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### **Pathways to make “Khadi” sustainable**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Multi-cultural composition like that of India reveals a strong link of physical and climatic lean on the culture of dressing and the socio-psycho aspects of its region. India has rich tradition of textiles and the crafted textiles and costumes are the assets of India. The aim of this paper is to explore the possibilities of incorporating the Indian Fabric Khadi and adapting them in dresses and accessories. Further, the pointed and favorable policies instituted by the government backed by design inputs will give the Khadi industry a fillip. Khadi product diversification has tremendous potential since it can be effectively backing the “Make in India” and “Skill India” initiatives for the textile and garment industry. The paper contributes to the sustainable design area for social, economic and environmental wellbeing. The aim of the paper is to repositioning Khadi as sustainable fashion textile product that fits into the modern lifestyle of the Indian as well as international consumer. The world economy is growing and consumers have realized their responsibility towards nature and are willing to make sincere efforts to preserve the nature and the tradition. To provide further impetus it is important that the stake holders spread awareness, build a brand image and reposition Khadi in the Indian as well as international markets.

**KEY WORDS:** Brand, Khadi, product diversification, Fashion, sustainability.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*“In the future, there won’t be a sustainable sector,  
ALL fashion will be sustainable by design or it won’t exist”*



**Dave Cobban, Consumer Mobilization Director at Nike**

In the current fashion scenario and aggressive marketing, the innovation in product development and business strategies need to adapt to modern practices to preserve the art, technique and brand identity. This research highlights the design process that enables Khadi in repositioning as a sustainable fashion fabric. The attempt is to design and develop Haute Couture styles that fits into the modern life style of the global market. The traditional art forms are greatly appreciated all over the world because of information dissipation provided by the digital age. Furthermore, consumers have realized their responsibility towards nature and traditional crafts and are willing to take efforts to preserve them. Systematic and concentrated effort from designers backed by aggressive marketing will re-position Khadi as a brand in India as well as abroad. Westernization, Liberalization and Globalization is changing the fashion and market status prompting the designers to be innovators. Khadi constitutes an important segment of the textile sector. Khadi has been defined as any cloth woven on handlooms in India from cotton, silk or woolen yarn handspun in India or from a mixture of any two or all of such yarns. Due to the artistic nature of khadi products and with sustained efforts, good demand of khadi products can be created in the international market. KVIC (Khadi and Village Industries Commission) has been creating employment opportunities for spinners, weavers, and other allied artisans. A large number of women artisans are covered under these schemes.<sup>(1)</sup> The aim of this paper is to explore the possibilities of incorporating the Indian Fabric Khadi and adapting them in dresses and accessories.

The concept of implementing the traditional forms of art is in a rapid stage of development that can be implemented on garments through the contemporizing of the concept and everything within it. Pattachithra is a traditional form of art of our country that has its roots of origin in Orissa and is representative form of hand artwork that implements motifs of religious significance onto paper which is now being implemented on fabric as well. Their form of painting is mainly characteristic of the art work done by hand with natural ingredients and naturally developed tools. In general, the styling of the motifs and the artistic technique implemented contains vibrancy in the

form of color and a limited but beautiful exaggeration of the features of devotional characters of gods and goddesses. The Durga motif has been chosen as a representation of the current day woman who is a characteristic representation of today's modern woman.<sup>(2)</sup> Pattachitra is an art form, a means of livelihood for people that is characteristic of bright colors, elegant features and is representative of the traditional gods and goddesses of the mythological importance. Pattachitra is generally done on a prepared canvas and generally contains of traditional design. wear.



Figure:1: Durga Motif from Patachitra

The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, urged the people of India to wear khadi garments. It was not only a call to create self-reliance but also a call to wear something that could demonstrate the unity of India. Khadi was given an important status by Gandhiji after his return from South Africa. While in search of the Charkha, Gandhiji felt that for a nation to turn to mass production, it had to return to indigenously produced goods. Most of the khadi cloth is of pure white (bleached or unbleached), and most of the people wear them based on their “ideology”. Khadi has an extremely important connection with Indian freedom movement, and has become virtually symbolic of the struggle for freedom.<sup>3</sup>

Alexander the Great, when he invaded the country in 327 BC, was dazzled by the art of fabric making and printing, as also was Marco polo, the Venetian traveler. It was in 1921 that Gandhiji launched the movement of 'spin your own cloth and buy hand spun cloth', which gained momentum making khadi, the fabric of the freedom struggle. In 1953 when the Khadi and Village Industries Board was established, it had only 156 registered institutions. Today every village, either remote or small, has its own khadi institution. Initially weaving of khadi was rather difficult, as it was impossible to weave a full length of cotton with the uneven khadi thread. Today the range of khadi products is unlimited from garments to household linen to furnishing, etc.

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) have contributed significantly to the rural development of the Indian economy through its presence - prior to independence in an unorganized, unstructured manner; as well as in the post-independence era in a structured, organized

manner. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), is a statutory organization engaged in promoting and developing Khadi and Village industries created by the Act of Parliament (No.61 of 1956 and as amended by Act No.12 of 1987), Khadi and Village Industries Commission was established in April 1957, taking over the former All India Khadi and Village Industries Board. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission is charged with the planning, promotion, organization and implementation of programmes for the development of Khadi and Village Industries in rural areas

Khadi has the unique property of keeping the wearer warm in winter as well as cool in summer season. This fabric on washing is more enhanced, thus, the more you wash it, better the look. Khadi easily lasts years together, at least for 4-5 years. Very attractive. and designer apparel can also be made from doing handwork on the khadi garments. The weaving of khadi is preceded by the spinning of the thread on the charkha after which it goes on to the bobbin winder, warper, sizer, and finally the weaver. The khadi board organizes spinning while weaving is done by the weavers at their home in an individual capacity. Spinning is mostly done by the women in villages. During spinning of khadi, the threads are interwoven in such a manner that it provides passage of air circulation in the fabric.



Figure 2: Genesis of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).

Today the Khadi and Village Industries have a strong foothold. The low capital investment, the easy availability of raw materials and the need for simple skills favor the villages industries. These provide a livelihood to the villager serve to supplement the income of the peasant. Since a majority of these vocations involve anterior and posterior industries, these lead to the overall growth and development of the village. <sup>(4)</sup>



Figure 3: Factors for revival of Khadi.

In this paper an attempt has been made to contemporize the design of Pattachitra and apply the same on westernized khadi wear. The aim of the study was to apply Pattachitra motifs on the khadi red carpet wear. The methodology included a style analysis with the basis of bringing out new trends by analyzing the old. It included the novel idea generation to bring out a new concept from to formulate new ones that revolutionize red carpet fashion. This study can be extended and the product range and diversification could be explored contributing to the design research and new trends.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Materials used

#### 2.1.1 Fabrics Used

**Khadi** : khaddar or khadi is handspun, hand-woven natural fiber cloth that has originated from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan mainly made out of cotton. The cloth is usually woven from cotton and may also include silk, or wool, which are all spun into yarn on a spinning wheel called a charkha. It is a versatile fabric, cool in summer and warm in winter.

**Organza**: Organza is a thin, plain weave, sheer fabric traditionally made from silk. Many modern organza are woven with synthetic filament fibers such as polyester or nylon. Silk organza is woven by a number of mills along the Yangtze River and in the province of Zhejiang in China. A coarser silk organza is woven in the Bangalore area of India. Deluxe silk organza are woven in France and Italy.



**Cotton-Poplin:** A fabric that is made of the cotton fiber. It is a plain-woven fabric that is light weight and has been used for lining in these products. It is lightweight, compatible, flexible and comfortable.

**Trims used:** Thread, metallic anklet baubles, needles



Figure 4: Khadi and Organza Fabrics.

## 2.2 Geometric properties of Materials

Table 1: Parameters of fabrics

PARAMETERS		FABRIC CONTENT		
Sl.no	Type of fabric	Khadi fabric	Organza	White cotton fabric
1	Yarns	Cotton, cotton	synthetic	Cotton, cotton
2	Type of weave	plain	plain	plain
3	Weight of fabric (GSM)	85	33	56
4	Thickness(mm)	0.16	0.12	0.16
5	Ends per inch (EPI)	82	92	97
6	Picks per inch (PPI)	74	84	87

The fabrics were also tested for: colorfastness to washing, colorfastness to perspiration, colorfastness to crocking (wet and dry).

**Materials used for embroidery:**

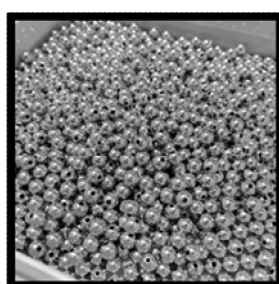


Fig 5 Silver beads

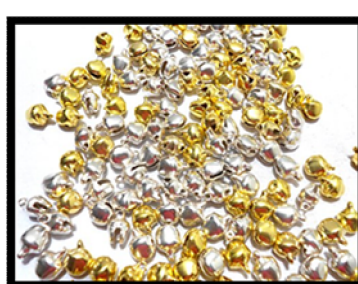


Fig 6 Anklet Baubles



Fig 7 Embroidery Threads

**Silver beads:** Tiny circumference ball of hardened plastic that is coated with silver paint that serves as an enamel.

**Anklet Baubles:** Generally used for anklets. It is made out of a flexible metal with a tiny ball on the inside that serves for establishing sound within the bauble and thus emitted outside. It is available in gold and silver.

**Embroidery threads:** Generally, two ply, used exclusively for embroidery. Available in a large range of colors.

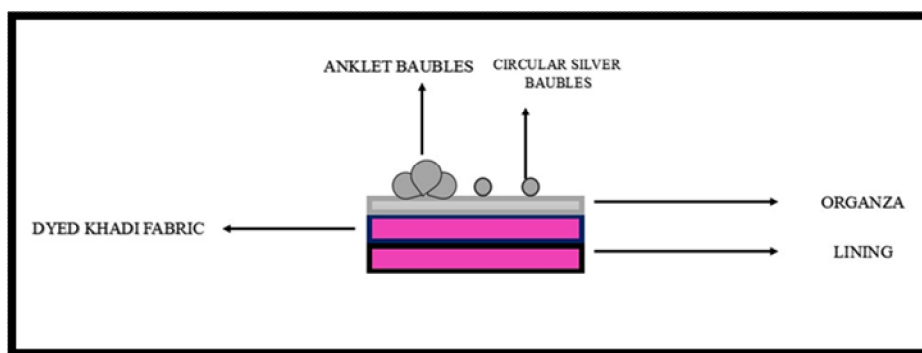
### **2.3 The motif**

#### **Designing the motif**

The motif was designed based off of the inspiration of Goddess Durga from the traditional art of Pattachithra of Orissa. The features and design characteristics were contemporized to achieve a novel print design to be applied with help of screen printing later on.

### **2.4 Embroidery on marked fabric**

The pieces to be cut out from the fabric were marked in such a way that a stay stitch was done around a given area. The three layers of the fabric were layered one on top of the other. They were layered in the order as follows: Dyed Khadi fabric – over which the organza was laid – above which the anklet baubles and the silver balls were embroidered.



**Figure. 8: Texture development and value addition**

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The salient features of Khadi fabrics are that it is light and soft, It is comfortable, can be subjected to dyeing and printing and has inherent strength. Organza fabrics are also light weight, sheer, shiny and versatile to match with various textures.

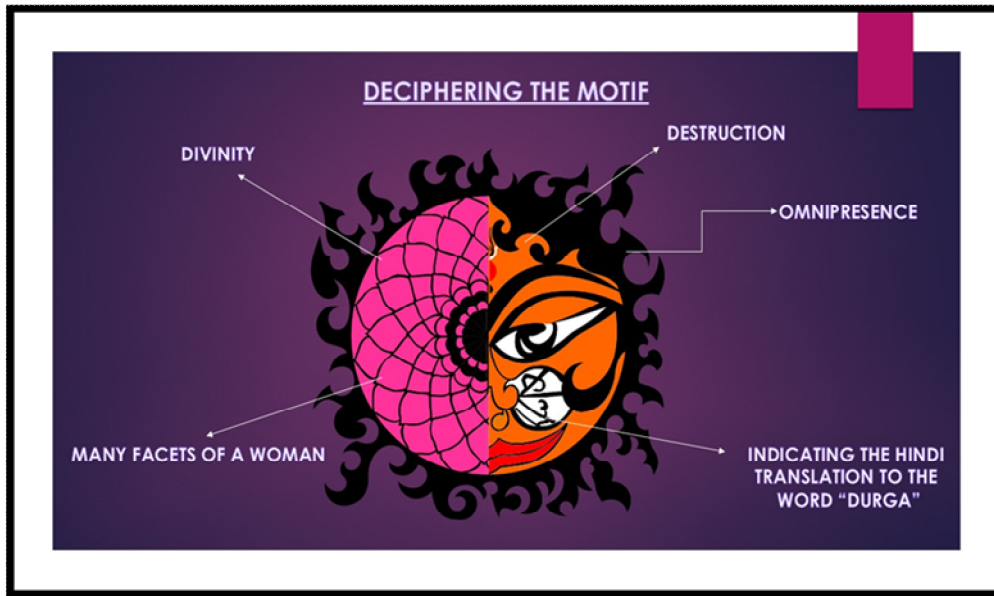


Figure 9: Correlation of the traditional and contemporized motifs

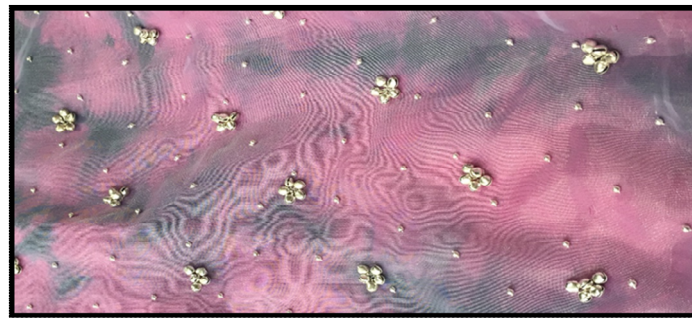


Figure 10: Value addition on organza fabric

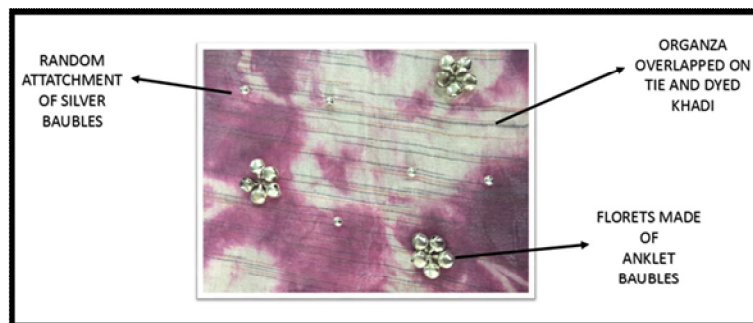


Figure 11: Value addition on tie & dyed Khadi fabric

The design is a knee length ensemble that is a one-piece garment that is made of cream-colored khadi for the bottom that is pleated and dual color dyed khadi and organza for the top blouse that contains anklet bauble embroidery and characterized by flared sleeves with patches and a sweet heart neckline. The bottom has Durga motifs that shows the evolution of divinity and destruction.





Figure 12: Design -1: Invigorating Agility

The design is a knee length ensemble that is a two piece that is made of cream-colored khadi for the bottom and dual color dyed khadi and organza for the top blouse that contains anklet bauble embroidery and characterized by being sleeveless and a U neckline. The bottom has Durga motifs. And the bottom contains a trail of embroidered organza.



Figure 13: Design – 2: Beneficial Lightness

#### 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Kantha.G.in his thesis states that problems faced by sarvodaya products and their marketability and expresses that, no more khadi can be sold on emotion. Similar situation is faced by

the centers from various states. Research and product development will ensure wider market. Effective promotional methods through documentation, publications and advertisements, e-commerce will enhance sales and revenue. Frances Sinha and Sanjay Sinha (2012) have pointed out that promotion of industries based on local resources and skill is a vital component of planning for employment and income distribution.

The fashion industry runs based upon the consumers acceptance and the consumers tend to buy clothes and other fashion goods based upon their knowledge of the product and the influence it has on the consumer. The consumer is now exposed to various forms of media and tend to know all the latest trends especially through red carpet events. Red carpet events tend to represent the latest trends that tend to occur and all type of red-carpet events be it international or within a particular region tends to utilize the spotlight to bring into knowledge of the buyer the different fabrics, prints, colors and silhouettes etc. And thus, slowly leading to their spread within the market to reach the consumer eventually in the right price ranges that may be affordable. Red carpet wear has tremendous influence on fashion and is the part of media and fashion culture. It attracts attention from people and is followed by the people all over the world, especially women's red-carpet wear enjoys greater focus.



Figure 14: “Khadi spins employment and weave prosperity in rural India”

Designing using Khadi fabrics and value addition using traditional art forms of Pathachitra can be one of the solutions for better financial performance. Most of the studies have focused on

marketing the Khadi products, marketing strategies adopted by Khadi units, customer satisfaction and attitudes towards these products.



**Figure 15: Brand Positioning.**

This paper is an attempt to contribute to the products development and sustainability aspect for the global market not compromising on the cultural ethos. This is essential since we are living in an age of digital marketing and global market that still remains untapped and harbors a lot of potential, if implemented successfully.

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