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India's Technical Textiles Mission to pave new path for industry development

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 Source:Journal for Asia on Textile & Apparel
 by Seshadri Ramkumar

The government of India has recently launched Technological Mission on Technical Textiles (TMTT) in an event jointly organized by the Ministry of Textiles and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in New Delhi. This national program is a nationally significant mission to boost the growth of value-added textiles. It is mission-oriented and aimed at imparting practical knowledge in specialty textiles and provides marketing support for entrepreneurs.



The government of India has recently launched the Technical Textiles Mission to boost the value-added textiles, including geotextiles (Image source: DiloGroup)

Technical textiles in India

In India, technical textiles sector is estimated to grow at a rate of 10-11%, whereas globally speaking, the growth is estimated at 3-4%. The growth in India has happened predominantly due to the efforts of the government of India for the past five years. Ever since, the Indian government has supported a number of awareness programs and workshops throughout India. There are many national and international trade bodies and institutes such as the US-based Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry and Brussels-based European Disposables and Nonwovens Industry Association. Along these lines, US-based Texas Tech University has been making effort in creating greater awareness and developing international linkages to boost the growth of nonwovens and specialty fabrics industry.

Technological Mission on Technical Textiles (TMTT)

With a budget outlay of 200 crore rupees for a period of five years (2010/11 to 2014/15), TMTT has two mini-missions. The first mini-mission is aimed at boosting the know-how on technical textiles via different means, including standardization, creating common testing facilities, indigenous development of prototypes and resource centers with IT infrastructure. The second mini-mission supports market development activities.

Under the first mini-mission, the Indian government will establish four Centers of Excellence (CoEs) which will focus on nonwovens, composites, indutech and sportech. Each center will have a maximum allocation of 24.5 crore rupees. Each will have a ceiling of 20 crore rupees for capital equipment, 2 crore rupees for training facilities and 3 crore rupees towards recurring expenses for employing scientists and consultants over a period of three years.

The TMTT is a positive step, but it is necessary to put emphasis on two aspects of the technical textiles sector, namely converting sector as well as chemical finishes and application. The TMTT at

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this present stage has overlooked these two important sectors. So far, the Indian government has emphasized the importance on product-based centers such as agrotextiles, protective textiles, geotextiles, medical textiles, sportech and indutech. Only through the TMTT, the Indian government has realized the need for process-oriented centers such as nonwovens and composites. It is important to enhance the technical know-how on processes which can be used to develop specialty textiles. Such an endeavor is important to create more opportunities in the technical textiles sector. The Indian government in the next phase of TMTT should emphasize the importance of process-oriented centers as a means of diversifying the textile industry.

Overall, launching the TMTT is of significance to the Indian textiles industry. Developing the converting sector that can create more small and medium sized enterprises should be an important task. The Converting sector will be the engine for job creation and will grow the Indian textile industry.

Seshadri Ramkumar is Manager of Nonwovens & Advanced Materials Laboratory of Texas Tech University and a contributor of ATA Journal

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