

# A Study on Consumer Attitude and Perception Towards Contemporary Stage of Marketing of Khadi Products in Theni District

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## OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 6

Special Issue: 1

Month: March

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2321 - 4643

Impact Factor: 3.122

Citation:

Gunasri, G. "A Study on Consumer Attitude and Perception Towards Contemporary Stage of Marketing of Khadi Products in Theni District." *Shanlax International Journal of Management*, vol. 6, no. S1, 2019, pp. 71–76.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2590385>

## Abstract

*Khadi is very closely associated with India's freedom movement in today's world and it's a matter of pride for every Indians. khadi represented a powerful symbolic challenge to British imperialism, but Indians never realized it even after independence. During the freedom struggle many had worn khadi more for its political effectiveness than for love of the cloth, just as many had spun their own yarn more out of self-sacrifice and national duty than out of belief in the economic and moral benefits of hand spinning. But after the post-independence, Khadi products are not well attracted for major consuming customers. Though its products are diversified, their penetration levels of products among customers are very low. The study would highlight the efficiency and inefficiency of the study unit which in turn would help the study unit to improve further in its operations and set correct measures to increase its sales by improving its customers. This study also examines the level of satisfaction of usage of products among customers. The present study will help us to identify the ways how to promote khadi products in market. This will help us to specifically trace out the customer's opinion about the khadi products and what drives them to purchase the khadi products.*

**Keywords:** Khadi revival, post- independence, contemporary.

## Introduction

Khadi, which symbolized self reliance and emancipation during the freedom struggle in India but it has lost its sheen over the years. And there are several reasons for the same. Post 1947, India opted for state led large scale industrialization. With many Indian industrialists setting up huge textile mills, the mass production of fine clothes led to the availability of clothes at lower prices. People began to buy machine-made textiles and thus Khadi began losing out to the mill fabric. In January 1953, the All India Khadi and Village Industries Board was set up to provide employment to thousands of spinners all over India. In 1957, the Khadi and Village Industry Commission (KVIC) was established to take over the work of the board. KVIC was formed as a nodal agency to promote Khadi all over India through its exclusive outlets known as Khadi Bhandars. The Government of India (GoI) has ever since continued its support to Khadi. Khadi has been considered that it is root in the freedom struggle of India.. Gandhi wanted Indians to spin their own cotton thread and to weave Khadi, thereby, providing employment to many Indians and contributing to the country's self-sufficiency.

### **Post Independence of Khaki**

During the post-independence era, Indian industrialists set up capital intensive textile mills. Due to mass production, these mills could offer fine cloth at lower prices. Synthetic material like polyester was available at a very low price compared to Khadi. Thus despite all policy incentives to popularize Khadi, people bought machine made textiles.

In order to popularize khadi among the masses, in 1957, the government set up the KVIC. It had the following broad objectives:

- The social objective of providing employment
- The economic objective of producing saleable articles, and
- The wider objective of creating self-reliance amongst the poor and developing a strong rural community spirit.

Besides Khadi, KVIC also dealt with other products such as toilet soaps, detergents, honey, pickles, spices, incense sticks, handmade paper, leather, ceramics, and many other agro-based products. To keep the spirit of Khadi alive and promote it as a national fabric, KVIC has set up many outlets across India. As a result thousands of spinners, who wove the fabric could sell their output through the vast network of KVIC retail outlets. However, the situation did not improve much. The poor quality of garments sold through the KVIC outlets, resulted in customers' dissatisfaction. People even complained that the quality of Khadi had deteriorated and hence it faded easily. In the 1990s, very few people bought Khadi. Khadi was bought only during the annual discount sale.

However, there were a few problems. According to designers, the production of Khadi was inconsistent and the cloth was prone to shrinkage and fabric stretch. Besides, fabric colours in khadi were also limited. Red tapism and bureaucracy prevalent in the Indian system further hampered the growth of the Khadi sector. In spite of having a wide distribution network, there were problems, especially middlemen. Corruption was rampant. There were many bogus Khadi units operating in the country, which made it extremely difficult to claim rebates from the Government of India (GoI).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Khadi is still in the introduction stage and, is now becoming a brand. Many people and regions are still not aware about khadi, and also people who are aware of khadi still prefer the mill cloth because of the price factor. Due to the lack of technology, khadi has been facing great competition with the other products. Another problem in khadi is not proper marketing by government. They are given platform on state and national level exhibitions but they are not IT friendly hence not able to come on online platforms to sell their products. A middleman takes the advantage and takes the product at very cheap cost from them and sells it at very high rates. Besides the manufacturers are facing problem due to liquidity crunch as the government is not paying the rebate regularly so, the manufacturers cannot promote their products and services widely. A Raw material is bought by the khadi institutions which differs in cost as well as the quality. Therefore, there is a considerable variation in the quality of the finished products even in the same sale price range besides, the equipment involved at preprocessing and spinning-weaving stages affect the quality in a hugely way. Weak R&D infrastructure and transfer mechanism lead to limited design patterns available to the customers. Naturally, the customers who have limited options end up not buying the goods at all.

### **Objectives**

1. To identify the customer's attitude towards khadi products at the contemporary stage.
2. To identify the problems in the present market of khadi products.
3. To identify the satisfaction level on khadi products in the present market.

### Scope of the Study

Khadi activities occupy a place of significance in India’s rural economy as the khadi and village industries(KVI) sector employs the most marginalized masses. Of late, khadi which symbolized self- reliance emancipation during the freedom struggle in India after that it has lost its vigor over the years against aggressive marketing by the big domestic and multinational players. In this context, the study on the customer’s contemporary attitude towards khadi products may help the policy makers in formulating the suitable marketing strategies to augment its sales.

### Research Methodology

This study was conducted in Theni district in India. As of 2011 the Theni district has a total population of 1,245,899 with a sex ratio of 980 females for every 1,000 males. The total area of Theni district is 3242.3sq km and five taluks and 22town panchayat and 130 village panchayat in Theni district. The study covers both opinion of male and female and the sample of 50 users of Khadi products in Theni district was selected for this study.

The present study based on the primary data. It has been collected by means questionnaires, which were distributed to customers of Theni district and the secondary data has been collected from various articles and further details have been collected from the various data sources on the internet.

### Analysis and Interpretation

#### Socio Economic Background of Respondents

S. No	Socio Economic Background	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	15-20 years	1	2%
		21-25 years	8	16%
		26-30 years	15	30%
		above 30 years	26	52%
			50	100%
2	Education qualification	School level	19	38%
		undergraduate	22	44%
		post graduate	5	10%
		professional	4	8%
			50	100%
3	Monthly income	1000-2000	4	8%
		2000-3000	10	20%
		4000-5000	31	62%
		Above 5000	5	10%
			50	100%
4	Marital status	Single	1	2%
		Married	45	90%
		Widowed	4	8%
		Divorced	0	0%
			50	100%

**Source:** primary data

It is observed from the above that out of 50 respondents 52% of respondents are belongs to the age group of above 30 years, Majority (44%) of respondent's has completed their of under graduation level, 62% of respondent's earning their monthly income between 4000-5000 and 90% of the respondents belongs to the category of married .

**Opinion Regarding Khadi with Other Fabric as Perceived by Customers**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>No.of Respondents</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>
other fabrics are cheap	12	21%
costly, more variety in other fabric	25	50%
khadi not durable	3	6%
khadi is more comfortable	4	8%
handmade, good gesture	3	6%
khadi silk good	2	4%
khadi has a great feel	1	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** primary data

It is inferred from the above table there are about 50% of the respondents opinion regarding khadi is quite costly comparatively with the other products it has not more variety, 21% of the respondents expressed their opinion that other fabrics are cheap, there are about 8% of the respondents feel khadi is more comfortable,6% of the respondents feel khadi is handmade and it gives good gesture, only 4%of the respondents expressed their opinion that it has a great feel.

**Reasons Expressed for Not Wearing Khadi**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>No.of Respondents</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>
no designs	4	8%
bad or rough finish	6	12%
need maintenance	7	14%
not durable	8	16%
Expensive	25	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** primary data

It is revealed from the above table there are 50% of the respondents feel khadi is very expensive product,16% of the respondents are saying it is not durable item,14% of the respondents feel need more maintenance, there are about 12%of the respondents expressed their opinion on khadi cloth is bad or rough finish and 8% of the respondents are saying that there is no designs in khadi clothes.

**Problems Regarding Qualities of Khadi Fabric**

<b>Qualities</b>	<b>No.of Respondents</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>
Colour fastness	10	20%
No Softness of fabric	2	4%
More Shrinkage	21	42%

No durability	9	18%
No Skin friendly	3	6%
Uncomfort	5	10%
TOTAL	50	100%

It is revealed from the above table there are about 42% of the respondents feel it has more shrinkage, 20% of the respondents are saying that the fabric of khadi is colour fastness, 18% of the respondents expressed their opinion that there is no durability of khadi fabric, there are about 10% of the respondents feel it is very uncomfortable to wear and only 4% of the respondents are saying that there is no softness of fabric.

#### Satisfaction Level at the Time of Buying from Khadi Shop

Factors	Mean Value	Rank
(a) Vehicle Parking facility	1.10	X
(b) Window Display	7.11	III
(c) Appearance of the Shop	6.21	IV
(d) Response of Sales Staff	10.4	I
(e) Individual attention	9.12	II
(f) Product variety display	3.10	VII
(g) Baskets / Trolley system	2.20	VIII
(h) Credit card payment facility	3.12	VI
(i) Debit card payment facility	1.2	IX
(j) Packing and Delivery	4.34	V
Total	50	100%

It is revealed from the above table that response of sales staff obtained first rank in mean value, individual attention scored second rank in mean value, third rank in mean value is window display, appearance of the shop obtained the fourth rank in mean value, packing and delivery is in fifth rank, credit card payment facility obtained sixth rank in mean score, product variety display is in seventh rank, baskets/trolley system is scored in eighth rank, debit card payment scored ninth rank in mean value and vehicle parking facility is in tenth rank in mean score.

#### Satisfaction about the Various Factors of Khadi Products

Factors	Mean Value	Rank
Quality	12.1	I
Order	8.2	III
Durability	5.2	V
Availability	10.1	II
Price	3.2	VII
Packaging	6.1	IV
Designs	5.1	VI

It is observed from the above table that quality is in the first rank in mean score, availability of products is in the second rank, order is obtained in the third rank, packaging is in the fourth rank, durability of the products is in the fifth rank, designs obtained in the sixth rank in mean score and at last price hold the seventh rank.

### **Suggestions**

- According to analysts, Khadi requires government sanction in every single activity and has therefore been stuck in a bureaucratic swamp, unable to increase its output or raise the quality of the fabric.
- KVIC must allot a special advertising budget to promote the fabric.
- KVIC should plan to launch an advertising campaign in India and abroad to create awareness among people about Khadi and its uses.
- KVIC should explore the possibilities of using e-commerce system to the market for Khaki products.
- The government plays a paternalistic role in khadi sector restricting the choices for production, sales, distribution and marketing as well as imposing the rules and regulations in the section. This has resulted in restricting the growth of khadi market in India. So, government can modify the rules and regulation imposed on khadi.
- By introducing new designs and technologies the production could be introduced.
- Khadi institution should concentrate variety of products; it should promote by giving diversified products.
- There are significant inefficiencies associated with systems and procedures of KVIC, resulting in the failure of saleable khadi products. So, KVIC should regulate the proper steps for promoting Khadi products.

### **Conclusion**

Khadi still in the introduction stage and, is now becoming a brand. Many people and regions are still not aware of khadi and also people who are aware of khadi still prefer the mill cloth because of the price factor. Thus, khadi has to face great competition with the other clothes, also because khadi lacks in technology. The sale ability of any textile depends on its USP and performance. For many years, the promotion for Khadi had been on emotional and political grounds while its quality and variety had been ignored completely. Khadi has very little to offer in terms of fabric performance. It looks attractive when starched and kept in showrooms but, it does not remain the same after washing. Even finer counts and blends of Khadi cannot withstand many washes and thus, cannot be used for day-to-day purposes. It was becoming extremely difficult for Khadi to compete with the high-tech, color-fast, wrinkle-free, mill-made cotton and blends available today. However, Khadi, like any other craft of India, would need to face the challenge of quality and produce contemporary designs, which suit the tastes of the present generation.

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