

Watch out...Strategize... Implement!!! Key for Textile value chain enhancement

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Get set... Go!!! Needs to be converted for textile industry to watch out... Strategize... Implement!!!



It is the final alert call for Indian textile & apparel industry in order to get a bigger pie from the global market. We need to analyze our existing situation, understand our key areas to focus on, plan country strategy for domestic as well as international market and have our strategy for each and every country understanding their imports, product baskets to be targeted, key deliverables, etc. New India which is destined to be a Superpower in coming years is an achievable vision that has driven the industrialists on a mission to achieve the best of best targets. Textile Industry should respond to this positively. The industrialists are all pumped up to achieve the targets and contribute to the larger vision.

The targets of the industry can only be achieved, when the industry works as one united front. Our 5 F's – Farm, Fibre, Factory, Fashion, and Foreign Trade working in unison will exponentially achieve the target. All that is needed is unison so the focus of the textile industry must be on building a strong chain linking the 5F. Let us introspect the immediate needs of each Fs.

Farm: Creating a Strong Farm Base

At the onset, we need to observe & exercise new techniques for Cultivation like drip irrigation. The contamination level at ginning stage should be thoroughly checked so that it is the bare minimum. We need to introduce ways to prevent malpractices of introducing contamination in natural fibers. The Minimum selling price concept introduced for the benefit of farmers must be more aggressively implemented and the mediators that are not keeping the deals fair for the industrialist and the farmers must be eliminated. Direct links between farmers and industrialists are the call of the hour. Completing chalking out the existing problems like bonded labour. More and more emphasis should be given to educating farmers through artificial intelligence about the weather conditions, an ideal time for sowing and nutritive information on the soil and crop seeds. Benchmarking standards are for the utilization of right fertilizers both in terms of Quantitative parameters & Quality Parameters. The most essential step is registration & regulation of the farmers wherein by using the latest user-friendly technology the farmers can get all updates like climate, soil fertility, fertilizers, irrigation practices, market knowledge, etc. on their cellphones.

Apart from the above natural fiber farming must be incorporated under MOT (ministry of textiles) for better control. The ministry can further extend its hand to introduce contractual farming with Brand Tie-ups by linking the industry with the farmers. To keep a close watch, an active Government cell must be bought into practice that will monitor- control & implement the government schemes specifically related to textiles & fair farming techniques. The farmers need to be awarded based on quality, yield and best farming techniques.

Fiber: Introducing Contamination Free Fibre

Contamination is the major hurdle as far as natural fibers are concerned. At the value end, this contamination leads to produce low-quality products. Hence efficient methods are to be bought into practice right for cleaning, sorting, grading up to baling. The clear way of eliminating malpractices is by strongly building the first “F-Farm” very strong. So the interest of ginners, fiber producers along with farmers, and the industry must be brought on the same page with fair trade implementation. The right value to farmers will provide the right quality raw material to the ginners who will then be able to produce and sell quality material at the right price to the industry. Close watch & monitoring by independent professional cell must be introduced to ensure no false contamination practices are observed at any stage. There is a need for standardization of ginning techniques which will provide the best quality to the value chain developing industry. We may have to boost ginning machine manufacturers to adopt best technology for contamination elimination at raw cotton stage itself.

Factory – State of the-art-infrastructure & High Productivity

COVID however dark the phase had been, the emergence of hygiene products would be the only silver lining. The importance of hygiene has been reflected in all walks of society. A hygienic factory not only ensures the best quality of the products but also brings a clean & positive atmosphere which leads to an increase in efficiency of people. Also, the proper practices ensure less utilization of energy & water and minimum waste generation. Properly disposing of scraps will lead to revenue generation. Routine Machine Maintenance will be led to energy efficiency and also reduce losses due to unplanned breakdowns. It will also signal the up-gradation of machinery. Green Practices are today's necessity. Globe is eyeing environment friendliness in each and every activity. Lowering operating costs in terms of power, steam & water consumption with sustainable practices will be a cherry on the pie.

There is a need to establish proper skill enhancement and efficiency utilization among the labour force. Efficient labour management can be achieved by workers' periodic training & welfare through better work practices. The industrial internet of things (IIOT) and digitalization are the reckonings that are needed today. Most important is to ensure regular & mandatory Audits of the factory to get the certifications that will bring in top global brand orders on circular routines.

Fashion – Brand Building

Today's fashion is being executed across the globe from Europe to Africa - Down south to Asia – USA. Youth-inspired fashion is trending day in & day out. Green, Organic & Recycled are the trendsetters & USPs used to create Brand loyalty. Naturally derived fashion from jute to cactus leather is creating their patents & labels. Internet is speeding the Fashion trends worldwide and hence making garments with labels is the best way to grab the open worldwide markets. The world dynamics have shifted in the COVID outbreak. It has led to a comfortable knit revolution. Comfort is the motto in today's fashion, it is an era of brains instead of appearance. So what one wears is not much important than what one delivers. Naturally, with the only virtual meet period during the pandemic, the trend was well accepted. Casuals are today's Formals. The virtual meet has changed the game for wovens, though the IT sector had seen the shift of pre Covid era, especially in developed countries. The acceptance of it in Developing countries has started now. So, Knit wears by tie-ups with global brands or our Indian brands is the way forward for achieving success. Moreover, sustainability, recyclability, circularity, green are the fashion icons amongst the new generation.

Foreign Trade

Free Trade enjoyed by some of the other countries has created a lot of concerns for our country's textile trade for which the government is working on creating trade agreements with top developed markets to ease our way in. China + 1 has created an open market to compete globally and make our mark to capture a larger market share. Today buying houses & brands are exploring alternate options. We just need to develop our strong garmenting chain with state of the art technology and a skilled labour force to grab this opportunity & progress exponentially to fill the open market with our capability.

Government policy during COVID provided good support to exporters making sure India reaches the double-digit market share from the current 4 to 5% in textiles & apparel trade. They are already working on Trade agreements with developed countries & globally assisting in the representation of Indian players through pavilions and enhancing the brand India. Establishing the more effective state of the art infrastructure to support the timely dispatch of orders and reduce the logistics & supply chain management costs incurred due to poor logistic support is the need of the hour.

The next focus for making India a superpower in textiles is by developing a strong Indian Textile Machinery industry.

Build Unbeatable Indian Textile Machinery Industry

The Indian textile machinery industry is expected to touch INR 45,000 crore/ \$6 bn mark by end of 2022. There are about 3,250 companies involved in the manufacturing of textile machinery, accessories and trading of equipment in India. The industry currently thrives on the partnership by Indian players with the global counterparts from top companies be it in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Japan, etc. The Indian machinery industry is slowly taking over major steps toward supplying machines from India. We have made a huge name in the spinning sector which once started with a partnership to address the immediate needs of our domestic market. Today it is having well-established Indian players supplying to top textiles producing countries. For other segments of textile engineering, however, a lot of development needs to take place, let us introspect the segments one by one:

1. Weaving: We need to provide the following

- Value Proposition

- Technological Advancement
- Make the necessary modifications
- Research of the actual requirements & techno-commercial analysis
- Growth model

2. Knitting: In Knitting, we need to start refocusing on the assembly line Model which has been in practice but not on a larger scale. The immediate focus can be to concentrate on developing accessories like dobbies & jacquards. We need to have an Innovation and development process through research & development. The existing players can focus on collaboration & creating the knitting machines in India. There need to be forecasted expansion plans.

3. Processing: Existing Indian Machinery producers need to focus on improvements in metallurgy & innovative technology in line with global needs. There is a need to have India make continuous bleaching & dyeing ranges of global standards, Mercerising & other essential finishing machines, and singeing machines to enter into the map of being a processing machinery developer. We need to focus on reducing operating costs and saving resources such as water, power, steam etc.

4. Garmenting: There is a tremendous scope & growth in this sector. We need to focus on producing bulk quantities. The technology is fairly simple to develop in-house. We need to however have modern technology. This will also help to boost the overall Textiles & Apparels share of India on the global map as it will develop machinery in price range more comfortable to the Indian market and thereby help bring in more players into the apparel producing chain for India.

5. Technical Textiles: A highly technology-driven industry & precised engineered segment. There is a top secrecy mentained with various patents and there are limited manufacturers. The technology is a challenge and hence a bit difficult for self-manufacturing. We need to explore collaboration in this sector with renowned brands. We have shown phenomenal growth in products of nonwoven & woven growing with a CAGR – of 15-20%. The development of machinery will further escalate the growth

Strategy to Boost Technical Textiles Product Market

Focus on our requirements of technical textile products such as:

- Road & Highway – Geotextiles
- Sea, river beds & dam area – Geo-bags
- Landfills & mining zones
- Workwear standardization with technical parameters for government institutes, medical hospitals
- Funding for space-oriented functional textiles productions
- Mobitech – Safety mandates in Passenger & Luxury vehicles
- Mandating products – government-aided certified geotextiles, packtech standardization for graded packaging materials for storage
- Sportech –standardized technical parameters for Indian sports personalities
- Mandates on construction safety nets & other construction materials for use in buildings – Acoustic proofing, fire proof safety suits, work wear garments
- Active promotion from Government
- Largely untapped domestic institutional buyers for technical textiles: Institutional buyers such as railways, defense forces, hospitals, etc., are still heavily dependent on imports for high-value technical textile products. However, in the recent past, some Indian technical textile manufacturers have started working with such institutional buyers, but most of the market is yet to be tapped.

Conclusion

The major focus is to boost the value chain for which we need to focus majorly on three things one is global scale, standardization & competitiveness

Global Scale: We are not able to compete with China because of below the average scale of production. There is a limited production scale maintained due to a lack of mileage internationally. However recent progressive action by the Ministry of textiles has changed the dynamics introduction of schemes and policies like the PLI Scheme to boost the economy for value-added product development, Textile Parks & Mega Clusters are channeling our growth. So the spotlight must be on resolving the key concerns in the following issues to increase our scale of production

- Supply Chain Management
- Quality & Consistency in Raw Material
- Logistic support

- Skill sets of people
- Marketing

Standardization: Ministry has started mandatory production recording. HS code harmonization & creation of new 8-digit product-specific HS codes especially for technical textile products. The prima facie standardization needs to be achieved for following

- Organizing the unorganized sector
- Recording outputs & transactions
- Traceability of raw materials across the value chain
- Global Audits compulsions & Certifications mandate
- Environment clearance audits

Let us introspect ourselves to incorporate new norms

- Scan our existing facilities
- Remove weak areas
- Adopt appropriate technology
- Spin profits

Competitiveness

- We need to have skilled labour force & training institutes as the technology upgrades.
- We must have efficient process adoptions to create more productivity. Ensure reduction to minimise operating costs
- Seamless adoption of renewable sources like Solar Power etc.
- Our products must be world class & have consistency in quality from raw material to finished products.
- We must develop state of art factory setup
- Our concentration should be on value-added products instead of the low-value chain products sale
- We need garmenting units with higher capacities
- Strategize & work on Brand development initiatives
- We need to take a bigger pie from the global market for which Industry 4.0 is pre-requisite
- New technology advancements are the need of the hour
- Environmental concerns need to be our priority- Recycle & Reuse would be the mantra for future

Let us all come together to build new India !!!

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