



Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Radha Mohan Singh addressed Textiles India 2017 Conference today in Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat.

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Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shri Radha Mohan Singh said that the overall growth of natural fibre sector is important for the country's economy. They have economic importance and enormous impact on the development of the society. He was speaking at the Textiles India 2017 Conference in Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat.

He said that natural fibres are backbone of the Indian textile industry. It constitutes more than 60% of the total fibre industry. After the agricultural industry, the Indian textile industry gives direct employment to millions of people. Several small and medium industries use by products of natural fibres. More than 75 million households worldwide are directly involved in the production of natural fibres. In India, 30 million farmers are involved in the production of natural fibres.

The Agriculture Minister said that at present, natural fibres face a tough competition from artificial fibres such as acrylic, polyester, etc. A century ago, the fibres brought in use were natural, whereas now natural fibre share is less than 40%. Cotton alone contributed for 50% of apparel use during 1990s. However, at present, the share of cotton has declined to less than 30% in world apparel market.

He said that synthetic fibres are making a strong hold on the market due to their cost effectiveness and tailormade properties. The cost of production of natural fibre is comparatively higher than the synthetic fibres. In view of the rapid increase in population, countries are giving importance to increase the area of food grains cultivation as compared to fibre crops. The demand for natural fibre is steadily increasing due to the increase in the population and due to the greater awareness among public to use eco-friendly natural fibres. As there is a limitation in increasing the cultivation area of natural fibres, the only way to increase the availability of above fibres is to increase their productivity.

The Minister said currently 90 countries are producing cotton in the world. Cotton accounts for about 60% of the total fibre consumed by Indian textile industries which is less than 40% share in global scenario. India is the leading producer of cotton in the world accounting for around one-third of the area and one fourth of the global production. During 2016-17, India produced around 5.8 million tonnes of cotton from 10.5 million hectares with productivity of around 550 kg lint/hectare. There is an urgent need to increase the productivity of cotton with the introduction of high yielding plants, best agronomic practice and innovative technologies.

He said jute is one of the most important natural fibres used for industrial applications. Jute farming and jute industry are providing livelihood to about 5 million people. At present, jute is attaining success in controlling soil erosion in the form of geo-texture, use in the automobile industry for the manufacture of interior of cars etc and in the new applications of technical wear. The demand of natural geo-textiles manufactured from jute and sisal fibres is going to have a steady and sustainable growth in coming decades. Apart from fibre, the cultivation of these fibres has many advantages like carbon sequestering capacity, improved soil health, economic importance to the farmers etc. Across the world, countries are making efforts to reduce the greenhouse gas like carbon dioxide. The average productivity of jute is around 2300-2400 kg fibre/hectare.

He said flax ranks fourth among the world's commercial fibre crops. It is one of the most natural and most environment friendly of all textile fibres. In India, total area and production under flax fibre is meagre due to unavailability of location specific high yielding varieties and improved production technology. The manufacturer of linen fabrics in India import worth Rs.60 crore flax fibres from European countries every year. So, the primary need of the country is to develop a significant area under organised flax cultivation supported with improved production and processing technologies to ensure steady flow of quality flax fibre to the domestic market and satisfy the need of the textile industry.

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