

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

ICAHT 2023

18th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON APPAREL & HOME TEXTILES



**FUTURISTIC APPAREL BUSINESS :
A PARADIGM SHIFT**

PMS Uppal
President

Amarjit Singh
Secretary General

Vinit Sethi
Treasurer

Col. S. Kapoor
Director General

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Prashat Agarwal, Co-Founder & Partner
M/s Wazir Advisors Pvt. Ltd.

Prashant has an extensive experience of over 28 years, in various corporate strategy, business creation, diversification and performance enhancement assignments in the textile, apparel and retail sector for Indian and international clients.

Prashant has worked in the manufacturing, sourcing and marketing departments of leading textile and apparel companies. He has been a speaker at various national and international textile & apparel conferences/seminars. He has also served as guest faculty at IIT-Delhi, IIM-Ahmedabad and been on the board of some of the most successful textile parks in India.

He is a textile graduate from The Technological Institute of Textile & Sciences, Bhiwani and MBA from IMS, Indore.



Pallab Banerjee, Joint Managing Director
M/s Pearl Global Industries Ltd.

Pallab Banerjee is Joint Managing Director at Pearl Global Industries Ltd. Experienced in Apparel Sourcing, Manufacturing, Strategies & Operations.

He has been associated with the apparel industry for over three decades; prior to joining Pearl, Mr., Banerjee was Vice President of Global Sourcing and Managing Director of Gap India operation.

A graduate from Delhi University and a diploma holder in Apparel Marketing & Merchandising from NIFT, he also did Financial Management from e-Cornell.

With world class experience in Supply Chain Strategic Solutions, he is able to devise competitive, long-term strategies with the unique ability to identify trends that the brands pick on and develop.



Sivaramakrishnan Ganapathi, Vice Chairman & Managing Director
M/s Gokaldas Exports Ltd.

Sivaramakrishnan Ganapathi (Siva), as Vice Chairman & Managing Director, leads Gokaldas Exports Ltd, set sits strategic direction and nurtures its leadership team to excel. He is passionate about growth and creating high business impact, with a focus on people empowerment and sustainability.

Siva has over three decades of global experience, leading several high growth businesses in diverse industries across countries in Asia, North America and Europe. With his passion and strong entrepreneurial mindset, Siva has turned around Gokaldas Exports over the last five years making it a leading apparel manufacturer.

Earlier, Siva has worked with the Aditya Birla Group for over two decades, involved in leadership positions in diverse businesses. Siva holds a Masters degree in Management from IIM, Bangalore and a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from NIT.



Gaurav Bhargava, President
M/s LPH Apparel Inc, USA

Gaurav Bhargava is a seasoned professional with an impressive track record spanning over 34 years in the manufacturing and supply chain sector. With a wealth of experience garnered from across the globe, Gaurav brings a deep understanding of industry dynamics and an unwavering commitment to excellence to his work. His expertise is a valuable asset in optimizing operations and driving growth in the ever-evolving landscape of manufacturing and supply chain management.



Srishti Srivastava, Business Development Associate
M/s Fashion Snoops, USA

Srishti is currently working as a Business Development Associate for Fashion Snoops which is a US based trend & design forecasting platform. She works with South Asian stakeholders and helps them stay relevant with key industry trends in fashion & innovation. A design graduate from NIFT, she is involved in developing utility-driven products for premium segment, by closely studying major design shifts and trends in the market and has been instrumental in leading projects for various international clients.



Amandeep Randhawa, Founder Director
M/s Beyond Basics Learning Pvt. Ltd.

Amandeep Randhawa, over the last 24 years, has developed into an experienced Coach and Organisational Behaviour facilitator.

She has worked extensively in the areas of Change Management, Developing Functional mindsets, Conflict Resolutions, Negotiation Skills, Self-awareness, Personal Effectiveness and Being People Managers.

She has ventured in two startups in training & education. She has trained more than 5000 people across nations and domains to include key clients like Nike, Jubilant Group, Aditya Birla Group, Adidas, Danfoss, Rockwell Automation, Brandix Group (Sri Lanka), MUST Group (Middle East), The Smart Cube, Moglix, GAP, HP, Hitachi, Sapient, Li&Fung, Jindal Stainless to name a few.

She is a certified Brain Based Coach from Neuro Leadership Institute and holds a Post Graduate Diploma from RMIT Australia in Textile Technology and International Marketing.



Vibhuti Sharma, Consultant
M/s Wazir Advisor

Vibhuti Sharma is a fashion technology graduate from NIFT and MBA from IIT Madras. She works as a Consultant at Wazir Advisors and has been instrumental in delivering several strategy assignments for Indian and international clients. Vibhuti is a keen enthusiast about sustainability, textiles and fashion.



Khushbu Maheshwari, Innovation Associate
M/s Fashion For Good

Khushbu Maheshwari is an Innovation Associate at Fashion for Good, with a primary focus on end-of-use solutions within the Asian market. Over the course of three years, she has actively engaged in scouting and collaborating with innovators and key stakeholders to scale innovation and drive disruptive change in the fashion industry. At the forefront of her efforts, Khushbu spearheads the Sorting for Circularity India Project, a pioneering initiative introduced by Fashion for Good. This project aims to establish a robust infrastructure encompassing sorting, mapping, and recycling technologies, bringing together diverse stakeholders from the industry.



Ranjit Sasi, Director: Business and Operations
M/s Reverse Resources

Ranjit Sasi is currently working with Reverse Resources in the capacity of Director- Business and Operations India. His work involves sensitising the Indian apparel industry on the need for traceability and hence the opportunity to building circularity in the textile value chain. He has worked closely with brands, manufacturers, recyclers and waste handlers ensuring setting up of the circularity eco systems across major apparel clusters in India. He has more than 20 years of experience in the textile/apparel industry having worked with global companies like Intertek, TUV SUD in India and Sri Lanka in various senior management capacities.

He is a Textile Engineer with an MBA and Masters in Strategic Marketing (University of Wollongong, Australia).



Garvit Sahdev, Co-Founder
M/s Infinite X

Garvit Sahdev is the co-founder of Infinite X where he is trying to accelerate the transition towards circular fashion in India using Digital Product Passports.

Previously, Garvit has worked with PwC and CEEW where he closely watched the policy and development space. He has also worked with AYM Syntex in new product development. Garvit is a MBA from IIM Kashipur, M.Tech. from IIT Delhi, and B.Tech. from TIT Bhiwani.



Vivek Mehra, Co-Founder and Chief Sustainability Officer,
M/s Onlygood

Vivek Mehra is a Co-Founder and Chief Sustainability Officer at Onlygood - a technology firm based in Gurugram. Over the last 25 years Vivek has been leading technology teams across industries in the US, Europe and India, with a focus on digital transformation, data analytics and systems design. He is currently working on carbon emissions management for multiple industries including apparel and automotive manufacturing, hospitality as well as food & beverages. He is a passionate environmentalist and is helping industries balance growth with sustainability.



Varun Vaid, Business Director
M/s Wazir Advisors

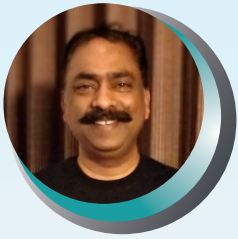
Varun Vaid heads the textile and apparel strategy practice at Wazir Advisors. He possesses more than two decades of experience covering manufacturing, marketing and consulting domains. As a strategy consultant, he has led diversified projects for private companies, government bodies and development agencies in Asia and Africa.

He has worked extensively for international development agencies such as ITC Geneva, IFC, FCDO UK, Gatsby Trust, GFEMS, etc.



Amod Tripathi, Director- Strategy and International Marketing
M/s SGPL (an Of Business Company)

Amod is an Electronics Engineering Graduate and a Post Graduate in General Management from IIM, Kashipur. He has worked across various industries including Information Technology, Oil and Gas, Automobile and Fashion and Lifestyle. Having worked in a PSU as well as a startup, he has seen various aspects and dynamics of businesses. He has been a Director for Marketing and Strategy at Saivana Garments Pvt Ltd for the last 2 years and has been an integral part of the growth journey at the company.



Sanjay Shukla, Team Leader
M/s Triburg

Sanjay Shukla is a Team Leader at Triburg and a Board Member of Brand and Sourcing Leaders Association.

He is a fashion and supply chain expert on many markets and product categories. He is also a Mentor, spokesman and working towards vision of bringing all the industry leaders together with a clear focus on inclusive growth for the textile Industry.



Sonali Pal, Country Head
M/s UV Stacks Logistics Pvt. Ltd.

Ms. Sonali Pal, with an illustrious career spanning over 22 years, stands at the forefront of the apparel and textiles industry. Currently serving as the Country Head for UV Stacks Logistics Pvt. Ltd., she steers Gaiabay.com, a remarkable international marketplace bridging Indian brands & manufacturers with US consumers.

She also heads the Sustainability Chapter at Brands & Sourcing Leaders Association.

A proud alumnus of NIFT, Sonali boasts a Master's in Design, equipping her with a rare blend of skills encompassing design, training, and business acumen. Her journey in the industry is marked by her strategic prowess, from facilitating pan-India sourcing of artisanal products to forging strategic tie-ups.



Raman Dutta, Founder & National General Secretary
M/s Brands & Sourcing Leaders Association & CEO Alliders

Mr. Raman Dutta is the Founder of three verticals

- Founder & National General Secretary of Brands & Sourcing Leaders Association which is not for profit Association having CEO's, CXO's, Brand heads and Sourcing leaders as members who source approximately 35 Billion dollars plus worth merchandise from South Asia.
- Founder & CEO - AI GLOCAL where he is working with nearly 15 brands which are in the size of 500 crore to 2000 crores - hand holding from Design to supply chain management to sales in Global market.
- Founder & MD - ALLIDERS which is a Design & Sourcing company catering to Large format Brands like Inditex, Urban out fitters, Guess, Cielo and many others.



Gunish Jain, CEO
M/s BlueKaktus

Gunish Jain is Managing Director of Royal Datamatics Pvt. Ltd. A technology solution provider to the apparel industry, Gunish has over 20 years' experience in the technology domain and is a thought leader to promote how technology can be leveraged in the apparel industry. He has a degree in Computer Engineering from Delhi College of Engineering and MBA in Operations from Vanderbilt University.

Okhla Garment & Textile Cluster

ICAHT - 2023held on 23rd September 2023

Theme - Futuristic Apparel Business: A Paradigm Shift

Conference Background and Highlights

The textile and apparel industry worldwide is currently at a critical juncture, experiencing significant geo-political shifts and changing trends. These transformations create a dual landscape of both opportunities and challenges for the apparel sector. On one hand, the evolving dynamics present new avenues for growth and expansion while on the other, they introduce complexities that demand strategic adaptation. In the midst of this global shift, the Indian textile and apparel industry has made significant strides over the past decade, solidifying its position as a major player in both export and domestic consumption. This accomplishment is commendable and demonstrates India's potential to thrive in the international market. However, to harness the full potential for increasing exports on a global scale and to meet predetermined targets, the Indian industry needs to take a proactive approach. This involves not merely capitalizing on existing strengths but also responding swiftly and effectively to the evolving landscape.

In order to provide a common platform to industry experts and Government bodies to focus on deliberating the changing landscape witnessed by the industry, Okhla Garment Textile Cluster **in collaboration with AEPC** hosted a conference on 23rd September, 2023 at **Gurugram** with the theme "Futuristic Apparel Business: A Paradigm Shift". The conference highlighted the core trends that have emerged from the shift and the way forward for the Indian textile and apparel industry.

The event was attended by leading industrialists, manufacturers, industry experts, government representatives and academia. During the event, the speakers and delegates shared their views on the emerging opportunities, strategic approach for the Indian textile industry to capture them and support needed for future growth.



Opening Session

Chief Guest	Mr. Sudhir Sekhri, Vice Chairman, Apparel Export Promotion Council
Conference Chairman	Col. S. Kapoor, Director General, Okhla Garment & Textile Cluster
President OGTC	Mr. PMS Uppal, President, Okhla Garment & Textile Cluster
Knowledge Partner	Mr. Prashant Agarwal, Co-founder & Joint Managing Director, Wazir Advisors



Col. S. Kapoor gave the opening address in which he welcomed the dignitaries and set the context of the conference. Thereafter, he talked about the present state and future potential of the apparel industry.



This was followed by an inaugural speech by **Mr. PMS Uppal**. He extended a warm welcome to everyone and highlighted the fact that textiles forms the foundation of leading nations globally. He further emphasized the potential for India to foster its growth in this industry. Following the speech, **Mr. PMS Uppal** formally welcomed **Mr. Sudhir Sekhri** by presenting a planter.



The Chief Guest, Mr. Sudhir Sekhri in his speech, shed light on the objective of the conference which was to highlight the discussion of various subjects relevant to the industry today. He lauded OGTC for various initiatives taken from time to time for the benefit of the industry.



The conference started with the theme presentation titled "Futuristic Apparel Business: A Paradigm Shift" delivered by **Mr. Prashant Agarwal**. He highlighted on the ongoing transformation toward futuristic business models in the garment industry, providing a glimpse of how these concepts are reshaping the industry's traditional norms. This shift is driven by a mix of technological progress, including automated planning and design, virtual sampling, digitally advanced factories, warehouse automation, and the growing importance of sustainability. He underscored the need of strategic partnership to grow in this industry.

Fireside Chat: Pre-requisites for Profitability in Apparel Business

Moderator	Mr. Prashant Agarwal, Co-founder & Joint Managing Director, Wazir Advisors
Speakers	Speaker 1: Mr. Sivaramakrishnan Ganapathi, VC & MD, Gokaldas Exports
	Speaker 2: Mr. Pallab Banerjee, JMD, Pearl Global Industries Ltd.
	Speaker 3: Mr. Gaurav Bhargava, President, LPH Apparel Inc., USA

The panel discussion deliberated on the factors contributing to apparel sector profitability, and how India can leverage the opportunities it presents. It was moderated by **Mr. Prashant Agarwal**.

Mr. Sivaramakrishnan Ganapathi urged the importance of maintaining consistent manufacturing practices in the apparel business world. He explained the day-to-day challenges that businesses encounter and the need for effective supply chain management to overcome these obstacles. Mr. Ganapathi highlighted the significance of finding a balance between micro managing daily operations and keeping an eye on the larger strategic objectives. He further stated that companies should prioritize safeguarding their niche within the market before setting ambitious targets. In doing so, businesses can establish a strong foundation for sustainable growth and success in their respective industries.



Mr. Pallab Banerjee addressed the importance of fostering strong buyer-supplier relationships in the context of the Indian textile and apparel industry. He underlined India's performance in the On Time In Full (OTIF) metric in comparison to other countries and underscored the potential for growth in this aspect. Then Mr. Banerjee focused the role played of sustainable business models in ensuring long-term success.



Mr. Gaurav Bhargava delved into several critical aspects of the textile and apparel industry. He notably discussed the potential for e-commerce to drive growth in this sector. In addition, Mr. Bhargava shed light on the intricacies of conducting business in the United States, particularly the associated costs. Understanding the financial considerations of operating in the US market is essential for companies aiming to establish a foothold in this competitive environment. Thereafter, he highlighted the strategic imperative for companies to identify and cultivate their niche. By focusing on a distinctive market segment or product specialization, businesses can differentiate themselves from competitors, attract a loyal customer base, and lay the groundwork for sustained growth in the long run.

Concluding the session, **Mr. Prashant Agarwal** said that a strong commitment to one's goals, coupled with a well-defined vision, serves as the foundation for success in any endeavor, particularly within the context of the textile and apparel industry.



Presentation: Sustainability as a Driver of Future Fashion Trends and Materials

Ms. Srishti Srivastava, Business Development Associate, Fashion Snoops, USA gave a presentation on 'Sustainability as a Driver of Future Fashion Trends and Materials'. In her presentation, Ms. Srivastava highlighted the impact that sustainability will have in the fashion landscape over the next 3-5 years.



She discussed key movements that will inspire new pathways for productive and meaningful growth in fashion trends & materials by keeping sustainability as the single most important component of all future design thinking. She further commented on why it is crucial for industry players to embrace and adapt this shift while working on incorporating sustainable innovations into their manufacturing processes.



Presentation: Fostering Business Sustainability: Nurturing Young Minds for Future



Ms. Amandeep Randhawa, Founder Director, Beyond Basics Learning Pvt. Ltd. delivered a presentation on 'Fostering Business Sustainability: Nurturing Young Minds for Future' where she talked about the critical role of individuals in driving sustainability within an organization. She elaborated on the importance of retaining a skilled and committed workforce.

Ms. Randhawa emphasized that achieving sustainability in the long term necessitates the development of a comprehensive and well-thought-out strategy. To illustrate her points, she presented a video that showcased initiatives taken by apparel companies towards achieving sustainability. This video served as a visual example of how businesses in the textile and apparel industry are actively working to incorporate sustainable practices into their operations.



Panel Discussion: Transitioning to a Circular Supply Chain: Opportunities of waste management and recycling across entire value chain

Moderator	Ms. Vibhuti Sharma, Consultant, Wazir Advisors
Speakers	Panelist 1: Ms. Khushbu Maheshwari, Innovation Associate, Fashion for Good
	Panelist 2: Mr. Ranjit Sasi, Director: Business and Operations, Reverse Resources
	Panelist 3: Mr. Garvit Sahdev, Co-Founder, Infinite X
	Panelist 4: Mr. Vivek Mehra, Co-Founder and Chief Sustainability Officer, Onlygood



The panel into the key drivers of circularity, explored available recycling technologies, discussed the challenges faced in adopting sustainable practices and how embracing circular practices can lead to effective waste management and recycling within the industry. It was moderated by Ms. Vibhuti Sharma.

Ms. Khushbu Maheshwari talked about the pressing issue of textile waste within India's textile and apparel industry. She pointed out that major manufacturing hubs in India are contributing substantially to the post-consumer waste problem. Moreover, she stressed the urgent need for the adoption of advanced technology and improved traceability within the Indian Textile & Apparel Industry. These advancements are crucial not only for reducing waste but also for enhancing overall sustainability and accountability within the industry.



Mr. Ranjit Sasi provided valuable insights into the significant drivers of change within the textile and apparel industry. He addressed the critical role of policies in shaping the industry's landscape, highlighting how government regulations and incentives can influence manufacturing and sourcing practices. Mr. Sasi also discussed the tools employed by manufacturers to enhance traceability in the supply chain. Furthermore, he shed light on the rapid advancements in technology as a driving force behind industry transformation. Lastly, he touched upon the growing global awareness and emphasis on circularity and sustainability in the industry. Collectively, these key drivers of change are reshaping the textile and apparel sector, making it imperative for businesses to adapt and innovate to remain competitive and environmentally responsible.

Mr. Garvit Sahdev provided an overview of the transitional strategies that have guided the shift from a linear economy to a circular economy within the textile and apparel industry. He particularly emphasized the pivotal role that consumers play as drivers of circularity in the textile value chain. Their choices and behaviors have the potential to influence the industry's practices significantly, whether through purchasing decisions, demand for eco-friendly products or support for recycling and up-cycling initiatives. Then, Mr. Sahdev stressed that consumer knowledge is a critical element in advancing circularity. He noted that a lack of awareness and understanding among consumers can hinder progress in this direction; therefore, education and information-sharing are vital to empower consumers to make more sustainable.



Mr. Vivek Mehra addressed the textile industry's standing in terms of waste management compared to other industries. He also discussed strategies for reducing carbon emissions within the textile sector. He further elaborated the importance of sustainable practices and technology adoption, which can lead to a reduction in the industry's carbon footprint. Thereafter, Mr. Mehra highlighted the growing significance of carbon neutrality in shaping the future of circularity in India's textile industry. Overall, he underscored the industry's current position in waste management and the imperative for reducing carbon emissions, while emphasizing the pivotal role of carbon neutrality in shaping the future of circularity within India's textile sector.



Presentation: Global Influence on Apparel Manufacturing and Sourcing Decisions - Insights from the Stakeholders

Mr. Varun Vaid, Business Director, Wazir Advisors, delivered an insightful presentation titled 'Apparel Sourcing - past, present, and future.' In his presentation, Mr. Vaid delved into the evolution of sourcing decision parameters in the apparel industry over the years. He deliberated on the results of interactions with prominent buyers, where they discussed the factors that significantly impact their global sourcing choices. These factors encompassed cost considerations, compliance with regulations, maintaining quality standards, and delivering excellent service. Furthermore, he talked about the perception of India as a sourcing destination among the global buyer community, challenges faced by buyers and how suppliers can align themselves to increase their market share.



Panel Discussion 2: The Changing Trends: Winners and Losers

Moderator	Mr. Varun Vaid, Business Director, Wazir Advisors
Speakers	<p>Panelist 1: Mr. Amod Tripathi, Director- Strategy and International Marketing, SGPL (an Of Business Company)</p> <p>Panelist 2: Mr. Sanjay Shukla, Team Leader, Triburg</p> <p>Panelist 3: Ms. Sonali Pal, Country Head, UV Stacks Logistics Pvt. Ltd.</p> <p>Panelist 4: Mr. Raman Dutta, Founder & National General Secretary, Brands & Sourcing Leaders Association & CEO Alliders</p>



The panel discussion deliberated on the changing trends of the industry ranging across fashion preferences, technological demands, supply chain shifts, etc. The corresponding need to evolve at the manufacturers' end as well as the way out of the constraints faced by the industry on the path of this change, were also notable points of discussion. It was moderated by **Mr. Varun Vaid**



Mr. Sanjay Shukla commented on the importance of a solution-driven approach, encouraging the industry to focus on building solutions rather than dwelling on problems. He advocated diversifying product offerings and enhancing resilience in the manufacturing value chain. Mr. Shukla stated that India possesses the capabilities but innovation is essential to attract buyers and establish India as a premier sourcing destination.

Mr. Raman Dutta talked about the need for creating a supply chain that meets the world's expectation. He stated the importance of sustainability certifications within India, as they can instill trust in buyers. Mr. Dutta underscored the significance of manufacturing excellence with sustainability as a core consideration.

Ms. Sonali Pal emphasised that sustainability will take center stage in the future of the Indian textile and apparel industry. She stressed the importance of sustainability certifications as an integral part of the industry's direction. With buyer demands increasingly aligned with sustainability, substantial investments in sustainable practices are deemed essential.

Mr. Amod Tripathi pointed out the need for a collaborative approach within the industry and leveraging technological innovations to bridge gaps in the manufacturing process. He also talked about the importance of government support in this journey toward industry innovation and enhancement. These diverse perspectives collectively pointed toward a future where innovation, sustainability and collaboration will be the driving forces shaping the Indian textile and apparel industry.



Presentation: Case Study on Fashion and Digitalization: Leveraging Technology for Sustainable and Profitable Manufacturing



Mr. Gunish Jain, CEO, BlueKactus in his presentation titled 'Fashion and Digitalization: Leveraging Technology for Sustainable and Profitable Manufacturing' addressed the key aspects of the garment industry's future. He discussed the imperative need of establishing digitally enabled manufacturing facilities, which are essential for optimizing operations, reducing costs, and staying competitive in the modern apparel landscape. Furthermore, he delved into the significant role millennials will play in shaping the garment industry's trajectory.

Mr. Jain also highlighted the critical importance of reaction time within manufacturing strategies. He concluded the session with a case study which highlighted the role of digital tools for design collaboration, seamless integration with the supply chain and the application of AI for analyzing sales and fashion trends.



Closing Remarks and Vote of Thanks

In his closing remarks, **Mr. PMS Uppal** acknowledged the significant progress India has made in the textile and apparel manufacturing sector since its inception. He also stressed that while India has come a long way, it must continue to evolve in response to changing industry trends and evolving buyer requirements, particularly with a strong focus on sustainability. Mr. Uppal said that India is heading in the right direction by embracing automation, advanced technologies, carbon neutrality, and circularity as key pillars of its growth strategy. In conclusion, he expressed hope that the valuable insights gained from the day's discussions would be applied in practical ways across the industry, leading to excellence in textile and apparel manufacturing. These insights will be instrumental in helping India navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the ever-changing landscape of the T&A industry.

Finally, **Col. S. Kapoor** concluded the session with a vote of thanks to the speakers for sharing their invaluable insights and initiating a much-required dialogue which will ignite a spark of change in the industry. He also thanked Apparel Export Promotion Council for collaborating and Lady Irwin College for being actively associated with the conference.



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