

**Speech by Ambassador Subhash Gupta**  
**Indian Textile and Handloom Fashion Show**  
**[Paramaribo, 11 April 2025]**

**Members of the Indo-Surinamese Community,  
Friends of India, distinguished Guests, and friends.**  
**Namaskar, good evening, Shubh Sandhya**

It gives immense pleasure to see you all as part of this august gathering here at the Swami Vivekanand Culture Centre that has an indelible imprint in the art and culture circle in Paramaribo.

India boasts a rich handloom and textile tradition that is deep rooted in its history and civilization. Archeological evidence suggests that Indians acquainted with textile weaving and dying during the Indus Valley Civilization date back to 5000-7000 years ago. In fact, the oldest evidence of cotton in the world was traced to 9000 years ago.

**Herodotus**, an ancient Greek historian, mentions Indian cotton in the 5th century BCE as "a wool exceeding in beauty and goodness that of sheep. The cotton plant in India was referred to as "wool that grew on plants" for a long time by the Greeks.

In fact, the ladies in Roman aristocracy were obsessed and completely enchanted by Indian fabric due to its softness, lightness, attractiveness in design and gracefulness when worn.

The Roman historian of the 1st century CE, **Pliny** lamented that a hundred million sesterces [equal at the time to 15 million Indian rupees] worth of gold is draining to India every year. Subsequently, a ban was imposed on Indian muslin around the 1st century CE.

**Many elaborative references** were subsequently made by Chinese, Arabian and European travelers about Indian textile tradition and its intricacy throughout the mediaeval and modern periods. Frederick William-I banned Indienne in Marseilles in 1580 CE. The ban was intense with heavy fines imposed on those found guilty of wearing such fabrics.

**Turkish-Bulunmaz Hint Kumas**-Scarce commodities like hindi idiom Gular ke fool

India is a land of diversity and it also reflects in its handloom and textile tradition that is deeply rooted in Indian culture, often used in weddings, festivals, and religious ceremonies, and reflecting local customs and traditions.

A piece of Indian textile and handloom itself speaks loudly about its regional character and uniqueness, associated with its culture and tradition. Each region has its own traditions and adopts base materials ranging from cotton, silk, wool and jute to manmade fibers, weaving methodology, design and pattern, and dying technology.

- **Weaving tech**-Kani and Suzeni style, Panchachuli, Kalamkari, Chikenkari Zardoji, Jhalar, Patchwork, Kota Doria, Kantha
- **Dyeing**- Bandhej, Sangneri and Bagru (Rajasthan), Ikat (Andhra), Bandhani, Ajrakn (Gujarat), Block painting-Chhapa

- **Silk-** Banarsi, Baluchari (WB), Chanderi, Bhagalpuri, Tussar (Jharkhand) Mysore, Kanjivaram, Paithani (Maharashtra), Sambhalpuri, Pochampally (AP), Patola (Gujarat), Muga (Assam), Kasavu (Kerala), Kosha (Chhattisgarh), Sualkuchi (Assam), Apatani (Arunachal Pradesh) Moirang Phee (Manipur), Pachhra (Tripura), Mizu Puan (Mizoram) Eri (Meghalaya) etc.
- **Cotton-** Zamdani (WB), Tanti, Kunbi, Ilkal (Karnataka)
- **Wool-** Pashmina (Kashmir), Kinnauri (Himachal), Lepcha (Sikkim)
- **Jute-** Tanti

The textile sector provides the second largest employment after the agriculture sector in India with direct employment to over 45 million people directly and 100 million indirectly, and it is the backbone of small- and medium scale enterprises. The sector is inclusive in terms of its extent in rural areas and participation of the women workforce. Women are the frontrunners and contribute about 70% of the workforce.

India is the second largest producer of silk and also the largest consumer of silk in the world. India has a share of 3.91% of the global trade in textiles and apparel. India is the 6th largest exporter of Textiles & Apparel in the world. Major textile and apparel export destinations for India are the USA and the EU, with around a 47% share in total textile and apparel exports.

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