

INDIA • 2026

# The **Fabric** Scorecard

Twenty-eight clothing materials scored out of ten for environmental impact: what each one really costs, and how easily you can find it in India.





“Imagine if 30 million people suddenly changed their clothes buying habits. Small daily life decisions can create a huge impact on a countrywide scale. This PDF is an effort towards creating that change.

It is your ultimate guide to deciding which fabrics are the best for our planet and environment, and in most cases, the best for your skin also. This is something that I have personally spent a lot of time researching over the years.



Today, almost all the clothes that I own are 100% natural fibres, and whatever I own can fit in 4 drawers. I also spend a lot less time thinking about clothes than the average person. It is really a win win for the environment and for your own peace of mind.

Use this guide for yourself, and forward this PDF freely on WhatsApp to your friends and family to create a chain of good impact.

And for people who are reading this for the first time, do watch the Fast Fashion video I made on YouTube. Search on YouTube for Dhruv Rathee Fast Fashion.”

**Dhruv Rathee**

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Every fabric is scored out of ten, where ten is best. Read it straight through, or turn to the page you need.



# The six simple rules

Every score in this guide assumes you follow these first. None of the 28 materials that follow can rescue a garment you wear five times and throw away.

1

## Wear it thirty times, at least

Impact is counted per wear, not per garment. This one habit outweighs every fibre choice in this guide.



2

## Buy one fibre, never a blend

Pure cotton and pure polyester can each be recycled. Poly-cotton cannot be separated. Some stretch clothes really do need elastane, but most shirts and jeans do not.



3

## Buy secondhand first

A used garment carries zero new production impact. It is the largest saving available to you, and it costs less.



4

## Wash cold, full loads, air dry

Most of a garment's lifetime energy is spent after you buy it, not before.



5

## Repair before you replace

A re-stitched hem, a new zip, a resoled shoe. Each one buys years for a fraction of the price.



6

## Read the fibre tag, not the ad

"Eco", "natural", "bamboo" and "vegan" are marketing words. The composition label is a legal declaration.



WEAR IT 5 TIMES

5

The entire cost of making that shirt is carried by five wearings. This is the fast fashion default.



WEAR IT 30 TIMES

6×

less impact every single time you put it on. The same shirt, simply kept for longer.



WEAR IT 200 TIMES

40×

less again. Nothing you can change about the fabric itself comes anywhere close to this.



## What each score measures

SEVEN AXES, WEIGHTED OVER A GARMENT'S FULL LIFE



### Water

Irrigation and process water



### Land

Yield, pesticide, soil health



### Chemistry

Solvents and mill discharge



### Carbon

Feedstock through to dyeing



### Lifespan

Wears the fibre delivers



### Shedding

Microfibre per wash



### End of life

Biodegrades or never



**TEN IS BEST,  
ZERO IS WORST**

No fibre here is perfect and none is beyond saving. A 9.5 bought carelessly and worn twice still beats nothing, and a 2.0 you already own and wear for a decade is not a failure. Packaged garments sold in India must declare fibre composition by law, so if a seller will not tell you the mix, you already have your answer.



# The full scorecard

| SCORE |             | MATERIAL                                                  | IN INDIA   | ONE-LINE VERDICT                             |
|-------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 9.5   | <div></div> | <b>Hemp</b><br>CANNABIS SATIVA, INDUSTRIAL                | ✗ HARD     | Almost no water, no pesticide, builds soil   |
| 9     | <div></div> | <b>Linen</b><br>FLAX                                      | ✓ EASY     | Rain-fed, whole plant used, lasts decades    |
| 8.5   | <div></div> | <b>Ramie</b><br>CHINA GRASS                               | ✗ HARD     | Linen's profile, needs more processing       |
| 8.5   | <div></div> | <b>Khadi</b><br>HAND-SPUN, HAND-WOVEN COTTON              | ✓ EASY     | Near-zero process energy, rural livelihoods  |
| 8.5   | <div></div> | <b>Recycled cotton</b><br>POST-INDUSTRIAL / POST-CONSUMER | ⌚ MODERATE | Skips farming entirely; short fibres         |
| 8.5   | <div></div> | <b>Recycled wool</b><br>SHODDY YARN                       | ✓ EASY     | India already does this at huge scale        |
| 8     | <div></div> | <b>Jute</b><br>GOLDEN FIBRE                               | ✓ EASY     | Grows almost anywhere, coarse for apparel    |
| 7.5   | <div></div> | <b>Lyocell / TENCEL</b><br>CLOSED-LOOP WOOD PULP          | ⌚ MODERATE | 99% solvent recovery; not strictly natural   |
| 7     | <div></div> | <b>Organic cotton</b><br>GOTS CERTIFIED                   | ✓ EASY     | No synthetic pesticide, still thirsty        |
| 7     | <div></div> | <b>Alpaca</b><br>SOUTH AMERICAN CAMELID                   | ✗ HARD     | Low-impact grazer, near-zero Indian supply   |
| 6.5   | <div></div> | <b>Wool</b><br>EXTENSIVE / REGENERATIVE                   | ⌚ MODERATE | Methane and land, but decades of wear        |
| 6.5   | <div></div> | <b>Eri silk</b><br>AHIMSA / PEACE SILK                    | ⌚ MODERATE | Moth is not killed; Assam-grown              |
| 6     | <div></div> | <b>Pashmina</b><br>CHANGTHANGI GOAT, LADAKH               | ⌚ MODERATE | Tiny volumes, fragile grassland, faked a lot |
| 5.5   | <div></div> | <b>Mulberry silk</b><br>BOMBYX MORI                       | ✓ EASY     | Small land use, heavy water and energy       |
| 5.5   | <div></div> | <b>Modal</b><br>CERTIFIED BEECH PULP                      | ⌚ MODERATE | Better than viscose, still chemical-heavy    |
| 4     | <div></div> | <b>Conventional cotton</b><br>BT / HYBRID                 | ✓ EASY     | 2700 L a shirt and pesticide-hungry          |
| 4     | <div></div> | <b>Leather, veg-tanned</b><br>BARK TANNED                 | ⌚ MODERATE | Cattle footprint, but 20-year lifespan       |
| 4     | <div></div> | <b>Recycled polyester</b><br>RPET FROM BOTTLES            | ✓ EASY     | Best plastic. Still sheds microfibre         |
| 3     | <div></div> | <b>Viscose / rayon</b><br>CONVENTIONAL, LIVA-TYPE         | ✓ EASY     | Forest risk and carbon-disulfide process     |
| 3     | <div></div> | <b>Bamboo fabric</b><br>= BAMBOO VISCOSE                  | ✓ EASY     | Marketed as natural. It is chemical rayon    |
| 3     | <div></div> | <b>Cashmere</b><br>CHANGRA / MONGOLIAN GOAT               | ⌚ MODERATE | Overgrazing is desertifying grasslands       |
| 2.5   | <div></div> | <b>Leather, chrome-tanned</b><br>STANDARD COMMERCIAL      | ✓ EASY     | Chromium effluent plus cattle footprint      |
| 2     | <div></div> | <b>Polyester</b><br>VIRGIN PET                            | ✓ EASY     | Fossil feedstock, permanent microfibre       |
| 1.5   | <div></div> | <b>Nylon / polyamide</b><br>PA6, PA66                     | ✓ EASY     | Production emits nitrous oxide               |
| 1.5   | <div></div> | <b>Poly-cotton blend</b><br>PC 65/35 ETC.                 | ✓ EASY     | Both footprints, and unrecyclable            |
| 1     | <div></div> | <b>Acrylic</b><br>PAN                                     | ✓ EASY     | The worst microfibre shedder measured        |
| 1     | <div></div> | <b>Elastane / spandex</b><br>LYCRA, SPANDEX               | ✓ EASY     | 2% ruins a whole garment for recycling       |
| 0.5   | <div></div> | <b>PVC 'vegan leather'</b><br>POLYVINYL CHLORIDE          | ✓ EASY     | Plasticisers and dioxins. Dies in 2 years    |

8.0-10

BUY FREELY

6.0-7.9

CERTIFY IT

4.0-5.9

KEEP IT LONG

2.0-3.9

RARELY

0-1.9

ONLY IF FORCED



# Plant fibres



## THE PATTERN

Every fibre here is a fast-growing stalk plant that lives on rain instead of irrigation and grows without much spray. That single fact is what separates them from cotton.

**9.5**
**Hemp** CANNABIS SATIVA

Needs roughly a quarter of cotton's water, no pesticide, and returns nutrients to the soil it grows in. Yields two to three times more fibre per hectare than cotton, and softens with every wash rather than wearing out.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

✗ HARD

Licence-only cultivation. Uttarakhand first, then Uttar Pradesh. Supply is tiny and mostly online.

Rs 600-1,500 / metre

**9**
**Linen** FLAX

Rain-fed, almost no spray, and the entire plant is used with nothing wasted. Wears for decades and biodegrades completely. Creasing is the only real cost, and that is a matter of taste.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

Sold everywhere, but India grows almost no flax. Yarn is imported from Europe, then woven here.

Rs 350-1,200 / metre

**8.5**
**Khadi** HAND-SPUN, HAND-WOVEN COTTON

The same cotton fibre, spun and woven by hand. That removes the mill electricity, the boiler and most of the processing water. It also breathes better than mill cotton in Indian heat.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan outlets and state emporiums. Look for the KVIC Khadi Mark.

Rs 150-500 / metre

**8.5**
**Ramie** CHINA GRASS

Linen's profile with even greater strength and natural resistance to bacteria. The catch is degumming: turning stalk into yarn takes real chemistry and labour, which is why it stays niche.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

✗ HARD

Grown in the North East, but rarely reaches retail pure. Usually blended into handloom cloth.

Rs 400-900 / metre

**8**
**Jute** THE GOLDEN FIBRE

Grows on rain alone almost anywhere, absorbs carbon fast while growing, and rots down to nothing. India is the world's largest producer. Too coarse for most clothing, so it lives in bags and jackets.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

Everywhere, and cheap. West Bengal, Bihar and Assam. Apparel-grade blends are growing.

Rs 60-200 / metre



## THE HONEST TRADE-OFF

The best fibres are the hardest to buy in India. Hemp is licence-restricted and costs six to eight times what cotton costs. Khadi is the exception, and the reason it earns its place here: an 8.5 available in every state, at a price close to ordinary cotton.



# Recycled and animal

8.5

## Recycled cotton POST-INDUSTRIAL AND POST-CONSUMER

Skips farming entirely, which is where nearly all of cotton's damage sits. Fibres come out shorter, so it is usually blended with virgin fibre to hold together.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

🕒 MODERATE

Panipat in Haryana is one of the world's largest textile recycling clusters.

Rs 120-350 / metre

8.5

## Recycled wool SHODDY YARN

Old woollens shredded and re-spun. No new grazing, no new methane, no scouring of raw fleece. India has quietly done this at scale for decades.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

Panipat blankets and shawls. Increasingly used by Indian outerwear labels too.

Rs 200-600 / metre

7.5

## Lyocell TENCEL, BIRLA EXCEL

Wood pulp dissolved in a solvent recovered at about 99% and reused. Soft, drapes beautifully, biodegrades. It is regenerated rather than natural, and only as good as the forest behind it.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

🕒 MODERATE

Birla Excel is made in India, TENCEL imported. Growing fast in shirting and innerwear.

Rs 300-800 / metre

7

## Organic cotton GOTS CERTIFIED

No synthetic pesticide or fertiliser, healthier soil, and a far safer crop for the farming family. Still thirsty, and lower yields mean more land per shirt. Rain-fed scores near 8, irrigated closer to 6.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

India grows roughly half the world's organic cotton, yet most of it is exported.

Rs 200-600 / metre

6.5

## Wool EXTENSIVE OR REGENERATIVE GRAZING

Methane and land are real costs. Against them: decades of wear, rarely washed, insulates when wet, biodegrades. Impact per wear is genuinely low. Intensive systems drop this to 5.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

🕒 MODERATE

Most Indian wool is carpet grade. Apparel wool is largely imported merino.

Rs 500-1,800 / metre

6.5

## Eri silk AHIMSA OR PEACE SILK

The moth leaves the cocoon before the silk is taken, so nothing is boiled alive. Reared on castor leaves in the North East with minimal input. Warmer and more matte than mulberry silk.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

🕒 MODERATE

Assam and Meghalaya, through North East emporiums and online.

Rs 800-2,500 / metre

6

## Pashmina CHANGTHANGI GOAT, LADAKH

Tiny volumes, hand-combed, and a real shawl outlives its owner. The risk is the Changthang grassland itself, which is fragile and under grazing pressure.

FINDING IT IN INDIA

🕒 MODERATE

GI-tagged Kashmir Pashmina only. Under Rs 5,000 it is not pashmina.

Rs 8,000-40,000 a shawl



### CERTIFY IT OR IGNORE IT

In this band the certificate is the product. Uncertified "organic" cotton, uncertified lyocell and uncertified pashmina are simply the conventional version with a better price tag. GOTS, the Silk Mark, the Woolmark and a named GI cluster are the only things separating the two.



# The middle



## THE BIG DECEPTION

Viscose, modal and bamboo are the three fabrics most often sold in India as natural, eco or plant-based. All three are chemically regenerated, and the plant they started as tells you nothing about their footprint.

**5.5**

### Mulberry silk BOMBYX MORI

Tiny land use and fully biodegradable, but reeling is water and energy heavy and the pupae are killed in the cocoon. A silk saree is also kept for generations, which counts for a great deal.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

**EASY**

Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal. The Silk Mark rules out polyester fakes.

Rs 600-3,000 / metre

**5.5**

### Modal CERTIFIED BEECH PULP

A softer cousin of viscose, made with recovered chemicals when it comes from a reputable producer. Uncertified modal is just viscose with a nicer name.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

**MODERATE**

Common in Indian innerwear and loungewear. Lenzing Modal is worth paying for.

Rs 250-600 / metre

**4**

### Conventional cotton BT AND HYBRID

Around 2,700 litres of water for one t-shirt. Cotton covers about 2.5% of the world's farmland but takes a far larger share of its insecticide. It does at least biodegrade, and it is what most of India wears.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

**EASY**

Everywhere, at every price. The cheapest way to avoid plastic entirely.

Rs 80-250 / metre

**4**

### Leather, veg-tanned BARK TANNED

Carries the full cattle footprint, which is heavy. Against it: bark tanning avoids chromium effluent, and good shoes last fifteen to twenty years, which almost nothing else here does.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

**MODERATE**

Small tanneries in Tamil Nadu and Kanpur. You have to ask for it by name.

Rs 2,500-9,000 a pair

**3**

### Viscose RAYON, CONVENTIONAL

Dissolved wood pulp made using carbon disulfide, a solvent dangerous to mill workers and often released untreated. Linked to logging of ancient and endangered forest.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

**EASY**

Surat is the hub. It is in most cheap printed kurtis, sarees and dress fabric.

Rs 70-220 / metre

**3**

### Bamboo fabric = BAMBOO VISCOSE

Bamboo the plant is excellent. Bamboo the fabric is almost always viscose: the stalk is dissolved in the same harsh chemistry and none of the plant's virtue survives it.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

**EASY**

Sold widely in India as an eco product. Treat every bamboo label as viscose.

Rs 200-500 / metre

**3**

### Cashmere CHANGRA AND MONGOLIAN GOAT

Each goat gives a few hundred grams a year, so demand has multiplied herd sizes. Goats pull grass out by the root, and overgrazing has driven serious desertification across Mongolia.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

**MODERATE**

Some Ladakhi and Himachali supply. Most retail cashmere here is imported or fake.

Rs 6,000-30,000 a piece

**2.5**

### Leather, chrome-tanned STANDARD COMMERCIAL

The cattle footprint plus a tanning process using chromium salts. Where effluent treatment is weak, that chromium reaches groundwater. About 85% of world leather is tanned this way.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

**EASY**

The default in Indian footwear and bags. Kanpur and Ambur effluent is a known issue.

Rs 800-4,000 a pair





# The plastics



## THE INDIAN REALITY

Polyester is not a luxury problem here. It is the cheapest cloth available, and for many households it is the only affordable option. Man-made fibre has now overtaken cotton in Indian wardrobes.

**4**

### Recycled polyester RPET FROM BOTTLES

The best of the plastics. It skips virgin fossil feedstock and diverts bottles, and for a rain jacket or running shirt it is the right call. But it sheds microfibre exactly like virgin polyester, and bottle-to-fabric is a one-way trip, not a loop.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

Common in Indian activewear. Ask for GRS certification, not a claim.

Rs 120-350 / metre

**2**

### Polyester VIRGIN PET

Made from crude oil and gas, and now more than half of all fibre produced on earth. Sheds plastic in every wash, and a discarded polyester shirt outlives the person who bought it by centuries.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

The default fabric of affordable Indian clothing.

Rs 40-120 / metre

**1.5**

### Nylon POLYAMIDE, PA6 AND PA66

Everything polyester does, plus a production route that releases nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas roughly 273 times more warming than carbon dioxide. Extremely strong, which is its only defence.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

Sarees, linings, sportswear, swimwear, umbrellas.

Rs 90-300 / metre

**1.5**

### Poly-cotton blend PC 65/35 AND SIMILAR

The worst of both parents. Cotton's water and pesticide load, polyester's fossil feedstock and shedding, and a mix no recycler can separate.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

School uniforms, office shirts, bedsheets. The most-worn fabric in urban India.

Rs 60-180 / metre

**1**

### Acrylic POLYACRYLONITRILE

The heaviest microfibre shedder measured in a domestic wash, releasing several times more than polyester in the same load. Pills badly and is thrown away fast.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

Almost all cheap Indian sweaters, mufflers and "woollen" winterwear.

Rs 100-300 / metre

**1**

### Elastane SPANDEX, LYCRA

Some clothes genuinely need it. Socks, underwear, swimwear and activewear do not work without stretch, and there is no realistic way around that. The problem is elastane in garments that never needed it: shirts, denim, bedsheets. Even 2% means the garment cannot be recycled.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

Unavoidable in socks and activewear. Usually optional in shirting and denim.

adds Rs 20-60 / metre

**0.5**

### PVC 'vegan leather' POLYVINYL CHLORIDE

The floor of this scorecard. Softened with phthalates, releases dioxins when made or burned, and cracks and dies within about two years. Vegan here means plastic.

#### FINDING IT IN INDIA

✓ EASY

Cheap bags, belts, jackets and shoes. PU is marginally better, still plastic.

Rs 150-400 / metre

#### OF INDIAN FIBRE USE

**52%**

is now man-made fibre, ahead of cotton at about 41%.

#### FIBRES PER WASH

**700k**

released by a single six-kilo acrylic load in lab testing.

#### WARMING VS CO<sub>2</sub>

**273×**

the potency of the nitrous oxide released making nylon.



# Microplastics

Plastic microfibre is far too small for any household or municipal filter. Once it leaves your wash water it is gone for good, so reducing it at source is the only lever that exists.

## ✗ What makes it worse

- ✗ **Fleece, brushed and fluffy surfaces.** Loose fibre ends are what break off. Smooth, tightly woven synthetics shed far less.
- ✗ **Hot water and long cycles.** Heat and agitation time both raise fibre loss measurably.
- ✗ **Half-empty drums.** Less fabric means more free movement and more abrasion per garment.
- ✗ **The first few washes.** New synthetic garments shed most when they are new.
- ✗ **Tumble drying.** It sheds again, into the air, on top of the energy it burns.

## ✓ What actually reduces it

- ✓ **Wash synthetics less often.** Air them out instead. Most are washed far more than they need to be.
- ✓ **Cold water, short cycle, full load.** Free, and it cuts your electricity bill at the same time.
- ✓ **Air dry.** The Indian default. Keep it, even once you own a dryer.
- ✓ **A filter bag or drum filter** for the synthetics you already own catches a meaningful share.
- ✓ **Buy fewer new synthetics.** Where you genuinely have a choice, take it. Nothing else here has as much effect.

## 🔍 Where the fibre actually goes



01

### The wash

Abrasion in the drum breaks loose fibre ends off the fabric surface.



02

### The drain

Fibres leave with the grey water. No household filter catches them.



03

### The river

Treatment removes some. What passes through reaches open water.



04

### The food chain

Fish, salt and drinking water all carry measurable microplastic.



05

### Back to you

Found in human blood, lungs and placenta. It does not leave.

## ☀ Three advantages India already has AND IS QUIETLY LOSING



### Air drying is normal

Tumble drying is one of the largest single energy costs in a garment's life, and it sheds fibre a second time into the air. Indian households mostly skip it, which removes a large share of the use-phase footprint before anyone even tries.



### Repair is still cheap

A tailor, a cobbler and a darning are within walking distance in most Indian towns, at a fraction of the price of replacement. Most of the rich world has lost this entirely, and it is the single most valuable sustainability asset the country has.



### Clothes get passed on

Garments move down through families and communities rather than being binned. India also restricts imports of used clothing for domestic resale, so most secondhand supply here is genuinely domestic rather than dumped from abroad.



# Buying it in India

## 🏷️ Marks that mean something



### GOTS

A green tag showing a small white shirt, with a licence number. The only organic claim worth paying for: it covers the farm and every step after it.



### Khadi Mark

A KVIC tag, usually carrying a charkha. Confirms the cloth was genuinely hand-spun and hand-woven, not mill cloth being sold as khadi.



### India Handloom

A registered government mark for hand-woven cloth, with a number. India Handloom is the stricter, quality-graded version of the Handloom Mark.



### Silk Mark

A small hang tag from the Central Silk Board carrying a numbered hologram. The quickest way to rule out polyester sold as silk.



### Woolmark

The famous looping skein of yarn. Plain Woolmark means all new wool. Woolmark Blend and Wool Blend mean progressively less of it.



### GRS

Global Recycled Standard, always naming a certifying body and a number. Verifies recycled content claims, including recycled polyester.



### GI tag

Names the cluster the cloth actually comes from: Chanderi, Maheshwari, Kanjeevaram, Pochampally, Kota Doria, Muga, Kashmir Pashmina and more.

## ✗ Words that mean nothing



### Bamboo

Almost always viscose. The word names the raw material, not the process that mattered.



### Vegan leather

Usually PVC or PU. Vegan is an animal-welfare claim, not an environmental one.



### Eco, green, conscious

Unregulated marketing words. No standard behind them, no audit, no meaning.



### Natural fibre

Viscose and modal both start as plants. It says nothing about chemistry or water.



### 100% pure

Pure what? A composition percentage is the only statement that binds a seller.



### Pashmina under Rs 5,000

Real Ladakhi pashmina cannot be made at that price. It is viscose or acrylic.

## ₹ What it really costs INDICATIVE 2026 RETAIL, PER METRE

| FABRIC                     | PER METRE    | VS COTTON | WHAT THAT BUYS YOU                                                          |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Polyester</b>           | Rs 40–120    | 0.5×      | The cheapest cloth in India, and the highest lifetime cost to everyone else |
| <b>Conventional cotton</b> | Rs 80–250    | 1×        | The baseline. Biodegradable, thirsty, available everywhere                  |
| <b>Khadi</b>               | Rs 150–500   | 1.5–2×    | A 4.5-point score jump for well under double the price                      |
| <b>Organic cotton</b>      | Rs 200–600   | 2–2.5×    | The same feel, no pesticide, and a safer crop for the farmer                |
| <b>Lyocell</b>             | Rs 300–800   | 3–4×      | The drape of viscose without the chemistry behind it                        |
| <b>Linen</b>               | Rs 350–1,200 | 4–5×      | Twenty-plus years of wear, and the best fabric for Indian summers           |
| <b>Hemp</b>                | Rs 600–1,500 | 6–8×      | The top score on the card, at a price most people cannot justify yet        |



### Government and state

Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan outlets and state emporiums in every major city. The best value in the country for khadi, handloom cotton, wool and North East silk.



### Buy at the cluster

Going direct gets you the real cloth at the real price: Chanderi and Maheshwar for cotton-silk, Bhagalpur for tussar and linen, Sualkuchi for muga and eri, Kota for doria.



### Online and niche

Hemp and certified organic cotton are mostly online, from small labels. Ask any of them for the certificate number before paying the premium.



# The action card

## What to buy, by garment

|                  |                                                       |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Everyday t-shirt | Organic cotton, or plain cotton kept for years        |
| Shirt or kurta   | Linen, khadi or handloom cotton                       |
| Saree            | Handloom cotton, eri silk or a GI-tagged weave        |
| Summer wear      | Linen and khadi. Nothing beats them in Indian heat    |
| Winter wear      | Real wool or recycled wool, never acrylic             |
| Activewear       | Recycled polyester. Accept it, and wash it rarely     |
| Rainwear         | Recycled polyester or nylon. Buy once, keep ten years |
| Denim            | Cotton, with as little elastane as you can find       |
| Innerwear        | Organic cotton or lyocell                             |
| Bags and shoes   | Veg-tanned leather, canvas or jute. Never PVC         |
| Bedsheets        | 100% cotton. Poly-cotton is the default, so ask       |
| Kids' clothes    | Cotton or khadi. They outgrow it, so pass it on       |

## The five-second tag check

- 1 Find the **composition tag** before you look at the price.
- 2 **One fibre if you can.** Two or more usually means it can never be recycled.
- 3 **Elastane?** Fine in socks and activewear, which need the stretch. Worth skipping in shirts, denim and bedsheets, which do not.
- 4 **Acrylic or woollen?** They are not the same word. Check which one it says.
- 5 **Ask for the certificate number** if you are paying an organic or recycled premium.
- 6 **Then the real question:** will I wear this thirty times?

## When you are done with it



### Repair

A hem, a zip, a seam or a sole costs a fraction of replacement and buys years.



### Pass on

Family, staff, a neighbour, a resale app. Someone else's wear counts too.



### Repurpose

Cotton becomes cleaning cloth, patchwork or quilt filling.



### Recycle last

Single-fibre only, which is exactly why rule two matters.



### IF YOU CHANGE ONE THING

Choose single-fibre where you reasonably can, and do not throw out the plastic you already own. Replacing a working polyester shirt with a new cotton one makes things worse, not better. Wear it out first.

**SOURCES AND METHOD**

Scores are a weighted read of published life-cycle assessment literature across the seven axes on page 02. Drawn from peer-reviewed comparative LCAs of cotton, polyester, viscose and lyocell; Napper & Thompson and later microfibre shedding studies; Textile Exchange fibre data; the India Ministry of Textiles National Household Survey 2024; KVIC, Central Silk Board and Textiles Committee certification schemes; and NDPS Act state hemp licensing. Prices are indicative mid-2026 Indian retail and vary by city, weave and seller. This guide is free to share.

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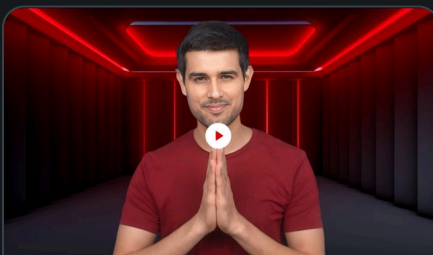
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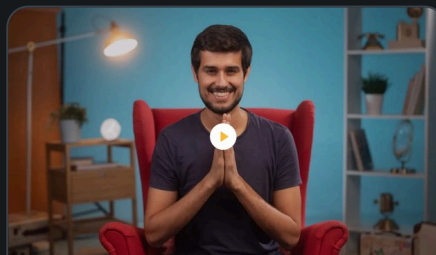
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