

WEBINAR ON SPORTECH - "The Future of Sport Textiles and Accessories Industry in India"

The Indian Technical Textile Association (ITTA) jointly with the Wool Research Association (WRA) organized a WEBINAR ON SPORTECH - "The Future of Sport Textiles and Accessories Industry in India" on 13th July 2022 through Virtual Platform. The workshop received over whelming response and attended by more than 190 delegates from the technical textile Industry, COEs, Textile Colleges & Universities and Govt. Officers.

The Guest of Honor of the webinar was Shri. Upendra Prasad Singh, IAS, Secretary (Textiles), MoT and Ms. Roop Rashi, IA&AS, Textile Commissioner, MoT as Chief Guest. Shri. Amit Agarwal, Chairman, ITTA welcomed the Guests from the MoT and OTxC, Experts and Delegates from the Sports Textiles and Accessories industry. He highlighted that how ITTA, WRA & Archroma came together to brainstorm the issues & requirements of Sportech industry and get the information about what could be the way forward and accordingly we are planning to organise the physical event on the larger scale in the 3rd week of September 2022.

Shri. K. K. Misra, Director (Officiating) & Chief Operations Officer, WRA delivered the welcome address saying that this event will provide the growing opportunity to the Sports Industry. He briefed about the activities and working of the WRA, COE on Sportech and its linkages with various International & National Universities, Associations, Sports textile manufacturers, etc. He pointed out that all these linkages whether domestic or international in a way will support us and are giving value to it for the three segments of Sportech i.e., Gear, Wear & Accessory. He also mentioned that WRA has got additional 150 NABL parameters approved which means today we have total 668 NABL accreditation.

Speaking at the webinar, Guest of Honor, Shri. Upendra Prasad Singh, IAS, Secretary (Textiles) said that Sport Textiles & Accessories sector is emerging as one of the fastest growing TT segments in world & also in India. Indian TT sector is growing at 12% and has reached US\$ 24 billion (Rs.1.81 Lakh Cr.) during 2021-22. He further emphasized that higher sustainable growth & investment for this high value-added textile sector in India face many challenges like quality products, competitive prices, advanced technology & raw materials, sustainable production processes, standards, adequate machinery etc. A slew of focused schemes and policy thrust for TT

in NTTM, PLI & PM-MITRA initiatives are giving hope for revival across the sunrise TT value chain & accessories segments to excel in growth and exports in immediate future. It is imperative to handhold & nurture certain TT segments like Sportech with focused policies for further strengthening its manufacturing & exports in order to spur futuristic sustainable growth, creating employment & export earnings. Globally, Sportech has 15% share in TT wherein Mobiltech, Sportech & Indutech together constitute 56% share of total global consumption of TT. At this critical juncture Indian Sportech & Accessories sector needs urgent attention to strengthen its domestic manufacturing leading to reduce its import dependency of its key value chains & accessories segments for developing world class competitive products, demanded by major Sportech brands across the world and also will be consumed in the Indian market. He also added that this webinar will help ITTA, WRA and industry to further crystalize the emerging problems and understand them in a perspective for suggesting practical solutions & policies which can be submitted to the Govt. for support and action.

Chief Guest Ms. Roop Rashi, IA&AS, Textile Commissioner highlighted that Indian Sportech sector could emerge as a high growth sector due to our inherent favorable factors viz. high consumption demand driven by demographic dividend of active youth population, the multiplier effect of initiatives like the TUFS, NTTM, PLI, PM-MITRA scheme, availability of basic raw materials at competitive prices & thrust by the Govt. for sports infrastructure including the Khelo India initiative. She mentioned that for evolving, Sportech & Accessories sector needs a cohesive approach involving all key stakeholders, in line with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat to make it self-reliant by creating a sustainable value chain and robust accessories segments focusing on reducing cheap imports dependence and giving thrust to hand-holding MSMEs and Start-ups. She also pointed out that major impediments for growth of world class Sportech products in India includes low quality & counterfeit products produced by a large number of unorganized units in this sector. This needs attention in terms hand holding with them for making quality products, making them aware of global standards and fashion trends.

The purpose of the webinar was to bring together all Sportech supply chain manufacturers and users in one platform to discuss the key business & policy issues through panel discussions with the relevant Industry Captains & domain experts. The webinar consists of Three Sessions --

1. Session 1- Introduction to Sportech
2. Session 2- Panel Discussion on Sports Goods and Accessories: Coated fabrics, Nets, Composites and Rubber Products
3. Session 3- Panel Discussion on Sports Apparel and Supply Chain Management

SESSION 1

Dr. Smita Bait, WRA, COE for Sportech spoke about the “Gap Analysis & Requirements- Sportech”. She highlighted about the Survey on Sportech sector (North India) wherein they have visited some of the Industry & Institutions in Panipat, Meerut and Jalandhar. She pointed out the gap in Sportech industry that is Wool/ Nylon blended fabric for lawn tennis ball, Low cost 4 way stretch fabric for Sportswear, Dyed Nylon 66 knitted fabric with good fastness properties, Manufacturing of Seamless garment and its technical knowhow, Artificial turf manufacturing as per International Norms of FIFA, Hockey Federation etc. and Development of knitting technology for fabric using yarn with higher Lycra percentage wherein a lot of technical intervention are required. She explained about the Testing Facilities for Sports Garments and Functional Fabric available in WRA and also mentioned some of the products developed by WRA i.e., Waterproof Breathable Rainwear, Waterproof Breathable Hi-Visible Jacket, Reusable waterproof breathable PPE- coverall, Smart Sports T-Shirt, Evaporative Cooling Jacket and Active Heating System based sleeping bag.

SESSION 2

The 1st Panel Discussion was moderated by Dr. Anup Rakshit, ITTA. The Panelists in the session were - Shri. Aditya Sharma, Process Cum Product Development Centre (PPDC), Shri. Sanjay Poddar, Topline Commodities Pvt. Ltd., Dr. Milind Khandwe, The Bhor Chemicals & Plastics Pvt. Ltd., Shri. Surya Mahajan, R K Mahajan Exports, Shri. Yogesh Motegaonkar, Garware Technical Fibres Ltd. and Smt. Suchismita Sahoo, Indian Rubber Manufacturers Research Association.

Dr. Rakshit said that this session will focus on the products falling under Sports Goods and Accessories, Raw materials and Process used to manufacture. Policy related Issues on availability of RM, machinery, processes, testing equipment, quality standards, etc. Current market trends & future growth potentials of various Sportech products & investment opportunities.

The Panelists addressed all the questions covering areas, such as Current market trends of sport industry is total 2000 cr. wherein 800 cr. is import and 1200 cr. is domestic production said, Shri. Aditya & future growth potentials of various Sportech products such as sportswear, sports footwear, tennis ball, hockey sticks, boxing equipment, leg pads & cricket bat, sports helmet, etc., Shri. Sanjay said that PU coated fabrics are used in various Sportech products such as football, volleyball, sport shoes, hand gloves, punching bags, etc. Only 4 manufacturers of PU synthetic leather in India are Topline, Mayur Uniquoters, Jasch Industries & Winner Nippon wherein their total domestic production is 8% i.e., 4 lakh/month. Huge amount i.e., 40 lakh mtrs/month of PU synthetic leather are being imported to India because of price variation, quantity variation, pay less duty to govt. and getting the products at our reasonable price. For stopping of such imports now we have got the anti-dumping duty on PU synthetic leather if imported from China. Shri. Milind mentioned that various RMs & process used to manufacture Sport composites- basic material wise composites is divided in 2 parts such as high-performance fibres- carbon, aramid, glass and resins systems. How is the future potential in sport composites business, what are the products have potential in future- badminton rackets, tennis racket, helmets, bicycle parts, hockey stick, water & ice sports. Shri. Surya spoke about the end user cost comparison of the above products- for example- top quality wooden hockey stick will cost 1500 Rs. for life cycle of 1 yr. whereas composite hockey stick made of fibre glass will cost around 2500 Rs for life cycle of 6 yrs. Shri. Yogesh mentioned that Garware is largest manufacturers of sport accessories like nets, strings & ropes and also manufactures other products such as gym foam mat, inflatable products, webbings, etc. Supplying quality products to all major tournaments like FIFA, US Open, etc. and Challenges faced in this are high end testing equipment's which are not available in India. Use of Rubber Products- natural & synthetic in bicycle tyre, car tyre, rubber flooring for sports such as gymnasium, jogging track, etc., R&D & Testing facilities available in IRMRA and how industry can take benefits out of it, what are futuristic research program on products, process, RM development, etc. undertaken by IRMRA were highlighted by Smt. Suchismita.

SESSION 3

Shri. Anjani Kumar Prasad, Archroma moderated the 2nd Panel Discussion. Panelists in this session were - Shri. Henry Menezes, All India Football Federation, Shri. Sunil Jhunjhunwala, Techno Sportswear Pvt. Ltd., Shri. Chetan Agarwal, Positex Pvt. Ltd., Shri. Suresh Manoharan, Best

Colour Solutions India Pvt. Ltd., Shri. Suresh Babu, KKP Fine Linen Pvt. Ltd., Dr. Nandan Kumar, High Performance Textiles Pvt. Ltd.

The Panelists addressed all the questions - Shri. Henry mentioned that sport industry needs to bring the awareness to the customers about the different Sportech product, its quality, its affordability to customers, to understand its value for performance, prevention of injuries and rehabilitation, what are the major hurdles and gaps in branding & supply chain management to the consumers- Shri. Sunil said that there is no prominent brand of sportswear in India because of lack of understanding, requirement of Indian consumers and how to uplift the whole ecosystems to serve them, Sustainable solutions to the specific issues and concerns, Challenges faced in supply chain management, Process aspects, Certification cost which needs to be taken up with the Govt., availability of critical raw materials & inputs, and problems for availing latest technology for manufacturing sportswear.

FEEDBACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

1. WELSPUN - One of the Excellent sessions. Thanks ITTA team
2. DE ARIA CREATIONS - The session is very informative; Dr. Rakshit thank you for this platform.
3. ARCHROMA - Thank you very much for such a wonderful and informative session!
4. WILDCRAFT INDIA - Very nicely organized. Congratulations to organising team!
5. DUCIT MATERIALS - It was a great session! Very interesting!!! Well done to all the participants and panel members. Great Job!!!
6. COLOURTEX INDUSTRIES - Very nicely organised. Congratulations. Valuable knowledge and apprehensive session
7. NIFT- SRINAGAR - Very useful and informative talk from the experts
8. NIRMALA NIKETAN - Excellent thoughts shared all speakers. Thank you for the wonderful program. Congratulations ITTA and WRA.