

Celebrating Khun Craftsmanship from Loom to Lifestyle

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Abstract

Khan cloth, a unique textile from the Kolhapur and Ichalkaranji districts of Maharashtra, is renowned for its vivid hues, elaborate designs, and soft texture. This fabric, used for blouses and saree borders, reflects the area's rich weaving tradition and expert craftsmanship. The fabric represents the skill of regional weavers and encourages sustainability by supporting traditional craftspeople. Once a symbol of vibrant elegance and cultural pride in traditional Maharashtrian sarees, khan fabric has gradually faded from prominence as modern trends have taken centre stage.

To revive this timeless heritage, reimagining of khan fabric through innovative and contemporary creations is a must. By transforming it into versatile accessories and lifestyle products, to make it relevant for today's audience while preserving its traditional charm. This initiative is not just about honouring the legacy of khan fabric but also about reinventing it, ensuring it continues to thrive in a modern context while celebrating its rich cultural roots. The collection honours the rich tradition of khan fabric, highlighting its vivid colors, elaborate designs, and enduring charm. These adaptable lifestyle accessories serve practical purposes and exemplify high-quality craftsmanship, merging tradition with contemporary style.

Keywords: Handmade, Sustainability, Tradition, Vibrant.

Introduction

Khun fabric, a traditional handloom textile, holds a deep cultural significance in India, particularly in Maharashtra and Karnataka. Known for its intricate patterns and vibrant colors, Khun fabric has been a staple in traditional attire for generations. Originally woven in Guledgudda, Karnataka, and other regions, this fabric showcases exceptional craftsmanship and reflects India's rich textile heritage [1][2]. Despite its historical roots, Khun fabric has adapted to modern fashion trends, gaining popularity in both domestic and international markets [3][4]. Traditionally used for blouses, sarees, and accessories, recent innovations have expanded its application to contemporary fashion and home décor [5]. Efforts to revive and contemporize Khun fabric through jacquard weaving techniques and sustainable production methods have played a crucial role in its resurgence [6][7]. This project aims to create a line of goods that seamlessly blend traditional and modern design elements, catering to environmentally conscious consumers. By incorporating Khun fabric into diary covers, bags, bangles, and other accessories, we seek to preserve its

heritage while making it relevant to contemporary lifestyles [8][9]. Additionally, this initiative supports artisans by promoting their craft and ensuring fair trade opportunities [10][11].

By embracing Khun fabric in modern designs, we hope to bridge the past with the future, allowing this exquisite textile to remain a symbol of elegance, sustainability, and cultural pride [12][13].

Objectives

- To explore the combination of traditional and contemporary materials for unique product offerings.
- To design and develop the khan fabric products.

Production of khun Fabric

Precise data on the current production volume of Khun (Khan) fabric is not readily available in public sources. Khun fabric is a traditional handwoven textile primarily produced in specific regions of Karnataka and Maharashtra. Its production is typically carried out by local artisans and small-scale weavers, contributing to its limited availability and exclusivity.

The broader Indian handloom sector, which includes various traditional fabrics like Khun, plays a significant role in the country's textile industry. In the financial year 2021, the total fabric production in India was over 70.45 billion square meters, with 100% cotton fabric accounting for 36.34 billion square meters. However, these figures encompass a wide range of fabrics, and specific data for Khun fabric is not delineated.

Given its artisanal nature, Khun fabric's production is relatively modest compared to mass-produced textiles. The fabric has seen a resurgence in interest due to its unique aesthetic and cultural significance, leading to its incorporation into contemporary fashion and accessories.

Price and popular markets: As of February 10, 2025, the price of Khun (Khan) fabric varies depending on factors such as material composition, design intricacy, and the retailer. Generally, prices range from ₹200 to ₹490 per meter. For instance, Matkatus offers Khun fabrics at approximately ₹220 per meter.

For purchasing, both online platforms and local markets are viable options. Online retailers like iTokri and Matkatus offer a variety of Khun fabrics. In physical markets, areas in Karnataka and Maharashtra are renowned for their selection of traditional textiles, including Khun fabric.

Brands in the Market: Several brands are incorporating Khun (Khan) fabric into their products, blending traditional aesthetics with contemporary designs:

1. KaleNale: Founded by Janhavi Kulkarni, KaleNale aims to popularize Khun fabric globally. The brand offers a range of products, including apparel and accessories, showcasing the unique blend of silk and cotton characteristic of Khun.
2. Saras - Handcrafted Bags: This brand specializes in handcrafted bags that feature Khun fabric, highlighting its traditional beauty in modern accessories.
3. Peppy Palette: Peppy Palette offers a variety of products made from Khun fabric, including dresses and frocks, bringing the traditional weave into contemporary fashion.
4. iTokri: An online platform that collaborates with artisans to provide authentic Khun fabrics, staying true to traditional uses while also encouraging innovative applications.

These brands contribute to the revival and global appreciation of Khun fabric by integrating it into diverse product lines, thereby supporting artisans and preserving this traditional craft.

Methodology:

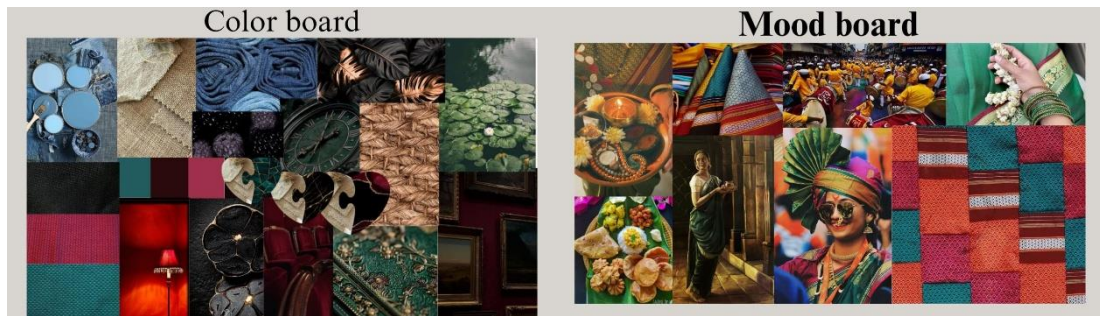


Challenges Faced by Khan Fabric Artisans

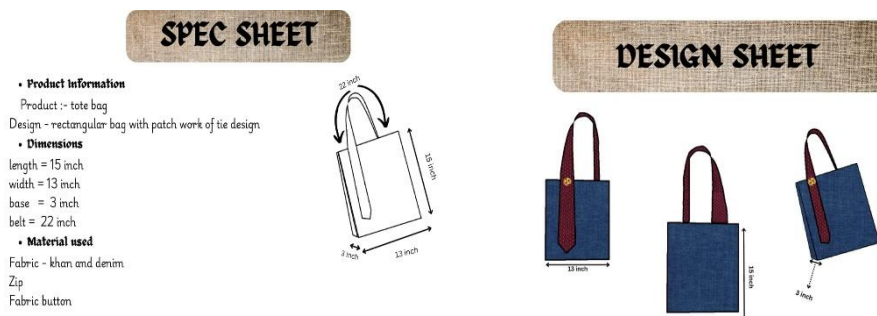
The advent of synthetic materials and mass-produced, less expensive alternatives are reducing the need for handcrafted textiles. Khan cloth is unknown to younger generations, and machine-made textiles are growing more competitive. Because skilled labor and materials are becoming more expensive, handmade clothing is pricey, and many artisans do not have access to online marketplaces. Due of weaving's time-consuming nature and minimal financial returns, the younger generation is moving to other occupations. Modern fashion trends require traditional designs to be updated, yet creativity is hampered by a lack of design education and teamwork possibilities. The expensive expense of handloom weaving and traditional dyes creates sustainability problems, and low-quality synthetic textiles degrade the art.

Methodology and Procedures

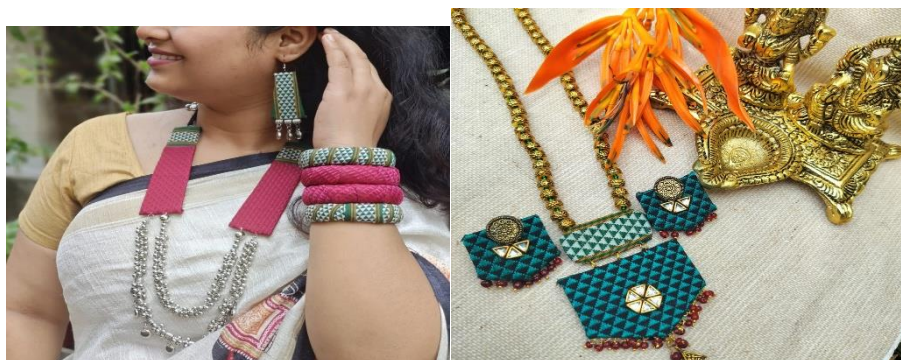
- 1. Theme Selection** – Focused on Maharashtrian culture as the primary inspiration, highlighting its rich heritage of traditional textiles, motifs, and craftsmanship. The project particularly aimed at reviving the use of Khun fabric, a significant yet underappreciated textile, by incorporating its essence into contemporary designs.
- 2. Mood Board Creation** – Gathered an array of visual inspirations, including intricate patterns, weaving methods, and cultural symbols associated with Khun fabric. This helped in developing a cohesive design direction that blends tradition with modern aesthetics.
- 3. Color Selection & Trend Forecasting** – These colors were carefully selected to resonate with current trends in handmade, sustainable, and ethnic fusion products, ensuring the designs remain both relevant and visually appealing. A palette featuring maroon, green, and black, complemented by jute beige and denim blue.



4. **Product Design & Development** – The prototypes were created and the best ones were selected for Product development. A product range was planned which included tote bags, jewellery, diary covers. Spec sheets were made for each product which gave detailed instructions about the making of the products. Based on the spec sheets the design sheets were created which gave a clear picture about the look of the products. The products were then meticulously crafted using various techniques such as fabric layering, precise stitching, intricate embroidery, and decorative embellishments, ensuring a perfect balance between tradition and innovation.



5. **Final Presentation & Photoshoot** – Styled and captured high-quality photographs of the finished products to effectively highlight their aesthetic appeal and craftsmanship. Special attention was given to composition, lighting, and presentation to showcase the intricate details and cultural significance of each piece.



Branding: Our brand, Khun Kath, is derived from the Marathi word for storytelling, khun-the-fabric Kath-katha. Reimagining khun fabric via creative and modern designs is essential to reviving this ageless legacy. It may be made relevant for today's audience while maintaining its classic charm by turning it into adaptable accessories and lifestyle goods.

Costing:

A cost sheet was prepared keeping in mind the sourcing of the raw material, the type of raw material is used, such as fabric decorations and accessories. Fabric requirement was Calculated based on consumption for each design accounting for wastage and pattern placements was also done. The costing also included labour charges, stitching charges and the cost of labels, tags and packaging cost was also added. It also included operating costs (personnel, logistics, and transportation). Calculating the ultimate product price by taking the profit margin into account.

Conclusion

Khan fabric is traditionally worn in the form of blouses (cholis) with Nauvari sarees, Khun fabric carries a deep cultural significance. By incorporating it into modern accessories, this study not only preserve its heritage but also give it a contemporary appeal. This initiative supports local artisans, ensuring their traditional weaving techniques remain alive in the today's market there's a good demand.

By reimagining Maharashtra's textile heritage in stylish, functional products, this project bridges the gap between tradition and modernity, offering a unique collection that resonates with both cultural pride and sustainable living. Ultimately, this project is a step towards preserving traditional craftsmanship, empowering artisans, and promoting sustainability, bridging the gap between heritage and contemporary lifestyles. The use of Khun (Khan) fabric in crafting diary covers, bags, and bangles is a tribute to Maharashtrian culture and craftsmanship.

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