



English rendering of the text of PM's address at the Inauguration of Textile India 2017

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Welcome to Textile India 2017. This is the biggest program so far of the country's textile sector in which more than 100 countries are participating. I offer my best wishes and congratulate the ministry of textiles, the organizers and all the entrepreneurs and artisans who are participating in this program.

I am happy to note that this is for the first time different state governments and people from the textile industry have come together to showcase the Indian textile industry's potential to the world through this mega international event.

Textile is a sector that works like a bridge between the agriculture sector and industry. Be it cotton cultivation or silk production, the end product for both broadly depends on the textile sector. Textile sector provides the market for the raw material produced by the hard work of farmers. In a way, textile sector span over both agriculture and industry.

If there is an industry in the history of India that has always been important for the country it is the textile industry. Thousands of years old Indian scriptures are full of the importance of clothing. For hundreds of years this industry has been the basis for trade with the other countries. Even the major trade routes have been named after those yarn and fabrics that were transported along those routes. Using these routes, numerous foreign scholars also visited India to understand the Indian culture and went back after understanding the greatness of Indian culture. They prominently mentioned the power of India's textile industry and Indian attires in their literature.

Impact of the textile industry was also visible in our literature through the different periods. A weaver from Banaras had gifted me a stole around one and a half years back when the first national handloom day was celebrated in Chennai. A famous couplet of Kabirdas Ji was hand woven on it. It reads like this:

Jhini Jhini bini chadariya

Kahe ke tana Kahe ke bharni, kaun taar se bini chadariya.

Kabir who used to spin himself, used to weave and color the cloth himself. He not only searched the truth of life in his work but also expressed that truth in the words of that trade.

Friends, the clothes have also been associated with the cultural diversity of our country. We can also say that the clothes are reflection of our cultural diversity. Several countries and regions are recognized by the textile industry there. Be it silk of Kanchipuram, Banaras or Assam, or be it Pashmina or Jamwar work of Kashmir, be it Muslin of Bengal or Chikan work Lucknow, or be it hand woven Ikkat from Odisha or Telangana or be it Patola of Gujarat, these clothes have been given the identity to these places for hundreds of years. This kind of diversity cannot be found in any other country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

India is today described as a bright spot in the global economy. It has emerged as one of the most attractive global investment destinations. This has been made possible by a series of sustained policy initiatives.

More than seven thousand reforms have been implemented to improve the ease of doing business. Processes have been simplified and made transparent. Government has repealed over twelve hundred outdated laws. These are just a few examples.

Consequently, India has moved up by thirty two places in the last two years in the Global Competitiveness Index of the World Economic Forum. This is the highest for any country. India moved up nineteen places on the World Bank Logistics Performance Index of 2016. We have also moved up sixteen places on the Global Innovation Index of the World Intellectual Property Organisation in 2016. We are third among the top ten FDI destinations listed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Based on the "Make-in-India" initiative, the organized textile industry is being infused with the mantras of 'skill, scale, speed' and 'zero-defect, zero-effect' for scaling up employment, production and exports.

We have one of the most liberal investment policies for foreign investment in the textile and apparel sector. We allow 100 percent FDI through automatic route in textile and apparel sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The textiles industry has a pivotal position in the Indian economy. It is strong and competitive across the value chain. India has an abundant supply of raw material, like cotton, wool, silk, jute, and man-made fibre. In fact, it is the world's largest producer of cotton and jute, and second largest producer of silk and man-made fibre. This provides us the distinct advantage of backward integration, which many other countries may not have. In addition, India has strong spinning, weaving, knitting and apparel manufacturing capacities. Young, skilled labour is available at a reasonable cost.

Our high economic growth has resulted in higher disposable income. The resulting higher demand for products offers a huge domestic market. Ours is a nation of aspirational youth, who wish to spend on textiles, apparel, and handcrafted lifestyle products. The domestic market for apparel and lifestyle products, currently estimated at US Dollars 85 billion, is expected to reach US Dollars 160 billion by 2025. This growth will be driven by the rising middle class.

There is also a high global demand for textiles and apparel manufactured in our country. India is the world's second largest exporter of textiles, commanding a global share of around five percent. Indian textiles, including traditional handloom and handicraft products, are exported to more than a hundred countries. Sometimes, Indian tourists buy garments abroad, only to realize later, that they have been made in India.

The textile sector offers significant employment opportunities. It is today, our second largest employer after agriculture. Over forty-five million people are employed directly in the sector, and over sixty million people are employed in allied activities.

Keeping this in mind, the government has been giving special attention to the textile sector. A package was announced for the textile sector last year.

Under the package apparel and made-up sector were strengthened.

The government has decided to provide financial assistance to those companies in the apparel and made-up sector that will provide employment. However, the assistance will be in the form of bearing the burden of 12% Employee Provident Fund that is borne by the company. One of the benefits of this kind of assistance is that it will bring maximum number of workers in the organised sector.

In addition to this, the government has allowed the provision for the fixed term employment in the textile sector. It means that these workers will be employed for a specific time period, however, during this period they will get the same facilities as given to a regular employee. This will help improve the condition of the workers.

The companies of the textile sector have also been given relief under the provisions of the income tax act. The manufacturing units that employ at least 100 workers, the units that employ a new worker up to 150 days are also being given tax rebate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

An integrated skill development scheme is also being implemented to address the critical gap of skilled manpower, through industry-oriented training programs.

Our strengths in manufacturing and export are backed up by our ability to develop world-class training and research institutes. The National Institute of Fashion Technology has a network of sixteen professionally managed campuses. It has been playing a crucial role in benchmarking performance and processes in the areas of fashion education, research and development, training and consultancy.

In the last few years we have witnessed a very healthy competition amongst States to attract investment and industries in their respective States. As a result, there have been some major reforms that have taken place in States. Each State in its own way has tried to facilitate the establishment of new industries including textiles. I think, the time has now come for us to concentrate on textile exports in a big way.

India is a country with diverse culture, fashion and traditions. This diversity is clearly reflected in the clothing present in different regions. We should catalogue and map our clothing diversity and clearly earmark strengths and specialties of each state or region. Each State should appoint nodal officers dedicated to a few well-known products, who would facilitate producers and traders across the value chain. The intervention should start from production to export of garments. It should meet the specific requirements of domestic as well as export markets.

We should also formulate an action plan to study and map the requirements of people in large global markets and monitor new trends in fashion and textiles in these areas on a real time basis. Government Councils and Industry Bodies should rise to the occasion, in a spirit of cooperation. This would enable us to channelize our energies in meeting those requirements and give a boost to our exports.

Friends,

Innovation and research are new mantras for growth and wealth generation. The textile industry will have to constantly innovate and research for growth and to tap new markets. For example, physiques may be larger in some parts of the world. This may require clothing of greater width than the normal size used in our country. For this, you may need to increase the width of the loom. Elsewhere, requirements may be different. Such attention to detail is necessary to attain leadership in export markets.

Today, there is a demand for products with zero carbon footprint. Holistic lifestyle has become a buzzword. The market for Organic Dyes, clothes and fabrics made of organic products is growing. Our effort should be to innovate in organic products.

Apart from cotton and jute, we already have fabrics made of banana and bamboo fibres. There is a niche market for such products. Thus, there is a need for further research by our institutions like National Institute of Fashion Technology and Scientific and Industrial Research institutes to develop fabrics from other sources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our integrated textile clusters are compliant to global standards of environment and health safety. Textile producing States also have pro-industry policies in place, to facilitate the required infrastructure for investments in textiles.

I understand that over the next two days, you would have an opportunity to interact with a few State Governments. Some of my Cabinet colleagues will also interact with you. I am sure you will find these sessions interesting and informative.

I hope this event will help familiarize global and Indian leaders with India's enabling policy environment, strengths and vast opportunities associated with the sector. This will help establish India as a valued partner for countries seeking sourcing and investment opportunities in India. I hope, it will go a long way in realizing India's inherent potential to become one of the most significant textile and apparel sourcing and investment destinations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by wishing you a very successful and productive three days in Gandhinagar.

I call upon you to Come, Invest and Make Textiles in India.

Thank You!

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