

Hon'ble Minister of Textiles chairs Industry Symposium

Filling the Gap: Emerging Opportunities for Indian Textiles and Crafts in the Present Global Environment



Hon'ble Union Minister of Textiles and Women & Child Development, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani being welcomed by Mr. Ravi K Passi, Chairman, EPCH. Seen alongside is Mr. Ravi Kapoor, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles



EPCH organised a symposium on 'Emerging Opportunities for Indian Textiles and Crafts' at The Imperial, New Delhi, on February 19, 2020. The objective was to discuss the impact as well as meet the rising challenges and emerging opportunities in the present global scenario, especially the situation after the outbreak of the 'Corona Virus' in China. This symposium was held under the aegis of Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India and the deliberations were on opportunities on how India should fill the supply gap and position itself as an alternate sourcing hub, by stepping up its manufacturing & supply capabilities.

Hon'ble Union Minister of Textiles and Women & Child Development, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani was the Chief Guest and Mr. Ravi Kapoor, Textiles Secretary, was the Guest of Honour. The symposium was chaired by Smriti Zubin Irani, Textiles and Women and Children Development Minister, Government of India. Mr. Shantmanu, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts); Mr. Sanjay Rastogi, Development Commissioner (Handlooms); and officials from the Ministry of Textiles, Ministry of Commerce and DGFT were also present. Officials from the Indian Missions in Brussels and Washington - Dr. Smita Sirohi, Adviser, Embassy of

India (Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU); Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra Minister (Commerce) and Dr. Shyam Prasad Katipalli, First Secretary (ITOU) & Commerce from Embassy of India in Washington, also attended the symposium through video conferencing.

"The Corona Virus outbreak and its aftermath are very unfortunate," said Mr. Ravi Capoor, Textiles Secretary, while delivering the keynote address. He drew attention to the critical juncture and how the international value chain has been adversely impacted due to the situation in China. He encouraged the industry to believe that every crisis has an opportunity and Indian industry could leverage the bold moves made by the Govt. of India around man-made fibers. "It is a bold decision that

Mr. Ravi Capoor, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, drew attention to the critical juncture and how the international value chain has been adversely impacted. He encouraged the industry to believe that every crisis has an opportunity and Indian industry could leverage the bold moves made by the Govt. of India in certain sectors



Hon'ble Union Minister of Textiles and Women & Child Development, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani encouraged all the EPCs (Export Promotion Councils) to reach out to MSME units in their segments for hand holding towards quality, compliance, R&D and certification which the Government would support



Mrs. Aditi Das Rout, Trade Adviser, Ministry of Textiles, shared knowledge and opportunities based on itemised export/import data analytics



Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Director General, EPCH, made an emphatic call for immediate action to seize the moment and have a united, strong and clear communication pitch, inviting buyers to visit and step up buying from India

Ms. Cristine Rai, President, Buying Agents Association of India (BAA), said the time is "now." She urged the textiles and home products sectors to reach out to buyers across the world and tell them about India's strengths and capabilities



opens up huge opportunity," he said and added that the industry should add up to its capacity and occupy the space vacated by China. Further, the Government support through a dedicated mission around technical textiles should be used to strategically catapult India onto the global stage. Mr. Ravi Capoor also encouraged the industry to take advantage of the China+1 policy which companies are using. As of now, only South East Asia has fully benefited from buyer policy. Indian manufacturers should also diversify. He recognised that while there were some FTA issues with European nations to be sorted out, the US market is

open for India to tap. The Textiles Secretary also suggested that based on the many global shows getting cancelled, the EPCs must rework their event calendars and schedule their Buyer Seller meets accordingly.



Dr. Tamanna Chaturvedi, expert trade consultant from Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), shared opportunities and insight based on itemised trade synergies and India's strengths

Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, Minister of Textiles and Women & Child Development, in her address, said that the time has come to focus on the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). She said the Government would like to see industry responding by positioning India not only as a sourcing hub for carrying out job works but also as an end-to-end service providing leader in the textiles sector. She encouraged all the EPCs (Export Promotion Councils) to reach out to MSME units for hand holding towards quality, compliance, R&D and certification which the Government will support. "Younger MSMEs with hunger in the belly will be drivers of India's dominance in the world in the coming times," she stated emphatically and added that the Textiles Ministry will get in touch with small scale manufactures, who are meeting exports compliances, meeting delivery schedules and support them with finance, legislation, certification, quality control programmes and R&D to make them leaders in their respective sphere. The Ministry of Textiles has been interacting with the industries very closely and major policy decisions like liberalising MMF sector and GST concerns in the handicrafts industry have been addressed, the Minister further added.

In a clarion call for the industry, the Hon'ble Minister emphasised that there is a need to diversify our established opportunities instead of leaving the space for one Export Promotion Council (EPC) or one segment. She stressed on

augmenting manufacturing capabilities. She further said that the industry should resolve to ensure that India is not a nation of job workers but a leader in textiles sector that can service end-to-end needs of the world. The Textiles Minister also said that her Ministry always worked an extra mile for every issue highlighted by the industry. Observing that India has been satisfied with just 10 big textiles companies for long, she said that the time has come now for 100 new companies to spring up. The Minister appealed to the textiles industry to fulfill the intention behind the Prime Minister's announcement on anti-dumping duty on PTA and National Mission on Technical Textiles. She also asked the industry to meet the requirements of Jal Jivan Mission and farmers, apart from focusing on exports.

Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Director General, EPCH, actively moderated major part of the event. His presentation mainly focused on the symposium topic and articulated immediate steps to be taken to capitalise on the current opportunity as well as address the present mindset of buyers across the world. He suggested innovative and bold steps around "Namaste India" to attract overseas buyers towards Indian fairs and thereby to project India as a "compliant and health-safe hub". He emphasised, "Namaste India, proud host of US President, Mr. Donald Trump, now waiting to welcome buyers from across the world." Indian embassies world over can be involved in spreading the word he said and also suggested an

innovative marketing approach of using travel agents in USA and EU to drive the "Namaste India" campaign.

Mr. Rakesh Kumar availed the opportunity of the presence of the dignitaries to enumerate suggestions for the benefit of the industry like MAI grant for buyers from developed countries; issuance of instant and long term business visas; involving Embassies and Consulates in aggressive marketing; and finally assisting foreign buyers to set up dedicated joint ventures with Indian manufactures, making them "partners in progress".



The gathering at the symposium that brought together strong representation from textile and handicrafts EPCs

Glimpses....



Mr. Kumar also emphasised the need of a nodal officer at the Ministry who could take up shipment related issues with the concerned departments so that no shipments are stalled.

Dr. Tamanna Chaturvedi, expert trade consultant from Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), said, looking at opportunities across all sectors it is important to ask, "do we have equal opportunities across all markets?" If not there is need to identify where growth and opportunity exists. "It's time for a focused export promotion by applying market intelligence," she emphasised.

Ms. Cristine Rai, President, Buying Agents Association of India (BAA), started with an appreciation for how all EPCs have come together on this promotion in the given challenging scenario. Mentioning of US President, Mr. Donald Trump's visit and the 'Namaste Trump', campaign that preceded and followed him, she said, the entire world is looking at India at this moment. So it's high time we get down to doing what we can, to let the world look at us with a different perspective. Addressing the issue of many European and American buyers' reluctance to visit India, Ms. Rai said, "you need to always convince people to come to India. So, let's go out and really promote India and tell them that this is a fantastic place to visit." Echoing the Textiles Minister's sentiments and expectations from the industries of textiles and handicrafts, Ms. Rai said it's high time we wake up to the present situation. All industries need to rise up and deliver. "Sectoral EPCs are there to support but you have to do the work," she stated emphatically and added that India really needs to find out about its capabilities like technology, skills, etc. that need to be honed to be able to catch up with any other part of the world where our buyers may go for their sourcing needs. The BAA President thereafter underlined the growing importance of compliance as "the world does want to know what we are doing behind the scenes." She added that along with skill development, compliance development will be rewarding for vendors to explore more markets. It will take away some of the ironing the industry needs today for the upcoming compliant era. It's time to change the '*chalega*' attitude and take the share of the market India deserves, she remarked.

Lastly, Ms. Christine Rai touched upon India's apparel and furniture segment's dependency on imports for certain components, trims & embellishments and hardware accessories. "India is not anywhere in the world in these categories so why don't we start making some of these stuff ourselves," she said and added that small entities can be set up with help from EPCs

24x7 Customs Clearance facility initiated

Due to ongoing shutdown in China on account of Coronavirus outbreak, there is an apprehension of disruption in supply of raw materials/inputs to the handicraft sector's industrial units which were dependent on these raw materials.

As an initiative to combat the situation, the Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC) has allowed clearance of all export goods on 24x7 basis from seaports and Airports all across the country, through a instructions circular (Instruction No. 02/2020-Customs, dated 20th February 2020). These instructions would remain in operation till end of May 2020 by which time the disruption in the supply chains are expected to have settled. However, designated Sea Ports/Air ports already under 24x7 operations shall continue to function so even after May, 2020.

to see if such components can be made here in India. That way we can become self-reliant to some extent, Ms. Rai concluded.

During the symposium various issues pertaining to Government support with respect to nodal officer in Embassies for export facilitation and nodal officer in Ministry of Textiles for trade facilitation, issuance of phyto-sanitary certification, support for RoDTEP scheme were raised to which while responding in the end, Textiles Secretary, Mr. Ravi Kapoor assured of all possible help and appreciated the idea of "Namaste India" campaign to be undertaken by all EPCs in the next two months to project India as a sourcing hub and encourage maximum visitors to the fairs in India. He assured setting up of help desk in the Ministry for facilitating exports and issues related to exports.

The event saw the presence of several exporters from the handicrafts, handloom, textiles, carpet and synthetics industries. Many EPCH member exporters from outside Delhi also attended alongside several of their counterparts from Delhi NCR. A large number of member exporters from Moradabad including Mr. Nabeel Ahmed, Member, COA Member, EPCH; Mr. Awadesh Agarwal, Secretary, Moradabad Handicrafts Exporters Association were present. From Jodhpur there were, COA Members EPCH - Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari and Mr. Hansraj Baheti among others. The dignitaries from the Ministry of Textiles at the symposium assured of all possible assistance and support to the Indian exporters in the larger interest of the trade and the country as a whole. ■