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India's Nonwoven Textiles Sector to Witness Phenomenal Growth

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The Indian nonwoven sector has grown 367 percent in the past five years, exceeding even the most optimistic predictions for this major growth area for cotton.

Ian Butler, director of market research and statistics for the U.S.-based Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry (INDA), says that India's recent growth in the nonwoven sector has been nothing short of phenomenal. Butler estimates India's nonwoven production to be about 125,000 to 140,000 tonnes--likely on the higher end of that range.

India's current market position is similar to China's from 20 years ago. Butler estimates China's nonwoven production to be about 1.1 million to 1.2 million tonnes, and the number frequently quoted by Chinese nonwoven-related associations--1.6 million tonnes--is an overestimate. The current growth rate for this segment (12 percent to 14 percent annually) is unsustainable, he adds.

Butler predicts production will come down as the industry matures. China produces shopping bags by the billion, and when the conventional apparel industry goes through a slump, labor is redirected to develop converted products (like shopping bags), thus resulting in huge production increases.

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