

# Organic Clothing



The coming generations have their existence at stake and the world might end earlier than we assume, thanks to the pain and suffering that we cause to the planet we live on! Constant deforestation, the menace of non-biodegradable substances, endless environmental pollution, food chain contamination are merely a few issues not so difficult to name and define. It is high time we went green and organic.

One gradually pacing contender in the eco-friendly industry is Organic Clothing. The term 'organic clothing' may bring to your mind handspun, coarse-textured *khadi* fabric. You often associate it with the 1970s' concept of Indian traditional wear, which does not appear to be much in vogue. But this is not true. Manufacturers of organic fabrics and alternative fibres across the world have started to innovate and offer you a variety of styles, textures and colours. And it is all eco-friendly.

## Why Organic Clothing

Studies by the *Indian Textile Journal* have found that the widely spread textile industries generate a substantial amount of waste in the form of water, energy and hazardous chemicals every year from manufacturing, dyeing and finishing processes. This severely damages the environment through water body pollution, air emission of volatile organic compounds as well as excessive noise and foul odour.

Organic fabrics are manufactured using all-natural and non-synthetic materials. Organic clothing materials come from crops that have not been genetically modified or treated with synthetic or chemical pesticides and fertilizers. The criteria for labelling a given fabric or textile material as organic follow a cradle-to-grave approach, i.e. from raw material extraction, manufacturing, distribution, usage and disposal. A few varieties available are:

- 1. Naturally Coloured Cotton:** Your normal perception of the cotton crop is the homogeneously white buds. However, another variety of cotton is the one naturally grown in varieties of colours like mauve, red, yellow and orange. This earlier practice has been recently revived in the modern market, considering its significance in reducing harmful environmental impact. Such naturally coloured cotton does not require synthetic colouring and the colour does not fade that soon as compared to synthetically dyed fabrics.
- 2. Bamboo Fabric:** Heavily pulped bamboo grass is used in making bamboo fabrics. Bamboo grows faster and that too without the need of pesticides or agrochemicals. It is 100 per cent biodegradable and has a silky feel.

## 3. Organic Hemp:

Hemp is a crop similar to bamboo, resistant to most pests and diseases and requires little water to grow. Hemp fibres are very much durable and stronger than cotton fibre. Because these fibres are fundamentally coarse in texture, their main uses were limited to making ropes. However, modern technology and breeding practices have made this fibre more flexible, soft and finer to use for clothing.



- 4. Soy Fabric:** Fibres of the soy fabric are obtained from the hulls of soybeans, which is a manufacturing byproduct. The soy fabric is mainly biodegradable, thus leaving the least impact on the environment.



Soy fabrics are moisture absorbent, anti-bacterial and UV resistant.

- 5. Organic Cotton:** Organic cotton is the most popular organic fabric, particularly in the Indian organic textile industry. It is grown without genetic modification to the crops and without the use of any pesticides, fertilizers and other synthetic agro-chemicals to the land. Organic cotton is soft to touch and keeps you away from skin allergies. According to the *Organic Trade Association*, India is one of the largest producers of organic cotton in the world.

## Identifying Organic Clothing

To identify genuine organic clothing, look for an appropriate certification mark:

Global Organic Textile Standards (GOTS) is a worldwide accepted standard for eco-friendly textiles and fabrics. It is applicable to all the processes in textiles and provides demanding environmental as well as social criteria. Indian manufacturers such as Organic Clothing India, Do U Speak Green, Organic Clothes India, etc. use this certification mark.

'Ecomark' is an eco-labelling scheme, launched by the Government of India in 1991, for easy identification of environment-friendly products. The Government of India has notified final criteria for 16 product categories which include textiles. The criteria for Ecomark are applicable to processes from raw material extraction to manufacturing to disposal of the product.

Source: [indiantextilejournal.com](http://indiantextilejournal.com); [eartheasy.com](http://eartheasy.com)

