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# Dyeing to survive: Textiles that help the Earth breathe

Sustainable practices, if followed by the textile industry, can not only help the planet, but also generate employment and benefit the economy

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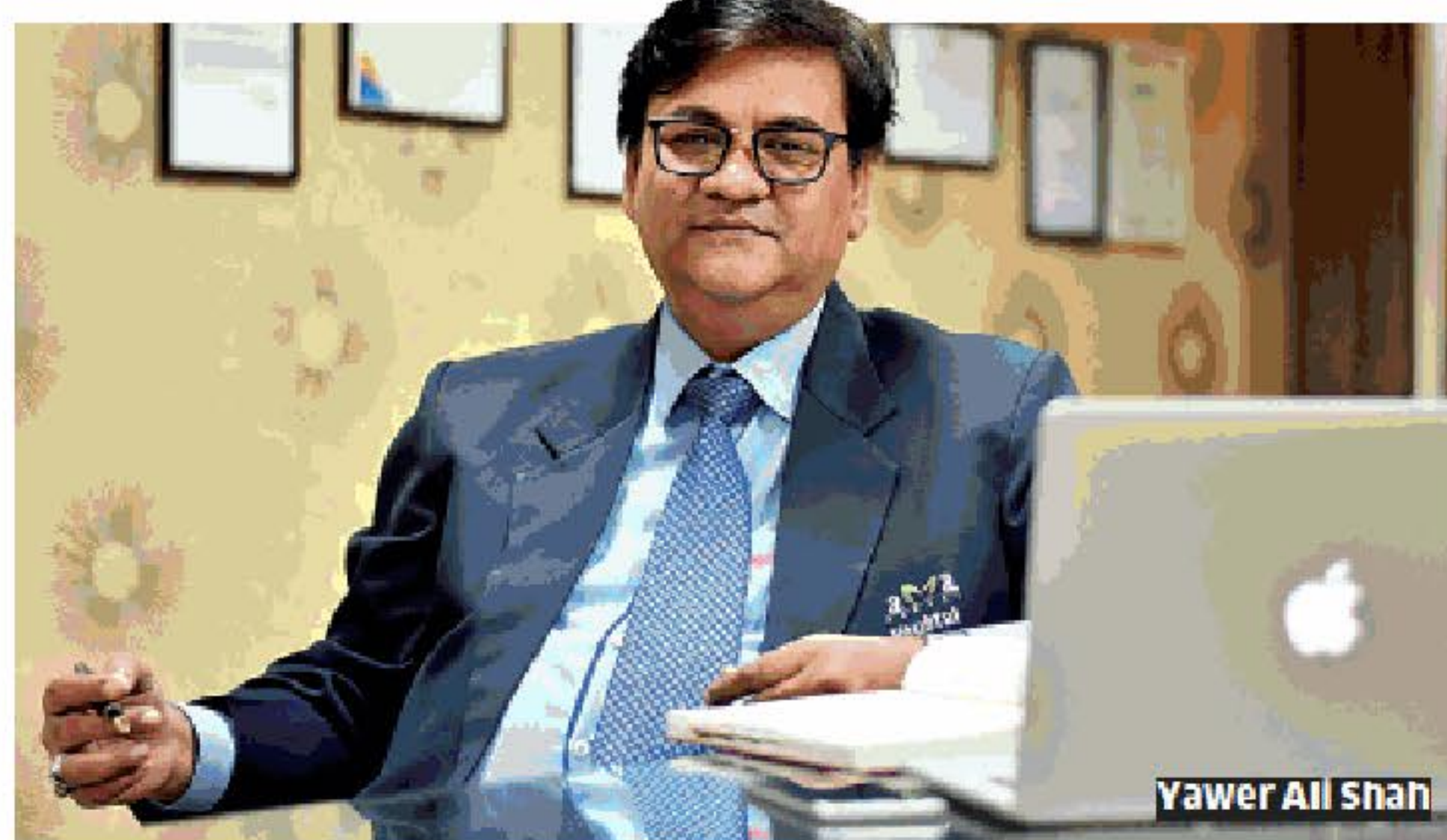
**S**ustainability is not a luxury; it's a necessity in business. Sustainable practices followed by the textile industry will help support the planet. And natural dyes can play an important role in making textiles sustainable. If even 10 per cent of the world's textiles can be produced using natural dyes, it can be a great contribution towards humanity, says Yawer Ali Shah, co-founder, AMA Herbal Laboratories.

## What are natural dyes? Why are they being used in textiles?

Natural dyes are extracted from vegetables, minerals, plants or flowers. Currently, the textile industry is the second largest contributor to environmental pollution because of the wide prevalence of chemical dyes, and denim is seen as the most polluting material. Hence, the need to create eco-friendly textiles was felt.

Bio indigo (natural indigo), a dye extracted from *Indigofera Tinctoria*, is known to impart a deep blue colour to fabrics. Only the leaves of the plant are used since they contain the greatest concentration of dye molecules.

Apart from bio indigo, AMA Herbal works on commercialisation of other natural colourants as well, such as mellow (a by-product of pomegranate rinds), bee (a by-product of kattha), and nimbus (a



Yawer Ali Shah

by-product of lac used in the shellac industry) and others.

## What is the demand for natural dyes in India?

Natural dyes like bio indigo are being used industrially as well as by artisans to manufacture hand-woven products. Not just in India, but also overseas, in the UK, US, China etc.

Colours like indigo, khaki, brown, green, yellow, etc., extracted through natural resources and waterless dyeing, are being used for printing textiles. With our patented technology, we undertake dyeing at room temperature, which saves energy. All natural dyes are biodegradable.

**How does AMA Herbal support dyers in the production process?**  
AMA Herbal is the only firm

specialised in natural dyes in India which has a technical team to give a complete three-day training through its on-site and off-site workshops to the dyers. Dyers are educated about commercial and industrial practices of natural dyeing vis-à-vis theory and practical trials as well.

## How do natural dyes support the society and economy?

Huge employment is generated by cultivation of crops and collection of leaves, fruits and flowers, as well as the cleaning of the herbal material. For example, the manufacture of one kilogram of bio indigo provides employment to two rural farmers. Being a legume crop, it also supports the environment. Natural dyes support all three spheres of sustain-

ability: Environment, society, and economy.

## What is your vision for the future?

AMA Herbal works on the principle of 'spirituality in business'. Spirituality is about prioritising others over yourself and being committed to the promotion of natural dyes as *tapasya* (penance) for us, so it can benefit the planet as well as humanity.

Today, AMA is a leading natural dyes manufacturing company. We are focusing on the industrial development of natural dyes to let as many people benefit as possible. We want to be known as an important contributor in achieving 100 per cent sustainable textiles to make this industry climate positive. •

For more details visit  
[www.amaherbal.com](http://www.amaherbal.com) or  
email on [bioindigo@gmail.com](mailto:bioindigo@gmail.com)

## Salient features

- No deforestation, no misuse of land, no use of vegetable products meant for human consumption.
- Global Organic Textile Standards (GOTS) certified.
- Acceptable fastness rating.
- Reduced impact of carbon dioxide by up to 100 per cent.
- Rural employment generation.
- Bio indigo consumes 60 per cent less primary energy.
- Best of the waste: Raw material comes from natural waste.