

Weak sentiment hits small apparel brands in March quarter

BS REPORTER
Mumbai, 11 June

Weak sentiment impacted small apparel brands (₹10-25 crore), while big ones (over ₹100 crore) grew in the January-March quarter, shows a study by the Clothing Manufacturers' Association of India.

The Association's index of growth was at 110.26 in the March quarter of 2014; the growth was by 5.01 points in the December quarter and seven in the January-March one. Small brands constitute 44 per cent in the CMAI

Index; big ones, 35 per cent. The March quarter showed reasonably good growth for the apparel industry. Nearly 75 respondents of the 100 surveyed said their brand improved in sales. As many as 82 brands reported an increase in investments, reflecting confidence for the future.

None of the surveyed giant brands reported a loss in turnover, while only one large brand reported a loss in turnover. However, small brands continued to be in negative territory.

FASHION FRAT JOINS HANDS FOR BANARASI TEXTILES

Meera.Vohra@timesgroup.com

To infuse the much-needed zest in the Banarasi handloom industry, renowned fashion designers of the country, led by designer-turned-politician Shaina NC, held a tripartite meeting in Banaras earlier this week. Organised by the Banarasi Vastra Udyog Association, the meeting saw textile manufacturers, weavers and designers coming together in the presence of top officials from the textile ministry, including Minister of State (independent charge), Textiles, Santosh Gangwar, to discuss the problems ailing the Banaras handloom industry. President of the association, Jagdish Shah, welcomed the participants of the interactive session and the elite panel of designers, which included the likes of Ritu Kumar, Rina Dhaka, Krishna Mehta, Shruti Sancheti, Abhishek Gupta, Rinku Sobti, Reynu Tandon and Fashion Design Council of India President, Sunil Sethi.

DOING THEIR BIT

Lending a positive note to the entire exercise was Shaina, who said, "Nearly 70 top fashion designers of the country have already extended their support to the revival of the Banarasi handloom industry as part of their corporate social responsibility. Some of them have already started working with the artisans. Our aim is not just to provide one-time orders to the weavers, but ensure that they get enough work through repeated orders." She added, "Through the Make In India campaign, we wish to showcase this rare textile craft in the international arena. This specialised art, which has been an integral part of our textile history, will also hold an important place in future."

INVOLVING THE YOUTH

Designer Ritu Kumar was of the opinion that Banarasi handlooms need to be more in sync with today's times. "Over the years, it has been observed that the change in yarn has led to Banarasi sarees becoming stiff and puffy. Over-designing of the fabric has also led to it losing favour with youngsters," said Ritu, adding, "Youngsters today are working really hard to get themselves in shape, and would certainly not like to wear a garment which gives them a bloated look. The need is to make handlooms look more attractive and glamorous. No amount of subsidy from the government can make it fashionable, only good quality handloom products can make it happen."

Prominent textile manufacturer Bharat Shah, who was representing the local manufacturers, also emphasised the importance of attracting a younger audience to the handlooms. He urged the designers to collaborate with manufacturers to add a glamour quotient to the fabrics.

However, designer Rina Dhaka, reiterated that it was the classic appeal of the Banarasi handlooms that were its USP. "There is no need to lose the classicism of the Banarasi fabrics in order to make them trendy. Some rethinking is required to bring the fabric back in fashion and it is our responsibility to do so," she opined.

WORKING AT THE GRASSROOT LEVEL

Designer Rinku Sobti, who has done a detailed study of the Banarasi handloom industry, gave a presentation on its functioning and emphasised the need for making changes at the grassroots level. "There is a need to empower the weavers," she said.

"They should be linked to

the market forces and there must be improved interaction between them and the stakeholders of the industry," said Rinku, adding, "National and international designers should be hired for fashion forecasting in order to make Banarasi handlooms more appealing for the urban clients."

Designer Krishna Mehta elaborated on the need to work on the cost factor of the product. "We do not require value addition to the handlooms, but we need to keep in mind the demands of the market. Cost of the product is something which also needs to be addressed," said Krishna.

IN ALL SUPPORT

Santosh Gangwar, MoS (independent charge), Textiles, said that his ministry is always ready to provide assistance wherever required. "We will make all efforts that this traditional craft is preserved and revived. Countries like Japan have expressed their desire to collaborate in the fabric sector and we are exploring all possibilities," said Gangwar.

Sunil Sethi, president, Fashion Design Council of India, in his brief address acknowledged the contribution of various fashion weeks in showcasing and highlighting Banarasi handlooms.



Designers, textile manufacturers and weavers at the meeting

Apparel brands get bigger: Study

Mumbai: Big apparel brands like Raymonds, Louis Phillipe, Van Heusen and Zodiac became bigger, while small-and medium-sized brands saw their sales decline in fiscal year 2015, according to a report released by the clothing manufacturers' association of India (CMAI) on Thursday. Small brands are identified as companies with revenues of up to ₹25 crore and mid-sized brands are those with revenues of ₹25 crore to ₹100 crore. These companies were hurt because of poor sales during the festive period and pile-up of inventory, said the report. **SAPNA AGARWAL**

Cotton prices likely to remain stable

Stock position good, says trade body

OUR BUREAU

Coimbatore, June 11

The Indian Cotton Federation (ICF) does not foresee big fluctuations in cotton prices this season.

Comfortable stock position, poor export demand, limited buying by domestic mills have helped keep prices under control, say federation officials.

ICF Vice-President K N Viswanathan said that cotton arrivals have been normal at 345 lakh bales.

Lean demand

"While the stocks at this time of the year usually lie with the traders and mills, this year, due to lean buying by the mill sector, huge volumes have been purchased by the Cotton Corporation of India. The quality is good and [is] not as feared by a section of the trade," he said.

The Corporation has also been releasing the cotton at regular intervals to meet mill demand, he said and added that global demand has been slow and restricted to far eastern countries such as Bangladesh and Vietnam.

China has been a non-importer for some time and the demand from the domestic mills limited to their sale of yarn and fabrics.

In such a situation, volatility in prices won't happen, Viswanathan said.

The farmers, he said, are happy with the minimum support prices this year and will, therefore, keep the area under cotton at the same level the next season.

Mills' woes

But what the textile sector seeks at this juncture is support to hold sufficient volumes at an affordable interest rate of 7 per cent, Viswanathan said.

He pointed out that mills usually carry 3 to 8 months stock as per spinning pattern, and location from the source to maintain uninterrupted production.

Due to sluggish demand for yarn and garments, the mills would need to augment their financial limits to hold cotton as also restrict the interest burden, he said, adding "and so should this burden be limited for cotton growers, traders and government agencies to boost industry and trade."

SIMA workshops to boost skill development

OUR BUREAU

Coimbatore, June 11

The Southern India Mills Association (SIMA) in association with Textile Sector Skill Council (TSC) is organising a series of workshops to sensitise mills about the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana Scheme (PMKVY).

The first of such workshops was organised in Coimbatore on Tuesday, followed by one each at Madurai and Salem.

The workshop was attended by 100 textile mill promoters in Coimbatore, SIMA Chairman T Rajkumar said. He further said the association would facilitate and extend necessary assistance to different associations and textile units on a "no-profit, no-loss" basis. The units will need to remit ₹5,000/- towards the training provider affiliation

fee and ₹1,000 per trainee as the assessment and certification fee to TSC. The association would work as a knowledge partner to enable units in South India avail themselves of various skill development benefits through TSC, he said.

Cultivation of cotton on decline

SUSHIL MANAV
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SIRSA, JUNE 11

Many farmers are deviating from cotton crop this year owing to fall in prices, depleting productivity and difficulties in the management of white flies and leaf curl virus.

Against 6.48 lakh hectares under cultivation last year, cotton has been sown on merely 5.72 lakh hectares this year so far.

Though Sirsa and Fatehabad was almost close to their last year's figures of 1.93 lakh hectare and 82,000 hectares, the maximum deficit in the area under cotton is being witnessed in Hisar and Bhiwani districts, where the crop has been sown on 1.23 lakh hectares and 60,000 hectares against the previous year's figures of 1.23 lakh hectares and 98,000 hectares, respectively, said Brij Lal, technical assistant in the office of Joint Commissioner (Cotton), Agriculture Department, Haryana.

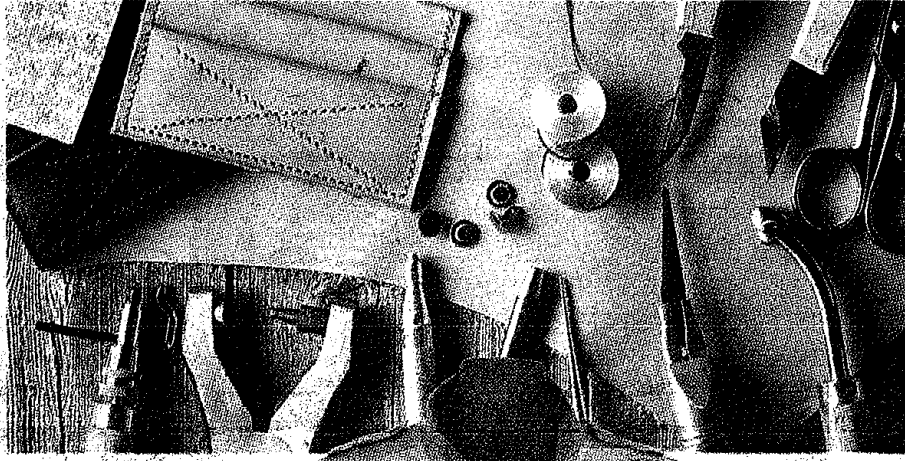
The data available on www.cicr.org.in, the official website of the Central Institute of Cotton Research (CICR), shows the area under cotton covered from 4.83 lakh hectares and 5.3 lakh hectares between 2006-07 and 2010-11, respectively.

The area was 5.3 lakh hectares in 2006-07, 4.83 lakh hectares in 2007-08, 4.56 lakh hectares in 2008-09, 5.07 lakh hectares in 2009-10 and 4.92 lakh hectares in 2010-11.

लेदर प्रोडक्ट स्पेशलाइजेशन में उज्वल भविष्य

लेदर सेक्टर एक ऐसा क्षेत्र है जिसमें रोजगार के, शायद रेलवे के बाद, सबसे ज्यादा अवसर हैं। हालांकि बहुत से लोगों में यह गलत धारणा बनी होती है कि लेदर क्षेत्र में करियर दिलचस्प और लाभप्रद नहीं होता

कारिगरी की आवश्यकता होती है। पिछले साल से उत्पादन क्षेत्र में जबरदस्त उछाल आयो है। कंपनियां अपना विस्तार कर रही हैं जिससे मैनपावर की जबरदस्त कमी आ गयी है। गौरतलब है कि फिनिश लेदर और जूते बनाने के लिए साइंस और टेक्नोलॉजी



लेकिन वास्तविकता यह है कि लेदर क्षेत्र हाइटेक है जिसमें अच्छे वेतन की नौकरियां उपलब्ध हैं और कुशल व प. शिक्षित कर्मचारियों के लिए न सिर्फ देश में, बल्कि अंतर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर भी तरक्की के जबरदस्त अवसर उपलब्ध हैं। बहुत से लोगों को यह जानकर आश्चर्य होगा कि देश में ऐसे कई अच्छे इंस्टीट्यूट्स हैं जहां लेदर और फुटवियर साइंस एंड टेक्नोलॉजी, फुटवियर फैब्रिकेशन एंड डिजाइन आदि में बी-टेक और एम.टेक. की डिग्रियां दी जाती हैं। इसके अलावा इन इंस्टीट्यूट्स से डिप्लोमा और सर्टिफिकेट कोर्स भी किए जा सकते हैं। जो छात्र इन इंस्टीट्यूट्स में वोकेशनल ट्रेनिंग प्रोग्राम सीखते हैं उन्हें लेदर प्रोसेस टेक्नोलॉजी, लेदर प्रोडक्ट टेक्नोलॉजी (फुटवियर, लेदर एपेरल और लेदर एक्सेसरीज़) के बारे में सिखाया जाता है। वोकेशनल कार्यक्रम की दो श्रेणियां हैं—एक में कारिगरी सिखाई जाती है और दूसरे में निगरानी। इन दोनों ही कार्यक्रमों में सिलाई, कटिंग और विभिन्न उत्पादनों की पैटर्न-इंजीनियरिंग सिखाई जाती है। वोकेशनल कार्यक्रम छह माह का होता है। जो छात्र चार वर्षीय बी-टेक- लेदर टेक्नोलॉजी में करते हैं, उनके पहले दो सेमेस्टर इंजीनियरिंग की तरह होते हैं, तीसरे सेमेस्टर का पाठ्यक्रम केमिकल इंजीनियरिंग की तरह होता है, चौथे सेमेस्टर में लेदर टेक्नोलॉजी के बारे में पढ़ाया जाता है। बाद के चार सेमेस्टर्स में छात्र लेदर प्रोसेसिंग, एनवायरनमेंटल मैनेजमेंट या लेदर प्रोडक्ट्स में स्पेशलाइजेशन हासिल कर सकता है। फिनिश लेदर क्षेत्र में जूता उद्योग की तरह ही मोटी पूंजी के निवेश की आवश्यकता होती है। लेकिन चारों ही क्षेत्रों (फिनिश लेदर, फुटवियर, गारमेंट्स और लेदर आर्टिकल्स) में बहुत ज्यादा कुशल

की अच्छी जानकारी होनी चाहिए जबकि फुटवियर के मामले में डिजाइन की जरूरत पड़ती है। छात्रों के सामने इस उद्योग में प्रवेश करने के लिए टेक्निकल और प्रबंधन के दो विकल्प हैं। शुरुआत में उन्हें ट्रेनी के तौर पर लिया जाता है। इनमें से कुछ कच्चा माल हासिल करने और उसकी गुणवत्ता परखने में लगाए जाते हैं और कुछ फिनिशिंग विभाग में काम करते हैं जहां चमड़े को रंगना और उसकी टेक्सचरिंग करने का काम होता है। वोकेशनल कोर्स करने वाले छात्रों को मास्टर टेक्नीशियन कहा जाता है और वे चमड़ा उद्योग में टेक्नीशियन के तौर पर प्रवेश करते हैं। डिप्लोमा हासिल करने वाले छात्रों को फैब्रिक्स में निगरानी का काम मिलता है। बी.टेक. ग्रेजुएट्स टेक्नोकामर्शियल होते हैं जो अपना करियर प्रशिक्षु प्रबंधक के तौर पर शुरू करते हैं। फिनिश श्रेणी में कॅरिअर बतौर टेक्नोलॉजिस्ट शुरू किया जाता है जिसके तहत व्यक्ति का काम विभिन्न प्रक्रियाओं को नियंत्रित करना और अलग-अलग किस्म के लेदर को विकसित करना होता है ताकि उनसे गारमेंट्स, जूते और ऑटोमोबाइल अपहोल्स्ट्री बनायी जा सकें। जहां तक फुटवियर का सम्बंध है तो छात्र अपना कॅरिअर प्रोडक्शन या मेटेरियल मैनेजर या डिजाइनर के तौर पर शुरू कर सकता है। जैसा कि ऊपर कहा गया है कि लेदर क्षेत्र में लुभावने वेतन दर हैं। एक बी.टेक. ग्रेजुएट का शुरुआती वेतन 50 हजार रुपये प्रतिमाह तक हो सकता है। वैसे इस उद्योग में औसतन 30 से 60 हजार रुपये का वेतन होता है। डिप्लोमाधारी को कॅरिअर की शुरुआत में 15 से 25 हजार रुपये प्रतिमाह मिलते हैं।