

# Potential, prospects, and problems of textile tourism in Kerala

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**Abstract** | Tourism in the textile industry has tremendous potential for future growth and development of local economies and rural communities, building upon the services provided by local governments. This study focuses on Khadi textile business operations, with a particular emphasis on textile-based businesses, and provides visitor perceptions of textile tourism. It discusses the possibilities and challenges in the local textile industry, including the difficulties faced by the weavers in marketing their goods to tourists and exporters. The questionnaire survey applied to 120 visitors from three different khadi shops in Kozhikode, Kerala. According to the study's findings, textile business centres require strategic promotional approaches to boost textile tourism. The major hurdle for weavers and independent producers is a lack of direct access to visitors, as well as access to information controlled by producers, commercial interests, and gallery owners. more in the future to expand the reach of this type of tourism. The potential role that the government and tourism authorities may play an important role in designing policies that may grant this form of tourism increased visibility.

**Keywords** | Textile tourism, Khadi textile industries, Community-based tourism, Poverty alleviation

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism has always been a popular recreational activity among humans. Domestic and foreign tourism both have an influence on a country's balance of payments. Tourism is now an important source of revenue for many nations, affecting the economies of both the source and host countries. The textile and apparel businesses are some of the world's oldest, largest, and most widely traded. It is a labour-intensive starter industry for nations engaged in export-oriented industrialization (Gereffi, 2002). Textile and apparel industries are crucial in the economic and social environment because of the diverse opportunities they generate by giving money and employment, particularly for women.

The overall number of families in India involved in handloom activities (weaving and associated occupations) is 31.45 thousand according to the Fourth All India Handloom Census. In rural regions, 82 percent of weavers work independently, i.e., are self-employed, but in urban areas, this figure is roughly 51 percent. The states with the most organised weavers working under a cooperative organization (56 percent) are Goa (95 percent), Kerala (71 percent), Puducherry (91 percent). It is a sector that is directly concerned with women's empowerment. According to the most recent census, the sector employs approximately 23 lakh female weavers and affiliated employees. The handloom sector is primarily family-based, with labour supplied by the entire family (India's Handloom Census, 2019–20). Textiles and the garment sector play an important role in production, employment, and trade in many developing countries. However, the government's assistance and policies will have an impact on the textile and garment industries' capacity to contribute to India's long-term development and progress.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the significance of Khadi textile businesses and how they encourage tourism. Textiles cannot be

relied on to offer economic stability for rural towns and communities. This industry's output, sales, and employment are all expected to rise year after year. Because of this investigation, we will learn whether visitors are lured to textile tourism and how satisfied they are with the material supplied on various websites. Further research is required to assess visitor satisfaction and to focus on the challenges that tourists face because of textile tourism. The major objectives of the study are following:

- To study the Potentiality of textile tourism in Kerala;

- To discover the advantages of Khadi textile businesses because of tourism;

- To investigate the concerns and challenges associated with textile-based tourism;

- To identify the advantages of Khadi to communities because of tourism.

### 1.1. Khadi (Handloom) Textile industry in India

Khadi is a traditional Indian textile made by hand from natural fibres such as cotton or silk, and the term applies to both hand-spun and tissue. Cotton, silk, or wool can be used as raw materials, which are spun into threads on the ground. Whereas the single variety is grown in West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, and the Northeast, cotton is grown in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Western Bengal (Khadi and Village Industries Commission) Khadi is obtained from various parts of India based on its primary constituents. Wool is produced in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir, whereas poly Khadi is made in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Both the Khadi and village industries have one thing in common: they both require a lot of labour. The Khadi and village industries, as a by-product of industrialisation, are ideally suited to a labour-surplus country like

India. Khadi and Village Industries have the additional benefit of requiring little or no money, making them a financially viable choice for the rural poor. Given the country's vast wealth, geographic variety, and rural-to-urban disparities, this is a severe problem in India. The 'Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956' created it as a legislative organisation. It is India's apex organisation for Khadi and village industries, reporting to the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME), and aims to "plan, promote, facilitate, organise, and assist in the establishment and development of Khadi and village industries in rural areas in coordination with other rural development agencies wherever necessary". The commission also organises international sales events.

The Indian government intends to promote Khadi as a global textile since it has the potential to help economic growth. Development at the district level is critical to establishing Khadi as a worldwide fabric, which will in turn support economic prosperity. The Khadi sector employs 80 lakh people, and while assistance and promotions from the Indian government might offer a boost from time to time, intrinsic demand is required for long-term viability. There is a big possibility for the Indian fashion business in the textile sector, both in local and foreign markets, and Khadi must drive demand. "Government seeks to promote Khadi as a global fabric" (The Economic Times, 2018). The government can stimulate economic growth, and Khadi was pushed as a worldwide fabric in 2019.

## 1.2. An overview of textile tourism in world

Textile Tour to Japan with Tokyo International Great Quilt Festival, planned and conducted by award-winning fibre artist, Martha Wolfe, for people who share a passion for travel and exploration with a concentration on textiles and quilts. The journey will include textile workshops, fabric shopping, museums, and places to create lasting memo-

ries, in addition to a visit to the Tokyo International Great Quilt Festival. Textile tours in Morocco provide a view of Moroccan crafts at the grassroots level, where women's cooperative initiatives showcase a variety of textile products that merge age-old skills with contemporary ideas. Houston is a dynamic, multi-cultural metropolis with 20 museums and cultural institutions, a world-class culinary scene, and the largest annual quilt exhibition in the United States. Peruvian Textile Tour is a one-of-a-kind study of Peruvian colours, created especially for individuals who are enthusiastic about culture and interested in textiles and craft traditions. Textile tours in Morocco provide a view of Moroccan crafts at the grassroots level, where women's cooperative initiatives showcase a variety of textile products that merge age-old skills with contemporary ideas.

The ASEAN area provides a treasure trove of the most gorgeous hand-woven textiles available anywhere in the globe for the silk textile enthusiast. From the ikats of Cambodia and Thailand to the golden songkets of Indonesia and Malaysia, to the Philippine pina silk and the Burmese acheik -each nation has its own centuries-old weaving traditions that are delectably distinctive and must-sees for travellers. Sapa is a tiny town in northern Vietnam's highlands. The town of Sapa and its surrounding region are particularly noteworthy since they are home to the indigenous Hmong Tribes. The Brunei Arts and Handicraft Training Centre in Kota Batu offers weaving courses and has trained a generation of local weavers in the silk weaving craft. Artisans Angkor, has locations in both Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, teaches weaving and other Cambodian crafts to young Cambodians from rural regions. Khmer Silk Villages (KSV) also provides technical assistance to Cambodian sericulture producers and weaving communities. KSV operates a showroom in Phnom Penh, which is stocked by its weavers. Many visitors associate Indonesian textiles with beautiful batiks from Bali. Sengkang and Soppeng are

silk weaving towns of the Bugi ethnic group, famed mariners and traders whose women weavers still carry out their work on traditional handlooms housed under stilt homes for visitors travelling to Lake Tempe in South Sulawesi.

Taykeo textile gallery, created by Ms Taykeo Sayavongkhamdy, who recreates historical designs to manufacture museum-quality copies of antique textiles, has some of the best Lao textiles in Vientiane. Fine examples of this and other textiles from around the Philippines may be found in the newly opened Philippine Textile Gallery at the National Museum in Manila. Jim Thompson's mansion is a must-see for many first-time visitors to Bangkok, and the fabric and items bearing his name have come to represent Thai silk.

### 1.3. The current state of textile tourism in India

Textile and apparel industries are particularly essential for a few nations; in terms of commerce, GDP, and employment, they have made substantial contributions to numerous other countries, and they draw many local and international visitors. Today's travellers want to experience the location, and sightseeing is only an afterthought. Textiles are one of the numerous components to be appreciated in locations such as Varanasi. A visit to antique silk weaving homes was recently included as part of a Varanasi trip. The State Tourism Department is also planning a Heritage Walk, which will include a visit to weavers' colonies in Ramnagar and Madanpura Districts, in response to visitor interest in the weavers' route (Vohra, 2016).

Tourists are eager to learn about the art of Banarasi sari weaving and the time and work that goes into it. Many female visitors to the city are interested in a weaver's trail. It is part of their schedule to visit the weaver's colony and observe the weaving process. They like to visit a gaddi, which is often owned by people who have been

in the business for decades, even when purchasing Banarasi saris or fabric, and have interesting facts to impart about the Banarasi cloth. (Vohra, 2016). For example, a burgeoning movement in Madurai to revive the Sungudi sari, classic Kanjeevaram patterns, and Chettinad cotton is attracting textile aficionados from across the country. Textile trails are also in high demand in Chennai, particularly in Mylapore and T. Hey. Nagar. According to a member of India's Crafts Council who worked with weavers to revitalise handcrafted Madurai Sungudi, Veeravanallur saris, and Koranadu saris, a tourist niche sector made it a point to see the craftspeople (Hamid, 2016). The government of Orissa also emphasises the expansion of the textile circuit, which will draw people from all over the world. This new textile path is exciting since Orissa is a treasure trove of many textile forms, including tribal ones. Odisha Tourism and the Textile Directorate suggested that all master weavers show their finest patterns to guests for them to remember happy moments (Barik, 2015).

### 1.4. Khadi(handloom) industry in Kerala

The Kerala Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) was established by the Kerala Khadi and Village Industries Act in 1957. It is a statutory organisation established by Act IX of the Kerala Legislative Assembly in 1957 because of the national formation of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC). KVIC and KVIB's taglines are "Promotion of Village Industries," implying that these organisations oversee organising, promoting, and growing Khadi and village industries at the national and state levels. The Board is responsible for coordinating the production of Khadi and village industries in the state through joint operating organisations, registered institutions, and individual artisans.

Khadi and village factories play an important part in the economy, which is characterised by high

unemployment, high population density, and low capital levels. As the rate of cultivable land falls, the growth of the agriculture industry is constrained. The state's agriculture industry is trying to create lucrative jobs for the growing population. In these situations, the significance of Khadi and village industries may be found. Not only are the jobless employed in the Khadi and village industries, but agricultural labourers who face seasonal unemployment are also given replacement occupations. Kerala has a unique storey to tell regarding the development of Khadi and village industries in the state. There was little of Khadi's labour heritage in Kerala. What little was done was confined to Malabar's former area. The establishment of the Kerala State Khadi Board helped the operation of this industry in the state.

Kozhikode Sarvodaya Sangh (KSS) is a non-profit organisation that is recognised by the government's Khadi and Village Industries Committee. It was created through the Khadi and village industries, as well as other efficient activities to help communities thrive. The Sangh, based in Kozhikode, has a network of operations spread over four neighbouring districts. 40 Khadi Village Sales Centers, 8 Khadi Weaving Training Canters, and 13 Khadi Spinning Centers. The Sangh seeks to help rural people get out of poverty. Khadi and Village Industries sales are gradually increasing to create jobs for rural residents. As one of the most prominent Khadi-Village Marketing Industries Centres of its type in South India, this is the best destination to acquire inexpensive Indian handcrafted arts and crafts gifts for your family and friends. The centre is divided into sections for Khadi and Village Industries products. In addition to Khadi items, they sell a variety of village businesses such as crafts, honey, culinary oils, soaps, leather goods, and so on.

## 2. Literature Review

There has been far less study about textile-based tourism. This research paper aims to understand the textile and Khadi industries contribution and the expansion of tourism. An attempt is made in this section of the research review to offer a quick summary of the research literature regarding the status of research work. The development of indigenously based management frequently leads to greater economic success for some local producers. increased demand for handwoven textiles, as well as problems for contract weavers in gaining access to visitors, exporters, and market information (Cohen, 2001). Textiles are not the primary reason for visitors to visit a location, but they may be an important secondary reason (Richards, 2005). Textiles can and should be linked to tourism as a tourist development strategy; the tourism sector is recommended to design a legal framework to govern and grow a more powerful "textile tourist."It is vital to identify what aids or hinders the goals of textile visitors (Suhud et al., 2018). Because fabric retail tourism has a special value for the town and its surrounds, extending and strengthening trade activities related with textile tourism can have an influence on a city's image and character. Wijaya and Permana (2018). Indigenous textiles are crucial to the growth of regional tourism. Spending by foreign tourists from wealthier regions in developing nations promotes industrial growth, generates foreign exchange revenues, and creates development prospects, hence reducing economic inequities and poverty (Adejoke, et al., 2013).

Tourists and exporters who visit these cities and buy their items benefit merchants, even if the wages they pay limit contract weavers' opportunities. Independent producers have made some headway, but the majority continue to suffer, and many are abandoning the textile industry in search of economic security in other small businesses as migrants or wage labourers. The strengthening

of production and marketing abilities among craft producers, as well as increased links between the crafts and tourist sectors, appears to have resulted in positive outcomes in terms of tourism flows and economic activity. Working directly with local craft producers allows for the development of a more inventive approach to craft manufacturing, especially in remote areas (Richards, 2005). Experts from relevant fields devise a management strategy that is compatible with the villagers' way of life. Teenagers who are not involved in weaving are encouraged to work in tourism management roles such as tour guides, cultural performers, and organisers for villages and silk purchasers (Siribowonphitak, 2016). If the shopping commercial industry has already impacted an area, local governments could collaborate with artists and artisans to ensure that their wares receive significant exposure in order to promote the region's tangible culture. This is especially true if the artisans are the ones who keep the local custom alive (Hayes, 2012).

The genuineness of handcrafted items is very important in the purchasing decision. Greater efforts should be made to market textile craft goods in the regions where they are created in order to improve the perceived authenticity of the products. If textile craft items are to be offered through stores, they should be sold by specialists rather than through souvenir shops where the craft products are likely to be sold alongside manufactured goods. Consumer items gain symbolic value and perform a variety of functions for their owners. Exploration of the meaning that crafts have for visitors improves visitors' comprehension of tourist behaviour and adds to craft people's knowledge of potential clients. Profiles of foreign travellers were created based on the significance they ascribed to textile crafts learned while travelling (Littrell, 1990). The urge to increase knowledge (experience-seeking), create experiences (experience-seeking), capture and share photographs, engage in holiday and leisure activities, visit for marketing purposes, visit

for conservation purposes, and visit for patriotic reasons are all powerful motivators (Suhud et al., 2018).

### 3. Methodology

This paper mainly focuses on textile tourism and defines the demands and attitudes of tourists toward textile tourism, as well as the expansion of textile tourism. The research focuses on the challenges and competitiveness of textile goods. Customer input is used to inform the product development process, with the notion that what a small number of customers desire is also what other customers want (Olsson & Bosch, 2015). Because most Khadi industries are in villages, a lack of infrastructure, such as adequate textile-tourism promotion, has a negative influence on company growth. There are issues with raw resources, labour, money, technology, and so on.

The descriptive technique was adopted in this study as the methodological approach. Descriptive analytics are beneficial because they enable us to learn from previous behaviours and understand how they may impact future results. Rajarajeswar and Bhavana (2019) The sample size for this research study was one 120 visitors in three different khadi outlets in Kozhikode, Kerala, and the open-ended questions were directed to authorities. Based on the framed close-ended and open-ended questions, data was collected from visitors and authorities. Purposive sampling was used to conduct interviews with important informants. Closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires were designed and handed to visitors and officials, respectively. The questionnaire is made up of using the Likert scale with a five-point rating scale as the possibilities of the scale are: strongly agree, agree, neutral, strongly disagree, disagree.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

The research was conducted on Potential, prospects, and problems of textile tourism in Kerala.

The findings of this study were regarding tourists visiting Kozhikode for a textile product, specifically choosing the Khadi industries and how they help to develop and promote tourism.

Table 1 | Tourist Opinion

Tourist Opinion		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Promotional activities	Between Groups	5.025	3	1.256	1.831	0.128
	Within Groups	78.900	115	0.686		
	Total	83.925	119			
Accessibility	Between Groups	11.275	3	2.819	5.345	0.001*
	Within Groups	60.650	115	0.527		
	Total	71.925	119			
Media promotion	Between Groups	8.725	3	2.181	3.657	0.008*
	Within Groups	68.600	115	0.597		
	Total	77.325	119			
Attitude of local people	Between Groups	2.300	3	0.575	0.627	0.544
	Within Groups	105.400	115	0.917		
	Total	107.700	119			
Govt support	Between Groups	8.200	3	2.050	3.225	0.015*
	Within Groups	73.100	115	0.636		
	Total	81.300	119			
Security System	Between Groups	16.850	3	4.212	6.120	0.000*
	Within Groups	79.150	115	0.688		
	Total	96.000	119			
Infrastructure	Between Groups	9.350	3	2.337	3.102	0.018*
	Within Groups	86.650	115	0.753		
	Total	96.000	119			
Age factors in the choice of Khadi	Between Groups	5.725	3	1.431	2.629	0.038*
	Within Groups	62.600	115	0.544		
	Total	68.325	119			
Cost Affordability	Between Groups	6.425	3	1.606	2.984	0.022*
	Within Groups	61.900	115	0.538		
	Total	68.325	119			
Developmental Activities	Between Groups	15.425	3	3.907	2.324	0.005*
	Within Groups	113.500	115	0.987		
	Total	128.925	119			

##### 4.1. Interpretation

1) Promotional activities: Because the result is not significant at the 5% level, the P value is 0.128, which is more than 0.05. As a result, it is discovered that visitors have differing perspectives on topics relating to promotional efforts in the centre. Therefore, the research region does not have any concerns with promotional efforts.

2) Accessibility: The result is significant at the 5% level, which is 0.001, indicating that visitors share similar opinions regarding issues linked to accessibility in the centre. The results suggest that areas of research have challenges with accessibility.

3) Media promotion: Because the result is significant at the 5% level, 0.008, it is discovered that visitors share the same attitude regarding issues linked to media promotion

in the centre. Therefore, the results suggest that the areas of research have challenges with media marketing.

4) Attitude of local people: Because the result is not significant at the 5% level, the P value is 0.544, which is more than 0.05. This result demonstrates that visitors have differing perspectives on issues concerning the attitude of local people. Therefore, the results demonstrate that the areas of research do not have any issues with the attitude of local people.

5) Govt support: The research rejects the null hypothesis since it is significant at the 5% level, which is 0.015, and it is discovered that visitors have similar thoughts on the difficulties with government assistance in the centre. The results reveal that the areas of research have challenges with government funding.

6) Security System: This test is likewise significant at the 5% level, which is 0.000. As a result, it is discovered that visitors share the same opinion that the security system in the pilgrim centre is not effectively maintained. The results suggest that the area of study has concerns with the security system.

7) Infrastructure: As a result of this result, we may reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, which is significant at the 5% level of 0.018. The visitors all agree that there is a difficulty with sufficient preventative steps taken to raise product awareness. The results suggest that the areas under investigation have infrastructure difficulties.

8) Age factors in the choice of Khadi: Because the result is significant at the 5% level, 0.008, it is discovered that visitors share the same attitude regarding issues linked to age

factors in the choice. Therefore, the results suggest that the areas of research have variations with age choices.

9) Cost Affordability: The research rejects the null hypothesis since it is significant at the 5% level, which is 0.022, and it is discovered that visitors have similar thoughts on the difficulties with cost affordability in the centre. The results reveal that the areas of research have challenges with cost affordability.

10) Developmental Activities: The result is significant at the 5% level, which is 0.000, indicating that visitors share the same view about issues linked to the developmental Activities system in the centre. As a result of the analysis, the fields of research have difficulties connected to developmental Activities.

The data indicates that promotional initiatives to enhance textile tourism in Kerala are constantly needed. The product's branding is quite significant. According to the research, the consumption rate of Khadi stabilises on occasion during the off seasons. In addition, the data reveals that visitors prefer to visit Khadi bhavan over other shops that sell Khadi items. Khadi is sold on the streets and in small shops, but Khadi bhavans are stores that solely offer Khadi and Khadi-related items. Khadi is not only available in the shape of fabric, but also in the form of Khadi soaps, Khadi shampoos, and Khadi cosmetics. According to the understanding, the tourist's choice of other Khadi items is occasionally thirty percent.

The data suggests that local people's attitudes always have an impact on textile tourism in Kerala. This is since people's hospitality is extremely important to visitors visiting that location. According to the survey, Khadi is an ethnicity that is rarely represented in Kerala. This is mostly due to Kerala's brand of ethnicity being displayed during festivals,



particularly when 'Onam' is celebrated,' which is celebrated with a golden and white colour motif. The rate of consumption of Khadi has constantly increased throughout the years. According to the survey, tourism in the Khadi business always leads to increased investment and spending. According to the data, there is always an economic gain for the people & tourism always offers job chances for the Khadi industry.

The key issue for Khadi's company should be to ensure that manufacturing items occur economically, and that its essential purpose of providing the incompetent poor with an open employment door is met. Khadi items should be packaged to appeal to distant purchasers. More outlet bargains must be arranged in travel zones, and they must establish relations with the Tourism Promotion Council. It is critical to have a main website for Khadi products that may serve as a facilitator for thinking about the items and placing orders for them.

#### **4.2. Tourism Markets and Community-Based Tourism**

First, the purpose of community-based tourism development should not be to construct programmes that are primarily aimed at introducing the rural poor to new economic links in which they have no experience or understanding. Instead of transforming the vulnerable into unstable employment in an already competitive market, this could include the establishment of programmes in the textile industry that relate to local education and training. The development of local tourism might aid in the acceptance of a community's assets while also devising strategies to support growth among the lowest members of society. It is critical to investigate the local issues of Khadi production and growth, as well as how these issues affect the aims of sustainable community development. These local issues, however, are meaningless if we neglect

the significant challenges that indigenous producers face in getting market access and exportation.

A seller must understand his or her market to thrive in business. It is critical for weavers and independent manufacturers to understand the people that visit the region and are eager to follow taste, style, and design trends. Some gallery owners and exporters often cooperate with weavers to promote their grasp of international market trends or to give fresh and common colour schemes that cater to the interests of international tourists. This might entail sending photographs of popular textile patterns. Weavers are thus aware of fluctuations in demand and often understand what buyers need in locally produced textiles. Weavers, on the other hand, continue to be upset by merchants' dominance. State-funded loans have aided weavers and independent manufacturers in the textile tourist and export industries. Weavers were able to get cheaper raw materials due to loans. Unfortunately, these achievements have not increased local producers' access to the market. Apart from attracting a few international enterprises and women, the company has had little success in connecting weavers and independent producers directly to local tourism and export markets. However, they lack the skills and tools to act on the information they do have, and as a result, they continue to lose revenue.

64.1 percent of weaver and allied worker households sell their goods at the local market, making this the most common marketing technique for this country's weavers/allied workers. 17.6 percent of their products are sold to master weavers with whom they are linked and from whom they receive orders and raw materials. Cooperative societies sell around 8.8 percent of the output (Handloom Census of India, 2019-20). However, the utilisation of organised fairs, e-commerce platforms, or exports has yet to gain traction among direct manufacturers. The lack of direct access to visitors, as well as access to information possessed by producers, foreign corporate interests, and gal-

lery owners, remains the most significant barrier for weavers and independent producers.

## 5. Limitations

The study focuses solely on the registered Khadi industry. The research solely looks at the textile industry in Kozhikode. Secondary data collection was hampered by a lack of available information and records on textile tourism.

## 6. Conclusion

This research examines the relevance of tourism in Kerala in general, particularly in the context of textile industry and tourism. Kerala, particularly in the Khadi industry, offers enormous potential for textile tourism. To be successful in business, a seller must understand his or her market. Weavers and small-business owners are aware of the region's visitors and can stay up with taste, style, and design trends. Weavers, as previously said, have the necessary skills and motivation to succeed, and the textiles produced by contract weavers are almost identical in quality and craftsmanship to those produced by wealthy merchants and independent manufacturers. However, skill and desire to success are irrelevant if weavers do not have market access. Direct access to visitors and access to information held by producers, corporate interests, and gallery owners are the most significant barriers for weavers and independent producers.

The support system for Khadi items requires substantial preparation. The expert technique is required for product development and advertising. The use of organised fairs, e-commerce platforms, or exports has yet to gain traction among direct makers. Furthermore, efforts to combat the use of Khadi as a brand name are impossible until signifi-

cant changes are made. Finally, in Kerala, the government must endeavour to promote textile tourism and security, as well as encourage Khadi enterprises to take advantage of the country's home and global basis to help raise income.

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