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+918988885050



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www.vajiraoinstitute.com



info@vajiraoinstitute.com

YOJANA MAGAZINE ANALYSIS

(May 2024)

(Part 2/3)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

PART 1/3

- REGIONAL DIVERSITY IN INDIAN WEAVING

PART 2/3

- INDIAN WEAVES PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY
- KHADI: THE ICON OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

PART 3/3

- HANDLOOM PRODUCTS OF INDIA
- WEAVING AS A LIVELIHOOD

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INDIAN WEAVES PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

Today, as the world embraces sustainability as a guiding principle, the **significance of Indian weaves has only magnified**, and at the forefront of this movement stands the **Cotton Corporation of India (CCI)**, playing a pivotal role in ensuring the sustainability of cotton farming and weaving practices.

The introduction of the '**Kasturi Cotton Bharat**' brand, with its end-to-end traceability using **blockchain technology**, is a groundbreaking initiative, setting a new standard for transparency in the cotton textile value chain to uplift the valuation of Indian cotton and promote the rich textile heritage of India by combining traditional craftsmanship with a touch of luxury.

COTTON AS A SUSTAINABLE FABRIC

Cotton holds immense significance in India not only as a **commercial crop** but a **symbol of our country's rich textile heritage**. It is also an emblem of tradition, artistry & sustainability.

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India boasts rich legacy of weaving also with immense diversity. (as seen in the previous topic) **Each region has its own style & pattern.** But largely, the commonality is cotton.

Indian weaves are **eco friendly** inherently since the Indian weavers have relied on natural fibres like **cotton, silk, jute & wool.** These fibres are sourced locally and **processed by using environment friendly techniques.**

These fibres are **renewable, biodegradable & support biodiversity** unlike synthetic fibres.

TRADITIONAL WEAVING PRACTICES

Traditional Indian weaving practices are **deeply ingrained in local communities,** fostering a **sense of social cohesion and economic empowerment.** Weaving clusters scattered across the country provide livelihoods to millions of artisans, often in rural areas where alternative employment opportunities are scarce.

By supporting Indian weaves, **consumers not only invest in sustainable fashion but also contribute to the preservation of traditional crafts** and the welfare of artisan communities.

COTTON CORPORATION OF INDIA

Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), is playing a pivotal role in ensuring the sustainability of cotton farming and weaving practices.

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ABOUT CCI:

The Cotton Corporation of India Limited (CCI) is a **central public sector undertaking (PSU)** that is owned by the **Government of India** and is under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Textiles.**

The CCI was **established on July 31, 1970** under the Companies Act of 1956 and its **headquarters are in Mumbai.** The CCI's roles and functions have changed over time to reflect the country's cotton economy.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CCI

The CCI's responsibilities include:

- **Equitable distribution of cotton:** The CCI distributes cotton fairly among the industry's various constituents.
- **Cotton imports:** The CCI helps with cotton imports.
- **Minimum Support Price (MSP) operations:** The CCI is a nodal agency that undertakes MSP operations when raw cotton prices reach the government-announced support price.

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CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Despite many virtues of Indian weaves, there are many challenges. These are:

- Competition from mass producing textiles.
- Lack of infrastructure
- Dwindling interest among younger generation.

These challenges also present **opportunities** for innovation & collaboration.

- CCI has strategically collaborated with Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) to amplify its impact on sustainability.
- The introduction of 'Kasturi Bharat Cotton Brand' with end to end traceability using Blockchain technology is a groundbreaking event.

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KHADI: THE ICON OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

It was during the **Champaran Satyagraha in 1917**, that Gandhiji encountered the plight of the farmers of Bihar.

He **met a woman in the Bhilwara village** and it was during his discussion with her that he realised that **she was unable to change her sari** simply because **she did not have another one**. The plant which is the source of indigo dye for clothing was the central issue of the Champaran Satyagraha and the same cloth was a costly commodity for the farmers.

At one time in the past, we were **one of the top cotton cultivators**. But our cultivators were deprived of the same product made of cotton. The cotton had gone to England as raw material and again came back to India as the finished product as cloth from Manchester and Lancashire.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Each and every part of India had its own style of textile design-weaving, dyeing, printing, etc.

The quality of cloth also varied from region to region.

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India's cloth was the pride and glory of the country and **even some countries banned the import of cloth from India!**

WHY?

Our clothes **decorated the royals of many countries.**

These were also the hand-spun and hand-woven cloth, Khadi of the past!

WHAT CHANGED WHEN BRITISHERS CAME?

The Industrial Revolution extended its ugly tentacles and **power-loom industries in England crushed Indian textiles.** The newly enacted laws, in consonance with the British colonial policy, paved the way for a new trade practice.

All the **cotton grown in India** was to be **exported to England** at **very low prices** while **British mill cloth flooded the Indian markets.**

Lakhs and lakhs of Indian spinners and weavers became unemployed and were literally thrown out on the streets.

The pride of India--hand-spun, hand-woven cloth, was forcibly allowed to die and with it, the vast reservoirs of precious traditional textile knowledge too disappeared.

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KHADI MOVEMENT: THE BEGINNINGS

In 1908, Gandhi visited London from South Africa. There he met with multiple Indian students and others. They discussed about the condition in India and Gandhiji had a realisation that **without spinning the wheel there will be no Swaraj.**

When **Gandhiji came to India**, he toured the entire country. He saw **miseries of the weavers** especially during movements like the Champaran Satyagraha.

Spinning and weaving came to his mind and he **introduced weaving in the Ashram** with the support of textile mill owners of Ahmedabad. But he found out that **this process is benefitting the industries more** as compared to the farmers.

WHAT STEPS WERE TAKEN THEN?

Gandhi met an energetic lady, **Gangabehn Majumdar** at the Second Gujarat Education Conference in Broach, and entrusted her with the work of **finding out the traditional way of spinning and its instruments.** At last, after no end of wandering in Gujarat, Gangabehn found the spinning wheel in Vijapur in the Baroda State.

Quite several people there had **spinning wheels in their homes** but had long since consigned them to the lofts as useless lumber. They expressed to Gangabehn their

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readiness to resume spinning, if someone promised to provide them with a regular supply of slivers & to buy the yarn spun by them.

Gandhiji **ignited the spirit of nationalism** through the Swadeshi Movement and made **khadi the symbol of nationalism**. He, through the Khadi Movement, **positioned his non-violent weapon to strike at the very foundation of colonial exploitation!**

KHADI- THE SWADESHI

The test of Swadeshi is **not the universality of the use of an article** that goes under the name of Swadeshi, but the **universality of participation in the production or manufacture of such article**.

Thus, considered mill-made cloth is Swadeshi only in a restricted sense. For, in its manufacture only an infinitesimal number of India's millions can take part, but in the manufacturing of Khadi, millions can take part.

- He insisted use of Khadi & boycott of foreign made goods. This would impact the economy of Britishers.
- He ignited the spirit of nationalism through the Swadeshi movement & made Khadi the symbol of nationalism.

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KHADI: THE ECONOMIC ASPECT

- Khadi was an instrument of a vibrant rural economy.
- Khadi empowered women as many of them were involved in weaving & spinning.
- The decentralised system of production would lead to equal distribution of income.
- Khadi made a dent on the textile industries of Manchester & Lancashire by reducing Indian imports.

KHADI: THE ICON OF INDEPENDENCE

Charkha became the **icon of the independence movement** and khadi became the identity of nationalism. India witnessed a major shift from **colonial power to people's power**.

Common people once feared policemen in this country but with Gandhi's introduction of a non-violent strategy, policemen feared 'khadi people'

Purely an economic activity became a powerful political weapon.

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