EVALLIANCE

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Sommaire / Summary

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L'usine de textile géante de Relizane prévoit d'exporter 50% de sa production

Par: Sonia Lyes 31 Mars 2018 à 10:27

La société mixte Tayal Spa, fruit d'un partenariat entre le groupe turc Taypa et l'État algérien, ambitionne de créer à Relizane la plus grande usine de production textile d'Europe et de la Méditerranée orientale. La première étape du projet, en trois phases, doit être achevée avant fin 2018. Taypa est une filiale de Tay Group.

"C'est une ville entièrement dédiée au textile qui prend forme dans la zone industrielle de Sidi Khettab (wilaya de Relizane) en Algérie, avec une surface totale de 2,5 millions de m3", rapporte le site Innovation in Textiles -plateforme dédiée à l'industrie textile – jeudi 29 mars.

9000 tonnes de tissus tricotés et de fils de tricot à maille, 30 millions de mètres de denim seront notamment produits sur ce site.

Selon le journal turc gouvernemental Daily Sabah, la première étape du projet comporte huit unités industrielles de textile et de confection, une école de textile qui formera 400 personnes et 567 logements pour les ouvriers et les fonctionnaires.

Cette usine doit fournir, selon le groupe, 10.000 emplois dans un premier temps, puis 25.000 emplois dans 10 ans.

Selon le site Innovation in Textiles, les usines dédiées à la confection de fils et de tricot seront opérationnelles en juin 2018. L'usine de finition textile sera achevée en août. Celle dédiée à la production de vêtements fin 2018.

La moitié de la production devrait être dédiée à l'export, indique Mesut Toprak, le PDG de Tay Group, qui détient 49% de l'usine de Relizane, selon des propos rapportés par le portail dédié à l'industrie textile. « Nous planifions d'exporter 45-50% de la production », a-t-il dit.

« Nous investissons 800 millions de dollars sur la première phase du projet. Ici, nous nous concentrons sur la production de coton, de fil, de tissu, de tricot et de vêtements », a-t-il également précisé.

Selon les statistiques de Merter Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MESIAD) publiées en octobre 2017, la Turquie exporte chaque année près de 30 milliards de dollars de textiles et de vêtements.

Le Salon du textile revient pour une seconde édition

Mardi 03 Avril 2018 00:00

Alors que l'Algérie s'apprête à inaugurer, en partenariat avec la Turquie, son plus grand pôle industriel des textiles en Afrique, le Salon du textile et de la mode revient pour une seconde édition, du 25 au 28 avril prochain à Oran.

Textyle-Expo est sans aucun doute devenu le salon de référence du secteur en Algérie, la forte présence de la presse nationale et des médias lors de la précédente édition lui ont donné l'importance qui lui sied, le taux de satisfaction des exposants à la fin des fiches de satisfaction confirme le succès de l'édition 2017.

Conférences, B2b et défilé de mode seront organisés avec la participation des spécialistes de renommée mondiale afin de mettre en évidence les dernières tendances et innovations dans le domaine.

Direct exports draw huge investments in garment accessories

- Ibrahim Hossain Ovi
- Published at 10:17 PM April 02, 2018

Garment accessories such as buttons, zippers, tags, labels, rivets etc has a large export market and have been drawing huge amounts of direct investment in the sectorMehedi Hasan

According to BGAPMEA's latest data, garment accessories and packaging products earned $6.7 billion in the last fiscal year, of which over $1 billion came from direct exports

Bangladeshi garments accessories and packaging manufacturers have made a massive new investment to seize a larger chunk of the global export market share.

According to data from the Bangladesh Garment Accessories and Packaging Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGAPMEA), garments accessories and packaging manufacturers have made an investment of Tk722.5 crore, with more proposals in the pipeline.

Sources in the sector said this new investment focuses on producing higher quality garment accessories with an aim to increase exports and establish the sector as a direct export earner instead of just deemed. Since there is more capacity than is currently needed, accessories can be another big export earner, they opined.

“Bangladesh is already well established as a sourcing hub for apparel products. Garment accessories and packaging products are key components for competition. The demand of accessories is increasing very fast at home and abroad,” Al- Shahriar Ahmed, Managing Director of Adzi Trims Ltd told Dhaka Tribune.

Bangladesh is almost self-sufficient in meeting local demands in the garment accessory manufacturing sector. This direct exporting will open up a new avenue for local manufacturers, said Shahriar.

“In order to reach market demands for exports, I have made investment of $3.8 million to produce eco-friendly and high quality value added products, which is what global fashion brands prefer,” continued Shahriar.

“I have another investment of $6 million which is aimed to increase my production capacity, since I plan to increase my yearly turnover to $18 million in 2018 from the existing $12 million,” he added.

BGAPMEA president Abdul Kader Khan told the Dhaka Tribune: “If the government provides logistic support including gas and electricity connections, the investment will increase further.

“Manufacturers are using coal instead of gas to run boilers due to a gas shortage. This is costly due to a higher import duty on coal. If the government allows duty free coal import, manufacturers will be more price-competitive,” he also said.

Currently, manufacturers have to pay about a 45% tax on import of coal.

DhakaTribune

HOME NEWSPAPER BANGLADESH BUSINESS WORLD SPORTS FEATURE OPINION MAGAZINE

Illegal foreign workers and tax evasion hurting the Bangladesh economy

- Ibrahim Hossain Ovi Shariful Islam

- Published at 01:31 AM April 04, 2018

Photo:**Bigstock**

The country is missing out on a huge amount of revenue due to the illegal employment of foreigners

Chandra Shekhar (not his real name), an Indian expert of the apparel industry, joined a Gazipur-based ready-made garment (RMG) factory in 2013.

In order to continue working in Bangladesh, Chandra was required by law to renew his work permit from the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA). He chose not to do so, however, and continued working illegally.

This has become a common problem in many manufacturing industries such as those for the apparel, textile, and leather sectors, causing Bangladesh to miss out on large amounts of tax revenue.

According to a number of trade analysts, industry insiders and government officials, the problem is being exacerbated by lax monitoring of government authorities concerned, and a lack of proper coordination among the stakeholders and a part of the business community.

National Board of Revenue (NBR) sources say around 13,000 foreign employees are currently submitting tax returns. This figure, however, does not match the amount of outward remittance from Bangladesh.

“Every year, more than $4 billion outward remittance is being sent from Bangladesh to India,” said a NBR official, seeking anonymity. “So, you can understand how much revenue the government is losing due to tax evasion perpetrated by Indian workers.”

Every year, more than $4 billion outward remittance is being sent from Bangladesh to India

The Dhaka Tribune has learned that a significant number of foreign nationals – mainly from India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan – are currently working in different factories in Bangladesh.

Although some arrived in Bangladesh with proper work permits which must be renewed every year, many of them do not bother to. There are also those who enter Bangladesh on tourist visas and join the workforce after their visas have expired.

Why do we need foreign employees?

The RMG sector currently has the largest pool of foreign personnel, as it needs highly-skilled individuals to keep up with the latest fashion technology and automated machinery.

“In the clothing industry, the latest machinery and technology is being introduced frequently, and to operate this technology, this sector needs foreign technical experts,” said Exporters Association of Bangladesh (EAB) president, Abdus Salam Murshedy.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Siddiqur Rahman said RMG owners usually hire foreign employees for top positions, as this particular sector does not have many domestically available experts.

“We appoint foreigners following all existing rules and regulations,” he said. “In this industry, there will always be a need for foreign technical experts.”

Although foreign nationals are required to renew their work permits every year, many of them do not bother to do so **Mahmud Hossain Opu/DhakaTribune**

According to insiders, the RMG factory owners deliberately hire foreign experts without due legal process in order to evade taxes and employ them on lower salaries.

“I do not agree with the owners’ claim that there are not enough highly experienced local experts in the RMG industry,” a general manager at a Gazipur-based apparel factory said, on condition of anonymity.

“There are people who can meet the demand. But I agree that there is a shortage of designers.”

This general manager, who has worked in this industry for the past 15 years, could not say why this sector needs to employ so many foreigners on a regular basis.

How many foreigners are working in Bangladesh?

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Home Ministry has no data on the number of foreign nationals currently employed in Bangladesh
- Many foreign workers first enter Bangladesh on a tourist visa
- Tax returns submitted by foreigners do not match the amount of outward remittance
- Existing Bangladeshi laws dictate that a foreign employee must pay a 30% income tax
- Sources claim that RMG factory owners hire foreigners illegally to evade taxes

Industry insiders claim that over 500,000 foreign nationals currently working in Bangladesh take away around $5 billion every year. Most of these, they claim, are working illegally.

The Dhaka Tribune attempted to verify these figures with a number of authorities concerned, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Home Ministry, the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Airport Immigration, and BIDA.

According to BIDA data, in the past five years it has provided work permits to 13,147 employees in the commercial and the industrial sector.

BIDA also renewed the work permits of 17,389 employees in the same time period. However, there is no clear data about how many foreign workers are currently working in the country.

On February 4, 2018, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal informed parliament that a total of 85,486 foreign nationals are working in different sectors in Bangladesh, of whom 67,853 foreigners were owners of business enterprises.

Separately, a Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) study found that 16% of all apparel factories in Bangladesh employ foreign individuals.

“It is a widely discussed issue that there is no accurate data on foreign employment in the country (so) I think it is time to take an initiative together, to handle this matter effectively,” Labour Secretary Afroza Khan told this correspondent.

“If there is no system in place, the industry owners could deny any responsibility arising from hiring foreign nationals. An employer should always appoint foreign people through proper channels with valid documents.”

BIDA executive member Navash Chandra Mondol said it is difficult to ascertain the number of foreign employees in Bangladesh.

“BIDA, Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) and NGO Affairs Bureau are giving work permits, too,” he said.

“We do not have a dedicated mechanism with enough manpower.”

Meanwhile, a high-ranking Home Ministry official acknowledged that they do not have any data on the number of foreign employees who have taken security clearance.

“The government is planning to take an initiative for setting up a digital database,” he added.

Foreign employees mostly come to Bangladesh from Sri Lanka, South Korea, China, India, Pakistan, Taiwan and sometimes from European countries as well.

They are working in non-government organizations (NGOs), hotels, restaurants, educational institutions, manufacturing industries, hospitals and many other sectors.

How can we reduce dependency on foreign experts?

The ever-expanding manufacturing industry in Bangladesh makes it difficult to reduce dependency on foreign expertise, but it can be lessened with some initiatives.

“Public and private universities should introduce subjects such as Merchandising, Fashion Technology, Production Engineering and Lean Management, along with practical courses,” said Salam, managing director of Envoy Textile.

“The universities can also help the students get in touch with the industry they are interested in, and Bangladesh’s dependency on foreign experts will gradually drop.”

Government initiatives

The existing laws of Bangladesh dictate that a foreign employee must pay 30% tax on his or her income.

A violator has to pay Tk500,000 or 50% of their income tax as a fine, and can be jailed for up to three years. The company that employed the violator may lose tax holidays or other exemption benefits.

NBR Member for Legal and Enforcement of Taxes, Md Serajul Islam, told the Dhaka Tribune that the NBR already has a list of tax evaders, and has launched an initiative to identify foreign personnel that are illegally working in the listed companies.

“The drives will be conducted throughout April and May this year,” he said. “We have already identified 15 foreigners working at four companies, who are not paying income taxes.”

The NBR has already set up four income tax booths at immigration check posts at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Shah Amanat Airport in Chittagong, MAG Osmani International Airport in Sylhet, and Benapole Land Port.

These checkpoints will prevent foreigners who do not have updated tax clearance certificates from leaving the country.

The Phnom Penh Post
Thu Apr 05 2018 08:27:48 GMT+0200 (Paris, Madrid (heure d'été))

A sector too big to fail?

Robin Spiess | Publication date 05 April 2018 | 06:31 ICT

An employee works at a garment factory in Phnom Penh's Por Sen Chey district in 2014. Vireak Mai

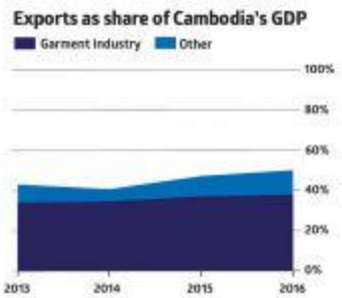
Cambodia's garment sector is the backbone of the country's export-driven economy and employs 86 percent of all factory workers. But the sector faces threats from increasingly competitive regional neighbours, the inevitable shift to automation and the potential loss of preferential trade agreements.

The stakes couldn't be higher for the country's economy. About 40 percent of Cambodia's GDP comes from garment exports, while more than 800,000 people are employed in garment factories around the country.

But as Cambodia's political situation has deteriorated with the dissolution of the main opposition party in November, and as the push to lower electricity and logistics costs for businesses have taken a backseat to populist policy initiatives, the garment sector is facing several risks that threaten the industry's short- and long-term future in the Kingdom.

CompetitivenessCambodia remains competitive in the global garments marketplace primarily because of its low wages, according to analysts. But recent years have seen steep wage hikes for garment factory workers, and that trend has accelerated ahead of

July’s national elections. The minimum wage has risen from $61 in 2012 to $170 this year. And as Prime Minister Hun Sen has attempted to woo garment workers ahead of the election, more populist policies have been enacted, including an increased burden for businesses to pay into their workers’ funds at the National Social Security Fund.



In a recent speech, the prime minister said that experts had floated $250 per month as a reasonable minimum wage by 2023, and said he thought it could go even higher. That could be disastrous, according to some factory owners that operate in Cambodia.

“We cannot survive a 12 percent wage increase every year,” said Eric Tavernier, CEO of France-based textile firm We Group Ltd. While Tavernier said he has no immediate plans to leave the country, the increased financial burden of doing business in the Kingdom worried him. “I believe a significant number of factories feel the pressure to consider moving out, and not many are willing to come in,” he said.

Tavernier said that when he compared his Cambodia operations to those in Vietnam and China, the Kingdom has only maintained its profitable edge due to lower wages, as Cambodia’s transportation, freight and export costs were all higher than in neighbouring countries. “We can’t increase prices for our customers, because competition is intense,” he said. “Vietnam has high wages, but . . . there’s better oversight there, better shipping and more flexibility in the market.”

Anthony Galliano, CEO of Cambodian Investment Management, said the Kingdom needed to improve on a wide range of factors if it hoped to keep investment flowing.

“Cambodia’s attractiveness and competitiveness has elevated over the last 10 years, primarily due to low labour costs,” Galliano said. “But infrastructure, productivity, energy costs and logistics are lagging, and must improve demonstrably if Cambodia is to remain a major player.”

Labour Ministry spokesman Heng Sour has said in the past that increased costs and wage hikes should not deter future investment in the sector, pointing to the government’s recent reduction of corporate taxes.

The January elimination of the export management fee, along with exemptions allowed to the prepayment tax – a 1 percent minimum tax obligation paid on monthly revenue flows – are expected to amount to a $40 million tax break for factories this year.

But lowered taxes may not be enough to cover employers' rising financial burdens.

"If costs are going up faster than productivity, then Cambodia is absolutely at risk of losing factories to other countries in the region," said Stephen Higgins, managing partner at Mekong Strategic Partners.

"Embracing automation is the only way that Cambodia can improve productivity quickly enough to justify the level of wage rises that we are seeing," he said.

Automation

Automation can increase productivity while lowering the wage burden for employers. But questions remain about whether Cambodia's labour force would be able to adapt to move up the value chain, and whether the country's infrastructure could support an automated garment sector.

David Tan, the managing director at the technology company MyTeb Cambodia, noted that Cambodia lacks both the trained workforce and infrastructure backbone to support an automated factory sector.

"Electricity availability and uptime remain a critical challenge," he said. "Without a steady and uninterrupted supply of energy, many of these automated processes will be disrupted, causing multiple points of delay and unproductivity."

The local labour force could benefit from education programs regarding automation, and Tan said Cambodian labourers appeared willing to adapt.

"Cambodian people are eager to learn more and embrace modern methods of productivity – this is unlike other territories, where there is a perception that automation and enhanced efficiency will cause redundancy and a reduction of jobs," he said.

But retraining the more than 800,000 garment workers would be a massive investment for both private companies and the government, and it's unclear if either side would be willing or able to put in the time and money.

Marco Kalinna, the founder of factory assessment company Cosmos Services who has 17 years of experience working in Cambodia's garment sector, was pessimistic about the country's chances of adapting to automation.

"Cambodia can only be competitive in those areas where labour costs are still an advantage," he said. "Mass-automation will find its place where electricity costs are affordable and where there is proximity to the markets, and Cambodia has none of these."

Loss of agreements

Last week, apparel groups representing some of Cambodia's largest garment buyers expressed "growing concern" over several of Cambodia's controversial labour laws and requested a meeting with Hun Sen.

In the letter, penned by US-based American Apparel & Footwear Association and UK-based advocacy group Ethical Trading Initiative, the groups warned that Cambodia's 2016 Trade Union Law places restrictions on freedom of association and union rights, and continuing to implement such restrictions "will make Cambodia an unattractive and expensive place to do business".

H&M, one of the buyers represented in the letter, told The Post that while they are monitoring the situation in the country, they had no immediate plans to leave.

"We are continuously monitoring the political situation," wrote Ida Stahlnacke, H&M communications officer, in an email. "However, we remain committed to Cambodia,

and to being present [in the Kingdom], to continuously improve the lives of garment workers."

Kalinna, from Cosmos Services, said that brands were unlikely to take concrete steps beyond issuing "concerns".

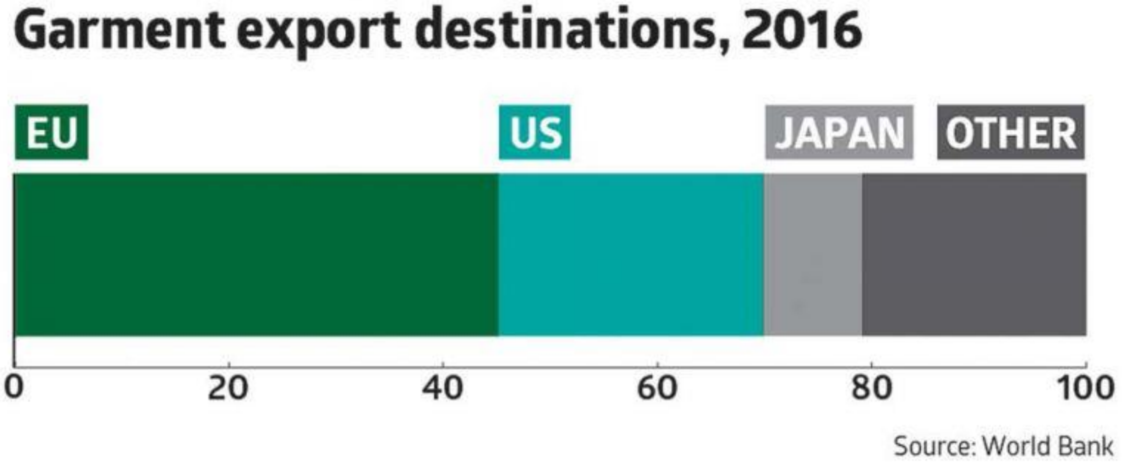
"Sorry, but that letter was a publicity stunt," he said.

A more significant risk was the potential loss of preferential trade agreements, such as the Everything But Arms (EBA) agreement, which grants Cambodian exports tariff-free access to the EU market.

The EU imports more than 40 percent of Cambodia's garments, making EBA a lynchpin of the Kingdom's economy.

"The removal of . . . duty free [status] for garment exports to the EU would certainly have a devastating effect on the garments industry," Kalinna said. "My estimate is that, within 18 months, up to 50 percent of manufacturers would move out of Cambodia."

Whether the EU would ever enact such a measure remains an open question. Most analysts think it is unlikely due to the fact that the ramifications of a repeal would impact hundreds of thousands of Cambodian workers.



"There are more effective, targeted mechanisms for the EU to make their point than a broad brush approach like pulling the EBA," Higgins said.

However, the bloc has taken several unprecedented steps toward Cambodia recently, raising questions about how predictable its actions may be.

The EU Commission, prompted by protectionist concerns from member nations, launched an investigation into Cambodian rice exports last month – the first investigation of its kind of Cambodian exports. The decision was unrelated to labour rights or the political situation, but the move shows that Europe won't hesitate to re-evaluate Cambodia's tariff-free status if it determines it would benefit its members' interests.

In mid-March, the EU and Cambodia held the 10th Joint Committee, a meeting that is held roughly once every two years to discuss a range of issues between the two trading partners.

In past statements, the portion written by EU foreign affairs ministers often chides Cambodia on politics and rights issues, but the portion from the Trade and Investment Subgroup – which is responsible for evaluating the EBA – has generally refrained from wading into such matters. The subgroup's portion of the statement from the ninth meeting, held in 2016, for example, makes no mention of politics or rights.

But at the meeting in March this year, the Trade and Investment Subgroup specifically called for more attention to be paid to human rights and fundamental freedoms, "including labour rights", which "underpins the continued eligibility for EU trade preferences under the EBA".

It went on to detail specific concerns related to economic land concessions for sugar plantations, as well as human rights and labour issues that needed "urgent action on the Cambodian side".

But even with a stronger statement, analysts say the EU is likely all bark and no bite.

Galliano, from Cambodian Investment Management, said he is not worried at all about the continued existence of preferred trade agreements, with continued access to the EBA all but assured in the coming years.

“While strong statements threatening concrete steps have been issued, withdrawal of preferences are rarely implemented,” he said. “I see a very low probability that Cambodia’s EBA status will be terminated.”

If trade agreements remain stable, the Kingdom may avoid a sudden shock to its largest industry. But the inexorable changes promised by automation technology, as well as the lofty promises of wage hikes that
are unlikely to be offset by decreases in costs for businesses, could leave the garment sector in Cambodia hanging by a thread.

The Phnom Penh Post

Wed Apr 04 2018 10:46:11 GMT+0200 (Paris, Madrid (heure d'été))

Garment workers to be reimbursed

Yon Sineat and Daphne Chen | Publication date 04 April 2018 | 08:25 ICT

Garment workers protest in front of the Great Honour Textile Factory in Kandal province in 2016, demanding a resolution to unpaid wages. Pha Lina

The Ministry of Labour on Tuesday released the names of four factories whose workers will be compensated after their employers absconded owing back pay and severance.

Labour Minister Ith Sam Heng said abandoned workers at Benoh Apparel, Yu Fa Garment Industry, Great Honour Textile Factory and Chung Fai Knitwear will get the compensation next week. The ministry had initially announced that workers at nine such factories would be eligible for compensation, but the status of the other five factories remained unclear on Tuesday.

It was also unclear how much each worker would receive.

Roeum Sao Leap, who worked at Benoh for nine years before owners abandoned the factory in January, said she is owed about $3,000 in unpaid wages and severance.

"If this news is true, we welcome that solution since it's close to Khmer New Year and we don't have money to go to our hometown," Sao Leap said. "It has taken about five months after the employer fled, and I don't know what compensation we'd get or how the ministry is going to pay us."

In a message, Ministry of Labour spokesman Heng Sour said it has been government policy to pay out of pocket for garment workers whose employers have absconded.

"We are now under the process of fixing this moral hazard," Sour said.

One possibility is a severance payment deposit scheme, floated by Sam Heng last month. Under the scheme, businesses in Cambodia would be required to deposit severance payments on a regular basis with the National Social Security Fund (NSSF). If factories do shut down unexpectedly, the NSSF would distribute the severance to workers on behalf of the factory.

William Conklin, the director of labour rights NGO Solidarity Center, said all sides "can work together to come up with something that doesn't hamper investment but ensures owners don't run away".

"We know the industry transitions, there can be downturns and upswings, but what you need is an orderly transition out so that if a company goes bankrupt, workers aren't left with nothing," he said. "In many countries this is a standard business practice."

However, Ken Loo, of the employer representative body Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia, said that a severance deposit scheme "requires much more in-depth study and analysis on the impact it would have on all businesses, domestic and foreign, before implementation".

How is the China Textile trends are depleting ?

Date
4/5/2018 12:30:54 AM

(MENAFN Editorial) China is the undisputed giant in the field of textiles and apparel market since after 1980. China has contained 40% of market share in the worldwide textile market. Till 2017 China has done the export of $200 in the worldwide market. There is low manufacturing cost, efficient workforce, low manufacturing cost etc reasons which are responsible for making China a no 1 giant to Indian Textiles. But from some time the condition of China is continually changing after since the 2008-09 slow down.

What are the major reasons of the downfall of the Chinese textile industry ? -
Growth of domestic demand -
The domestic demand of textile and apparel products is increasing at the speed rate of 15% and this growth is seemed to be increasing in the next upcoming years. If the demand of the domestic import will be increasing then it will definitely increase the pressure on the supply chain management system of China and it can definitely affect the export rate of the country. It can be daunting for the country economy and a growing opportunity of the competitor company.

High wage rate -
One of the major reasons of the growth of the Chinese economy is the low manufacturing cost and low per capita individual income. But the increasing expected wage rate can make the opposite situation as well for the chinese economy. Due to low wage rate the interest of people is continually decreasing towards the manufacturing and production field and is increasing towards the other field.

Increasing focus towards the value added segments -
As the manufacturing rate and production cost will be rapidly increasing in the

economy then it will be definitely shrink the margin value of the profit and other revenue models. To remain competitive in the long run, they will definitely concentrate on the other alternative areas of technology and artificial intelligence and the export rate will shrink.

Relocating and outsourcing the manufacturing industry -
There are many asian countries like India and other neighbour countries where the manufacturing rates and costs are low. China is predicted to make the official agreements with these countries to cover their manufacturing demand and supply management system and the profit margin of China in the international market will shrink.
Hope you have liked the post ! Thanks for reading it !

KNITTING TRADEJOURNAL

The Leading Magazine for Hosiery & Knitting Technology

Invista to build new Advanced Textiles Innovation Centre in China

Written by **Haydn Davis** Published: 03 April 2018

Foshan - Invista Apparel and Advanced Textiles, the owner of the Lycra Brand has signed a memorandum for the construction of a new Textile Innovation Centre in China.

The opening of the facility at the Foshan Nanhai Sanshan Scientific Innovation Park is scheduled for later this year.

The Innovation Centre, with an area of more than 4,500 square meters, will be equipped with modern textile processing equipment for knitting and weaving along with garment engineering, fabric certification and analytic testing. It will also include an innovation development area where customers and Invista R&D personnel can meet to develop and test fibre, fabric and garment innovations. In addition to this Centre, the business has other Textile R&D Labs in the US, Italy and Taiwan.

“We are excited to attract R&D personnel to our new Innovation Center as well as use this facility to network with the experienced experts from our other Labs, while we work with customers to develop and commercialize new products," said Jack Yang, chief technology officer of East Region, Invista Apparel and Advanced Textiles. The team will be committed to creating new textile solutions that are both functional and fashionable to meet the global apparel market needs, by conducting research programs based on advanced fibers and textile-based fabric and garment innovations.”

“This year marks the 60th anniversary of Lycra fibre, an important milestone for the brand, an innovation which continues to transform the apparel industry," added Julien Born, executive vice president of East Region, Invista Apparel and Advanced Textiles. "The establishment of this Innovation Center, is yet another sign of the commitment we are making to invest in innovation that will create value for our customers and ultimately the consumers.

“The Centre will serve as a hub, to better facilitate communications with our global brand/retail customers based in Hong Kong and across the Asia Pacific region as well as local brands/retailers serving the China market.”

China moves its factories back to the countryside

Manufacturers lured from the coast as Xi Jinping turns focus to rural revival

A factory in Henan run by the Jintai Garment Company

Emily Feng in Hua county, Henan **April 2, 2018**

It is a scene typical of China's manufacturing regions: clattering machines and smocked workers piecing together clothes for foreign brands such as American Eagle and Uniqlo.

But this garment factory is far from China's usual coastal production hubs. Down a long unpaved road past yellowed fields, the factory lies in rural Henan, a province in China's central plains.Once famous for exporting labour, Henan now wants it to return. So authorities are building factories in its villages to counter migration that has thinned its population, leaving crops untended and many children to be brought up by their grandparents.

The move reflects a stark shift in government focus. After decades of urbanisation and rural neglect, China's Communist party is seeking to revitalise the countryside, where wages and standards of living have stagnated compared with those of big cities.

“In the long term, China’s continued economic development will depend on people in fourth-tier cities, county towns and villages joining the consumer class,” says Even Pay, an agriculture analyst at the Beijing-based research firm China Policy. “This is the real aim of the rural revitalisation strategy.”

The shift is embodied in Henan’s Hua county, where the first “satellite factories”, garment factories relocated wholesale from wealthier coastal regions, were rebuilt in rural villages with funding from poverty alleviation initiatives

. “We draw a circle on a map and, if there are enough villagers to employ here, we build a factory,” says Shao Deming, manager of Jintai Garment, based in the affluent coastal province of Zhejiang.

Mr Shao began operating small textile factories in Henan’s Hua county in 2015, making jackets for Chinese outerwear brand Bosideng. He now has 17, employing 2,600 workers. “The government built [those] 17 factories in one year. Normally it would take us two to three years to build one,” he says.


Hua county in Henan province, where the first 'satellite factories' were relocated wholesale from wealthier coastal regions

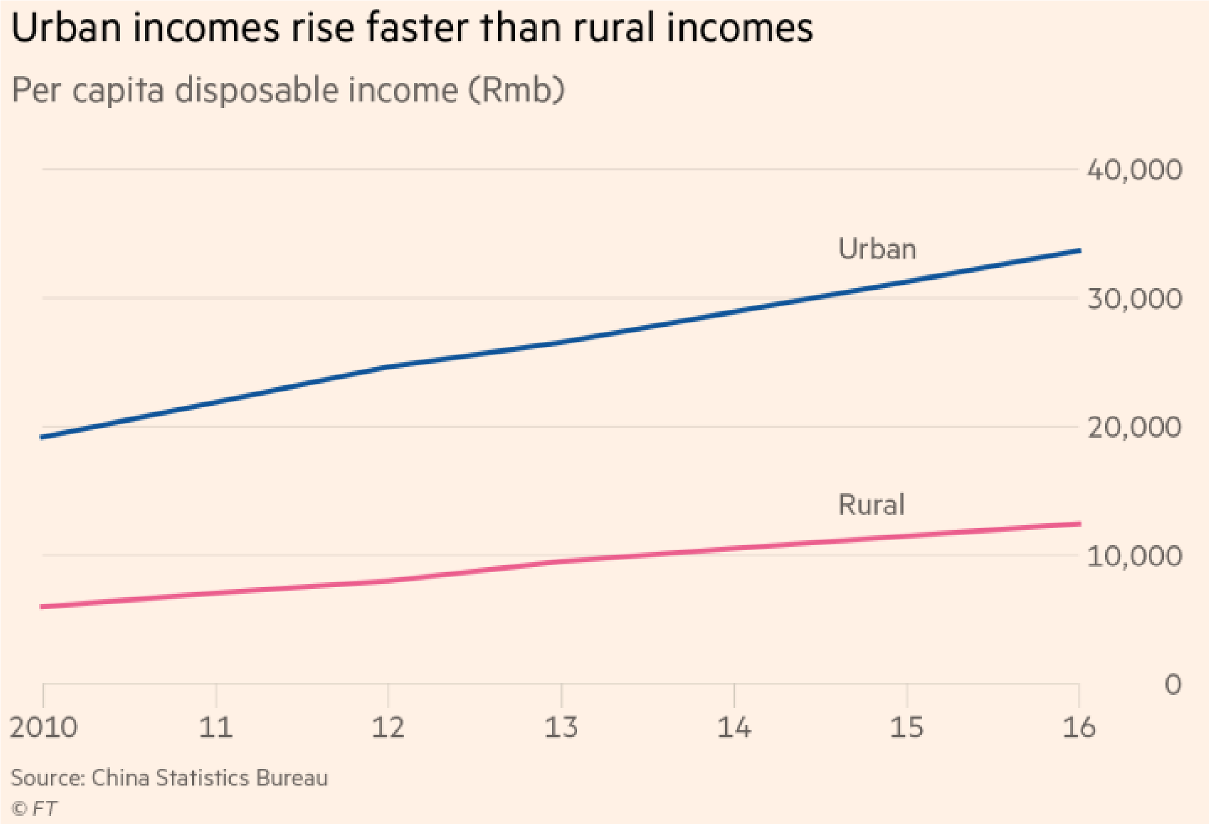
The county pays for the buildings while Jintai pays for the equipment and workers, saving about Rmb1.5m ($235,000) per factory opening, according to Mr Shao. Such is the county government’s zeal to build factories, Mr Shao thinks Jintai could have 80 more opening by the end of the year.

President Xi Jinping has made rural revitalisation a priority for his second term, singling it out as a policy challenge at a landmark party meeting last year and indicating he would push ahead despite a lack of success by his predecessors dating back to Hu Jintao.

Every year China’s State Council devotes its first official policy document to agriculture.

This year’s Document No 1, as it is known, laid out a strategy — and expanded party control — over rural economic development.

The signalling from the party’s upper echelons suggests there will be more programmes such as Henan’s satellite factories to lure young workers back home. Numerous counties in the western region of Xinjiang and Shandong province have replicated Henan’s model, building small factories making garments that require low-skilled workers and can be easily shipped from anywhere.



The relocations make economic sense. The days of cheap manufacturing on China's eastern coast, where wages have rocketed, are over. In Hua county, workers earn an average Rmb2,000 a month for seven-hour shifts in a five-day week, lower than the average migrant worker salary of Rmb3,410 in Guangdong province, according to China's national statistics bureau.

For villagers in a region where job opportunities are scarce, the work provides a stable, if not luxurious, income source close to home. "At least I have a few thousand a month to take care of my child," says Qin Chengxin, a 38-year-old textile worker from Zaocunxiang village in Hua county. "It guarantees a basic quality of life.

"Food security also is a driving factor behind rural revitalisation. China still largely depends on small-plot farming because of Communist land policies that hamper large-scale agribusiness.

Garment factories relocating to Hua county take advantage of lower costs than on the eastern coast, where wages have rocketed

But individual plots are often left fallow by people seeking higher wages in cities. That has put China dangerously close to dipping below its self-ascribed “red line”, the minimum level of arable land needed to feed itself.

“Given its history, China feels it must hold its rice bowl with its own hands,” says Ether Yin, co-founder of consultancy Trivium China. “As a Communist state, it cannot simply allow farmers to decide how to use arable lands in case it is diverted for commercial purposes.”

Hua county is no exception. It has remained a big producer of sorghum, used for feeding livestock and as a stabiliser in processed foods. The satellite factories dotting Hua county design their shifts so people still have time to plant crops each day before or after work.Bringing workers back to villages can mean that labour issues come with them. In the first two months of 2018, Henan experienced the highest number of strikes in mainland China, according to China Labour

Bulletin, a Hong Kong-based advocacy group.China also runs the risk of subsidising exporters as it provides capital investment into rural areas. It was penalised in 2015 by the World Trade Organization for giving tax breaks to exporters in seven sectors, including textiles.For Mr Shao and his textile company, enlisting governmental help has been a boon, providing more than just buildings to house his operations. "They help us recruit workers and are much more effective than we could be because they know everyone."

SHEEP

Chinese hungry for more Australian wool

02 Apr, 2018 04:00 AM

Williams woolgrower Andrew Rintoul (second left) and other members of the Australian Wool Innovation tour of China at the Mengdi Group circular knitting mill.

PRODUCE more wool was the clear message Andrew Rintoul, Dongiemon and Tilba Tilba Merino studs, Williams, returned with after a recent tour of China.

At 44, Mr Rintoul was one of the older members of a tour organised by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) to give young woolgrowers some global perspective of their industry, so he was possibly more aware of the historical context behind processors' and garment manufacturers' requests for more wool.

While demand from China and good wool prices in the past two seasons appears to have halted a year-on-year trend of declining shorn wool production in Australia – down from more than a billion kilograms greasy in 1990-91 to an estimated 345 million kilograms for the current season on AWI figures – it has highlighted China's awareness of the industry's vulnerability.

"Their (Chinese wool processors' and garment manufacturers') major concern is supply going forward," Mr Rintoul said.

“They are not so concerned about price, with the massive investment they have put into processing wool they want to know that their supply (of raw material) into the future is secure.

“They just want us to produce more wool.

“(In China) I was asked if I thought some of the farmers who had got out of sheep to concentrate on cropping, might come back into the industry now that the prices for wool made it much more worthwhile.

“I had to tell them that I didn’t think so.

“Much of their (sheep and wool) infrastructure has gone - or in disrepair – and they’ve invested their capital into cropping,” he said.

Mr Rintoul said while the scale of the industry and ongoing investment in new technology for wool in China reinforced his own belief in the future of wool, the obvious demand had caused a rethink.

“I always thought it was supply that drove (wool) prices up, but its (record and near-record prices in the past five months) been driven by demand,” he said.

“And from what we saw and were told, I don’t think the prices are going to fall away dramatically anytime soon into the future.

Les prix du coton pourraient atteindre leur plus haut niveau depuis 5 ans, en 2018/2019

- **mercredi, 04 avril 2018 12:50**

(Agence Ecofin) - En 2018/2019, les prix du coton marqueront un nouveau record en se chiffrant à leur plus haut niveau depuis près de 5 ans, a annoncé le Comité consultatif international sur le coton (ICAC).

D'après les informations publiées par le site *Agrimoney*, l'indice A de Cotlook, qui mesure les cours de la fibre, pourrait se situer autour de 84 centimes la livre, une performance jamais observée depuis la saison 2013/2014.

Cette envolée tient à une contraction des stocks mondiaux de coton, de 220 000 tonnes à 17,9 millions de tonnes, la prochaine saison.

De son côté, la production devrait en revanche maintenir le cap, en affichant une hausse de 320 000 tonnes à 25,3 millions de tonnes en 2018/2019, malgré la baisse attendue des superficies ensemencées en Inde, liée à des dommages parasitaires.

Selon l'ICAC, la demande sera toujours vigoureuse, en 2018/2019, en progression de plus de 1,1 million de tonnes contre 880 000 tonnes en 2017/2018.

Espoir Olodo

Après un long déclin, le textile recrée des emplois

DOMINIQUE CHAPUIS Le 03/04 à 15:47Mis à jour à 16:36

Ourdissage. Préparation des bobines de fils, fil de coton biologique avant fabrication du tissu destine à produire des sacs. Fabrication Francaise ' made in France '. Industrie textile - Patrick ALLARD/REA

Le secteur compte plus de 60.000 salariés dans l'Hexagone. Souvent situées en zones rurales, les entreprises peinent à recruter.

C'est une première depuis 40 ans ! Après avoir délocalisé à tour de bras il y a plus d'une vingtaine d'années , le secteur textile recrée des emplois. Même si les chiffres sont faibles, le renversement de tendance est bien là. « *Pour la première fois, nous enregistrons une hausse du nombre de salariés, grâce à la vitalité des ventes et des* *exportations depuis 2012, avec une hausse moyenne de 3 % par an* », souligne Yves Dubief, le président de l'Union des Industries Textiles (UIT).

Sur un effectif d'environ 60.000 postes, la croissance a atteint 0,2 % en 2017 pour un chiffre de 13 milliards d'euros. Une hausse qui aurait pu être bien plus forte, si le secteur n'avait pas souffert de problèmes de recrutements. « *Nombre d'entreprises ont loupé des ventes, car elles avaient les capacités de production, mais pas le personnel pour faire tourner l'outil* », poursuit le responsable.

Une mauvaise image


Les chiffres clefs

13
MILLIARDS D'EUROS
Le chiffre d'affaires de l'industrie du textile en France.

60
MILLIERS
Le nombre de postes dans le secteur du textile en France en 2017. Soit une hausse de 0,2 %.

2.500
EUROS
Le salaire a minima à l'embauche d'un ingénieur dans le textile.

Ce sont les fabricants de textiles à usage technique, (près de 50 % de la filière) qui sont le plus sous tension. Si toutes les régions sont concernées, dans le nord de l'Isère, elles sont très fortes pour des groupes comme Porcher (automobile, l'aéronautique, parachutes...) ou de petites entreprises comme Hexcel (tissage de fibres carbone) ou Texinov (génie civil, médical...). En phase de développement, ces sociétés recherchent entre 300 et 400 salariés à elles trois.

En cause, la mauvaise image du textile. Dans un sondage de l'UIT publié mi-mars, 71 % des Français pensent que le secteur est en déclin, même si pour les plus jeunes, il est innovant. *« Les anciens gardent en tête les images de fermetures d'usines*, estime Yves Dubief. *Ce n'est donc pas gagné dans l'esprit du grand public. Nous devons sensibiliser les nouvelles générations, mais aussi leurs professeurs et leurs parents.* »

Des territoires ruraux

La localisation de ces entreprises, souvent situées dans des régions rurales, est aussi un frein. Car elles sont mal desservies en transport en commun, ce qui ne facilite pas la mobilité. « *Pour attirer les jeunes talents, cela passe aussi par la fiche de paie,* estime Yves Dubief, *et les conditions de travail* ». A l'embauche, il faut compter entre 2.500 à 3500 euros brut mensuels pour un ingénieur, selon sa qualification, et pour un opérateur entre le SMIC et 1,5 fois son montant.

La formation est souvent assurée en interne. A la tête du tisseur, Tenthoret dans les Vosges (50 salariés), qui fabrique notamment des sacs, cabas personnalisables en lin ou coton biologique, Yves Dubief a embauché 10 personnes en neuf mois : comptable, DRH, et tisseurs. Parmi eux, 5 jeunes ont des contrats professionnels, dont trois issus de la vente qui ont décidé de se réorienter.

Dominique Chapuis

C&A va céder huit magasins en France

JEAN-NOËL CAUSSIL

Publié le 03/04/2018

C&A poursuit sa transformation et annonce céder cinq magasins à Kiabi et trois à La Halle.

C&A va céder huit points de vente en France.

C&A poursuit son plan de fermetures. Après une salve de 13 boutiques en novembre 2017, l'enseigne de mode C&A annonce se séparer de huit nouveaux points de vente en France : cinq devraient être repris par Kiabi et trois par La Halle. « Ce projet de cession de fonds de commerce (…) vise à doter C&A d'un réseau de magasins plus adapté aux conditions d'un marché de l'habillement en pleine évolution », précise C&A dans un communiqué.

Kiabi et La Halle récupèrent des magasins

Le magasin de Blagnac sera, lui, purement et simplement fermé mais, promet l'enseigne, « sans impact sur l'emploi car l'ensemble des salariés de ce magasin seront repositionnés dans les magasins situés à proximité. »

C&A ne précise pas le nombre de ses magasins qui, après ces cessions, resteront sous son giron en France, mais cela devrait désormais tomber non loin des 150.

Textile et habillement : un secteur qui survit grâce à la main-d'oeuvre étrangère

02 AVRIL 2018 PAR VIJAYAN AYASSAMY

Le recrutement de travailleurs étrangers a freiné la délocalisation des entreprises mauriciennes.

Le nombre d'usines textile a chuté au cours de ces dernières années. Après deux décennies de forte croissance, l'industrie ayant atteint un sommet dans les années 2000, le nombre d'usines est passé de 660 à 240.

L'industrie du textile et de l'habillement a été mise à mal par la concurrence des pays asiatiques, car le coût de la main-d'œuvre ne cessait de majorer. L'accord multifibre de l'Organisation Mondiale du Commerce (OMC) a imposé des quotas sur les exportations des pays en voie de développement. La fin de cet accord en 2005 n'a pas mis un frein à la décroissance du secteur et le nombre d'usines a dégringolé de 660 à 240 en 2014.

Pour faire face aux nouveaux défis, les principaux acteurs de l'industrie se sont restructurés en fournisseurs intégrés verticalement, offrant davantage de valeur-ajoutée. Les producteurs locaux se sont orientés vers le design et la qualité en offrant des solutions flexibles avec l'apport de travailleurs étrangers. Ayant acquis une certaine expérience, certains producteurs ont investi dans des unités de production dans la région et en Asie. D'autres ont carrément délocalisé leurs usines.

En 2016, l'unité de production de Floréal Knitwear a été délocalisée à Madagascar. Il s'agissait d'un transfert de production car la majeure partie des opérations y était déjà. Les employés du groupe ont été, par la suite, transférés dans les autres filiales. Certains qui ont opté pour une retraite anticipée ont eu droit à des compensations. La compagnie opère cependant toujours ses divisions d'échantillonnage, de marketing et de finances à Maurice.

En avril 2015, la direction de Sonia Wear a également décidé de bouger ses opérations dans la Grande Ile. C'est ainsi que sa dernière unité de production a fermé au cours du premier semestre. La nouvelle n'était en aucun cas une surprise car, au fil du temps, elle a fermé ses unités de production. La hausse des coûts de production a été un des éléments motivant la décision de quitter Maurice.

Ces départs vers des horizons plus « prometteurs » ont été enclenchés par un des plus grands producteurs du pays, Textile Mills (STM). À la veille de 2009, elle a annoncé sa décision de délocaliser toute l'usine à Madagascar en raison de l'accroissement des coûts de fonctionnement. Le management a révélé une hausse des coûts de $ 3,5 millions, avec comme explication principale l'appréciation de la roupie face au dollar et de l'euro. Une des autres raisons de la délocalisation a été l'élimination de coûts entraînés par le transport de matières premières (tissus) de Maurice vers ses fabriques de vêtements situées à Madagascar.

L'ouverture du marché de l'emploi aux travailleurs étrangers a quelque peu freiné l'ardeur des producteurs locaux à se pencher sur une éventuelle délocalisation, fait-on ressortir. Les grandes entreprises employaient 15 921 d’étrangers en 2009. En mars 2017, ils ont été plus nombreux dans des usines de textile et de l’habillement, soit 41 575. Les différentes initiatives des autorités, dont la possibilité de renouveler leur permis de travail à plusieurs reprises ont été aussi en faveur des producteurs locaux. Certains d’entre eux sont aussi qualifiés, voire davantage, que leurs homologues mauriciens, d’où une certaine réticence de certains de délocaliser.

International Business Times

NEWS BUSINESS & MARKETS TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE SPORTS MOVIES AUTO LIFE & CULTURE GALLERY VIDEO

Marks & Spencer finds sweet spot in India: lingerie

M&S, which launched its inner-wear products in India in 2014, plans to add more standalone lingerie stores from the existing six.

By : Aastha Agnihotri
Apr 2, 2018 14:19 IST

Marks and Spencer plc (also known as M&S) is a British retailer headquartered in the City of Westminster, London.M&S

British fashion retailer Marks & Spencer (M&S) is planning to increase the number of its standalone lingerie stores in India after stellar growth in the last few years.

The company, which has a joint venture with Reliance Retail Ltd, launched its inner-wear segment in India as an experiment in 2014.

But after witnessing 40 percent growth over financial years 2015 and 2017, M&S is looking to expand its standalone lingerie stores from the existing six, according to a report by Quartz Media.

The London-listed firm operates 63 other stores in 27 cities and also sells the M&S brand across three online marketplaces—Myntra, AJIO and Amazon.

> *"Over the last two-three years now, (lingerie) has been our fastest-growing business unit and I don't see why that will slow down," James Munson, managing director of Marks & Spencer India, told Quartz in an interview late last month.*

This comes on the back of strong growth in India's innerwear market, as demand for stylish, sensuous and premium quality lingerie continued to pique interest among female customers.

By 2020, the women's segment in the intimate wear market is expected to hit around Rs 280 billion, up from about Rs 145 billion in 2015, according to research firm Statista.

And M&S is making the most of this surging demand. People are moving towards fashion-led products in inner-wear as opposed to practical products, said Munson.

The company also slashed prices last year to bump-up volumes.

Since Munson took over in May 2017, M&S has lowered the prices for all categories to stave off competition from fast-fashion retailers such as Spanish apparel firm Zara and Sweden-based H&M, the report said.

Delhi and Mumbai are the biggest contributors to Marks and Spencer's India growth while tier-II cities contribute a fifth of its overall revenue, according to a Mint report in December.

WOMEN

04/APR/2018

Large Number of Job Ads in India Explicitly Prefer Men: World Bank Study

While women were also preferred for certain jobs, the authors found that these were "low-quality, low-status jobs, typically low-paid informal jobs".

Commuters stand at an open doorway of a suburban train during the morning rush hour in Kolkata

New Delhi: A recent study conducted by the World Bank has found that for job advertisements in India that specify a preferred gender, six out of every ten advertisement explicitly state that men will be given a preference in hiring over women. The study is based on data from over

800,000 advertisements on online job portal Babajob.com (which has now merged with QuikrJobs), between 2011 and 2017.

It has been a cause for concern for a while now that the female labour force participation rate in India is one of the lowest in the world and is actually declining – in the first four months of 2017, for instance, 2.4 million Indian women stopped being employed. This study reinforces the demand side of this problem – that people doing the hiring still often assume that a man will be able to do the job better.

One-third of the advertisements the researchers looked at specified a gender preference, and 60% of this one-third said a man would be preferred. Men were commonly preferred for mechanised jobs such as driving and garment sector jobs, sales work and elementary jobs such as gardening, guard duty and delivery persons.

The authors found that the jobs ads that preferred women were "low-quality, low-status jobs, typically low-paid informal jobs". The outcome of this kind of advertisements is a segregated labour market, the authors write.

> "Our analysis suggests jobs for positions in sales, retail clerk, office helper, high-intensive outdoor labor work such as laborer, gardener, watchman, delivery collection, and machine-related tasks such as garment worker, machinist, and driver are considered as male jobs. Among indoor low-end jobs, cook and steward are male jobs. On the other hand, women are disproportionately more preferred in household elementary jobs and caregiving jobs, as well as beautician and receptionist positions. Among professional jobs, teaching and management are relatively female jobs, and engineering and IT profession are considered male jobs."

BPO jobs stood out in the study. Not only was it the sector with the highest proportion of jobs advertised (19%), it also had the most gender neutral postings, with only 14% of advertisements specifying a gender preference.

The male bias doesn't stop at just the quality of job, but extends into pay as well, the study has found. Looking within the pool of gender-specific job advertisements, the researchers found that employers who preferred women on average offered a salary ten percentage points lower than the average salary offered by employers who preferred men. In each occupation group other than ads for clerical jobs, ads targeted at women offered lower salaries than ads targeting men.

One of the concerning factors that researchers have pointed out in the past is that even though the educational level of girls is on the rise, this is not translating into a larger female labour force. As Namita Bhandare reported, "The logical link that education should lead to jobs is broken in India. In rural India, 67% of girls who are graduates do not work. In towns and cities, 68.3% of women who graduate don't have paid jobs."

Here's another confusing statistic to add to that: the 2011 National Sample Survey reported that over one-third of urban women and half of urban women who engage mainly in housework want a paying job.

There have been several explanations given for why this strange state of affairs has come to be in India. Societal expectations rank high on that list – while a man is *supposed* to be the breadwinner, a women's duties are assumed to be confined to the unpaid work she does at home, which isn't hardly ever recognised as work at all. Often, if a women wants to go beyond that, she is required to have the explicit consent of the people around her – something that would never even be imagined for a man. Even once she does have that consent, it's not an easy path to a job, Bhandare reported; there are concerns such as how she will get to her workplace, the hours she will be away from home, how far she will travel, etc.

And that's just on the supply side, where the will to work is hard to translate into actually getting a job. Add to that the demand side problem like the one highlighted in the World Bank study, and you realise just how much will have to change if India wants to take its female labour force participation problem seriously.

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Thursday, April 05, 2018

Indonesia Seeks Upgrade for Five Industries

Indonesia has drawn up a road map for upgrading five manufacturing sectors and making the country one of the world's 10 biggest economies.

The plan, titled **"Making Indonesia 4.0"** and released by the ministry of industry on Wednesday, calls for developing the food and beverage, **textile and garment**, automotive, chemical and electronics industries. This is to be achieved through efficiency enhancements, improved transportation and the use of advanced technology like artificial intelligence, robotics and the Internet of Things, Nikkei reported.

"A successful implementation of 'Making Indonesia 4.0' can drive real GDP growth by 1-2% per year, so that GDP growth per year will rise to 6-7% in the period of 2018-2030," President Joko Widodo said at a launch event in Jakarta. He said Indonesia wants to crack the global economic top 10 by 2030. The country ranked 16th in 2016, according to the World Bank.

The ministry of industry expects the road map—which borrows its name from Germany's Industry 4.0 whereby machines are connected to the internet for efficient manufacturing—will lead to the manufacturing sector contributing 21% to 26% of gross domestic product by 2030, from the current 17.9%.

The development of the five sectors is also aimed at making Indonesian products more competitive and boosting exports enough for them to contribute 10% of GDP by 2030. This, the government hopes, will create new jobs for seven million to 19 million people.

The road map also lays out plans for attracting foreign investment, improving the quality of human resources and building an "innovative ecosystem" through incentives for technology investment.

Meanwhile, Indonesia is also targeting the third position in the global footwear industry by improving its current position as the fourth country after China, India, and Vietnam.

“This year, we are targeting to enter the big three, supported by government interventions and ease of doing business,” the industry ministry’s small and medium industries for fashion and crafts director, E. Ratna Utarianingrum, stated during a Makers Talk held at the Prasetya Mulya University, South Tangerang, on Tuesday.

She said 86% of the footwear in the world is produced by Asian countries, where China takes 80% of the total production, while the other 6% is produced by India, Vietnam and Indonesia. “Our market share is 3.3% globally,” she remarked.

Maroc: le port de Tanger Med tourne à plein régime

AFP

Modifié le 04/04/2018 à 11:06 - Publié le 04/04/2018 à 10:47 | AFP

Maroc: le port de Tanger Med tourne à plein régime © AFP / FADEL SENNA

Dans ce site où il y a une quinzaine d'années des troupeaux de moutons batifolaient dans les champs, des hordes de poids-lourds manoeuvrent nuit et jour: le port de Tanger Med tourne à plein régime et prépare son extension.

Inauguré en 2007 et situé à quelques encablures du détroit de Gibraltar, le complexe portuaire qui dessert à ce jour 174 destinations dans le monde a manutentionné l'an dernier 51,3 millions de tonnes de marchandises et géré 3,3 millions de conteneurs.

Créé à la même époque, le parc industriel adossé au port, en zone franche, "se développe et crée de plus en plus en plus d'emplois", à un rythme qui "dépasse les attentes", se félicite Jaafar Mrhardy, le directeur général de "Tanger Med zone".

On compte désormais 750 entreprises -surtout dans les secteurs de l'automobile, mais aussi du textile, de l'électronique, de l'aéronautique, de la logistique, et de l'agro-alimentaire- et 70.000 emplois pour un chiffre d'affaires de 5,5 milliards d'euros en 2017, selon Tanger Med.

Et ce n'est pas fini. L'ouverture de l'extension de Tanger Med II permettra de tripler la capacité conteneurs à partir de 2019, avec l'ambition de devenir le premier port de Méditerranée.

Photo d'un quai du port de Tanger, dans le nord du Maroc, prise le 12 mars 2018 © FADEL SENNA AFP

Jaafar Mrhardy est confiant: "l'idée est d'avoir un rôle plus important vers l'Afrique: le Maroc a investi à contre-cycle du secteur portuaire entre 2008 et 2012, au moment où le marché était en train de se rétrécir et cet investissement nous a donné un coup d'avance".

2,8 millions de voyageurs

Les engins de chantiers travaillent sur les remblais, trois portiques géants ont déjà été livrés. Malgré le mauvais temps, on distingue de l'autre côté du détroit le port espagnol d'Algésiras.

Sur un des quais de Tanger Med I, une pale éolienne monumentale produite par une unité de Siemens Gamesa, ouverte depuis quelques mois, attend d'être acheminée vers sa destination.

A proximité, des agents de sécurité assistés par un maître-chien contrôlent des voitures à l'embarquement d'un ferry pour l'Italie.

Le terminal passagers a accueilli 2,8 millions de voyageurs l'an dernier. "Pendant le pic de saison, on est à 32-33.000 passagers et 8 à 9.000 véhicules par jour", détaille Hassan Abkari, le directeur du pôle passagers. Selon lui, le nouveau port a réduit les temps d'attente et permis de désengorger le centre de Tanger.

Près de 290.000 poids-lourds de transport routier international ont transité par Tanger Med l'an dernier, via la bretelle d'autoroute qui contourne la ville située à une cinquantaine de kilomètres. Jour et nuit, des rondes de camions relient les quais du complexe portuaire, les entrepôts de stockage et les entreprises de la zone industrielle.

Les ateliers de confection de "Still Nua Fashion", installés dans une des allées de la zone franche, reçoivent ainsi des conteneurs de tissus en provenance de Chine et de Turquie. Les modèles conçus en Irlande sont coupés et cousus ici, puis expédiées aux Etats-Unis et en Grande-Bretagne.

Une employée de l'entreprise textile "Still Nua Fashion", installée dans la zone franche de Tanger, dans le nord du Maroc, le 13 mars 2018 © FADEL SENNA AFP

"On est dans le +fast-fashion+, avec des délais de livraison très courts, la proximité du port est cruciale", explique Naoual El-Mlih, l'énergique directrice de Still Nua.

'Compétitivité'

"Le temps, c'est de l'argent: avant pour rallier Hambourg, il fallait trois semaines, maintenant c'est dix à 12 jours. Les connexions sont directes, on peut recevoir ou faire sortir un conteneur en moins de 24 heures", renchérit Mohamed Ali Enneifer.

Arrivé sur le site au début des travaux d'aménagement, ce Tunisien vient d'être recruté pour diriger la nouvelle unité d'Acome, une entreprise française spécialisée dans la production de câbles.

Pour lui, l'arrivée annoncée du constructeur automobile chinois BYD, qui doit ouvrir une usine de véhicules électriques d'ici 2025 dans un parc industriel 100 % chinois, est une "excellente nouvelle".

"On se positionne comme un pays +best cost+, avec proximité des marchés européens et coûts très compétitifs, ce qui favorise la compétitivité et la profitabilité", argumente Jaafar Mrhady.

Le groupe français Renault, qui a choisi de s'installer là dès 2012, a exporté l'an dernier plus de 300.000 voitures dans les 74 pays desservis par le port.

"L'an prochain, on va exporter toutes les voitures de la nouvelle usine Peugeot qui arriveront en train de Kénitra", à environ 200 km au sud, soit "150.000 véhicules supplémentaires en 2019-2020", se réjouit Rachid Houari, du pôle portuaire.

Au-delà des facilités logistiques ou douanières offerte par la zone franche, le coût de la main-d'oeuvre marocaine est un atout majeur.

"La société mère en Irlande emploie 75 personnes, avec un coût de revient sensiblement égal à celui de notre unité qui compte 400 salariés", détaille sans complexe la directrice de l'atelier "Still Nua Fashion". Prochaine étape: la délocalisation du design, qui se fait encore à Dublin.

04/04/2018 11:05:50 - Tanger (Maroc) (AFP) -

Textile buying houses propose compliance centre in Pakistan

02
Apr '18

The Pakistani Government has been advised by foreign textile buying houses to set up a central compliance centre in the country to improve manufacturers' compliance with social standards, a critical factor in apparel sourcing decisions. The government may consider setting up sourcing parks to ensure a single-window facility, they suggested.

The country's first buying and sourcing houses symposium was recently organised by the commerce division of the commerce ministry and the Trade Development Authority.

It was attended by representatives from a large number of foreign buying houses, including Ikea, H&M, Marks and Spencer and Inditex, according to Pakistani media reports.

Many buying houses that relocated out of Pakistan due to the security situation in the past may come back if offered incentives like subsidised office space, the representatives felt.

Two US companies, Character World and Disney, had shifted buying orders to Bangladesh and other regional countries in the recent past.

The buyers said a national compliance centre may be set up which coordinates the improvement of compliances on cooperative model to improve social compliances by the manufacturers, which are increasingly becoming an important critical determinant of sourcing decisions.

The commerce ministry has been in the process of formulating a strategic trade policy framework for the 2018-23 period and the symposium aimed at gathering inputs from the buying and sourcing houses in that regard, commerce secretary Younus Dagha said.

After witnessing slow growth during the past couple of years, outbound shipments recovered by 12 per cent to $15 billion in the first eight months of the current fiscal as exporters availed of government incetives to boost exports. (DS)

Skills shortage hampers Portugal's economic recovery

Date
4/4/2018 4:26:15 AM

(MENAFN - AFP) When French technology consultancy Altran needed to hire staff for a new centre in Porto, it held a recruitment fair on board a boat docked in the northern Portuguese city's colourful riverside area.

Dozens of recent graduates mingled with Altran staff as they enjoyed sweeping views of Porto's iconic double-deck metal arch bridge.

At the end of the day Altran managed to fill just over 20 positions and the company plans to repeat the experience again this year.

The event held in July highlights the effort companies need to make to woo skilled workers in Portugal, which is facing a shortage of qualified talent that is hampering its economic recovery.

"Given the scarcity of technology professionals we ended up having to draw their attention in a more appealing way," Altran Portugal's human resources manager, Ricardo Machado, told AFP.

Portugal, which has bounced back from a 2011-14 debt crisis that brought the country to the brink of bankruptcy, is grappling with a skills shortage that is capping how fast its economy can grow.

Fuelled by a tourist boom and a surge in exports, the Portuguese economy expanded 2.7 percent last year, the fastest pace since 2000.

This helped bring the unemployment rate down to 7.9 percent in January, down from a record 17.5 percent in 2013 at the height of the debt crisis.

But companies from the tourism to the textile sector complain they struggle to find candidates with the skills they need.

- Drop-out rate -

Over half of Portuguese CEOs, 55 percent, surveyed by recruitment consulting firm Stanton Chase, ranked difficulties finding qualified workers as their biggest headache.

"We have today in every sector a huge shortage of qualified workers," said the head of the Portuguese Business Confederation, the country's main business lobby, Antonio Saraiva.

Portugal simply does not produce enough of the skilled workers it needs.

While education reforms have improved its track record in recent years, the country still has one of the biggest high school drop-out rates in Europe, a legacy of the country's 1926-74 right-wing dictatorship which invested little in schooling.

Only 24 percent of Portugal's adult population has attained a post-secondary education, compared to 46 percent in Britain and 44 percent in Finland, according to 2016 figures from the OECD, which groups 35 developed economies.

Portugal's key auto sector will need to hire 10,000 people until 2022, 30 percent of them with technical skills, said Jose Couto, the president of Mobinov, a lobby group that represents the sector's 975 firms.

"We don't have in the pipeline in our universities enough people with these skills," he said at a business conference in Cascais, a seaside resort near Lisbon, last month, echoing a complaint made by many other business leaders at the event.

- 'Revolution' -

The severe recession that accompanied Portugal's debt crisis worsened the problem as many skilled workers and recent graduates left the country in search of work.

While exact figures are hard to come by, one study by the University of Coimbra, Portugal's oldest university, estimates the country lost one-fifth of its qualified workforce during the crisis.

The OECD has urged Portugal to boost vocational training and offer more adult education.

"Raising the skills of the labour force will also lift potential growth, by alleviating the skill shortages faced by Portuguese companies," it said in a report on the Portuguese economy last year.

Portuguese universities are starting to churn out more graduates but this will take time to be felt by the economy, Economy Minister Manuel Caldeira Cabral said at the conference in Cascais.

Germany has three times more adults aged 55-65 with a university degree than Portugal, but among those aged 25-35 Portugal "has slightly more people with a degree than Germany," he added.

"This is what has changed, it is a sort of a revolution. This should bring a big improvement in productivity in the future," he said

Le Monde ÉCO&ENTREPRISE

30 mars 2018

PERTES & PROFITS | H&M

DES INCONVÉNIENTS D'UNE CHAUDIÈRE À TEE-SHIRTS

A Västeras, jolie bourgade du centre de la Suède, il a fait froid cet hiver, comme partout en Europe. Alors, on a poussé la chaudière. Pas de problème : la centrale de Mälarenergi, qui approvisionne la ville, a du combustible. Par souci écologique, elle a décidé de limiter au minimum le recours au charbon et s'est tournée vers un carburant plus original : les invendus de H&M. Le roi de la mode à petits prix dispose, dans cette ville qui l'a vu naître, d'un entrepôt géant où s'accumulent les vêtements à défauts ou qui n'ont pas trouvé preneur. Et ce froid qui a transi les citoyens de Västeras a aussi gelé les ventes des célèbres magasins de la marque.

Résultat : la société a dû reconnaître en début de semaine que la valeur de son stock d'invendus avait atteint, à la fin du premier trimestre de cette année, la coquette somme de 3,4 milliards d'euros. Cela fait de belles piles de pantalons, jupes, petits hauts et t-shirts, peu attractifs quand le thermomètre affiche – 10 0C. De quoi alimenter les fourneaux de Mälarenergi pour quelques hivers, même si la firme précise que seuls les vêtements défectueux et non dangereux subissent ce sort.

Maestria partie en fumée

Il reste que ce sont les profits et le chiffre d'affaires de H&M qui partent ainsi en fumée, et peut-être aussi la maestria de ce commerçant exceptionnel qui a réussi, en quelques décennies, à se hisser aux tout premiers rangs mondiaux. Le cours de Bourse du géant de la mode a encore reculé de 6 %, mardi 27 mars, quand la firme a annoncé une chute de 44 % de son bénéfice net pour le premier trimestre. La collection de printemps est mal partie, et les stocks explosent. *" La chaîne d'approvisionnement du groupe manque de réactivité "*, a reconnu la société.

Ce que le patron, Karl-Johan Persson, l'héritier de la dynastie fondatrice, traduit par *" nous ne sommes pas allés assez vite "*. Un comble pour une entreprise, qui, avec son -concurrent espagnol Zara, est l'inventeur du concept de " fast fashion ", la mode qui se renouvelle en fonction des désirs du consommateur. Mais de nouveaux " animaux " sont apparus dans le paysage, comme l'irlandais Primark, avec ses prix cassés, et les acteurs de l'Internet comme Amazon ou le britannique Asos.

Au-delà, c'est toute l'organisation mondiale de H&M qui est remise en cause. Ne possédant aucune usine en propre, la société fait fabriquer l'essentiel de ses produits en Asie, à grands volumes, pour faire baisser les coûts. Mais ses produits se banalisent et sont donc à la merci d'un acteur encore moins cher. Si l'espagnol Inditex, maison mère de Zara, s'en sort mieux, c'est en grande partie parce qu'il est industriel lui-même et que nombre de ses usines sont encore en Espagne ou au Portugal. Ce lien étroit entre la fabrication et les magasins permet une réactivité plus grande pour réapprovisionner ou modifier un modèle en fonction de son succès. Face à la nouvelle concurrence, la maîtrise de l'usine redevient un élément-clé face à des consommateurs qui se moquent que les t-shirts dont ils ne veulent plus échouent dans la chaudière de Västeras.

Philippe Escande

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Tunisie: le FMI préconise une dévaluation du Dinar pour relancer l'économie nationale

- mercredi, 04 avril 2018 13:34

(Agence Ecofin) - La Tunisie devra baisser le cours de sa monnaie, si elle souhaite relancer l'économie nationale. C'est ce qu'a indiqué Björn Rother (photo), chef de mission du fonds monétaire international (FMI) en Tunisie, dans une interview accordée à l'agence *Bloomberg*. Selon les informations relayées, cette dépréciation de la monnaie, permettra de stimuler les exportations tunisiennes, qui ont connu une hausse de 43% en janvier et février derniers, par rapport à la même période l'année passée.

« *Si vous voulez attirer des investissements et si vous voulez développer vos exportations, vous devez être compétitif dans l'économie mondiale*.», a indiqué le responsable. Et d'ajouter : « *Et le moyen le plus facile d'y parvenir est de compter sur un taux de change réel compétitif.* »

S'exprimant sur le même sujet un peu plus tôt dans l'année, le nouveau gouverneur de la Banque centrale, Marouane El Abassi avait quant à lui, souligné le risque d'une augmentation de l'inflation dans le pays, en cas de forte dépréciation de la monnaie locale.

Depuis 2011, l'économie tunisienne a été mise à mal par de nombreux facteurs économique, politique mais également sécuritaire. Ceci s'est traduit par un assèchement des réserves de change, qui ont chuté pour atteindre 4,6 milliards $ ce lundi, soit le montant suffisant pour couvrir 78 jours d'importations.

Notons qu'en 2016, la Tunisie avait déjà bénéficié d'un prêt de 2,9 milliards $ de la part de l'institution de Bretton Woods, afin d'intensifier la politique nationale de dépréciation de la monnaie et de réduction des dépenses.

Rappelons qu'un peu plus tôt dans l'année, la Banque mondiale avait tablé sur une croissance à 2,7% en 2018 pour la Tunisie. Celle-ci devrait être stimulée notamment par la mise en place de mesures de réductions d'un déficit commercial qui s'est déjà réduit de près d'un quart pour les deux premiers mois de 2018.

Tunisie : Le ministre du Transport n'ose pas, la CONECT et la FTTH si !

par African Manager - **02/04/2018 16:48**

Le ministre du Transport, Radhouane Ayara, a eu une réaction très timorée face à la grève au port de Radès. Une réaction molle qu'on peut comprendre du reste par son statut de responsable qui ne voudrait pas, par une intervention mal dosée, mettre de l'huile sur un feu déjà conséquent et aux effets déjà dévastateurs, en termes de pertes financières et de réputation pour le pays, laquelle a aussi un coût. Mais ceux que cette grève a surtout heurté, scandalisé et à qui elle a fait perdre des sous, beaucoup de sous, n'ont pas eu les mêmes égards que le ministre. Eux aussi on les comprend car cela fait longtemps que les agents de la Société Tunisienne d'Acconage et de Manutention (STAM) leur dictent leur loi, leur laissant que leurs yeux pour pleurer, saut peut-être parfois un bon coup de gueule dans les médias qui soulage son auteur certes mais qui hélas n'a jamais rien résolu. La CONECT (Confédération des Entreprises Citoyennes de Tunisie), à travers un communiqué émis ce lundi 02 avril 2018, "*s'indigne contre la grève anarchique observée par les agents de la STAM au Port de Radès, les 30 et 31 Mars 2018, ayant provoqué un arrêt total des activités au port et paralysé les mouvements de marchandises à l'export et à l'import causant de graves préjudices aux relations et aux engagements des opérateurs économiques tunisiens avec leurs partenaires étrangers et locaux.*

La CONECT rappelle que de par ses faibles niveaux de rendement par rapport aux normes internationales d'usage et à ceux des pays concurrents et voisins, la situation particulière de *monopole des activités d'acconage et de manutention dans ce port et les perturbations fréquentes dues aux mouvements sociaux fréquents, le Port de Radès continue à constituer l'un des plus graves goulots d'étranglement pour l'économie tunisienne, surtout que plus de 80% de nos échanges de marchandises à l'export et à l'import passent par ce port.*

La CONECT attire l'attention du Gouvernement et de toutes les parties concernées sur le grave danger de prendre en otage les entreprises et l'économie du pays et réitère ses appels qu'elle n'a cessé de lancer depuis 2012 pour engager les réformes nécessaires en proposant aux autorités compétentes une feuille de route visant l'amélioration de la gestion et des performances du Port de Radès.

Tout en rejetant l'attitude irresponsable des grévistes, la CONECT appelle le Gouvernement et les parties concernées à prendre sans délai les mesures nécessaires pour assurer la continuité du service public au Port de Radès et sauvegarder les intérêts supérieurs et stratégiques du pays".

Dans la même journée, la Fédération Tunisienne du Textile et de l'Habillement (FTTH) est également montée au front, à travers un communiqué, "*suite à la totale paralysie de l'activité au sein du Port de Rades enregistré les 30 et 31 mars dernier en raison d'un mouvement de grève observé par le syndicat de base du port de Radès de la Société tunisienne d'acconage et de manutention (STAM) qui réclame une augmentation des salaires qui ne pourrait être satisfaite qu'à la faveur d'une augmentation des tarifs des prestations fournies par la STAM dans les différents ports du pays.*

A cet égard, la Fédération tunisienne du textile et de l'habillement (FTTH) tient tout d'abord à rappeler que si le droit de grève est un droit légitime et constitutionnellement reconnu, elle tient toutefois à rappeler également que, sans vouloir s'immiscer dans un conflit qui ne la concerne pas, cette grève et les raisons qui la sous-tendent ont non seulement provoqué de sérieux préjudices à l'activité de commerce extérieur, mais risquent de l'amplifier davantage si une telle situation venait à se réitérer.

Alors que l'activité d'exportations donne des signes de reprise depuis le début l'année après plusieurs années de stagnation, traduisant un regain de compétitivité du tissu productif du pays en général et des entreprises industrielles tunisiennes en particulier, notamment celles du textile et de l'habillement, la FTTH considère qu'une augmentation des tarifs des prestations portuaires va éroder ce regain fragile de compétitivité laborieusement acquis. La Fédération tunisienne du textile et de l'habillement estime que les tenants de cette grève sont une prise en otage implicite des opérateurs économiques directement concernés par l'activité d'import-export et que ses aboutissants risquent de pénaliser gravement et durablement l'activité des entreprises et de handicaper l'effort de redressement des finances publiques du pays. Une situation qu'elle rejette absolument et solennellement.

La FTTH considère que les raisons de cette grève incitent à un réexamen des performances l'activité portuaire du pays et à une réforme globale du secteur. Elle en appelle ainsi au gouvernement à prendre les initiatives adéquates dans cette perspective".

BUSINESS INSIDER
INDIA

A dominant American clothing style is back from the dead - but athleisure has changed it forever

MARY HANBURYAPR 4, 2018, 01.28 AM

Shutterstock/Vastram **Denim is back in vogue.**

- **Denim is making a comeback.**
- **Several retailers including Gap, J. Crew, and Abercrombie reported strong growth in denim during their fourth-quarter earnings results.**
- **This could cause issues for the athleisure market.**

Denim is creeping its way back into our wardrobes.

Stretchy athletic wear has dominated fashion for several years. Between 2011 and 2016, the market for athletic wear grew to be 30% of the total clothing and footwear industry, increasing an impressive 7% a year compared to the 1% growth of the apparel sector in general, according to Wells Fargo analysts.

Athletic brands such as Lululemon, Under Armour, and Nike led the way from the get-go, but eventually, even more traditional clothing stores such as Gap, J. Crew, and Forever 21 followed suit in the hope of boosting their own sales.
Athleisure became such a phenomenon that in 2017, for the first time in history, US imports of stretchy knit pants exceeded those of blue denim jeans, according to data from the US Census Bureau.
But now denim is making a comeback.

In its most recent earnings, reported at the end of March, Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger parent company PVH said that jeans showed "incredible improvement" in 2017. In particular, Calvin Klein jeans showed "tremendous strength and outsized growth above our average order book growth," CEO Manny Chirico said in a call with investors.

The Calvin Klein brand is benefiting from a resurgence in '90s fashion, and it isn't alone.
America's most famous jeans maker, Levi's, reported an 8% sales increase in 2017, which was the highest growth rate in a decade. The company is capitalizing on a resurgence of its vintage styles driven by trendy shoppers who have been willing to spend hundreds of dollars on its jeans in secondhand stores.

Levi's caught on to this and has created a collection of 50,000 limited-edition jeans from the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, known as Levi's Authorized Vintage, which are sold for $300 a pair.
"We were sitting on an aged icon," James "JC" Curleigh, president of Levi's, told The Wall Street Journal in 2017.

But it's not only these iconic '90s brands that are having a denim comeback. In their fourth-quarter earnings, several mainstream retailers reported stronger denim sales, including J. Crew's sister brand Madewell, Gap, Abercrombie, and American Eagle.
Teen retailer Abercrombie & Fitch reported six years of dismal sales before it recorded positive same-store sales growth in the fourth quarter of 2017. In a call with investors, CEO Fran Horowitz-Bonadies confirmed that this was partly due to an increase in denim sales across its brands, especially at Hollister, which had "a record year" in denim sales, she said.

Some analysts say that athletic wear has hit its peak, partly because the market is now overcrowded with options.
In 2017, growth in this category showed some signs of slowing. US activewear sales totaled $48 billion last year, which was a more modest 2% rise from 2016 compared to previous years, according to The NPD Group.

American consumers aren't quite ready to give up their stretchy pants, however, and retailers have adapted to this by creating more stretchy versions of the traditional jean using elastane and lycra.

American Eagle **American Eagle's jeggings have 2% elastane.**

American Eagle is one of them - on its online store, you can sort jeans by the level of stretch you want, and there are a ton of different styles appealing to different tastes.

"Our goal is to be the authority in jeans in America," Global Brand President Chad Kessler said in a call to investors in March. "And we're committed to it."

NCC: Tariffs would undermine US cotton trade with China

- Apr 4, 2018

The National Cotton Council is concerned that China's announcement of significantly higher proposed tariffs on U.S. raw cotton shipped to that country would significantly harm the economic health of the U.S. cotton industry.

For the current 2017 crop year, China stands as the second largest export market with purchases of approximately 2.5 million bales of U.S. cotton.

"I cannot overstate the importance of China's market to U.S. cotton farmers and the importance of U.S. cotton in meeting the needs of China's textile industry," NCC Chairman Ron Craft said. "The cotton industries of the United States and China enjoy a healthy, mutually beneficial relationship."

According to the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service GAIN Report, cotton has been listed among multiple U.S. agricultural products that could potentially be hit with higher tariffs from China—specifically an in-quota tariff that would increase from one percent to 26 percent. Following the announcement, the cotton market reacted accordingly—almost limit down on nearby contracts.

The GAIN Report noted that China's proposal of retaliatory tariffs on selected U.S. agricultural products is in response to the recent U.S. proposed tariffs on Chinese imports resulting from the Section 301 investigation into the forced transfer of U.S. technology and intellectual property.

Craft said the NCC strongly encourages the two governments to engage in immediate discussions "that can resolve trade tensions and preserve this long-term collaborative relationship. The U.S. cotton industry stands ready to assist the U.S. government and our trading partners in China to find a resolution to this damaging trade dispute."

Fast fashion will only slow down if consumers shop consciously

TATIANA DIAZ APRIL 3, 2018 7:33 PM

Take a step into a closet and reach for a random clothing item. Chances are the garment was produced in a foreign country — China, India, Vietnam as it may be. Globalization has plagued the fashion industry and with it the new concept of fast fashion has become mainstream.

However, the environmental dangers and social crises created by this change in the fashion industry have not been very visible in the eyes of consumers. Fast fashion has led to the consumption of clothes in larger numbers, negatively changing the way it is being produced worldwide.

Consumers need to be more conscious about the way their shopping habits affecting both communities and the environment. Conscious shopping can show companies sustainable and eco-friendly clothing is what shoppers and the world really want and need.

The appeal of trendy, cheap clothing is everywhere and the accessibility and affordability is undeniable. Fast fashion's success in this country is substantiated by the $250 billion spent on the clothing industry in the U.S. annually.

Clothing stores like Forever 21, H&M, Topshop and Zara have gained success through globalization, allowing them to produce inexpensive clothing at a low cost, but all this is done through hazardous practices.

The emphasis on speed and quantity rather than quality has exported the demand for garment workers from the U.S. to developing countries where there are fewer regulations on working conditions are enforced.

Highlighted in the documentary "The True Cost," the demand and competition between industries force factories to cut deals with companies as factories fight to offer the cheapest labor for the greatest production.

In these factories men, women and children work long hours with minimal payoff. Many times, the bosses are abusive and force their employees into dangerous and potentially fatal working conditions, according to Human Rights Watch, a nonprofit, nongovernmental human rights organization.

This is exemplified by the 2013 collapse of the Rana Plaza, an eight-story building in Bangladesh containing five garment factories for well-known brands around the world. More than 1,100 people were killed and over 2,000 were injured in destruction, and the event has been considered the biggest disaster to hit the Bangladesh garment export industry.

In order to remain affordable, corners are cut by companies in all areas; the use of toxic chemicals to manufacture products has increased overseas, and produces a large amount of textile pollution.

The Environmental Protection Agency considers many textile manufacturing facilities to be hazardous waste producers, according to a report made by the Environmental Health Prospect.

Garments produced for fast fashion stores leave a pollution footprint as materials like polyester generate environmental hazards. When polyester is put in washing machines microfibers are shed and add to the plastic levels in the ocean.

While small and seemingly insignificant, these microfibers are eaten by plankton, which in turn, are eaten by shellfish and continue up the food chain, often landing in the stomachs of humans.

Toxic chemicals are also used to produce vivid colors and prints seen on clothing. The pros that come from these fabrics is outweighed by the cons as textile dyeing is the second largest polluter of clean water globally.

The pollution created by dyeing vibrant fabrics makes rivers toxic for people in countries like Bangladesh, where 18 million residents are being threatened by the high levels of pollution in their water, according to the World Bank.

Textile waste continues with the consumer, as clothes are bought as fast as they are thrown out. Most people won't bother to have a garment fixed because it's so cheap to replace it.

Being a conscious shopper means putting the lives of workers and the environment ahead of desire and appeal. The idea that people constantly need to consume — whether it's shoes, jewelry or shirts — can no longer be justified.

The clothes being produced should not be disposable, but instead sustainable and eco-friendly.

Purchasing from secondhand stores like thrift, vintage or trade shops is a way to reverse the success fast fashion has seen in this country. Clothing donations are made at large rates but only around 10 percent of donations are resold in stores. The clothes are there, but it's up to the shoppers to step in and reuse the once-admired garments.

The clothes available at these stores are not only cheaper, but they are also refreshingly different from the mass-produced items seen in many stores at the mall.

Clothing from past decades are better quality because fast fashion was not leading the clothing industry. The clothes produced were made with durable fabrics meant to last longer.

Waste management can also be achieved by buying clothing made from recycled fabrics. Although these garments may not be as accessible to college students due to their price tags, they can be seen as investment pieces.

One of the most eco-friendly things a smart shopper can do to aid in the social ills manifested from fast fashion is to shop less. Not everything needs to be purchased just because of the cheap price attached to it.

Having a large closet full of clothes and shoes is tempting, but the social and environmental ramifications make it significantly less appealing. It’s best to go against the trend and buy less.

US firm Sourcemap mapping Bangladesh garment factories

03
Apr '18

Representatives from US firm Sourcemap, which maps supply chains across the world, visited Bangladesh last month to initiate a door-to-door census of garment units for a digital readymade factory map of the country. Data collectors have started collecting thousands of geographical positioning system (GPS)-linked data points from workers and organizations.

This data is being fed into Sourcemap's supply chain mapping and transparency platform, which will then be available to global apparel brands and consumers with radical transparency and help transition accountability for factory improvements to Bangladeshis after North American and European platforms walk away from the safety tracking programs in May this year, according to a press release from the company.

Sourcemap has partnered with C&A Foundation and BRAC University (BRAC U) in Bangladesh to administer the survey.

In addition to factory and worker statistics, types of products manufactured, the names of clothing brands that each factory manufactures for will also be captured. (DS)

SJ SOURCING JOURNAL

Here’s a Breakdown of What’s Actually Going on in the US Textile Industry

by Tara Donaldson

Posted on March 26, 2018 in Report, Trade

Things are tense in the global marketplace right now, but the good news for an apparel and textile sector facing potential blow back from the tariffs flying back and forth between the U.S. and China is that the sector will be going into any battle strong.
In its 2018 State of the U.S. Textile Industry overview, the National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO) said it’s been an “amazing” year for the U.S. textile industry.

“The numbers show the fundamentals for the U.S. textile industry are sound. This is true even though some markets for U.S. textiles and apparel were soft last year,” said NCTO chairman William V. McCrary Jr. “For the most part, any sluggishness was due to factors beyond control, such as disruption in the retail sector caused by the shifting of sales from brick and mortar outlets to the internet. With that said, the U.S. textile industry’s commitment to capital re-investment and a continued emphasis on quality and innovation make it well-positioned to adapt to market changes and take advantage of opportunities as 2018 moves along."

Looking at the numbers, NCTO said the value of shipments for man-made fibers, yarns, fabric, apparel and sewn products was $77.9 billion last year. The sector accounted for 550,500 U.S. jobs, with the majority of workers based on Georgia, followed by North and South Carolina, California and Tennessee.

The U.S. exported $28.6 billion worth of apparel and textiles last year, up from $20.1 billion in 2009. Breaking that down further, fabrics made up the largest portion of those exports at 31 percent. Cotton, wool and fine animal hair followed, accounting for 21 percent, while apparel made up 20 percent of the U.S. exports. Man-made fibers were 15 percent of those exports, and home furnishings and non-apparel sewn products accounted for 13 percent.

"The United States is especially well-positioned globally in fiber, yarn, fabric and non-apparel sewn products markets; it was the world's 4th largest individual country exporter of those products in 2016," McCrary said.

Among the top three export markets for U.S. apparel and textile goods, were Mexico, Canada and China—three countries the U.S. has been stoking tensions with over trade deals and targeted tariffs. Exports to the NAFTA countries in 2017, accounted for $11.8 billion, or 41 percent. The next largest share went to Asia, with $8.7 billion worth of textile and apparel exports bound for the region, 30 percent of the total. That means 71 percent of U.S. fiber, yarns, fabrics and apparel are headed to countries where trade relations are presently being upended.

NCTO, however, believes Trump's trade policies will help reposition the U.S. as the leader it needs to be. Particularly with regard to NAFTA.

"America's most important trading relationship is NAFTA, a pillar upon which the U.S.-Western Hemisphere textile supply chain is built," McCrary said. "Let me be clear. NCTO strongly supports NAFTA. That said, NCTO agrees with President Trump that NAFTA can and must be improved. NAFTA's yarn-forward rule of origin contains loopholes that benefit third-party countries, such as China. Closing them would boost U.S. and NAFTA partner textile and apparel production and jobs."

As its report came hours ahead of Trump's announcement Thursday that he would levy $60 billion worth of tariffs against China, McCrary's NCTO statements did not take a position on the tariffs and what they might mean for textiles. However, its outlook for the sector appears to be a positive—though cautious—one.

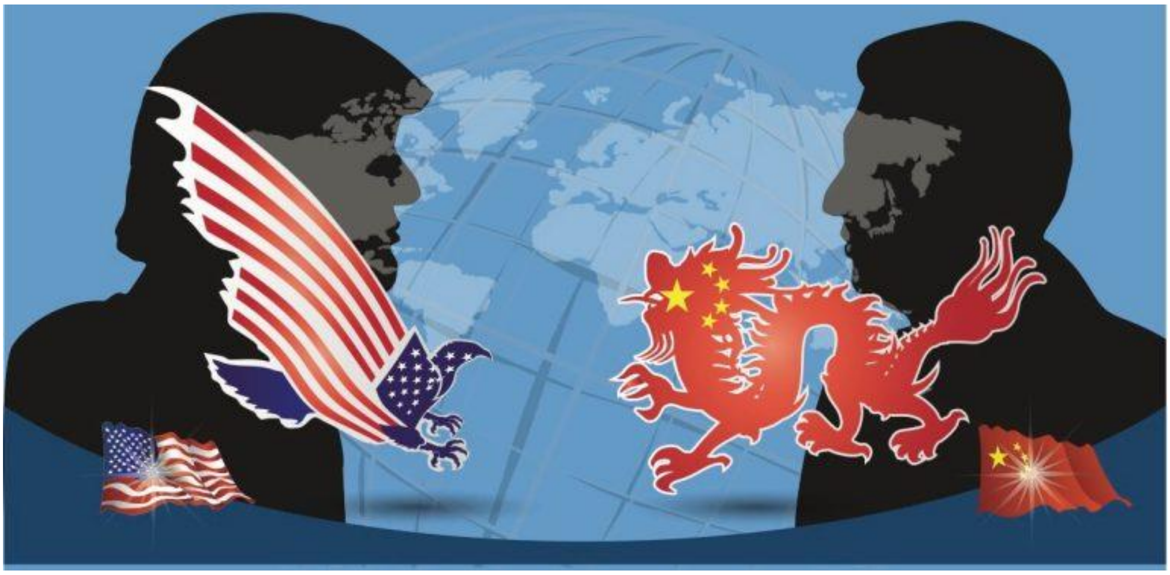
"Although the U.S. textile industry is world-class, it cannot afford to rest on its laurels," McCrary said. "There will always be intense and sometimes unfair competition from abroad, changing consumer demands and inevitable economic downturns."

SJ SOURCING JOURNAL

US Says These Are the 1,300 Products on its China Tariff List—and the Textile Sector Could Take a Major Hit

by Tara Donaldson

Posted on April 3, 2018 in News, Trade



The United States has released its list of targeted tariffs for the $50 billion it will hit China with, and the tit-for-tat on tariffs could mean another target list from China is forthcoming.

There are 1,300 products from China that will now face tariffs as high as 25 percent, which the U.S. has put in place because of what it deems China's unfair practices surrounding intellectual property and forced technology transfer. Though the list doesn't target apparel and footwear products directly, it does hit largely at the machinery and tools used to produce those products—which could dampen prospects for Made in USA, as bringing in the machinery to make it could cost as much as 25 percent more.
In the list, released Tuesday, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said it has "determined that the acts, policies, and practices of the Government of China related to technology transfer, intellectual property, and innovation covered in the investigation are unreasonable or discriminatory and burden or restrict U.S. commerce." As such, a note in the list continued, "The Trade Representative proposes an additional duty of 25 percent on a list of products from China."

That list, though aimed largely at the aerospace, information technology and robotics industries—includes more than 80 products tied directly to machinery for apparel and textiles manufacturing.

“We are pleased with the administration’s decision to avoid adding tariffs to U.S. imports of apparel, footwear, and travel goods from China,” American Apparel and Footwear Association president and CEO Rick Helfenbein said in a statement immediately following the news. “At the same time, we are concerned that the list includes tariffs on machinery used in our domestic manufacturing process. This would directly raise costs on domestic manufacturers and impact our ability to grow Made in USA.”

The China Tariff List will impose new tariffs on things like: textile printing machinery, carding machines for preparing textile fibers, textile spinning machines, machinery for producing textile yarns, weaving machines, circular knitting machines, flat knitting machines, embroidery machines, spindles and sewing machines—and many of the parts that go into operating those machines.

When it comes to footwear tariff lines, no additional duties were levied there either, though machinery for preparing tanning or working hides, skins or leather, and machinery for making or repairing footwear will face the tariffs.

“Including footwear on the list was a very real and substantial threat to footwear workers and consumers across the country, and we are very pleased that we can take a deep sigh of relief,” said Matt Priest, president and CEO of Footwear Retailers and Distributors of America.

As tariffs are often little more than a hidden tax on consumers, prices in the textiles and apparel sector could face increases as the new tariffs drive up the cost of doing business. Manufacturers may not be able to absorb a new 25 percent tariff without passing at least some of the costs on, which could come in the form of higher prices for apparel.

Tuesday’s tariff announcement likely won’t end the back-and-forth between the U.S. and China on tariffs, either, as China has already responded with $3 billion worth of tariffs following the U.S. steel and aluminum tariff order, and it’s expected to act similarly in reaction to this new set of tariff targets.

Last update 08:00 | 04/04/2018

Vietnam's textile & garment industry expect big benefits from EVFTA

VietNamNet Bridge - Once the EU-Vietnam FTA (EVFTA) is signed and the tariff is cut to zero percent, textile and garment exports to the market may obtain 7-8 percent growth rate per annum, experts say.

Vo Van Kien Nhan from Viet Tien Garment JSC said he is looking forward to the signing of EVFTA and puts high hopes on the agreement, though he anticipates serious competition from foreign brands such as Zara and H&M.

The preparations for the signing of EVFTA are nearly completed. Deputy PM Vuong Dinh Hue said at a recent event that only some technical issues need to be fixed.

"I believe that with goodwill on both sides, the issues will be settled before the summer so that the agreement can be inked," he said.

In 2017, Vietnam exported $31.16 billion worth of textiles and garments, an increase of 10.23 percent compared with the year before. Of this, exports to the EU brought $3.79 billion, up by 6.3 percent, according to the General Statistics Office (GSO).

Vitas' chair Vu Duc Giang said the target of $36 billion worth of exports this year is within reach thanks to the FTAs.

The EU, the second largest export market for Vietnam, is expected to help the country's textile and garment industry grow well in 2018.

The belief in the high export growth rate from the EU is consolidated by optimistic forecasts about the EU economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts a 2.2 percent GDP growth rate for the EU this year.

The belief in the high export growth rate from the EU is consolidated by optimistic forecasts about the EU economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts a 2.2 percent GDP growth rate for the EU this year.

Rong Viet Securities, in its latest report, also affirmed that in the context of the world's stable economic growth, especially in the EU, the shock to Vietnamese enterprises caused by the sharp fall orders in 2016 will not occur again.

A research team from Rong Viet emphasized the big benefits of EVFTA in the immediate time, saying that Vietnam will also enjoy benefits from CPTPP, but it will take time to enter new markets in CPTPP.

Also according to Rong Viet, the enterprises which have a large proportion of revenue from the EU will see a sharper increase in the number of orders than other companies.

These enterprises include Sai Gon Production, Trade & Garment JSC which has 32 percent of revenue from the EU, TNG Investment & Trade JSC (21 percent), Garment Company 10 (36 percent) and Viet Tien Garment Corporation (18 percent).

However, experts warned that it would be not easy to take full advantage of the opportunities brought by EVFTA.

Nguyen Thi Thu Trang, director of the WTO and Integration Studies Center, said the requirements on production, packaging and labeling will be technical barriers for Vietnam's exports.

FTAs help garment-textile firms diversify export markets

VNA WEDNESDAY, APRIL 04, 2018 - 14:32:00 PRINT

In 2017, the garment-textile sector raked in 31.2 billion USD from exports, a year-on-year rise of 10.23 percent (Photo: VNA)

Hanoi (VNA) – Free trade agreements (FTAs) that Vietnam has signed and is going to sign have helped local firms diversity their export markets, according to Chairman of the Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association Vu Duc Giang.

He said Vietnam is exporting garment-textiles to the US, the European Union (EU), Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Apart from those traditional markets, Vietnamese firms are pushing exports to new markets such as China and Russia, with export turnover projected to exceed 2 billion

USD and about 500 million USD in 2018 in each of the countries respectively.

Most domestic garment-textile businesses have received orders for the second and third quarters of 2018, he added.

The garment-textile sector has exported more than 3 billion USD worth of yarn, nearly one billion USD worth of fabric and 400 million USD worth of garment accessories.

Particularly, the fourth industrial revolution has changed the mindset of businesses in regards to technology investment, Giang said.

Garment-textile companies have paid more attention to developing human resources and using technology to create quality products.

The selection of high value production segments helps such as Original Design Manufacturing and Own Brand Manufacturing has helped Vietnam continue making differences in the global market, he said.

In addition to investment in new technology, some big enterprises such as Phong Phu Joint Stock Company and Garment-10 Joint Stock Company are seeking to export through online sales.

This is considered a cheap and quick way to send products to customers in foreign countries, according to Doan Anh Dao, a marketing and sales representative from Phong Phu Joint Stock Company.

In 2017, the garment-textile sector raked in 31.2 billion USD from exports, a year-on-year rise of 10.23 percent.

In the year, Vietnam’s garment-textile exports to major markets like the US, the EU, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Russia increased by 7.2 percent, 9.23 percent, 6.1 percent, 11.8 percent and 56 percent, respectively.

In the first quarter of 2018, the sector is expected to see export growth of nearly 7 percent. It targets 35 billion USD in export turnover by the end of this year.-VNA

Garment-textile sector earns 8 billion USD from exports in Q1

VNA FRIDAY, APRIL 06, 2018 - 10:55:00 PRINT

Garment-textile export turnover reached nearly 8 billion USD in the first quarter of 2018, a year-on-year rise of 13.3 percent (Illustrative image. Source: VNA)

Hanoi (VNA) – Garment-textile export turnover reached nearly 8 billion USD in the first quarter of 2018, a year-on-year rise of 13.3 percent.

This is considered a good start for the industry to realise its export target of 35 billion USD by the end of this year.

President of the HCM City Association of Garment and Textile Pham Xuan Hong said the sector has bright prospects this year.

Garment-textile exports in 2018 are anticipated to be better than in 2017 with the maintenance of two-digit growth.

Chairman of the Directors Board of Hung Yen Garment Corporate Nguyen Xuan Duong said the number of orders is likely to strongly increase this year, especially for large-scale businesses.

Most domestic enterprises have orders until the second of quarter of 2018. Some have even received orders for the third quarter, he said.

According to Chairman of the Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association Vu Duc Giang, Vietnamese garment-textile businesses can compete in the region thanks to the sharpened skills of workers, improved productivity and better quality of products.

Domestic enterprises have also invested in new technology to increase productivity and competitiveness, he said.

Free trade agreements not only help the garment-textile sector diversify export markets but also reduce imports of material, he said, adding that currently Vietnam exports more than 3 billion USD worth of yarn, nearly one billion USD worth of fabric and 400 million USD worth of garment accessories each year.

Industry 4.0 has changed the mindset of businesses in regards to technology investment, Giang said, noting that businesses are looking to high value production segments such as Original Design Manufacturing and Own Brand Manufacturing.

Garment-textile companies also focus on the development of human resources and cutting edge technology, he said.

Some big enterprises such as Phong Phu Joint Stock Company and Garment-10 Joint Stock Company are seeking to export through online sales, he added.

However, the Vietnam Textile & Apparel Association has warned businesses of numerous challenges, including fiercer competition from other countries like China, Myanmar and Cambodia.

The association advised enterprises to improve skills of workers and reform management methods to increase productivity.

Apart from maintaining and developing exports to key markets such as the US, EU, Japan and the Republic of Korea, businesses should expand to other markets such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Eurasian Economic Union, India and Latin American countries.-VNA

Nombre record d'entreprises participant au Saigontex 2018

SAMEDI 31 MARS 2018

Photo : baodautu

Ho Chi Minh-Ville (VNA) - Environ 1.100 entreprises vietnamiennes et étrangères vont participer à la foire internationale du textile-habillement et des matières premières Saigontex 2018, qui aura lieu du 11 au 14 avril à Hô Chi Minh-Ville.

Placée sous les auspices du ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce, et de l'Association du textile-habillement du Vietnam, cette édition 2018 établira un record en termes de nombre d'exposants.

Sur 31.000 m², les exposants vietnamiens et étrangers - notamment venus des Etats-Unis, d'Asie et d'Europe - présenteront des machines et dispositifs au service de l'industrie textile, ainsi que des technologies de management d'entreprise dans ce secteur.

Il s'agira d'une opportunité pour les entreprises nationales d'accéder à des technologies avancées en vue d'améliorer la qualité de leurs produits, de rencontrer des fournisseurs étrangers d'équipements et matières premières, permettant d'impulser le développement de l'industrie textile nationale. -CPV/VNA

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Clothing and textile manufacturing's environmental impact and how to shop more ethically

Updated 3 April 2018, 10:35 AEST

By Tegan Taylor

What goes into manufacturing the various textiles we wear and how do the environmental impacts of each compare?

How did the fibres that make up your clothes come to be? (Credit: ABC licensed)

The shirt you're wearing right now: what's it made from? In its rawest form, was it once growing in a field, on a sheep's back or sloshing at the bottom of an oil well?

We wear clothes literally every day, but few of us spend much time reflecting on what goes into manufacturing various textiles and their environmental impacts.

This is interesting considering how much we think about the food we eat or the skin care products we use.

Most of us don't realise how environmentally intensive it is to make a single article of clothing, says fashion sustainability expert Clara Vuletich, whose PhD research focuses on sustainable textiles.

"Textile supply chains are some of the most complex of any manufacturing sector," she said.

"When you think about one garment, how it's got to be on your back, it's gone through so many different suppliers and production processes."

First comes the fibre, which, whether it comes from a plant, animal or crude oil, is almost always an energy and pollutant-intensive process.

The fibre is processed until it can be spun into a yarn, which, in turn, is woven or knitted into a fabric. Somewhere in there bleaches and dyes are usually involved.

Finally, the fabric is made into a garment.

Each of these steps probably happens in different factories, possibly in different countries.

"All of these stages have environmental impact," Dr Vuletich said.

"And we know that the making of textiles, generally speaking, uses huge amounts of water because all of this yarn has to be constantly washed, it's going through all these chemical processes to turn it into this high quality, very delicate material, and then it becomes a different colour to what it is naturally.

"So yes, all this is hugely impactful."

Apparel and footwear industries currently account for 8 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, nearly as much as that of the whole European Union, according to a recent industry report, Measuring Fashion.
By 2030, the climate impact of the apparel industry alone is forecast to nearly match today's total annual US greenhouse gas emissions, emitting 4.9 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

RMIT textile technologist Mac Fergusson said textiles made in Australia were setting a good example for the rest of the world, and the global industry was making strides to be more environmentally friendly.

"We've got a lot of recycling going on that a lot of people don't realise," he said, such as a Victorian operation recycling plastic bottles into polyester that would be opening soon.

Because manufacturing processes are so complicated and varied, exactly how much of an environmental effect they impart is difficult to quantify.
But here's an introduction to what goes into manufacturing some of the fabrics you may have hanging in your wardrobe.

Cotton

Cotton fabric is made from yarn spun from the fibres of the cotton seedpod, called a boll. Most of the world's cotton is grown in India and China, usually on farms that rely heavily on pesticides, fertilisers and intensive irrigation.

Growing 1 kilogram of non-organic cotton lint (the raw cotton fibre) uses about 2,120 litres of water from irrigation, according to Textile Exchange, a not-for-profit group promoting sustainable practices within the industry.
Cotton is generally harvested by machine, then undergoes ginning, a mechanical process that removes the fibres from their seeds.

These fluffy fibres are then subject to a series of processes, such as carding and combing, to smooth and refine them until they are ready to be spun into yarn.

A Textile Exchange life cycle analysis published last year found organic cotton — which is usually grown using water-conserving practices and without pesticides and fertilisers — had reduced potential for global warming, acidification, soil erosion, water consumption and non-renewable energy compared with conventional cotton production.
Australia holds a relatively small piece of the global cotton pie, producing about 2 million bales a year compared to China and India's 33 million and 27 million respectively, but it punches above its weight in the environmental stakes, contributing less than a third of a per cent to the country's agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, according to Cotton Australia.
A 2014 industry report found Australian cotton had increased its water efficiency by 40 per cent over the previous decade and had reduced insecticide use by 89 per cent since the late 90s.

Synthetics

Synthetics such as polyester, acrylic, nylon and elastane are made using fossil fuels.

Polyester is the most widely used fibre in clothing, accounting for nearly half the world's fibre production, or 63,000 million tonnes each year, according to Textile Exchange.

To make polyester, chemicals from petroleum are liquefied under high pressure and forced through tiny holes. As the liquid is squeezed out the holes, it solidifies into fibres.

These fibres are then drawn out to make them longer and thinner, and then spun into a yarn. Sometimes other processes, such as dyeing, crimping or dulling the natural lustre of the fibre, are involved in these early stages.

While synthetics are usually made from non-renewable resources, some are made from recycled materials, such as polyester made from recycled bottles.

Recycled polyester reduces the need for fossil fuels and diverts plastic bottles from landfill. As technology continues to advance, polyester textile manufacturer could eventually become a closed-loop system, according to Textile Exchange.

But beyond the manufacturing phase, all synthetics, recycled or not, have a longer-term environmental impact while they are being used by you, the consumer.

Every time you wash your polyester clothing, it sheds microscopic fibres that travel into waterways, adding to plastic pollution in our oceans.

Man-made cellulosics

Man-made cellulosic fabrics involve taking a renewable material, such as bamboo or eucalyptus, and breaking it down until it can be spun into a fibre in a similar process to synthetics, such as polyester.

Viscose, rayon, Lyocell and bamboo are all types of cellulosic fabric.

On one hand, they use renewable materials instead of non-renewable fossil fuels, and crops such as bamboo don't require the same volumes of water or pesticides, if any, as cotton.

However, just because a material is renewable doesn't make it the best for the environment. Textile Exchange said greater transparency is needed to ensure logging for these fibres is not being done in ancient or endangered forests, endangered species habitats or otherwise illegal or controversial ways.
Once the wood has been obtained, the process involved in breaking down the raw material involves toxic chemicals that can affect the surrounding environment and people who work in the factories.

According to Textile Exchange, these substances can remain in the fabric during dyeing and finishing. The high-tech process to spin the man-made cellulosic yarn is also energy-intensive.

Because safety standards and environmental impacts of cellulosic fabrics vary so widely, Dr Vuletich advises consumers seek out manufacturers who are transparent about their processes.

Wool

Australia is the largest wool producer in the world, with about 75 million sheep producing about 4.47 kilograms of wool per head, but the fibre holds a relatively small share of global consumption: 1.2 per cent in 2015, according to the International Wool Textile Organisation.
Like cotton (and other textile fibres), wool processing involves many water and energy-intensive phases, including multiple washes to clean the fibre. This process is called scouring, which is how lanolin is recovered.

Australian wool processing plants use water-saving methods such as taking the water from the last rinse to become the first wash of the next batch, said Mr Fergusson.

Further processes — called carding and combing — smooth and refine the fibres prior to spinning into fibre and then weaving or knitting into fabrics. These fabrics may undergo fulling and crabbing, which use heated water to shrink and set the cloth.

Because it comes from animals, wool has environmental impacts at the farming level, including land degradation from overgrazing, soil compaction, erosion and loss of organic matter from the soil.

Deforestation and farms impinging on conservation areas are also problems identified by accreditation body Responsible Wool Standard.

This doesn't mean wool can't be part of your wardrobe: the Bureau of International Recycling estimated if each person in the UK bought one reclaimed woollen garment, it would save nearly 1,700 million litres of water and 480 tonnes of dyeing chemicals.

Linen

Linen is made from bast fibres — fibres made from the stalk of a plant, usually flax but sometimes hemp (*Cannabis sativa*).
Creating linen involves a process called water retting to break down the stalk into bundles of fibres, which are then mechanically refined and spun into a yarn.

It's a thirsty process, but not as water-intensive as cotton processing. Growing these plants is also less intensive terms of water and pesticides than cotton.

Hemp is not a big hitter in the global fashion industry, but has been pointed to as a more environmentally friendly option in the past. Dr Vuletich said that claim mostly stacked up.

But, she added, the fact the cannabis plant was also used as a drug meant it wasn't as widely embraced as a textile as cotton. Nor had it seen the same investment and innovation to create high-quality yarns.

"It's always going to remain a niche fibre because of its raw material."

Even the more widely used flax linen is still a long way behind other fibres in terms of popularity, partly because it has a "particular look", Dr Vuletich said.

"We don't all want to wear linen because it crushes so easily, it's [about] useability."

Dyeing

No, not a textile, but together with other finishing techniques, dyeing is the most energy-hungry part of the garment manufacture process, according to the Measuring Fashion report, accounting for 36 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions of the whole process.

The dyes themselves are also affecting the environment.

A recent documentary tracked how chemical waste from dyeing was making its way into waterways. But the spotlight on these practices is already leading to change.
"There's a zero-discharge initiative that a lot of the brands are realising that they need to really put pressure on suppliers in China around hazardous chemical waste into water," Dr Vuletich told the ABC last year.
Mr Fergusson, who specialises in dyeing, said when he lived near dyehouses in Indonesia, "the rivers used to change colour" — but other dyehouses nearby treated their wastewater and used it to irrigate rice paddies.

Here in Australia, dyehouses must meet very stringent discharge standards so they usually have an on-site treatment plant, Mr Fergusson said.

The Australian industry is also making strides in new technologies, he said, including a method called cold pad-batch dyeing, which cuts down on energy needs by using cold water.

Life cycles

So, are some fibres better or worse for the environment than others? Should we all completely eschew cotton, for example, because of the water and pesticides growing it uses?

It's not quite as simple as that, Dr Vuletich pointed out: cotton could be knitted into a jersey t-shirt, which would be washed frequently and perhaps wear out quickly.

Or it could be turned into a finely woven specialty fabric that's sewn into a kimono jacket to be washed sparingly and carefully maintained.

"We talk about life cycles," she said.

"You've got the impacts of the production phase, but then the material's made up and the garment is used by the customer, and that has environmental impacts as well."

Having said that, knowing what goes into manufacturing a textile can help you know what you're buying. Choosing recycled polyester, local or organic cotton or water-saving fibres like hemp will likely have a lower environmental impact. They also send a message to producers there is a demand for more eco-friendly products.

To make a real environmental difference, Measuring Fashion recommended recycling be combined with a shift to renewable energy, more efficient processes, smarter design and different consumption models — by you, the consumer.

Mr Fergusson said local wool and cotton growers wanted to see more textile manufacturing happen here in Australia, but local energy costs were prohibitive.

"I know that several cotton farmers have looked at the problem but our energy costs are too high. Textile manufacture is not a labour-intensive industry — it is capital intensive," he said.

Shop sparingly, treasure what you have

If buying clothes with the environment in mind is important to you, it can be tough to know where to shop.

While some brands spruik their environmental credentials, many don't provide information about how their fabric is sourced.

In fact, Dr Vuletich said, sometimes even the brand did not have much control over the origins of their textiles, especially smaller Australian brands that did not have the economic clout of a big global chain.

"Obviously the big players, it's easier for them, the H&Ms, they've got huge scale," she said.

"Some of these smaller players just can't get access to that better material.

"You've got to be doggedly determined to make a go of it in this space."

Consumers wanting to be informed can use apps like Good On You, which rates brands based on their environmental impact, as well as their labour and animal welfare practices. But such apps rely on brands being transparent about their processes in the first place.
If you're really trying to limit your wardrobe's effect on the environment, Dr Vuletich said the best thing you could do was to limit buying new, and to treasure what you have.

"Be conscious. Take care of it and cherish it. Each garment has had this journey," she said.

"It is really complex but I find it really exciting. Our eyes have been opened to these amazing processes and the amazing materials we have. The new innovations that are opening up that are really exciting.

"I think as consumers we're ready for it, we're hungry for it, especially the younger generation."

The future of clothing is not in tatters

Bloomberg
/
The Edge Financial Daily

April 03, 2018 14:56 pm +08

This article first appeared in The Edge Financial Daily, on April 3, 2018.

Adam Minter: Years ago, I visited a Chinese factory where several hundred workers spent long days using sandpaper and razor blades to distress jeans manufactured for a US apparel brand. As you have mentioned, Levi Strauss is now replacing that hand labour in its production of distressed jeans with lasers and automation.

If automation is poised to shift mass production to high-wage countries, what role will developing countries play in textiles and apparel in coming decades?

Virginia Postrel: Textile and apparel making is no longer going to provide the well-established path for a poor country to industrialise. That is one reason for economist Dani Rodrik's fears of "premature deindustrialisation," which he describes as "many (if not most) developing nations," particularly in Latin America and Africa, "becoming service economies without having had a proper experience of industrialisation."

Minter: Is fashion destined to become a hyper-localised industry, much like it was before the Industrial Revolution?

Postrel: In the near term, the bigger challenge for apparel makers, wherever they are, is that people in developed countries, particularly the US, seem to be losing interest in buying new clothes.

Is it something you (AM) are seeing in your book research on the used clothing trade?

Minter: Not really. In the developing world, emerging-market consumers are buying more clothes than ever — especially used clothes. However, this demand is not just about the cheap price of used clothing. It is about quality. In Ghana, where I have spent time over the last two years, imported second-hand clothes are often more expensive than new clothes. If you wander through a used clothing market in Ghana, you will find very little in the way of fast-fashion brands. Used clothing exporters look for durable used garments, and they work hard to keep low-quality fast fashion out of their shipping containers.

Postrel: The "death of clothing" is definitely a first-world phenomenon and quite possibly a North American one. Aside from sheer satiation because our closets are full and we would rather spend the money on food or travel, I suspect that the emphasis on casual comfort has simply made new clothes boring.

They no longer offer something transformative or special.

Minter: American consumers pay lip service to the idea that fast-fashion purchases fall apart after a wash or two (and then head back to H&M for more). For emerging-market consumers, fast fashion's lack of durability drives purchasing decisions. Apparel manufacturers could potentially accelerate the opening up of a massive market.

Postrel: The cost of equipment is going down, so it could eventually pose a challenge to second-hand clothes in emerging economies, especially as established manufacturers in places like Bangladesh and China look for markets nearer to home. It might also reduce the supply of second-hand clothes by offering consumers in affluent countries garments worth hanging on to longer.

Minter: From a second-hand market standpoint, the China question is the crucial one. China stopped accepting imports of second-hand clothing in the 1990s, in part to encourage domestic consumption of the large volume of apparel already being manufactured there for export.

China has become one of the world's top exporters of second-hand clothes

Whether or not the ban made any difference is debatable (I think the key factor was rising incomes), but what is not debatable is the volume of new clothing China now consumes. By the end of the decade, it will surpass the US to become the world's largest apparel market — and much of that apparel will be fast fashion. By one recent estimate, the number of times a garment is worn in China has declined by 70% between 2000 and 2015.

China has become one of the world's top exporters of second-hand clothes. In Africa, it is not at all unusual to see second-hand clothing markets stocked with T-shirts covered in Chinese characters. What Chinese manufacturers produce for China's domestic market tends to be of poorer quality than what they produce for export markets.

Postrel: China's advantage lies less in low wages than in state-of-the-art equipment and expertise. And, of course, China also has a vast domestic market, as well as potential customers in the region, where the quick-turnaround advantages of more automation would be relevant.

Minter: Yet there is a growing volumes of Chinese apparel waste, both at home and abroad. Many international clothing traders will not touch Chinese clothes.
I think the development of online, cross-border trade can reduce this waste at the high end of the market. Good quality garments will be traded and used between multiple users. But that is a small percentage of the whole.

Postrel: Maybe that will involve tapping local aesthetics for an international market — producing quality garments that can sell for higher prices in developed countries while still appealing to the home market. California casual could use some African competition.

Minter: The big question is what happens to unbranded, lower-quality goods. In recent years there has been money and attention lavished on developing technology that can transform old textiles into quality new fibres. If that kind of technology can be scaled, it would lower the cost of clothing while reducing guilt and wastage. From a technological standpoint, I am an optimist when it comes to the future of second-hand and new clothing. — *Bloomberg*