



AMITY
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AMITY SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS &
AMITY SCHOOL OF FASHION TECHNOLOGY

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON

COUTURE AS CANVAS

TRADITION RE-IMAGINED
THROUGH GEN-Z LENSES

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PROCEEDING 2026



ABOUT AMITY SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

Amity School of Fine Arts, a constituent of Amity University, was established at the Lucknow campus in 2004 with the vision of becoming an institution of excellence recognized in the field of fine arts. We hope and believe that the school would serve to be the most preferred source of trained professionals in the world of arts. Our journey has started with success being our milestone learning our pursuit and future as our goal. We take immense pride in being recognized as a promising source of talent for the expanding industry.

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COUTURE AS CANVAS: TRADITION RE-IMAGINED THROUGH GEN-Z LENSES

**CHIEF EDITOR : PROF. (DR.) POOJA VERMA
EDITOR : DR. PRIYA GUPTA**



**MSB INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH**

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



PROF. (DR.) POOJA VERMA
Chairperson

“Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire.”

-- Gustav Mahler

To all Contributors & Collaborators,

In an era defined by rapid technological advancement, global interconnectedness, and evolving cultural narratives, the relationship between tradition and innovation has become increasingly significant. The conference theme, **“Couture as Canvas: Tradition Reimagined Through Gen-Z Lenses,”** explores this dynamic intersection, highlighting how the Gen-Z youth is redefining art heritage through contemporary design.

The papers featured in this Book of Proceedings reflect the richness of contemporary research and practice in design and visual arts. They showcase how emerging generations are not only preserving cultural legacies but also reimagining them in ways that are relevant, inclusive, and globally connected.

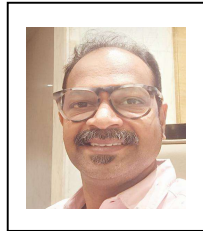
Through these contributions, we have gained valuable insights into the transformative power of design as both an artistic and cultural force. To every author who poured their expertise and passion into their contributions, thank you for enriching this volume with your unique perspectives. May your work inspire new ideas and avenues for artistic exploration.

Let this Book of Proceeding stand as a testament to the power of collaboration and the boundless potential of Gen-Z intellect. I congratulate all contributors and participants and wish them continued success in their academic and creative endeavors.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pooja Verma', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Prof. (Dr.) Pooja Verma,
Director
Amity School of Fine Arts
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FROM SURFACE TO SKIN: COUTURE AS A LIVING CANVAS IN THE CONTINUUM OF INDIAN AESTHETICS



PROF. RAJAN SHRIPAD FULARI¹

Keynote Speaker

ABSTRACT

The evolving discourse of contemporary fashion increasingly situates couture beyond the domain of apparel, positioning it as a dynamic site of artistic expression, cultural memory, and identity formation. This paper explores the concept of “*Couture as a Living Canvas*” within the continuum of Indian aesthetics, where the boundaries between art, craft, and lived experience remain fluid. Drawing from traditional textile practices, printmaking sensibilities, and contemporary design pedagogy, the study reflects on how surface transforms into skin, where the garment becomes an embodied aesthetic experience.

Further, the paper engages with the interpretive lens of Gen-Z practitioners who actively reimagine tradition through hybrid, digital, and sustainable approaches. It argues for a pedagogical and creative shift from preservation to reinterpretation, positioning couture as a critical medium for negotiating tradition and modernity in a rapidly evolving visual culture.

INTRODUCTION: EXPANDING THE NOTION OF CANVAS

In the history of Western art, the canvas has often been understood as a bounded surface as a site upon which artistic expression is composed and contained. In contrast, the Indian aesthetic tradition has consistently resisted such confinement.

Here, the idea of *rupa* (form) extends beyond static representation into lived and performative realities. Surfaces are not merely visual; they are experiential, tactile, and imbued with *rasa* (aesthetic essence).

Within this framework, the body itself emerges as a site of aesthetic articulation. The drape of a textile, the rhythm of a motif, and the tactility of fabric transform the body into a moving canvas, where art is not simply viewed but inhabited. The concept of couture, therefore, demands reconsideration—not as an extension of fashion alone, but as an integral component of a broader visual and cultural continuum.

TRADITION AS LIVING ARCHIVE: RE-READING INDIAN TEXTILE PRACTICES

Indian textile traditions are ranging from Kalamkari and Ajrakh to Ikat and hand embroidery where it represents complex systems of knowledge rather than mere decorative practices. These traditions embody processes of repetition, layering, and symbolic encoding, closely aligned with the methodologies of printmaking and visual arts.

¹ Prof. Rajan Shripad Fulari, Visual Artist, Curator, Dean, School of Visual Arts at World University of Design and Founder President of White Temple : A Sarva Shri Kala Bhoomi

Each mark, motif, and pattern are embedded within a network of meanings shaped by:

- ecological conditions
- community practices
- ritualistic contexts
- temporal continuity

Such traditions function as living archives, continuously evolving through practice and reinterpretation. To engage with them is not to replicate historical forms, but to understand the underlying logic of making where process and meaning are inseparable.

FROM PRINT TO TEXTILE: SURFACE, IMPRINT AND MEMORY

As a practitioner of Visual Art and specially in Printmaking, the notion of the *imprint* becomes central to understanding both Visual Art and textile traditions. The act of printing, whether on paper or fabric it embodies a dialogue between surface, pressure, and material resistance. It is through this interaction that memory is inscribed.

Textiles, similarly, operate through processes of imprinting, be it through block printing, resist dyeing, or weaving. These processes transform the surface into a repository of gestures and repetitions. The fabric thus becomes more than a material; it becomes a carrier of lived experience.

When translated into couture, this surface extends onto the body, transitioning from static representation to embodied expression. The garment, in this sense, is not merely worn but it is performed.

COUTURE AND CONTEMPORARY ART: BLURRING BOUNDARIES

In recent decades, the boundaries between fashion and contemporary art have increasingly dissolved. Garments are no longer confined to functional or aesthetic roles; they are conceived as conceptual objects, installations, and performative elements.

Couture today operates within gallery spaces, museums, and interdisciplinary practices, where:

- garments function as sculptural forms
- textiles become mediums of installation
- fashion engages with critical discourse

This shift reflects a broader expansion of the idea of Art itself where material, context, and body intersect to produce new forms of meaning.

THE GEN-Z LENS: REINTERPRETATION AS CULTURAL PRACTICE

A significant dimension of this evolving discourse is the emergence of Gen-Z practitioners who approach tradition with a distinct sensibility.

Unlike previous generations, Gen-Z does not inherit tradition as a fixed legacy; rather, it engages with it as a fluid and negotiable framework.

Key characteristics of this engagement include:

- hybridisation of local and global aesthetics
- integration of digital technologies and AI-driven processes
- emphasis on sustainability and ethical production
- exploration of identity as a dynamic construct

For Gen-Z, couture becomes a site of experimentation where tradition is not preserved but reimaged through contemporary visual languages.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS: TOWARDS INTERDISCIPLINARY INQUIRY

The transformation of couture into a living canvas necessitates a corresponding shift in Art and Design education. Traditional pedagogical models, centred on skill acquisition and disciplinary boundaries, must evolve towards interdisciplinary and inquiry-based approaches.

Educational practices must:

- integrate visual arts, textile traditions, and digital media
- encourage material exploration and process-based learning
- foster critical engagement with cultural and historical contexts
- support experimentation across mediums and formats

In this expanded framework, the role of the educator shifts from instructor to facilitator by guiding students in navigating complex intersections between tradition, technology, and identity.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS: CONSCIOUS CREATION AND CULTURAL CONTINUITY

The future of couture lies in its capacity to engage with pressing global concerns while remaining rooted in cultural specificity. Sustainable practices, craft revitalisation, and technological innovation must converge to create meaningful and responsible forms of expression.

Couture, as a living canvas, offers the potential to:

- bridge the gap between tradition and modernity
- sustain craft ecosystems through contemporary relevance
- articulate new narratives of identity and belonging
- redefine the relationship between art, body, and environment

CONCLUSION: FROM RUPA TO RASA

In the continuum of Indian aesthetics, the journey from *rupa* (form) to *rasa* (essence) signifies a movement from the visible to the experiential. Couture, when understood as a living canvas, embodies this transition.

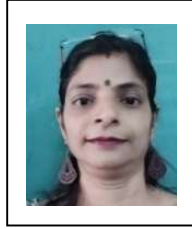
It transforms the surface into skin, the object into experience, and the garment into a site of aesthetic consciousness.

In this expanded understanding, couture is not merely an act of adornment but it is a process of becoming. It carries within it memory, identity, and imagination, allowing art to move beyond the confines of the frame and into the rhythms of everyday life.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Couture today is not simply worn; it is lived, interpreted, and performed. It is where tradition breathes through contemporary expression, and where the canvas, no longer static, walks alongside us, but as an integral part of our aesthetic and cultural being.

CONVENOR'S NOTE



DR. PRIYA GUPTA
Convenor

Dear Authors,

Tradition does not remain still; it travels, transforms, and finds new languages through each generation. **“Couture as Canvas: Tradition Re-Imagined Through Gen-Z Lenses”** emerges from this very dialogue—between inheritance and innovation, memory and imagination, craft and contemporary expression.

These proceedings bring together voices that examine how cultural narratives are being revisited, reinterpreted, and reimagined in an age shaped by new aesthetics, technologies, identities, and creative sensibilities. The contributions reflect not merely a changing fashion landscape, but a deeper cultural conversation on what it means to preserve, question, and reinvent tradition.

As **Convenor and Editor**, I am delighted to bring together these diverse scholarly perspectives. I extend my sincere appreciation to the contributors, reviewers, speakers, delegates, and organizing team whose intellectual engagement and collective efforts have given this publication its richness and purpose.

May these proceedings inspire further conversations where heritage becomes a source of possibility, and the canvas of couture becomes a space for new generations.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Priya Gupta'.

Dr. Priya Gupta
Amity School of Fine Arts
Amity University Lucknow

CO-CONVENOR'S NOTE



Mr. Shikhar Saxena
Co-Convenor

Dear Readers and Scholars,

It is a prerogative to welcome you to the proceedings of “**Couture as Canvas: Tradition Re-Imagined Through Gen-Z Lenses.**” While culture or tradition creates our foundation, it is through modern, re-proving perspectives that culture remains zestful and appropriate. This volume captures a pivotal shift where Gen-Z creators do not simply take over the culture—they actively cross-examine, Scan , and convert it.

As Co- Convenor, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our authors, reviewers, and delegates whose research and creative perception have boost this dialogue. Special thanks are also due to the organizing team and supporting institutions for turning this imagination into a reality.

We hope these papers set fire to the new inquiries at the intersection of craft, technology, and identity, inspiring sustainable and comprehensive road maps for the future of contemporary fashion.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shikhar". The signature is stylized with a long, sweeping underline.

Mr. Shikhar Saxena
Amity School of Fashion Technology,
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HERITAGE TEXTILES REIMAGINED: GEN-Z DESIGNERS MERGING INDIAN HANDLOOM TRADITIONS WITH ZERO-WASTE CIRCULAR COUTURE — CASE STUDIES AND LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

The collapse of the global fashion industry recoils from the environment by adding up some 10 percent of CO2 emissions worldwide and more than 92 million tonnes of Waste from clothes annually. Under the mastery of Gen-Z talents, handloom traditions gain vibrant new colours such as the insertion of age-old regional weaving in Pachedi of Gujarat and korai grass weaving from Tamil Nadu into zero-waste and circular couture to produce sustainable and heritage-rooted garments. This paper will explore two exemplar Gen-Z-owned projects through a multiple case study: the National Institute of Design initiative of Srishty Menon and Gujarat Pachedi master weaver Khoda Kaka, who have come together to plan stripes, motifs, and layouts in the loom for zero-waste pattern cutting.

The second example is the award-winning collection Symbiosis by CRCLE of Varshne B (the Circular Design Challenge 2025 winner), a project from NIFT Chennai, which uses the age-old skills of weaving of korai grass and waste from banana crops to create a leather fibre out of Calotropis and for the disposal of dead stock in a modular, waste-free system. Undertaking an in-depth case study including a strategic understanding of design procedure, artisan partnerships, and cultural effects, the study is set against Cradle-to-Gate Life Cycle Assessment to the ISO 14040 standard and also quantified significant environmental benefits in the form of carbon footprint (37 to 59 percent reduction), water use (41 to 58 percent reduction), and even textile waste reduction (to 94 percent reduction) as compared to the conventional handloom baselines by virtue of foregrounding resilience and vivid features relative toward artisan livelihoods and cultural singularity in tribal and regional craft valor.

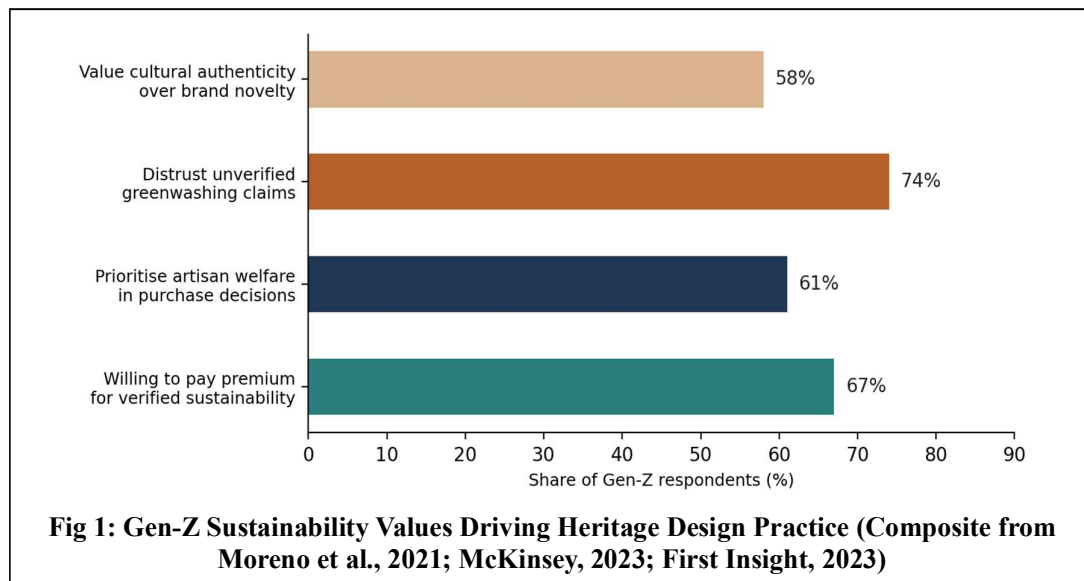
These were the research findings that lent credence to an intended framework proposal targeted to render generational, postcolonial sustainable novelty in design education, craft policy, and global fashion supply chains through the seamless assimilation of Indian handloom traditions and contemporary zero-waste circular couture into a masterpiece of creativity.

Keywords: Gen-Z fashion; zero-waste couture; Indian handloom; circular design; life cycle assessment; sustainable couture; heritage revival; artisan co-design; cultural sustainability; postcolonial craft

INTRODUCTION

In the spectrum of global realities, which the modern world offers, there are several adumbrations about Generation Z. A stipulation comprises the more assertive critique by the young people of the world in the phenomenological excesses imposed upon it through a generation beyond itself, hence a generation residing in a world marked out for it by the previous one. Thus, such literature casts the modern world as bereft of anything more cultural than technological. Very much like its counterpart from the last few centuries, the forward march of technology put paid to any cultural subtlety, uniformity becoming its very "culture." Cultural norms and cultural values which had become "innocent" with the passing of time were ousted by new technology. The former ranks too high because "instruments" of marketing strategies are turned nonetheless already against themselves, still following the above opening statement.

The study looked at two national Gen-Z projects to find out how young Indian designers are engineering loom outputs into zero waste layout directly, how their values differ from the earlier



generations, what life cycle assessment tells about environmental gains, and what social-cultural value arrives to artisans. The study contributes to three main fields: the first empirical LCA concerning the output of Gen-Z-driven zero-waste handloom clothing from India; a Heritage Textiles 2.0 framework that connects post-colonial craft theory with generational studies as well as circular economies; and suggestions for policy in KVIC, NIFT/NID, and industrial, which will link the ongoing crafts work to the heritage (maximizing quality).

LITERATURE REVIEW

For each system of resource use through design, production and disposal, there has been marked growth in scholarships that refer to that of Fletcher (Sustainable Fashion) in 2008. Later LCA methodologies proven that significant impacts-absorption in terms of processing as well as growth of fibres-using wet processes-occurred on a garment scale, and laundering by consumers was of the least concern in terms of presenting sustainability aspects of garments (Muthu et al., 2012; Shirvanimoghaddam et al., 2020). Gen-Z consumers are the greatest sceptics of greenwashing (Lyon & Maxwell, 2011) and ask for authentic evidence such as LCA over profit expectations (Moreno et al., 2021).

Indian handloom tradition forms a "proto-circular design," which, in contrast to industrial cut-and-sew manufacturing, which leaves 15–20% cutting-room waste, handloom cloth has been shaped into the garment from the very beginning, woven with motifs rather than added later (Tarlo, 1996; Crill, 2015; Rathore, 2018) — an efficiency both case-study designers deliberately reactivate. As

Rissanen and McQuillan (2016) formalize "zero-waste fashion design" through tactics like subtraction cutting and jigsaw-pattern layout, in their prototypes, developing after-the-fact design, they differentiate, for example, from the design "pond loom-wards" method; with this, too, they continue to work in the direction of the two designers cited here. They highlight the significant gap in the literature, making LCA-supported evidence with such methods scarce. Sandin et al. (2019) and Wiedemann et al. (2020): This article addresses this weak side.

The spending approach of Gen-Z is typified by a series of trends: digital nativism, values-based consumption, and "pragmatic idealism" (Ordun, 2015; Francis & Hoefel, 2018). However, there is a scarcity of research dealing with Gen-Z and treating them as producers, particularly outside the Western context. Theoretically, the study argues against postcolonial craft theory which understands craft in terms of the material intelligence that lies inside, not the raw material contributed for innovation, and the circular economy theory (Venkatesan, 2009; Ellis, 2013; Nimkulrat, 2010) by emphasizing waste elimination, preserving material value, and regenerative principles of natural systems that fit best with the preexisting logic of hand looming.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Four research goals were identified: 1-Characterization of how Gen-Z designers link loom weaving with zero-waste practices; 2-Examining Gen-Z values of sustainability in the context of decision-making concerning design in daily life; 3-Accuracy of environmental benefits from using LCA in carbon, water, waste, and energy quantification; 4-Delineating a replicable model for policy training and industry for sustainability of development. A researcher reframed these objectives into four research problems-RQ1-How loom outputs will be managed from their inception for zero waste? RQ2-Can a Gen-Z mentality that differs from those of its predecessors be identified? IQR3-What measurable environmental benefits environmentally come through a breakthrough in LCA compared to the earlier, manually operated baselines? The study also aims to identify the social, cultural, and economic impacts on carrying an econo-centric model in handloom art and craft ecosystems: RQ4-What socioeconomic impacts can yield to both weavers and art/craft factions?

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods concept integrating a qualitative multiple case-study analysis, quantitative Life Cycle Assessment, and integrated synthesis based on Heritage Textiles 2.0 was conducted as a major research project as part of approved guidelines for ethical research being January 2024 to June 2025.

Table 1: Research Design Overview

Research Phase	Method	Instruments	Output
Phase 1: Qualitative	Multiple Case Study	Semi-structured interviews (n=11), studio visits, visual semiotics	Thematic findings, process maps
Phase 2: Quantitative	Life Cycle Assessment	SimaPro 9.5, Ecoinvent 3.9, ISO 14040/44	GWP, water, waste, energy data
Phase 3: Synthesis	Triangulation + Framework	Abductive reasoning, NVivo 14 ($\kappa = 0.81$)	Heritage Textiles 2.0 Framework

On three criteria, two projects were selectively drawn: the designer was a Gen-Z graduate from a recognised institution; the fusion had at least one-in-a-lifetime, a distinct emphasis on handloom, and zero-waste approach; and recognition either through award or institutional incorporation. The data collection comprised 11 semi-structured interviews (designers, weavers, faculty, sustainability advisors; NVivo 14 for hybrid thematic coding with Cohen's $\kappa = 0.81$), studio observations, and through visual-material semiotic calculations of final garment units (Rose, 2016).

LCA was conducted following the procedures shown in ISO 14040/44:2006 through the application of SimaPro 9.5 and Ecoinvent 3.9. The functional unit of interest was the "10 zero-waste couture garment, ~350g" and working as cradle-to-gate approach, which incorporates the impact of every fibre and our sustainably made garment production. The four categories include GWP100, scarcity-weighted water use, cutting-room waste and primary energy demand, wherein a conventional handloom garment (~17% cutting waste) was compared with a cotton baseline. Sensitivity studies were run to change fibre-blend proportions between them (-30% to +30%), different transport distances (-50% to +50%), and alternative co-product allocation methods, including net change in availabilities from banana-waste credit.

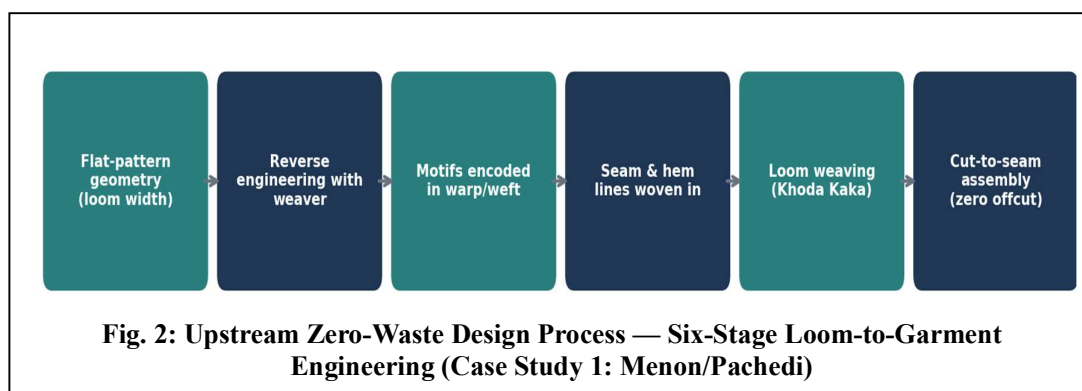
CASE STUDIES

TABLE 2: COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF BOTH CASE STUDIES

Dimension	Case Study 1: Srishti Menon (NID, Gujarat)	Case Study 2: Varshne B (NIFT Chennai)
Designer Background	b. 2001; NID Ahmedabad graduate 2024	b. 2002; NIFT Chennai graduate 2024
Craft Tradition	Pachedi block-print weaving, Kutch, Gujarat	Korai grass mat-weaving, Pattamadai, Tamil Nadu
Artisan Partner(s)	Khoda Kaka (3rd-gen Pachedi master weaver)	Pattamadai cooperative (12 artisan women)
Material System	100% organic cotton; natural dyes	Korai + banana leather + Calotropis + deadstock
Zero-Waste Strategy	Upstream loom-planning; CAD-encoded motifs	Modular multi-material system; panel interlocking
Collection Scale	6 garments; 480 artisan hours	9 garments; multi-cooperative production
Recognition	NID Graduation Award 2024	Circular Design Challenge 2025 Winner
Artisan Income Impact	+68% for Khoda Kaka household	+52% for cooperative average
GWP (kg CO ₂ -eq/unit)	2.14 (-53.3% vs baseline)	1.87 (-59.2% vs baseline)

5.1 SRISHTI MENON — "HANDLOOM TEXTILES FOR ZERO-WASTE APPAREL" (NID, GUJARAT)

Menon did his certificate project in 2024 after he spent twelve weeks as an artist-in-residence at Khoda Kaka's home, working with the third-generation Pachedi master weaver in Kutch, whose family has hand-block printing practised along with the handwoven cloth for the past seventy years. The innovation at its core was when the entire waste at the pattern stage was not removed but was encoded in directly to stripe widths, motif locations, seam allowances, and hems in the warp and weft plan specifically for the standard 45-inch Pachedi loom, so that the capsule allowed six



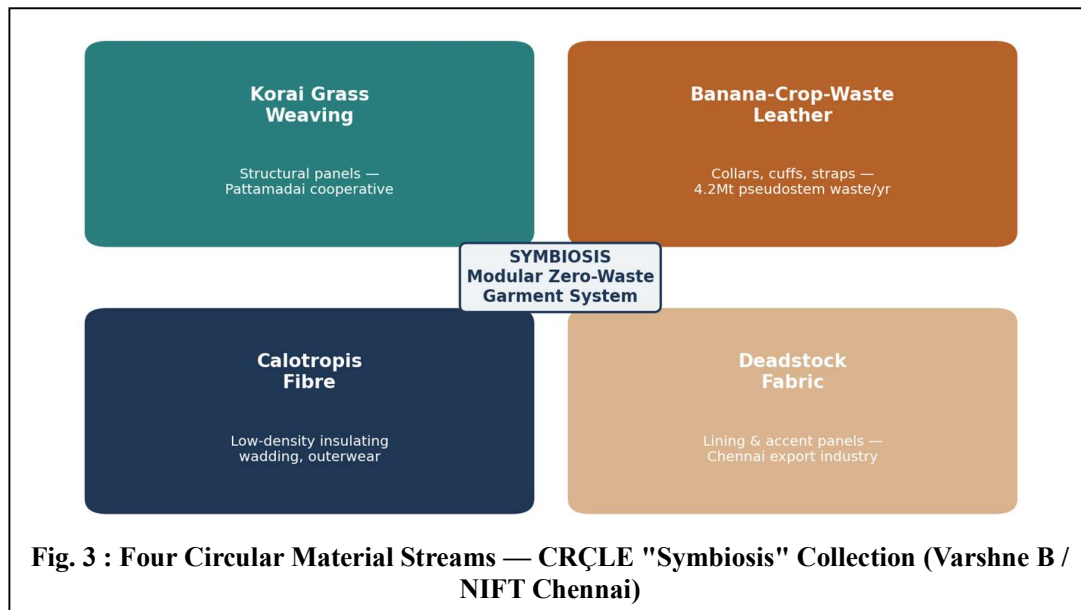
garments to be cut along only the pre-woven seam lines. With this, the offcuts can be pre-designed into coin-purse and belt-loop templates.

Following twenty years of unused designs, the revamped collaboration was further characterized by the geometry that matched the needs of her layout. Using naturally dyed and 100% organic unbleached Saurashtra cotton, the production called for almost 480 hours of hand spinning, hand weaving, hand block printing, and hand assembly.

5.2 VARSHNE B — CIRÇLE "SYMBIOSIS" COLLECTION (NIFT CHENNAI)

Varshne B's Symbiotic collection was awarded first place in the national Circular Design Challenge for 2025 by judges from the Ministry of Textiles, Ellen MacArthur Foundation India, and the Craft Council of India. Raised in Madurai about korai grass mat weaving (UNESCO Recognized Intangible Heritage), she designed a complex material system That incorporates the alignments of four circular streams.

In the case, 12 women artisans of the Pattamadai cooperative conceptualized and executed the flat korai mat that acts as a panel garment. Two crafts of banana pseudostem salvage were converted into strong leather-like material for collars and belts; cut Calotropis into wadding; its lining was retrieved from deadstock of export industry.



The modular system was designed to merge several exact dimensions on all four classes of the materials to produce just nine experiences of garments with no cutting waste. The craft co-sovereignty instance, as called by the paper, was a co-designer, not subcontractor, or citizen of Miss Meenakshi Amma and Miss Saroja as they seemed to be in fact in the substantive material content they brought in.

6. LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT: RESULTS

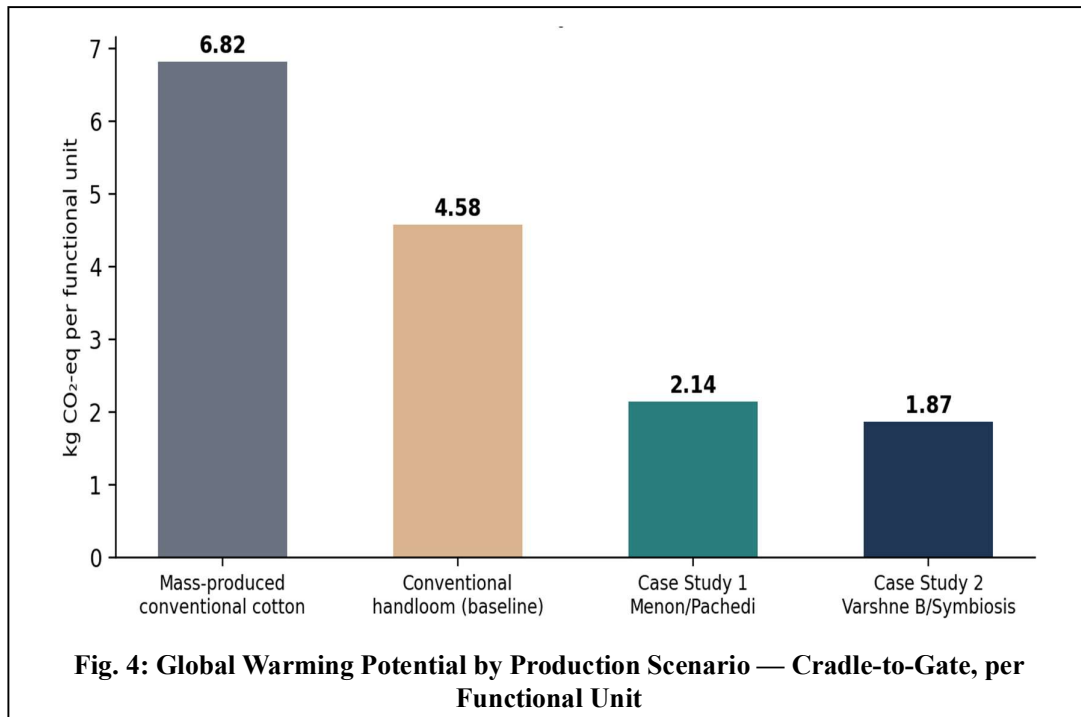
Significantly, both garments significantly surpass traditional baselines across all four impact categories (Figure 4, Table 3). The Menon/Pachedi garment consumed 2.14 Kg CO₂-eq per unit compared to the traditional hand loomed garment's 4.58 Kg CO₂-eq equivalent. This represents a drastic decrease in chemical waste cutting, and to top it all the garment is dyed with all the natural dyes. The Varshne B/Symbiosis reaches 1.87 Kg CO₂-eq representing a fall of -59.2%. This is significantly assisted by the avoided emission credit of ~0.62 kg CO₂-eq from the banana-waste co-product (-45.6% on allocation accounting).

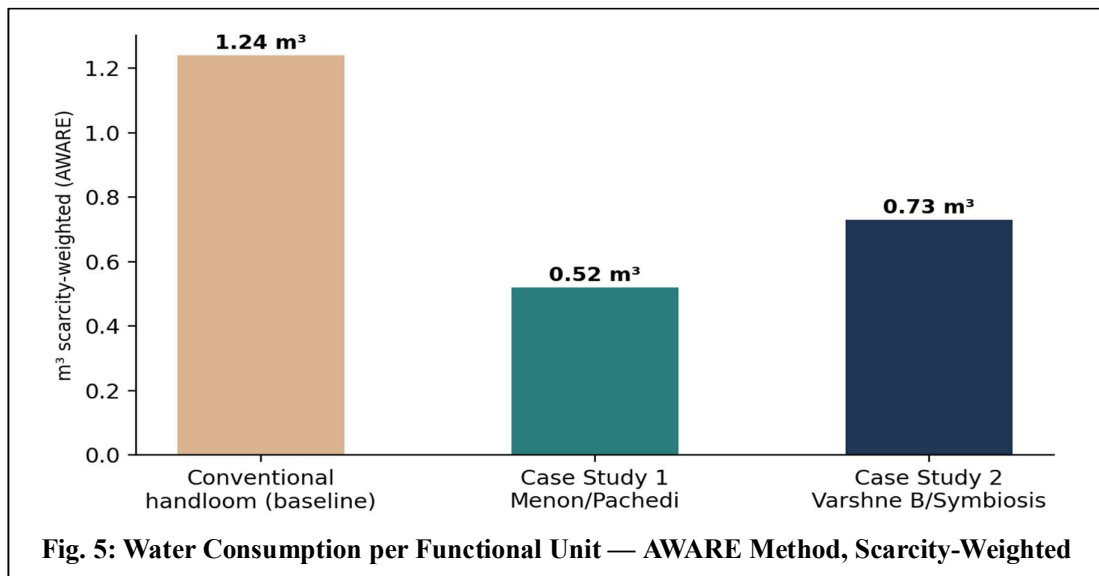
TABLE 3: GLOBAL WARMING POTENTIAL RESULTS BY SCENARIO (KG CO₂-EQ PER FUNCTIONAL UNIT, CRADLE-TO-GATE). *ALLOCATION METHOD, NO AVOIDED-EMISSIONS CREDIT. SOURCE: AUTHORS' LCA MODEL, SIMAPRO 9.5/ECOINVENT 3.9.

Scenario	GWP (kg CO ₂ -eq)	vs Conv. Handloom	vs Mass Cotton	Key Driver
Mass-produced conventional cotton	6.82	—	Baseline	Wet processing, synthetic dyes
Conventional handloom (baseline)	4.58	—	−32.8%	Cutting waste, natural fibre
Case Study 1: Menon/Pachedi	2.14	−53.3%	−68.6%	No cutting waste; natural dyes
Case Study 2: Varshne B/Symbiosis	1.87 (2.49*)	−59.2% (−45.6%*)	−72.6%	Waste-stream materials; co-product credit

There are reduced amounts of water from 1.24 m³ (conventional weaver+ groundwater-stressed Saurashtra cotton) to 0.52 m³ that was extracted for standing crops-growing in Menon/Pachedi (−58.1%) and 0.73 m³ Varshne B/Symbiosis (−41.1%) owing majorly to removal of chemical wet-processing.

The most dramatic result concerns waste generated during physical-making: At baseline, we've got 0.074 kg of cut room waste generated per garment~ This equates to about 17% of the pre-cut fabric: Both garments have 100% material use incorporated.





Primary energy use has been decreased from its base value of 31.2 MJ to 18.4 MJ for Menon/Pachedi (-41.0%) and 22.7 MJ for Varshne B/Symbiosis (-27.2%); both of it is way lesser than 54.6 MJ of mass-produced cotton basslines.

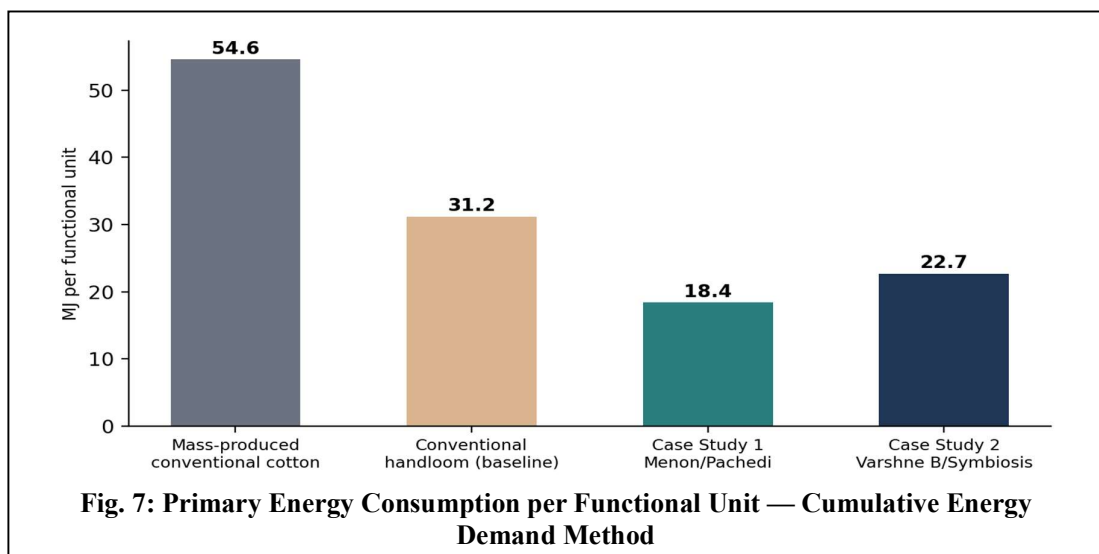
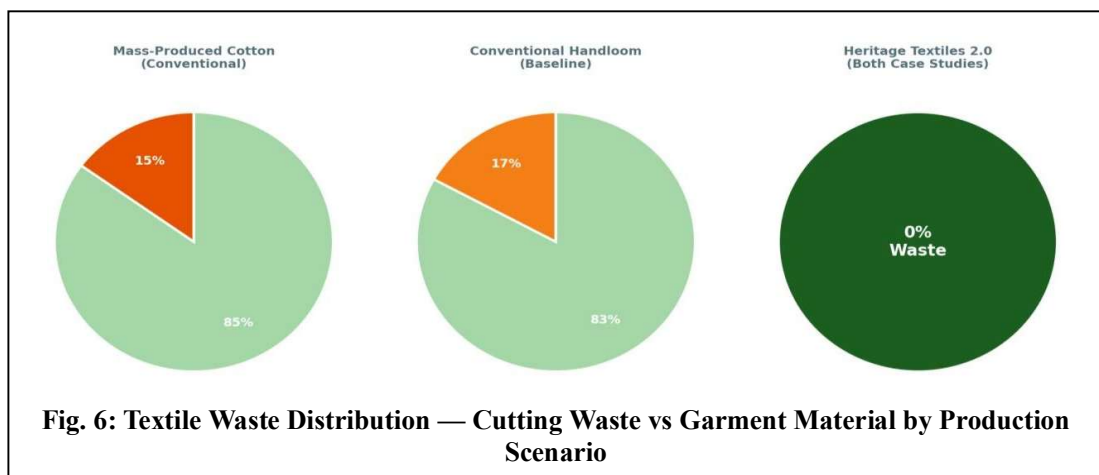
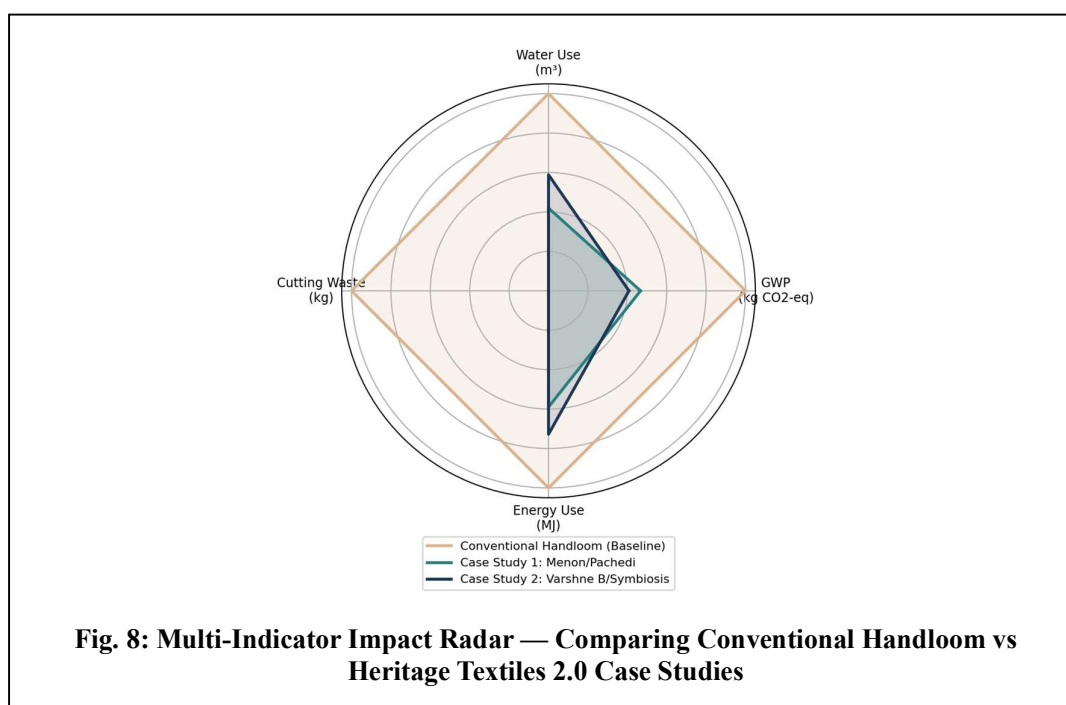


TABLE 4: CONSOLIDATED LCA RESULTS SUMMARY

Impact Category	Baseline (Conv. Handloom)	Case Study 1 (Menon)	Case Study 2 (Varshne B)
GWP (kg CO ₂ -eq)	4.58	2.14 (−53.3%)	1.87 (−59.2%)
Water (m ³ AWARE)	1.24	0.52 (−58.1%)	0.73 (−41.1%)
Cutting Waste (kg)	0.074	~0.000 (−100%)	~0.000 (−100%)
Primary Energy (MJ)	31.2	18.4 (−41.0%)	22.7 (−27.2%)

Changing fiber proportions by as much as $\pm 30\%$ in the Mrs. B case caused GWP to shift by as much as $\pm 12\%$ and water as much as $\pm 18\%$. Changing transport distances by as much as $\pm 50\%$ resulted in GWP changes by as little as $\pm 7\%$. There will still be a significant difference in the results from the banana co-product dividing methods.



DISCUSSION

THE HERITAGE TEXTILES 2.0 FRAMEWORK

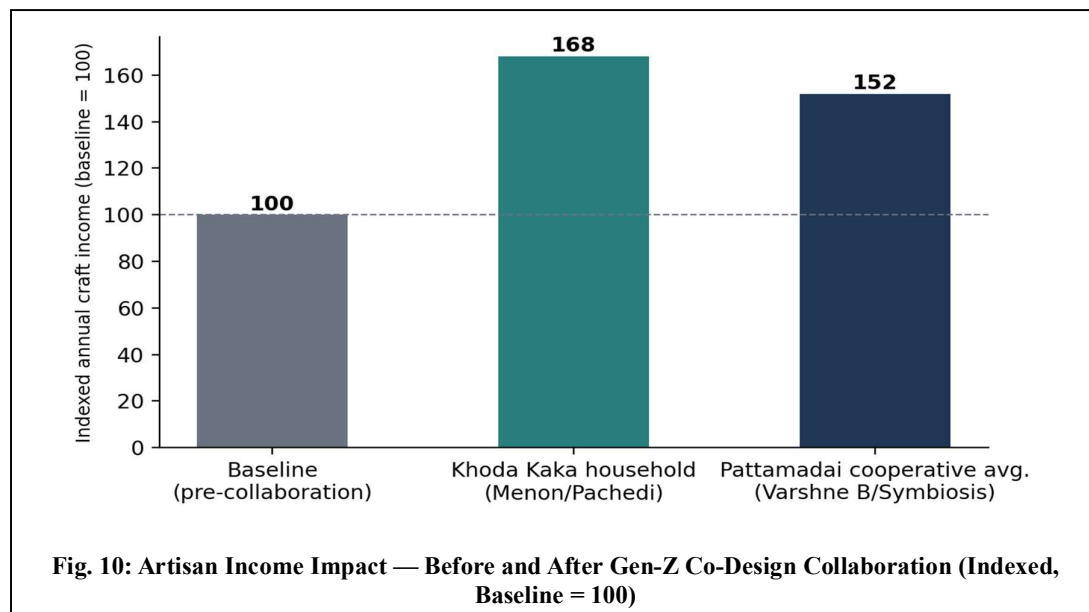
In this framework, we suggest a conceptualisation, as supported by findings from Qualitative and LCA, for Heritage Textiles 2.0 based on five principles—number one gets into "Upstream Zero-Waste Design" where the elimination of waste is better still designed on looms than in the cutting room; two hints at "Education of Crafts (in the fertile potential of weaving)," where weavers are seen as expecting mostly to take on the roles of co-designers, not sub-contractors Third on the list is "Bio-Region Material Intelligence;" that is about privileging material locally embedded, such as Korai, banana waste, and Calotropis, and introducing last for today's conversation is "Generation Values Transmission," which is all about introducing Gen-Z sustainability discourses for building the market in heritage craft. And also, "Performance Evaluation for Design Claim" (5) bases the whole thing on robust LCAs while recognizing the still-higher validity of claims.

Gen-Z Values as Design Driver

There are three methods which translate core values into actionable reputability—radical transparency (visible seem logic, that is an ethical, not marketing stance), refusal of the heritage/innovation binary, fitting in with postcolonial craft theory's critique of tradition/modernity hierarchies (Venkatesan, 2009; Ingold, 2013), and economic pragmatism, as well as idealism. Menon achieved a 40% revenue share in retail for Khoda Kaka, which far surpasses regular craft fees, as well as products for both collections priced at ₹8,000–₹25,000 each.

ARTISAN LIVELIHOODS AND CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

In addition to the earnings the cases document, cultural sustainability causes communities to be able to hold their crafts and teach these arts to the others. Khoda Kakri households saw annual income increase during project year by 68 per cent; two younger male relatives came back from factory work at Ahmedabad and joined workshop again citing revitalized pride and earning prospects.



COMPARISON WITH EXISTING LITERATURE

These MRT reductions (45–53%) surpass those of 14–22% predicted by Sundin et al. (2019) in the case of Swedish low-waste pattern cutting, which might be due to eliminated chemical wet-processing, avoided-burden credits from waste-stream materials, and higher handloom cutting-waste baseline than typically optimised industrial systems can illustrate.

POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

They favor training on LCA methodology and systems thinking while both agreed the curricula failed to address the issue of hands-on professional knowledge. In the case of Menon, her education relating LCA across twelve weeks outweighed even four years of coursework, lending well to longer co-residencies supported by credit.

For KVIC, collaboratively funded residencies coming with integrated LCA documentation would further extend its current subsidy backings and reinforce their premium positioning in the market.

The existing certificates (GOTS, Fair Trade) do not set up upstream zero-waste loom design or craft-community impacts and envisage a particular certification for Turns India named 'Zero-Waste Hand Khadi' by the Craft Council of India.

TABLE 5: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS BY STAKEHOLDER

Stakeholder	Recommended Action	Policy Instrument	Timeline
NIFT / NID	Embed structured co-residencies with craft communities in core curricula	Curriculum reform; Heritage Textiles 2.0 modules	Short (1–2 yrs)
KVIC	Fund Gen-Z × artisan collaborative design residencies with LCA documentation	"One Craft One Designer" residency scheme	Medium (2–4 yrs)
Ministry of Textiles	Align framework with Panchamrit climate goals and One District One Product	Sustainable Handloom Export Premium certification	Medium (3–5 yrs)
Craft Council of India	Develop LCA-based certification for zero-waste handloom couture	Zero-Waste Handloom Certification (ZWHC)	Long (4–6 yrs)
Industry	Adopt craft co-sovereignty models; invest in bio-regional material R&D	Corporate sustainability commitments + profit-sharing	Ongoing

LIMITATIONS

Qualitative sampling resources are small (n=2 projects, n=9 interviewees) and thus not comparable across larger-N investigations. Also, this LCA does not use-phase and end-of-life functions since this is data-poor; it uses process data from the Ecoinvent background data, which is mostly from European/North American processes with minimal coverage for hand-spinning and natural dyeing in India. The choice in the case was purposive, therefore there is a strong likelihood of having more positive outcomes, assuming these were not Gen- Z graduates chosen at random.

CONCLUSION

In addition, very little research has been documented on the Gen-Z Indian designers who reintroduced the elegant traditional handloom and crafted it via circular design principles, co-design methodologies, and bio-regional material intelligence. This approach could get 45-53% in GWP saving, 41-58% in water consumption, and escape cutting waste almost every bit of it compared to the traditional handloom manufacturing, coupled with better results for artisan livelihood and implications for cultural sustainability. Heritage Textiles 2.0 zero-waste-from-upstream design, joint sovereignty of craft, material intelligence within bio-region, generational-based upholding of line-of-ancestry values, as well as demonstrating their environmental performance verification, provides a model that could go beyond sustainability rhetoric to other designing industries. In an essential manner, the findings suggest that conventional craft know- how and modern environmental sustainability are not opposites, but largely inseparable-particularly in the context of these designers, who are doing a bit more than applying the most modern of tools to very old traditions so much as revealing that these traditions already, in fact, held the very values western modernity's now re-finding through all of its knowledge production and documentation practices.

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COUTURE AS WEARABLE ART: TRANSFORMING FASHION

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ABSTRACT

High-end clothes as art worn on the body clothes expressions of the production of couture or wearable Art. Designers make unique, hand-made works that are like moving sculptures, showing ingenuity and ability. These wearable artworks break the border between fashion and high art, asking what we consider to be “just clothes.”

To create visually appealing products, couture designers often take inspiration from nature, architecture, painting and cultural history. They are not just for dressing the body but for expressing creative ideas and stories. Many couture garments have dramatic shapes, rich fabrics, extensive embroideries and hand-finished elements that recall sculptures or works of art.

The couture creations are frequently one-off, created using exceptional materials and processes. They are worn by celebrities, or models, or shown in museums. This convergence of art and fashion changes the way we see clothes, not just as a useful object but as a vehicle for self-expression and creativity.

This research investigates the fashion industry’s transformation via couture – an art form, a creative process and a skill. It also explores how designers utilize couture to communicate cultural identity and creativity. Research suggests that couture is more than expensive apparel; it is also creative expression. In the evolution of fashion, couture will play a vital role in bridging the relationship between fashion, art and culture.

Keywords: Couture, Wearable Art, Fashion, Fine Art, Design, Creativity

INTRODUCTION

Fashion has always played a very essential position in human life. Traditionally, clothing was utilized for fundamental purposes such as protection from the weather, covering the body, and displaying social standing (Miller, 2007). In time it also became a method to demonstrate identity, culture and personal style (Miller, 2007). Fashion, especially couture, has become art in recent years and is no longer simply practical (Geczy & Karaminas, 2012).

Couture or haute couture is high quality fashion, made to measure clothes crafted by talented designers and craftspeople (Miller, 2007). These clothes are not mass manufactured but are meticulously designed by hand with premium fabrics and intricate processes (Miller, 2007). Each work is one of a kind and typically takes hours, days or even months to create.

Today, couture is no longer considered “expensive clothing.” It’s become a tremendous form of artistic expression. Designers are increasingly looking at cloth as a canvas and the human body as a moving frame or gallery. So couture is like other art disciplines such as painting and sculpting. The designs are not only wearable, but also a way to communicate thoughts, feelings and creativity.

Wearable art is a combination of fashion design and creative creation; clothing is made to be worn, but also for its visual and emotional impact. Such objects can have dramatic forms, vibrant colours and rich textures, intricate hand-work and seem like moving works of art.

This article discusses how couture is changing fashion into an art form. The book explores how designers employ the human body as a live canvas to obliterate the conventional distinctions between fashion and high art. It also looks at how couture expresses creativity, culture and innovation in today's society.

As we perceive clothes continue grow and transforming, Couture has a vital part to show, not only as something we wear but as a strong form of creative and cultural expression as the fashion industry keeps evolving (Geczy & Karaminas,2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW & DEFINITIONS

2.1. DEFINITION OF COUTURE

Couture is high-end apparel, produced to order, for particular clientele. These are generally handcrafted clothes that take a great deal of time, effort and talent. High quality fabrics, elaborate stitching and special methods are used by designers (Miller, 2007).

Couture's key traits are:

- Made to order
- Details, handmade
- Employment of expensive materials
- Restricted and special editions

2.2. ART TO WEAR: COUTURE

To think of couture as art, we must first define both:

Fashion: Traditionally centered on trends, mass manufacturing and utility.

Fine Art : Traditionally concerned with aesthetic beauty, emotional strength, and intellectual depth. Often with little “utility.”

Wearable Art is the connection between the two worlds. The methods of fashion (stitching, draping, manipulating fabric) are employed to meet the aims of fine art (storytelling, social commentary, visual astonishment) (Geczy & Karaminas,2012).

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative research framework to assess the process of couture's acceptance as a legitimate type of fine art. “Methods Used Were:

3.1. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS:

A detailed discussion of the intellectual implications underlying certain fashion collections, beyond the “utility” of the garments.

3.2. VISUAL CASE STUDIES:

In-depth assessment of three influential designers, Elsa Schiaparelli, Alexander McQueen and Iris van Herpen to determine to what degree their work operates as sculpture and performance art.

3.3. ARCHIVAL RESEARCH:

Review of historical documents and high-resolution photographs from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Costume Institute) and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A).

ANALYSIS: THE ARTISTIC FOUNDATION

4.1. SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

“Couture designers don’t look at what people are wearing for inspiration, they look at the world at large. Those ideas assist them to produce designs that are meaningful and visually appealing.

- Nature: Nature is a frequent source of inspiration. Designers utilize things like flowers, animals and landscapes to create designs. For example, clothing may look like flowers or wings.
- Art & Paintings: Many designers take inspiration from great artworks. They employ colors and textures and patterns as in paintings.

- **Architecture:** The shapes and forms of architecture impact the shapes and forms of couture clothes. Designers take architectural ideas and make powerful and aggressive shapes.
- **Culture and Tradition:** Couture is an important part of cultural legacy. Designers have their individuality in traditional materials, needlework, dyeing and folk themes and designs.

4.2. TECHNICAL CRAFTSMANSHIP AS ARTISTRY

Couture is known for its workmanship and its attention to detail. Each piece is hand-made by trained artisans who dedicate countless hours and sometimes even months to crafting a single piece. Couture is not mass manufactured unlike conventional apparel, every piece is handcrafted with attention, accuracy and originality (Miller, 2007).

Some key techniques are:

- Hand-embroidered
- Beading and decorations
- Basic Draping and Tailoring
- Manipulation of fabric
- 3-D printing

These procedures make each haute couture creation distinct, unique and very precious. producing couture is much like producing a piece of art, where every detail counts and is a reflection of the designer's vision and the expertise of the artisan.

4.3. COUTURE AND FINE ART: BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES

Couture is transforming our perspective on fashion. It's not about manufacturing clothing anymore. It's about making art. Fine art is painting, sculpture and other visual works . Couture is now very much like them.

Creativity and imagination is one commonality. Artists take their ideas and make distinct and diverse things . So do designers. They don't only follow trends, but also explore new styles and patterns.

Couture is very expressive in mood and emotion. A clothing can speak of beauty, melancholy, strength or other themes. Like a painting or a sculpture, it communicates a narrative in this way.

Another similarity is the visual impact Couture items are supposed to be striking and attention-grabbing. They draw the eye and make a statement, like pieces of art in a gallery.

Couture is culturally important too. It may tell us customs, history and societal concepts. Designers often turn to diverse cultures and different eras for inspiration.

For all of these reasons numerous couture works are on exhibit in museums and art galleries today. Couture is not only a kind of clothes but also a form of art it is observe by this study and data. It recommends merging of fashion and great art.

CASE STUDIES: DESIGNERS AS ARTISTS

To understand the emergences of couture as wearable art, we look at key figures who treated the runway like a gallery:



Fig. 1: The Schiaparelli Tears Dress, created in collaboration with Salvador Dalí (1938)

5.1: ELSA SCHIAPARELLI – THE SURREALIST CANVAS

“Elsa Schiaparelli was one of its first real painters if couture is like art. In the 1930s she blurred the distinction between clothing and sculpture, raising fashion to the level of art. She worked with Surrealist artists such as Salvador Dalí and Jean Cocteau to create designs that challenged people’s expectations of fashion.

The most striking examples what we can take, was the Tears Dress, made in collaboration with Dalí. The dress was printed to look like torn skin, with animal fur underneath. Schiaparelli didn't make it for comfort or conventional beauty. Instead she wanted it to evoke emotion, to stimulate curiosity and to have a strong psychological impact on the viewer. Her work showed that couture could do far more than decorate the body—it could tell a story, express ideas, and make people think.”

The Skeleton Dress displayed the innovative use of trapunto embroidery that formed raised bone-like shapes on a black silk gown, allowing Schiaparelli to transforming the wearer’s body into a bold fusion of fashion, anatomy, and surrealist art.

ARTISTIC IMPACT:

Her work proved that a designer could be an artist-in-residence. She treated the female silhouette as a canvas for the subconscious mind, moving fashion away from "pretty dresses" into the realm of intellectual provocation.



Fig. 2: The Skeleton Dress, Elsa Schiaparelli in collaboration with Salvador Dalí for her 1938 Le Cirque collection.

5.2 ALEXANDER MCQUEEN – THE PERFORMANCE ARTISTE



Fig. 3: Performance art and fashion: Alexander McQueen Spring '99

Alexander McQueen did not create clothes. He created experiences. His runway shows were more “Performance Art” than fashion shows.

Voss (Spring/Summer 2001): The presentation included a large glass chamber that looked like a padded cell in a mental hospital. At the end, the glass broke, and there was a nude model, breathing via a tube, with moths all around her. The clothes, the razor clams and ostrich feathers and hand-painted silk, were secondary to the artistic statement of beauty, lunacy and nature.

Savage Beauty His work was the topic of one of the most frequented

exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met), confirming his place as a superb artist. His “Armadillo Boots” are today regarded as sculptures, not footwear.

Artistic Influence: McQueen's couture was utilized to explore gloomy themes such as death, religion and colonialism. He demonstrated that wearable art might be a form of societal and personal reflection.

5.3: IRIS VAN HERPEN – THE SCULPTURAL TECHNOLOGIST

The current head of the “Wearable Art” movement is Iris van Herpen. She is sometimes termed a “fashion alchemist” for her combination of traditional hand-crafting with future technologies.

3D Printing in Fine Art Van Herpen was the first person to employ 3D printing in haute couture. Her “Crystallization” collection had outfits that appeared to be splashing water frozen in time. It is impossible to make these items by stitching in the usual way. They demand the accuracy of an engineer and the imagination of a sculptor.

Cymatics and Physics she works with architects and scientists regularly. Her “moving sculptures” are made from materials like silicone, stainless steel weave and umbrella ribs that move with the user like a live thing.

Artistic Impact: She has destroyed the 'seasonal' essence of fashion. Her work is an everlasting relic of a place between biology, technology and art. They urge the viewer to rethink what a “fabric” is.



**Fig. 4: Iris Van Herpen:
Sculpting the Senses**

CHALLENGES OF COUTURE AS WEARABLE ART

- Premium pricing: Couture garments are quite expensive as they employ luxurious materials and meticulous craftsmanship
- Limited Accessibility: Couture garments made for a custom based clientele. Individuals cannot afford or get these rare clothing.
- Impracticality: Many couture designs learn more towards art than practicality. As a consequence, they are typically unpleasant or not fit for regular wear.
- Low Commercial Viability: Couture clothing are not manufactured in bulk. This is a food for thought for the designers to make large earnings on a wide basis.
- Lack of Public Awareness Some feel that couture is impractical, or too expensive. Or they may not get it at all, or think it is something like art.
- Time Intensive : It requires many hours or even months to create a couture garment. Each hand made detail was done by skilled artisans.
- Environmental Issues: Haute couture designers frequently use unusual materials and resource intensive processes. This begs the question of environmental impact and ethical sourcing.
- Skill Gap: In current days, the old-style handicraft skills are decreasing. Simultaneously, not every designer has access to new technology.

FUTURE OF COUTURE AS WEARABLE ART

- Tech Integration: Future couture will have to use smart textiles, 3D printing and digital design tools. This kind of progress will lead to more uniqueness and innovative designs.
- Easier to wear and more comfortable. Wearable art will be easier to wear and more comfortable.
- Designers will blend creativity and utility.
- More Accessibility: Couture may be available to a larger audience.
- There are new ways of making things that can make them cheaper and more available.
- Social Media: Social media networks will be used to promote wearable art internationally.
- More people will see, wear and experience couture as a form of art.

- Creative Innovation: designers then develop new ideas and materials.
- It will push fashion and creative expression to the edge.
- Culture Connection Couture for saving culture, identity and traditions.
- It will bridge art, fashion and society in a meaningful way.”

CONCLUSION

Couture has changed over the years. It’s not about making beautiful, expensive clothes any more. Today it is a kind of wearable art, a mixture of inventiveness, painstaking craftsmanship and cultural value. Couture is used by fashion designers as a way to move beyond the trends of fashion and to create works that tell stories, convey feelings and share ideas with the audience.

This development has also changed the way people view fashion. Fashion is no longer about looking good and style, it is about expression and communication. Couture challenges conventional thinking, showing that clothes can be as important as paintings or sculptures. “Fashion is a way of designers to approach serious issues like identity, history, nature and society and to make fashion more meaningful and beautiful.”

But couture is important to the business of fashion and the art world. It drives daily dressing, dictates new trends and tests creative boundaries. Today, museums and galleries display couture as art, highlighting the cultural value and relevance of couture.

Fashion is always changing and couture will always be a necessary link between art and everyday life. Couture will never be worn by most people, but its values and inventiveness are present in everyone through modern fashion. Couture will continue to inspire, innovate and connect people to art in a new and interesting way.

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RECONTEXTUALIZING SACRED TEXTILES : A PILOT STUDY ON UPCYCLING RUMALA SAHIB FOR SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT INNOVATION

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally crafted from premium materials such as silk, satin, brocade, and velvet, Rumala Sahibs often remain in excellent physical condition after ceremonial use but are retired due to ritual practices, leading to underutilization and storage challenges.

Using qualitative research methods, including interviews, questionnaires, material assessment, and design experimentation, this study examines community perceptions, ethical boundaries, and the feasibility of transforming retired Rumala Sahibs into functional and decorative textile products. Items developed during the pilot phase included wall hangings, book covers, cushion covers, dupattas, tote bags, and accessories, all designed within culturally defined limits of acceptability.

The findings reveal cautious yet growing acceptance of sacred textile upcycling, particularly among younger community members and Gurdwara authorities, when reuse is framed as **SEWA** (selfless service) and conducted with ritual respect. Products developed during the study were donated back to the Gurdwara, reinforcing spiritual values while extending material life. The study further proposes a community-based NGO model for sacred textile upcycling to support environmental sustainability, preserve cultural heritage, and create livelihood opportunities. This research contributes to emerging discourse on faith-based sustainability and culturally sensitive textile reuse practices.

Keywords: Sustainable textiles, Upcycling, Rumala Sahib, Sacred textiles, Textile product development

INTRODUCTION

Sikhism, founded by Guru Nanak Dev Ji in the late fifteenth century, is grounded in principles of equality, devotion to one universal God (Ik Onkar), and SEWA (selfless service). The Guru Granth Sahib Ji, regarded as the eternal Guru, holds supreme spiritual authority within Sikh religious life and is treated with profound reverence in homes and Gurdwaras (temples). One visible expression of this reverence is the ceremonial covering of the Guru Granth Sahib with the Rumala Sahib, a sacred textile traditionally offered by devotees as an act of devotion and service.

Rumala Sahibs are typically crafted from high-quality textiles such as silk, satin, velvet, and brocade, often embellished with embroidery, lace, and decorative trims. Since the time of Guru Arjan Dev Ji and the installation of the Adi Granth at Harmandir Sahib in 1604, the offering of Rumala Sahibs has been a deeply embedded religious practice. New Rumalas are frequently donated during festivals (Gurpurabs), life-cycle rituals, and special occasions, resulting in continuous accumulation across Gurdwaras worldwide.

Despite their material durability, Rumala Sahibs are retired after a period of ceremonial use due to ritual protocols. As these textiles have been in contact with the Guru Granth Sahib, they are considered sacred and cannot be discarded casually. Consequently, Gurdwaras face challenges related to long-term storage, environmentally harmful disposal practices, and the absence of

standardized guidelines for respectful management. This situation presents an opportunity to explore sustainable and culturally appropriate alternatives through textile upcycling.

Upcycling, defined as the transformation of discarded materials into products of higher value, offers a framework for extending the life of sacred textiles while maintaining their spiritual significance. When guided by ethical, religious, and community norms, upcycling may serve as a sustainable solution that aligns with Sikh values of stewardship, service, and social responsibility.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

AIM

To examine the feasibility of sustainable textile product development through the respectful upcycling of Rumala Sahib within Sikh religious and community contexts.

OBJECTIVES

1. To document existing methods for the storage and disposal of used Rumala Sahibs in Gurdwaras
2. To explore community and religious perspectives on the reuse of sacred textiles
3. To assess the material and aesthetic potential of retired Rumala Sahib fabrics
4. To identify ethical, cultural, and environmental factors influencing acceptance of upcycling
5. To propose preliminary guidelines for culturally sensitive and sustainable reuse practices

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Existing scholarship on sustainable textiles emphasizes circular design, waste reduction, and material longevity; however, limited attention has been given to sacred or faith-based textiles. Studies addressing religious material culture primarily focus on symbolism, ritual use, and preservation, leaving a gap in understanding how sacred textiles may be managed sustainably without compromising spiritual integrity.

Literature on textile upcycling highlights its environmental benefits and socio-economic potential, particularly in community-based and craft-led initiatives. Yet, the application of these practices to sacred textiles remains underexplored. The absence of documented guidelines for respectful reuse of religious fabrics, including Rumala Sahib, represents a significant research gap that this pilot study seeks to address.

RESEARCH GAP

1. Limited academic research on the disposal and reuse of sacred textiles
2. Absence of standardized ethical guidelines for sacred textile upcycling
3. Lack of documentation on community and religious perspectives
4. Underutilization of traditional craftsmanship and sustainable design opportunities

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted a descriptive and exploratory qualitative research design, appropriate for a pilot investigation into culturally sensitive practices. Rather than testing hypotheses, the study aimed to document current practices, explore perceptions, and assess feasibility.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD

A multistage sampling method was used. The sample included Gurdwara authorities (Granthi, committee members), sewadars, and members of the Sikh community from Gurdwaras in Chandigarh and Mohali. Participants were selected based on their involvement with religious textile management or their engagement with community decision-making.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

1. Semi-structured interviews
2. Structured questionnaires
3. Observational documentation of storage and disposal practices
4. Material assessment and design experimentation

DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns related to sacredness, sustainability, ethical boundaries, and acceptance of reuse. Findings were triangulated across interviews, questionnaires, and observations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

CURRENT DISPOSAL PRACTICES

All surveyed Gurdwaras followed respectful but unsystematic disposal methods. Practices included long-term storage in cupboards or designated rooms (80%), ritual burning (15%), and donation to devotees (5%). While these methods preserved spiritual respect, they also contributed to material accumulation and environmental concerns, particularly when synthetic fabrics were burned.

Table 1.1 Distribution Of Total Respondents Taken For The Study

S. N.	Sample/Respondent	Age Group	No. of respondents interviewed
1	President of the Gurudwaras	50-60 years	40
2	Sr. Head Granthis	30-40 years	25
3	Junior Granthis (Katha Vachak)	40-50 years	35

Table 1.2 Analyse The Data Through The Questionnaire And Interview Method

Questions	Analysis
Approximately how many rumal sahib sets are received as donations per month?	70% of respondents from gurdwaras stated that in the summer, donations from Rumala Sahib are 10-20 per month, but in winter, they increase to 30-50 per month. 30% of respondents from the gurdwara said they have received fewer than 10 rumals per month.
How frequently does Rumala sahib set change on the Guru Granth Sahib?	54% of respondents' gurdwaras changed the Rumala sahib weekly, and 46% changed it on alternate days.
What is currently done with Rumala Sahib sets that are no longer in use?	15% said they burnt it with respect; 5% said they donated it to other gurudwaras; 80% said it was stored in the cupboards and trunks of the gurdwaras.
Is there a formal protocol or guideline followed for discarding or reusing Rumalas?	No, there is no formal protocol.
What Challenges does the Gurudwara face in managing the discarded Rumala Sahib?	100% said that the Storage Space issue, and there is no formal policy to manage discarded Rumala Sahib.

Would the committee be open to exploring respectful and creative reuse options (eg, quilts, art, upcycling for charitable purposes)?	Yes, but respectfully
Do you have any suggestions for better handling or respectful repurposing of discarded Rumala Sahib?	66% said it would be used to make covers for literature books; 15% said it would be used to make cholas for granthis and needy people; 19% said it would be donated to other small gurdwaras.
Would the Gurdwara be open to collaborating on respectful reuse or upcycling of Rumala Sahib through NGOs, textile artists, or Sikh heritage projects?	Yes, all the respondents will agree to the reuse and upcycling of the Rumala sahib.
Do you think repurposing old Rumala Sahib for creative and charitable purposes (without commercial gain) is acceptable?	Yes, from all respondents, because the donations from Rumala sahib are increasing day by day, which will make it difficult for the gurdwara committee to manage and store them.
Would your committee be open to a dialogue with Sikh scholars or heritage professionals to clarify respectful practices for the reuse of Rumala Sahib?	Yes, all the respondents agree to do this.

ATTITUDES TOWARD UPCYCLING

Approximately 68% of Gurdwara authorities expressed openness to upcycling when conducted with proper ritual respect. Younger respondents were notably more receptive, viewing sustainable reuse as an extension of sewa. Older participants were more cautious, emphasizing the need to avoid “ordinary” usage. This generational contrast suggests evolving interpretations of sacredness in relation to sustainability.

ETHICAL BOUNDARIES

Clear limitations were identified regarding acceptable reuse. Decorative and religiously aligned products (e.g., wall hangings, book covers) were widely accepted, while personal fashion items were considered inappropriate. These findings underscore the necessity of culturally informed design frameworks.

ROLE OF GURDWARAS

Participants strongly supported the idea of Gurdwaras serving as hubs for sustainable practice through education, inventory systems, and partnerships with NGOs. Such initiatives align with Sikh values of collective responsibility and environmental stewardship.

CONCLUSION

This pilot study demonstrates that respectful upcycling of Rumala Sahib is both feasible and culturally negotiable when grounded in Sikh ethical principles. While sacred textiles command profound reverence, community members are increasingly open to sustainable alternatives that preserve dignity and purpose.

Research on sacred textile disposal and reuse, particularly within Sikh religious contexts, remains limited and fragmented. Existing studies have primarily focused on the symbolic, historical, and devotional significance of sacred textiles such as the Rumala Sahib, with relatively little attention given to their post-use life cycle. Where sustainability-oriented research exists, it often lacks deep engagement with religious ethics or community consent. One key weakness in the field, therefore, is the absence of culturally grounded frameworks that reconcile environmental sustainability with religious reverence. This pilot study addresses this gap by foregrounding community voices, ethical

boundaries, and ritual sensitivity, though its limited geographic scope and sample size suggest the need for broader validation.

The findings indicate that respectful upcycling of Rumala Sahib is not only feasible but increasingly acceptable when framed within Sikh ethical principles, particularly *sewā* (selfless service). The observed generational shift—where younger respondents view sustainable reuse as an extension of religious duty—signals important potential for long-term change. The ultimate goal in this field should be the development of standardized, community-endorsed models for sacred textile lifecycle management that prevent waste while preserving spiritual dignity.

To achieve this goal, further research is needed in several areas. Comparative studies across regions and Gurdwaras could help establish best practices, while material-based research could assess environmental impacts of current disposal methods, especially the ritual burning of synthetic fabrics. The biggest challenge lies in negotiating ethical consensus: sacredness is interpreted differently across generations and institutions, and any intervention risks being perceived as desacralization if not carefully managed.

Looking ahead, the field is likely to move toward institutionalized solutions, such as Gurdwara-led inventory systems, educational initiatives, and partnerships with NGOs specializing in sustainable craft and heritage preservation. Such models could integrate faith-based sustainability into broader circular economy discourse. At present, the most compelling area of ongoing interest is the role of religious institutions as agents of environmental stewardship. When sustainability initiatives emerge from within faith traditions rather than being externally imposed, they hold greater legitimacy, longevity, and transformative potential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop community-approved guidelines for sacred textile reuse
2. Use Gurdwaras as platforms for sustainability education
3. Encourage collaboration between religious institutions and textile designers
4. Establish documentation systems for sacred textile management
5. Expand future research with larger samples and advanced design experimentation

This study contributes to emerging discussions on faith-based sustainability and culturally sensitive textile product development. It demonstrates that environmental responsibility and religious devotion need not be mutually exclusive, offering a model for integrating tradition with sustainable innovation.

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BOTANICAL PRINTING AS A SUSTAINABLE STARTUP MODEL FOR EMPLOYMENT GENERATION AMONG GENERATION - Z

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ABSTRACT

Gen Z is a generation known for its unique fashion sense and socially active behaviour. They are the generation that were born after 1990's. They were born and brought up in an environment where the influence of social media and smartphones were very common. Because of that, they are socially conscious of how they look, what people think about them, etc., and also socially aware of their behaviour. These people love the environment, care about it, and take action toward environmental conservation. They believe in sustainability and love to do experiments and explore the potentials of single attire so that they can follow the trend and always stay up-to-date. It is also believed that they are the reason for fast fashion. Analysing this behaviour, one Chinese fast fashion brand, Shein, uploads over 6000 new products to their website per day. Diverse collection of clothing in their wardrobe could be seen; it can be a collection of ZARA bags with Sarojini Nagar t-shirts, shoes from local stores, perfume from Dior, and hair accessories from Meesho, and a combination of ethnic and contemporary wear all under the same wardrobe, contrasting each other and complementing each other. It is estimated that in the present scenario, the part of the Gen Z population that has started hunting for their livelihood, either in the form of a job or business, is meeting all the demands of Gen Z with one product is challenging. So, in this study an attempt has been made to develop a business model for Gen Z so that they contribute to the field of job orientation.

Keywords: Gen Z, Social media, environment conservation, sustainability, job orientation.

INTRODUCTION

Gen Z, also known as Generation Z, has a perplexing or diverse age range. Many authors claimed that Generation Z are the kids who were born from 1990 to 1999 (Half 2015), some define it from 1993 to 2005 (Turner 2013), and others divide them from 1993 to 2012 (White 2017). To summarize, Singh & Dangmei (2016) define Generation Z as the generation that was born in the 1990s and brought up in the 2000s; they were the witnesses of many revolutionary changes in the world, like smartphones, the internet, laptops, and social media. This is a generation that spends the majority of its time over the internet. They find everything from the internet, such as food, groceries, matching heels, furniture, their happiness, sorrow, enemies, friends, love, and even life partners. Generation Z not only use the content of the social networking sites such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube but also sometimes become the one. It is believed this generation is the most educated and sophisticated generation ever, as they have good command over various foreign languages; they can't compromise at the workplace and don't even believe in stability at the workplace; whenever they get a better opportunity, they just switch the job and don't even hesitate to even switch countries (Dolot, A. 2018). Whereas young Gen Z believe in self-employment as it provides them independence and better pay (Pocztowski, Buchelt, Pauli, 2015). Gen Z are looking up to their financial independence at a very early age, as it provides them the freedom to take their life decisions, influence their lifestyle, and make them mature (Dolot, A. 2018).

Pekevski (2025) stated in their study that a startup is the running engine of any country that contributes to the country's economy by creating jobs and attracting foreign investors. It's not a simple venture; it requires the fuel of an innovative mindset, hard work, dedication, patience, and passion. India, the most populated country in the world, has over 377 million of Gen Z; this country is the epicenter of the world's largest cohort of this demography. Generation Z are risk takers, take bold decisions about their lives themselves, and know the power of social media very well. That's why they do not hesitate while starting their own startups.

There have been countless methods of textile printing on the market for a long time, but there was a need for a printing technique that must be environmentally friendly, easy to process, provide an exotic feel, and still fall within the budget. Here, botanical printing is setting a new trend. As it is easy to implement, economical, eco-friendly, and leads to sustainability.

Botanical printing is a technique of development of an exact print of the plant over a fabric surface. In this technique, various parts of plant materials, such as roots, stems, leaves, flowers, or fruits, are used to make exact prints on fabric that lead to bold, clear, and aesthetic prints.

Each print produced using this method is unique because it depends on the type of plant, the season of harvesting, and the shape of the leaves and flowers, which can never be the same. This technique is special because it is sustainable and avoids the use of synthetic dyes and harmful mordants. Every printing material reacts differently depending on the mordants, MLR, fabric, and steaming time. Optimizing the perfect recipe is the key to mastering this amazing printing technique.

OBJECTIVES

1. To develop print on fabric by using botanical printing technique.
2. To make it adaptive for Gen Z consumers.
3. To develop business plan for the startup.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Botanical printing is an easy method of textile printing, which one can do by themselves with the help of basic infrastructure. For the development of print, the below-mentioned process is applied.

RAW MATERIALS

This printing technique requires:

1. **Fabric:** Cotton, wool, and silk are the fabrics that are highly preferable for this printing technique. As they have good absorbency, color uptake capacity, and are easily available and preferred by the masses.
2. **Printing Materials:** Parts of plants such as stems, roots, and flowers are potential printing materials for this technique. But instead of collecting it directly from nature, one can collect it from other sources. Such as used flowers from shrines, peels, and other kitchen wastes such as the peels of onions, manjishtha, and so on. It will help to reduce the weight of pollution from the environment and reduce the cost of the products as well.
3. **Mordants:** Mordants are the salts used to fix the print over textile material (Veysian et al., 2023). In this study the use of alum, acetic acid, and ferrous sulfate as mordants is suggested, as they are easily available and economical in price.
4. **Other materials:** Other materials such as wooden or metallic rods are required for rolling the samples; thread for tying; a hammer for beating; a wooden board as a workstation; a gas stove; tongs for safety; and butter paper as a resistance sheet. They are used to develop prints and are easily available in the home.
5. **Equipment:** For deep fixation of prints, steaming is required; for that, there is a need for the formation of equipment that consists of a water pot, sieve, and covering lid of stainless steel material so any chemical reaction is not possible during treatment.

METHOD

The below-mentioned process is the key technique of development of print through botanical printing on textile materials:

1. Procurement of RFD fabric from stores.
2. Scouring of the fabric to remove impurities and increase the color uptake power of the fabric.
3. Line dry fabric in shade and iron it later.
4. Pre-mordanting of the fabric with mordant solution at 20-100% mordant and 20-100% water as per the requirement for the fabric weight for 15-30 minutes.
5. Gently squeeze the mordanted fabric to remove excess water solution.
6. Spread the fabric over the wooden board, and spread plant materials over it.
7. With the help of a wooden hammer, gently beat the plant materials so that the color of that will transfer onto the fabric.
8. Put a layer of butter paper over it so that color will transfer to the other layer while rolling.
9. Roll the fabric over the wooden rod and tie it with tying thread tightly.
10. Put these rolls into the steaming vessels for 30 to 90 minutes, depending on fabric type.
11. Rotate the fabric roll's side with tongs for even steaming.
12. After steaming, take out the roll with tongs and let it dry on a clean surface for a while.
13. After some time, open the rolls, remove the plant materials, and butter paper carefully.
14. Wash the printed fabric with running water and let it dry in the shade.
15. Iron the dried fabric and store it for a fortnight in a dark place for better fixation of the print.
16. After that, develop products from that print.
17. Take a picture of the products, and prepare them for selling.

This technique of textile printing is easy to execute, exotic tropical prints with really low investment can be developed, and also does not harm our Mother Nature. That's why it will prove to be one of the best choice for Gen Z for their start-up idea.

The pictures of the developed prints on fabric made from kitchen and garden waste are shown below:

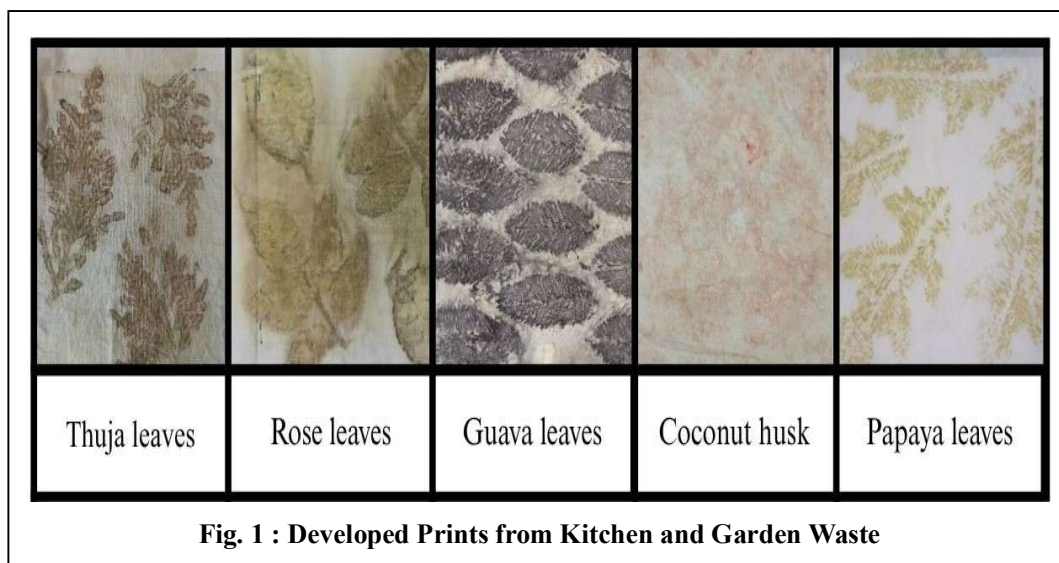
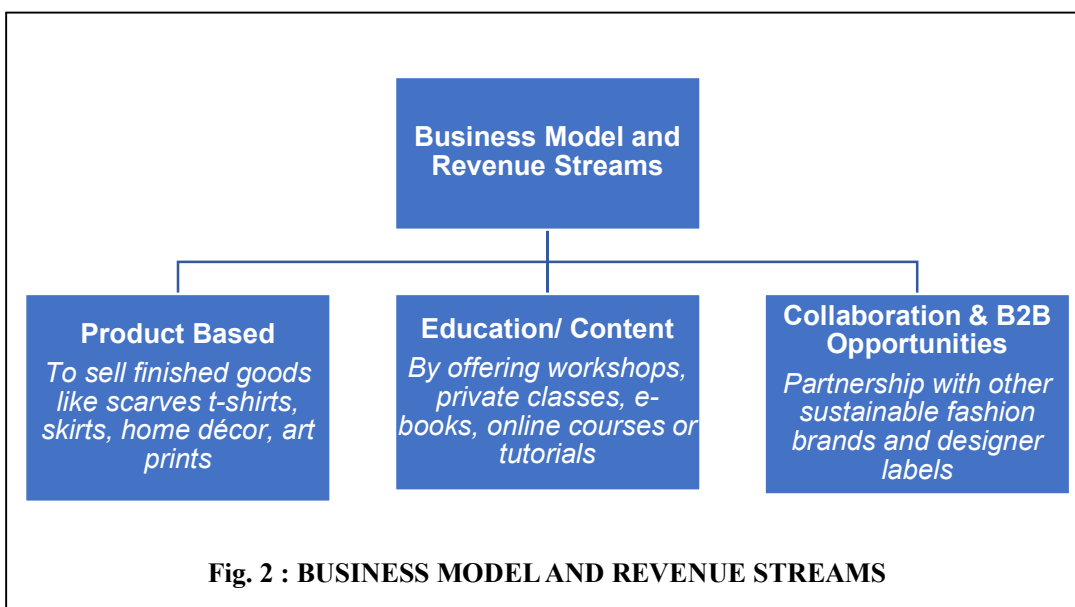


TABLE 1 : BREAKDOWN OF THE INVESTMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS STARTUP

Material Required	Estimated Value
Equipment Formation	5,000 - 10,000 INR
Gas Stove	2,000 – 3,000 INR
Weighing Balance	10,000 – 12,000 INR
Fabric Requirement	According to the type & quantity of fabric
Mordants	2,000 – 7,000 INR
Other Equipment (wooden board, tying thread, hammers, scissors, resistance sheet, tongs, binding rods etc.)	5,000 – 7,000 INR
Product Development	50,000 INR
Marketing and Advertisement	50,000 INR
Other Expenses (freights, electricity bills, stationery, labor charge, rent etc.)	50,000 INR

After making close observation, it is expected that the investment required for this venture, intended for the establishment of basic infrastructure, is about 2 lakhs to 3 lakhs INR.



COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE AND ADVANTAGES

1. The awareness towards the environment raises the demand for environmentally friendly products in every field; the textile industry is not the untouched one here either. Nowadays, there are many entrepreneurs working in this discipline by producing the naturally dyed products. Natural dyeing is not the only replacement for the synthetic dyeing and printing industry: there is a need for some printing techniques too to provide multiple options to consumers for adopting or using the naturally adorned clothes and textiles.
2. Chemical-free, biodegradable, eco-efficient, economic, and custom-made behaviors are some advantages of botanical printing.
3. Apart from synthetic dyes, traditional textile printing techniques, innovation in CAD, heritage craft, and other scientific innovations are potential competitors in this field.

CONCLUSION

According to the report of Startup India, there are more than 217,777 DPIIT-registered startups in India, of which 104,597 are led by women owners (startupindia.gov.in). Gen Z is the generation that is the boldest and most confident. They prefer thrill and satisfaction over a 9 to 7 monotonous job life; that's why they are shifting towards providing job opportunities over job seeking. That's why botanical printing as a startup idea will be the best choice for them. By developing products with this technique, we will also achieve the 11th goal of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which is "Sustainable Cities and Communities." As mentioned earlier, it is a less capital-intensive process of textile printing, so that anyone can do this at their household level and create employment opportunities for other people too. This technique of fabric printing also reduces the load of chemical dyes on the environment and leads the niche market, especially in sustainable fashion, eco-friendly textiles, and artistic products. In this printing technique, prints are generally developed with native plants or kitchen or garden waste, so there is no misuse of plants, and natural wastes are recorded. Apart from natural dyeing, this technique of textile adornment will also provide a good alternative to the eco-conscious Gen-Z consumers.

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HERITAGE AND HAUTE COUTURE FROM STONE TO STITCH: REIMAGINING TEMPLE ART OF RANI KI VAV AND MODHERA SUN TEMPLE IN GEN-Z INDIAN COUTURE

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ABSTRACT

The extensive architectural and sculptural legacy of ancient India has long served as a repository of cultural memory, understanding of cosmic forces, and symbolic storytelling. This paper explores the intersection of visual temple heritage and contemporary fashion practices by analysing motifs from Rani ki Vav and Modhera Sun Temple. The study employs and traces how Gen-Z designers can incorporate certain elements of building structures, decorative motifs of structures to develop unique silhouettes of garments, through the lens of Generation Z designers.

Both monuments are renowned for their intricate carvings, and their decorative motifs of structures that may serve as inspiration for print patterns on fabrics and as designs for embroidered clothing. This comprises of variety of geometric compositions, depictions of flora and fauna, and narrative sculptural panels that symbolise spiritual symbolism and refined craftsmanship. These visual elements provide a rich design vocabulary that continues to inspire modern artistic practices that holds various cultural, spiritual, and historical significance in each style.

The study explores how the contemporary designers take inspiration from the prominent monumental architectures of our country and treats fashion as a “canvas,” where traditional temple iconography and regional textile heritage are reimagined through innovative design approaches. The Patan Patola pattern traditional of Gujarat, is in particular consideration, known for its symmetrical geometry and vibrant colour schemes which resonate with the architectural patterns found in temple structures. Increasingly drawing from such historical sources, Gen-Z fashion designers are trying to amalgamate sculptural motifs, sacred geometries, and natural forms into embroidery, textile prints, silhouettes, and surface ornamentation, not only for aesthetic reasons but also to promote culture. This practice is clearly seen in the work of Gen-Z Designers such as Rahul Mishra, Gaurav Gupta, and younger experimental studios demonstrate how heritage motifs are reframed within contemporary couture narratives that appeal to a globally connected generation. Thus, this type of inspiration helps designers to create new sustainable designs.

Keywords: Temple Art, Gen-Z Fashion, Patan Patola, Modhera, Rani Ki Vav.

INTRODUCTION

Temple art is an important medium of collective memory of Indian society. The symbols used in temples carry deep cultural meaning varying from lotus, (nymphs, gods and goddesses, and animals and birds these are not merely decorative elements. The architecture of the temple here is not merely a symbol of religious faith, but it is also a mirror of social, cultural and artistic life. All these icons, symbols symbolize the beauty of life in one or the other way for e.g. lotus icon portrays purity and spirituality, while the dancer represents the beauty of life. In recent years, heritage is perceived as a dynamic and evolving resource in contemporary design practices. Indian fashion, particularly haute couture, has increasingly turned toward indigenous art forms to construct new aesthetic dimensions. As noted in Vogue India, “today’s Indian designers are looking inward, mining history not for nostalgia, but for reinvention” (Vogue India, 2021). Generation Z designers, who approaches

tradition with fluidity and experimentation this shift is highly visible among them. They try to reinterpret them through modern techniques, materials, and global sensibilities instead of replicating historical motifs.

Temple architecture in India is looked upon as a visual archive of cultural knowledge consisting of wide variety of cultural elements like sculptures, carvings, and 3-D arrangements encoded with narratives that reflect philosophical ideas, social practices, and cosmological beliefs. “Rani ki Vav contains more than 500 principal sculptures depicting deities, nagakanyas, nymphs and everyday life, forming a “comprehensive narrative environment” (Mehta, 2018). Beautiful balance of sacred and the mundane is illustrated through these carvings. Thus it’s absolutely correct to say, temple art is not merely decorative but deeply symbolic, offering a rich visual language for reinterpretation.

This paper investigates how temple art specifically from Rani ki Vav and the Modhera Sun Temple is weaved into contemporary couture. Through this fashion has become a powerful medium of cultural storytelling, in such a way that ancient visual languages are reimagined in new dimensions.

RANI KI VAV: FEMININE AESTHETICS AND NARRATIVE SCULPTURE

Rani ki Vav (The Queen’s Stepwell) at Patan stands out as one of the most elaborate and ornate subterranean water monument, that marks the zenith in the evolution of the stepwell architecture in India. Distinguished by its exclusive descendent structure, and remarkable rich sculptural program that unfolds slowly as one moves deeper into the space. RANI-KI-VAV is a powerful ode to craftsmanship. Intricately carved figures of Gods and Goddesses like Dashavatara, Kuber, Ganesha are enshrined in the wall of the well itself and pillars are heavily adorned. Stepwell is profusely decorated with sculptures and carvings of great quality secondary divinities which gives the well its main charm: like apsaras-celestial female figures, nagakanyas, the yoginis which hold particular significance. These artistic representations embrace dynamic poses of dance, music, or worship showcasing a highly refined and sensitive understanding of femininity and the vibrant interplay between the celestial and terrestrial worlds.

In the context of contemporary fashion, these sculptural forms inspire through its geometric precision, intricate jali lattice work and 500 and more mythical sculptures which offer a rich and versatile design of femininity. These days it can be seen in many Contemporary Indian couturiers that they are frequently incorporating monument’s layered stepwells and sculptural pillars into structured, Indo-contemporary menswear collection. Designers are reinterpreting the ornate bangles, waistbands and necklaces worn by the sculpted Apsaras, drapery-inspired silhouettes that mirror the softness and movement suggested in the carvings. The Dashavatara and apsara figures go beyond visual elements, and bring out the emotional depth embedded in these sculptures as for intricate zardozi and gotta patti work on bridal wear. The expression in narrative-driven embroidery, where garments tell stories through motifs and patterns, much like the sculptural panels of the stepwell. As noted in The Indian Express, “heritage sites like Rani ki Vav offer designers a vocabulary of movement and ornament that feels surprisingly contemporary” (Indian Express, 2020). This observation underscores the timeless relevance of the site, the rising interest of designers in using elements of traditional architecture for developing new fashion couture.

MODHERA SUN TEMPLE: GEOMETRY AND SPATIAL DESIGN

The Modhera Sun temple a sacred architecture, richly adorned with carvings arranged in well-defined horizontal and vertical bands, emerged as a medium through which humans determined their understanding of cosmic forces. It’s a remarkable example of the Maru-Gurjara architectural style, celebrated for its precision, symmetry, and intricate ornamental detailing. The Modhera sun temple is unique for its accurate alignment with the equinox showing changing position of the sun as it stands out for its intact structure and detailed surface carvings on the temple, creating a rhythmic visual pattern that interacts dynamically with light and shadow throughout the day.

The temple’s repetitive geometric patterns, along with its detailed depictions of floral and animal motifs, continues to attract scholars, architects and visitors. Its emphasis on symmetry and proportion, mirrors modern design principles, making it especially adaptable to couture practices.

Designers often seen experimenting with these architectural features into garments through, patterned textiles, layered constructions and structured silhouettes that mimic the temple's spatial depth and visual complexity. In this way, the Modhera Sun Temple not only serves as a place of its historical and religious context, but also emerges as a powerful and enduring source of inspiration for contemporary fashion design.

FROM STONE TO STITCH: THE DESIGN TRANSLATION PROCESS

The beauty of transformation “from stone to stitch” lies behind the profound shift in medium, meaning, and experience where the textile artists and designers plunge to these sources because they offer timeless vocabulary and temple architecture is reimagined into fluid, tactile, and living form of fashion. Temple motifs once carved into ancient temple walls are translated, centuries later in stone and bound to a specific spatial context, are now translated into delicate thread work of hand-embroidery textiles that move with the human body. This design translation is both technical and conceptual. Designer's journey from stone to stitch is more than mere copying, its reinterpretation of sculptural intricacies through embroidery, engineering, and cultural preservation. Stone's fine three-dimensional detail ,textural layering is employed to create dimensionality, echoing the interplay of light and shadow found in architectural surfaces, transforming pillars, domes, and geometric alignments into wearable shapes.

It has been noticed that, the crucial bridge in this transformation is the Patan Patola textile tradition, which serves as an architectural echo within the realm of fabric. The geometric motifs and latticework patterns also known for its highly complex double Ikat technique are found carved in the stone architecture of Rani ki Vav , these are echoed in the complex designs of Patola fabrics. This connection reveals a deeper unity within Indian artistic traditions, where the complex three-dimensional stone carvings are deconstructed into their fundamental two-dimensional forms. In contemporary couture, with extreme precision through digital adaptations design are precisely planned and transferred onto the threads and with the hybrid textile innovations, and experimental colour palettes Patola motifs are reproduced often resulting in geometric interpretations of organic forms.

Designers such as Rahul Mishra and Gaurav Gupta exemplify this approach. Rahul Mishra's experimenting by inheriting intricate, narrative-driven embroidery rooted in craftsmanship, and Gupta through his sculptural silhouettes that echo architectural forms and spatial dynamics. In this context, fashion itself emerges as a powerful narrative medium. Young designers are refreshing centuries- old weaving techniques, motifs. They are using traditional textile collections as direct inspiration, garments are no longer viewed merely as functional objects carrying cultural meaning rather transforming the human body into a site of storytelling and expression. In an increasing globalisation, such practices nurture ethnic dialogue, allowing heritage to rise above geographical and progressive boundaries.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Architect's creations inspire fashion designers in terms of design and shape. The relationship between heritage art and contemporary fashion has been widely explored across disciplines such as art history, cultural studies, and fashion design. Motifs are translated on fashion fabrics using various techniques like weaving, embroidery and more. Scholars claim that traditional art forms serve as a cultural identity, thus offering a rich visual vocabulary that can be according to scholars.Traditional art forms are considered as living archive that offers a varied and rich vocabulary of visuals that can be reinterpreted across time.

In the past researchers such as Stella Kramrisch and Adam Hardy have examined how visual texts such as motifs found in Indian temple structures have been used as an inspiration in many contexts not merely as religious spaces, where sculptural elements communicate philosophical and cosmological ideas, thus Indian temple architecture highlight its intricate synthesis of symbolism, geometry, and narrative.

Designers these days weave magic on couture taking great inspiration from these architectural studies. Textile historians have discovered the deep interconnection between Indian craft traditions and modern visual culture. In monuments like Rani ki Vav and the Modhera Sun temple, superior beautification, balanced accuracy and narrative carvings of the Maru-Gurjara, style-native of Gujarat has been particularly noted. For instance, The Patan Patola weaving tradition, the imperceptible cultural heritage, the ancient art of double ikat weaving of the Patola cloth has been extensively discussed for its mathematical precision, symmetrical layout, and symbolic motifs. During the findings scholars claims that such textile traditions share structural and aesthetic parallels and there is great potential in the revival of architectural ornamentation, suggesting broader cultural design logic.

In recent years, to promote culture and solely not for aesthetic reasons the designers take inspiration from the prominent architecture of the country. Especially visible in the works of designers like Rahul Mishra and Gaurav Gupta researchers examining Indian couture noted a growing tendency to draw inspiration from traditional crafts, natural forms, and historical motifs.

However, existing works acknowledges the revival of craft and tradition in fashion, still there remains a gap in scholarship specifically addressing the intersection of temple art and Gen-Z fashion practices. By bringing together architectural analysis, textile studies, and contemporary fashion, this research aims to bridge that gap. Innovative ideas are being reimagined in Gen-Z Indian couture.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the visual language of temple art in Rani ki Vav and Modhera Sun Temple.
2. To identify and classify key motifs, patterns, and symbolic elements relevant to design.
3. To examine the relationship between architecture and fashion in contemporary Indian couture.
4. To understand the role of Gen-Z designers in incorporating heritage-based fashion.
5. To explore the connection between temple art textile traditions like Patan Patola and various developing new fashion trends.

METHODOLOGY

This research has been carried out using qualitative **and exploratory methodologies**, combining art history, fashion studies, and cultural analysis.

- **Primary Sources:** In primary research visual analysis of architectural and sculptural elements from Rani ki Vav and the Modhera Sun Temple is conducted through photographs, site documentation, and case studies to analyse motifs, icons etc.
- **Secondary Sources:** The collection of secondary data is done by going through various books, research papers, journals, and digital archives related to temple art, textile design, and contemporary fashion.
- **Case Studies:** To explore the influence of temple art on contemporary couture. Study of selected collections of renowned Indian designers such as and Gaurav Gupta, Rahul Mishra along with selected emerging Gen-Z designers.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Traditional architectural motifs, patterns are compared with their modern counterparts in fashion.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This research has indicated that the incorporation of the motifs found in Rani ki Vav such as apsara figures, floral patterns, and ornamental carvings is possible in fashion design. These are reinterpreted in fashion through embroidery, surface detailing, and draped silhouettes. The study reveals a strong permanency between temple art and contemporary couture. When examining adaptation approaches within fashion, like planned garments, pattern-making and textile prints it is essential to focus not on imitation of architectural features but on their creative translation to the world of clothing. Likewise, reflecting the geometric accuracy and balance of the Modhera Sun

Temple. In this regard, architects reinterpret the elements and details of buildings in accordance with fashion's unique parameters.

The correspondence between temple architecture and Patan Patola textiles is detected to be noteworthy. Both share values of symmetry, recurrence, and vivacious color configurations, which are progressively visible in modern couture assortments.

The main conclusion of the study is that the motifs from Indian architecture heritage can provide meaningful inspiration for Gen-Z designers for designing clothes. Materials, techniques and digital tools play an important role in the adaptation of architecture for fashion too. They are investigated to reinterpret outdated ideas in a current setting. Their work imitates poise amid cultural rootedness and worldwide appeal.

Overall, architecture can be turned into fashion emerging as a “living canvas” where historical forms are transformed into wearable narratives, preserving its fundamental nature but still ensures originality and practicality fashion

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The multiplicity of Indian temple architecture may not be amply represented, as the study is limited to two explicit monuments.
- It relies principally on visual and secondary data, with restricted exploration or direct designer interviews.
- Motifs and symbolism are inferred differently reliant on cultural and particular perceptions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A wider range of temples across different regions of India can be encompassed in forthcoming research for comparative analysis.
- Integrating interviews with designers and artisans would provide profounder understandings into the design process.
- More focus can be given to sustainable practices and ethical sourcing in heritage-based fashion.
- Genuineness should be invigorated to be preserved through association amid historians, designers, and craftsmen.
- Digital technologies such as AI and 3D design can be travelled further to reinterpret heritage in new means.

CONCLUSION

A Communicative change in the way cultural heritage is assumed and expressed today is imitative by the journey from stone to stitch. Monuments such as Rani ki Vav and the Modhera Sun Temple are not just remains of the past. Contemporary design gets reflected with their motifs and stories, making these sites living epitome of recollect.

When these elements rather components are expressed through fashion, they move forward in their original architectural context and become part of a more lively and wearable form of art. This shift makes heritage part of everyday life, so it is more accessible and relevant to current generations.

In this changing scenario, Gen-Z artists have a vital contribution where they redefine heritage as something adaptable and fluid, rather than being rigid and unshakable.

The unique perspective they bring allows us to understand that heritage aesthetics are not just to be preserved but are redefined in such a way that fits our current aesthetic sensibilities. In doing so, they allow us to connect the temple arts with contemporary fashion. Finally, through this course, we realize that heritage is not just an ancient artefact restricted to history but a growing force which lives on.

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SPATIAL NARRATIVES OF CRAFT: CULTURAL BRANDING OF HOSPITALITY SPACES THROUGH INDIGENOUS TEXTILES AND COUTURE AESTHETICS

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ABSTRACT

The combination of fashion, craft, and spatial design as a cultural expression of identity is a contemporary trend in the hotel industry. Indigenous textiles like Khadi and other handcrafted textiles represent the culmination of centuries of regional identity, artistry, and cultural expression. The need for cultural expression in the new paradigm of hospitality spaces has led to the effective use of indigenous textiles and couture aesthetics in spatial designs as a means of cultural branding. In an effort to appeal to the Gen Z audience, the article explores the potential of indigenous textiles as a spatial representation of identity in the context of resort and hospitality settings. The study aims to examine the significance of textile-inspired interventions in the development of immersive environments where indigenous textiles become an expression of spatial identity rather than only being used for apparel. Through a series of case studies from Indian heritage hotels and culturally themed resorts, this study attempts to explore the use of motifs, textures, weaving forms, and material palettes from traditional textiles in interior elements such as wall finishes, furniture, lighting schemes, and installations. For tourists who are becoming more interested in tales about sustainability, legacy, and traditional handicraft, this also contributes to the creation of unforgettable experiences. The study also discusses how this may be used to increase the visibility of traditional crafts in discussions about modern design. For Gen Z travellers, who are heavily influenced by visual storytelling and culturally relevant experiences, traditional artisan settings offer a terrific opportunity to engage with legacy in a modern environment. The project also seeks to establish textiles as a bridge between fashion, craft, and architecture in order to investigate how interdisciplinary approaches to design could promote the preservation of old knowledge systems in a world that is rapidly changing. The study concludes that indigenous textiles in hospitality design frameworks can be a powerful tool for cultural branding, sustainable design practices, and the revival of traditional crafts in the rapidly changing field of experience tourism.

Keywords : Indigenous Textiles, Cultural Branding, Hospitality Design, Craft Traditions, Experiential Tourism, Gen-Z Cultural Engagement

INTRODUCTION

These days, hospitality establishments provide more than just lodging and services. These days, travellers are looking for even more immersive experiences that allow them to engage with the local customs, history, and culture. Architects and interior designers are exploring new ways to use spatial design to tell stories as experience tourism expands. India's indigenous textiles offer a singular chance to create culturally rich spaces that convey regional identity and artistic expression. In the past, textiles have been connected to apparel and personal ornamentation. But they also have an impact on interior design and architecture in addition to fashion. Wall treatments, furniture, lighting fixtures, dividers, and decorative installations are all inspired by the textures, colours, patterns, and stories of traditional fabrics. These days, hospitality establishments provide more than just lodging and services. These days, travellers are looking for even more immersive experiences that allow

them to engage with the local customs, history, and culture. Architects and interior designers are exploring new ways to use spatial design to tell stories as experience tourism expands. India's indigenous textiles offer a singular chance to create culturally rich spaces that convey regional identity and artistic expression.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between textiles and architecture has long been recognized by design philosophy. Gottfried Simper's "Theory of Dressing" emphasized textiles as one of the first architectural elements, suggesting that woven enclosures preceded permanent structures. Modern designers continue to explore this link by infusing textile features into constructed spaces. Research on hospitality design highlights the growing importance of cultural authenticity in enhancing guest experiences.

The Experience of Pine and Gilmore According to economic theory, memorable experiences are created in settings that engage customers both intellectually and emotionally. This is achieved by integrating narratives of craftsmanship, heritage, and regional identity into textile-inspired places' spatial design.

Research on indigenous crafts also highlights how important they are to sustainable development and cultural heritage preservation. Eco-friendly materials and artisanal production techniques are frequently used in traditional textiles, which support modern sustainability objectives. Using these textiles in hospitality initiatives can support environmental responsibility and cultural preservation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To investigate how traditional Indian crafts and textile-inspired design ideas are incorporated into modern hospitality architecture, a qualitative case study methodology was used. An in-depth comprehension of design tactics, cultural importance, and the experience benefit of integrating indigenous artistic traditions inside hospitality spaces is made possible by this method.

Purposively chosen for in-depth examination were three well-known Indian hospitality projects that were praised for their effective application of regional craftsmanship and textile-inspired design features.

Secondary data from publicly accessible architectural documents, hospitality design reports, project descriptions, academic publications, and visual analysis of photos and design drawings were used in the study.

These resources included thorough explanations of each case study's architectural language, material selection, spatial personality, and cultural expression.

The analysis was conducted using the following parameters:

1. Incorporating patterns, themes, and visual components from textiles into interior and architectural design.
2. Use of indigenous materials, traditional construction techniques, and handcrafted components.
3. Cultural storytelling, regional identity, and branding strategies reflected in the design.
4. The design incorporates branding tactics, regional identity, and cultural narrative.
5. Support for local workmanship, conservation of traditional artisanal expertise and cultural legacy, and environmental sustainability.

CASE STUDY 1: RAAS JODHPUR, RAJASTHAN

BACKGROUND

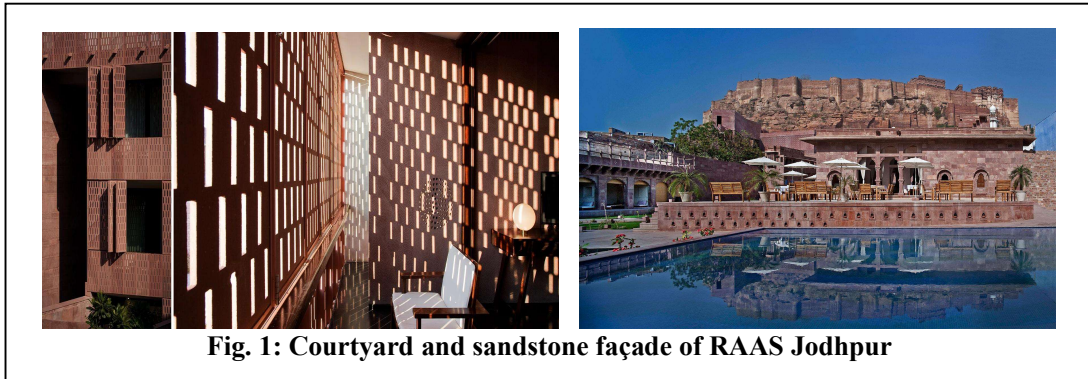


Fig. 1: Courtyard and sandstone façade of RAAS Jodhpur

The Mehrangarh Fort in Rajasthan is next to the opulent historic hotel RAAS Jodhpur. The project is renowned for combining traditional Rajasthani craftsmanship with modern design.

TEXTILE-INSPIRED DESIGN ELEMENTS

Traditional Rajasthani block printing and jali work patterns are included into the design. Handmade fabrics made by regional craftspeople utilizing age-old weaving and dying methods are used in interior design. Themes found in regional textiles can be found in wall hangings, ornamental panels, cushions, and upholstery. The earthy hues used in the hotel's public areas are inspired by naturally coloured materials. The house has a cohesive look thanks to screens and barriers inspired by textiles. Cultural Branding RAAS successfully positions itself as a destination rooted in local culture. Guests encounter authentic craft traditions throughout their stay, creating a strong sense of place and regional identity.

RELEVANCE TO GEN Z

The blend of heritage architecture and contemporary luxury creates highly photogenic spaces that appeal to social media-oriented travellers. The visible presence of local craftsmanship contributes to meaningful cultural engagement.

CASE STUDY 2: TAJ FALAKNUMA PALACE, HYDERABAD

BACKGROUND



Fig. 2 : Interior and architectural spaces of Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad,

The Taj Falaknuma Palace, which was first built as a royal palace, has been converted into an opulent heritage hotel while maintaining its historical relevance.

DESIGN ELEMENTS INSPIRED BY TEXTILES

Traditional Deccan textiles, such as elaborate embroidery, brocade fabrics, and woven designs, provide as inspiration for the interiors. Rich textile applications can be seen in carpets, upholstery, draperies, and ornamental furniture.

Hyderabadi weaving traditions serve as the inspiration for a number of public areas. Regional fabrics' textile geometries and decorative elements are reflected in custom-designed furniture.

CULTURAL BRANDING

The palace experience is strongly connected to Hyderabad's royal and textile heritage. Guests are introduced to local traditions through carefully curated spatial experiences that celebrate regional craftsmanship.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CRAFT REVIVAL

Many restoration and furnishing efforts involved local artisans, helping sustain traditional craft knowledge and providing economic opportunities within artisan communities.

RELEVANCE TO GEN Z

The palace offers immersive storytelling through design, allowing visitors to experience history through visually rich and culturally layered spaces.

CASE STUDY 3: THE SERAI KABINI, KARNATAKA



Fig. 3: Interior and landscape spaces of The Serai Kabini, Karnataka

BACKGROUND

The Serai Kabini is a luxurious resort in Karnataka that focuses on environment and is close to the Kabini River. The resort places a strong emphasis on sustainable design and regional culture.

DESIGN ELEMENTS INSPIRED BY TEXTILES

The resort's common rooms and guest apartments include handmade textiles from Karnataka's weaving traditions. A warm and genuine ambiance is created by handcrafted furniture, weaving textures, and natural materials. Examples of how traditional weaving patterns are replicated in architectural forms are wall panels and ornamental installations. Textile-inspired aesthetics are improved by using locally available materials.

SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH

By utilizing local resources and assisting regional craftspeople, the project places a high priority on environmentally conscious design. Handmade fabrics lessen reliance on ornamental items produced in factories.

CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

Instead than using ostentatious decorative themes, visitors are exposed to local culture through design. The built environment and local customs are meaningfully connected through textile-based interventions.

RELEVANCE TO GEN Z

The Serai Kabini is very appealing to Gen Z travelers because of its focus on sustainability, wellness, nature immersion, and aesthetically beautiful locations. Modern visitors are increasingly prioritizing authentic experiences above traditional luxury. The resort's handcrafted décor, ecological sensitivity, and breathtaking setting provide highly shareable experiences while encouraging greater engagement with the local environment and culture. Discussions on travel forums frequently In Kabini's hospitality sector, the Serai offers an opulent, high-end experience.

DISCUSSION

TEXTILES AS SPATIAL IDENTITY

The case studies show that native textiles can have purposes beyond aesthetics. They take on the role as messengers for cultural narratives that shape the character of hospitality establishments. Textiles convey local histories and craft traditions through patterns, textures, and material characteristics.

CRAFT-BASED CULTURAL BRANDING

Hospitality businesses are increasingly using localized experiences to differentiate themselves. Textile-inspired design is a powerful branding strategy because it creates a direct connection between the location and its cultural heritage. Unlike generic luxury interiors, craft-based rooms have unique personalities that are hard to replicate.

Sustainability and Ethical Design

Natural fibers, artisanal methods, and regional supply networks are frequently used in traditional textile manufacture. Sustainable development goals are furthered by using such materials into hospitality design. Collaboration with artisan communities also promotes cultural continuity and economic sustainability.

GEN Z AND EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM

Authenticity, cultural immersion, and visual connection are highly valued by Generation Z tourists. Textile-inspired hospitality facilities, which provide aesthetically distinctive and culturally relevant environments, satisfy these expectations. Social media platforms have raised the importance of aesthetically pleasing rooms. The distinctive visual experiences produced by handcrafted installations, culturally inspired design elements, and traditional textile patterns stimulate digital sharing and destination marketing.

PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Traditional knowledge systems can be preserved by incorporating indigenous textiles into hospitality operations. Artists have greater opportunity to grow and pass on their abilities to the next generation as the need for culturally influenced design rises. Additionally, this multidisciplinary approach makes traditional crafts more relevant than their typical uses. Textile traditions are incorporated into modern design discourse through their integration into architectural and hospitality contexts.

CHALLENGES

Textile-inspired hospitality ventures face several challenges despite their benefits:

1. The potential for superficial cultural appropriation when substantial engagement with artisan communities is lacking.
2. The difficulty of balancing goals for contemporary luxury with authenticity.

3. Higher costs for handcrafted materials and unique fabrication.
4. Local textile traditions are not well understood by designers.
5. Problems with textile installations in hospitality environments.

Designers, craftspeople, academics, and stakeholders in the hospitality industry must work together to address these issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To improve the usage of indigenous textiles in hospitality design, the following strategies are recommended:
- Establish long-lasting partnerships between hotel companies and artisan communities.
- Incorporate artisan tales into visitor experiences through exhibitions, seminars, and storytelling projects.
- Encourage design education programs that look at the relationships between textiles and architecture.
- Promote research on innovative methods for combining traditional crafts with contemporary home design.
- Develop sustainability certification systems that recognize craft-based design solutions.

CONCLUSION

The integration of fashion, craft, and space design is a significant development in contemporary hospitality architecture. The abundance of cultural expression provided by indigenous textiles has the potential to transform hospitality environments into immersive, identity-based experiences. The case studies of RAAS Jodhpur, Serai Kabini, and Taj Falaknuma Palace demonstrate how textile-inspired interventions promote immersive tourism, sustainability, and cultural branding.

These places provide Generation Z travellers significant chances to interact with cultural heritage through visually striking and genuine encounters. Textile-based design frameworks promote artisan livelihoods, sustainable development goals, and craft preservation in addition to being visually beautiful. Indigenous textiles will probably become more important in creating hospitality environments that combine innovation and tradition as experiential tourism expands. According to the study's findings, indigenous textiles may function as potent spatial manifestations of identity, bridging the gap between architecture, fashion, and craft while guaranteeing the survival of traditional knowledge systems in the contemporary world.

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INVESTIGATING THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN CLOTHING, SELF -ESTEEM AND SOCIAL PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT

Clothing is a fundamental aspect of human expression, life style and moreover it is the reflection of persona. It also serves as a vital element of human expression, influencing self-perception and social interactions (how we perceive ourselves and how others perceive us). Style of clothing meaningfully impacts self-esteem and social perception through "enclothed cognition," where wearing specific attire alters psychological processes. This study investigates the complex relationship between clothing, self-esteem, and social perception that shapes individual identity, boosts confidence and leading to significant change in self and social perception. It also reveals that how dressing related decisions or choices impact self - social perception process, in turn, shapes our attitudes towards clothing wherein clothing mismatches can lead to negative self-perception, self-doubt and decreases self- acceptance known as self-discrepancy theory. Clothing selection is an important factor in dealing with stressful states and also outline a person's self-image. In one study shows that when people wear clothes they prefer, their self-confidence increases (Allensworth, 2015). As suggested by many other previous researches that there is a great role of clothing preferences in the context of psychological disturbances or mental issues like depression and Anxiety (Johnson, 2021). One study conducted by Tiggemann and Slater (2014), found the strong relationship between the consistent clothing pattern and positive psychological constructs like greater self -confidence and positive body image. In conclusion it can be said that there is strong psychological impact of clothing on shaping the identity, positive body image, self-worth, healthy form of expressions and social perception.

Keywords: Clothing, Self -Perception, Lower Self Confidence, Psychological constructs, Positive Body Image

INTRODUCTION

Human mind traditionally considered as the storage of different memories, thoughts, perceptions, emotions and previous learning. In eastern perspective or various texts in Indian Mythology also believes that how the mind regulates the actions and defines the preferences either in clothing selection or any other life choices. The dressing sense of a human being is related to his mind, social awareness, external validation, reflecting power or control over others or just enhancing the mood. Even the clothes we wear will satisfy our mind. The social brain science of attire is associated with what every individual's clothing means for the individual way of behaving and direct of others around them (Johnson and Lennon 2014).

PERSPECTIVE OF CLOTHING

Traditional and modern clothing represent two distinct ideas: the former origins clothes in cultural tradition and generational craftsmanship, while the latter prioritizes functionality, global trends, and minimalist aesthetics.

- **Traditional vs Modern**

The traditional viewpoint of clothing perceives it as beyond just utility or style, considered it as a representation of own cultural identity and legacy, community heritage, cultural significance, societal norms and social ranking. It is also deeply rooted in historical and more often spiritual beliefs. Early psychologists like **J.C. Flügel (1933)** focused on the role of dress in upholding modesty and managing social rank. The kind of dress made by individuals is influenced by many essential elements ranging from cultural, social and economic conditions (**Powell & Gilbert 2009**). A person's identity is very much identical with or his or her dress (**Twigg et al., 2009**).

Usually in Indian context attire provides the value for the cultural heritage and also symbolizes the history of any community like Saree for women and Dhoti-Kurta for men cherished as enduring signs of cultural pride. Clothing as the only lasting and strongest connection to ancestors and cultural beliefs. Similarly, there are several instances include the elaborate embroidery or needle work on specific garments or the use of particular colors associated with life milestones. Wearing traditional dresses, particularly during festivals or significant life events, fosters a sense of unity and continuity within a community. On the other hand, modern clothing view centers on the functionality and fast-paced design and lifestyles. It also focuses more on globalization and personal expression rather than bound by regional rituals.

As nothing can be centred in one extreme i.e traditional or modern. The intersection or fusion between the traditional values such as hand weaving, organic dyeing and environmentally sustainable practices and contemporary adaptation need to be added in the society.

- **Physical vs Psychological**

Clothing impacts human being in two different ways but connected: physiologically (how our bodies interact with fabric and weight) and psychologically (how our minds process the symbolic meaning of clothes). Research confirms that dressing well and comfortably regulates bodily stress level while deeply varying cognitive and mental processes and overall confidence.

The Physiological Impact connects with Body and Environment where researches based on the effect of the clothing on bodily movements or overall bodily reactions specifically regarding thermal comfort, sensory touch etc. for Example: Many researches have been found the strong bond between the fabric textures (cotton, silk etc.) and positive neurological responses. Conversely, stiff, rough fabrics can trigger minor sensory stress and fidgeting. Similarly, Research indicates that the physical mass of the clothing directly affects energy outflow. Heavy or restrictive garments cause physiological tiredness, while lightweight, breathable fabrics lessen the physical stress and improve overall comfort and well-being. The Psychological Impact related the Mind and Behavior where several studies prove that clothing operates as a tool affecting the processes such as thinking, feeling and concentration level. For instance, individuals wearing a lab coat symbolically linked to carefulness performed significantly better on sustained-focus tasks than those without one. On same note, wearing clothes that fit well aligns with positive self-perception and directly regulates the level of self-esteem also reduces the social anxiety. According to studies on formal business attire, wearing formal clothing causes wearers to feel more competent, rational, and powerful. It also encourages a more abstract and systemic or structured style of thinking.

As demonstrated by Singh (2024), fashion functions as a powerful form of nonverbal communication and self-expression, allowing individuals to project confidence and assert their identity. In the book *The Principles of Psychology*, William James (1890) referred to clothing's psychological value: humans appropriate their attire and begin to identify with it as an extension of their own persona (Watson, 2004). During the twentieth century, several writings and research papers on the psychology of clothing came into light, positing about attire's interrelationship with modesty (Flügel, 1933), social class (Simmel, 1957) or the self and identity (Davis, 1992). Studies have examined garments' impact on cognitive processing (e.g. wearing formal attire caused abstract construal; Slepian et al., 2015).

Several previous researches have been concluded the strong relationship between the preferred clothing and psychological aspects of human life which is just opposite to the conventional purpose of clothing. Few of them have also elaborated the valid interconnection among the preferred clothing style, Self Esteem and Self Perception which is grounded in the established background of Symbolic Interactionism (clothing as a facilitator for social interaction), Self-Perception Theory (representation of internal motivations), Enclothed Cognition (Clothes trigger psychological processes based on their symbolic meaning).

CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ENCLOTHED COGNITION AND FEEDBACK LOOP

The Enclothed cognition illustrates the strong relationship between the clothing, cognitions and behaviour (actions) coined by the researchers Hajo Adam and Adam Galinsky in 2012. It shows that how our outward appearance shapes our internal emotional state through the reactions of others and our own perceptions. Entoven (2020) explains how clothing affects the mind and thoughts. The ground of this phenomenon is The Feedback loop where clothing choices or preferred dressing style aligned with one's own identity leading to the reflection of personality attributes towards the outer world. *For Example:* When a person wears clothing that makes him/her more powerful or comfortable lifts the self-worth.

- **Clothing choices or Intentional Dressing:** Choosing clothes that fit well with one's identity, or are considered stylish sends a message of confidence and competence to the external world for choice validation.
- **Positive Social Feedback:** When our appearance matches a social context, we receive validation, such as compliments or positive attention. The feedback reinforcing that our choices are effective and well received.
- **Elevated Self-Esteem:** This constant reinforcement loop leads to higher self-confidence, better mood, and ultimately positive self Esteem or more positive self-image.

Clothing Choices —► Positive Social Feedback —► Elevated Self-Esteem

(Initial choices and (External Validation) (Internal Self -worth) (Preferences)

Once a person is able to comprehend the essence of the Feedback loop to consciously aware for the clothing choices resulting in obtaining the desired outcomes. It can also be referred as the choices for success formula. For Example, if a someone wants to be creative in a specific moment, then traditional or conventional clothing choices will be more effective rather than random decision. If someone wants to appear for any formal presentation or any interview then the clothing selection has to be very structured and organized will activate the positive qualities.

Self Esteem and Clothing: Many times wearing the preferred dressing style directly enhances the personal mood, confidence, professional efficacy, increases the power of control, competence. Sometimes it also works as body image bufferer where strategic dressing masks the perceived negative views about self and also enhances physical security. As whatever a person wear does not simply cover the physical body but acts on the cognitions and psychological self. All styles carries a specific meaning- meaning that the wearer absorbs and observer sees.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to find the interconnection between the variables of clothing, self-esteem and social perception, it is concluded that clothing choices work as a strong, powerful, non-verbal communicator that simultaneously influences an individual's psychology (self Esteem) and subsequently shapes external social evaluations (perception). Clothing that is considered as very attractive and fits well to the personality or self often boosts the self-confidence, increases the attention and subsequently improves the future performances. As per the existing researches it has been also found that clothing leads to immediate evaluation about a person's personal attributes and potentialities. In terms of the Feedback Loop hypothesis there is strong positive relationship between the fitted clothes leading to the increased self confidence resulting in more positive and effective social interactions and in turn higher self-esteem and self-worth. Clothing is far more than a functional necessity; it is an extension of the self that acts as a cognitive tool and reflects the

inner self. By aligning personal style with personal identity, individuals can improve their mood, behavior, and social standing.

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RECONTEXTUALIZING KULLU WEAVE: INTEGRATING REGIONAL TEXTILE PRACTICES INTO CONTEMPORARY DENIMWEAR

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Abstract

Kullu, nestled in the hills of Himachal Pradesh, carries a quietly powerful identity, one built from mountain landscapes, living craft traditions and a natural environment that tends to stay with you long after you've left. There is something about its stillness, its textures and its particular range of blues that feels deeply personal once experienced. This study begins there, with that memory and asks how such a felt sense of place might find its way into contemporary fashion. Denim forms the foundation of the collection not as a neutral choice, but a deliberate one. It is the fabric most present in young wardrobes today, familiar and unpretentious, and precisely because of that, it becomes an interesting surface to carry something more culturally layered. Motifs drawn from Kullu's temple architecture are worked into the collection through the Kullu weave, bringing a regional visual language into conversation with everyday dress. At its core, this study treats fashion as a form of memory-keeping. Clothes, in this sense, are not just things we wear; they are ways of holding onto experiences, places and identities that matter to us. The collection grows from that belief, attempting to build a design language that is rooted in a specific cultural moment while remaining open and relevant to a wider world.

Keywords: Weaving, Denim, Traditional Handloom, Kullu, Himachal Pradesh

INTRODUCTION

India is known for its rich and diverse cultural heritage, where traditional crafts and textiles play a significant role in reflecting regional identities, histories and socio-cultural practices (Singh, et al., 2022). Handloom and handicrafts also play a significant role in sustaining rural economies and preserving indigenous knowledge systems (Sharma & Chadha, 1996).

The state of Himachal Pradesh stands out for its vibrant craft traditions shaped by its mountainous geography, climatic conditions, and cultural diversity. The region is particularly known for its wool-based textiles (Sharma, Kanwar, & Rekha, 2008).

Kullu valley, often referred to as the “Valley of the Gods”, is known for its distinctive weaving traditions and textile practices (Singh, et al., 2022). The weaving culture of Kullu has developed over centuries, influenced by migration, trade routes and interactions with neighbouring regions such as Kinnaur (Patterson, 2002). Kullu textiles, particularly shawls and pattu, are characterized by geometric patterns, vibrant colours, and motifs inspired by nature, religion and the surrounding environment (Sharma, Kanwar, & Rekha, 2008).

Among these, *pattu* holds a unique cultural position as a traditional garment worn by women, combining both functional and decorative aspects. The weaving process involves intricate

techniques, including yarn preparation, warping and weaving on looms, reflecting the skill and craftsmanship of local artisans (Singh, et al., 2022). Motifs such as floral forms, temple symbols and geometric patterns serve as visual expressions of cultural identity and belief systems (Thakur, 2024).

Despite its rich heritage, the handloom sector in Kullu faces several challenges, including declining interest among younger generations, competition from power looms and limited innovation in design (Subba, 2020) (Gurung, 2020). Studies suggest that while traditional crafts continue to hold cultural value, there is a growing need to adapt them to contemporary contexts to ensure their sustainability and relevance (Bhandari, 2023).

In this context, the present study explores the translation of Kullu weaving and temple-inspired motifs into fashion. Denim, being one of the most widely worn and accessible fabrics in the Gen-Z wardrobe, is used as the primary material to bridge traditional craft practices with modern design sensibilities, creating a dialogue between cultural memory and contemporary expression. Furthermore, the study investigates how design can function as a medium of cultural continuity, where elements of heritage are not merely preserved but actively reimagined.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing literature on Kullu weaving highlights its deep cultural, historical and socio-economic significance. Patterson (2002), in her research “Weaving Traditions along the ‘Wool Road’ in India”, discusses the historical evolution of weaving practices in Himachal Pradesh, particularly in Kullu and Kinnaur regions. The study highlights weaving influenced by migration and trade. It also notes changes in materials and motifs over time due to commercialization and market influence.

Sharma, Kanwar and Rekha (2008), in their research “Traditional Handicrafts and Handloom of Kullu District, Himachal Pradesh”, document the cultural and functional significance of wool-based textiles. The study explains that Kullu textiles are characterized by geometric patterns, bright colours and locally available materials, while also observing a gradual shift towards pastel shades and diversified products in response to changing consumer preferences.

Research on craft traditions also extends to architectural and symbolic contexts. Thakur (2024), in his research “Timeless Craft: The Woodcarving Tradition of Nirmand’s Wooden Temples”, explores the woodcarving of temple architecture in the Western Himalayan region, emphasizing the cultural and symbolic importance of motifs. The study identifies the use of geometric, floral and mythological elements as expressions of local belief systems and identity, highlighting their role as a visual language within architectural spaces. This connection between architecture and ornamentation provides a foundation for motif-based design translation.

Several studies focus on the transformation of traditional crafts in contemporary contexts. Bhandari (2023), in her research “Sustaining the Cultural Heritage: Handlooms in Himachal Pradesh”, examines the role of design intervention in sustaining handloom in Himachal Pradesh. The study highlights how color adaptation, motif simplification and product diversification contribute to the relevance of traditional crafts, while maintaining cultural authenticity.

Gurung (2020), in her research “To Study the Choices and Preferences of Handloom Products of Kullu District in Himachal Pradesh”, identifies a gap between crafts and modern users. The findings suggest that while consumers value quality and tradition, there is limited awareness and engagement, especially among younger generations, along with concerns related to pricing and accessibility.

Chadha and Sharma (1996), in their research “Co-operatives Succeed in Mountains Too: Case of Bhutti Weavers Society, Kullu”, analyze the functioning of the Bhutti Weavers Cooperative Society in Kullu, highlighting its role in supporting artisan livelihoods and sustaining traditional weaving practices. The study emphasizes the importance of community-based systems in ensuring economic stability and continuity of craft.

Subba (2020), in her research “Co-operatives Succeed in Mountains Too: Case of Bhutti Weavers Society, Kullu”, investigates the current status of the handloom industry in Kullu district, focusing on socio-economic conditions of weavers. The study identifies challenges such as low-income levels, lack of innovation and declining interest among younger generations, indicating the need for development within the sector.

Chauhan (2025), in her research “Re-Searching Textile-Nature Partnerships: Rhythms and Rituals of Desi Oon”, expands the understanding of textiles by situating them within ecological and cultural systems, introducing concepts of material and immaterial aspects such as rituals, rhythms and relationships with nature. This perspective adds conceptual depth to craft-based design.

Singh, Sethiya, Anupriya, Pathak, Kapoor, Kothari, Yadav and Kakaria (2022) in their research “The Untold Story of Pattu Textile Weaving Traditions in the Indian Mountains of Kullu Valley, India”, document the traditional Pattu textile of Kullu valley, detailing its weaving process, tools, raw materials and symbolic motifs. The study emphasizes the cultural importance of the garment while also noting challenges such as lack of innovation and changing lifestyles affecting its relevance.

Additionally, SareesBelow500 (2025, May 28), in the blog ‘Kullu Shawls: Weaving Traditions and Unique Patterns’, documents the Kullu shawl weaving patterns and outlines the use of geometric motifs, symbolic meanings and border placements. It highlights how patterns are inspired by nature and everyday life, providing a simplified understanding of motif structure and application.

TABLE 1.1 : REVIEW TABLE

Author & Source (APA Style)	Focus of Study	Key Findings	Relevance for Present Study
Patterson, S. R. C. (2002). Weaving traditions along the ‘Wool Road’ in India.	Historical evolution of weaving	Migration & trade influence; geometric motifs; material shifts due to commercialization	Establishes origin, evolution and visual identity of Kullu weaving
Sharma, N., Kanwar, P., & Rekha, A. (2008). Traditional handicrafts and handloom of Kullu district, Himachal Pradesh.	Traditional textiles & materials	Wool-based textiles; geometric patterns; shift to pastel tones & diversification	Provides understanding of material, motifs and changing design trends
Thakur, N. (2024). Timeless craft: The woodcarving tradition of Nirmand’s wooden temples.	Temple motifs & symbolism	Geometric, floral, mythological motifs; cultural and spiritual meanings	Supports translation of temple architecture into motif development
Bhandari, B. (2023). Sustaining the cultural heritage: Handlooms in Himachal Pradesh.	Design intervention in crafts	Motif simplification; color adaptation; product diversification	Guides reinterpretation of traditional craft into contemporary design
Gurung, P. (2020). To study the choices and preferences of handloom products of Kullu district in Himachal Pradesh.	Consumer behavior in handloom	Low awareness; limited youth engagement; price sensitivity	Justifies need for contemporary, accessible design approaches
Chadha, G. K., & Sharma, H. R. (1996). Co-operatives succeed in mountains too: Case of Bhutti Weavers Society, Kullu.	Cooperative systems & livelihoods	Artisan support; income stability; community-based production	Provides insight into craft ecosystem and production structure
Subba, A. (2020). Existing status and potential of handloom industry in Kullu district.	Industry status & challenges	Low income; lack of innovation; declining youth interest	Highlights need for innovation and design-led intervention
Chauhan, M. (2025). Re-searching textile-nature partnerships: Rhythms and rituals of desi oon.	Textile-nature relationships	Material & immaterial aspects; rituals; ecological connections	Adds conceptual depth linking craft, memory and environment
Singh, N., Sethiya, A., Pathak, A., Kapoor, R., Kothari, S., Yadav, P., & Kakaria, R. (2022). The untold story of pattu textile weaving traditions in the Indian mountains of Kullu Valley, India.	Weaving process & garment study	Traditional techniques; symbolic motifs; cultural relevance	Supports craft documentation and motif-based design translation
SareesBelow500. (2025, May 28). Kullu shawls: Weaving traditions and unique patterns.	Motif structure & patterns	Geometric motifs; symbolic meanings; border-based layouts	Helps understand motif placement and visual composition

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the traditional weaving practices and motifs of Kullu.
2. To reinterpret Kullu weaving and temple-inspired motifs within contemporary fashion design.
3. To develop a Gen-Z focused denim wear collection that bridges Kullu traditional handloom practices with contemporary aesthetics.

METHODOLOGY

- The study is **qualitative and exploratory in nature**, focusing on understanding traditional Kullu weaving practices and temple-inspired motifs and interpreting them within a contemporary fashion context.
- A **participatory and practice-based approach** is adopted, combining field engagement with design development.
- Primary data was collected through **on-site visits**, where temple motifs were documented through photography. This was complemented by creative experimentation, including the translation of these motifs into woven Kullu textiles and their application in contemporary garments.
- Purposive sampling is used for selecting temple motifs and Kullu design elements based on their cultural relevance, visual characteristics and adaptability to denim-based fashion.

RESEARCH PLAN

Step 1: Secondary Research (Literature Review)

Secondary data has been collected from books, research papers and online sources to understand the history, materials, techniques and cultural significance of Kullu weaving, along with references to temple architecture and motifs. A study on contemporary brands has been undertaken to understand current silhouette trends relevant to Gen-Z.

Step 2: Primary Research (Field Documentation)

Primary data has been collected through on-site visits, where temple motifs have been documented through photography. This step provides first-hand visual references and contextual understanding.

Step 3: Visual Analysis

Both primary (photographs) and secondary (literature) data have been analysed to identify **key motifs**, forms and design elements suitable for reinterpretation.

Step 4: Design Development

Selected motifs have been adapted and translated into design concepts. These have been further developed into woven Kullu textile samples through traditional weaving techniques.

Step 5: Material Integration and Collection Development

The developed woven samples have been incorporated into a Gen-Z focused denim wear collection, bridging traditional handloom practices with contemporary aesthetics.

Step 6: Evaluation

The final designs have been selected based on their effectiveness in integrating traditional motifs with modern fashion and their alignment with the research objectives

DATA ANALYSIS

A brief study of contemporary fashion identified silhouette preferences such as relaxed fits, minimal aesthetics, layering and wrap-based forms.

Primary data was collected through on-site documentation of temple architecture in Kullu. Key visual elements such as layered roof forms, vertical structures and carved details have been identified and used as the basis for motif extraction.

Leesle



Hyein Seo



Antar Agni



Mati



Khanijo



Fig. 1 : Dress Collections of Gen-z's inspired by temples



HIDIMBA DEVI TEMPLE

The Hidimba Devi Temple has intricately carved wooden doors .

The goddess Durga forms the theme of the main door carvings.

The temple base is made out of whitewashed, mud-covered stonework.

An enormous rock occupies the inside of the temple, only a 7.5 cm (3 inch) tall brass image representing goddess Hidimba Devi.

Temple has 24 meters tall wooden "shikhhar" or tower above the sanctuary.

The tower consists of three square roofs covered with timber tiles and a fourth brass cone-shaped roof at the top.

MANU TEMPLE

The temple is dedicated to the Indian sage Manu.

Its made up of Wood and Stone, Marble is used for flooring.

The temple is laid out in a square formation with sides measuring 4.80 m.

Over it stand 12 square wooden pillars, one on each of the four corners and two placed equidistantly forming three division on each side.

The sanctum sanctorum is 2.15 m sq chamber and enshrines a stone image of Manu Rishi.



BIJLI MAHADEV TEMPLE

The 60 feet high staff of Bijli Mahadev Temple glistens like a silver needle in the sun.

The pole is made of Deodar wood, carved in a square shape.

One of the fine examples of the pent-n-gable type roof is the Bijali Mahadev Temple.

The lower portion of the walls is of cut stone, no plaster being used throughout.

At the entrance, which is to the west, there are fancifully carved uprights that join on the roof, and a good deal of open carving also surrounds the arched window.



JAGATSUKH TEMPLE

One of the oldest wooden temples with the exterior view of the 'Gabled Roof Type'.

The carvings on the columns are quite native.

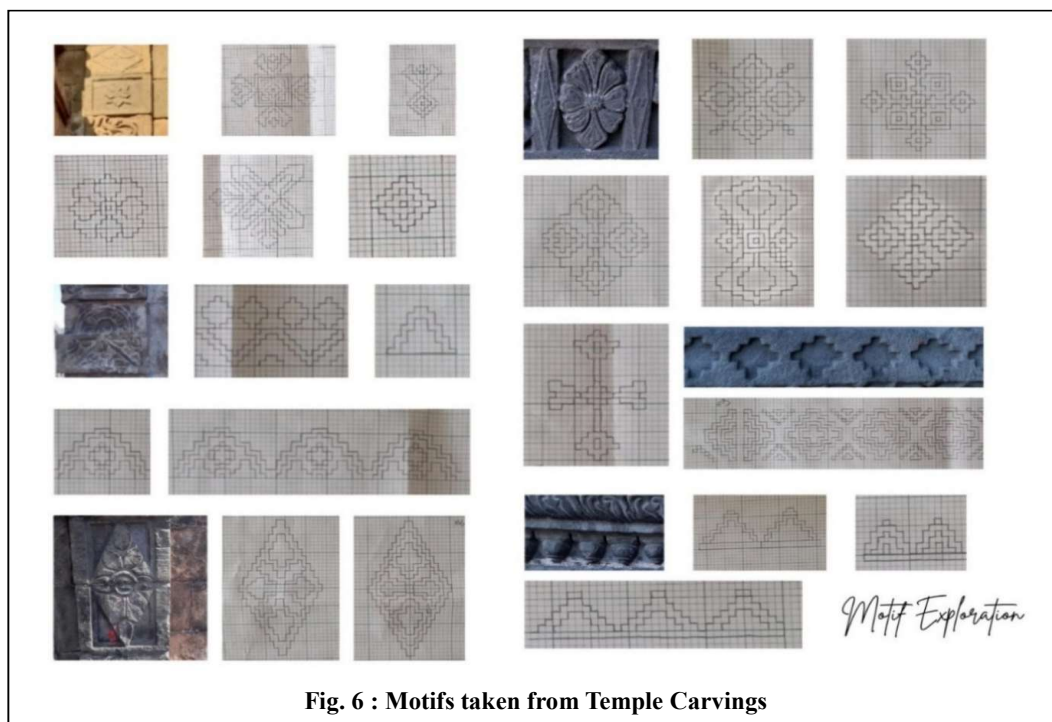
Fundamental folk art carvings of Himachal Pradesh.

Garbhagriha (sanctuary) and Mandapa (hall) are walled of stone but surrounded with a wooden open colonnade.

The temple is crowned with a large 'gambrel roof a kind of gabled roof or gabled hipped roof, supported by a line of outer timber columns and the stone wall.

Fig. 2, 3, 4 5 : Temples at Kullu

The documented **temple motifs** have been analysed and simplified into geometric and grid-based forms.



The weaving translation has been explored through design development and application within the final prototype.

Trend research, supported by WGSN insights, highlights a shift towards cultural fusion, minimalism and storytelling in Gen-Z fashion.



Fig. 8 : Trend Research by Gen-Z's



Fig. 9 : Moodboard designed by Gen-Z's

These directions have been translated into a visual mood board, combining Kullu-inspired elements with contemporary aesthetics to define the design language. The interplay of blue tones and woven elements defines the design direction.

A range of design explorations was developed, aligning with Gen-Z preferences, to test silhouettes and motif placement.

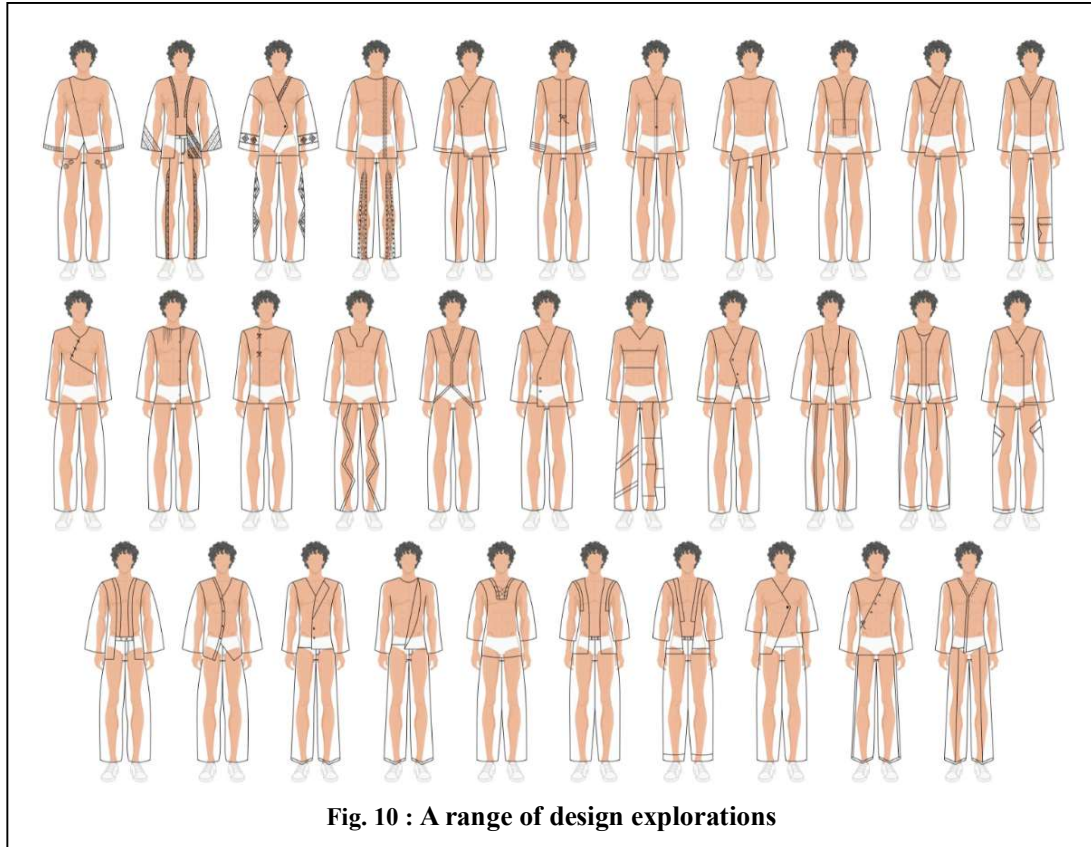


Fig. 10 : A range of design explorations



Fig. 10 : Shortlisted Designs

From this range, 5 designs have been shortlisted based on their visual coherence, feasibility and alignment with the research objectives.



Fig. 11 : Prototype of Dress



Fig. 12 : Final Garment

One selected design has been developed into a **prototype** through toile and final garment construction. The toile stage tests fit, proportion and placement before final execution. The final garment has been further explored through styled photoshoots to situate the garment within a contemporary context. The imagery reflects the intended Gen-Z aesthetic, highlighting wearability and narrative expression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An informal survey was conducted with 30 students of Unitedworld Institute of Design, Delhi-NCR, where the garment was presented and responses were recorded through a structured questionnaire focusing on visual appeal, wearability, cultural perception and contemporary relevance.

The responses indicate positive reception. 87% found the design visually appealing, and 80% were willing to wear it. Denim was well received, with 90% identifying it as enhancing relatability and wearability. Additionally, 83% of participants perceived the design as contemporary and aligned with Gen-Z fashion, while 77–87% recognized the presence of cultural elements. Most respondents appreciated the design and cultural aspects, with 20–23% suggesting variation in silhouette and styling. Overall, the findings support the effectiveness of integrating Kullu-inspired elements into contemporary denim wear, demonstrating both cultural relevance and user acceptance.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates the potential of translating Kullu weaving and temple motifs into contemporary fashion through denim, effectively bridging craft traditions with modern aesthetics for Gen-Z. The design process, from field documentation to prototype development, establishes how cultural elements can be reinterpreted without loss of identity, supported by positive user response. It further emphasizes the role of Indian textiles in design education as a means of sustaining craft through active engagement and contemporary application. By integrating traditional elements into familiar formats like denim, the study enhances accessibility and encourages wider acceptance among younger audiences. The study positions fashion not merely as a product but as a medium of cultural continuity, enabling traditions to evolve meaningfully within contemporary contexts.

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REPOSITIONING KHADI IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION: AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION AMONG GEN-Z COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Khadi is a significant heritage of Indian culture, produced by the skilled hands of Indian artisans. It holds great historical importance and played a remarkable role during India's freedom movement. Traditionally made from natural fibers through hand-spinning and hand-weaving techniques, Khadi is considered an eco-friendly textile that supports environmental sustainability. In recent years, there has been increasing interest in promoting Khadi among younger consumers and encouraging its use in contemporary clothing styles.

The present study aims to examine the awareness and perception of Gen-Z college students toward Khadi. A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 30 students of United University, Prayagraj. The findings reveal that awareness of Khadi among the respondents is very high; however, its actual usage among students is comparatively lower. Most respondents perceive Khadi as a sustainable and eco-friendly fabric and expressed willingness to wear Khadi garments if they are available in modern and attractive designs. The study suggests that design innovation and effective promotion can enhance the acceptance of Khadi among younger generation.

Keywords : Khadi, Gene-Z, Sustainable Fashion, Consumer Perception, Contemporary Fashion

INTRODUCTION

Khadi is one of the most important heritage textiles of India, deeply associated with the country's cultural identity, traditional craftsmanship, and socio-economic history. It is a hand-spun and hand-woven fabric produced through artisanal processes, which distinguishes it from industrially manufactured textiles. Traditionally made from natural fibres such as cotton, silk, and wool, Khadi is widely recognized for its eco-friendly nature, breathability, and sustainable production process. Mahatma Gandhi emphasized that the essential criterion of Khadi lies in its method of production being both hand-spun and hand-woven irrespective of whether the fibre used is cotton, silk, or wool (Gandhi, 1925).

Historically, Khadi played a significant role during India's freedom movement and emerged as a symbol of the *Swadeshi* movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Over the years, its relevance has expanded from a political and cultural symbol to a textile associated with sustainable fashion, ethical consumption, and artisanal revival. In the present era of growing environmental awareness and concern over the negative impacts of fast fashion, Khadi has gained renewed importance as a sustainable and socially responsible fabric. The broader fashion and textile industry has been identified as a major contributor to environmental challenges, including greenhouse gas emissions, water use, and textile waste, which has increased the relevance of sustainable alternatives in fashion (UNEP, 2022; UNEP, 2025). The fashion sector is reported to contribute approximately 2–8% of global greenhouse gas emissions, further strengthening the need for sustainable textile choices

At the same time, contemporary fashion consumers, particularly Generation Z, have emerged as an influential segment in shaping fashion trends and consumption patterns. Generation Z is commonly

understood as the cohort born between the late 1990s and early 2010s; some popular business and media sources define it as those born between 1997 and 2012, while other research sources place it roughly between 1996 and 2010 (Ita, 2025; McKinsey & Company, 2024). Gen-Z is widely described as the first truly digital-native generation, having grown up with the internet, smartphones, and social media as an integral part of daily life

Despite increased awareness of sustainability among younger consumers, traditional textiles such as Khadi are often perceived as conventional, outdated, or limited in terms of style and design. This creates a significant need to reposition Khadi in a way that aligns with modern aesthetics and contemporary clothing preferences. College students, as a prominent segment of Gen-Z, represent a relevant group for understanding how traditional textiles are viewed in present-day fashion settings and whether design innovation can improve their acceptance.

Therefore, the present study focuses on repositioning Khadi in contemporary fashion by examining the awareness and perception of Gen-Z college students toward Khadi. The study also seeks to understand whether design innovation and effective promotion can enhance the acceptance and usage of Khadi among younger consumers in the contemporary fashion market.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Khadi has long been recognized as an important heritage textile of India, closely associated with traditional craftsmanship, self-reliance, and indigenous production. Gandhi's writings on Khadi emphasized its identity as a hand-spun and hand-woven fabric rooted in self-reliance and indigenous production (Gandhi, 1925). This historical and philosophical significance gives Khadi a unique identity in Indian textile culture and continues to influence its relevance in the present day.

In the contemporary context, Khadi is increasingly viewed as a sustainable and eco-friendly textile. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC, 2024) defines Khadi as hand-spun and hand-woven cloth produced in India, reinforcing its artisanal nature. The growing concern over the environmental impact of the global fashion industry has increased interest in sustainable textiles, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2022; 2025) has highlighted the need for responsible fashion consumption and low-impact textile alternatives. In this context, Khadi is often considered compatible with the principles of sustainable and slow fashion.

Studies on youth perception of Khadi indicate that young consumers generally appreciate its comfort, cultural value, and sustainability, but often perceive it as traditional, expensive, or less fashionable. Rohilla and Gautam (2022) found that although young consumers had positive awareness of Khadi, its actual acceptance in everyday fashion remained limited due to issues of style appeal and affordability. This suggests that awareness alone does not necessarily lead to usage, especially among younger consumers who are influenced by changing fashion trends.

Research on Generation Z shows that this group is highly influenced by digital culture, visual appeal, and value-based consumption. McKinsey and Company (2024) describes Gen-Z as the first true digital-native generation, McKinsey and Company (2024) identifies Gen-Z as the first generation to grow up fully in the digital era, and recent consumer studies suggest that this generation increasingly values authenticity, sustainability, and socially responsible consumption. However, studies also indicate that Gen-Z consumers prefer products that combine ethical value with modern design and market relevance. Therefore, repositioning Khadi through design innovation, contemporary styling, and effective promotion becomes essential for improving its acceptance among college-going Gen-Z consumers. The present study is undertaken in this context to examine the awareness and perception of Khadi among Gen-Z college students in relation to contemporary fashion.

However, limited studies have specifically examined the awareness, perception, and acceptance of Khadi among Gen-Z college students in the context of contemporary fashion at the local academic level. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the level of awareness of Khadi among Gen-Z college students.
2. To examine the perception of Gen-Z college students toward Khadi as a heritage and sustainable textile.
3. To analyse the usage and acceptance of Khadi in contemporary fashion among college students.
4. To suggest ways to reposition Khadi among Gen-Z through design innovation and effective promotion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive in nature and aims to examine the awareness and perception of Khadi among Gen-Z college students in the context of contemporary fashion. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 30 students of United University, Prayagraj, belonging to the Gen-Z age group. The respondents were selected using the convenience sampling method. The questionnaire included questions related to awareness of Khadi, its usage, perception as a sustainable fabric, and preference for contemporary Khadi designs. Secondary data were collected from books, journal articles, reports, and official sources related to Khadi, sustainable fashion, and consumer behaviour. The collected data were classified and analysed using the simple percentage method for interpretation of the findings.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A total of **30 responses** were collected from Gen-Z college students of **United University, Prayagraj**. The collected data were analysed using the **simple percentage method**. The following tables present the findings of the study.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1: Age-Wise Distribution Of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–20 years	15	50.0
21–23 years	14	46.7
24–26 years	1	3.3
Total	30	100

The table data shows that, the majority of respondents (**50%**) belong to the **18–20 years** age group, followed by **46.7%** in the **21–23 years** category. This indicates that most participants fall within the younger segment of Gen-Z.

Table 2: Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	27	90.0
Male	3	10.0
Total	30	100

The table data shows, that **90%** of the respondents were **female**, while **10%** were **male**. Hence, the study mainly reflected the responses of female college students.

4.2 AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF KHADI AMONG GEN-Z COLLEGE STUDENTS

Table 3: Awareness of Khadi Fabric

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	29	96.7
No	1	3.3
Total	30	100

The table data indicates that, a large majority (**96.7%**) of the respondents were aware of Khadi fabric. This clearly indicates a **very high level of awareness** among Gen-Z college students.

Table 4: Source of First Awareness about Khadi

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
School / College	12	40.0
Family	12	40.0
Fashion Shows / Designers	4	13.3
Social Media	1	3.3
Other	1	3.3
Total	30	100

The table data shows that, major sources of awareness were **School/College** and **Family**, each accounting for **40%**. This shows that educational and family environments play an important role in introducing Khadi to students.

Table 5: Usage of Khadi Clothing

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	16	53.3
No	14	46.7
Total	30	100

The table data shows though awareness is high, only **53.3%** of the respondents had worn Khadi clothing. This suggests that **actual usage is comparatively lower than awareness**.

Table 6: Perception of Khadi as Suitable for Modern Fashion

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	20	66.7
Maybe	10	33.3
Total	30	100

The table data indicates that, the majority of respondents (**66.7%**) believed that Khadi is suitable for modern fashion. This reflects a **positive perception** of Khadi's relevance in contemporary apparel.

Table 7: Present Image of Khadi Fashion among Respondents

Perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sustainable / Eco-friendly	17	56.7
Traditional	10	33.3
Stylish	2	6.7
Not sure	1	3.3
Total	30	100

Table data shows that, the Most respondents (**56.7%**) perceived Khadi as **sustainable and eco-friendly**, while **33.3%** still viewed it as **traditional**. This shows that Khadi has strong sustainable value but still needs fashion-oriented repositioning.

TABLE 8: WILLINGNESS TO WEAR KHADI IN MODERN DESIGNS

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	80.0
Maybe	6	20.0
Total	30	100

The table data shows that, the A significant majority (**80%**) of respondents were willing to wear Khadi if it is available in **modern designs**. This highlights the importance of **design innovation** in increasing acceptance.

TABLE 9: NEED FOR PROMOTION OF KHADI AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	27	90.0
Maybe	2	6.7
No	1	3.3
Total	30	100

The table data shows that, the majority (**90%**) believed that Khadi should be promoted among young people. This clearly supports the need for **targeted youth-oriented promotional strategies**.

TABLE 10: SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING KHADI MORE POPULAR AMONG YOUTH

Suggestion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Through modern and trendy designs	14	46.7
Affordable pricing	7	23.3
Promotion on social media	4	13.3
Celebrity and influencer promotion	3	10.0
Fashion shows and college events	2	6.7
Total	30	100

The table data shows that, the most preferred suggestion was **modern and trendy designs (46.7%)**, followed by **affordable pricing (23.3%)**. This indicates that design appeal and affordability are the key factors in making Khadi popular among Gen-Z.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study shows that **most of the Gen-Z college students were well aware of Khadi fabric**.

1. Although the level of awareness was high, the **actual use of Khadi clothing among students was comparatively less**.
2. A large number of respondents considered Khadi to be a **sustainable and eco-friendly fabric**, but many still assumed it mainly as a **traditional textile**.
3. Most students believed that **Khadi can be used successfully in modern fashion**.
4. A majority of respondents expressed that they would be interested in wearing Khadi if it is available in **modern and attractive designs**.

The findings also reveal that students feel **Khadi should be promoted more actively among the younger generation**.

According to the respondents, **modern styling, affordable pricing, and social media promotion** are the most effective ways to make Khadi more popular among youth.

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that Khadi continues to hold strong awareness among Gen-Z college students, which reflects its cultural significance and continued presence in society. However, the findings also show that awareness does not always result in regular usage. While students recognized Khadi as a sustainable and eco-friendly fabric, many still associate it with a traditional image rather than as an everyday fashion choice. At the same time, the responses clearly indicated that Gen-Z students are open to accepting Khadi in contemporary fashion if it is presented in a more modern, stylish, and appealing way. This suggests that Khadi has strong potential to connect with younger consumers, but its acceptance depends largely on design innovation, affordability, and better promotion. Therefore, Khadi can be successfully repositioned in contemporary fashion by balancing its traditional identity with the expectations and preferences of the younger generation.

LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is suggested that Khadi should be presented in a more modern and attractive way to connect better with young consumers. Trendy designs and affordable prices can make Khadi more appealing to Gen-Z students. Social media can also play an important role in promoting Khadi among youth. In addition, fashion events, college activities, and influencer promotion may help increase its popularity. More focus should be given to showing Khadi as a stylish, sustainable, and comfortable fabric for today's fashion needs.

The present study is limited to a small sample of 30 respondents from United University, Prayagraj. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to all Gen-Z consumers. Further studies with a larger sample size and wider geographical coverage may provide more comprehensive results.

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BEYOND APPEARANCE: ANALYSING THE INFLUENCE OF CLOTHING ON IDENTITY FORMATION AND SELF-IMAGE

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ABSTRACT

Clothing plays a crucial role that extends beyond physical appearance, acting as a medium for self-expression and identity formation, particularly among Generation Z consumers. This study examines the psychological impact of clothing on individuals' identity and self-image, focusing on how fashion choices influence confidence, social perception, and emotional well-being. The research adopts a quantitative approach, using a structured questionnaire administered to Gen-Z respondents aged 18 to 25. The findings indicate a strong correlation between clothing choices and self-perception, revealing that individuals often use fashion to construct and communicate their identity. Most participants experienced increased confidence levels and more positive self-perception when their clothing reflected their personal style and aligned with social norms. Additionally, the study also emphasises the impact of social and cultural factors in shaping clothing behaviour and identity expression. It underscores the role of clothing and fashion as a medium that works beyond aesthetics into the realm of personal and social psychology. The result offers deeper insight into how clothing influences self-image and behaviour across diverse social contexts.

Keywords: Clothing, Identity Formation, Fashion Psychology, Gen-Z Consumers, Self-Concept.

INTRODUCTION

Clothing occupies a significant position in human life, extending far beyond its basic function of protection and adornment. It operates as a symbolic and communicative medium through which individuals construct and express their identities. In modern society, influenced by globalisation and the rise of digital media, clothing has become increasingly influential in shaping how individuals perceive themselves and how they are perceived within social contexts. Fashion is no longer confined to aesthetics; it actively participates in shaping self-concept and personal narrative.

Identity formation is a complex process that develops over time and is influenced by culture, society, and personal experiences. Clothing contributes to this process by allowing individuals to express their beliefs, values, and social belonging. It acts as a form of non-verbal communication through which people present themselves to the world. At the same time, self-image, which refers to how individuals think and feel about themselves, is closely connected to their appearance and clothing choices.

The process of identity formation is inherently multidimensional, shaped by an interplay of cultural norms, social environments, and individual experiences. Within this framework, clothing serves as a visible and adaptable tool that enables individuals to project their beliefs, values, and affiliations. It functions as a non-verbal language, allowing individuals to negotiate their position within society while maintaining a sense of individuality. At the same time, self-image—defined as an individual's internal perception of their own identity—is closely intertwined with outward appearance, particularly clothing choices, which can reinforce or challenge personal confidence and self-worth. Clothing has long been understood as more than a physical necessity. Clothing functions as a form of social communication that reflects identity and personal meaning. "Clothing serves as a visible

expression of identity and communicates social meanings beyond its functional purpose.”- Susan B. Kaiser (1997)

This study seeks to critically examine the psychological implications of clothing in the development of identity and self-image. “Dress is closely linked to the body and plays a central role in shaping how individuals present themselves in everyday life.” - Joanne Entwistle (2000). It aims to explore how fashion influences cognitive and emotional responses, shapes behavioural patterns, and mediates social interactions. It examines how clothing choices influence confidence, behaviour, and social perception, highlighting the importance of fashion as a psychological and social tool rather than merely a visual element.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Clothing has long been examined as a significant medium through which individuals construct, express, and negotiate their identities. Across disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and fashion studies, scholars have emphasised that clothing extends beyond its utilitarian function to operate as a symbolic and communicative tool. This section reviews key theoretical and empirical contributions related to clothing, identity formation, and self-image, with a focus on their psychological and social dimensions.

CLOTHING AS A SYMBOLIC AND COMMUNICATIVE SYSTEM

Early theoretical perspectives establish clothing as a form of non-verbal communication embedded within social contexts. Clothing is understood as a symbolic system through which individuals convey meanings about themselves, reflecting both personal identity and societal expectations (Kaiser, 1997). Similarly, fashion has been described as a language-like structure that communicates cultural and social meanings, enabling individuals to express identity without verbal articulation (Barnard, 2002)

Fashion also functions as a system of coded symbols that allows individuals to negotiate identity in dynamic social environments. It facilitates both conformity and individuality, enabling individuals to align with social groups while maintaining personal distinctiveness (Davis, 1992). These perspectives collectively highlight that clothing is not merely reflective of identity but actively participates in its construction.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF CLOTHING BEHAVIOUR

The role of social structures and cultural norms in shaping clothing practices has been widely discussed. Clothing choices are influenced by factors such as class, gender, and cultural expectations, positioning fashion within broader systems of social stratification (Crane, 2000). This indicates that identity expressed through clothing is socially constructed and influenced by external forces.

From a symbolic interactionist perspective, fashion emerges through collective behaviour and group dynamics, where individuals adapt their clothing choices based on shared meanings and peer influence (Blumer, 1969). This highlights that clothing is deeply embedded in social processes, where identity expression is continuously negotiated within cultural and social contexts.

CLOTHING, THE BODY AND IDENTITY PERFORMANCE

An embodied perspective further emphasises the relationship between clothing and identity. The concept of the “dressed body” suggests that clothing is central to how individuals experience and present themselves in everyday life (Entwistle, 2000). Dress works in conjunction with the body to produce socially meaningful appearances, making identity a performative process. Clothing mediates the relationship between the internal self and the external world by shaping how the body is perceived. This reinforces its role in influencing both self-perception and social recognition (Entwistle, 2000).

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF CLOTHING ON SELF-IMAGE

The psychological dimension of clothing has been explored through empirical research. The concept of “enclothed cognition” demonstrates that clothing can influence cognitive processes and behavioural outcomes based on the symbolic meaning associated with it (Adam & Galinsky, 2012). Individuals may experience enhanced confidence, attention, and performance when wearing clothing linked to positive attributes.

Clothing also significantly affects emotional states and self-perception. What individuals wear can influence mood, confidence, and overall self-image, with appropriate clothing enhancing self-esteem and unsuitable attire leading to discomfort (Pine, 2014). These findings establish that clothing is both externally visible and internally experienced, directly impacting psychological well-being.

CLOTHING AS A MEDIUM OF SELF-EXPRESSION IN CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS

In contemporary society, clothing has become an important tool for self-expression, particularly with the rise of digital media. Individuals use fashion to communicate personal narratives, beliefs, and emotions, often curating their appearance to align with desired identities. While earlier studies focus on physical interactions, modern contexts highlight the role of visual self-presentation in both offline and online environments.

The increasing influence of social media has heightened awareness of appearance, encouraging individuals to make conscious clothing choices that reflect both personal identity and social expectations. This demonstrates that clothing functions as a dynamic and evolving medium of identity construction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the relationship between clothing practices and the process of identity construction.
- To analyse the influence of clothing choices on individuals’ self-image and self-perception.
- To evaluate the psychological impact of clothing on confidence, emotional state, and behavioural responses.
- To investigate the role of social, cultural, and media-driven factors in shaping clothing preferences.
- To assess how clothing functions as a medium of non-verbal communication in expressing identity.

CLOTHING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Clothing plays a vital role in shaping identity by acting as a visual representation of the self. Individuals often select clothing based on their personality, beliefs, and social affiliations. For example, someone inclined toward minimalism may prefer simple and neutral outfits, while another individual may use bold and experimental fashion to express creativity.

Clothing also helps individuals align with specific social groups. Uniforms, cultural attire, and fashion trends contribute to a sense of belonging and collective identity. At the same time, clothing allows for individuality, enabling people to differentiate themselves from others. Elements such as uniforms, traditional attire, and popular fashion trends create a sense of belonging and shared identity among individuals. These forms of dress often symbolise cultural values, professional roles, or group affiliations, allowing individuals to connect with others who share similar backgrounds or interests.

At the same time, clothing provides an opportunity for differentiation. While it can unite individuals within a group, it also enables them to stand out and establish a unique personal identity. People often modify or personalise their clothing styles to distinguish themselves from others, balancing both conformity and individuality. “Clothing choices are shaped by social structures and reflect cultural and societal influences.”- Diana Crane (2000)

Therefore, clothing functions as both a unifying and distinguishing factor in identity formation. It not only helps individuals integrate into social groups but also allows them to express their uniqueness, making it an essential element in understanding personal and social identity.

“Dress functions as a symbolic code that allows individuals to express and construct their identities.” - Fred Davis (1992)

TABLE 1 : FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CLOTHING CHOICES

FACTORS	DESCRIPTION
Cultural Influence	Traditional norms and values shape attire
Social Influence	Peer pressure and societal expectations
Media & Trends	Social media and the fashion industry impact
Economic Status	Budget affects clothing selection.
Personal Preference	Individual taste and comfort

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, relying on secondary data collected from academic journals, books, and credible online sources related to fashion psychology and identity studies. The analysis is descriptive in nature, focusing on interpreting existing research findings to understand the relationship between clothing, identity, and self-image. The selection of secondary sources was done carefully to ensure credibility, relevance, and academic value. Priority was given to peer-reviewed articles and well-established theoretical works in the fields of fashion studies and social psychology. This approach allows the study to build upon already established knowledge while providing a deeper understanding of the topic.

The research follows a descriptive and analytical method, where existing theories and findings are systematically reviewed, compared, and interpreted. Instead of conducting primary surveys or experiments, the study analyses previously published work to identify patterns, relationships, and key insights regarding how clothing influences identity and self-perception.

Furthermore, the study adopts a conceptual framework, focusing on connecting different ideas such as clothing behaviour, self-image, and social influence. Through this method, the research aims to present a well-structured understanding of how clothing functions as both a psychological and social tool.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Self-image is deeply influenced by how individuals perceive their appearance. Clothing plays a crucial role in shaping this perception by enhancing or diminishing confidence. Self-image is closely linked with appearance and clothing. According to Karen Pine, what individuals wear can significantly influence their confidence and emotional state. This research shows that clothing can affect how people feel about themselves and how they behave in different situations. Wearing well-fitted and preferred clothing can lead to a positive self-image, while uncomfortable or socially inappropriate attire may negatively affect self-esteem. “What people wear can significantly affect their confidence, mood, and overall self-perception.” - Karen Pine (2014)

Clothing also influences mood and behaviour. Bright colors and comfortable fabrics can create a sense of positivity, whereas restrictive or unsuitable clothing may lead to discomfort and self-consciousness. This demonstrates that clothing is not merely external but has a direct psychological impact on the internal state of an individual.

CLOTHING AS A TOOL FOR SELF-EXPRESSION

Fashion serves as a powerful medium for self-expression, allowing individuals to communicate their identity without words. Through clothing, people can express emotions, beliefs, and personal narratives. For instance, traditional attire may reflect cultural pride, while contemporary fashion choices may indicate modernity and openness to change.

In the digital age, social media platforms have amplified the role of clothing in self-expression. Individuals curate their appearance to create a desired image, influencing both self-perception and public perception.

With the advancement of the digital era, the role of fashion in self-expression has become even more significant. Social media platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest have transformed the way individuals present themselves, allowing them to carefully curate their appearance and create a specific image for a wider audience. People are now more conscious of their clothing choices, as these choices contribute to their online identity as well as their real-life persona.

Furthermore, the constant exposure to fashion trends and peer content on digital platforms influences both self-perception and public perception. Individuals may adjust their style to align with trends or to gain social acceptance, which can positively or negatively impact their confidence and self-image. “Fashion emerges through collective behaviour and is shaped by social interaction within groups.” - Herbert Blumer (1969). As a result, clothing becomes a dynamic medium through which individuals continuously shape and reshape their identity in response to both internal preferences and external influences.

Table 2 : Clothing Choices Reflecting Identity Expression

CLOTHING TYPE	IDENTITY EXPRESSION
Traditional Wear	Cultural identity
Formal Wear	Professional identity
Casual Wear	Relaxed and personal identity
Trendy Fashion	Modern and socially aware identity
Experimental Style	Creative and unique personality

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCE

Clothing choices are significantly shaped by social and cultural contexts. Cultural norms dictate acceptable attire, influencing how individuals present themselves. Similarly, social factors such as peer influence, media exposure, and fashion trends play a crucial role in shaping clothing preferences.

The rise of globalisation has led to the blending of cultural styles, allowing individuals to experiment with diverse fashion identities. However, it has also created pressure to conform to certain beauty and fashion standards, impacting self-image.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF CLOTHING

Clothing choices are strongly influenced by the social and cultural environment in which individuals live. Culture provides a framework that defines what is considered appropriate, acceptable, or desirable to wear in a particular society. These cultural norms guide individuals in selecting clothing that aligns with traditions, values, and social expectations. For example, in many parts of India, traditional attire such as sarees, salwar suits, or kurta-pyjamas is commonly worn during festivals, weddings, and religious events. Wearing such clothing for cultural practices and helps individuals feel connected to their heritage.

At the same time, social factors also play a major role in shaping clothing behaviour. People are often influenced by their peer groups, friends, and social circles. For instance, college students may adopt similar dressing styles as their peers to feel included and accepted within a group. If a particular fashion trend, such as oversized clothing or streetwear, becomes popular among a group, individuals may follow it even if it is not their personal preference, simply to maintain social belonging. “Fashion emerges through collective behaviour and is shaped by social interaction within groups.” Herbert Blumer (1969)

LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite offering valuable insights into the relationship between clothing, identity formation, and self-image, the present study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged.

Firstly, the study is based primarily on secondary data, relying on existing literature rather than primary empirical investigation. While this approach provides a strong theoretical foundation, it limits the ability to capture real-time behavioural patterns and personal experiences of respondents. Secondly, the research adopts a conceptual and descriptive approach, which restricts the scope for statistical validation and generalisation of findings. The absence of quantitative analysis or experimental data may limit the empirical strength of the conclusions drawn. Another limitation lies in the lack of demographic specificity. Although the study focuses on Generation Z, it does not deeply differentiate between variables such as gender, socio-economic background, education level, or regional diversity, all of which can significantly influence clothing behaviour and identity formation. Furthermore, the study does not extensively explore the Indian socio-cultural diversity, where clothing practices vary widely across regions, religions, and traditions. This limits the contextual depth of the findings within a culturally rich and diverse setting.

Additionally, the influence of rapidly evolving digital platforms and social media trends has been discussed conceptually but not empirically measured. Given the dynamic nature of digital influence, the findings may not fully capture its real-time impact on identity and self-image. Lastly, the study focuses broadly on clothing without deeply examining specific categories such as sustainable fashion, luxury fashion, or subcultural styles, which may offer more nuanced insights into identity construction.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the limitations identified, several recommendations can be proposed for future research to enhance the depth and scope of understanding in this field. Future studies should incorporate primary data collection methods, such as surveys, interviews, or experimental designs, to obtain first-hand insights into how individuals perceive and experience the relationship between clothing and identity. This would strengthen the empirical validity of findings.

There is a need for quantitative and mixed-method approaches to analyse the relationship between clothing and psychological variables such as self-esteem, confidence, and emotional well-being. Statistical tools can provide measurable evidence to support theoretical claims.

Researchers should also consider conducting comparative studies across different demographic groups, including gender, age brackets within Generation Z, urban versus rural populations, and socio-economic classes. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how identity formation through clothing varies across diverse populations.

Given the cultural richness of India, future research should focus on region-specific and culture-specific analyses to explore how traditional values and modern influences interact in shaping clothing behaviour and identity.

Another important area for future exploration is the impact of social media and digital identity formation. Empirical studies examining platforms like Instagram and their role in shaping self-image, peer comparison, and fashion choices would be highly relevant.

Further research can also investigate emerging areas such as sustainable fashion, ethical consumption, and smart clothing, and how these factors contribute to identity construction in contemporary society.

Lastly, interdisciplinary research integrating fashion studies, psychology, sociology, and digital media studies is recommended to develop a more holistic understanding of clothing as a multidimensional phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

Clothing emerges as a significant psychosocial construct that extends far beyond its functional and aesthetic dimensions, playing a central role in shaping both identity formation and self-image. The findings of this study establish that clothing operates as a dynamic interface between the internal self and external social reality, enabling individuals to construct, communicate, and negotiate their identities in diverse contexts. It is not merely a passive reflection of personality but an active agent that influences cognitive processes, emotional states, and behavioural responses.

The study further highlights that clothing contributes meaningfully to psychological well-being by enhancing self-confidence, regulating mood, and facilitating positive social interactions. Individuals often engage with clothing as a strategic resource to manage impressions, reinforce self-perception, and align with desired social roles. At the same time, the influence of cultural norms, peer dynamics, and media exposure underscores the socially embedded nature of clothing choices, indicating that identity expression through fashion is shaped by both individual agency and external pressures.

Clothing is a powerful element in shaping human identity and self-image. It goes beyond aesthetics, influencing how individuals perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others. The study highlights the importance of clothing in psychological well-being, identity expression, and social communication.

Understanding the role of clothing in psychology can help individuals make more conscious fashion choices that enhance confidence and self-awareness. The research also reveals a dual dimension of clothing influence. While it empowers individuals to express uniqueness and creativity, it can simultaneously impose standards and expectations that may lead to comparison, conformity, and self-evaluation.

“Dress is a fundamental aspect of how individuals experience and present their bodies in social contexts.” - Joanne Entwistle (2000)

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TRADITION IN TRANSITION: GEN-Z REINTERPRETING INDIAN ART HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

Indian art heritage, rooted in centuries of cultural practices, is undergoing a dynamic transformation in the contemporary era. This paper explores how Generation Z (Gen-Z) is reinterpreting traditional Indian art forms through modern aesthetics, digital platforms, and sustainable design practices. Using a qualitative and conceptual framework supported by case-based insights, the study examines how youth engage with textiles, crafts, and visual culture. The findings reveal that Gen-Z is not merely preserving heritage but actively reshaping it through innovation, identity expression, and global cultural exchange. This shift highlights a transition from static preservation to participatory cultural evolution, positioning Indian art heritage as a living and adaptive practice.

Keywords: Gen-Z, Indian art heritage, reinterpretation, fashion, visual culture, sustainability

INTRODUCTION

India's artistic heritage encompasses a wide spectrum of practices, including handloom textiles, embroidery traditions, and folk art forms such as Madhubani, Warli, and Kalamkari. Historically, these forms were deeply embedded in ritual, identity, and regional expression.

In contemporary times, however, Generation Z has emerged as a key cultural mediator, reshaping how tradition is perceived and practiced. This generation, characterized by digital fluency and global exposure, engages with heritage not as a static inheritance but as a flexible and expressive medium. Recent shifts in the Indian fashion and art landscape indicate that Gen-Z blends traditional motifs with contemporary styles, creating hybrid forms that reflect both cultural continuity and change.

LITERATURE REVIEW

GEN-Z AND CULTURAL CONSUMPTION

Research indicates that Gen-Z's engagement with fashion and art is heavily influenced by digital platforms, particularly social media. Platforms such as Instagram act as key spaces for discovering and reshaping cultural narratives. Over half of Gen-Z consumers report being influenced by digital creators and micro-influencers in their aesthetic choices.

HERITAGE AND MODERN IDENTITY

Scholarly work suggests that traditional clothing and crafts are being repositioned within modern consumer culture. Indian fashion brands increasingly reinterpret heritage through contemporary design, digital marketing, and sustainability-driven approaches.

YOUTH AND TRADITIONAL TEXTILES

Global studies reveal that younger generations historically associated traditional textiles with occasional wear. However, contemporary reinterpretations are shifting these perceptions toward everyday usage.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, conceptual, and interpretive approach, including:

- Secondary data analysis (research papers, articles)
- Case-based observations from fashion and visual culture
- Visual analysis of contemporary design adaptations

The research focuses on identifying patterns of reinterpretation rather than empirical measurement.

REINTERPRETING INDIAN ART HERITAGE: GEN-Z PERSPECTIVES

FUSION OF TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY AESTHETICS

Gen-Z integrates traditional Indian elements into modern design formats:

- Sarees styled with sneakers or crop tops
- Ethnic textiles in streetwear silhouettes
- Asymmetrical garments using heritage fabrics

This fusion reflects a fluid design language that bridges temporal and cultural boundaries.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ETHICAL REVIVAL

A defining characteristic of Gen-Z engagement is its emphasis on sustainability. Traditional Indian crafts—such as handloom weaving and natural dyeing—align with eco-conscious values.

Gen-Z actively supports:

- Slow fashion
- Handmade production
- Artisan communities

These practices contribute to both cultural preservation and ethical consumption.

DIGITAL MEDIATION OF HERITAGE

Digital platforms play a transformative role in making heritage accessible and interactive. Social media enables:

- Visual storytelling of crafts
- Global dissemination of regional art forms
- Direct engagement between artisans and consumers

This creates a digital ecosystem of cultural exchange.

IDENTITY AND CULTURAL EXPRESSION

Gen-Z uses fashion and art as tools of identity construction. The reinterpretation of traditional motifs reflects:

- Cultural pride
- Hybrid identities
- Resistance to homogenized global culture

Emerging trends show that young individuals adopt multiple aesthetic identities across platforms, blending heritage with global influences .

5. CASE-BASED INSIGHTS

5.1 Revival of Handloom and Khadi

Khadi, once associated with nationalism, is now reimagined in contemporary fashion:

- Modern silhouettes
- Minimalist aesthetics
- Global appeal

This shift demonstrates how heritage textiles evolve with changing cultural contexts.

5.2 Folk Art in Contemporary Design

Folk art forms like Madhubani and Warli are being incorporated into:

- Apparel
- Home décor
- Digital illustrations

These adaptations transform traditional art into functional and commercial design elements.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that Gen-Z's reinterpretation of Indian art heritage is characterized by:

- From Preservation to Participation: Heritage is actively reworked rather than passively maintained
- From Ritual to Everyday Use: Traditional elements are integrated into daily life
- From Local to Global: Indian art gains international visibility through digital platforms

This transition reflects a shift in cultural dynamics, where heritage becomes a site of innovation.

FUTURE SCOPE

The reinterpretation of Indian art heritage through Gen-Z perspectives opens multiple avenues for further research and practice. As cultural, technological, and design landscapes continue to evolve, the following areas present significant potential:

9.1 Integration of Emerging Technologies

Future studies can explore how technologies such as AI, AR/VR, and digital fashion will influence the preservation and reinterpretation of traditional art forms. Virtual exhibitions, NFT-based art, and digital textiles may redefine how heritage is experienced and owned.

9.2 Expanded Empirical Research

This study is conceptual; therefore, future research can adopt:

- Quantitative surveys on Gen-Z consumer behavior
- Ethnographic studies with artisans and designers
- Comparative analysis across regions of India

Such approaches will provide data-driven validation of emerging trends.

9.3 Artisan–Designer Collaboration Models

Further research can investigate sustainable collaboration frameworks between:

- Traditional artisans
- Contemporary designers
- Digital platforms

This can help in developing inclusive economic models that ensure fair compensation and long-term sustainability of craft communities.

9.4 Regional and Lesser-Known Art Forms

Many indigenous and regional art practices remain underexplored. Future work can focus on:

- Documenting endangered crafts
- Reviving lesser-known traditions
- Studying regional variations in reinterpretation

This will contribute to cultural diversity and preservation.



Fig.1: Traditional Textile to Contemporary Fashion Adaptation

9.5 Sustainability and Circular Fashion

Future research can analyze how traditional Indian practices align with:

- Circular design systems
- Zero-waste fashion
- Eco-conscious consumer behavior

This area is particularly relevant as sustainability becomes central to global design discourse.

9.6 Globalization and Cross-Cultural Influence

With increasing globalization, Indian art heritage is interacting with international design systems. Future studies can explore:

- Cross-cultural collaborations
- Global reception of Indian-inspired fashion
- Cultural appropriation vs. appreciation debates

9.7 Role of Education and Curriculum Development

There is scope to integrate traditional art knowledge with contemporary design education. Future research can propose:

- Curriculum models for art and design institutions
- Skill-based learning for heritage crafts
- Digital documentation of traditional knowledge
- Conclusion of Future Scope

Overall, the future of Indian art heritage lies in its adaptability and innovation. With Gen-Z as active participants, tradition will continue to evolve as a dynamic, inclusive, and globally relevant cultural force.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Gen-Z plays a pivotal role in transforming Indian art heritage into a dynamic and evolving cultural practice. By merging tradition with contemporary expression, this generation ensures that heritage remains relevant in a rapidly changing world.

Rather than viewing tradition as fixed, Gen-Z treats it as a creative resource, enabling continuous reinterpretation and renewal.

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EMOTIONAL ADVERTISING APPEALS IN SOCIAL MEDIA FASHION BRANDING AND THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCE ON IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND SELF-IMAGE

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ABSTRACT

In today's modern and dynamic digital India, the rapid expansion of social media OTT platforms in terms of new advertising and promotional mediums, has transformed contemporary fashion branding into an emotionally and psychologically effective communication medium. Fashion advertising in the digital environment relies increasingly on emotional appeals such as dreams, sentimental empowerment, affiliation, and cultural pride to connect consumers with practical product features.

Studies on branded apparel and identity consumption also show that fashion branding generally acts as a symbol of social status and personal identity for consumers, enabling them to express their individuality, style of living, and social belongingness through these symbols. Other studies, which are centered on adolescents, also show that clothing is highly associated with self-esteem, peer acceptance, and self-image creation for consumers.

In this digital landscape, my research explores how social media reshapes emotional advertising within the fashion industry. This work seeks to uncover the deep psychological bond between heart-centered brand messaging and how audiences define their own identities. To achieve this, I employ a dual-track strategy: analyzing the nuances of specific social media campaigns alongside a broad consumer survey to capture the public's perspective. By weaving these findings together with established psychological and fashion theories, I provide a comprehensive, human-centered look at how the clothes we see online influence the people we become.

Keywords: Emotional Advertising Appeals; Social Media Fashion Branding; Identity Construction; Self-Image; Digital Consumer Psychology

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era—in contrast to traditional media, which was primarily based on highlighting the positive aspects of products and mass communication—the advent of social media platforms has revolutionized the fashion branding market by offering experiences that are interactive, personalized, and visually captivating. This shift has prompted fashion brands to adopt emotion-based advertising strategies to connect with consumers on a psychological level. In becoming a central component of digital fashion communication, advertisements that evoke emotions—specifically those tapping into aspirations, nostalgia, empowerment, self-confidence, and cultural identity—play a pivotal role.

Fashion, as a cultural and symbolic system reflecting the shared beliefs, values, customs, traditions, and behaviors of a specific group of people, plays a significant role in shaping individual identity and self-expression. Clothing is no longer viewed merely as a necessity; rather, it serves as a powerful medium through which individuals articulate their personality, define their social standing, and facilitate interactions with people from diverse backgrounds. On social media platforms—where visual representation and self-presentation are accorded immense importance—fashion plays a crucial role in identity formation and in projecting a user's public image. Users are

constantly engaging with advertising imagery, content, and brand narratives; these elements profoundly influence how they perceive themselves and how they wish to be perceived by others.

According to research rooted in consumer psychology, emotion-based advertising influences how society thinks and feels, thereby transforming people's perspectives, preferences, and self-perception. In the context of fashion branding, emotionally resonant content not only enhances brand recall but also influences how consumers internalize fashion-related ideals and integrate them into their own personal identities. For instance, empowerment-based campaigns often foster a sense of self-confidence and self-acceptance, whereas visuals relying on emotional appeals that evoke aspirations to "become" something reshape desires related to lifestyle and social status.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate how emotionally driven advertisements employed in social media fashion branding influence the processes of identity formation and self-image construction. By combining content analysis of fashion campaigns with survey-based data, this study endeavors to provide a holistic understanding of the relationship between emotional influence and psychological identity formation in the digital age.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The relationship between fashion, advertising, and psychology has been widely studied across fields such as consumer behavior, media studies, and cultural theory. Researchers increasingly recognize that fashion is not just about clothing but also serves as a powerful means of communication and self-expression. In the age of digital media, this role has become even more dynamic, as social media platforms allow constant interaction between brands and consumers through visually engaging and emotionally appealing content. As a result, fashion branding today goes beyond promoting products—it actively shapes how individuals perceive themselves and express their identity in a highly connected, image-driven environment.

Research on emotional advertising appeals highlights their effectiveness in shaping consumer attitudes, preferences, and behaviors. Emotional appeals such as aspiration, empowerment, nostalgia, and belongingness are widely used in fashion advertising to create a deeper connection with audiences. Unlike rational appeals that focus on product features, emotional appeals operate at a subconscious level, influencing how individuals feel about themselves and the brands they associate with. Studies suggest that emotionally engaging advertisements enhance brand recall, foster loyalty, and encourage consumers to internalize brand values as part of their identity.

According to the study *Branded Clothing and the Self: A Qualitative Meta-analysis on the Psychological and Identity-Based Dimensions of Brand Consumption*, clothing brands serve as symbolic markers of personal identity and social status. The research emphasizes that consumers use branded clothing to express individuality while simultaneously seeking social acceptance and group belonging. This supports the idea that fashion consumption is closely linked to identity construction and self-image.

Similarly, the study *Clothing Choices and Self-Image Among Adolescents* highlights the strong relationship between clothing and psychological development. It reveals that clothing choices significantly influence self-esteem, peer perception, and identity formation, particularly among young consumers. The findings indicate that individuals are not only influenced by personal preferences but also by social expectations and media representations.

In the realm of social media advertising, scholars argue that digital platforms amplify the impact of emotional appeals through visual storytelling, influencer marketing, and user-generated content. Continuous exposure to idealized images and aspirational lifestyles contributes to social comparison, which in turn affects self-perception and identity formation. However, while positive emotional appeals can enhance confidence and self-expression, they may also create unrealistic standards and psychological pressure.

Despite these contributions, there remains a research gap in integrating emotional advertising strategies with psychological theories of identity construction within social media fashion branding. Most studies focus on consumer engagement, purchase behavior, and brand loyalty, with limited

attention to the deeper psychological implications of emotional appeals. Therefore, further research is required to explore how emotional advertising in digital fashion contexts shapes identity and self-image in contemporary society.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Titled “Emotional Advertising Appeals in Social Media Fashion Branding: Their Psychological Impact on Identity Formation and Self-Image,” this research aims to explore the growing role of emotional appeals in digital fashion advertising and their impact on consumer psychology. With the rapid expansion of social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, fashion branding has shifted away from a purely product-oriented approach toward one that emphasizes emotional connections and personal relationships between the consumer and the company. In this context, this study outlines the following objectives:

The primary objective of this research is to understand the relationship between emotion, fashion, and social media. It aims to investigate how emotional elements are incorporated into fashion advertising and how emotional appeals within a digital environment influence consumer perceptions, experiences, and interactions.

Another significant objective is to analyze the social media fashion advertisements utilized by companies on platforms like Instagram and Facebook. This involves examining the visual design, storytelling techniques, brand messaging, and overall presentation employed in these advertisements. The study will focus on how companies utilize creative strategies to engage audiences and effectively communicate their brand identity within today's highly competitive market—a landscape characterized by ever-increasing demand and the constant emergence of new market entrants.

Additionally, this research identifies the successful emotional appeals commonly employed by companies in their social media fashion advertisements. These appeals may include themes such as aspiration, empowerment, self-confidence, nostalgia, and a sense of belonging. By identifying these appeals, the study seeks to evaluate which emotional strategies are most effective in capturing attention, driving engagement, and influencing consumer attitudes toward fashion brands.

Finally, this study seeks to understand the broader impact of emotional advertising on consumer behavior, encompassing aspects such as brand attachment, loyalty, and decision-making processes, as well as the maintenance of sustained trust in the product. Overall, the aim of these objectives is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how emotional appeals in social media fashion branding make a significant contribution to the construction of identity and self-image in contemporary society.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods research approach to examine the contribution of emotional advertising appeals to social media fashion branding, as well as the psychological impact of such appeals on identity construction and self-image. This mixed-methods research is primarily grounded in social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, given that these platforms are extensively utilized by fashion brands for promotion, dissemination, and establishing psychological connections with consumers. The study is based on a content analysis of advertisements and the collection of survey-based data from consumers.

For the qualitative component, a content analysis method is employed to examine a selection of fashion advertisements posted by companies on Instagram and Facebook. These advertisements are analyzed based on parameters such as visual elements, messaging frameworks, the type of emotional appeal utilized, and the overall communication strategy.

For the quantitative component, a survey method is utilized to collect primary data from consumers within the target population—specifically, young consumers and active social media users who are regularly exposed to fashion-related content. A questionnaire is designed to gather information regarding participants' perceptions, emotional responses, and the psychological impact of fashion

advertisements. This questionnaire focuses on aspects such as self-perception, self-image, identity expression, and the influence of social media content on personal style and self-confidence. The collected data is analyzed using both descriptive and interpretive techniques. Data derived from the qualitative content analysis is interpreted thematically, whereas the quantitative data obtained from the surveys is interpreted using statistical methods, such as percentages and frequency distributions.

Additionally, this study incorporates secondary data obtained from existing research papers, academic journals, and scholarly sources. Overall, this methodology enables a detailed exploration of how emotional advertising appeals in social media fashion branding influence identity formation and self-image among consumers.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LIMITATIONS

The primary limitations of this study include a restricted sample size and a lack of representation across the broader societal spectrum—specifically, the absence of individuals spanning diverse income levels, age groups, and geographical locations. This research relies predominantly on a specific subset of social media users, particularly young consumers who are frequent users of platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Furthermore, data from individuals with limited internet usage would have been valuable; similarly, while data regarding personal opinions, the desire for social acceptance, and the perspectives of those dissatisfied with or uninterested in the product is essential, gathering comprehensive data across all such diverse groups proved infeasible.

Additionally, this study focuses primarily on active social media users, potentially overlooking the perspectives of individuals who are less engaged with digital platforms. Another limitation lies in the restricted scope of the advertising samples, as the analysis was confined to a specific, limited number of fashion advertisements created by companies. Consequently, the study may not fully capture the wide array of emotional strategies employed by fashion brands on a larger scale.

A further limitation of this research is its narrow focus on select social media platforms—specifically Instagram and Facebook. Although these platforms are widely utilized, they do not fully represent the entire digital landscape, as each platform features distinct advertising styles and attracts audiences with unique preferences and tastes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Broaden the study to include different types of fashion brands (local, national, and global) for comparative analysis.
- Examine the impact of emotional advertising on different age groups, especially teenagers and adults separately.
- Include more dynamic platforms like TikTok along with Instagram to understand evolving content styles.
- Conduct experimental or case-study-based research to measure real-time emotional responses.
- Encourage advertisers to design campaigns that reflect authenticity and cultural sensitivity.
- Promote awareness among consumers about the psychological effects of social media advertising.
- Study the negative impacts such as social comparison, anxiety, and identity pressure in more depth

CONCLUSION

Fashion advertising on social media is no longer limited merely to showcasing clothing; rather, it has evolved into a powerful platform for reaching consumers directly. This study demonstrates that platforms such as Instagram and Facebook have transformed fashion communication into an emotionally rich and psychologically impactful experience. In today's digital culture, every scroll, like, and share exposes individuals to meticulously crafted messages that do more than simply promote products—they also suggest specific ways of living, appearing, and feeling.

The study emphasizes that the use of emotional appeals in advertising is strategically employed to connect consumers with the external world. These appeals operate at a profound level, influencing how individuals perceive themselves and how they wish to be perceived by others. Consequently, fashion emerges as a language of identity, wherein clothing is not merely worn but is lived and experienced as a reflection of the self.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that this emotional engagement exerts a dual influence. On one hand, it fosters creativity, self-confidence, and self-expression, enabling individuals to discover and redefine their identities. On the other hand, constant exposure to idealized images and lifestyles can engender feelings of pressure, social comparison, and unrealistic expectations. This highlights the complex role of fashion advertising on social media—while it can be empowering, it can also exert influence in subtle and, at times, challenging ways.

An analysis of advertisements—particularly those produced by companies themselves—demonstrates the pivotal role that storytelling techniques, contextual visuals, and emotionally resonant content play in forging strong bonds between brands and consumers. These strategies not only foster engagement and brand loyalty but also become an integral part of the consumer's identity-formation process.

In conclusion, in the realm of social media fashion branding, emotional appeal has evolved from a mere marketing tool into a cultural force that shapes how people think, feel, and present themselves in the modern world. As this influence continues to grow, it has become imperative for brands to promote authenticity, diversity, and a positive self-image. Simultaneously, consumers must also remain conscious of these influences, recognizing that identity is forged not by trends, but by personal meaning and experiences.

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CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF KHADI AMONG GENERATION Z: FROM FREEDOM FABRIC TO FASHION STATEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Khadi, once recognised as a symbol of India's freedom movement and self-reliance, has gradually evolved into a sustainable, versatile fabric in the contemporary fashion industry. Nowadays, fast fashion is trending everywhere, whereas khadi is a natural and sustainable fashion that promotes slow fashion. Khadi can be used in a contemporary way, for maintaining the value and sustainability from generation to generation. A survey was conducted as a part of this study on Generation Z to know their perception regarding awareness and sustainability of khadi. Results show that Gen Zs are familiar with khadi, and they know that choosing khadi is a sustainable step.

Keywords: Khadi, Generation Z, Consumer Perception, Sustainable Fashion, Youth Awareness

INTRODUCTION

“If we have the ‘khadi spirit’ in us, we would surround ourselves with simplicity in every walk of life.”

– Mahatma Gandhi.

Khadi is a fabric that carries India's rich cultural and textile legacy through generations and passes on age-old traditions and values to the younger generations. It connects people and their traditions with the past, present, and future, and has stood the test of time as a true symbol of Indian culture and values.

Khadi is called “living” fabric because the production process requires energy and skill to be transferred from the maker to the fabric. All stages of production from spinning to weaving are done by hand. Khadi means hand-spun and woven cloth that comes from the word “khaddar.” It stands for the ancient tradition of self-sufficiency and sustainability, and harmony with nature, and represents the deep connection between humans, non-violence, and nature. The process of making Khadi consists of two main stages – spinning yarn through a hand spinner and weaving. This kind of yarn is further processed in order to achieve the desired consistency and appearance. Khadi is a fabric that is worn during both hot and cold seasons because it is soft enough to keep the body warm during the winter and cool during the summer. It is also possible to make it stiff and crispy with the help of special starch treatment. During the freedom struggle, Mahatma Gandhi advocated for Indians to wear Khadi as a sign of solidarity, and Khadi became a powerful symbol of India's independence. Gandhi strongly believed in the need for India to become self-sufficient in all goods, including textiles. After returning from South Africa, he promoted the use of the charkha (spinning wheel) and advocated for Khadi production as a means to achieve self-sufficiency, economic independence, and sustainable living. Gandhi's efforts transformed Khadi into a powerful symbol of protest, nationalist pride, and India's unique identity. Today, Khadi is a sustainable and eco-friendly fabric that supports thousands of jobs in India while also providing employment, skills, techniques, and sustainable livelihoods for many people.

Few other textiles in history have been able to shape the lives of so many people both in social, political, and business context as Khadi has. Woven into the very fabric of the Indian cultural identity, it represents the ethos and values of Indian society.

Khadi played a prominent role in Indian history during the time of India's independence from British rule, when it became a popular and recognizable symbol of nationalist pride. It was promoted and supported by Mahatma Gandhi who urged Indians to wear homespun cloth and adopt this type of self-sufficient and sustainable living. Gandhi's advocacy not only influenced people's perception of Khadi but also changed the social and cultural history of the country while promoting the values of self-development and self-sufficiency. Today, Khadi is both a symbol and a product: it continues to be a powerful reminder of India's rich cultural heritage, and its unique status as a fabric that helped to liberate a nation of people. The production of Khadi remains largely the same as it was during Gandhi's time, involving the spinning wheel and manual weaving. Nevertheless, Khadi is still being promoted by the government as an important part of the national economy.

Khadi is a highly versatile fabric and is being promoted as an eco-friendly and sustainable textile. The Khadi and Village Industries Board and its state-level counterparts, the Khadi and Village Industries Boards, or KVIBs, play a significant role in not only promoting, producing, selling, and distributing Khadi products. These organizations are the driving force behind rural employment and skill development, as well as rural livelihood promotion and sustainable development.

Due to its eco-friendly and sustainable nature, Khadi has become an increasingly popular choice in the world of fashion where there has been a growing interest in developing and promoting a circular economy (an economic system focused on eliminating waste). Khadi production is much more environmentally friendly as compared to the production of regular textiles. The creation of this fabric requires little electricity (due to it often being spun and woven by hand) and thus, has a significantly smaller carbon footprint. Furthermore, the process of making Khadi requires less water than regular textile production. The concept of "economy of permanence" suggested by the Gandhian thinkers also promotes the responsible usage of resources and a sustainable development path focused on conserving India's natural resources for future generations. These principles are especially relevant for today's world as the global scientific community works on developing solutions to reduce the negative effects of the greenhouse effect and stop global warming. In addition, the production and promotion of Khadi support the process of decentralization, create jobs, and promote self-sufficiency. The sustainable and eco-friendly nature of this fabric fits in with current initiatives to create a circular economy and a bio-based society. In addition, Khadi production supports India's economy by meeting the requirements of a growing global market for natural fibers and sustainable textiles.

The promotion of Khadi fits in with the Gandhian ideas that continue to be relevant for today's world. Inspired by Gandhi's vision and values, the production and promotion of Khadi fit in with India's current goals in terms of sustainable development, rural employment, and poverty alleviation. In addition, the creation and promotion of Khadi help to meet the needs of the growing international market, as well as support India's economy while promoting its rich cultural heritage. Thus, Khadi production not only maintains traditional methods and values but also helps to address the current global concerns regarding environmental sustainability.

1.2 ROLE OF KVIC IN PROMOTING KHADI

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission plays an essential role in promoting and developing the production of traditional handicrafts and Khadi in India. The main objective of the KVIC is to promote and sustain India's rich cultural heritage while also focusing on creating employment. This organization plays a vital role in connecting India's rich textile-making history with modern-day production methods.

Among the many roles played by the KVIC, one of the most important is promoting Khadi and its products. The organization takes care of the production and sales of Khadi, as well as supporting various khadi institutions in different parts of the country. The KVIC focuses on providing financial and other types of support to various khadi artisans in order to boost production while also ensuring

the high quality of the products. In addition, KVIC also promotes employment while ensuring the self-reliance of rural artisans.

One of the most important goals of KVIC is to develop new markets for handicrafts and Khadi products. It accomplishes this by organizing fairs and festivals that draw attention to the products. In addition, KVIC has launched several initiatives to reposition Khadi and its products as modern-day fashion statements, including the development of contemporary clothing lines and designer Khadi collections. Another program put forward by the KVIC is the PRODIP that focuses on product development. With programs that focus on making Khadi more appealing to a modern audience, KVIC hopes to attract not only the younger generation but also the international buyers.

Finally, KVIC actively promotes awareness about Khadi among the general public. The organization participates and collaborates with different agencies and businesses to promote and sell Khadi and Khadi products. It also actively participates in social media to engage with the younger generation and raise awareness about the importance of this special fabric. Thus, KVIC has an active role in ensuring that Khadi products continue to be popular and are integrated in the daily lives of modern Indians.

1.3 PROCESS OF MAKING KHADI :

- Hand-picking of the cotton
- Ginning
- Opening and cleaning
- Carding
- Drawing and combing
- Roving
- Spinning
- Wrapping
- Drawing and drafting
- Weaving
- Finishing

OBJECTIVE

1. To study the consumer perception, awareness, and acceptance of Khadi among Generation Z consumers in the context of sustainable and contemporary fashion.
2. To examine the perception of Generation Z regarding Khadi as a traditional, fashionable, and sustainable fabric.
3. To analyse the buying behaviour and preferences of Generation Z consumers toward Khadi products.
4. To explore the awareness of sustainability and eco-friendly aspects associated with Khadi among Generation Z.

METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a descriptive survey research design to explore the perception, awareness, and acceptance of Khadi among Generation Z consumers. The study aimed to understand the attitudes of young consumers toward Khadi in relation to fashion, sustainability, buying behaviour, and willingness to adopt it in contemporary lifestyles.

2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

A descriptive survey method was adopted to examine the consumer perception of Khadi among Generation Z. This method was considered appropriate as it enabled the collection of responses regarding awareness, preferences, and attitudes toward Khadi from a defined population.

2.2 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The target population for the current study was Gen Z (individuals aged 18-25). The convenient sampling technique was used to select the final sample.

2.3 DATA COLLECTION TOOL

The data for the current study were collected by utilizing Google Forms and a questionnaire. The study included questions related to consumer awareness, buying behaviour, and general perception towards the fabric.

The questionnaire consisted of different sections, namely:

- Consumer awareness about khadi
- Buying behaviour towards khadi products
- Fashion perception about khadi
- Sustainability awareness about khadi
- General willingness to adopt khadi product in everyday and contemporary fashion

Most of the questions included in the questionnaire were multiple choice.

2.4 TYPE OF DATA

The type of data used in the current study was primarily quantitative as the information was collected from the participants through an online survey.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The objective of the present study was to gain an understanding of how Generation Z views and perceives the textile known as Khadi. In order to achieve this objective, a survey was distributed among 20 participants aged between 18 and 25 in order to determine respondents' awareness, perception and acceptance of the textile. The majority of participants were students, however, the final sample also included respondents who were not students.

The results of the survey suggest that most participants view Khadi as a suitable fabric for fashion clothing. For instance, 90 percent of the respondents stated that they view Khadi as a suitable textile to use in contemporary clothing. This suggests that the young generation is willing to incorporate this textile into their daily clothing. Thus, it can be concluded that Khadi is becoming increasingly popular among the younger generation and is viewed as a stylish textile.

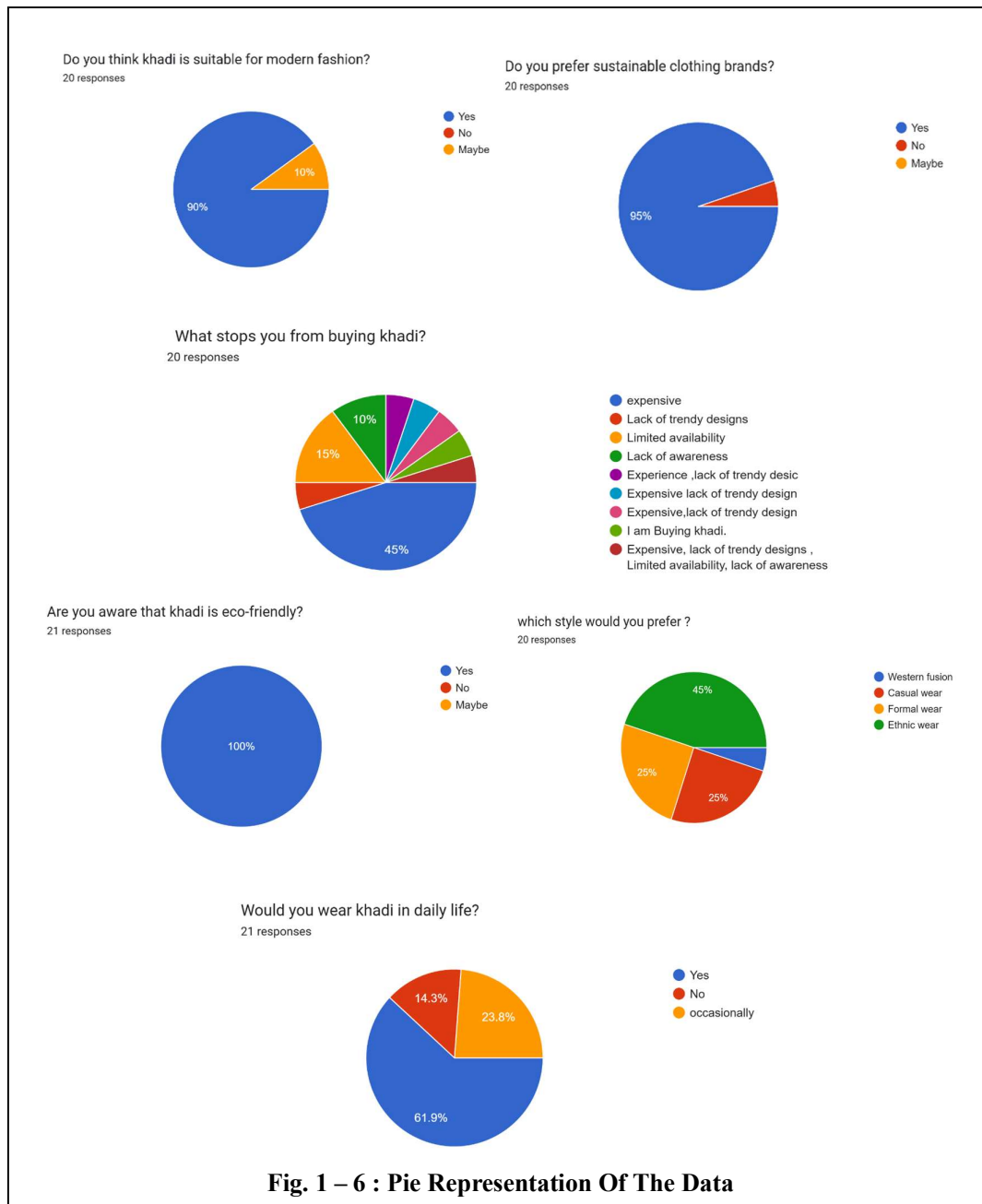
It can be seen from the results of the survey that 85 percent of participants view Khadi as a sustainable and eco-friendly textile. This result suggests that the majority of young people are aware of the numerous benefits associated with the use of Khadi. Therefore, it can be said that the young generation is becoming more conscious of not only the fashion industry but also the impact it has on the environment.

However, there are also some barriers that prevent the young generation from viewing this textile positively. For instance, 45 percent of participants indicated that they view Khadi as an expensive textile. This means that the young generation is less likely to buy clothes made of Khadi as they tend to have a higher price range. In addition, 15 percent of respondents mentioned that a lack of availability of this textile is a barrier to buying Khadi products. While this might not be an issue for those who are used to shopping, it can pose as a problem for students who have to buy their clothes in advance.

Another interesting finding was related to respondents' perception of the use of Khadi. 45 percent of participants stated that they view Khadi as more suitable for traditional wear. This can be seen as a limitation since the majority of young people do not view this textile as suitable for modern clothing. Therefore, in order for Khadi to become more popular among the young generation it has to undergo certain changes that would allow it to be incorporated into the daily clothing of the respondents. A more modern approach that focuses on creating fashionable clothes made from this textile would be more beneficial in terms of making the young generation adopt this textile as a part of their everyday clothing.

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that while the young generation has a positive perception towards the textile known as Khadi, there are still several barriers that prevent this fabric from becoming a part of the daily clothing of the respondents.

RESULT ANALYSIS



- **Promotion and Awareness:** Some of the suggestions were to promote the fashion of Khadi by bringing new design trends, educate about the value and importance of the fabric to gain interest and popularity.
- **Adoptions and Support:** Some of the suggestions were to adopt Khadi to build India by spreading it among everyone and motivate others, and supporting weavers by buying Khadi products.
- **Improvement and Accessibility:** Some of the suggestions were to improve the quality of Khadi and promote the variety of designs available and normalise selling shops for Khadi to make Khadi more accessible.

- **Positive Attributes:** Some of the attributes where Khadi is a good clothing material, it is very Evergreen, Comfortable & Eco-friendly and the eco-friendly textile is the best innovation for a healthy environment.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the current study involved the exploration of the perception of the respondents towards the textile known as Khadi. The study examined how the young generation views this textile. The survey results showed that the majority of respondents viewed Khadi as a valuable textile suitable for both traditional and contemporary clothing. The majority of the participants were aware of the numerous benefits associated with this textile, which makes them more likely to adopt this textile in their daily clothing. However, the survey also revealed that young people viewed this textile as expensive and difficult to maintain.

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FUSION OF TRADITION AND INNOVATION: DEVELOPMENT OF COTTON–LOTUS HYBRID TEXTILES FOR GEN-Z FASHION STARTUPS

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ABSTRACT

Generation Z is revolutionising the fashion business by emphasising sustainability, innovation, and individualism. In India, where traditional textiles and crafts have significant cultural importance, there is a growing urge to incorporate these characteristics into contemporary design. This study focuses on creating a sustainable hybrid yarn by merging natural fibres cotton and lotus, with the goal of creating a silk-like texture fabrics for modern lifestyle fashion. Cotton is a popular fabric in India for its comfort and breathability, is blended with lotus fibre, an environmentally friendly and underutilised substance recognised for its smooth and rich feel. This combination not only improves the fabric's aesthetic and functional properties, but it also promotes sustainable textile innovation. The produced yarn can be utilised to make garments and products such as Scarves, stoles, and fusion wear that are popular among Gen Z customers. The study also looks into the feasibility of launching a Gen Z-focused fashion firm inspired by sustainable brands like No Nasties, Fabindia, and Panagia. These brands emphasise the value of ethical production, natural textiles, and cultural aesthetics. Digital channels like Instagram play an important role in promoting such innovative products to young consumers. This study concludes that combining cotton and lotus fibres can result in sustainable, aesthetically pleasing textiles that cater to Gen Z demands. It also emphasises the opportunity to create an original fashion firm that combines Indian textile history with experimental design.

Keywords: Gen Z, Sustainable Fashion, Cotton Fiber, Lotus Fiber, Hybrid Yarn, Experimental Textile Design, Indian Textiles, Fashion Startups, Eco-friendly Fabrics, Lifestyle Fashion.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary fashion industry is undergoing a dynamic transformation, largely influenced by the evolving preferences of Generation Z. This generation emphasizes individuality, sustainability, and innovation, seeking products that not only reflect personal style but also align with ethical and environmental values (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). In the Indian context, where textiles are deeply embedded in cultural heritage, there exists a significant opportunity to merge traditional knowledge with modern experimental design to meet the expectations of this new consumer group.

Indian textiles have long relied heavily on natural fibres, with cotton being one of the most popular fabrics because of its ease, breathability, affordability and adaptability (Kadolph, 2010). However, there is a growing interest in investigating alternative and underutilised natural fibres as sustainability becomes more widely recognised. Lotus fibre shows promise as an environmentally friendly alternative because of its silk-like texture, smoothness, and low weight. Lotus fibre, which has historically been utilised in a small number of artisanal processes, has enormous potential for innovation when paired with more accessible fibres like cotton (Textile Today, 2022). The creation of a cotton–lotus hybrid yarn can provide a fabric with both opulent beauty and practical comfort.

The experimental development of these hybrid textiles and their use in lifestyle fashion items, including clothing, scarves, and stoles made especially for Gen Z consumers, are the main topics of this study. The goal of the research is to produce a sustainable textile that embodies both creativity and conventional wisdom by combining cotton and lotus fibres. The idea also includes opening a fashion firm that uses this hybrid fabric to create garments that are both environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing.

This study emphasises the significance of ethical sourcing, transparency, and cultural storytelling, drawing inspiration from sustainable fashion initiatives and companies like Fabindia, No Nasties, and Panagia, among others. These companies set on examples of how ecological techniques and conventional materials can be successfully integrated into modern fashion markets. Furthermore, digital platforms such as Instagram, YouTube and others online shopping platforms and own websites are essential for promoting products, establishing connections between entrepreneurs and Gen Z audiences, and setting trends. (Deloitte, 2023).

Additionally, the study is in line with the increasing desire for experimental and sustainable fabrics that have a high aesthetic value and less of an influence on the environment. In addition to promoting regional craftsmen and craftsmanship, the fusion of traditional fibres with cutting-edge methods helps to create a circular and ethical fashion environment.

In conclusion, by creating cotton-lotus hybrid fabrics, this study seeks to close the gap between traditional Indian textile legacy and contemporary fashion innovation. It demonstrates how natural fibres, experimental design, and entrepreneurial vision can be combined to create a sustainable fashion firm that meets the demands and goals of Generation Z. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an experimental and exploratory research design to investigate the development of sustainable hybrid textiles using cotton and lotus fibers. The methodology focuses on material innovation, fabric development, and its application in lifestyle fashion products targeted toward Generation Z consumers.

2.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study takes a practice-based experimental approach, merging textile material development and design application. It is divided into two stages: (i) yarn and fabric development, and (ii) product design and market relevance assessment.

2.2 SELECTION OF RAW MATERIALS

The study utilizes two natural fibres, namely cotton and lotus. Cotton is selected for its softness, breathability, durability, and wide availability, while lotus fibre is chosen for its eco-friendly nature, biodegradability, and silk-like texture, making it suitable for developing sustainable and premium textiles. The selection of these fibres is supported by previous studies, which highlight cotton as a widely used sustainable natural fibre and lotus fibre as an emerging eco-friendly material with potential for innovative textile applications (Kadolph, 2010; Blackburn, 2009; Textile Today, 2022).

2.3-FIBER EXTRACTION AND PREPARATION

Lotus and cotton fibres will be prepared and aligned for further processing to ensure uniformity in yarn development.

2.4- YARN DEVELOPMENT (BLENDING PROCESS)

The prepared cotton and lotus fibres will combine in various ratio to achieve the best balance of strength, softness, and aesthetic qualities.

2.5- FABRIC DEVELOPMENT

The developed yarn will weave into cloth using standard weaving processes. Various weave structures were investigated to determine their impact on texture and appearance. The resulting

fabric samples were assessed using factors such as smoothness, tensile strength, drape, and visual appeal.

2.6- PRODUCT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

By this, a variety of lifestyle fashion items, including as scarves, stoles, and fusion clothing, will be created using the fabric created by mixing cotton and lotus fibres. The design approach will mainly concentrate on the tastes of Generation Z customers, who typically seek straightforward, cosy, and distinctive looks. Designs that strike a balance between modern aesthetics and sustainability will receive particular attention.

In order to improve the fabric's aesthetic appeal while preserving its inherent qualities, several shapes, colour schemes, and surface methods will be tested during the product development stage. In order to make the products appropriate for both informal and semi-formal wear, every effort will be taken to accentuate the delicate texture and subtle sheen of the cotton-lotus combination.

Furthermore, sustainability will continue to be a major factor in the design process. In order to fit the products with the values of ecologically concerned consumers, eco-friendly dyes, low waste processes, and ethical production methods will be investigated. The ultimate goal will be to create fashion items that are not only fashionable and practical but also exhibit a sense of responsibility and originality.

This strategy will also help a fashion firm grow in the future by positioning these goods as inventive and sustainable options for the Gen Z market

2.7- MARKET AND STARTUP ANALYSIS

PROCUREMENT OF FIBERS

Raw Fibers (Cotton + Lotus)



Yarn Development (Blending Process)



Fabric Creation (Weaving/Processing)



Product Design (Dupattas, Stoles, Fusion Wear)



Branding (Sustainable + Cultural Story)



Digital Marketing (Instagram, Influencers)



Online Sales (Website / Social Media)



Customer Feedback & Improvement

In addition to material and design development, this study also includes a qualitative investigation of well-known sustainable fashion brands such as Fabindia and No Nasties to better understand current market trends and evolving consumer preferences. These brands have been studied to analyse how they successfully combine sustainability with traditional elements and modern design. Their approach towards ethical sourcing, minimalism, and transparency reflects the changing expectations of consumers, especially Generation Z (Gwilt, 2020).

Building on these discoveries, a startup model based on cotton-lotus hybrid textiles is part of the research's future scope. The goal is to turn the produced fabric into products that are ready for the market, like stoles, scarves, dupattas, and fusion clothing, which can be marketed as high-end yet eco-friendly fashion items. The firm will concentrate on narrative, emphasising the distinctiveness of lotus fibre and its combination with cotton, which enhances the product's cultural and inventive value.

Furthermore, the study highlights the growing influence of digital platforms like Instagram, YouTube and others online shopping platforms and own websites in shaping fashion trends and consumer behaviour. Social media plays a significant role in how emerging brands promote their products, connect with audiences, and build a strong identity (Deloitte, 2023). In the future, digital marketing strategies such as influencer collaborations, reels, and storytelling-based content will be used to reach Gen Z consumers and create brand awareness.

CONCLUSION

This study will effectively demonstrate the feasibility of combining cotton and lotus fibres to produce a sustainable, silk-like material appropriate for modern fashion uses. The new hybrid yarn blends the comfort of cotton with the rich texture of lotus fibre, creating a fabric that is both utilitarian and aesthetically pleasing.

The study also shows how historic materials can be reinvented using experimental ways to fit modern fashion demands. Such inventions are highly valued by Generation Z, which prioritises sustainability, distinctiveness, and ethical behaviours. The cotton-lotus textile not only promotes environmentally responsible production but also encourages the use of underutilised natural resources.

Furthermore, the study verifies a strong link between textile innovation and entrepreneurship. By incorporating this hybrid fabric into a fashion startup strategy, it is feasible to develop a brand that honours cultural tradition while embracing contemporary design aesthetics. The impact of digital platforms and sustainable fashion trends increases the market potential of such initiatives.

To summarise, the union of history and innovation through cotton-lotus textile creation provides a promising path for sustainable fashion entrepreneurs. It advances eco-conscious design, encourages local workmanship, and coincides with the changing preferences of Gen Z customers, ultimately defining the future of the fashion industry.

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CRAFT TRADITIONS AS CULTURAL MEMORY IN GEN-Z FASHION

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ABSTRACT

In an era of ecological volatility and digital fragmentation, Gen-Z fashion is undergoing a radical pivot: from aesthetic consumption to the curation of "Biophilic Archives." This paper investigates the pursuit of Indian landscape art as a functional tool for cultural memory, reimagining traditional craft not as a passive relic, but as a site of high-utility intervention. Central to this study is a comparative analysis of two pioneering brands: NorBlack NorWhite (NBNW) and Sui. NBNW represents "Saturated Utility," where the geometric rhythms and neon topographies of Indian landscapes are translated into a social toolkit for the global nomad. Here, heritage functions as a "visual ID" in the urban concrete, bridging the gap between diasporic memory and streetwear rebellion. Conversely, Sui embodies "Regenerative Utility," utilizing herbal alchemy and organic fibers to create a visceral archive of endangered ecosystems. In Sui's framework, the garment acts as a wellness tool, providing the wearer with a tactile, biophilic connection to the Earth that mitigates modern "nature deficit disorder." This research argues that the integration of landscape art into fashion is a restorative act of resistance against the anonymity of mass production. By shifting from "wearing a look" to "inhabiting an archive," Gen-Z transforms the body into a living map of survival. Ultimately, these brands prove that when craft traditions are paired with utility value, fashion becomes a primary vessel for preserving both the spirit of the culture and the body of the land.

Keywords: Biophilic Archives, Utility Value, Gen-Z Heritage, Saturated Utility, Regenerative Heritage, Landscape Topography, Cultural Memory.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary fashion landscape is witnessing a profound ideological shift driven by Generation Z (Gen-Z). Emerging from a childhood defined by anthropogenic climate change, geopolitical instability, and ubiquitous digitization, this demographic is discarding the hyper-accelerated cycles of fast fashion in favor of existential and material permanence. No longer content with superficial aesthetic consumption, Gen-Z consumers are demanding that their apparel function as a site of historical preservation, environmental advocacy, and personal identity.

This paper articulates this shift through the concept of the Biophilic Archive—a material practice wherein traditional textile crafts and landscape art are synthesized into high-utility garments that serve as repositories of cultural memory and ecological awareness.

Historically, Indian craft traditions—such as handloom weaving, block printing, and natural dyeing—have served as visual and tactile recordings of the subcontinent's diverse topographies. Rivers, flora, fauna, and regional terrains are intricately woven into the very taxonomy of indigenous textiles. However, industrialization and globalization have threatened to reduce these living traditions to static museum artifacts.

This research investigates how contemporary designers are disrupting this trajectory by reinterpreting landscape-inspired craft traditions for a hyper-modern audience. Through a comparative analysis of two progressive fashion entities—NorBlack NorWhite (NBNW) and Sui—we explore how traditional craft functions as a dynamic instrument of utility, resistance, and healing.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Cultural Memory, Biophilia, and Gen-Z Axiology

To comprehend how fashion transforms into a functional canvas, we must synthesize three distinct theoretical frameworks: Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory, Edward O. Wilson's biophilia hypothesis, and the evolving socio-economic value system (axiology) of Gen-Z.

2.1. CULTURAL MEMORY AND TEXTILE MATERIALITY

According to Assmann (2011), cultural memory comprises the objectified culture—texts, images, rituals, and monuments—that a society maintains to preserve its collective identity. In non-textual or indigenous histories, textiles frequently serve as primary mnemonic devices. The motifs, weave patterns, and dye techniques of Indian regional crafts are not merely decorative; they are spatialized records of local landscapes and communal histories. When these crafts are integrated into contemporary garments, they function as wearable historical texts.

2.2. THE BIOPHILIA HYPOTHESIS AND NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER

Wilson's (1984) biophilia hypothesis posits an innate, evolutionary bond between human beings and the natural world. In the twenty-first century, rapid urbanization and digital immersive spaces have ruptured this bond, culminating in what Louv (2008) terms nature deficit disorder (NDD)—a state of psychological alienation, anxiety, and ecological amnesia. Gen-Z, as digital natives, experience this fracture acutely. Consequently, their fashion choices increasingly seek to reconstitute this severed connection through tactile and visual biophilic stimuli.

2.3. THE EVOLUTION OF UTILITY VALUE

In classic Marxist critique, utility value (use-value) pertains to the physical, functional properties of a commodity that satisfy human needs. For Gen-Z, utility value has undergone a metaphysical evolution. It encompasses not only physical durability and ergonomic design but also emotional, cultural, and ecological utility. A garment possesses utility value if it aids the wearer in navigating identity displacement, coping with climate anxiety, or executing political resistance against mass production.

CASE STUDY 1: NORBLACK NORWHITE (NBNW) AND "SATURATED UTILITY"

Founded by Amrit Kumar and Mriga Kapadiya, NorBlack NorWhite (NBNW) operates at the intersection of the Indian diaspora, urban streetwear, and ancient handloom practices. The brand exemplifies what this study defines as Saturated Utility: the strategic deployment of high-chroma, neon topographies and traditional geometric patterns as a functional socio-cultural toolkit for the global nomad.

3.1. NEON TOPOGRAPHIES AS A VISUAL ID

NBNW frequently employs traditional Indian resist-dyeing methods, such as Bandhani (tie-dye) and Ikat (space-dyeing), but radically mutates the color palette. Instead of traditional earthy tones, NBNW injects electric neon pinks, ultraviolet blues, and acid greens into the fabrics. This aesthetic choices do not erase the landscape; rather, they translate the vibrant, sun-drenched, chaotic topographies of India into an urban vocabulary.

"By hyper-saturating traditional patterns, NBNW creates a high-visibility 'Visual ID' for the wearer. In the gray, concrete expanse of global metropolises, these garments serve as flags of cultural assertion." (Kapadiya & Kumar, 2024)

3.2. THE SOCIAL TOOLKIT FOR THE GLOBAL NOMAD

For the diasporic Gen-Z individual, navigating multicultural environments often induces identity fragmentation. NBNW addresses this by integrating these transformed heritage textiles into utilitarian streetwear silhouettes—oversized bombers, cargo pants, tracksuits, and bucket hats.

The utility here is dual-fold:

Physical Utility: Ergonomic, comfortable clothing suited for highly mobile, urban lifestyles.

Cultural Utility: A tangible bridge between ancestral geography and contemporary street culture, acting as a subversive resistance against Western-centric fashion hegemonies.

CASE STUDY 2: SUI AND "REGENERATIVE UTILITY"

While NBNW operates in the vibrant spaces of urban culture, the brand Sui—founded by Mahima Gujral—focuses on ecological restoration. Sui embodies Regenerative Utility, a design philosophy where the creation and consumption of apparel actively heal both the consumer's psychology and the degraded biosphere.

4.1. HERBAL ALCHEMY AND ORGANIC MATERIALITY

Sui's structural methodology relies heavily on organic fibers—such as hemp, bamboo, and certified organic cotton—and the implementation of ancient herbal alchemy. Using natural dyes derived from madder root, indigo, marigold wastes, and neem leaves, Sui directly infuses the physical properties of the Indian soil into the fabric fibers.

4.2. MITIGATING NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER

Sui's garments feature minimalist, delicate hand-embroidery depicting endangered landscapes, migrating birds, and fragile marine ecosystems. For a Gen-Z consumer suffering from eco-anxiety or nature deficit disorder, wearing a Sui garment functions as a sensory, therapeutic intervention. The tactile friction of organic linen against the skin, combined with the subtle olfactory presence of herbal dyes, creates a localized micro-environment of natural connection, functioning as a portable wellness tool.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: SATURATED VS. REGENERATIVE UTILITY

The strategies employed by NBNW and Sui reveal two distinct yet complementary methodologies through which Gen-Z converts couture into a canvas of cultural memory.

Both brands reject the passive viewing of craft traditions. NBNW utilizes the canvas of tradition to blast a loud, multi-hued declaration of survival in the concrete jungle. Sui uses the exact same canvas to softly whisper a restorative message of physical and environmental reconciliation.

DISCUSSION

THE BODY AS A LIVING MAP OF SURVIVAL

The synthesis of landscape art, utility, and traditional craft within Gen-Z fashion establishes a new ontological status for the dressed body. When a consumer puts on a garment from these curated archives, they are no longer merely "wearing a look"—a transitory, superficial performance of trend adoption. Instead, they are inhabiting an archive.

[Aesthetic Consumption: Wearing a Look]

|

▼ (Gen-Z Shift)

[Archival Curation: Inhabiting an Archive]

This transition alters the human body into a living map. In a highly volatile world, the physical geography of ancestral craft communities and endangered ecosystems is threatened by climate catastrophes and industrial sprawl. By embedding these threatened topographies into highly functional, durable garments, Gen-Z constructs a decentralized, mobile archive. If a specific forest is lost to industrialization, its memory remains codified in the herbal dye formulas and botanical embroidery patterns worn by individuals thousands of miles away.

Furthermore, this practice constitutes a potent form of resistance against mass production. Fast fashion relies on anonymity, homogeneity, and the erasure of geographic specificity to maximize global profit margins.

By insisting on garments that carry distinct regional signatures, historical lineage, and ecological accountability, Gen-Z disrupts industrial fashion logic. The utility value ensures that these garments are kept, mended, and passed down, transforming fashion into a sustainable vessel of long-term cultural transmission.

CONCLUSION

The exploration of "Couture as Canvas" at Amity University's 2026 conference highlights a crucial realization: the survival of craft traditions depends entirely on their evolution into tools of modern utility. Through the distinct paradigms of NBNW's Saturated Utility and Sui's Regenerative Utility, Gen-Z is demonstrating that heritage textiles need not remain locked in regional pasts.

By transforming apparel into "Biophilic Archives," this generation bridges the digital-physical divide, fights off ecological grief, and records endangered landscapes directly onto their bodies. Through this synthesis of craft, utility, and ecology, fashion moves past superficial display to become a vital strategy for preserving both human culture and the living earth.

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KHADI 4.0: REIMAGINING HERITAGE TEXTILES AS DIGITAL COUTURE THROUGH GEN-Z DESIGN AESTHETICS AND SUSTAINABLE FASHION NARRATIVES

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ABSTRACT

Khadi, one of India's most historically and culturally significant textiles, has long symbolised self-reliance, craft heritage, and socio-political resistance. In contemporary fashion discourse, however, heritage textiles are increasingly being reinterpreted through the lenses of sustainability, digital culture, and youth-driven aesthetics. As Generation-Z emerges as a digitally native and socially conscious consumer group, fashion narratives are rapidly shifting toward platforms of visual storytelling, identity construction, and experimental design practices. Despite Khadi's ecological advantages and cultural value, existing scholarship largely focuses on its historical, economic, or sustainability aspects, while limited attention has been given to its reinterpretation within Gen-Z digital fashion culture and contemporary couture practices. This gap highlights the need to examine how heritage textiles are repositioned within emerging digital and youth-led fashion ecosystems.

This study investigates how Gen-Z designers and consumers reinterpret Khadi as a medium of digital couture and cultural storytelling in the twenty-first century. The research explores the intersection of traditional textile heritage, social media aesthetics, and sustainable fashion narratives to understand how Khadi is being transformed within modern couture frameworks. A mixed-method approach is employed, integrating digital ethnography of social media fashion content, case study analysis of contemporary fashion labels incorporating Khadi, and consumer perception surveys among Gen-Z audiences.

The findings suggest that Khadi is evolving beyond its historical identity to emerge as a dynamic cultural canvas that supports innovation, sustainability, and youth-driven fashion entrepreneurship. By conceptualising "Khadi 4.0," the study contributes to the discourse on heritage textile revival and proposes a framework for integrating traditional craft knowledge with digital fashion culture and contemporary couture innovation.

Keywords: Khadi, Sustainable Fashion, Gen-Z Fashion Culture, Digital Couture, Heritage Textiles

INTRODUCTION

Khadi holds a unique and enduring place within the history of Indian textiles. More than a fabric, it has long represented ideals of cultural identity, economic self-reliance, and political resistance. During India's independence movement, Mahatma Gandhi promoted Khadi as a symbol of the Swadeshi movement, encouraging citizens to spin and wear hand-woven cloth as a means of resisting colonial industrial production and supporting rural livelihoods. Through this movement, Khadi became deeply embedded within the social and political consciousness of the nation. Over time, the meaning of Khadi has gradually expanded beyond its nationalist symbolism. In contemporary fashion discourse, Khadi is increasingly recognised as a sustainable textile that reflects slow production processes, artisanal craftsmanship, and environmentally responsible practices. Scholars such as Tarlo (2016) have documented the transformation of Khadi from a political symbol into a textile embraced by contemporary designers and global fashion markets. This transition illustrates how

heritage materials can evolve within changing cultural and economic contexts while maintaining their historical significance.

At the same time, the global fashion landscape is undergoing significant transformation due to the influence of Generation Z. As digitally native consumers, Gen-Z individuals interact with fashion primarily through online platforms that emphasise visual communication, identity construction, and participatory culture. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok have reshaped fashion communication by enabling designers and consumers to co-create fashion narratives and reinterpret traditional aesthetics within contemporary digital environments.

Another key factor influencing modern fashion practices is the growing emphasis on sustainability. Increasing awareness of environmental damage caused by fast-fashion production has encouraged both designers and consumers to seek alternative materials and production models. Traditional handloom textiles such as Khadi have gained renewed attention because of their low energy consumption, biodegradable fibers, and decentralised production systems that support artisan communities.

Within this evolving context, the concept of digital couture has emerged, referring to the integration of traditional craftsmanship with digital storytelling, social media branding, and experimental design practices. Despite Khadi's strong cultural and ecological significance, limited research explores how the fabric is being reinterpreted within Gen-Z-driven digital fashion culture. This study therefore seeks to investigate how Khadi can function as a contemporary cultural canvas within emerging digital fashion ecosystems shaped by youth creativity and sustainability narratives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF KHADI

Khadi occupies a central position in India's socio-cultural and political history. During the independence movement, Mahatma Gandhi advocated the use of hand-spun and hand-woven cloth as a means of promoting economic self-reliance and resisting colonial industrial textiles. In his writings, Gandhi emphasised that Khadi represented more than a textile; it embodied a philosophy of dignity of labor, rural empowerment, and decentralised economic systems (Gandhi, 1959).

Subsequent scholarly studies have explored the evolving cultural meanings of Khadi.

Tarlo (2016) argues that Khadi has undergone a significant transformation from a symbol of political resistance to a textile embraced by contemporary designers and luxury fashion markets. Her work highlights the complex relationship between tradition and modernity within Indian fashion culture, illustrating how Khadi continues to embody authenticity and craftsmanship while adapting to contemporary aesthetics.

These perspectives suggest that Khadi remains a dynamic cultural artifact capable of evolving alongside shifting design practices and market demands.

2.2 KHADI AND SUSTAINABLE FASHION

In recent years, Khadi has gained renewed recognition within global discussions on sustainable fashion. Concerns regarding environmental degradation and resource consumption associated with fast-fashion production have encouraged designers and researchers to reconsider traditional textile systems.

Fletcher (2014) highlights the importance of integrating traditional craft knowledge into contemporary design practices as a means of promoting ecological responsibility and ethical production. According to Fletcher, sustainable fashion must address environmental impact while also supporting cultural preservation and social equity. Handloom textiles such as Khadi exemplify these principles through their low-energy production processes, durable materials, and reliance on skilled artisan labor.

Government initiatives have also acknowledged the environmental and social significance of handloom industries. Reports from the Ministry of Textiles (2019) emphasise how traditional weaving practices contribute to environmental conservation while sustaining rural livelihoods and preserving indigenous knowledge systems.

2.3 DIGITAL CULTURE AND GEN-Z FASHION

The expansion of digital technology has significantly transformed contemporary fashion culture, particularly among Generation Z consumers. As digitally native individuals, Gen-Z interacts with fashion primarily through social media platforms that encourage visual storytelling and identity expression.

Researchers suggest that digital platforms function not only as marketing tools but also as cultural spaces where fashion narratives are collaboratively produced (Crane, 2012). Through digital branding strategies and influencer collaborations, designers increasingly present heritage textiles within modern lifestyle contexts, making them more accessible and relevant to younger audiences.

Furthermore, Gen-Z consumers are widely recognised for their interest in ethical and sustainable consumption practices. This demographic often prioritises transparency, authenticity, and environmental responsibility in their purchasing decisions. As a result, designers and fashion entrepreneurs are increasingly integrating traditional textiles into contemporary silhouettes, experimental design approaches, and digital marketing campaigns.

Despite these developments, the intersection between heritage textiles, digital fashion culture, and Gen-Z aesthetics remains under-explored in academic literature.

RESEARCH GAP

Existing literature extensively examines the historical importance, cultural symbolism, and sustainability potential of Khadi within the Indian textile tradition. While scholars have highlighted its ecological advantages and socio-economic contributions, most studies primarily focus on historical or sustainability perspectives.

Relatively limited research investigates how Khadi is being reinterpreted within contemporary digital fashion culture shaped by Generation Z. In particular, the interaction between heritage textiles, social media aesthetics, digital branding strategies, and youth-driven design innovation remains insufficiently examined.

This study addresses this gap by exploring how Khadi can function as a “digital couture canvas” within Gen-Z fashion narratives, connecting traditional craftsmanship with digital storytelling and sustainable fashion innovation.

OBJECTIVES: DETAILED STUDY, ANALYSIS, AND REPORT

The present study seeks to examine the changing role of Khadi within contemporary fashion discourse, particularly at the intersection of heritage, sustainability, digital culture, and youth aesthetics. In recent years, Khadi has moved beyond its conventional identity as a hand-spun heritage textile and has entered new conversations around sustainable design, fashion innovation, and digital branding. To understand this transition more systematically, the study is guided by four core research objectives. Each objective not only structures the inquiry but also opens new directions for future scholarship in fashion studies, textile research, and cultural design innovation.

OBJECTIVE 1: TO ANALYSE THE TRANSFORMATION OF KHADI WITHIN CONTEMPORARY FASHION NARRATIVES, PARTICULARLY ITS TRANSITION FROM A TRADITIONAL HERITAGE TEXTILE TO A MEDIUM FOR MODERN DESIGN INNOVATION

The first objective focuses on understanding how Khadi has evolved from a symbol of nationalism, rural craftsmanship, and cultural tradition into a textile that is increasingly being repositioned within modern design practice. Historically, Khadi was closely associated with India’s freedom movement, Gandhian ideology, and the principles of self-reliance and decentralised production. Its meaning was deeply political and cultural. However, the findings of this study indicate that Khadi is no

longer viewed only through a historical or traditional lens. It is now entering the realm of contemporary fashion as a material capable of supporting experimentation in silhouette, surface development, styling, and branding.

This transformation reflects a broader shift in the fashion industry, where heritage textiles are no longer treated as static artifacts but as dynamic resources for innovation. Designers are adapting Khadi to contemporary forms by combining it with minimalist cuts, modern tailoring, layered styling, and fusion aesthetics. In this process, the textile retains its heritage value while gaining new relevance in urban, youth-oriented, and global fashion markets. Such a shift suggests that tradition and modernity are not oppositional categories; rather, they can coexist in design practice through reinterpretation.

The analysis also reveals that Khadi's transformation is closely tied to its symbolic flexibility. Its handcrafted quality, irregular texture, breathable structure, and artisanal identity make it particularly suitable for narratives of authenticity, slow fashion, and conscious consumption. These qualities allow Khadi to function not merely as a fabric, but as a communicative medium through which values such as sustainability, rootedness, and individuality are expressed. Thus, Khadi's movement into contemporary fashion is not simply a matter of design adaptation, but also a process of semiotic rebranding.

This objective justifies further research because the transformation of Khadi is still uneven and context-specific. While some designers and brands have successfully repositioned it within contemporary markets, many consumer groups continue to associate it with older, formal, or politically symbolic meanings. Future studies may therefore examine how different fashion segments, regional markets, and international audiences interpret Khadi's modern identity. Additional research may also explore how material innovation, textile finishing, and hybrid fabric development can expand Khadi's applicability in high fashion, prêt, and digital fashion spaces.

OBJECTIVE 2: TO EXAMINE GEN-Z PERCEPTIONS OF HERITAGE TEXTILES WITHIN DIGITAL FASHION CULTURE

The second objective investigates how Generation Z perceives heritage textiles, especially Khadi, within the context of digital fashion culture. This objective is particularly significant because Gen-Z represents a consumer group that is not only digitally native but also socially and environmentally aware. Their relationship with fashion is shaped by online visibility, self-expression, ethical concerns, and participatory digital culture. As a result, their perception of heritage textiles cannot be understood through traditional consumer behaviour models alone.

The study findings suggest that Gen-Z consumers are open to engaging with heritage textiles, but their acceptance is strongly influenced by presentation, styling, and relevance to contemporary identity. Khadi is appreciated by many younger consumers for its sustainable image, handcrafted quality, and cultural value. However, it is more likely to gain attention when it is framed through modern silhouettes, aesthetic storytelling, and lifestyle-based branding. This indicates that Gen-Z does not reject tradition; instead, it seeks tradition in forms that are visually current, emotionally relatable, and socially meaningful.

A key insight emerging from this objective is that digital culture reshapes how heritage is understood. For Gen-Z, heritage is not inherited passively. It is curated, remixed, photographed, posted, and reinterpreted across digital platforms. In such a context, Khadi becomes meaningful when it enters everyday visual culture through reels, fashion campaigns, influencer styling, and online discourse. Therefore, perception is not formed only by the textile itself, but by the ecosystem of images, narratives, and identities surrounding it.

This objective also reveals a generational shift in the language of value. Earlier generations may have appreciated Khadi primarily for its ideological significance or cultural symbolism. Gen-Z, by contrast, often values it for its ethical production, uniqueness, aesthetic authenticity, and alignment with personal values. This does not diminish its cultural importance; rather, it relocates that importance into a contemporary framework shaped by visibility, sustainability, and self-fashioning.

The objective justifies further research because Gen-Z is not a homogeneous category. Perceptions vary according to class, geography, education, fashion literacy, and digital exposure. More nuanced studies are needed to examine how rural and urban youth, fashion students, digital creators, and general consumers differently understand heritage textiles. Future research may also compare Gen-Z perceptions across countries to understand whether Khadi has the potential to function as a globally recognisable sustainable textile identity.

OBJECTIVE 3: TO INVESTIGATE THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TEXTILE NARRATIVES

The third objective examines how social media platforms contribute to the promotion and circulation of sustainable textile narratives, particularly those related to Khadi. In contemporary fashion culture, platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok are no longer just communication tools; they are active spaces of aesthetic production, trend formation, and consumer education. For sustainable textiles, this is especially significant because visibility and storytelling often determine whether a fabric is perceived as desirable, outdated, niche, or aspirational.

The findings indicate that social media plays a central role in reshaping the public image of Khadi. Through fashion photography, campaign visuals, behind-the-scenes craft documentation, designer narratives, and influencer collaborations, Khadi is being repositioned as a relevant material for modern lifestyles. This digital visibility helps detach the textile from overly rigid traditional associations and reintroduces it within aspirational fashion culture. When presented through clean visual branding, contemporary styling, and sustainability-focused messaging, Khadi becomes more accessible to younger consumers.

An important aspect of this objective is the relationship between narrative and value creation. Sustainable textiles often require explanation because their worth lies not only in appearance but also in process, material origin, labor ethics, and environmental impact. Social media allows brands and creators to communicate these layered values in visually engaging ways. In the case of Khadi, digital storytelling can foreground hand-spinning, artisan labor, eco-friendly production, and cultural continuity, thereby making sustainability emotionally compelling rather than merely informational.

At the same time, this objective reveals a tension between genuine sustainability communication and surface-level branding. While social media can amplify ethical fashion narratives, it can also aestheticise sustainability without adequately addressing structural issues such as labor compensation, supply chain transparency, or material sourcing. This suggests that digital promotion may sometimes create symbolic sustainability rather than substantive sustainability. Therefore, the influence of social media must be understood critically, not only as a promotional mechanism but also as a site where meanings are selectively constructed.

This objective clearly supports further research because the relationship between digital visibility and sustainable consumption is still evolving. Future studies can examine how different content formats influence audience trust, how hashtags and visual styles affect engagement, and whether digital narratives actually translate into informed purchase behaviour. More work is also needed to assess the role of micro-influencers, independent designers, and craft communities in shaping sustainable textile discourse beyond mainstream fashion branding.

OBJECTIVE 4: TO EXPLORE HOW DESIGNERS INTEGRATE KHADI INTO CONTEMPORARY COUTURE AESTHETICS THAT RESONATE WITH YOUNGER AUDIENCES

The fourth objective focuses on the design dimension of the study by examining how Khadi is integrated into contemporary couture aesthetics. This objective is important because the long-term relevance of heritage textiles depends not only on their cultural value or sustainable qualities, but also on how successfully they are translated into compelling design language. In other words, for Khadi to resonate with younger audiences, it must be creatively adapted in ways that reflect current aesthetic preferences without erasing its craft-based identity.

The study shows that contemporary designers are engaging with Khadi through various strategies, including innovative silhouette construction, subtle draping, layered styling, textural contrasts, natural palettes, and hybrid garment formats. Rather than using Khadi only for traditional garments, designers are increasingly employing it in dresses, jackets, co-ord sets, overlays, and couture-inspired ensembles. This broadens the textile's expressive potential and demonstrates that Khadi can participate in fashion-forward design rather than remain confined to heritage wear.

Another important finding is that successful integration depends on balancing authenticity with innovation. Designers who work effectively with Khadi tend to preserve its tactile and cultural character while presenting it in forms that feel fresh and relevant. This includes careful attention to fit, finish, visual identity, and styling context. Khadi becomes especially appealing to younger audiences when it is not framed as moral obligation or nostalgic revival, but as an aesthetically sophisticated and culturally meaningful fashion choice.

This objective also highlights the role of couture as a conceptual space rather than only a luxury category. In the context of this study, couture refers to highly intentional design practice that emphasises creativity, craftsmanship, and narrative value. When Khadi enters this space, it gains symbolic elevation. It is no longer read simply as a rustic or everyday fabric, but as a textile capable of artistic and conceptual expression. This shift is especially important in challenging outdated assumptions about handloom fabrics as unsuitable for innovation or aspirational fashion markets.

The justification for further research under this objective is strong. Much more needs to be studied regarding design processes, consumer response to specific silhouettes, textile manipulation techniques, and the commercial scalability of Khadi-based couture. Future research may examine designer-led experimentation with dyeing, embroidery, digital printing, mixed materials, and virtual fashion presentation. Comparative research could also explore how Khadi performs against other heritage textiles in terms of adaptability, desirability, and couture potential among young consumers.

4.1 OVERALL ANALYTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Taken together, the four objectives demonstrate that Khadi is undergoing a significant cultural and aesthetic redefinition. It is moving from a historically rooted textile identity toward a more fluid and contemporary role shaped by sustainability discourse, digital mediation, and youth-oriented design practices. The study confirms that this transformation is not accidental; it is being produced through the combined influence of designers, digital platforms, and changing consumer values.

At the same time, the findings make it clear that Khadi's revival in contemporary fashion is still a developing process rather than a completed transition. There remains a gap between symbolic appreciation and widespread integration, between online visibility and sustained consumer adoption, and between heritage preservation and market innovation. These tensions create fertile ground for future inquiry.

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study provides a strong conceptual foundation, but it also reveals several areas that require deeper investigation. First, broader empirical research is needed across diverse demographic groups to understand how Khadi is perceived beyond the sample studied here. Second, longitudinal research could track whether current youth interest in sustainable and heritage-based fashion results in long-term behavioural change. Third, more detailed design research is required to document how Khadi can be adapted technically and aesthetically across product categories. Finally, interdisciplinary work combining fashion studies, digital media studies, cultural studies, and sustainability research would help develop a more comprehensive understanding of how textiles such as Khadi are being redefined in the twenty-first century.

In this sense, the research objectives do more than guide the study; they establish a continuing agenda for scholarship on heritage textiles, digital fashion culture, and sustainable design innovation. The concept of Khadi in contemporary fashion is not fixed. It is still unfolding, and that very incompleteness makes it a valuable subject for further academic research.

If you want, I can now turn this into a full “Data Analysis and Interpretation” section with subheadings, tables, and discussion points for direct use in your paper.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopts a mixed-method research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Such a methodology allows for a comprehensive understanding of consumer perceptions, digital fashion culture, and design innovation associated with Khadi.

5.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

a) Survey Analysis

A structured survey was conducted among 120 respondents aged 18–28 years to examine Gen-Z perceptions of Khadi. The questionnaire included demographic questions, awareness of Khadi, sustainability attitudes, and the influence of digital media on fashion preferences.

Results indicated that 72% of respondents associated Khadi with sustainability, while 64% expressed interest in wearing Khadi in modern or fusion styles.

b) Case Study Analysis

Case studies of Raw Mango and Anavila were conducted to analyse how designers reinterpret Khadi through modern silhouettes, textile experimentation, and contemporary branding strategies.

c) Digital Ethnography

Digital ethnography was used to analyse Khadi-related content on Instagram and Pinterest, focusing on visual aesthetics, storytelling techniques, hashtags, and user engagement patterns.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through survey responses, case study observations, and digital ethnographic analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to understand how Generation Z perceives Khadi within contemporary fashion culture and how digital platforms and design practices contribute to the evolving identity of heritage textiles. The findings are organised according to the study’s key research objectives.

6.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The survey was conducted among 120 respondents aged between 18 and 28 years, representing digitally active consumers who frequently engage with fashion trends through social media platforms. The demographic profile helps contextualise consumer perceptions of Khadi within a youth-oriented digital culture.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group		
18 to 21 years	48	40%
22 to 25 years	46	38%
26 to 28 years	26	22%
Gender		
Female	70	58%
Male	46	38%
Prefer not to say	4	4%

Educational Background		
Undergraduate Students	52	43%
Postgraduate Students	38	32%
Young Professionals	30	25%

INTERPRETATION

The demographic distribution indicates that the majority of respondents belong to the 18–25 age group, representing the core segment of Generation Z. This demographic is highly engaged with digital media and contemporary fashion trends. Their responses provide valuable insights into how younger consumers interpret heritage textiles within modern fashion contexts.

6.2 TRANSFORMATION OF KHADI IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION NARRATIVES

The first research objective examines how Khadi is perceived in contemporary fashion discourse and whether consumers recognise its transformation from a traditional textile to a modern design material.

TABLE 2 : CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF KHADI IN MODERN FASHION

Perception Category	Percentage of Respondents
Khadi as a traditional textile	28%
Khadi as a sustainable fabric	72%
Khadi suitable for modern/fusion fashion	64%
Khadi associated mainly with political or cultural symbolism	18%

ANALYSIS

The survey results reveal that 72% of respondents associate Khadi with sustainability, suggesting that its identity has expanded beyond its historical association with the Indian independence movement. Furthermore, 64% of participants expressed interest in wearing Khadi garments in modern or fusion styles, indicating growing acceptance of heritage textiles in contemporary fashion.

However, approximately 28% of respondents still perceive Khadi primarily as a traditional fabric, suggesting that the transformation of its cultural image is still in progress. This highlights the importance of design innovation and branding strategies in redefining Khadi’s role within modern fashion narratives.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that Khadi is gradually transitioning from a historically symbolic textile to a versatile material within contemporary fashion design. Designers who experiment with silhouettes, layering techniques, and fusion aesthetics are contributing to this transformation. The reinterpretation of Khadi aligns with broader industry trends emphasising slow fashion, sustainability, and craft revival.

6.3 GEN-Z PERCEPTIONS OF HERITAGE TEXTILES

The second research objective focuses on understanding how Generation Z perceives heritage textiles within digital fashion culture.

TABLE 3 : GEN-Z ATTITUDES TOWARD HERITAGE TEXTILES

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Heritage textiles should be preserved in modern fashion	76%	18%	6%
Traditional fabrics can be fashionable if styled creatively	82%	12%	6%
I prefer sustainable fabrics when buying clothing	70%	20%	10%
Heritage textiles feel outdated in modern fashion	14%	22%	64%

ANALYSIS

The results indicate a generally positive attitude toward heritage textiles among Gen-Z consumers. 76% of respondents believe that traditional fabrics should be preserved within modern fashion systems, while 82% agree that heritage textiles can become fashionable when combined with innovative design approaches.

Importantly, only 14% of respondents consider heritage textiles outdated, suggesting that younger consumers are open to engaging with traditional materials when they are presented in contemporary forms.

DISCUSSION

These findings challenge the assumption that younger consumers prefer exclusively modern or synthetic fashion materials. Instead, Generation Z appears to value authenticity, sustainability, and cultural storytelling within fashion. Heritage textiles such as Khadi resonate with these values when integrated into visually appealing and contemporary design contexts.

6.4 INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SUSTAINABLE FASHION NARRATIVES

The third research objective examines how digital platforms influence awareness and perception of Khadi and sustainable textiles.

TABLE 4 : ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN FASHION AWARENESS

Platform	Percentage of Respondents Discovering Fashion Trends
Instagram	52%
Pinterest	18%
TikTok	8%
Fashion blogs/websites	12%
Offline sources (stores/events)	10%

ANALYSIS

The findings reveal that 78% of respondents discover fashion trends through social media platforms, with Instagram emerging as the most influential platform. This indicates that digital platforms play a crucial role in shaping consumer awareness of sustainable fashion narratives.

Visual storytelling, influencer collaborations, and aesthetic presentation significantly influence how younger audiences perceive heritage textiles. Brands that showcase Khadi through modern styling and high-quality digital photography tend to generate stronger engagement among Gen-Z audiences.

DISCUSSION

Digital media functions as a powerful platform for cultural reinterpretation and fashion storytelling. By presenting Khadi within contemporary visual narratives, designers and brands can reposition the textile as both fashionable and sustainable. This demonstrates how digital communication strategies contribute to the revival of heritage materials within modern fashion ecosystems.

6.5 INTEGRATION OF KHADI IN CONTEMPORARY COUTURE DESIGN

The fourth research objective explores how designers incorporate Khadi into contemporary couture aesthetics.

Case study analysis of Raw Mango and Anavila provides insights into how designers reinterpret traditional textiles through modern design approaches.

Table 5 : Design Strategies Used by Contemporary Khadi-Based Fashion Labels

Design Element	Application in Contemporary Collections
Modern silhouettes	Structured dresses, jackets, and layered ensembles
Minimalist aesthetics	Neutral color palettes and clean lines
Textile experimentation	Blended fabrics and innovative weaving
Cultural storytelling	Branding narratives emphasizing craft heritage

ANALYSIS

Both Raw Mango and Anavila demonstrate how Khadi can be adapted to modern couture contexts without losing its artisanal identity. These brands reinterpret Khadi through contemporary silhouettes, subtle textures, and minimalist Colour palettes that appeal to younger audiences.

Design innovation plays a key role in bridging the gap between heritage craftsmanship and modern consumer expectations. By combining traditional weaving techniques with modern styling and branding, designers are successfully repositioning Khadi as a desirable textile within contemporary fashion.

DISCUSSION

The case study findings suggest that the revival of heritage textiles requires a balanced approach that integrates tradition with innovation. Designers who successfully integrate Khadi into couture collections often emphasise both aesthetic refinement and cultural storytelling. This approach enhances the textile's appeal among younger consumers who value authenticity alongside modern design sensibilities.

6.6 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The overall analysis reveals several important trends regarding the evolving role of Khadi in contemporary fashion culture:

1. Growing Sustainability Awareness : A majority of Gen-Z consumers recognise Khadi as an environmentally responsible textile.
2. Positive Attitudes Toward Heritage Textiles : Younger consumers are receptive to traditional fabrics when presented in modern design formats.
3. Strong Influence of Digital Platforms : Social media significantly shapes fashion perceptions and plays a key role in promoting sustainable fashion narratives.
4. Design Innovation as a Key Driver : Contemporary designers are successfully repositioning Khadi through modern silhouettes, branding strategies, and digital storytelling.

DISCUSSION

The findings highlight the shifting perception of Khadi within contemporary fashion culture. While historically associated with political symbolism and rural craftsmanship, Khadi is increasingly being reinterpreted as a material for modern design innovation.

Digital platforms play a critical role in this transformation by enabling designers to present heritage textiles within contemporary visual narratives. Through influencer collaborations, digital campaigns, and creative storytelling, brands are repositioning Khadi as both fashionable and sustainable.

Furthermore, the sustainability values associated with Khadi strongly resonate with Gen-Z consumers, who increasingly prioritize ethical consumption practices.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Khadi continues to hold significant relevance within contemporary fashion discourse. As sustainability, cultural authenticity, and digital communication reshape global fashion systems, traditional textiles such as Khadi offer valuable opportunities for innovation.

Generation Z plays a crucial role in redefining the cultural meaning of heritage textiles. Through digital platforms and experimental design practices, younger designers and consumers are reinterpreting Khadi as a versatile and culturally meaningful fashion material.

The concept of Khadi 4.0 illustrates how heritage textiles can adapt to new cultural contexts by integrating traditional craftsmanship with digital storytelling and contemporary design innovation. Such an approach not only preserves craft heritage but also contributes to the development of sustainable and culturally conscious fashion systems.

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ADAPTATION OF RAJA RAVI VARMA PAINTING ON INDIAN CONTEMPORARY COUTURE AS DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

The adaptation and reinterpretation of legacy of Indian Traditional Painting into contemporary fashion design is an important trend in modern couture. Among Indian Painters, Raja Ravi Varma is known as one of the most influential figures whose paintings continue to influence fashion designers across India. His artistic representation of Hindu mythological themes, royal or elite elegance, textiles, jewellery, and feminine charm has significantly contributed to Indian contemporary couture design.

This research paper evaluates how Raja Ravi Varma's paintings are adapted into modern fashion design practices. It focuses on the transformation of visual elements from art into couture garments, embroidery, drapery styles, prints, and fashion narratives. This short study also explores how fashion designers reinterpret Indian cultural legacy through contemporary couture while maintaining Aesthetic traditions. The paper explores that Ravi Varma's paintings provide a timeless treasure for design innovation and cultural expression in Indian fashion.

Keywords: Raja Ravi Varma, Contemporary Couture Fashion, Indian Art, Textile Design, Cultural Adaptation

INTRODUCTION

Fashion and Fine Arts from time to time influenced each other throughout history. In India, traditional paintings and cultural imagery have played a prime role in shaping textile and costume Aesthetics. Raja Ravi Varma is regarded as one of the pioneers of modern Indian painting whose matchless executions created a visual language combining Hindu mythology with Occidental realism. His paintings are symbols of Indian identity and elegance.

The adaptation of Raja Ravi Varma's paintings into Indian modern and latest couture has emerged as an appear design practice in the modern fashion world. Designers reinterpret the visual richness of his paintings through silhouettes, embroidery, textile patterns, colour palettes, and jewellery styling. Contemporary couture collections influenced by Ravi Varma often represent mythology, elite heritage, and Indian femininity in a modern format.

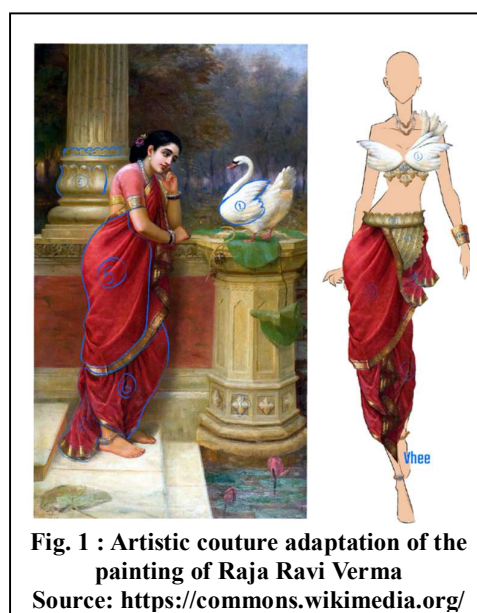


Fig. 1 : Artistic couture adaptation of the painting of Raja Ravi Varma
Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

This research paper analyses the adaptation of Ravi Varma's painting elements into couture design and studies how fashion transforms traditional art into wearable cultural expression.

ART AS A SOURCE OF FASHION DESIGN

Art provides inspiration for colour, form, composition, texture, and storytelling in fashion. Raja Ravi Varma's paintings offer a rich visual treasure for designers because of their minute and intricate representation of Indian costumes, ornaments, and emotional expressions. His works continue to inspire modern fashion aesthetics and couture innovation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Scholars of Indian art history have extensively studied the contribution of Raja Ravi Varma to Indian visual culture. Researchers note that his paintings popularized the Vaishnava Shaiva and Shakta mythological imagery and created idealized representations of Indian charm. His use of textiles, drapery, and ornamentation also reflected the social and cultural environment of nineteenth-century or Pre Independent India.

Fashion studies scholars argue that contemporary Indian couture increasingly uses the past or historical and artistic references to establish cultural identity. Designers such as Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Ritu Kumar, and Tarun Tahiliani often incorporate traditional Indian aesthetics into luxury fashion design. Previous studies indicate that Ravi Varma's paintings influence bridal couture, handloom revival, jewellery styling, and fashion photography.

However, limited research specifically focuses on the adaptation of Ravi Varma's art into contemporary couture design. This research paper is an attempt to bridge and junction that gap by analyzing the artistic transformation from Fine Arts to fashion design.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the artistic and stylistic genre of Raja Ravi Varma's paintings.
- To estimate the adaptation and assimilation of Ravi Varma's paintings in Indian contemporary couture design.
- To analyze the relationship between fine arts, textile design, and fashion aesthetics.
- To understand the role of Hindu mythology and heritage in contemporary couture collections.

METHODOLOGY

The study adheres qualitative research methodology based on visual and comparative analysis. Selected paintings of Raja Ravi Varma have been taken into consideration and analyzed to identify costume details, textile patterns, jewellery forms, and compositional aesthetics. Secondary data collections have been collected from books, research journals, fashion magazines, fashion designer interactions, and exhibition catalogues. Comparative analysis between Ravi Varma's paintings and contemporary couture collections was conducted to estimate design adaptation processes.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The adaptation of Raja Ravi Varma's Hindu religious and female paintings into contemporary couture design can be observed through various visual and stylistic elements. Fashion designers reinterpret the draped sarees, embroidered fabrics, temple jewellery, floral motifs, and majestic colour schemes used in his paintings.

Rich fabrics like silk, brocade, velvet, and organza are commonly used to recreate the luxurious and charming appearance visible in Ravi Varma's Oil paintings. Fluid, sculptural pleating and traditional regional saree drapes (like the Nauvari or Madisar) are transformed into structured lehengas, capes, and dramatic trailing gowns. Deep jewel tones like crimson, peacock blue, mustard yellow, and rich forest green mirror Varma's iconic oleographs and oil canvases.

One important aspect of adaptation is the transformation of Hindu mythological imagery into wearable fashion. Designers execute collections influenced by characters such as Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, and Shakuntala. These couture garments frequently include gold embroidery, hand-painted textiles, and traditional weaving techniques that reflect the elegance of Ravi Varma's paintings. Vintage zardozi, hand-painting, and heavy metallic thread work recreate the tactile opulence of aristocratic attire from the late 19th century.

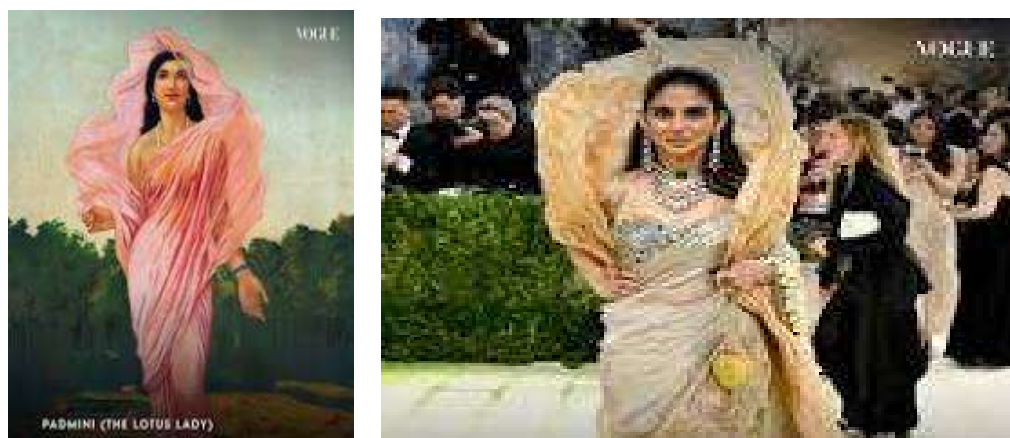


Fig. 2 : Met gala 2026 inspired by look created by Raja Ravi Varma
Source: theentrepreneurbytes.in

The Met Gala 2026 once again celebrated fashion as art, and this year's looks reminded the world why Raja Ravi Varma remains an enduring icon. The rich drapes, regal silhouettes, intricate jewelry & painterly aesthetics echoed the timeless elegance seen in his legendary works.

Fashion photography and runway presentations also borrow compositional ideas from Ravi Varma's illustrations. The gestures, expressions, shading and lighting, and decorative details used in fashion campaigns often resemble the painterly style of his religious works. This creates a fusion between classical Indian Painting and contemporary fashion aesthetics.

TEXTILE AND SURFACE DESIGN ADAPTATION

Iconic muses such as Damayanti and her celestial swan (*Hamsa Damayanti*) or Shakuntala are hand-embroidered onto statement pieces, as seen on international red carpets by designers like Manish Malhotra. Textile adaptation is a prime aspect of contemporary couture inspired by Ravi Varma. Designers lift motifs from his paintings into printed fabrics, embroidery patterns, Zari work, and handcrafted embellishments. Traditional Indian weaving and embroidery and crafts such as



Fig. 3 : Costumes on ramp, inspired by the paintings of Raja Ravi Varma
Source: <https://www.google.com>

zardozi, Banarasi and hand embroidery are revived through couture collections influenced by his artistic expressions.

REVIVAL OF INDIAN HERITAGE THROUGH COUTURE

Raja Ravi Varma's paintings contribute to the preservation of Indian legacy in contemporary fashion. Couture designers use his artistic vision to celebrate Indian identity, mythology, and traditional craftsmanship. Through adaptation, modern fashion becomes a medium for cultural continuity and artistic reinterpretation.

LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study is confined and framed to selected examples of couture collections inspired by Raja Ravi Varma's paintings. Limited access to original designer archives and artworks restricted detailed analysis of certain adaptations.

Forth coming research may focus on digital fashion design, costume design in Indian cinema, and the role of Ravi Varma's aesthetics in international fashion markets. Comparative studies between Indian and Western artistic adaptations in couture may also provide and serve broader understanding of cross-cultural fashion influences.

CONCLUSION

The adaptation of Raja Ravi Varma's paintings into Indian contemporary couture represents the apparent relationship between Painting and fashion trends and designing. His visual representation of Indian culture with Vaishnava Shaiva Shakta mythology, textiles, and feminine charm continues to influence fashion designers in innovating couture collections that fuse culture and legacy with modern creativity.

Contemporary couture transforms Ravi Varma's artistic language into experimental and innovative fashion expressions while preserving legacy of Indian aesthetics. His paintings remain an important cultural and artistic resource that enriches and enhances Indian fashion trends and strengthens the connection between fine arts and couture tradition.

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DRESSING THE SELF, DWELLING THE SELF: PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN FASHION AND SPATIAL IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the profound psychological relationship between clothing, identity formation, and self-image, drawing critical parallels with spatial design and architectural environments. It posits that the way individuals dress serves as a visible manifestation of their internal identity construction, which subsequently influences how they curate and inhabit their physical spaces. By examining the conceptual frameworks of the "indelible signature," shared design lexicons, trend migration, proportion and scale, and sentimental curation, this study reveals the deep interconnections between sartorial expression and architectural decision-making. The research employs a qualitative, interdisciplinary methodology drawing from environmental psychology, fashion theory, and architectural criticism to explore how the psychological mechanisms governing personal style choices are mirrored in spatial design preferences. The findings suggest that individuals who demonstrate a cohesive, well-curated personal style exhibit parallel competencies in creating balanced, aesthetically pleasing living environments. However, critical distinctions emerge between fashion's temporal, body-centric expression and architecture's permanent, functional demands. The paper concludes that understanding these psychological connections offers valuable insights for architects, interior designers, and environmental psychologists seeking to create spaces that resonate with inhabitant's authentic self-conceptions.

Keywords : Architectural Psychology, Fashion Theory, Identity Formation, Self-Image, Spatial Design, Personal Style, Environmental Aesthetics, Sentimental Curation, Design Lexicon.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE ARCHITECTURE OF SELF-EXPRESSION

The human experience of self is fundamentally a project of construction an on-going, iterative process through which individuals negotiates their identities, project their values, and communicate their place within social and cultural contexts. This construction manifests most visibly through two intimately connected domains: the clothing one wears upon the body and the spaces one inhabits. Both serve as what architectural theorist Juhani Pallasmaa (2005) might term "existential extensions" the sartorial self and the spatial self are not merely adjacent expressions but deeply intertwined manifestations of a coherent internal identity.

This paper explores the psychological underpinnings of this connection, investigating how personal fashion sense influences, reflects, and interacts with spatial design preferences. The premise is elegantly captured in the concept of the "indelible signature" the notion that an individual's unique approach to dressing, whether eclectic maximalism or restrained minimalism, reveals itself through their choices in furnishing and decorating their living environment. Both are fundamentally acts of self-expression, processes through which the abstract interior self is rendered visible and tangible.

1.2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The relationship between clothing and identity has been extensively theorized within fashion studies and social psychology. As Entwistle (2000) argues in "The Fashioned Body," dress is a

situated bodily practice, a fundamental means through which individuals present themselves to the world and navigate social interactions. Clothing is never merely functional; it is always communicative, conveying messages about status, affiliation, mood, and identity. Similarly, architectural and interior spaces function as what Rapoport (1969) termed "non-verbal communication systems," encoding cultural values, personal preferences, and social meanings into the built environment.

This paper draws upon the concept of "environmental psychology" as articulated by Proshansky, Ittelson, and Rivlin (1970), which examines the reciprocal relationship between individuals and their physical surroundings. The spaces we inhabit are not passive backdrops but active participants in identity formation, influencing mood, behavior, and self-perception. The clothing we wear, which constitutes what could be termed the "mobile environment," serves a parallel function, mediating our relationship with the world as we move through it.

OBJECTIVES

This research is guided by three primary objectives:

1. **To Analyze Psychological Mechanisms:** To identify and analyze the psychological processes through which personal fashion choices reflect and influence spatial design preferences, focusing on the shared conceptual frameworks that govern both domains.
2. **To Examine Shared Design Lexicons:** To investigate how principles such as layering, color blocking, accessorizing, proportion, and scale operate across both sartorial and spatial contexts, revealing the cognitive structures underlying aesthetic decision-making.
3. **To Distinguish Between Domains:** To critically examine the distinctions between fashion and spatial design, particularly regarding temporality, functionality, and permanence, to understand how these differences shape the psychological experience of self-expression.

The significance of this research lies in its potential applications for architectural practice, interior design, and environmental psychology. Understanding how individual's personal style preferences translate into spatial needs can inform more empathetic, user-centered design approaches. For architects and designers, recognizing that client's sartorial choices offer insights into their spatial preferences can facilitate more meaningful collaboration and more resonant outcomes

METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a qualitative, interdisciplinary methodology designed to explore the psychological intersections between fashion and spatial design. The approach is primarily conceptual and analytical, drawing from diverse theoretical traditions to develop a coherent framework for understanding the relationships under investigation.

3.2 DATA SOURCES

The research draws upon three categories of data:

Theoretical Literature: Extensive review of literature from fashion studies, environmental psychology, architectural theory, and social psychology provides the conceptual foundation for analysis. Key texts include Entwistle's "The Fashioned Body" (2000), Proshansky's work on place identity (1978), and Pallasmaa's phenomenological writings on architecture (2005).

Case Studies: The analysis is illustrated through examination of documented cases where individuals' fashion sensibilities are reflected in their spatial environments. These include published interior design profiles, architectural case studies, and biographical accounts of designers, artists, and cultural figures whose work spans fashion and spatial design.

Design Practice Analysis: The research examines contemporary design practices where fashion and interior design converge, including the work of designers who have crossed between these domains, fashion-inspired interior collections, and documented examples of individuals whose personal style is reflected in their homes.

3.3 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis is organized around five key conceptual connections identified in the research framework:

The Indelible Signature: How personal style consistency manifests across sartorial and spatial domains.

Shared Design Lexicon: How principles of composition operate in both contexts.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

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Design Practice Analysis: The research examines contemporary design practices where fashion and interior design converge, including the work of designers who have crossed between these domains, fashion-inspired interior collections, and documented examples of individuals whose personal style is reflected in their homes.

3.6 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis is organized around five key conceptual connections identified in the research framework:

1. **The Indelible Signature:** How personal style consistency manifests across sartorial and spatial domains
2. **Shared Design Lexicon:** How principles of composition operate in both contexts
3. **Trend Migration:** How aesthetic movements travel between fashion and architecture
4. **Proportion and Scale:** How embodied understanding of fit translates across domains
5. **Sentimental Curation:** How emotional attachment to objects structures both wardrobe and home

For each connection, the analysis examines the psychological mechanisms involved, the theoretical foundations, and illustrative examples.

ANALYSIS: KEY CONNECTIONS BETWEEN FASHION AND SPATIAL DESIGN

4.1 THE INDELIBLE SIGNATURE: COHERENCE ACROSS DOMAINS

The concept of the "indelible signature" captures the fundamental insight that personal style, whether expressed through clothing or spatial design, reflects a coherent aesthetic identity. Individuals who have developed a distinctive fashion sensibility tend to apply the same aesthetic principles whether minimalist restraint, maximalist exuberance, or eclectic juxtaposition to their living environments.

Psychological Mechanisms: The consistency between fashion and spatial choices can be understood through several psychological frameworks. Self-consistency theory (Lecky, 1945)

suggests that individuals are motivated to maintain coherence across different domains of self-expression; a person who presents as minimalist in dress would experience psychological dissonance in presenting as maximalist in home decor. Cognitive style research indicates that individuals develop stable aesthetic preferences based on underlying perceptual and cognitive dispositions; these preferences manifest across different domains of aesthetic decision-making.

Furthermore, the development of fashion sensibility involves what Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) term "cultivation of taste" a process of self-education through which individuals learn to distinguish, evaluate, and select objects that resonate with their sense of self. This cultivated taste, once developed, applies broadly across aesthetic domains. The person who has learned to distinguish high-quality fabric from poor quality has developed discrimination that applies to upholstery; the person who understands how a garment's silhouette flatters their body has developed visual-spatial reasoning that applies to furniture arrangement.

Illustrative Examples: Consider the case of architect and designer Elsie de Wolfe, whose sartorial elegance characterized by tailored suits, monochromatic palettes, and restrained accessories directly translated into her revolutionary approach to interior design. De Wolfe rejected the heavy Victorian interiors of her era in favor of light, airy spaces that mirrored her personal style. Her signature a consistent aesthetic of lightness, clarity, and restraint operated identically whether dressing herself or designing rooms.

Similarly, contemporary designer Kelly Wearstler's maximalist fashion sensibility characterized by bold pattern mixing, unexpected color combinations, and eclectic layering is directly mirrored in her spatial designs. The same principles of confident juxtaposition and controlled chaos that govern her wardrobe govern her interiors. This consistency is not merely coincidental but psychologically necessary; it represents the expression of a coherent aesthetic identity across different mediums.

4.2 SHARED DESIGN LEXICON: PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION

Fashion and spatial design share a common design lexicon a set of principles governing composition that operates similarly across both domains. These principles include layering, color blocking, accessorizing, rhythm, balance, and hierarchy. Individuals who have mastered these principles in dressing often demonstrate parallel mastery in spatial arrangement.

Layering: In fashion, layering involves combining garments of different weights, textures, and lengths to create depth, visual interest, and functional adaptability. A well-layered outfit might begin with a base layer, add a shirt, incorporate a sweater, and culminate in a jacket, with each layer visible or partially visible to create complexity. In spatial design, layering operates similarly: a well-layered room includes foundational elements (floors, walls, ceilings), secondary layers (large furniture pieces), tertiary layers (accent furniture, textiles), and finishing layers (artwork, accessories, lighting). The psychological principle underlying both is the human preference for visual complexity that remains coherent environments (whether worn or inhabited) that offer sufficient stimulation without crossing into chaos.

Color Blocking: Fashion color blocking involves combining blocks of solid color to create graphic impact, often using complementary or contrasting hues. Spatial color blocking operates analogously, using paint, upholstery, and accessories to create zones of color that structure the visual experience of a room. Individuals comfortable with bold color choices in dress tend to be comfortable with similar choices in spatial design; those who prefer neutral, tonal palettes in clothing similarly prefer such palettes in interiors.

Accessorizing: In fashion, accessories jewellery, scarves, belts, bags provide opportunities for accent, punctuation, and personal expression. They serve as the finishing elements that complete an outfit. In spatial design, accessories artwork, vases, books, decorative objects serve an identical function. The psychology of accessorizing involves what could be termed the "punctuation principle" the recognition that certain elements serve to conclude, emphasize, or elevate a composition. Individuals who understand when an outfit is "finished" demonstrate similar sensitivity to when a room is "finished."

Rhythm and Balance: Fashion composition involves the arrangement of visual elements to create rhythm repetition of color, pattern, or silhouette that creates visual flow. Balance involves distributing visual weight across the body. Spatial composition involves identical principles; rhythm is created through repetition of elements across a room, balance through distribution of visual weight across the space. The perceptual mechanisms governing these judgments are identical regardless of scale.

4.3 TREND MIGRATION: THE CIRCULATION OF AESTHETICS

The migration of aesthetic trends between fashion and spatial design is well-documented but rarely analyzed psychologically. The phenomenon whereby colors, textures, patterns, and even specific motifs appear on runways and subsequently migrate to home décor reflects deeper psychological mechanisms governing aesthetic circulation.

Mechanisms of Migration: The migration of trends can be understood through theories of cultural circulation (Bourdieu, 1984). Fashion functions as what can be termed the "leading edge" of aesthetic innovation the domain in which new aesthetic sensibilities are first articulated and tested. These innovations then diffuse to other domains, including interior design, as they become legitimized and mainstreamed.

Psychologically, the migration of trends responds to the human need for coherence across the sensory environment. Individuals who have adopted a new color palette in their wardrobe experience psychological satisfaction when that palette appears in their spatial environment; it creates what could be termed "aesthetic resonance" across the domains of self-expression. The rise of specific aesthetics minimalism, maximalism, biophilic design, art deco revival can be traced across both fashion and spatial domains, with each reinforcing the legitimacy of the other.

Illustrative Examples: The emergence of "quiet luxury" as a fashion trend characterized by neutral palettes, refined materials, and understated elegance has directly influenced interior design, with the same principles governing both wardrobe and home. Similarly, the resurgence of bold patterns and eclectic maximalism in fashion has paralleled the rise of "maximalist interiors" featuring pattern mixing, collected objects, and layered textures.

This migration operates through what could be termed the "legitimation cycle"-aesthetic sensibility gains legitimacy through its articulation in high-profile fashion contexts, enabling its adoption in spatial contexts where it might otherwise have seemed risky or unfamiliar. The fashion context provides the "permission" for aesthetic experimentation that then translates to more permanent spatial decisions.

Perhaps the most fundamental connection between fashion and spatial design lies in the domain of proportion and scale. Fashion involves constant judgment about how garments fit the body-where hemlines fall, how shoulders align, how volume distributes across the figure. Spatial design involves analogous judgments about how furniture, art, and architectural elements fit within the scale of a room and relate to the human body.

Embodied Cognition: The ability to judge proportion and scale is fundamentally embodied; it derives from the body's own dimensions, movements, and capacities. As Pallasmaa (2005) notes, we experience architecture through the body; we understand the height of a ceiling in relation to our own height, the width of a corridor in relation to our own width. Individuals who have developed sophisticated judgment about how garments relate to their bodies have cultivated embodied sensitivity that directly applies to judging how objects relate to spaces.

The psychological mechanism involves what can be termed "proportional reasoning" the ability to perceive and evaluate relationships between elements. A person who knows that a cropped jacket needs a high waisted pant to maintain proportion understands the principle of balancing volumes. This same principle applies when arranging furniture: a low sofa requires a low coffee table to maintain proportion; a tall bookshelf requires adequate wall space to avoid crowding.

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The psychological mechanism involves what can be termed "proportional reasoning"- the ability to perceive and evaluate relationships between elements. A person who knows that a cropped jacket needs a high-waisted pant to maintain proportion understands the principle of balancing volumes. This same principle applies when arranging furniture: a low sofa requires a low coffee table to maintain proportion; a tall bookshelf requires adequate wall space to avoid crowding.

Applications: The embodied nature of proportional judgment suggests that individuals who dress well who understand how to balance volumes, create silhouettes, and maintain proportion possess cognitive resources directly applicable to spatial design. The person who knows that a voluminous top requires a streamlined bottom understands the principle of balancing visual weight; this understanding applies whether selecting garments or arranging furniture.

Conversely, difficulties with proportion in fashion consistently choosing garments that overwhelm or diminish the figure may predict difficulties with spatial proportion. This suggests that proportional judgment constitutes a relatively stable cognitive capacity that manifests across different domains of aesthetic decision-making.

4.5 SENTIMENTAL CURATION: THE EMOTIONAL ECONOMY OF OBJECTS

Both fashion and spatial design involve the curation of objects with emotional significance. The closet contains garments selected not merely for function but for meaning the dress worn on a significant occasion, the sweater inherited from a loved one, the accessory purchased on a meaningful journey. The home contains analogous objects furniture, art, objects selected for their emotional resonance as much as their functional utility.

The Psychology of Attachment: Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) examine the emotional significance of household objects, finding that people develop profound attachments to objects that embody personal history, relationships, and achievements. The same psychological mechanisms govern attachment to clothing. Both domains involve what can be termed "sentimental curation" the process of selecting and preserving objects that sustain identity across time.

The closet and the home function as what could be called "memory theaters" spaces within which personal history is materialized and accessible. The decision to retain a garment long after its functional life reflects the same impulse that leads to retaining a piece of furniture: the object serves as a "mnemonic anchor," connecting present identity to past experience.

Comfort and Security: Much like choosing clothes to feel comfortable and secure in one's identity, designing a space is fundamentally about creating a personal, comforting "shell" that supports psychological well-being. The concept of "home" as a secure base a space from which to explore the world and to which to retreat parallels the concept of "personal style" as a secure identity from which to navigate social interactions. Both provide what Winnicott (1971) termed "holding environments" spaces (whether worn or inhabited) that support psychological integration and well-being.

The individual who has cultivated a wardrobe that reliably supports their sense of self has developed skills in creating supportive environments that translate to spatial curation. The ability to select objects that "feel right" to trust one's aesthetic instincts operates identically whether selecting a jacket or selecting a sofa.

CRITICAL DISTINCTIONS: WHERE FASHION AND SPATIAL DESIGN DIVERGE

While the connections between fashion and spatial design are profound and psychologically significant, critical distinctions complicate direct translation between these domains. These distinctions are essential for understanding both the limits of the analogy and the unique demands of spatial design.

5.1 TEMPORALITY AND PERMANENCE

The most fundamental distinction concerns temporality. Fashion is inherently temporary and mutable. Garments can be changed daily, outfits can be reconfigured moment to moment, and entire wardrobes can evolve seasonally. This temporal flexibility enables experimentation, play, and the exploration of different identity positions with relatively low stakes.

Spatial design, by contrast, involves considerably greater permanence. Painting a room is a commitment; purchasing furniture is an investment; architectural changes are structural and lasting. The stakes of spatial decisions are therefore substantially higher than sartorial decisions. This temporal difference has profound psychological implications. The individual who enjoys experimenting with fashion may be far more conservative in spatial choices, where mistakes are more costly and difficult to rectify.

Psychological Implications: The temporal distinction suggests that consistency between fashion and spatial preferences may be mediated by risk tolerance. Individuals with high tolerance for aesthetic risk may demonstrate consistency across domains; those with lower tolerance may show divergence, using fashion as the domain of experimentation while keeping spatial choices conservative and safe.

5.2 FUNCTIONALITY AND ERGONOMICS

While fashion serves functional purposes protection, modesty, thermal regulation these functions are relatively simple compared to the complex functional demands of spatial design. Spatial environments must accommodate a wide range of activities, support diverse uses over time, and meet ergonomic requirements for comfort, safety, and accessibility.

A garment that fails ergonomically is simply uncomfortable; a room that fails ergonomically may be unusable. The functional demands of spatial design are therefore more complex and consequential than those of fashion. An individual's fashion sensibility however refined does not guarantee the functional competence required for successful spatial design.

Psychological Implications: This distinction suggests that the translation from fashion to spatial design requires not merely aesthetic sensitivity but also what could be termed "functional intelligence" the ability to anticipate use patterns, understand human factors, and integrate aesthetic decisions with functional requirements. Some individuals possess both; others may excel in one domain while struggling in the other.

5.3 SPATIAL FLOW AND NAVIGATION

Fashion involves the body's static presentation and movement through space, but the garment itself does not create pathways, zones, or circulation patterns. Spatial design, by contrast, centrally involves the organization of flow how people move through spaces, how different zones connect, how circulation patterns support or impede activities.

An individual may have sophisticated aesthetic judgment regarding how spaces look without having developed judgment regarding how spaces work. The skill of arranging furniture to support conversation, of creating pathways that facilitate movement, of balancing openness with enclosure these are not directly analogous to skills in dressing.

Psychological Implications: The distinction between aesthetic composition and spatial organization suggests that the connection between fashion and spatial design is strongest regarding static visual composition and weakest regarding dynamic spatial organization. Individuals whose fashion sensibility is primarily visual may demonstrate this connection; those whose fashion sensibility is more tactile, embodied, or performative may demonstrate different connections.

5.4 IMPULSIVITY AND PLANNING

Fashion choices can be, and often are, impulsive. A garment purchased on a whim, an outfit assembled spontaneously these low-stakes decisions allow for intuitive, immediate aesthetic judgment. Spatial design, by virtue of its greater cost and permanence, typically requires more deliberate planning. The impulsive aesthetic decision that works in fashion a bold accessory chosen

on instinct may fail in spatial design if not integrated with existing elements and functional requirements.

Psychological Implications: This distinction suggests that consistency between fashion and spatial preferences may be mediated by planning capacity. Individuals who approach fashion as a domain of careful planning curating wardrobes, planning outfits, making considered purchases may demonstrate stronger consistency with spatial choices than those who approach fashion impulsively.

6. DISCUSSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE

6.1 UNDERSTANDING THE CLIENT

The connections between fashion and spatial design have significant implications for architectural and interior design practice. Clients' personal style their fashion choices, their approach to dressing, their relationship with clothing offers insights into their aesthetic sensibilities, their risk tolerance, and their approach to self-expression. Designers who attend to these signals can develop more accurate understanding of client preferences and more effective collaborative relationships.

Practical Applications: A client who dresses in restrained, neutral tones with minimal accessories likely prefers spatial environments with similar characteristics. A client who embraces bold patterns, eclectic combinations, and dramatic silhouettes in fashion likely welcomes similar boldness in spatial design. A client whose wardrobe is carefully curated and edited likely approaches spatial decisions with similar deliberateness.

6.2 THE SHARED LEXICON AS COMMUNICATION TOOL

The shared design lexicon identified in this analysis provides a powerful communication tool for designer-client collaboration. Concepts like layering, color blocking, accessorizing, proportion, and scale are familiar to clients through their experience with fashion. Designers who employ these concepts drawing explicit parallels between dressing and designing can help clients articulate preferences and understand design decisions.

Practical Applications: A designer explaining the need for "layering" textures in a room can reference the client's experience with layering garments. A designer discussing "accessorizing" a space can reference the client's experience with jewelry and accessories. These parallels make abstract design concepts concrete and accessible.

6.3 MANAGING RISK AND COMMITMENT

The temporal and permanence distinctions identified in this analysis suggest strategies for managing the transition from fashion to spatial decisions. Clients comfortable with experimentation in fashion may nevertheless experience anxiety about spatial commitment. Designers can address this by creating opportunities for low-stakes spatial experimentation temporary installations, easily changeable elements, spaces for trial and adjustment.

Practical Applications: The use of temporary finishes, movable furniture, and staged installations can provide clients with opportunities to "try on" spatial solutions before committing. This approach mirrors the temporal flexibility of fashion while acknowledging the greater stakes of spatial decisions.

6.4 BEYOND VISUAL AESTHETICS

The distinction between aesthetic composition and spatial organization suggests that designers must look beyond clients' fashion sensibilities to assess their functional and organizational competencies. A client with impeccable fashion taste may nevertheless require guidance in spatial planning, circulation, and ergonomics. Conversely, a client whose fashion choices seem unremarkable may possess sophisticated understanding of spatial organization developed through other experiences.

Practical Applications: Designers should assess clients' functional as well as aesthetic competencies. Questions about how clients use their current spaces, how they organize their belongings, how they navigate their environments these inquiries reveal the functional intelligence that complements aesthetic sensitivity.

CONCLUSION

7.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This research has explored the profound psychological connections between personal fashion sense and spatial design preferences, revealing the deep interconnections between how individuals dress and how they inhabit. The concept of the "indelible signature" captures the fundamental insight that personal style manifests consistently across sartorial and spatial domains, reflecting a coherent aesthetic identity. The shared design lexicon principles of layering, color blocking, accessorizing, proportion, and scale operates identically in both contexts, governed by common perceptual and cognitive mechanisms. Trend migration reveals the circulation of aesthetic sensibilities between domains, responding to the human need for coherence across the sensory environment. Proportion and scale are fundamentally embodied, with skills in judging garment fit translating to skills in judging spatial arrangement. Sentimental curation the emotional attachment to meaningful objects operates identically whether curating a wardrobe or a home.

However, critical distinctions complicate direct translation between domains. Fashion's temporality and mutability differ fundamentally from spatial design's permanence and commitment. The functional demands of spatial design ergonomics, use patterns, circulation are more complex than those of fashion. Spatial planning requires organizational intelligence not necessarily developed through fashion experience. And the greater stakes of spatial decisions demand more deliberate planning than fashion's impulsive possibilities.

7.2 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This research contributes to several theoretical domains. To architectural psychology, it offers a framework for understanding how individuals' aesthetic identities manifest across different domains of self-expression. To fashion theory, it extends understanding of how sartorial choices connect to broader patterns of identity construction. To design practice, it provides insights into client understanding, communication strategies, and risk management.

7.3 PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

For architectural and interior design practitioners, this research suggests:

1. **Attend to Client Style:** Clients' fashion choices offer reliable insights into their aesthetic sensibilities, risk tolerance, and approach to self-expression.
2. **Employ Shared Lexicon:** Drawing parallels between dressing and designing facilitates communication and helps clients articulate preferences.
3. **Manage Risk Strategically:** Create opportunities for low-stakes spatial experimentation to bridge the gap between fashion's flexibility and spatial design's permanence.
4. **Assess Functional Competencies:** Look beyond aesthetic sensibility to understand clients' functional and organizational capabilities.
5. **Support Identity Expression:** Recognize that spatial design is not merely aesthetic but existential a fundamental domain of identity construction.

7.4 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has limitations that suggest directions for further investigation. The analysis is primarily conceptual; empirical research examining the actual relationship between individuals' fashion choices and spatial preferences would provide valuable validation. Cross-cultural research would explore how these relationships vary across cultural contexts with different fashion and spatial traditions. Longitudinal research would examine how changes in fashion sensibility relate to changes in spatial preferences over time. And research on individual differences would explore how factors such as personality, risk tolerance, and cognitive style moderate the relationships identified here.

7.5 FINAL REFLECTIONS

The sartorial self and the spatial self are not separate entities but expressions of a coherent identity seeking manifestation in all available mediums. The clothes we wear and the spaces we inhabit are

both, in profound ways, who we are. Understanding the psychological connections between these domains offers not merely theoretical insight but practical guidance for creating spaces that truly resonate with those who inhabit them. The architect and the designer, by attending to how clients dress, gain privileged access to how clients see themselves and thus to how they wish to see themselves reflected in the spaces they call home.

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REELS, RUNWAYS, AND ROOTS: SHORT-FORM VIDEO AS A TOOL FOR CULTURAL PRESERVATION

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ABSTRACT

The rapid rise of short-form video platforms has significantly transformed the landscape of fashion communication, enabling new modes of storytelling that are immediate, visual, and widely accessible. Within this evolving media ecology, Gen-Z creators are actively engaging with traditional fashion practices, using formats such as reels and short videos to reinterpret, document, and disseminate cultural heritage. This paper aims to examine how short-form video functions not only as a promotional tool but also as an emergent archive for preserving and reimagining indigenous textiles, craftsmanship, and sartorial traditions. Drawing on a qualitative analysis of curated digital content and creator-led narratives, the study explores how visual brevity, sound design, and algorithm-driven visibility shape the representation of tradition in contemporary fashion media. It aims to investigate the tension between authenticity and aestheticization, questioning whether these formats deepen cultural understanding or reduce heritage to consumable visual trends. At the same time, the paper aims to highlight the participatory nature of short-form media, where audiences become co-creators through engagement, remixing, and reinterpretation. The research for this paper writing further situates these practices within broader discussions of digital heritage, cultural sustainability, and media democratization. By positioning Gen-Z not merely as consumers but as active mediators of tradition, the paper argues that short-form video has the potential to bridge generational and geographical divides, making heritage both visible and relevant in a globalized digital context. Ultimately, this study contributes to the discourse on how contemporary media formats are reshaping the ways in which fashion traditions are communicated, preserved, and transformed.

Keywords: Short-form video, Gen-Z, cultural preservation, digital storytelling, heritage fashion, social media narratives

INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has transformed the fashion industry, particularly in how narratives are constructed and consumed. With the rise of short-form video platforms like Instagram Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts, fashion communication has shifted from static imagery to dynamic, immersive storytelling.

Generation Z (born 1997–2012) plays a pivotal role in this transformation. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z actively engages in content creation, making them not just consumers but cultural interpreters and distributors. In India, this phenomenon is particularly visible in the resurgence of traditional crafts such as Bandhani, Phulkari, and Chikankari through digital storytelling.

LITERATURE REVIEW

DIGITAL MEDIA AND FASHION COMMUNICATION

According to Kawamura (2020), fashion is a system of communication shaped by social and cultural contexts. Digital platforms have amplified this system, enabling rapid dissemination of trends. Rocamora (2017) highlights how social media transforms fashion into a participatory culture, while Abidin (2021) emphasizes the role of influencers in shaping cultural narratives.

GEN Z AND DIGITAL CULTURE

Gen Z's media consumption is characterized by short attention spans and preference for visual content (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). In India, Kaur & Singh (2022) note that Gen Z increasingly engages with heritage through digital platforms.

CULTURAL PRESERVATION IN DIGITAL SPACES

Digital heritage studies (UNESCO, 2020) argue that technology enables the preservation of intangible cultural assets. However, Banerjee (2021) warns about the commodification of culture in digital media.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the role of short-form video in promoting cultural fashion heritage
2. To examine Gen Z's engagement with traditional fashion content
3. To evaluate the balance between authenticity and aestheticization
4. To compare Indian and global Gen Z perspectives

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

A **mixed-method approach** was adopted:

- **Qualitative:** Content analysis of 100 short-form videos (India + global creators)
- **Quantitative:** Survey of 200 Gen Z respondents

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

Region	Respondents
India	120
International (USA, UK, Korea, etc.)	80

TOOLS USED

- Google Forms (survey)
- Visual content coding framework
- Thematic analysis

SURVEY FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

Table 1 : Platform Usage (Gen Z)

Platform	India (%)	Global (%)
Instagram Reels	85%	78%
TikTok	40%	88%
YouTube Shorts	65%	70%

Table 2 : Engagement with Cultural Content

Response	India (%)	Global (%)
Frequently engage	62%	48%
Occasionally	28%	35%
Rarely	10%	17%

Insight:

Indian Gen Z shows higher engagement with cultural fashion content, indicating stronger cultural proximity.

Table 3 : Perception of Authenticity Opinion

Perception of Authenticity Opinion	India (%)	Global (%)
Authentic representation	54%	42%
Overly aestheticized	32%	40%
Unsure	14%	18%

Table 4 : Role of Creators

Role	India (%)	Global (%)
Cultural Educators	48%	35%
Trend Influencers	30%	42%
Entertainers	22%	23%

DISCUSSION

SHORT-FORM VIDEO AS CULTURAL ARCHIVE

Short-form videos act as **micro-archives**, preserving crafts such as:

- Handloom weaving
- Embroidery traditions
- Regional dressing styles Unlike traditional archives, these are:
- Dynamic
- Interactive
- Algorithm-driven

DEMOCRATIZATION OF FASHION NARRATIVES

Digital platforms allow marginalized voices—artisans, rural creators—to participate in global conversations. This aligns with *Jenkins' (2006)* concept of participatory culture.

AUTHENTICITY VS AESTHETICIZATION

A key tension emerges:

- **Authenticity:** Educational storytelling, process videos
- **Aestheticization:** Glamourized, trend-driven visuals

This reflects what Appadurai (1996) describes as the **global cultural flow**, where local traditions are adapted for global audiences.

ROLE OF ALGORITHMS

Algorithms influence visibility, often prioritizing:

- Visually appealing content
- Trending formats This may lead to:
- Oversimplification of heritage
- Loss of deeper cultural context

2. Case Examples (Suggested Visual Content)

Figure 3: Content Categories in Short-Form Videos

- Tutorial-based (30%)
- Transformation videos (25%)
- Storytelling (20%)
- Promotional (25%)

3. Implications

3.1 For Fashion Communication

- Encourages **visual storytelling pedagogy**
- Integrates heritage into modern narratives

3.2 For Cultural Sustainability

- Promotes awareness of traditional crafts
- Supports artisan communities

3.3 For Academia

- Opens new research areas in **digital heritage and media studies**

CONCLUSION

Short-form video platforms have emerged as powerful tools for cultural preservation, particularly within the fashion domain. Gen Z plays a transformative role in this ecosystem, acting as both creators and curators of cultural narratives. While these platforms enhance visibility and accessibility, they also introduce challenges related to authenticity and commodification. The study concludes that short-form video is not merely a trend but a significant cultural medium shaping the future of fashion communication.

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DIVINITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: AI, GEN-Z CREATIVITY AND THE RE-VISUALIZATION OF SACRED ICONOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

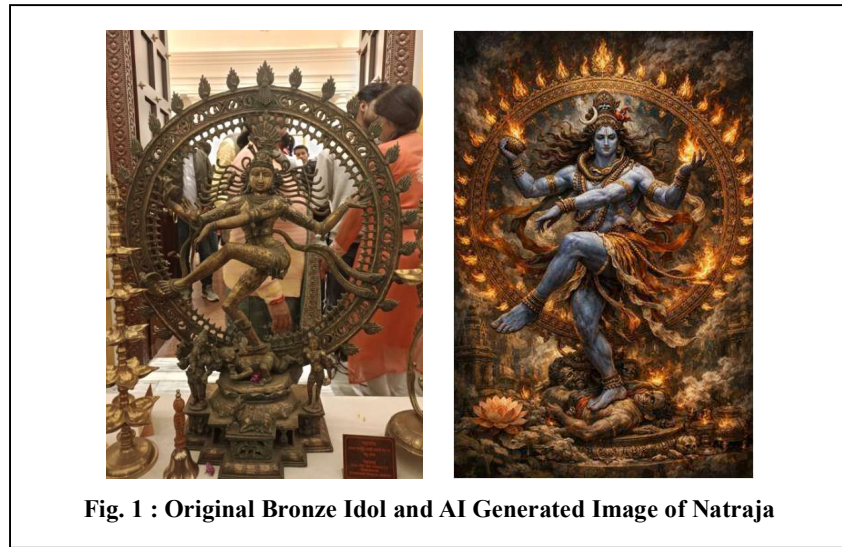
This portrayal of divinity is beginning to undergo a new phase and digital technologies are having an impact on, and playing with, the way sacred forms are created, interpreted and experienced by people. This paper looks at the possibilities of divinity in the digital horizon, in dialogue with artificial intelligence (AI) and the re-visualization of the Hindu sacred iconography, in the context of Generation Z. The iconography is generally understood from the principles and rules laid out in Shilpa Shastra in which iconic proportions, symbolic elements, asanas (postures) and mudras (gestures) have to be taken and adhered to precisely which ensure the divinity in each and every iconographic representation be spiritually deep, metaphysically filled and sacred at the same time. The symbols of the Hindu tradition have evolved over a number of centuries and varying geographical and historical contexts, affected by the artistic traditions, patrons and devotional practices of each time. The modern-day digital era, AI technologies are challenging this tradition, presenting new understandings of the sacred imagery, incorporation of classic structures and contemporary aesthetic sensibilities. These tools are powerfully used by Gen-Z creators to reimagine the divine image, notably in fashion design and culture. Sacred images and symbols become wearable, on-screen and interactive experiences. All these developments, however, cast doubt on both the authenticity and cultural sensitivity and on the survival of the image and dignity of the divine. The study demonstrates how AI serves as a creative catalyst and synchronizer of culturally distinct conceptions resulting in a visually arresting, full of colour and flamboyant representation, but only if it adheres to the principles of shilpa shastra; otherwise it is dosh-yukt (imperfect or flawed). Additionally, one can notice how important it is to have a balanced and ethical approach when reinterpreting sacred iconography. The terms Shilpa Shastra, Hindu Iconography, Sacred Visual Culture, Digital Re-visualization, Fashion and Sacred Motifs, Dosh-Yukta Iconography are used in the paper.

Keywords: Shilpa Shastra, Hindu Iconography, Digital Re-visualization, Fashion and Sacred Motifs.

INTRODUCTION

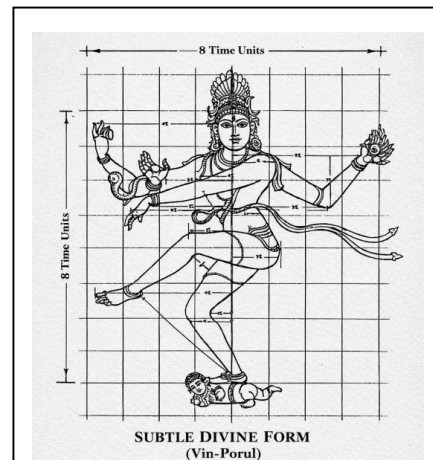
In the history of art, the pictorial treatment of gods and goddesses, as well as their meaning, has been regulated by a formal, aesthetic, philosophical and ritual framework. These imageries serve as a vehicle of communication of the metaphysical kind, They embody the theological dimensions, and help effect the devotional engagement (Dehejia, 1997). Sacred images are not simply objects to be viewed but are agents who act in religious practices, which relate the devotee and the divine. These are normally created by highly specialized craftsman, working in accordance with a set of authoritative texts such as Shilpa Shastra, and transmitted through the artisan heritage (Ghosh, 1956). The making process was steeped in ritual elements, observing strict proportional (tala mana system), correct symbolic attributes, aesthetic considerations, spiritual considerations and metaphysical meanings. But the explosion of digital technologies has revolutionized this process of

creating sacred images, how they are circulated, and explained. As a result, divine imagery is now found throughout digital spaces – created and generated by algorithms and global visual culture. It is especially notable when discussing Generation Z, as they are a people who engage with digital media both as a consumer and as a creator of these media. It is a renegotiation and reclaiming of the sacred connotations of the image which reflects a change in the cultural landscape that is a product of the more active integration and reinterpretation of cultural traditions. The arguments in this essay suggest that the visual images of gods and goddesses that are omnipresent in this modern world are typically attractively displayed and exuberant; but they are not strictly regulated by traditional iconographic systems and therefore tend to be aesthetically endowed but conceptually and symbolically deficient.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework includes Shilpa Shastra and sacred aesthetics. It is followed by a theoretical framework that also incorporates Shilpa Shastra and Sacred Aesthetics. This framework, the fundamental basis, for understanding sacred iconography in Indian tradition comes from the Shilpa Shastra in the form of deities' iconography (Ghosh, 1956). They provide detailed rules of proportion (tala-mana), posture (asana), gestures (mudra) and symbolic props (ayudha) which should be employed in the portrayal of deities that is consistent with cosmological and philosophical considerations (Rao, 1914). The sacred image has numerous levels of symbolic significance. Multiply Limbs refers to the transcendental power and the gestures convey protection, blessing, knowledge, etc. etc. Together, they create a system of visual syntax and representing ideas of the metaphysical. The Indian aesthetic theory complement this and theory of rasa, which conveys emotional and spiritual perceptions. The messages of the sacred images are meant to invoke devotion (bhakti) and tranquility (shanta) for the viewer, and instill a transformative encounter between the viewer and the divine (Coomaraswamy, 1956). The concepts of the standard types, if not followed, interfere with the symbolic coherence, thus the importance of traditional values to iconographic integrity. The icon is a living picture that continuously evolves throughout its existence.



HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

Throughout the history of the world, the same basic symbolism has undergone transformations in its iconographical characteristics. Early temple building traditions were focused on idealized and symmetrical forms conceived on a basis of philosophical ideas of cosmic order (Michell, 1988). In the medieval era, regional styles added to this, bringing some dynamics and complexity of storytelling. The Chola bronzes are examples of refinement in movement, while the miniature painting traditions, e.g. Pahadi, Rajasthani use Islamic art methods but are very focused on the narrative and emotion, which is predominantly Hindu, (Dehejia, 1997). The coming of print means the shift to the colonial period, and period calendar art helped to democratize access to images of the divine. Raja Ravi Varma was to popularize this, by using the oleographic printing techniques in his work to depict mythological scenes in broad reach and accessibility. Often there were elements of western realism built into these reproductions, creating hybrid visual forms (Dwyer, 2022). At this point the foundations were also laid for the modern dissemination of sacred imagery, geographical and ritual borders irrelevant.

AI AND DIGITAL RE-VISUALISATION.

AI is an important paradigm change in visual production. Digital systems can generate images based on a set of enormous data, to produce an image rich in visual complexity in short time. These technologies enable reinterpretations and use of a style, creating images of visual elaboration and engagement with the audience. They are part of an on-going shift in the digital religious culture (Herbert, 2021). In such systems, however, there is no cultural/symbolic understanding. They are able to create visual patterns but they lack involvement with the philosophical depth in traditional iconography. This results in its images being visually convincing, but with poor conceptual and symbolic precision. This is where the answer may lie.



Fig. 3 : Stone Sculpture and AI Generated Image of Devi Durga

CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES AND GEN-Z

This is where creativity and contemporary practices may come in. Generation Z becomes an integral part in this redefining of sacred visual culture from a digital engagement. They are digital natives, and re-imagine older imagery with design tools and social media. Sacred elements are now being used sparingly in digital art forms, visual narratives, and fashion, signifying an effort to shift towards context of participatory creation. By incorporating the sacred image into a more ordinary way in which images are fed, new ways of cultural expression can occur, while simultaneously more common imagery of sacred images can become new street images. This will make the text more accessible but simultaneously presents problems of disembodiment of images from their symbolic and ritual frames of meaning.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research is interpretive and qualitative, based on the art history and visual culture. A theoretical base is established from textual analysis of classical sources like the Shilpa Shastra (Ghosh, 1956) and visual analysis is based on comparing the traditional and contemporary representations. Contextual analysis also explores the reinterpretation of the images that are sacred in digital cultures and other media. In such a manner one can develop an understanding of issues

about authenticity, symbolism and transformation of culture. Festival Iconography and Fashion Appropriation.

CASE STUDY: FESTIVAL ICONS AND FASHION MOTIFS

The transformation of the sacred iconography is evident in the practices done today, e.g. Durga Puja and Ganesh Chaturthi. In such cases, a traditional representation may be stylized, humanized and re-imagined to be visually striking. In the idols made to Lord Durga and placed in the Pandal, idols from traditional form are seen whereas Ganesh idols come with a form, which is not

traditional but in a way based on a theme. The changes are indicative of a new representation and a greater focus on spectacle and innovation. The same pattern relates to fashion in that there are sacred designs that serve as decorative motifs and are removed from the context of sacredness. Actions like this can lord and command over sacred pictures or mutilate their values. The two examples show that the modern images are powerful, but are in conflict with the rules of the iconographic tradition, and that is why we have beautiful images with less of an iconographic character.

The conversion of sacred images into symbols of representation does call into question matters of authenticity and representational ethics. Contemporary iconography seldom fits into the cultural and ritual contexts as do the traditional ideas presented here. Excessively emphasis placed on the visuals may result in representation without symbolic connections and making the sacred image an aesthetic object. Such a change may tarnish honour and gravity that has come to be attached to representation. Cultural traditions are in a dynamic and evolving manner. The issue is to strike an equilibrium between innovation and the respect of symbolic and cultural importance.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The results suggest that modern interpretations of sacred iconography serve to preserve and propagate iconography while also reinterpreting them. Also many representations retain recognizable visual characteristics; they will often, however make stylistic innovations in tune with contemporary taste. But a very important conclusion is drawn: Many modern art works employ images more to catch the eye of the spectator than to evoke the response of an iconographic understanding. Their size, proportions, attributes and compositions are frequently not accurate, and can sometimes



Fig. 4 : AI Generated Images of Devi Durga and Lord Hanuman



Fig. 5 : AI Generated Image of Lord Shiva and Krishna

appear confused and disjointed, leading to depictions that are incomplete to traditional standards. Furthermore, often they don't follow the rules of Shilpa Shastra and Shadang rule (6 rules of Indian Painting) and represent what can be defined as chitradosh - exaggerated humanness features (swollen cheeks, bulging eyes); change of / disappearance of limbs, clear / unclear but missing attributes, fragmented anatomy. The images might also highlight a mood that is more negative, such as dukha(despair) or anguish than the concept of divinity, showing deities with odd features and feelings of distress. As Harsha Dehejia explained, the ensuing images of the gods decenter the deity from a super conscious, sublime being to one that is above from desire and limitations. This is part of a general trend towards image oriented production it has the symbolic meaning more and more submerged in the image spectacle.

CONCLUSION

As the sacred flows into the digital realm, the process of re-visualization of “iconography” continues in a traditional vein, blending tradition and innovation. Modern practices have opened up new opportunities for access and freedoms for expression, allowing new ways of interacting with the sacred image, especially for Generation Z (Gen-Z) consumers, who consume and reinterpret visual culture in the digital age. In fact, many of the modern depictions are visually pleasing and elaborate, but don't follow the conventions of iconography. In the absence of the knowledge of the attributes, proportion and symbolism, the image appears vibrant, showy, kitschy and attractive, but also void of any content and lacks any dharma (perfection). To a layman, these may appear to be minor, but an existing iconographic teacher or guru can easily spot or identify such dosh (mistakes). The lack of skills and understanding of religious practice and culture is compounded by a lack of information (especially in digital contexts that are driven by trends and viewings rather than scriptural and iconographic accuracy) especially within ‘next generation’ digital spaces of Gen Z. This research highlights the importance of interpretations of the sacred images and images themselves that are culturally sensitive and ethically responsible. The future of sacred iconography will rely on the delicate balance between technological development and the necessity of preserving its symbolic depth and spiritual integrity, as Gen-Z welds its own imprint on the overall visual scene.

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF CLOTHING ON IDENTITY AND SELF-IMAGE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Clothing has evolved beyond its basic functional purpose and now plays an important role in shaping identity, confidence, and social interaction. This study explores the psychological influence of clothing on self-perception and social identity, particularly among contemporary youth and Gen-Z. Drawing on the concept of enclothed cognition, the paper examines how clothing affects emotions, behaviour, confidence, and cognitive responses. Fashion is discussed as a medium of self-expression through which individuals communicate personality, values, and social belonging. The research also analyses the influence of social media and visual culture in shaping aesthetic standards and self-image. While clothing can enhance confidence and create a sense of empowerment, it can also contribute to self-comparison, insecurity, and body image concerns. Through a qualitative and theoretical approach, this study investigates how clothing choices are influenced by peer pressure, media exposure, and individual psychological experiences.

The findings suggest that clothing functions both as a tool of empowerment and as a social regulator within modern society. The paper highlights the importance of understanding fashion not merely as appearance or trend, but as a psychological, cultural, and social phenomenon that significantly impacts identity formation and emotional well-being.

Keywords: Clothing Psychology, Identity, Self-Image, Fashion, Enclothed Cognition, Body Image, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Clothing is one of the most visible and immediate forms of self-expression in human society. Beyond its practical role of protection and comfort, clothing carries psychological, social, and cultural meanings that influence both the wearer and the observer. Every individual makes daily choices regarding what to wear, and these choices are often shaped by mood, personality, social environment, cultural expectations, and personal identity. In contemporary society, fashion has become deeply connected with self-image and social perception, making clothing an important psychological medium.

The way individuals dress influences how they are perceived by others and also affects how they perceive themselves. Clothing communicates messages related to confidence, social status, lifestyle, personality, and group belonging. In many situations, people use clothing strategically to create desired impressions, express individuality, or fit into specific social groups. This relationship between clothing and identity has become especially significant among contemporary youth and Gen-Z, who are highly influenced by digital culture, social media trends, and visual representation.

The concept of enclothed cognition, introduced by Adam and Galinsky (2012), provides a psychological explanation for the impact of clothing on thoughts, emotions, and behaviour. Their research demonstrated that clothing associated with particular meanings, such as a doctor's white coat, can influence attention, confidence, and cognitive performance. This theory suggests that

clothing does not simply change outward appearance; it also affects internal psychological states and behavioural responses.

Social media platforms have further intensified the relationship between clothing and identity. Online platforms constantly expose individuals to fashion trends, beauty standards, and idealized lifestyles, creating pressure to maintain a socially acceptable appearance. While fashion can empower individuals and boost confidence, it can also contribute to body dissatisfaction, comparison, and insecurity. Many individuals use clothing to hide perceived flaws or seek social validation, while others use fashion as a form of creative self-expression and emotional comfort.

This research paper aims to explore the psychological impact of clothing on self-perception and social identity. The study focuses on understanding how clothing influences confidence, emotions, identity formation, and social interaction. It also examines the role of social media, peer influence, and body image in shaping clothing choices. By analysing theoretical perspectives and qualitative insights, the paper seeks to understand how fashion functions as both an empowering tool and a social influence in modern society.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CLOTHING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPRESSION

Clothing has long been associated with personal identity and social communication. Earlier sociological studies viewed clothing mainly as a symbol of culture, class, and status. However, modern psychological research suggests that clothing also influences emotions, self-perception, and behaviour. Fashion allows individuals to express personality, beliefs, mood, and social identity without verbal communication.

Researchers have argued that clothing plays a central role in impression management. Individuals often select clothing depending on the social environment they are entering, such as workplaces, educational institutions, social gatherings, or online spaces. Through fashion, people attempt to create an image that aligns with how they want to be perceived by others.

ENCLOTHED COGNITION

The theory of enclothed cognition proposed by Adam and Galinsky (2012) became one of the most influential concepts in clothing psychology. Their study revealed that participants wearing a white coat associated with doctors showed improved attention and performance compared to those who did not wear the coat or associated it with a different profession. The research highlighted that clothing carries symbolic meaning capable of influencing mental processes.

Further studies expanded this idea by examining different clothing styles and their psychological effects. Formal clothing has been associated with increased confidence, authority, and abstract thinking, while casual clothing is often connected with relaxation and comfort. Athletic wear has been linked with higher motivation for physical activity and improved self-efficacy. These studies demonstrate that clothing affects both emotional and behavioural experiences.

CLOTHING, BODY IMAGE, AND SELF-ESTEEM

Body image plays a major role in clothing choices and self-perception. Individuals with positive body image often use clothing to express confidence and individuality, while those experiencing body dissatisfaction may choose clothing primarily for concealment and protection from judgment. Research has shown that revealing clothing can sometimes increase self-consciousness and body anxiety, particularly among individuals exposed to unrealistic beauty standards.

Self-esteem is also closely connected to clothing behaviour. Wearing clothes perceived as attractive,



Fig. 1 : Self- esteem and Clothing

fashionable, or socially acceptable can temporarily enhance confidence and improve social interaction. Many individuals report feeling more capable, attractive, or socially accepted when wearing clothing that aligns with their ideal self-image.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND FASHION CULTURE

The rise of social media has transformed fashion into a highly visual and performance-based experience. Platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok constantly expose users to fashion trends, influencers, and curated lifestyles. This exposure has increased awareness of appearance and intensified social comparison among young people.

Research indicates that social media can positively influence creativity and self-expression through fashion inspiration. However, it can also contribute to unrealistic beauty expectations, low self-esteem, and body dissatisfaction. Many individuals experience pressure to dress according to trends in order to gain social acceptance and validation online.

CLOTHING AND YOUTH IDENTITY

Adolescence and young adulthood are critical stages for identity development. During these periods, clothing often becomes a major tool for experimentation and self-discovery. Young people use fashion to explore different identities, social groups, and lifestyles. Peer approval strongly influences clothing choices during this stage, making fashion an important factor in social belonging.

At the same time, youth fashion culture reflects the tension between individuality and conformity. While many individuals seek uniqueness through style, they also fear social rejection for appearing different. This creates a complex relationship between clothing, identity, and peer pressure.



Fig. 2 : Dressing Sense of Gen-z

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the psychological relationship between clothing and self-perception.
2. To analyse how clothing influences confidence, emotions, and identity formation.
3. To study the impact of social media and peer influence on clothing choices.
4. To understand the role of body image in shaping fashion behaviour.
5. To explore clothing as a medium of self-expression and social communication.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative and theoretical approach to examine the psychological influence of clothing on identity and self-image. Secondary data has been collected from books, journal articles, research papers, and online academic sources related to clothing psychology, body image, fashion studies, and unclothed cognition.

The study also incorporates qualitative insights gathered through informal discussions and observations regarding clothing behaviour among contemporary youth and adults. The collected information was analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns related to confidence, self-expression, emotional experiences, and social influence.

The research focuses primarily on contemporary youth and Gen-Z because of their strong engagement with social media, fashion culture, and digital identity formation. The study analyses how psychological experiences connected with clothing differ across social situations and personal perceptions.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

CLOTHING AS A FORM OF IDENTITY

The analysis reveals that clothing serves as a major tool for identity expression. Participants and existing literature consistently suggest that fashion allows individuals to communicate personality, interests, values, and emotional states. Many individuals reported feeling more authentic and confident when wearing clothing that reflected their personal style.

Clothing also functions as a social identifier. Specific styles, brands, and aesthetics are often associated with certain communities, lifestyles, or cultural groups. Through clothing, individuals create a sense of belonging and social recognition.

CLOTHING AND CONFIDENCE

One of the strongest findings of this study is the relationship between clothing and confidence. Participants reported feeling more attractive, motivated, and socially comfortable when wearing clothes they personally liked or considered fashionable. Formal and well-fitted clothing was often associated with professionalism and authority, while comfortable clothing was linked with emotional security.

This finding supports the theory of enclothed cognition, which explains how clothing can psychologically influence behaviour and performance. Clothing affects not only appearance but also the mindset and emotions of the wearer.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE

The study found that social media plays a significant role in shaping clothing preferences and self-image. Young individuals are highly influenced by online trends, influencers, celebrities, and digital aesthetics. Many participants admitted comparing their appearance and style with people they follow online.

While social media can inspire creativity and fashion awareness, it also creates pressure to maintain a certain appearance. This often leads to self-comparison, fear of judgment, and dissatisfaction with body image. Fashion trends promoted online sometimes encourage conformity rather than individuality.

BODY IMAGE AND EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Body image emerged as a central factor influencing clothing behaviour. Individuals with positive body image often used clothing as a form of empowerment and self-expression. In contrast, participants experiencing insecurity or body dissatisfaction frequently chose oversized or concealing clothing to avoid attention.

Many participants described clothing as emotionally connected to mood and self-worth. Certain outfits were associated with happiness, confidence, comfort, or safety. This demonstrates that clothing has emotional as well as social significance.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS SOCIAL PRESSURE

The research highlights an ongoing conflict between individuality and social acceptance. While many individuals wish to express uniqueness through fashion, they also feel pressure to conform to trends and social expectations. Peer groups, online culture, and beauty standards strongly influence clothing choices, especially among teenagers and young adults.

This tension shows that clothing operates both as a medium of freedom and as a mechanism of social regulation.



Fig. 3 : Reflection of Personality through clothing

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited by its reliance on qualitative and theoretical analysis rather than large-scale empirical investigation. The sample observations primarily reflect urban youth experiences and may not fully represent rural or culturally diverse populations.

Another limitation is the influence of subjective interpretation in understanding emotional experiences related to clothing. Since fashion and identity are deeply personal and culturally influenced, individual experiences may vary significantly. The study also focuses mainly on contemporary youth and Gen-Z, limiting broader generational comparison.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future studies should include larger and more diverse participant groups to better understand cultural and social differences in clothing psychology. Cross-cultural research could provide deeper insights into how clothing meanings vary across societies.

Researchers should also examine the long-term psychological effects of social media-driven fashion culture on self-esteem and body image. More studies focusing on gender identity, digital fashion, and virtual self-presentation would further expand the field. Educational institutions and mental health programs can incorporate discussions about body positivity, self-expression, and healthy fashion behaviour to reduce appearance-based pressure among youth.

CONCLUSION

Clothing plays a powerful role in shaping identity, self-image, emotions, and social interaction in contemporary society. The findings of this research demonstrate that fashion is not merely about appearance or trend but is deeply connected with psychological and emotional experiences. Clothing influences how individuals feel about themselves, how they present themselves socially, and how they are perceived by others. The study confirms that clothing functions as a medium of self-expression, confidence-building, and identity formation. At the same time, social media and modern beauty standards have intensified the pressure to maintain idealized appearances, often contributing to self-comparison and body dissatisfaction.

The concept of enlothed cognition further supports the idea that clothing can directly influence behaviour, confidence, and mental performance. Individuals often experience emotional and psychological changes depending on the symbolic meaning and personal significance of the clothing they wear. Overall, this research highlights that clothing acts both as an empowering force and as a social regulator within modern visual culture. Understanding the psychological significance of fashion is important for promoting healthier self-image, authentic self-expression, and emotional well-being in contemporary society.

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WEARING THE ARTWORK: THE TRANSFORMATION OF COUTURE INTO PERFORMATIVE AND EXPERIENTIAL ART IN THE GEN-Z ERA

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the changing intersection of haute couture and fine art and how current fashion has gone beyond purpose to become a performance and experiential art form. In the Gen-Z period, haute couture is no longer just the stuff of catwalks; it is a kinetic art form in which personal story, and artistic and aesthetic expression are embodied and performed. The research asks how clothing is a living artwork, animated by and audience and the body in motion.

Integrating interdisciplinary views from the genres of fashion theory performance studies and visual culture the research studies the way in which designers more and more treat couture as an art form. Runway shows are reimagined as full-blown immersive experiences, frequently akin to installations or theatrical productions that involve the audience in a more active way. Via digital media especially social media these performative dimensions are intensified enabling Generation Z viewers to reappropriate and share fashion as visual art.

The study also acknowledges the wearer as the subject and the co-creator, turning the body into a field of aesthetic negotiation in which the boundary lines of the creator, the object and the spectator are blurred. Through erasing the boundaries between fashion and fine art couture disrupts conventional aesthetic rankings and calls for alternative interactions.

In the end the paper contends that modern couture is a participatory art and that it is the Gen Z liking for self-expression visual storytelling and experiential consumption that is remaking the cultural and artistic relevance of fashion in the 21st century.

Keywords : Haute Couture, Performative Fashion, Experiential Art, Gen-Z Aesthetics, Fashion as Art, Visual Storytelling, Body as Medium

INTRODUCTION

Tradition has it that clothing is where function beauty and social differentiation come together. Historically, apparel has been functional and indicative of the cultural and social organization. Nevertheless, in modern times, couture has experienced a major change. No longer confined to wearable attire it has developed into a form of art that interacts with performance, experience, and storytelling.

Generation Z has only sped up this change. Having grown up in a world saturated with visual and digital content Generation Z sees fashion not just as fashion but as a means of personal and creative expression. Services like Instagram have transformed the way fashion is experienced moving from a commodity of ownership to a visual and symbolic experience.

Wearing the art is the embodiment of this change. High fashion pieces have moved from being static to being dynamic components of art creation. Through interaction with the human body, surroundings, and audience a seamless integration is created blurring the lines between fashion and

fine art. The study investigates the transformation of couture into a performative and experiential art and its consequences in current visual art discourse.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The conceptual basis of this research draws is interdisciplinary in nature drawing from fashion theory, sociology and art criticism.

For Roland Barthes (1990), fashion is a semiotic system, a system of signs whereby the signs of clothing transmit messages within a cultural code. It considers couture a form of self and creative expression. Walter Benjamin (1968) talks about the "aura" of art, emphasizing the uniqueness and authenticity of works of art.

Within Haute Couture, this essence is maintained by the artistry of construction the rarity of the piece and the physicality of the act of being dressed in it. Erving Goffman (1959) delves into the concept of self-presentation theorizing that people act out or perform their social selves in different situations.

According to Judith Butler (1990), identity is formed through continuous performative behavior. Fashion then serves as a vehicle for the performance and negotiation of identity. Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) offers the concept of relational aesthetics, focusing on the importance of interaction and involvement in art. Modern high fashion embodies this idea by drawing in viewers with interactive and sensory shows.

Fashion and art are becoming ever more intertwined as Caroline Evans (2003) points out contemporary designers are gradually treating fashion as a conceptual and artistic discipline.

OBJECTIVE

1. Studying couture as performative art
2. Investigating the body as a medium in fashion
3. Delving into the sensory experience of modern couture
4. Assessing Gen-Z's impact on fashion as visual art
5. Researching the crossover of digital media and couture

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is qualitative as it is constructed from secondary data, with the sources of Arts and Fashion theory, exhibition and digital media. For the analysis case study approach is used with specific reference to designers such as Alexander McQueen, Iris van Herpen and Rei Kawakubo. Visual analysis is employed for the interpretation of fashion runway presentation, fashion installation and digital presentation representing the comprehensive visual and experiential nature of couture.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

COUTURE AS PERFORMATIVE ART

Contemporary couture events merge the concept of a catwalk and a theatre show. Throughout these shows, designers take the audience on a journey with the piece and incorporate all the senses (sights, sounds, and movement). Instead of a one-way presentation of a collection to the audience, the presentation becomes a performance in which the models are the performers of the curated story. The message and emotion of the product are developed through the movement and the environment. The audience is



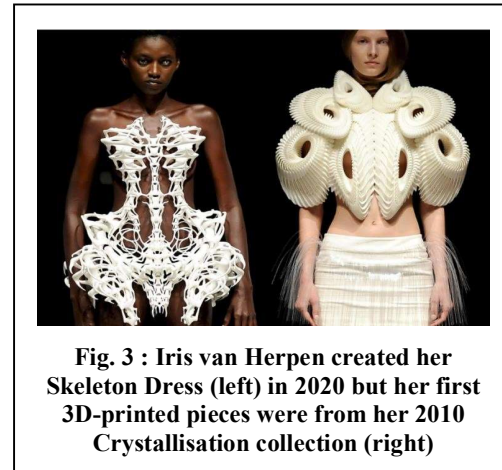
**Fig. 1 : Shalom Harlow,
Alexander McQueen
Spring 1999**

**Photo: Courtesy of
Alexander McQueen**

included in the story and the interaction of the audience and the performance creates the meaning of the show.

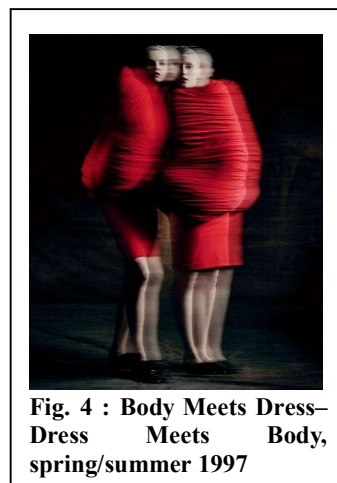
Alexander McQueen is credited with leading this practice. His catwalk presentations were frequently of theatric and performative in nature, turning the presentation of the clothing into an emotional and participatory event. The clothing was not just a thing to be worn but a thing to be performed and given new meaning through it. The performative aspect is in keeping with the larger movements in contemporary art, where performance and act are now part of the fabric of art. Couture is thus a fleeting and performative medium of art existing in the moment of the performance.

COUTURE AS EXPERIENTIAL ART



Besides performance couture is becoming more and more experiential. Designers design immersive worlds in which the audience is invited to experience fashion on a multitude of sensory levels. Iris van Herpen is a prime example of how this does work through her ground-breaking use of technology and materials. Her collections typically involve the use of 3D printing and kinetic elements that essentially produce garments which are sculptures in movement. These works are challenging the traditional purpose of fashion by placing the experience over the functionality. In addition, experiential couture also involves the presentation of the garments themselves. Some of the most recent fashion exhibitions have started to employ the museum/exhibition space as a sculptural exhibition space, with the garments displayed as works of art.

BODY AS CANVAS



Converting couture into art is fundamentally connected to the function of the body. Clothes only have significance in conjunction with the human body, so the body becomes a part of the piece of art. Rei Kawakubo twists the accepted paradigms of the body with her boldly experimental clothing. Changing the shapes and contours of the body she turns the body into a place of artistic experimentation. We view this as a very collaborative view of fashion. The person who wears the clothing does not have to be a passive receiver of the art but an active creator of the meaning. The body is a surface for the performance of art.

DISCUSSION

Merging of fashion and art signals a general move in culture for interdisciplinary approaches. Turned into a form of performative and experiential art, haute couture breaks down old boundaries that kept fashion and high art apart. This is also a way to make fashion more available to the masses using the internet. On the other hand, it raises issues of truth, commercialization, and the purpose of spectacle in art.

LIMITATIONS

- The research is mainly based on already existing data, which reduces interaction with the creators and viewers of fashion as art.
- Art is a subjective medium and therefore all the interpretations of what art is are also subjective.
- Digital culture is a fast-changing field which might make the results of the research obsolete in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Upcoming investigations might include first hand data collection via interviews and on location observations.
- Investigation of digital fashion and AI produced fashion.
- Cross cultural comparative studies.
- Application of psychological theory especially in the realm of identity and individualism.

CONCLUSION

Couture in the Gen-Z era marks a radical departure from previous relationship of the clothes with art. Thanks to the performative, experiential and digital aspects couture moves away from being simply clothing and becomes a living art. The statement “wearing the artwork” exemplifies the continuous interaction between the body, the self and the artistic expression. Couture is no longer associated only with the fashion show, it is part of a bigger cultural context which includes digital media, performance and audience participation. As fashion develops, it is expected to take an even more central role in the development of contemporary visual culture. The conversion of couture in performative and experiential art is just a reflection of the general change in the way art is defined and experienced in the 21st century.

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CULTURAL BRANDING OF RESORTS THROUGH INDIGENOUS TEXTILES AND COUTURE AESTHETICS

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary hospitality industry, cultural branding has emerged as an important strategy for creating unique and memorable guest experiences. Resorts are increasingly integrating indigenous textiles, traditional crafts, and couture-inspired aesthetics into their visual identity and spatial design to establish authenticity and cultural connection. This research paper explores how indigenous textiles and fashion aesthetics contribute to resort branding, identity creation, and experiential tourism within the context of contemporary visual culture and Gen-Z sensibilities.

The study examines the role of traditional textile practices, handcrafted motifs, embroidery techniques, and regional design elements in shaping the visual language of resorts. It also analyses how couture aesthetics inspired by heritage fashion enhance luxury branding while preserving cultural narratives. The paper discusses the growing interest among younger generations in sustainable fashion, local craftsmanship, and culturally immersive experiences, which has encouraged hospitality brands to incorporate indigenous design into architecture, interiors, uniforms, and promotional campaigns.

Using a qualitative and theoretical approach, the research investigates the relationship between fashion, cultural heritage, and hospitality branding. The study highlights how indigenous textiles function not only as decorative elements but also as carriers of identity, memory, and cultural storytelling. The findings suggest that integrating traditional textile aesthetics into resort branding creates emotional engagement, strengthens cultural representation, and promotes sustainable creative industries.

The paper concludes that cultural branding through indigenous textiles and couture aesthetics provides resorts with a distinctive identity while simultaneously supporting heritage preservation and contemporary design innovation. It emphasizes the importance of reimagining traditional art forms through modern hospitality and fashion practices in order to create meaningful and culturally rooted experiences.

Keywords: Cultural Branding, Indigenous Textiles, Couture Aesthetics, Resort Identity, Hospitality Design, Fashion Culture, Heritage Craft, Sustainable Tourism

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the hospitality industry has undergone a major transformation in the way resorts and luxury spaces present themselves to visitors. Modern travellers, especially Gen-Z and younger audiences, increasingly seek experiences that are visually engaging, culturally meaningful, and emotionally memorable. As a result, cultural branding has become an essential strategy for resorts aiming to create a distinctive identity within a highly competitive tourism industry. Rather than relying solely on luxury and comfort, resorts are now incorporating local traditions, heritage crafts, indigenous textiles, and couture-inspired aesthetics into their branding and design language.

Indigenous textiles hold deep cultural significance as they represent the traditions, craftsmanship, identity, and history of specific communities. Techniques such as weaving, embroidery, block

printing, dyeing, and handloom production have been passed down through generations and continue to function as important cultural symbols. When integrated into resort spaces, these textiles contribute to a sense of authenticity and cultural immersion. Textile-based aesthetics are increasingly visible in resort interiors, décor, staff uniforms, visual merchandising, and branding campaigns, creating an atmosphere that connects guests with regional heritage and craftsmanship.

At the same time, couture aesthetics inspired by traditional fashion and handcrafted luxury have become influential in hospitality design. Couture is no longer limited to the fashion runway; its principles of exclusivity, craftsmanship, detail, and storytelling are now reflected in architecture, interior styling, and hospitality experiences. Resorts often reinterpret indigenous textile traditions through contemporary design approaches in order to appeal to modern consumers while preserving cultural identity.

The growing influence of social media and visual culture has further strengthened the relationship between hospitality branding and fashion aesthetics. Platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest encourage visually curated travel experiences, making aesthetic presentation a major aspect of tourism culture. Gen-Z consumers are particularly drawn toward spaces that combine luxury with authenticity, sustainability, and cultural depth. Consequently, resorts are using indigenous textiles and couture-inspired design not only for decoration but also as tools for storytelling, branding, and emotional engagement.

This research paper explores how indigenous textiles and couture aesthetics contribute to cultural branding within the hospitality industry. The study focuses on understanding the relationship between traditional craftsmanship, fashion-inspired design, and resort identity. It also examines how cultural aesthetics influence guest perception, tourism experience, and contemporary branding practices. Through a qualitative and theoretical analysis, the paper aims to highlight the importance of preserving indigenous heritage while reimagining it through modern hospitality and design practices.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CULTURAL BRANDING AND HOSPITALITY

Cultural branding refers to the process of creating identity through cultural symbols, traditions, narratives, and aesthetics. In the hospitality industry, branding has expanded beyond logos and advertisements to include immersive visual and sensory experiences. Resorts increasingly use regional culture, traditional art, and local craftsmanship to differentiate themselves from standardized luxury spaces.

Researchers argue that culturally rooted branding creates stronger emotional engagement with visitors because it provides authenticity and uniqueness. Hospitality spaces that integrate local heritage often create deeper cultural connections and memorable travel experiences.

INDIGENOUS TEXTILES AS CULTURAL IDENTITY

Indigenous textiles are important representations of regional identity and craftsmanship. Handwoven fabrics, embroidery styles, natural dye techniques, and traditional motifs reflect the social, historical, and artistic values of communities.

Textile traditions such as Banarasi weaving, Chikankari, Ikat, Ajrakh, Kantha, and Kalamkari have become globally recognized symbols of Indian cultural heritage.

Studies suggest that textiles carry narrative value because they preserve stories, rituals, and cultural memory. Their integration into hospitality spaces contributes to cultural continuity and promotes appreciation for local craftsmanship.



Fig. 1 : Handloom Textile of Nagaland

COUTURE AESTHETICS AND CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

Couture aesthetics are associated with luxury, exclusivity, detail, craftsmanship, and artistic presentation. In recent years, hospitality spaces have increasingly borrowed elements from couture fashion in order to create visually sophisticated environments. Resorts now incorporate layered textures, handcrafted surfaces, embroidery-inspired patterns, and fashion-oriented styling into their interiors and branding.

This fusion of couture and hospitality reflects the growing importance of aesthetics in experience-based tourism. Guests often perceive couture-inspired environments as more luxurious, artistic, and emotionally engaging.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND VISUAL TOURISM

The rise of digital platforms has transformed tourism into a highly visual experience. Social media platforms influence how people select travel destinations, with aesthetics becoming a central factor in decision-making. Gen-Z audiences are particularly attracted to spaces that appear culturally rich, visually unique, and photographically appealing.

Research shows that hospitality brands now design spaces with social media visibility in mind. Indigenous textiles and couture-inspired décor contribute to visually distinctive environments that encourage digital sharing and online engagement.

SUSTAINABILITY AND HERITAGE PRESERVATION

The growing awareness of sustainability has encouraged greater appreciation for handmade textiles and local craftsmanship. Indigenous textile practices often involve eco-friendly production methods, natural materials, and artisanal labour. Their use in resort branding supports sustainable tourism and provides economic opportunities for local artisan communities.

Researchers emphasize that integrating traditional crafts into contemporary industries can help preserve endangered art forms while adapting them to modern markets and audiences.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the role of indigenous textiles in resort branding and identity creation.
2. To analyse how couture aesthetics influence contemporary hospitality design.
3. To study the relationship between cultural heritage and experiential tourism.
4. To understand the influence of social media and Gen-Z aesthetics on resort branding.
5. To explore the role of traditional craftsmanship in sustainable hospitality practices.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative and theoretical approach to study the relationship between indigenous textiles, couture aesthetics, and cultural branding in the hospitality industry.

Secondary data has been collected from books, journal articles, fashion studies, hospitality research, and online academic sources related to textile heritage, branding, tourism, and visual culture.

The study also analyses selected examples of resorts and hospitality spaces that incorporate indigenous textiles and traditional craftsmanship into their branding and interior design. Observational analysis has been used to understand how cultural aesthetics influence guest experience and visual identity.

The research primarily focuses on contemporary tourism culture and Gen-Z consumer behaviour because younger audiences play a major role in shaping modern visual and experiential trends within hospitality industries.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

INDIGENOUS TEXTILES AS BRAND IDENTITY

The analysis reveals that indigenous textiles contribute significantly to creating unique resort identities. Traditional fabrics, handcrafted motifs, and artisanal techniques provide authenticity and regional character that distinguish resorts from generic luxury spaces.

Textiles are often used in upholstery, wall décor, furnishings, uniforms, and branding materials. These elements create an immersive cultural environment that enhances the guest experience and strengthens emotional connection with the place.

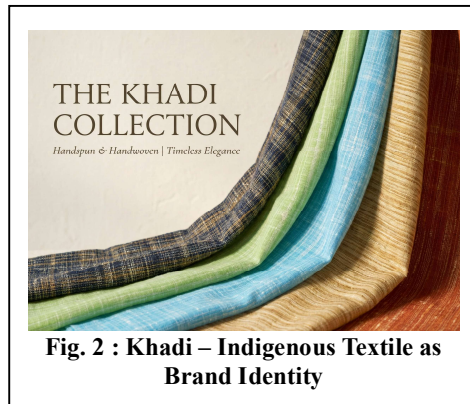


Fig. 2 : Khadi – Indigenous Textile as Brand Identity

COUTURE AESTHETICS AND LUXURY EXPERIENCE

Couture-inspired aesthetics enhance perceptions of luxury, exclusivity, and artistic sophistication. Resorts that incorporate embroidery-inspired textures, handcrafted detailing, layered fabrics, and fashion-oriented styling create visually rich environments associated with premium experiences.

The use of couture aesthetics transforms hospitality spaces into curated artistic environments rather than merely functional accommodations.

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media emerged as a major factor influencing contemporary resort branding. Resorts increasingly prioritize visually aesthetic interiors and culturally distinctive designs because guests often share travel experiences online.

Gen-Z audiences are particularly drawn toward spaces that combine heritage, luxury, and visual storytelling. Indigenous textile aesthetics contribute to creating highly shareable and visually engaging environments.

CULTURAL PRESERVATION THROUGH DESIGN

The research indicates that integrating indigenous textiles into hospitality design supports cultural preservation by creating new markets for traditional crafts. Resorts that collaborate with artisans help sustain local craftsmanship and increase awareness of regional heritage.

This integration also allows traditional art forms to evolve within contemporary contexts rather than remaining confined to museums or historical spaces.



Fig. 3 : Worli Art on Dress

SUSTAINABILITY AND ETHICAL TOURISM

The study found that indigenous textiles align closely with sustainable tourism practices. Handmade fabrics and artisanal production methods often involve lower environmental impact compared to mass-produced materials.

Guests increasingly value sustainability and authenticity, making culturally rooted and eco-conscious design an important aspect of modern hospitality branding.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited by its reliance on qualitative and theoretical analysis rather than extensive field-based research. The research primarily focuses on selected hospitality and textile examples and may not represent all cultural contexts.

Another limitation is the rapidly changing nature of tourism and social media trends, which continuously reshape branding strategies and consumer preferences.

The study also focuses largely on contemporary hospitality culture and Gen-Z audiences, limiting broader generational analysis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Future research should include field studies and interviews with designers, artisans, resort owners, and tourists to gain deeper practical insights into cultural branding strategies.
- Researchers should also explore cross-cultural comparisons between indigenous textile integration in hospitality industries across different countries.
- Hospitality brands are encouraged to collaborate directly with local artisans in order to promote ethical production, cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism practices.
- Educational institutions and design industries should further encourage interdisciplinary studies connecting fashion, textiles, tourism, and cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the growing importance of indigenous textiles and couture aesthetics in shaping cultural branding within the hospitality industry. The findings demonstrate that traditional textiles function not only as decorative elements but also as symbols of identity, heritage, craftsmanship, and storytelling.

The integration of indigenous textile aesthetics into resort branding creates emotionally engaging and visually distinctive experiences that appeal strongly to contemporary and Gen-Z audiences. Couture-inspired hospitality spaces combine luxury with authenticity, allowing traditional cultural forms to be reimaged within modern design environments.

The study also emphasizes the role of social media and visual culture in transforming tourism into an aesthetic and experience-driven industry. Resorts increasingly use heritage-inspired aesthetics to create memorable and culturally immersive environments that strengthen guest engagement and online visibility.

Overall, the research concludes that cultural branding through indigenous textiles and couture aesthetics supports heritage preservation, sustainable tourism, and creative innovation simultaneously. By integrating traditional craftsmanship into contemporary hospitality practices, resorts can create meaningful spaces that celebrate cultural identity while responding to modern design sensibilities.

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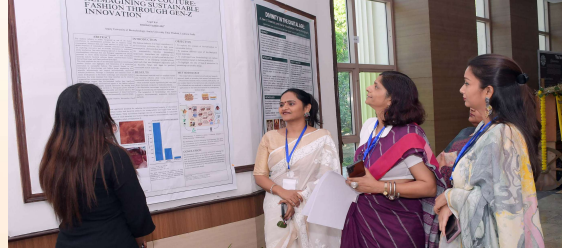
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