

Hot off the rack: organic cotton clothing

- [Zubeda Hamid](#)



Special Arrangement

There is a large untapped potential in India for organic clothing, say industry experts. Photo: Ethicus



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Hand-spun, naturally-dyed and directly-sourced garments gain popularity

At a small sale of organic cotton clothes V. Rama recently held at her house in Velachery recently, the response was stupendous.

“Many of my friends in the neighbourhood were interested. Organic cotton is soft, its production does not damage anything anywhere and so, it’s guilt-free clothing. One buyer from Tiruvanmiyur even told me that by buying this, he felt like he was directly helping farmers,” said Ms. Rama.

Clothes made from organic cotton — hand spun, hand woven, coloured with natural dyes and brought to the customer without middlemen — are slowly gaining ground in the city.

‘Ethicus’, a sustainable fashion brand under the Pollachi-based ‘Appachi Eco-Logic Cotton’, sells sarees at several outlets in the city, including Nalli Silks and Naidu Hall.

“‘Ethicus’ is more than just a label — it’s a lifestyle choice of ethical consumerism. When people realise that our products don’t bleed, shrink or run, and are organic too, they become repeat customers,” said Mani Chinnaswamy, partner of ‘Appachi Eco-Logic Cotton Pvt. Ltd.’

“There is a large untapped potential in India for organic clothing,” he said.

At ‘Tula’, a retail outlet (combined with an organic food store) in Kasturibai Nagar, there are not many clothes left. “Most of our men’s line

and almost all of our women's line has been sold out. Students, homemakers and working professionals, all buy them. Many buy fabric from us and get clothes stitched," said D. Gopi, a volunteer.

The clothes at 'Tula', a brand brought out by a group of volunteers, are made from organic, rain-fed desi cotton grown in Karnataka.

It is organic all the way from the farm to the store, said Ananthoo, coordinator, Safe Food Alliance, one of the volunteers.

'Tula' clothes are also displayed at exhibitions held regularly in the city. "We make clothes from just about 15 tonnes of cotton, as this is still an experiment. We have deliberately priced our clothes on the lower end to encourage all sections of the society to buy them," he said.

Most of the proceeds from 'Tula's' sales go straight back to the farmers, weavers and spinners.

Uma Prajapati, founder of the Auroville-based 'Upasana' and its organic clothing line 'Paruthi', however, has different views on pricing.

"Our clothes are priced for their design. While youngsters are definitely becoming more environmentally conscious, people are still primarily attracted to design. And if the design is good, they are willing to pay any price for it. The fact that it's organic is a bonus and helps promote conscious fashion," she said.

The clientele in Chennai is slowly growing more conscious, she said. Paruthi supplies to over 20 outlets across the country, including Amethyst and others in Chennai.

Printable version | Feb 25, 2016 9:31:47 AM | <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/chen-society/hot-off-the-rack-organic-cotton-clothing/article6242678.ece>

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