International Journal of Applied Home Science
Volume 10 (1 & 2), January & February (2023) : 23-26
Received : 20.12.2022; Revised : 06.01.2023; Accepted : 20.01.2023

RESEARCH PAPER
ISSN : 2394-1413 (Print)

A Review on Current Scenario of Khadi as a Brand in Panipat District

MONIKA ROHILLA*[1] AND DEEPIKA VARSHNEY[2]
[1]Research Scholar and [2]Associate Professor & Principal
[1]NIMS University, Jaipur (Rajasthan) India
[2]NIMS School of Humanities & Social Sciences, NIMS University, Jaipur (Rajasthan) India

ABSTRACT

The present study is conducted by researcher as analysis in preliminary stage of the research before committing a full-fledged study. An attempt was made by the researcher to know the current scenario of the khadi as a brand in Panipat district and analysed the problems. The study aims to explore the reasons and factors affecting the brand image which ultimately affect the acceptance non-acceptance of the khadi. The most prominent and possible reasons were studied by the researcher. It was found there is a need for awareness of khadi to reach out to youth. Youth do not perceive khadi as suitable for their age group, thus resulting khadi is still not a prominent fashion choice for them. online acceptance of khadi is seen very less. Study revealed that comfort and budget friendly clothing is opted by youth in Panipat district.

Key Words : Khadi, Youth, Brand, Khadi acceptance, Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Khadi being eco-friendly or say green fabric is a way to sustainable development in the fashion/textile industry that can contribute to climatic issues such as inmitigation of global warming. Khadi being handloom and sustainable fabric is a great choice of upcoming designers and youth. There was change in buying patterns during Covid-19 pandemic conditions where window shopping and stores traffic shifted to internet platform and e-commerce took upturn. In a study by Paragai and Jahan (2016), it was revealed that the majority of respondents were not aware of handloom products and online shopping practices of these handloom fabrics were almost negligible among youth consumers. The research focuses on attitude of consumers towards khadi and it was found that people do not have complaints about the comfort level and quality of khadi but they do not find it budget friendly. The focus of the study was on youth of Panipat district where various factors were studied which are inhibiting khadi to make its place in the youth wardrobe. The researcher tried to study those factors which affect the choices of consumers to accept khadi as clothing.

METHODOLOGY

The proposed study is descriptive and is based on primary data, collected with the help of a surveys, interview. A set of relevant questions were prepared to seek information from respondents and convenient sampling was done. The locale of the study was panipat district, where four blocks namely Israna, Panipat, Madlauda and Samalkha. The secondary data was collected from previous studies, research, topic-related articles, online available books, and journals for the augmentation of the primary data. The data collected is analysed on the basis of different age groups, and based on responses, bar graph were formulated for data interpretation.

The Fig. 1 shows age-wise classification of percentages of modes of shopping preferred by respondents while making khadi purchases. Data clearly

How to cite this Article: Rohilla, Monika and Varshney, Deepika (2023). A Review on Current Scenario of Khadi as a Brand in Panipat District. *Internat. J. Appl. Home Sci.,* **10** (1 & 2) : 23-26.

states that nearly 80% of respondents between age group of (27 - 29) years preferred to buy khadi more from retail store than the other group. Similarly, 62% of (24 – 26) years, and approximately 50% preferred retail stores between (21 – 23) years and (18 – 20) years. It was noticed that consumers opt for direct retail stores than any other service like online service, exhibitions and private retailers. Genuine khadi is available in khadi stores under khadi mark certification by KVIC, but there are many fake retailers also selling khadi copies in the market. Second most favorable option seen was the local stores by (18 – 20) years 26%, (21 – 23) years 18%, (24 – 26) years 18% and 9% by (27 - 29) years. Preference for online mode and exhibitions was seen very less among consumers.

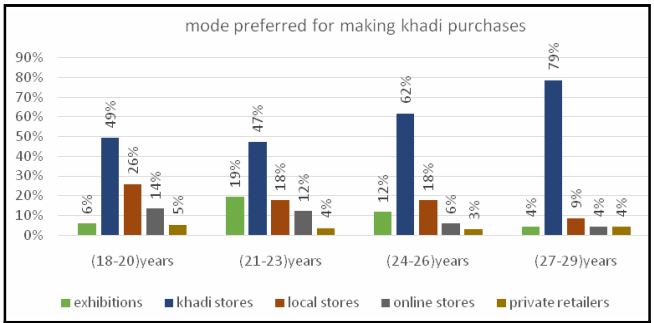

Fig. 1 : Depicting the percentage of mode for shopping of khadi products (Age-wise classification) N=292

The Fig. 2 shows age-wise classification of perceiving khadi as fashionable clothing perception of respondents in clothing. Data clearly states that respondents shows positive perception towards khadi and perceive it as fashionable clothing option. It was observed that 32% of respondents between (18-20) years, (21-23) years and similarly (24-26) years do not find it fashionable. Whereas, 85% of respondents between (27-29) years showed a great liking towards khadi fashionable clothing.

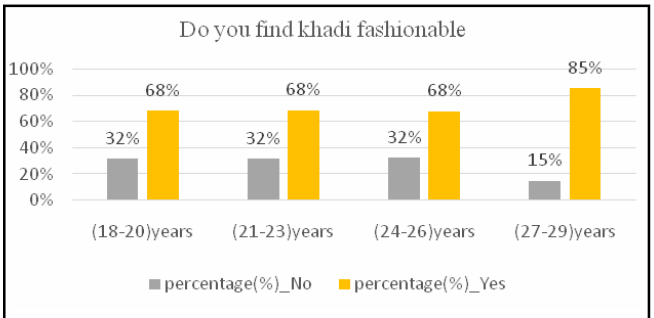

Fig. 2 : Depicting the percentage of perception of youth regarding khadi being fashionable (Age-wise classification) N=292

The Fig. 3 shows age-wise classification of percentages of most desirable qualities preferred by respondents in clothing. Data clearly states that majority of respondents in all age groups opted for comfort value. It was observed that 55% of respondents opted for comfort, 24% budget, 5% durability between (18-20) years. Similarly, 53% chose comfort, 18% budget friendly, 19% appealing, 11% chose durability from (21-23) years. From data it can be seen that 50% goes for first comfort value, more than 20% opted appealing and budget and only 6% for durability from (24-26). Whereas, 64% of respondents prefer comfort, 21% appealing, 6% prefer for budget friendly clothing and 9% look for durability in age group between (27-29) years.

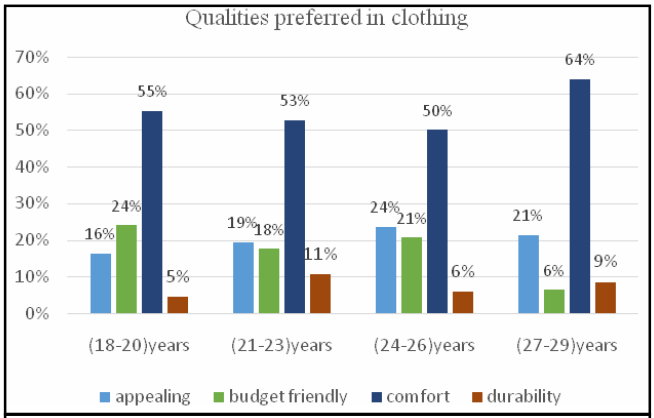

Fig. 3 : Depicting the percentage of qualities preferred in clothing by youth (Age-wise classification) N=292

Challenges faced by khadi sector:

Fig. 4 : Challenges for khadi sector in current situation

– **Decline of legacy:**

The artisans and weavers migrated to other occupations because of the exploitation of middlemen. Inadequate payments to weavers lead to a decline in the workforce. The artisans who passed this skill of weaving and hands spinning from generation to generation do not want the next generation to continue with the legacy. Kethayagounder (2021), in a conference presented that rapid development of khadi industry in the village area is necessary for the development of the nation as well as for economic independency of people.Vandana and Atre (2020) expoundedthat there is a need for improvement in quality design and product diversification but without losing the original essence of khadi and yet making it fit for modern society.

– **Lack of trained executives and sales people:**

The working times followed by the Khadi retail outlets are the same as government office timings in India, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. This has created inconvenience to the employed customers (Nair and Dhanuraj, 2016). Khadi industry needs to improve its marketing strategies and structure and enhance competitiveness and position in the market. Lack of proper training of workers, and artisans, the disparity in wages, and lack of enthusiasm in salespeople cause problems in proper functioning in brand positioning. Outdated marketing techniques and lack of product innovations cannot set brand image.

– **Competition with local brands:**

Khadi industry is growing as a big brand and creating competition in ayurveda, skin care and beauty products more than in clothing sector. Khadi clothing is considered costly and youth is not ready to invest in fashion that does not fit in budget. Khadi industry is suffering great competition with local brands that are providing more verity in designs, color and textures. Where youth look for budget friendly fashion, khadi brand is not a choice of youth for their wardrobe. In a study, (Sivasakthivelek and Dhanalakshmi, 2021) found that available designs, verity in khadi products, its packaging and advertising techniques, as least favorable factors in purchase of khadi.

– **Lack of awareness:**

The consumer buys a product, consumes it, fulfills his needs, and gets satisfaction from the product bought. Whereas awareness refers to knowledge and information about a particular product or service available to him or her for use and consumption. But to use or consume a product, the consumer needs to know about the product's existence. Lack of awareness of handloom product features leads to a decline in the handloom sector. "An awareness tool can also be created to sensitize the young consumers so that they become more tend towards the buying of handloom products" (Paragai and Jahan, 2016). People should know the authenticity and quality of a product which they consume. According to awareness level, and feedback. Proper initiatives need to be taken to know khadi as our heritage, which needs to be preserved.

– **Unauthorized use of word "khadi":**

The authority of KVIC has issued legal notices to many retailers and brands for using the term "khadi" without a permitted license. KVIC admits that there is a lack of awareness about khadi and its qualities so, if anyone sells khadi without a proper channel and uses the word "khadi" for non-khadi fabric can adversely affect the industry" says Arun Kumar Jha. CEO of KVIC in 2016 . It is therefore very important to protect the interest and safeguard the interests of consumers as well as lakhs of artisans who are involved in the manufacturing of genuine khadi. The Khadi Mark was launched on September 30, 2013, and was aimed at providing the required identity to Khadi as a symbol of purity, genuine, self-reliance, and non-violence for boosting its sale. No textile can be sold or otherwise traded by any person or institution as Khadi or Khadi product in any form or manner if the Khadi mark tag is missing (Nair and Dhanuraj, 2016)

Failed to gain market:

It is the critical step that involves strategic alignment of values, personality, and building relationships with customers. It starts with how you put your brand in front of customers. Customers can be gained by providing the correct information about the product its qualities, usability, compatibility, etc., to win their trust. Malikul (2012), expounded that changes in the perception of the brand image may cause changes in brand preferences. The study witnessed a relationship between sales and brand image statistically significant". Increased globalization is one of the important factors for the increased interest of youth in a stronger brand. The strong brand identity of national and international brands is

creating a tough competition situation in the market. Khare and Rakesh (2010), suggest that fashion apparel sellers in India can work on enhancing their brand awareness as the market for fashion wears, accessories and other products is promoting"

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study provides valuable implications for the khadi industry in competition with the fast-growing fashion industry providing khadi marketers, and retailers the opportunity to use findings for identifying their consumers and by focusing on youth's real buying behavior interests. This will help them to deal with problems faced by consumer in khadi buying in a digital fashion environment to make decisions accordingly. It was revealed that consumers opt for direct retail stores than any other service like online service, exhibitions and private retailers than online mode. Study found that respondents showed positive perception towards khadi and perceive it as fashionable clothing option in all age groups. It was propounded that majority of respondents in all age groups preferred qualities like comfort and budget over other qualities like appealing and durability. It was understood that youth of Panipat district opt for budget friendly and comfortable clothing over other aspects. To conquer fashion market khadi needs to build brand identity for which awareness must be created among youth. Where youth looks for more cost effective clothing, it was understood that price of khadi is a huge discouraging factor among young consumers.

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