

Textile industry in India

The **textile industry in India** traditionally, after agriculture, is the only industry that has generated huge employment for both skilled and unskilled labour in textiles. The textile industry continues to be the second-largest employment generating sector in India. It offers direct employment to over 35 million in the country.^[1]

According to the Ministry of Textiles, the

share of textiles in total exports during April–July 2010 was 11.04%. During 2009–2010, the Indian textile industry was pegged at US\$55 billion, 64% of which services domestic demand.^[1] In 2010, there were 2,500 textile weaving factories and 4,135 textile finishing factories in all of India.^[2] According to AT Kearney's 'Retail Apparel Index', India was ranked as the fourth most promising market for apparel retailers in 2009.^[3]

India is first in global jute production and shares 63% of the global textile and garment market. India is second in global textile manufacturing and also second in

silk and cotton production. 100% FDI is allowed via automatic route in textile sector. Rieter, Trutzschler, Saurer, Soktas, Zambiat, Bilsar, Monti, CMT, E-land, Nisshinbo, Marks & Spencer, Zara, Promod, Benetton, and Levi's are some of the foreign textile companies invested or working in India.^[4]

History of Textile industry in India

The archaeological surveys and studies have indicated that the people of Harrapan civilization were familiar with weaving and the spinning of cotton for as long as four

thousand years ago. Reference to weaving and spinning materials is found in the Vedic Literature. There was textile trade in India during the early centuries. A block printed and resist-dyed fabric, whose origin is from Gujarat was found in the tombs of Fostat, Egypt. This proves that Indian export of cotton textiles to Egypt or the Nile Civilization in medieval times were to a large extent. Large quantity of north Indian silk were traded through the silk route in China ^[5] to the western countries. The Indian silks were often exchanged with the western countries for their spices in the barter system. During the late 17th and 18th century there were large export

of the Indian cotton to the western countries to meet the need of the European industries during industrial revolution, apart from the domestic requirement at the Indian Ordnance Factories.^{[6][7]}



A woman in Dhaka clad in fine Bengali muslin, 18th century.

Up until the 18th century, Mughal Empire was the most important center of

manufacturing in international trade.^[8] Up until 1750, India produced about 25% of the world's industrial output.^[9] The largest manufacturing industry in Mughal Empire (16th to 18th centuries) was textile manufacturing, particularly cotton textile manufacturing, which included the production of piece goods, calicos, and muslins, available unbleached and in a variety of colours. The cotton textile industry was responsible for a large part of the empire's international trade.^[10] Bengal had a 25% share of the global textile trade in the early 18th century.^[11] Bengal cotton textiles were the most important manufactured goods in world trade in the

18th century, consumed across the world from the Americas to Japan.^[8] The most important center of cotton production was the Bengal Subah province, particularly around its capital city of Dhaka.^[12]

Bengal accounted for more than 50% of textiles and around 80% of silks imported by the Dutch from Asia and marketed it to the world,^[13] Bengali silk and cotton textiles were exported in large quantities to Europe, Asia, and Japan,^[14] and Bengali muslin textiles from Dhaka were sold in Central Asia, where they were known as "daka" textiles.^[12] Indian textiles dominated the Indian Ocean trade for

centuries, were sold in the Atlantic Ocean trade, and had a 38% share of the West African trade in the early 18th century, while Bengal calicos were major force in Europe, and Bengal textiles accounted for 30% of total English trade with Southern Europe in the early 18th century.^[9]

In early modern Europe, there was significant demand for textiles from The Mughal Empire, including cotton textiles and silk products.^[10] European fashion, for example, became increasingly dependent on textiles and silks imported from The Mughal Empire. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, The Mughal Empire

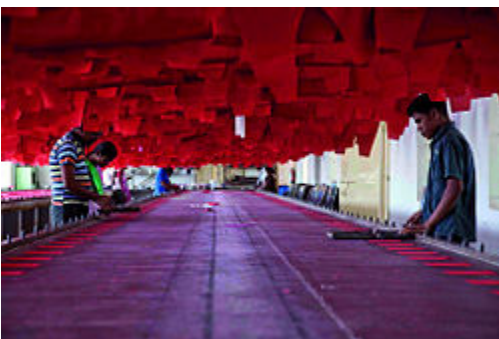
accounted for 95% of British imports from Asia.^[13]

The Textile industry was the major component of economic income in India before the English colonies. "The handloom and the spinning-wheel, producing their regular myriads of spinners and weavers, were the pivots of the structure of that society," described by Karl Marx.^[15]

Due to the abolishment of slavery in the Americas, England began to search for another source of cheap cotton, and saw India as a ripe place for this. They convinced many farmers to switch from subsistence farming to producing and

exporting huge amounts of cotton, after a long period of protectionism over the English textile industry.^[16] Eventually, through colonization, the traditional method of artisan Textile production was destroyed, and replaced with large scale factory production.

Production



Textile workers in Tiruppur, South India

India is the second largest producer of fibre in the world and the major fibre produced is cotton. Other fibres produced in India include silk, jute, wool, and man-made fibers. 60% of the Indian textile Industry is cotton based. The strong domestic demand and the revival of the Economic markets by 2009 has led to huge growth of the Indian textiles industry. In December 2010, the domestic cotton price was up by 50% as compared to the December 2009 prices. The causes behind high cotton price are due to the floods in Pakistan and China . India projected a high production of textile (325 lakh bales for 2010 -11).^[17] There has been increase in

India's share of global textile trading to seven percent in five years.^[17] The rising prices are the major concern of the domestic producers of the country.

- **Man Made Fibres:** This includes manufacturing of clothes using fibre or filament synthetic yarns. It is produced in the large power loom factories. They account for the largest sector of the textile production in India. This sector has a share of 62% of the India's total production and provides employment to about 4.8 million people.^[18]
- **The Cotton Sector:** It is the second most developed sector in the Indian Textile

industries. It provides employment to a huge number of people but its productions and employment is seasonal depending upon the seasonal nature of the production.

- The Handloom Sector: It is well developed and is mainly dependent on the SHGs for their funds. Its market share is 13%.^[18] of the total cloth produced in India.
- The Woolen Sector: India is the 7th largest producer.^[18] of the wool in the world. India also produces 1.8% of the world's total wool.

- The Jute Sector: The jute or the golden fibre in India is mainly produced in the Eastern states of India like Assam and West Bengal. India is the largest producer of jute in the world.
- The Sericulture and Silk Sector: India is the second largest producer of silk in the world. India produces 18% of the world's total silk. Mulberry, Eri, Tasar, and Muga are the main types of silk produced in the country. It is a labour-intensive sector.

Cotton textile

In the early years, the cotton textile industry was concentrated in the cotton

growing belt of Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Availability of raw materials, market, transport, labour, moist climate and other factors contributed to localisation. In the early twentieth century, this industry played a huge role in Bombay's economy but soon declined after independence.^[19] While spinning continues to be centralised in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, weaving is highly decentralised. As of 30 September 2013, there are 1,900 cotton textile mills in India,^[20] of which about 18% are in the private sector and the rest in the public and cooperative sector. Apart from

these, there are several thousand small factories with three to ten looms.

India exports yarn to Japan, United States, United Kingdom, Russia, France, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka and other countries.

India has the second-largest installed capacity of spindles in the world, with 43.13 million spindles (30 March 2011)^[21] after China. Although India has a large share in world trade of cotton yarn, its trade in garments is only 4% of the world's total.

Jute textiles

India is the largest producer of raw jute and jute goods and the third largest exporter after Bangladesh. There were about 80 jute mills in India in 2010–11, most of which are located in West Bengal, mainly along the banks of the Hooghly River, in a narrow belt (98 km long and 3 km wide).

In 2010-2011 the jute industry was supporting 0.37 million workers directly and another 400,000 small and marginal farmers who were engaged in the cultivation of jute.

Challenges faced by the industry include stiff competition in the international market from synthetic substitutes and from other countries such as Bangladesh, Brazil, Philippines, Egypt and Thailand. However, the internal demand has been on the rise due to Government policy of mandatory use of jute packaging. To stimulate demand, the products need to be diversified. In 2005, the National Jute Policy^[22] was formulated with the objective of improving quality, increasing productivity and enhancing the yield of the crop.

The main markets for jute are the United States, Canada, Russia, United Kingdom and Australia.

Ministry of Textile and Industry

In 2000, the Government of India passed the National Textile Policy. The major functions of the ministry of textiles are formulating policy and coordination of man-made fiber, cotton, jute, silk, wool industries, decentralization of power loom sector, promotion of exports, planning & economic analysis, finance and promoting use of information technology. The

advisory boards for the ministry include All India Handlooms Board, All India Handicrafts Board, All India Power looms Board, Advisory Committee under Handlooms Reservation of Articles for Production and Co-ordination Council of Textiles Research Association. There are several public sector units and textile research associations across the country.

See also

- [Great Bombay textile strike](#)
- [Oil and gas industry in India](#)

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