

INDIA'S FTAS: CATALYZING COMPETITIVE INVESTMENTS AND MANUFACTURING GROWTH



Director General

President



FROM PRESIDENT'S DESK

PMS Uppal President, OGTC

The advent of 2025 ushered in lot of cheers but accompanied by few uncertainties; the cheer was on account of continual increment in our exports on YoY basis while the uncertainties were on account of the tariff war unleashed by USA. A 10% YoY growth in exports during 2024–25 was a cherry on the cake but as the year moved forward the head winds of the tariff uncertainties have caused a sense of concern particularly amongst the apparel exporters dealing with USA.

Notwithstanding, the announcement of the conclusion of FTA with UK was a very positive step taken by our government for which I congratulate our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi and the Minister of Commerce & Industries, Sh. Piyush Goyal. This FTA will give our members an opportunity to cash on the advantage of a more level playing field and expand their growth through increased exports to the UK. I am sanguine that a concerted efforts and fore- vision will help our members grow with leaps and bounds. Added to this is the encouraging development of an expeditious FTA and BTA with EU and USA respectively.

I wish to share my thoughts on two very important pillars on which we established our cluster nearly two decades ago, viz Training and Common Sourcing.

Training is the bedrock of growth; training has to be continuous and sustained. There is a need to not only skill but upskill and reskill. OGTC has a basket of training programmes suitable for all levels and across all verticals; I urge our members to plan and share their training calendar for the coming months so as to ensure that maximum personnel are trained during this period before we once again set our focus on meeting the fall schedules.

The second important facet is Common Sourcing. We all are operating on very thin margins and therefore our endeavour should also be aimed at cost savings. Common Sourcing is one such initiative in which, without much effort, members can save 10-15% of their yearly expenses particularly an account of stationery, electrical parts, Machine spare parts and housekeeping items. I look forward to our members to come forward and take full advantage of this OGTC initiative.

Shortage of manpower is a problem with which we have been grappling over the years. The recent initiative of SAMARTH by the Central Government is a ray of hope to tackle this issue to some extent. I am extremely happy to note that many of our members are participating in this initiative with a hope to surmount the difficulty. As you may be aware that OGTC has signed a MoU with the UP Government on behalf of its members sharing their resolve to invest in PM Mitra Park coming up in Lucknow. We have been assured of availability of world class infrastructure and adequate workforce. The Park which is expected to be operational by 2029 gives an excellent opportunity to members who wish to expand and overcome the labour shortage.

Lastly, I wish to announce that our flagship event, ICAHT - 2025 is scheduled to be held at AEPC Gurugram on 20th September 2025. All efforts are being made to ensure eminent Speakers and Panellists to share their views during this event on subjects which are highly relevant and current. I seek the active cooperation of all members to make the conference a great success.

Finally, I wish all members an excellent order position for the coming spring/summer season.





Sudhir Sekhri Chairman, AEPC

Apparel Export Promotion Council



(Sponsored by Govt. of India, Ministry of Textiles)

MESSAGE

Invest India's projections indicate that India's textile market size will grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10 per cent to reach USD 350 billion by 2030 from the level of USD 165 billion in 2022. AEPC has also set the apparel export target of 40 billion by 2030.

This impressive growth projection is based on increased industry emphasis on sustainable fashion, rise & growth of e-commerce and path-breaking technological innovations happening within the industry.

Friends, India's apparel exports have seen an impressive growth of 10% in the FY 24–25 over the previous FY. This is testament to India's growing commitment towards compliance and quality. However, to achieve the ambitious target of USD 40 billion by 2030 we need greater focus on – (a) market diversification, (b) product diversification, (c) sustainability and (d) investment in the sector. For this, we need pro-active Government support primarily in four areas – (i) labour wage and overtime reforms, (ii) simplified raw material import policy, (iii) policy stability, and (iv) capacity augmentation.

In a major development for the textile industry, the India-UK has agreed for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). This is as a major step toward increasing exports and generating employment. Amidst global challenges—such as economic slowdowns in key markets, ongoing geopolitical conflicts (Russia-Ukraine, Israel-Hamas), U.S. tariffs, and aggressive trade practices from China—the FTA offers a much-needed competitive advantage. This agreement eliminates the tariff disadvantage, allowing India's readymade garments (RMG) to enter the UK market on an equal footing with nations enjoying duty-free access.

The garment industry has expressed gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for his strategic vision and to Union Commerce Minister Shri Piyush Goyal for his perseverance in bringing the agreement to a conclusion.

Another major development is the move to impose reciprocal tariff by the new US administration under President Donald Trump that can adversely impact India's apparel trade. However, this threat can be converted into an opportunity by engaging with the USA. We have welcomed the Government of India's move to go for Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) with the USA which will not only mitigate the potential risk of proposed 'Reciprocal Tariffs' adversely impacting our apparel trade with the USA, but also open new avenues for enhancing apparel exports to the all-important market of the USA.

We have suggested that the Government of India should consider bringing down the applicable customs duty rates on major apparel products vis-à-vis the USA to match with the applicable custom duty rates on the same products in the USA.

I am thankful to the Prime Minister whose vision has brought the Textiles Industry as one of the focus sectors. The new schemes such as PLI, PM MITRA Scheme, etc. will help India assert its global dominance in the textiles sector.

Friend, as you are aware, AEPC provides extensive support to the apparel sector, ranging from market research, trade policy advocacy, and technical assistance to design development, workforce training, and facilitation of participation in prominent international trade fairs.

It is time to scale up sustainability efforts and make our compliances robust, given the fact that apparel products using sustainable textile materials will gain momentum in times to come. With growing expectations from stakeholders and pushed by new regulations, fashion companies will make additional efforts to develop a more sustainable, socially responsible, and transparent apparel supply chain. Every aware consumer is now increasingly interested in fashion sustainability and reducing the environmental impact of textile waste. Sourcing clothing made from recycled textile materials is an emerging trend which is helping the fashion companies achieve business benefits beyond the positive environmental impacts.

AEPC has been doing its bit by launching Apparel Industry Sustainability Action (AISA) with an aim to encourage wider penetration of these measures amongst MSMEs, which is seen bearing fruits with active participation of the industry and brands in unison. AEPC had also conducted a Sustainability Marathon across all prominent garment clusters of the country with an objective of gauging the status of these garment clusters on sustainability.

AEPC is actively promoting alignment with eco-friendly and ethical manufacturing through regular webinars and seminars on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards and global regulatory frameworks. AEPC has also been advocating creation of a Green Transformation Fund, which would extend long-term soft loans at a maximum interest rate of 5 per cent on purchase/import of ESG equipment, enabling investments in water and energy efficiency, waste management, and renewable energy. Additionally, AEPC is lobbying for duty-free imports of textile and garment machinery, including environmentally sustainable technologies, to accelerate green transformation within the sector.

Coming to the challenges, a significant proportion of its requirement of MMF and synthetic fabrics is imported from overseas. Enhancing domestic production in these segments could be a game changer in the diversification of our product basket. We have requested the government to ease the process of duty-free import of MMF fabrics also. Expansion of the MMF sector is crucial, given projected global demand growth of 5-6 per cent annually in MMF-based apparel.

Regarding support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), AEPC facilitates market access and capacity building through various schemes. The Market Access Initiative (MAI) provides subsidies for participation in major apparel exhibitions and trade fairs, reducing entry barriers for SMEs. AEPC organises trade delegations and reverse buyer-seller meets to foster direct business engagement with international buyers. On capacity building, AEPC conducts seminars and webinars, while also offering market intelligence and advisory services to keep exporters informed of market dynamics and policy developments.

Skill development within the apparel manufacturing industry is supported through AEPC's collaboration with institution such as Apparel Training and Design Centres (ATDCs), delivering structured training under the Samarth Scheme of Capacity Building in Textiles Sector (SCBTS). Training focuses on garment construction, pattern making, quality control, and other essential competencies, equipping both workers and new entrants with industry-relevant skills aimed at boosting productivity.

India today is at the cusp of global focus for a safe business destination, let us together use this opportunity and make efforts to build a robust industry where we make and market quality products globally.

Best wishes!



AI'S VITAL ROLE IN APPAREL MANUFACTURING

Col. S. Kapoor Director General, OGTC

MSMEs play a critical role in the global apparel supply chain particularly in major exporting countries like India, Bangladesh, Vietnam and others. Limited resources, tight margin, intense competition and complex compliance standards are some challenges faced by MSME exporters; Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be a game changer for apparel MSME exporters to help them overcome these challenges and compete more effectively on the global stage.

1. ACCURATE DEMAND FORECASTING & ORDER PLANNING

AI powered forecasting tools can analyse historical data, market trends and seasonal demands to help MSMEs to:-

- a) Avoid overproduction
- b) Manage inventory effectively and reduce storage costs.
- c) Respond quickly to changing trends in target markets like USA and EU where fashion preferences shift rapidly.

2. FASTER AND SMARTER PRODUCT DESIGN

With AI driven design tools and trend analysis from social platforms, MSMEs can

- a) Create export friendly styles.
- b) Customise production for niche buyers.
- c) Reduce time-to-market, crucial for winning repeat export orders.

3. AFFORDABLE QUALITY CONTROL

Computer version solutions powered by AI can be deployed to detect: -

- a) Fabric inconsistencies.
- b) Stitching errors.
- c) Incorrect labelling or packaging.

4. SUPPLY CHAIN AND LOGISTICS EFFICIENCY

AI can help MSMEs manage their global logistics more effectively by: -

- Predicting shipping delays or customs bottleneck.
- Choosing optimal freight options.
- Managing multi-country regulations.

5. SMART PRICING FOR COMPETITIVE EXPERT OFFERS

AI tools analyse market pricing trends, competitor data and currency fluctuations to: -

- Help MSMEs set competitive yet profitable pricing.
- Automatically factor in duty rates, logistics costs and accuracy risks for each export market.
- Generate pricing growth tailored to each buyer's region and preferences.

6. COMPLIANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY MONITORING

Buyers particularly in EU and UK are requiring an increased transparency on sustainability and labour compliance; AI can help by: -

- Track Carbon emissions and water usage across production line.
- Monitor compliance of labour laws and worker safety.
- Automate documentation for eco-labels, REACH or OEKO-TEX compliance.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

AI can analyse customer feedback and product review to:-

- Improve product fit and design
- Predict future references in export markets
- Adjust marketing messages for different regions

CONCLUSION

For apparel MSMEs aiming to grow exports, AI is not just a luxury but a strategic necessity. By embracing affordable, cloud-based AI tools, MSMEs can achieve: -

- Higher operational efficiency.
- Improved compliance and quality.
- Greater market responsiveness.
- Enhanced buyer confidence.

It is relevant that AI can level the playing field giving MSMEs the power to compete globally without needing the tag of a multinational.

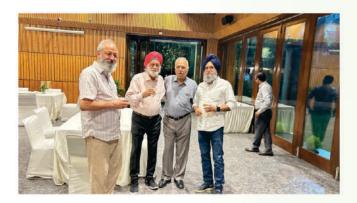


OGTC ACTIVITIES

OGTC 21st FOUNDERS DAY

OGTC celebrated its 21st Founders Day with a gala dinner for members and their spouses at Friends club, New Delhi on 2nd May 2025.

The event gave an opportunity to OGTC fraternity to interact informally with each other. The dinner was attended by 30 members including spouses.









PM MITRA PARK

At a glittering function held at Lucknow on 22nd March 2025, OGTC signed a MOU with UP Govt for investment in PM Mitra Park in the august presence of Shri Yogi Adityanath, Hon'ble Chief Minister, U.P.; the MOU envisages: -



- Investment of Rs. 150 Cr.
- Proposed employment of 10000 persons.
- Land requirement of 25 acres including Plug and Play Sheds.

The Park promises to provide high class infrastructure facility and is likely to be made available for allotment of plots during 2025-26. This is an ideal opportunity for our members to expand their manufacturing capacity since adequate labour is assured in near vicinity of the Park.

OFF-SITE TRAINING PROGRAM

As an initiative to promote better understanding and bonhomie amongst the HR fraternity, OGTC organised an Off-site training program at a resort in Chhatarpur, New Delhi on 29th March 2025.

Over 50 personnel from 17 member companies attended the day long activities. The entire program achieved its objective, and it was heartening to note that few members are contemplating to organise similar program for their internal teams.



POWER PACKED MOTIVATIONAL PROGRAM

A power packed Motivational programme titled "Manage Your Time, Master Your Stress, Energize Your Life" was organised by OGTC for its members on 26th February 2025.

The program was conducted by Mr. Nikhil Desai, a reputed International TED speaker and trainer.

The program was attended by over 70 participants.







TB FREE WORKPLACE

OGTC with the support of International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease organized a camp on TB Free workplace at the premises of M/s Orient Fashion Exports India Pvt Ltd, M/s Panorama Exports Pvt Ltd and M/s Indigo Crafts Pvt Ltd during January and February 2025.

All the workers and staff of respective companies were screened for TB and those who were detected with symptoms were provided with free treatment and financial support in accordance with laid down protocol.

The initiative has been temporarily put on hold due to non-availability of support from USAID.







NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP PROMOTION SCHEME (NAPS)

Apparel, Made-Ups & Home Furnishing Sector Skill Council organized a meeting on 27th February 2025 with various stakeholders regarding implementation of National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) in the Apparel Sector.

The meeting was attended by Col. S. Kapoor, Director General on behalf of OGTC; during the meeting we shared the difficulties being encountered by our members in implementation of NAPS. A comprehensive note on the subject along with possible solutions was subsequently shared with the Skill Council; we hope the Govt will address and resolve these issues in due course of time.

SAMARTH SCHEME

The diminishing availability of skilled workforce over the years is a stark reality being faced by all our members. The Central govt recently re-launched the SAMARTH SCHEME which envisages financial support to the industry for recruitment, training and employment of new labor either directly or through service provider.

The following members have enrolled for the scheme: -

- M/s Gudi Exports Pvt Ltd
- M/s New Delhi Export house
- M/s Meenu Creation
- M/s Pee Empro Exports
- M/s Rainbow Fabart
- M/s Team Krian

It is expected that, on approval of the individual industry proposal by concerned ministry, recruitment and training of the new labor by the service provider will commence by July 2025 with the first lot of trained manpower being made available by October 2025.

ZED AND LEAN INITIATIVE

OGTC has resolved that with the active support of all its members, it will aim to become the first apparel cluster in India where 100% units are ZED certified by 31st March 2026.

Further, to accelerate improved productivity, OGTC has also decided to recognize the active participation of its members in promoting ZED and Lean Program by award of certificates during ICAHT-2025.

The broad criteria for award of certificates will be as under: -

- a) ZED Certification. Certificate will be awarded to members who have achieved or initiated Silver level certification.
- b) Lean. Certificate will be awarded to members who have completed or are undergoing basic level training.



OGTC WELCOMES NEW MEMBER



M/S ISHMAN INTERNATIONAL

MR. ISHAN DEV ARORA

ADDRESS: F-38 SECTOR VI, NOIDA-201301 UP.

E-MAIL: ishan@ishman.net

PHONE: 9910829013

GLIMPSES OF CSR ACTIVITIES OF OGTC MEMBER COMPANIES (JANUARY TO JUNE 2025)

HEALTH CHECKUP CAMP AT M/S ORIENT FASHION EXPORTS INDIA PVT LTD







INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AT M/S ORIENT FAHSION EXPORTS INDIA PVT LTD







54TH NATIONAL SAFETY WEEK CAMPAIGN AT M/S ORIENT FASHION EXPORTS INDIA PVT LTD







ENVIRONMENT DAY AT M/S RAINBOW FABART PVT LTD







TB CHECKUP CAMP AT M/S MATRIX DESIGN & INDUSTRIES PVT LTD







NEW YEAR CELEBRATION AT M/S SONU EXIM PVT LTD







SAKHI WOMEN WELLNESS PROGRAME AT M/S SONU EXIM PVT LTD







HEALTH & EYE CHECKUP AT M/S SONU EXIM PVT LTD







HEALTH & EYE CHECKUP AT M/S RADNIK EXPORTS GLOBAL PVT LTD







INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AT M/S RADNIK EXPORTS GLOBAL PVT LTD







WORLD CANCER DAY AT M/S PARAMOUNT PRODUCTS PVT LTD







NATIONAL SAFETY WEEK AT M/S PARAMOUNT PRODUCTS PVT LTD







MATRITVA HIT AT M/S PARAMOUNT PRODUCTS PVT LTD







FINANCE MELA AT M/S TREND SETTERS INTERNATIONAL







ENVIRONMENT DAY AT M/S TREND SETTERS INTERNATIONAL







HOLI CELEBRATION AT M/S PEE EMPRO EXPORTS PVT LTD







ENVIRONMENT DAY CELEBRATION AT M/S PEE EMPRO EXPORTS PVT LTD







WOMENS DAY CELEBRATION AT M/S PEE EMPRO EXPORTS PVT LTD







WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION AT M/S PANORAMA EXPORTS PVT LTD







ENVIRONMENT DAY AT M/S PANORAMA EXPORTS PVT LTD







HR BEST PRACTICES IN OGTC MEMBERS COMPANIES

M/S PANORAMA EXPORTS PVT LTD, FARIDABAD

- Increased women empowerment
- Promoting Women as Line Supervisors in Production Department.

M/S GENUS APPARELS PVT LTD, FARIDABAD

- Online skill development training for internal employees
- 3D software training for pattern masters.

M/S PEE EMPRO EXPORTS PVT LTD, FARIDABAD

- Water Conservation: Implemented a recycling system for laundry water through Effluent Treatment Plants resulting in significant water savings.
- Water-Efficient Taps: Replaced traditional water taps with low-flow alternatives leading to substantial water conservation.
- Paper Reduction Initiative: Implemented measures to minimize paper usage by promoting a more sustainable and digital work environment.
- Solar Panel Installation: Installed solar panels leveraging renewable energy to reduce reliance on non-renewable sources. This initiative has resulted in significant electrical savings.

M/S ORIENT FASHION EXPORTS INDIA PVT LTD, OKHLA

- Employees being encouraged to share grievances.
- Grievances being addressed and resolved in a timely manner.
- Posters displayed in the premises, and grievance contact cards distributed to employees.
- Employees with good productivity, efficiency, and attendance being rewarded on a monthly basis.

M/S MEENU CREATION LLP, NOIDA

- Water Conservation: Implemented a recycling system for washing water through Effluent Treatment Plants resulting in substantial water savings.
- Online Trimmer for Thread Cutting: Introduced online trimmers for thread cutting on production floors thereby achieving significant cost savings.
- New Skill Matrix Implementation: Introduced a new Skill Matrix which includes the addition
 of new grades within the organization. This initiative aims to enhance employee skills and
 career development opportunities.

M/S RAINBOW FABART PVT LTD, NOIDA

• Free Checkup camp organised for employees in their organisation; also distributed free medicines for Cancer, Diabetes, BP etc to all the identified employees.

M/S ORIENT FASHION EXPORTS INDIA PVT LTD, NOIDA

- Digital Payslips: Reduced paper usage by sending payslips via email, the company reduced its
 environmental impact and save on paper costs.
- Leave Management: Efficient tracking: Operators enter leave requests through tabs, making it easy to track and manage employee leave.
- Waste Management: Transparency by selling waste fabric and plastic items to nominated recyclers/vendors, the company can track and monitor waste disposal, promoting transparency and accountability.

M/S AFFLATUS INTERNATIONAL, GURUGRAM

- Culture & Timings: Work life balance being promoted through flexi hours for their staff employees.
- Talent Retention & Career Growth: Each employee's individual roles and their responsibilities are defined to get maximum career growth based on their role and responsibility.
- Employees Exit Interview: Exit interviews conducted for proper feedback.
- Implemented HR ONE Software: This enables to track attendance, leave, wages, timing etc.

M/S TREND SETTERS INTERNATIONAL, GURUGRAM

- Plantation: near IMT Manesar Area.
- Solar Installation: 125KW solar plant installed which is helping reduction in energy costs and providing a stable source of power.
- Water Conservation: Installed water-efficient washing machines which significantly reduce water consumption.

M/S RADNIK EXPORTS GLOBAL PVT LTD, OKHLA & NOIDA

- Company Newsletter being distributed internally in whole group every quarter.
- Pond adoption in Noida to promote water conservation to achieve eco balance.

M/S SONU EXIM PVT LTD, NOIDA

- Sakhi Project wellness health program for women.
- Production employees complete eye checkups in all units.





Effective Leadership and Management Driving Success and Growth in the Organization

Shubha Nivedita Minz Chief People Officer Matrix Design & Industries Pvt Ltd

"If both a cuckoo and a crow are perched near you, both making noise, which one are you more likely to listen to—and which one would you rather shoo away?

This question came up during a thoughtful exchange with a senior leader, and the response was immediate: the cuckoo. But here lies an interesting insight: often, we do not see the cuckoo. We simply hear its voice—pleasant, clear, and meaningful—inviting us to pause and listen. In contrast, the crow, though constantly visible and vocal, often comes across as harsh, erratic, and overwhelming, and is to be shooed away.

This metaphor prompted a deeper realization: If success and growth are the sweetest sound in an organization, what kind of "voice" and impact must leadership and Management carry to inspire and sustain them?

Leadership and management, in many ways, resemble these two birds. Leadership is like the cuckoo's voice, thoughtful, visionary, and inspiring. It sets the tone, provides direction, and fosters a sense of purpose. Management, like the crow, is ever-present—focused on systems, consistency, and execution.

Both are essential, but they are not the same. Leadership ignites vision and drives change. management provides structure, stability, and ensures results. Without leadership, management becomes mechanical. Without management, leadership risks becoming disconnected.

The real power lies in their synergy. Together, leadership and management must strike a balance. Not every situation calls for gentleness, and not every challenge requires firmness. Sometimes, assertiveness is necessary to uphold accountability. The key is delivery—with fairness, clarity, and purpose.

Leadership and management are not defined by position or power, but by presence, partnership, and purpose. When they work in harmony—blending influence with control, empathy with discipline, and strategy with execution—organizations thrive.

When leadership and management align through C.L.E.A.R., success and growth follow.

- C Communicate: Teams thrive when Leaders and Management don't act in silos. Clear, consistent communication of goals and vision builds trust and alignment.
- L-Lead: Lead from the front, support from the side, and empower from behind. Adapt to the Situation.
- E Empower: Build trust, delegate responsibility, and ensure accountability through effective management and real empowerment. Real empowerment is practiced, not preached.
- A Align: Bridge functional gaps, resolve conflicts, and promote shared ownership. Alignment fosters unity and momentum.
- R Revolutionize: Challenge the status Quo, embrace change, push boundaries, drive innovation. Growth begins where comfort ends.

And the Result?

Organizations G.R.O.W.:

- G-Greater Performance: Clarity drives focus and measurable outcomes.
- R Responsibility Shared: Accountability becomes a shared culture. Buck passing becomes a passé.
- O-Organizational Loyalty: Engagement fuels retention, invested employees walk the extra mile, not because they have to, but because they want to.
- W-Widened Impact: Leadership becomes scalable, and the organization becomes future-ready.

Success and growth aren't accidental. They are intentional outcomes shaped by how leadership and management rise—together. When both operate with clarity, courage, and collaboration, success isn't just seen or heard—it's felt. It becomes the organization's rhythm, identity, and enduring legacy.



HR - Key to Organisation's Success

Rakesh Kumar Yadav Group CHRO (VP – HR & Admin) Radnik Exports Global Pvt Ltd

Why HR is the key to organization's Success?

Human resource function is very important and a key function to the organizations for achieving excellence in business activities, ranging from strategic planning to company image. HR practitioners in a small business who have well-rounded expertise provide a number of services to employees. The areas in which HR maintains control can enhance an employees' experience throughout the employment irrespective of levels and grade of the employees while strengthening business operations.

To simply understand the importance of HR function in any organization, let's review below facts:

1. Strategic Management

Strategic management provides overall direction by developing plans and policies designed to achieve objectives and then allocating resources to implement the plans. Ultimately, strategic management is for organizations to gain a competitive edge over their competitors.

HR improves the company's bottom line with its knowledge of how human capital affects organizational success. Leaders with expertise in HR strategic management participate in corporate decision-making that underlies current staffing assessments and projections for future workforce needs based on business demand.

2. Analyzing Benefits

HR Comp & Ben specialists can reduce the company's costs associated with turnover, attrition and hiring replacement. They are important to the organization because they have the skills and expertise necessary to negotiate group benefit packages for employees, within the organization's budget and consistent with economic conditions. They also are familiar with employee benefits most likely to attract and retain employees. This reduces the company's costs associated with turnover, attrition and hiring the replacement.

Reviewing headcount, labor cost to sales, labor cost to revenue, value proposition per employee, employee mix, diversity & inclusion, age of the employees, percent availability of critical skills are the common parameters being assessed while measuring effectiveness of any organization.

3. Minimizing Liability Issues

HR employee relations specialists minimize the organization's exposure and liability related to allegations of unfair employment practices. They identify, investigate and resolve workplace issues that, left unattended, could spiral out of control and embroil the organization in legal matters pertaining to various social security, labor, business and harassment laws.

4. Safety and Risk Management

Employers have an obligation to provide safe working conditions. Workplace safety and risk management specialists from the HR area manage compliance with national/state Safety and Health Administration regulations through maintaining accurate work logs and records, and developing programs that reduce the number of workplace injuries and fatalities. Workplace safety specialists also engage employees in promoting awareness and safe handling of dangerous equipment and hazardous chemicals.

5. Recruitment and On boarding

HR recruiters manage the employment process from screening resumes to scheduling interviews to processing new employees. Typically, they determine the most effective methods for recruiting applicants, including assessing which applicant tracking systems are best suited for the organization's needs. HR ensures the availability of right talent at right time at right place.

6. Hiring Processes

Wherever requires HR professionals work closely with hiring managers / line managers to effect good hiring decisions, according to the organization's workforce needs. They provide guidance, various tools and techniques to managers who aren't familiar with HR or standard hiring processes to ensure that the company extends offers to suitable candidates.

7. Wages and Salaries

HR comp & ben specialists develop realistic compensation structures that set company wages competitive with other businesses in the area, in the same industry or companies competing for employees with similar skills. They conduct extensive wage and salary surveys to maintain compensation costs in line with the organization's current financial status and projected revenue.

8. Training and Development

HR training and development specialists coordinate new employee orientation, an essential step in forging a strong employer-employee relationship. The training and development area of HR also provides training that supports the company's fair employment practices and employee development to prepare aspiring leaders for supervisory and management roles.

9. Employee Satisfaction

Employee relations specialists in HR help the organization achieve high performance, morale and satisfaction levels throughout the workforce, by creating ways to strengthen the employeremployee relationship. They administer employee opinion surveys, conduct focus groups and seek employee input regarding job satisfaction and ways the employer can sustain good working relationships.

10. Maintaining Compliance

HR ensures that the organization complies with central as well as state employment laws. They complete paperwork necessary for documenting that the company's employees are eligible to work. They also monitor compliance with applicable laws for organizations that are imposed or decided by the central as well as state authorities, through maintaining applicant records, registers, files and furnishing the details periodically to the authorities as per deadlines and guidelines.

By integrating HR strategy, business goals and company values into everything HR contributes every day, every moment to achieve the organizational goals and to making the business successful.



Threads of Opportunity: Unlocking India-UK Apparel Trade Potential Through the FTA

Varun Vaid Chief Business Director Wazir Advisors Pvt. Ltd

The India—UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA), signed on May 6, 2025, marks a pivotal moment in bilateral trade relations. With the removal of the 9.6% import duty on Indian apparel, Indian manufacturers are positioned to gain significant market share in one of the world's top apparel-consuming nations. This article examines the market opportunity, strategic implications, competitive challenges, and necessary industry actions to capitalize on this opening—while cautioning that success hinges on the fine print still to be released.

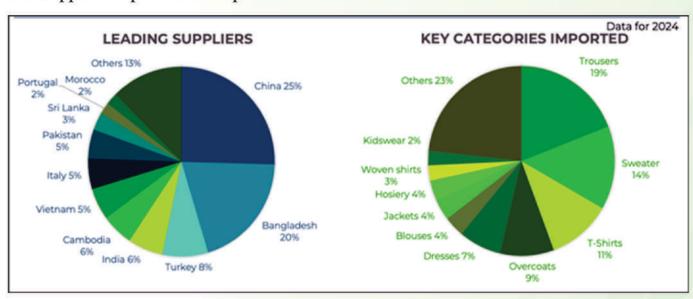
After over three years of negotiations, the India–UK FTA has finally been inked. This agreement is expected to provide Indian apparel exporters with enhanced market access by making exports to the UK duty-free. With the UK being one of the largest importers of garments globally, the deal has far-reaching implications for India's apparel sector.

The question is—will this FTA be a true game-changer or another missed opportunity?

Market Overview: A Snapshot of the UK Apparel Sector

The United Kingdom imported approximately US\$ 20 billion worth of apparel in 2024. The market is heavily supplied by China, Bangladesh, and Turkey, which collectively accounted for 53% of the total imports. Key product categories include trousers, sweaters, and T-shirts, which together form 44% of all imports.

UK's Apparel Imports Break-up.



India's current share in UK apparel imports stands at a modest 5%–6%, despite its capability in both knitted and woven garments. In 2024, India exported around US\$ 1.2 billion worth of apparel to the UK—US\$ 557 million in knitted and US\$ 642 million in woven garments.

Strategic Implications of the FTA

The FTA offers a tariff advantage of 9.6%, which can enhance India's cost competitiveness. With this India has come at par with Bangladesh, Vietnam, Turkey, etc. which already had zero duty access to the UK. However, the perceived competitiveness also needs to be viewed through a multidimensional lens as there are several challenges as well:

- Strong Competition: Bangladesh and Turkey are already entrenched in the UK market with significant duty-free advantages under other trade arrangements.
- Sustainability and Compliance: The UK market places significant emphasis on environmental and ethical practices, for which Indian exporters will have to gear up.
- Capability Gaps: There is a pressing need to improve design responsiveness, adopt advanced manufacturing technologies, and reduce lead times in the Indian industry.

Economic Impact Forecast

According to our analysis, India has the potential to more than double its apparel exports to the UK, increasing from the current US\$ 1.2 billion to nearly US\$ 3 billion under optimistic but feasible scenarios. This analysis factors India's competitiveness in specific categories as well as competitiveness with respect to other supplier nations. This expansion could generate:

- US\$ 2 billion in additional exports
- US\$ 650-700 million in fresh investments in garment manufacturing
- 1.1–1.2 lakh additional sewing machines
- 2.2–2.4 lakh new jobs in the apparel manufacturing ecosystem

India's experience with FTAs—such as those with Japan and South Korea—has been underwhelming. However, the UK FTA offers a distinct opportunity as India is already among the top five apparel suppliers to the UK and UK buyers are actively diversifying sourcing beyond China.

However, to fully capitalize on the FTA, the Indian garment industry must enhance capacity and product capabilities, invest in Sustainability and new technology. In addition, understanding the buyers and strengthening existing partnerships would be the key.

Conclusion

The India—UK FTA presents a tangible, high-impact opportunity for India's garment export sector. If leveraged effectively, it could add billions in exports, create hundreds of thousands of jobs, and establish India as a more formidable global sourcing destination.

However, the final text of the agreement is still awaited. The terms of rules of origin, safeguard measures, sustainability clauses, and other compliance requirements will ultimately shape how advantageous the deal truly is.

is. As always, the devil lies in the detail. The Indian apparel industry must not lose momentum. Strategic investments, faster execution, and a proactive stance will be vital.

The window is open—but unless the industry buckles up, this may well become another wasted opportunity.





Lean project initiative by OGTC in collaboration with Fashion Futures Consultants Pvt. Ltd.

Pooja Makhija Fashion Futures Consultants Pvt, Ltd.

Okhla Garment and Textile Cluster (OGTC) in collaboration with Fashion Futures Consultants Pvt. Ltd., has formally launched a Lean Project Initiative focused on enabling operational excellence in apparel manufacturing. Under the aegis of MSME/QCI, two prominent OGTC members Panorama Exports and Pee Empro Exports have enrolled 7 of their units located in Faridabad. These units have been strategically selected to form the first lean cluster, setting a benchmark for industry peers.

This initiative is a targeted intervention aimed at deploying Lean Manufacturing Systems (LMS) within apparel production environments, aligning with global best practices and the Ministry of MSME's thrust towards competitiveness enhancement. Mr. Pradeep Chaudhary, an experienced operations specialist with deep domain expertise in apparel manufacturing systems, has been appointed as the nodal officer to spearhead the cluster's implementation and performance monitoring.

OGTC has a rich legacy of pioneering productivity enhancement programs and has previously driven several lean adoption waves in the cluster. The current collaboration with Fashion Futures Consultants Pvt. Ltd. reinforces OGTC's continued commitment to structured transformation through system-driven excellence.

Lean Manufacturing, as applied in apparel units, focuses on value stream optimization, process waste elimination, and flow synchronization. The project involves a comprehensive diagnostic study followed by the phased implementation of core Lean tools such as 5S, Value Stream Mapping (VSM), Kaizen, Line Balancing, SMED (Single Minute Exchange of Die), Kanban systems, and Standard Work Definition.

Both Panorama Exports and Pee Empro Exports units have completed their Lean Basic Training and have now moved to the next step of Lean Intermediate Level. Intervention roadmaps will be established to reengineer production floor layouts, minimize WIP, and integrate visual control systems. The project also includes rigorous capacity building of supervisors and operators through structured shopfloor trainings and GEMBA walks.

KEY ANTICIPATED BENEFITS FOR THE CLUSTER INCLUDE:

Reduction in Throughput Time and Improved Line Efficiencies.

Enhanced First-Time Right (FTR) Quality Levels via root cause-based quality systems and poka-yoke implementations.

Reduction in Inventory Levels with implementation of pull-based systems and lean inventory control.

Standardized Operations using SOPs and visual work instructions to enhance repeatability and reduce skill dependency.

The implementation will also foster a continuous improvement culture anchored by performance tracking and cross-functional improvement teams. Regular performance reviews will be facilitated by Fashion Futures Consultants Pvt. Ltd. in close coordination with the OGTC core team.

By leveraging this initiative, OGTC aims to establish replicable models of lean-driven apparel production that are scalable across the Indian MSME manufacturing ecosystem. The cluster is also expected to emerge as a demonstration site for stakeholders seeking tangible proof of concept for lean adoption in fashion apparel manufacturing.

This strategic engagement between OGTC and Fashion Futures Consultants Pvt. Ltd. marks a significant step in fortifying India's competitiveness in apparel exports through structured lean transformations.



ICAHT-2025

20TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON APPAREL & HOME TEXTILES ON 20TH SEPTEMBER 2025 AT AEPC, GURUGRAM

THEME: INDIA'S FTAS: CATALYZING COMPETITIVE INVESTMENTS AND MANUFACTURING GROWTH CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Inaugural Session

Theme Presentation India's FTAs: Catalyzing Competitive Investments and Manufacturing

Growth

(Synopsis: This presentation will explore India's FTA landscape and current standing in the apparel manufacturing, highlighting the roadmap for

manufacturers to turn trade agreements into commercial advantage.)

Fireside Chat Winning Models: Future-Ready Business Strategies for India's Textile

Sector

(Synopsis: This fireside chat will explore the evolution of successful business models in apparel manufacturing providing insights on what will it take for Indian manufacturers to thrive under new global trade dynamics, with FTAs

enhancing access to global markets)

Panel Discussions Enhancing Manufacturing Competitiveness: Product Mix, Supply Chain

Agility & Efficiency

(Synopsis: This discussion will delve into how Indian players can enhance core elements of competitive manufacturing, including product mix strategy, operational efficiency, and supply chain responsiveness, in the context of

global trade shifts)

Global Sourcing Perspectives: Aligning India's Capabilities with Buyer

Expectations

(Synopsis: The panel will discuss India's current standing as a sourcing destination, and buyer's expectation from Indian manufacturers with a focus on quality, compliance, sustainability, speed-to-market, and product

innovation.)

Organizational Agility - People as Key Asset for Manufacturing Growth

(Synopsis: This session examines workforce development, leadership alignment, and agile organizational structures and incentive options as

essentials for scaling manufacturing excellence.)

Introducing AI in garment manufacturing - Key Applications,

Implementation Pathways, and Industry Impact

(This presentation will highlight the transformative impact of AI on efficiency, cost optimization, and decision-making across the value chain, addressing common challenges and outlining practical steps for

implementation)

Concluding Session

Presentation



CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT ICAHT-2025

20TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON APPAREL & HOME TEXTILES ON 20TH SEPTEMBER 2025 AT AEPC, GURUGRAM

THEME: INDIA'S FTAS: CATALYZING COMPETITIVE INVESTMENTS AND MANUFACTURING GROWTH

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION ABOUT OGTC

Okhla Garment & Textile Cluster (OGTC), established in 2004, is a pioneering collective of apparel exporters located in Delhi- NCR. It represents an unique cluster of minds uniting exporters not by physical proximity but through shared goals and collaborative efforts.

OGTC's mission is to enhance the competitiveness of India's apparel industry by fostering innovation, sustainability and collective growth. The cluster actively supports the initiative aimed at reducing carbon emissions in the garment sector, marking a significant step towards sustainable manufacturing practices. Our members have, till date, reduced an equivalent of nearly 2000 tons of carbon footprint with the ultimate goal of going carbon neutral in the near future.

Recognizing the need for improved productivity, OGTC is taking yeoman strides to promote adoption of Lean initiative and ZED certification amongst our members.

Beyond environmental efforts, OGTC is committed to empowering women in the garment industry. Recognizing the vital role of women employees, workers and partners, the cluster emphasizes their contributions across various facets of operation, from design and production to management and leadership. Our members continue to provide gainful employment to over 50,000 women workforce.

OGTC also plays a significant role in knowledge dissemination and industry collaboration by organizing events like the International Conference on Apparel & Home Textiles (ICAHT).

ABOUT OGTC CONFERENCE

These conferences provide valuable insights into the evolving global landscape of apparel manufacturing, India's strategic role and the growing impact of digital innovation in the industry. It also provides an environment for academicians, researchers and practitioners to exchange ideas on recent developments in the field of apparel manufacturing.

A cross – disciplinary event, the idea is to explore creativity and the creative process through the lenses of imagination and innovation. The conference aims to develop a creative coalition which takes everybody on board.

19th International Conference on Apparel & Home Textiles (ICAHT-2024) was held in collaboration with AEPC, Gurugram on 14th September 2024. It was a matter of pride for us with over 300 delegates who attended the day-long proceedings which included 2 Panel Discussions and 4 Presentations. OGTC Conferences are attended by different Manufacturing Units, Institutions, Consulting firms along with renowned professional speakers.

For further details, if any, contact:

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

Mr. PMS Uppal, Chairman Col. S. Kapoor, Conference Chairman (M): 09810100793

CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT

OKHLA GARMENT & TEXTILE CLUSTER

B-24/1, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi-110020, India, Ph. (91)11-41609550 Mr. Neeraj Pandey, Manager – (M) 9818505143 Email: ogtc@ogtc.in, ogtc.office@gmail.com Linkedin: @ogtc-okhla-garment-textile-cluster Twitter: @OGTC10 Website: www.ogtc.in