
Round Table on

Towards Sustainability: Elevating Khadi as the Fabric of the Future

25 Aug 2022 | 9.30 AM - 1:00 PM
USO International Centre, New Delhi

ROUND TABLE CONCEPT NOTE

India's signature fabric, khadi has traversed a tumultuous journey in the last century- from embodying the role of the freedom fabric during India's Swadeshi movement to attaining popularity as a sustainable fabric today. This hand-spun-handwoven cloth carries with it the philosophy of self-reliance and indigeneity that Gandhiji propagated to alleviate poverty among the Indian masses. A fundamental feature of khadi production entailed a constructive development of rural sections via collective action- characterised by local sourcing, local production and selling. Today amidst the legal and regulatory frameworks established to protect Khadi, the real idea of economic freedom as envisioned by Gandhi has drifted.

A relook at existing frameworks is necessary to improve the value chain in the Khadi sector. To truly empower local communities and advance their economic freedom, concerted efforts must be made in a manner that encourages KVIC and entities outside KVIC's purview to produce and conduct transactions in e-marketplaces, thereby connecting them to worldwide consumers.

The present milieu conflicts with Mahatma Gandhi's ethos of establishing economic freedom and his vision of making Khadi a common person's cloth. Although sales of Khadi have registered growth since 2014, Khadi is still far away from being a common person's cloth in today's India. This is evident from the data by KVIC where the sale of Khadi products only constituted 4 % of KVIC's total turnover in 2018-19. The sector offers the potential to scale. There is a need to go global and revitalise the Khadi and associated industries by leveraging the potential offered by rural India. The sector is ripe for reforms that would enhance the economic freedom of individuals and enable greater access to global markets.



The Khadi sector demands a generation shift. There is an ecosystem change with the economic growth, advancement of technology and entry of e-commerce platforms. In addition, the climate change discussion is also a boon for the sector as the material is eco-friendly and the production is less producing carbon resulting in a sustainable fashion. The reach of Khadi shall be global and with the emergence of the positive and vibrant start-up ecosystem, more and more designers and entrepreneurs working with the Khadi sector and with the global reach provided by the e-commerce platforms. The round table shall also discuss the future of Khadi and deliberate on the various rules and regulations along with plans for market readiness to take Khadi to an enterprise model which requires going beyond the present institutional mechanisms. The need of the hour is to hand over the baton to a young and dynamic ecosystem which champions the cause of Khadi globally. The round table shall feature Khadi institutions, designers, entrepreneurs, start-ups, e-commerce players etc.

The Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR), has undertaken an extensive study on India's Khadi industry with an objective to impact inclusive local growth and development of the sector and provide policy recommendations to increase the accessibility of the sector to global markets. The Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR) jointly with All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association (AIACA), the Foundation for MSME Clusters (FMC), and SaveTheLoom (STL), has scheduled to organise a Roundtable Discussion on Khadi with the theme "**Towards Sustainability: Elevating Khadi as the Fabric of the Future**" as part of CPPR's project #UnLockKhadi: Towards Sustainability. This half-day roundtable discussion will bring together experts in the field to discuss key themes. The suggestions and ideas emerging from the conference will feed into the final policy brief which will be forwarded to the concerned government departments.

AGENDA

Registration : 9:00 AM

INAUGURAL SESSION : 9:30 AM to 10.00 AM

Session 1: Policy, Regulations and Reforms

Time: 10:00 AM to 11.30 AM

With the rise of eco-friendly consumers and a booming sustainable eco-friendly market, India's signature fabric, Khadi, is poised to play a significant role. To embrace and leverage on this evolving new reality, Khadi's regulatory landscape needs to stay agile to the changes in the market. The present milieu necessitates a

relook at the existing policy and regulatory framework to improve the value chain in the Khadi sector in a manner that empowers artisans, accommodates aspiring businesses and encourages a sustainable lifestyle on a wider scale.

In this session, the discussion will explore the following themes.

- Regulatory challenges to sustain and organise Khadi
- The Essence of Khadi amidst the new production methods
- Impact on non-KVIC entities operating in the Khadi sector.
- From Cotton to Khadi- Empowering stakeholders in the Khadi's value chain.
- Reformative actions for a more level-playing field.

Tea break: 11.30 AM to 11.45 AM

Session 2. Going Local to Global: Harnessing the potential of Khadi

Time: 11:45 AM to 1.00 PM

With increased smartphone and internet penetration and favourable consumer demographics, there is a burgeoning demand for sustainable fabrics. To capitalise on this growth trend, facilitating Khadi's stakeholders' entry into the e-commerce space is important to globally scale the product. However, many factors ranging from policy constraints, marketing channels, branding etc contribute to the lack of presence of Khadi in the e-commerce landscape. The role of designers and their concerns needs to be addressed. A concerted effort needs to be taken to popularise Khadi through strategic collaborations with all the stakeholders to harness the potential of Khadi to go local to Global. In this session, the discussion will attempt to explore the following themes.

- Opportunities offered by e-commerce websites
- The role of designers, the fashion industry, etc., in the Khadi
- Role of private players in boosting Khadi sales.

CONCLUSION & LUNCH: 1.00 PM

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