important parameters like exports and investment. The research study can be extended into the new areas of factors influencing the domestic and international demand of khadi products.

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