

Sustaining Indian Textile Industry with Knowledge Workers



Source: Textile Review

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Sustaining Indian Textile Industry with Knowledge Workers

By: Dilip Barooah

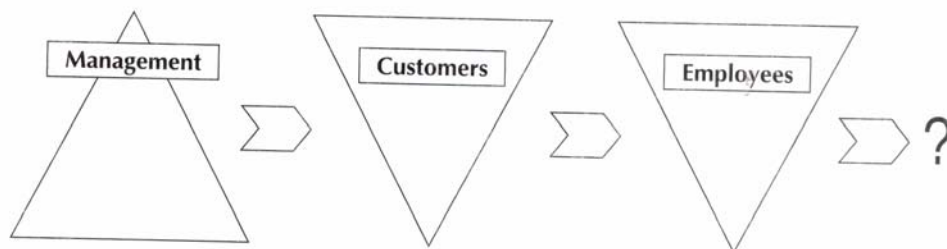
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Man power is one of the most important elements of the Textile industry. Sustainability of Indian Textile Industry is largely dependent on the man power, which is becoming a big concern for sustainability of the Indian Textile Industry. We discuss many issue related to other M's (Man, Machine, Material, Method, Market, Money, Measurement) for an industry and its management but we discuss seldom about the issue of the Man power.

Business is customer centric. Customer is God, customer first, customer is king. In a buyer's market it is customer that drives the business enterprise unlike the past when it used be sellers market and the top management used to steer the business operations.

Vineet Nayar's book "employees first customer second" has rightly exposed the importance of manpower to the present industry scenario.

Following change in pyramids of management practices are significant and proof of the fact "change is the only constant thing happening in this universe".



Textile industry is characterized by low margins, highly capital as well as labor intensive, largely dependent on capacity utilization, modernization, product diversification etc. Labour cost in Textile industry constitutes 6 to 8% of sales depending on the product mix.

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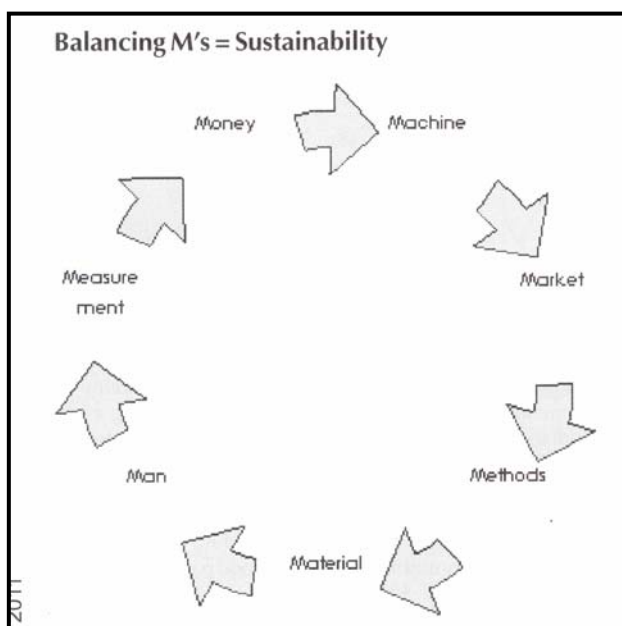
Best of the best HRD professionals keep themselves away from this industry because this industry is not considered to be a growing industry and it is no longer a good pay master.

Very few Textile company finds a comfortable place in the campus interview of India's premier Institutes like IIM, IIT, due to better job opportunity in the other growing sectors.

Generation X is no more inclined towards educating themselves in Textile Engineering, Textile Technology, Textile Chemistry. Trend in fashion designing, fashion technology, to some extent may be at par but, it boils down to negate the sector without the basics of Textiles.

Competition from the other sectors like IT, Telecom, Call centers, Retail, Import, constructions, Engineering.... Is likely to grow faster & faster to infinity and gradually Textile manufacturing is likely to shift from the west to east or developed to developing to under-developing to under developing world.

Textile is an labour-intensive operation. Component of Man power cost in Textile industry is more than other industry. It is hard work, it is monotonous, it is typically like a labor work, it does not pay like other industry and therefore not very appealing to the general labor force.



Textile is no more considered as a growing industry, value addition is not adequate, it is capital intensive, IRR (Internal Rate of Return), IRE (Internal Rate of Return on Efforts) are less, pay-back period is unlike other industry, earning per unit space built-up is not comparable with the growing real-estate business, amount of resources & infrastructures required is more; and hence not very much investor friendly in the current scenario.

The law of nature cannot be ignored. Value for money, value for time, value for efforts or in absolute terms "The Productivity" has to be justified. Productivity in terms of hour is the present days other sectors, due to SUSTAINABILITY.

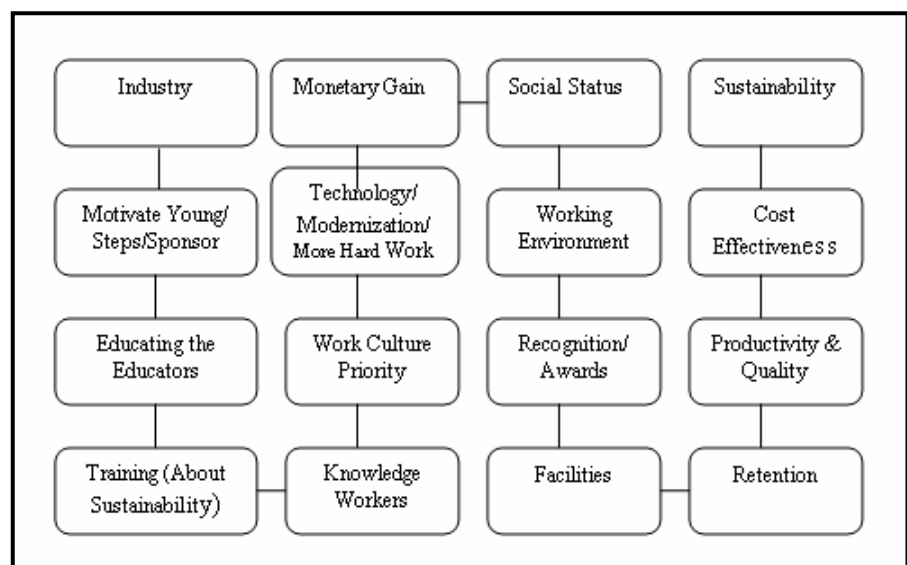
Knowledge Workers

value of goods produced & realized per man yardstick. Textile is far behind as compared to which we have a serious threat of

Sustainability Chain for Textile Industry (Man Power Perspective)

This article attempts to bring up this serious issue of "Sustainability (Man power perspective)" to the Indian Textile fraternity and suggests few points as understood by the author, so far, from his 32 yrs of journey in Textile manufacturing.

Sustainability with Knowledge Workers



Today's work force is no longer illiterate like it used to be. Job market is much bigger than it used to be. Options are many, mobility has increased, needs are different. ... As a result management of man power is becoming more and more complex. A typical retention solution could be as shown below:

Industry must attract, motivate, and encourage the new generation to join Textile Industry, by sponsoring students as CSR (Corporate social responsibility).

Educating the educators is the primary need of today's situation, which will then teach their lessons to the students with respect to the industry need with focus towards retention & sustainability.

Textile industry is drying up with real technocrats for working in the industry. Focusing on the academic lessons are required but it is high time that we think beyond to understand the void in the Industry. Collaboration between the Industry and Educational Institutes is a must for working towards sustaining the growth of Textile industry. College syllabus cannot remain unchanged with the changing scenario.

Knowledge workers:

Unlike earlier days the shop floor workers (no more called workers or) are not illiterate. Unlike earlier days Managers are no more THUMB TEXT"; Today's industry has knowledge workers, they are educated and hence they are employable by any industry; they are mobile, if they do not like Textiles they have many other options / job opportunity. Job market is wide spread, it has become global.

Technology:

Technology is dearer to all. Each and everyone is exposed to technology, thanks to mobile hand set, TV, Internet, IT technology. Everyone from the childhood is familiar with computers..... So, today's knowledge workers shall not be accepting an outdated machine, where there is no technology adaptation; which would mean lot of manual work / hard work. Textile industry has to adopt state-of-art in all the areas of operation to become sustainable.

Work culture:

No educated man / worker will allow himself / herself to be exploited. Earlier practice of "KICK IN THE ASS" does not work. Work culture for the knowledge worker has to be smart, techno-savy. People will not simply obey instructions unless the instruction is respectable and acceptable from the point of decency, fairness.....

Working environment:

Earlier environment in a typical textile mill is no longer acceptable to today's knowledge workers. The environment has to be bearable with the acceptable norms of noise level, Temperature, Pollution level, Dust level.....

Social status:

Without giving a social status to the knowledge workers, industry cannot function. There has to be pride in working for an industry. Being considered simply as a worker will not

encourage anyone to work. In textiles we have a big gap in this respect. A worker is an worker. A knowledge worker is not simply a worker. They are more exposed. They cannot be treated same as an illiterate.

Return on Effort (ROE) is an important factor for the knowledge workers. And this is the key element of retention.

Once the retention is accomplished, sustainability persists.

Conclusion

To sustain Indian Textile Industry, the focus needs to be towards man power retention, by accepting the fact that the Employees are first citizens of the Industry.

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