

Value addition is the only way forward for the future of Pakistan's textile industry

The current issue is devoted to the dyeing, printing and finishing sector. These sectors account for the highest value addition of textiles and garments. Pakistan and her textile industry are both at a crossroads where the only way forward is through value addition. The textile dyeing printing and finishing are the important sectors of the textile industry as they account for the value addition of textiles and garments which is the key to survival in a globally competitive environment.

Pakistan holds an important position in global textiles, being the 4th largest producer of cotton yarn. Pakistan produces the finest bed linen and home textiles, innovative and quality denim and denim garments. The growth in the exports has been in the value-added sectors only. Fast emerging sector of digital printing holds great promise for the future of the domestic retail sector as well as high value-added home textiles.

This strong position was achieved over the last seven decades through constant investments and implementation of state of the art technology by our industry. The textile industry was able to obtain the best of the textile technology in its time of infancy from Europe and Japan to establish a solid foundation. It was this technological edge which allowed the industry to exploit the natural advantages of raw material, primarily cotton, alongside an abundance of a talented labour force. The competitive edge thus gained has firmly positioned Pakistan among the top textile and apparel producing countries in the world.

Monforts, Bruckner, Goller, Fongs, Santex Group and Benninger are some of the names in the textile finishing technology that have been contributed to the development of Pakistani textile industry over the decades. EFI™Reggiani and SPGPrints have been instrumental in the growth of the printing sector. SPGPrints, previously Stork, is the pioneer of rotary printing in Pakistan and with the PIKE and JAVELIN have been well accepted in the global printing business as well as Pakistan. EFI™Reggiani, MS, Durst, Atexco and Mimaki are well known global brands present in Pakistan.

However, today Pakistan faces serious issues to remain competitive against countries such as India, Bangladesh and Vietnam. The key problems include the high cost of production due to increased raw material cost and labour, unstable and insufficient availability of cotton and monumental amounts of dues from the government towards sales tax and duty drawbacks.

Dyes chemicals and auxiliaries for the textile industry are imported. Even local manufacturers of textile chemicals including multinational companies are using imported raw materials, which have increased exponentially in cost due to the continued decline of Pakistani Rupee. The depreciation of Pakistani Rupee of over 20% has severely affected the profitability of those companies who had made their commitments on the basis of a previously higher Pakistani Rupee.

Investments in the right technology that can further sustainability by ensuring savings of water, energy and chemicals are necessary for the growth of the textile finishing sector. New stenters, for example, can result in the savings of about 30-40% energy cost. Water is a finite resource that is essential for the textile finishing. The dyeing machines with low liquor ratio grow increasingly important for the industry. The treatment of the water used in processing will also be mandated in the very near future. This requires solutions for effluent treatment plants. There is a severe shortage of space faced by textile mills. The government should, therefore, work with the industry to have combined treatment plants at different industrial hubs. There are high hopes from the new government of PTI for taking the necessary steps to encourage value addition by reducing the cost of production and creating a positive environment, conducive for the growth of the textile industry. ♦

