

## Interview With Siddharth Gupta

**Siddharth Gupta**Founder  
Indian Hempstore

▶ 0:00 / 17:30



### Every Product On Our Platform Is Of The Highest Quality And Authenticity

Indianhempstore.com is an e-commerce marketplace dedicated to the hemp community and consumers seeking hemp-based products. Founded after a transformative visit to the Himalayas in 2017, it connects over 200 industries, helping them digitalise and reach the right customers with a diverse range of hemp products. Founder Siddharth Gupta speaks to Fibre2Fashion about hemp clothing and its future.

**Q What are the key regulatory challenges facing the hemp fabric industry, both locally and globally?**

**A.** Key regulatory challenges facing the hemp fabric industry are:

**Legal Status and Classification:** Differentiating hemp from marijuana is crucial, as both come from the cannabis plant but have different uses and legal statuses. This distinction is not always clear in legislation, leading to confusion and restrictive regulations.

**Licensing and Permits:** Obtaining the necessary licenses and permits for growing, processing, and selling hemp can be complicated and varies significantly by region.

**THC Limits:** Strict regulations on THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) content (usually required to be below 0.3%) must be met, requiring rigorous testing and compliance measures that can be costly and time-consuming.

**Inconsistent Regulations:** Regulatory frameworks differ widely between countries and even within regions of the same country, making it challenging for businesses to navigate and comply with varying requirements.

**Import and Export Restrictions:** Variations in international regulations can complicate the import and export of hemp products, limiting market access and growth opportunities.

**Quality and Safety Standards:** Ensuring compliance with different quality and safety standards across regions can be a challenge, necessitating extensive testing and certification processes.

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**Q What are the key regulatory opportunities for the hemp industry?**

**A.** Key regulatory opportunities for the hemp fabric industry are:

**Clear distinctions:** Efforts to differentiate hemp from marijuana in legal terms can lead to more favourable regulations and less restrictive oversight, facilitating industry growth.

**Harmonisation of Standards:** International efforts to harmonise regulations and standards for hemp products can simplify compliance, reduce costs, and open up new markets for hemp fabrics.

**Government Support:** Increased recognition of hemp's economic and environmental benefits can lead to government incentives, subsidies, and support programmes that promote hemp cultivation and processing.

**Research and Development Funding:** Regulatory frameworks that support and fund research and development can drive innovation in hemp processing and product development, enhancing the industry's competitiveness.

**Sustainable Development Goals:** Alignment with global sustainability goals and policies can position hemp as a key material in the push for more sustainable industries, attracting investment and regulatory support.

**Public Education Initiatives:** Government-led public education campaigns about the benefits of hemp can improve consumer acceptance and demand, leading to a more favourable regulatory environment.

**Trade Agreements:** Trade agreements that include provisions for hemp products can enhance market access and reduce barriers to international trade.

**Economic Development Programmes:** Inclusion of hemp cultivation and processing in economic

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Red Stag Fulfillment

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**Sharif Tarequr Rahman**Director  
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**C Devarajan & P Raajashekar**Vice Chairman & Managing Director  
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development programmes can stimulate rural economies and create job opportunities, garnering regulatory and political support.

By addressing the earlier mentioned challenges and capitalising on the opportunities, the hemp fabric industry can achieve significant growth and contribute to sustainable development goals both locally and globally.

#### Q. Can you tell us about the inspiration behind starting Indian Hempstore and your journey so far?

- A. The inspiration behind starting Indian Hempstore came from a deep appreciation for the versatility and sustainability of hemp. Hemp is an incredible plant with a rich history in India, known for its numerous benefits ranging from nutrition to textiles, and even wellness products. Almost 25,000+ products can be made through hemp, solving the basic human needs of roti, kapda, makaan (food, clothing, shelter). Our journey began with the desire to reintroduce this ancient crop into modern lifestyles, promoting its use as a sustainable alternative to traditional materials and products.
- We invested 5 years in R&D, sourcing the best quality hemp, partnering with other hemp companies and building a strong network to meet the high product standards.
- Currently, we have partnered with 40 hemp companies in India, aiming to reach over 100 by the end of 2024. This expansion allows us to ensure product quality, optimise resources, conduct demand analysis, refine production and farming techniques, and collaborate closely with state and Central governments to develop effective corporate policies.
- We have built a community of like-minded individuals who share our vision for a greener future. It is a young team of 15 leaders hired from multiple premium institutions, who are working day and night to create the right awareness among youth and providing quality products and services to customers.
- Indian Hempstore has been representing Uttarakhand Government from past 2 years and have been featured in all commercials of Invest in Uttarakhand & Startup Uttarakhand, making us a key startup for the state. We are also now the first hemp marketplace platform in India which is funded by IIT institutions.

#### Q. What sets Indian Hempstore apart from other similar platforms in the market?

- A. What sets Indian Hempstore apart from other similar platforms in the market is our unwavering commitment to quality, sustainability, and education, along with our strong network and pioneering achievements. Here are the key factors that differentiate us:
- Premium Quality Products:** We source the finest hemp and ensure that all our products meet stringent quality standards. From cultivation to manufacturing, every step is monitored to deliver products that are not only effective but also safe and reliable.
- Sustainability Focus:** We prioritise eco-friendly practices in all aspects of our business, from sourcing raw materials to packaging. Our goal is to minimise our environmental footprint and promote a more sustainable lifestyle.
- Extensive Product Range:** We offer a diverse range of hemp-based products, including clothing, accessories, health supplements, and wellness items.
- Educational Initiatives:** We believe in educating consumers about the benefits of hemp. Through our blog, social media, and community events, we provide valuable information on the uses, benefits, and sustainability of hemp, helping to dispel myths and misconceptions.
- Community Engagement:** By fostering a sense of community, we encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences, creating a supportive network for those interested in hemp and sustainable living.
- Innovative Approaches:** We are constantly exploring new ways to incorporate hemp into everyday products, making sustainable choices more accessible and appealing.
- Ethical Practices:** Ethical business practices are fundamental to us. We work closely with farmers and producers to ensure fair trade and support local communities.
- Strong Network:** We have established a robust network with corporates, IITs, IIMs, and other prestigious institutions. These collaborations enable us to leverage cutting-edge research, innovation, and business acumen.
- Pioneering Achievements:** We are proud to be India's first hemp marketplace platform to receive funding from IIT Ropar and the Department of Science & Technology. This recognition highlights our commitment to innovation and excellence.
- Key Startup for Uttarakhand Government:** Indian Hempstore is recognised as a key startup by the Uttarakhand government. We proudly represent the state and industry across India, showcasing the potential and growth opportunities in the hemp sector.

#### Q. Can you give us an overview of the types of apparel and fabric products you offer?

- A. At Indian Hempstore, we offer a wide range of apparel and fabric products made from high-quality, sustainable hemp. Our collection is designed to cater to diverse tastes and preferences while promoting eco-friendly fashion. Here's an overview of the types of apparel and fabric products we offer:
- T-Shirts and Tops:** Comfortable and breathable, our hemp T-shirts and tops come in various styles, including casual tees, fitted tops, and tank tops. They are perfect for everyday wear, offering both style and sustainability.
- Shirts:** Our hemp shirts are ideal for both formal and casual occasions. Available in different cuts and designs, they are known for their durability and soft texture.
- Pants and Trousers:** We offer a range of hemp pants and trousers that are both stylish and comfortable. They come in various styles such as chinos, joggers, and relaxed-fit trousers, suitable for any occasion.
- Dresses and Skirts:** Our collection includes elegant hemp dresses. From casual sundresses to more formal attire, our pieces are designed to make a statement.
- Activewear:** Designed for comfort and performance, our hemp activewear includes leggings, shorts, and tops that are perfect for workouts and outdoor activities.



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**Q. What are some of your most popular items?**

- A.** Hemp T-Shirts: Our hemp T-shirts are a customer favourite due to their comfort, breathability, and eco-friendly nature. They are versatile and suitable for any casual occasion.
- Hemp Tote Bags: Stylish and practical, our hemp tote bags are extremely popular. They are spacious, sturdy, and perfect for daily use or shopping.
- Hemp Dresses: Our dresses, especially the casual sundresses, are highly popular for their elegance and comfort. They offer a perfect blend of style and sustainability.
- Hemp Scarves: Our scarves are a top choice among customers looking for stylish and warm accessories. They are soft, lightweight, and perfect for any season.
- Hemp Pants: Comfortable and stylish, our hemp pants are a bestseller. They are favoured for their durability and versatility, suitable for both casual and formal settings.
- By offering a diverse range of hemp-based apparel and fabric products, Indian Hempstore caters to customers who seek high-quality, sustainable, and stylish alternatives to conventional fashion.

**Q. How do you ensure the quality and authenticity of hemp-based fashion featured on your platform?**

- A.** Ensuring the quality and authenticity of our hemp-based fashion products is a top priority at Indian Hempstore. Here are the key steps we take to maintain high standards:
- Rigorous Sourcing**
- Trusted Suppliers: We partner with reputable suppliers who share our commitment to quality and sustainability. We thoroughly vet our suppliers to ensure they adhere to ethical and eco-friendly practices.
- Stringent Quality Control**
- Quality Checks at Source: We conduct thorough inspections at the source, ensuring that the raw hemp meets our quality standards before it is processed.
- Manufacturing Oversight: We closely monitor the manufacturing process, from spinning and weaving to dyeing and finishing. Our quality control team ensures that each step meets our stringent criteria.
- Third-Party Testing: We use independent laboratories to test our hemp fabrics for durability, softness, and other key attributes. This helps us guarantee the quality and performance of our products.
- Product Testing**
- Wear Tests and Customer Feedback: Before launching new products, we conduct extensive wear tests and analyse customer feedback to evaluate their comfort, durability, and overall performance. This helps us identify and address any issues before they reach our customers.
- Certifications and Standards**
- Certification Compliance: Our products comply with international standards and certifications for organic and sustainable textiles, such as GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) and OEKO-TEX.
- Authenticity Guarantees: We provide authenticity certificates for our hemp products, ensuring customers that they are purchasing genuine, high-quality hemp items.
- Transparent Practices**
- Clear Labelling: We provide detailed product information, including material composition and care instructions, to help customers make informed choices.
- Sustainability Reports: We publish sustainability reports that outline our sourcing practices, environmental impact, and efforts to promote ethical production.
- By implementing these comprehensive measures, Indian Hempstore ensures that every product featured on our platform is of the highest quality and authenticity, providing our customers with reliable and sustainable fashion choices.

**Q. What has been the customer feedback regarding the comfort and feel of hemp clothing?**

- A.** Customer feedback regarding the comfort and feel of our hemp clothing has been overwhelmingly positive. Here are some of the key points highlighted by our customers:
- Eco-Friendliness: Customers frequently express satisfaction with the environmental benefits of hemp clothing. Knowing that their comfortable attire is also sustainable adds to their positive experience.
- Hypoallergenic: Many customers with sensitive skin or allergies have noted that hemp clothing does not cause irritation, making it a preferred choice for them.
- Versatility: Feedback often highlights the versatility of hemp clothing. Customers enjoy how easily they can dress it up or down, making it suitable for various occasions.

**Q. What are some of the biggest challenges you face in the hemp fabric and apparel industry, especially in terms of sourcing and production?**

- A.** Some of the biggest challenges in the hemp fabric and apparel industry, particularly regarding sourcing and production, include:
- Limited Availability of High-Quality Hemp: Finding reliable sources of high-quality hemp that meet industry standards can be difficult due to limited cultivation and inconsistent quality among suppliers.
- Lack of Processing Infrastructure: The infrastructure for processing raw hemp into usable fibre is underdeveloped in many regions, leading to bottlenecks and higher production costs.
- Supply Chain Inconsistencies: Maintaining a consistent and reliable supply chain is difficult due to variations in crop yield, quality, and availability, which can disrupt production schedules and affect product quality.
- High Production Costs: The cost of producing hemp fabric is often higher than other materials due to labour-intensive processing methods and the need for specialised equipment and facilities.
- Technical Challenges in Fabric Production: Hemp fibres can be tough to work with due to their coarseness and need for specialised treatment processes to create soft, wearable fabrics. This requires advanced

technology and expertise.

Environmental Impact Concerns: While hemp is generally considered eco-friendly, ensuring sustainable farming practices and minimising the environmental impact of processing are ongoing challenges.

Addressing these challenges requires ongoing investment in research, infrastructure development, and efforts to educate consumers and policymakers about the benefits of hemp fabrics.

**Q. Looking towards the future, what long-term goals do you have for Indian Hempstore, and how do you plan to achieve them?**

**A. We plan to do the following:**

Strategic Partnerships: Form alliances with key stakeholders, including farmers, suppliers, industry associations, and research institutions, to strengthen our supply chain and drive innovation.

Investing in R&D: Allocate resources to research and development to stay ahead of industry trends, improve product quality, and develop new applications for hemp.

Educational Campaigns: Launch comprehensive campaigns to educate consumers, policymakers, and stakeholders about the benefits and uses of hemp, dispelling misconceptions and highlighting its diverse applications.

Advocacy Efforts: Collaborate with industry associations and policymakers to advocate for favourable regulations and promote research initiatives within the hemp industry.

Quality Assurance: Maintain stringent quality control measures to ensure the consistency and safety of our products, building consumer trust and loyalty.

Market Expansion: Explore new markets and distribution channels, both domestically and internationally, to expand our reach and customer base.

Innovation and Diversification: Continuously innovate and diversify our product offerings to cater to a wide range of consumer needs, from health and wellness to textiles and renewable energy.

**Q. How do you envision the future of the hemp industry, both nationally and globally?**

**A. Envisioning the Future of the Hemp Industry:**

Nationally (India):

Market Expansion: The hemp industry in India is poised for significant growth. As awareness increases, we expect to see a rise in both the cultivation and consumption of hemp products.

Regulatory Improvements: Clearer distinctions between hemp and marijuana will likely lead to more supportive regulations, simplifying the licensing process and encouraging more farmers and businesses to enter the market.

Sustainable Agriculture: Hemp's environmental benefits will promote its adoption as a sustainable agricultural crop, contributing to rural development and providing farmers with a profitable alternative to traditional crops.

Consumer Acceptance: As educational campaigns and marketing efforts succeed, consumer acceptance of hemp products will grow, expanding the market for hemp textiles, health products, and other applications.

Integration into Various Industries: Hemp will increasingly be integrated into various sectors, including textiles, construction, automotive, and healthcare, due to its versatile applications and sustainability benefits.

Globally:

Global Market Growth: The global hemp industry will experience robust growth, driven by increasing demand for sustainable products and the relaxation of regulatory barriers in key markets such as the United States, Europe, and China.

International Trade: Harmonisation of international regulations and standards will facilitate smoother trade, allowing hemp products to reach a wider audience and boosting global market expansion.

Sustainability Focus: The global shift towards sustainability will further drive the adoption of hemp as an eco-friendly alternative to conventional materials, aligning with global efforts to combat climate change and environmental degradation.

Diverse Applications: The versatility of hemp will see it being used in a wide range of industries, from textiles and paper to bioplastics, construction materials, and pharmaceuticals, broadening its impact and economic potential.

Investment and Funding: Increased investment from both public and private sectors will support the growth of the hemp industry, fostering innovation and expanding production capabilities worldwide.

Public Perception and Education: Continued efforts to educate the public and policymakers about the benefits of hemp will help overcome misconceptions and drive broader acceptance and utilisation of hemp-based products.

Conclusion:

The future of the hemp industry looks promising both nationally in India and globally. With supportive regulatory frameworks, technological advancements, and growing consumer demand for sustainable products, hemp is set to play a significant role in various industries, contributing to a more sustainable and prosperous future.

Interviewer: Shilpi Panjabi

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