Technology upgradation is the key to survival of the textile industry

Pakistan holds an important position in global textiles, being the 4th largest producer of cotton yarn, and the 3rd largest player in Asia with a spinning capacity of 5% of total world production. It also ranks 2nd in the export of yarn, 3rd in the export of cloth and contributes 3% to the total textile trade of the world. Pakistan also produces the finest bedlinen and home textiles, innovative and quality denim and denim garments. A large embroidery sector caters to the local apparel market’s requirements. Despite the claims of the demise of knitting sector, it remains one of the top foreign exchange earners in the country.

This strong position was achieved over the last six decades through constant investments and implementation of state of the art technology by our industry. The textile industry was able to obtain the best of the textile technology in its time of infancy from Europe and Japan to establish a solid foundation. It was this technological edge which allowed the industry to exploit the natural advantages of raw material (primarily cotton) and abundant and talented labour force. The competitive edge thus gained has firmly positioned Pakistan among the top textile and apparel producing countries in the world.

Pakistan’s textile sector also benefitted a great deal from the quota regime under the GATT and WTO. At the same time when the quota regime was phased out Pakistan was among those countries who had prepared themselves for the open market competition through investment in the latest technology. The buyers were no longer compelled to buy inferior textiles only because their manufacturers held quotas in certain categories while other suppliers were out of the market once their quotas were utilised.

Initially, many companies who could no longer compete with the best global producers of textiles went out of business. However, those who survived were resilient and consciously improved the quality of the textiles they produced by using the latest textile technology in all sectors from spinning, weaving, finishing to knitted and woven apparel and value added textiles.

Heimtextil Frankfurt is the largest home textile exhibition in the world and every year Pakistan’s home textile sector has a very strong presence in this fair. Similarly denim sector in Pakistan apparently did not face any consequences of global recession in the last few years.

The key remains efficient and economical production with a focus on cost savings at all levels. That is where the new and state of the art textile technology can benefit our industry the most. The global shift of the textile sector from the Western Hemisphere to the East has opened up myriad opportunities for Pakistan. India and China are two key players in textiles besides Pakistan who have large domestic markets to reckon with. India and Pakistan have removed several trade barriers in 2012 which are expected to ease further in the near future. India’s large middle class can be an important target market for fine Pakistani fabrics and textiles. China is already moving away from basic textiles, leaving a gap. Due to the huge demand of the Chinese domestic market there is an ideal opportunity for Pakistan to supply quality textiles particularly due to Free Trade Agreement between the two countries.

For decades, Pakistani industrialists have been visiting international exhibitions such as ITMA for making investment decisions. For the last 10 years international textile machinery exhibitions have been regularly held in Pakistan bringing textile machinery manufacturers and their customers together. One of the leading textile machinery exhibitions held in Pakistan is the well known brand of IGATEX.

**IGATEX Pakistan 2012**

IGATEX Pakistan 2012 exhibition spreads over area of 20,000 sqm with 500 exhibitors showcasing their technologies from 32 countries and it is expected to be visited by 50,000 corporate visitors from October 11th to 14th, 2012. Exhibitors at IGATEX 2012 will showcase apparel machinery and accessories, auxiliary equipment, knitting machines, textile processing and finishing machinery, embroidery machines, cutting and laying machines, looms, spinning machinery and accessories, yarn dyeing machines and processing machinery and accessories and spare parts for all kinds of textile and apparel machines.

There are great expectations from IGATEX this year as the industry is seeking energy efficient solutions from machinery suppliers. The survival of the fittest depends upon those who invest in sustainable technology which then helps the textile manufacturers to gain an edge over their competitors.◆