Internationally celebrated designer and model Bibi Russel came back to Bangladesh in 1994 and started work on promoting the local weaving industry. She set her eyes on the *jamdani*, muslin, check and *khadi* introducing these textiles for a fashion development programme. A lot of the work revolved around Shoilen Guho's *khadi* products. The duo helped to bring *khadi* further into the limelight during the mid-nineties. Bibi arranged fashion shows at home and abroad to increase the popularity of *khadi* resulting in a significant following alongside Indian *khadi*. Bibi commented that people prefer to use natural and ecologically friendly materials like *khadi*. She is endeavouring to further the work that Shoilen Guho started and also trying to protect the Comilla *khadi* society.

The *khadi* industry has been struggling for survival as it has had to make do with outdated equipment, inconsistent product quality, lack of professional expertise and funding, and lack of unity and resolve within the industry to adjust to changing market trends. In contrast, the country's overall textile sector has grown tremendously with the adoption of modern technology, branding, and strong marketing.

The art of spinning needs continuous practice. Some spinners are leaving their profession and switching to other work. Many of them have left the country and their replacements have not been proportionate to. A continuous training programme can solve this problem. But running a training programme is an expensive affair.

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Al- Helal, Proprietor of Purbasha Cottage, Comilla explained that the adequate working capital is needed to keep the industry on a winning streak. Many times items are delivered on credit. Also the cotton required for production is often unavailable according to demand. As a result the workers have to make do with whatever is available. A continuous twelve-month work period cannot be maintained. Thread made with pit loom and power loom does not provide a good finish. Producers of *khadi* spend about eight months using thread from textile mills and the other four months using cotton threads.

Long staple cotton of good quality is not grown in Bangladesh. Import of such cotton from foreign countries requires spending of hard earned foreign exchange. Storage of supply of cotton has become the most serious problem. This problem can be solved by widespread plantation of cotton trees in Bangladesh. There is shortage of other materials such as dyestuff, printing equipment and spare parts for charka.

Experience shows that trendy, good quality khadi products have a good market. It is beyond the capacity of the weavers to pay for a designer. A subsidy to the extent of the salary of a qualified designer can help the weavers improve the quality of their product and serve the community better.

According to Fatima Islam, a woman entrepreneur, (Owner of Agrani Kutir Shilpo) SME loans, and advancement of technology are not being linked to this industry. "Thus," she says. "While India is thinking about its revival, we are losing our heritage."

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is lending India $150 million to restore the popularity of khadi, a widely revered handspun and hand-woven cloth left behind by poor production and marketing. Reviving the khadi industry is anticipated to bolster employment opportunities in India, predominantly in the rural areas where 73% of the country's poor live. India's 11th Five Year Plan acknowledges that khadi production has huge employment prospects, particularly for women and minorities. A $2 million grant will be provided by the Japan Special Fund, through ADB, to maintain the implementation and monitor the progress of the khadi industry reform package funded by the ADB loan. The programme will promote khadi by establishing a "Khadi mark" including the design of a logo to indicate the product is genuine and to help build awareness and popularity of khadi. A marketing organisation with majority shares owned by the private sector will also be set up.

In spite of the huge demand and passion for khadi, it's not expanding as much as expected. So our government and other stakeholders should come forward to give policy support as well as financial support. Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), for instance, can arrange more fairs locally and internationally with subsidised subscription and SME loans should be extended for this sector with easier conditions. As a whole, it is our collective responsibility to protect this heritage that has such great economic potential.