

Cotton Textile Industry

Cotton textile industry is the most important among all textile industries. It is also one of the oldest industries in the world. Much of the developments during the early phase of the industrial revolution in Europe were concerned with this industry. This industry differs from the iron and steel industry in

that the raw material is not essentially the deciding factor in its localisation. The *localisation* of cotton textile industry is more a function of market, power supply and means of transport. Among all the factors, market plays the most important role as the industry has a high value addition and transit losses of finished product cannot be borne. Geographically, the cotton textile industry is fairly widespread in the world. However, the largest concentrations are in US, India, China, Russia, Japan, Pakistan, France and UK. Other important producers of cotton textiles are Germany, Poland, Italy, Romania, Hong Kong and Czechoslovakia.

Major Cotton Producers

The US The cotton textile industry in the US owes its origin to two factors, (a) the accumulation of capital, and (b) the local market. The first successful cotton mill of US was started in Rhodes Island. The industry in US is localised in three major regions in the eastern section of the country

- New England
- the Middle Atlantic States
- the southern states

New England used to be the largest centre until a few years ago, when the southern region surpassed it. In the early development of industry in New England the location of the hydro-electricity stations determined the location of the mills. Another advantage is the marine climate. New Bedford is one of the most important producing centres of US. In the Mid-Atlantic States, cotton mills are located in Pennsylvania, New York and Maryland. But Philadelphia is the only point at which there is a great concentration. The growth of cotton textile industry in southern states has been quite rapid during the recent decades. There has been some shift in the localisation of the industry due to availability of raw material and cheap labour in the southern region. This region grows large amounts of cotton that was earlier sent to the northern regions for cotton textile manufactures. These days this area consumes around 90% of the raw cotton. The most extensive concentration of mills in the south has been in the states of Virginia,

North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama. Greenville, Spartanburg, Charlotte, Augusta and Atlanta are the chief centres of textile industry.

India India is today the second largest producer of cotton textiles. The favourable factors for cotton textile industry in India are (i) availability of raw material, (ii) ease of importing machinery from abroad, (iii) a vast domestic market, and (iv) cheap supply of skilled manpower. Availability of coal has not played any role in deciding the location of cotton textile industry in India. As the industry in India was initially export oriented (exporting yarn to European textile manufacturing industry), the port city of Mumbai and the nearby cities of Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Bharuch developed as the major centres in the early phase of development of this industry. The port facilities also helped import of machinery from Great Britain. Initially, Indian industry was largely spinning industry. However, with the entry of China and Japan in the yarn export market, Indian industry lost a sizeable portion of the world market and had to switch over to weaving. Also the industry came to depend more on domestic market. Therefore, it spread to interior locations largely in the southern states where there is a large demand for cotton textiles. Today the major concentrations of the industry occur in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal. The chief centres of cotton textile production are Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Sholapur, Vadodara, Kanpur, Delhi, Indore, Gwalior, Ujjain and Coimbatore.

Russia Cotton textile industry in Russia, one of the leading producers, witnessed spectacular growth after 1948. Before the Soviet Revolution, the Central Region (Moscow and Ivanovo) accounted for 85% of the production of cotton textiles, Leningrad region for 8% and the northern Caucasian region for 5%. In the recent years, this industry has made spectacular progress in Ural region, western Siberia (Omsk, Novosibirsk and Barnaul) and eastern Siberia (Krasnoyarsk, Kansk, Tulun and Chita). As a result, the central region has declined in importance, but it continues to be important. Here the old mills

now enlarged and modernised remain the chief producers of textile goods. *Kazakhstan* also has a well-developed cotton textile industry in the Tashkent-Ferghana region. Cotton textile industry has developed in Georgia also in the Caucasus region.

The UK The UK has been one of the leading producers of cotton textiles but she no longer dominates the world as it earlier did. The British cotton textile industry is localised in Lancashire and Manchester—90% of the total cotton spindles and looms being located in Lancashire region alone. These areas enjoyed the highly developed and cheap transport system, local availability of coal and proximity to the centres of manufacture of cotton textile machinery. About 90% of the total cotton spindles and looms of UK are located in Lancashire region. Owing to the economies of scale, each branch of industry is specialised in a particular section of Lancashire. Southern Lancashire is the spinning and doubling district, while eastern Lancashire has specialised in weaving. Some of the spinning towns include Oldham, Bolton, Manchester, Rochdale and Leigh. Burnley, Blackburn, Preston, Nelson and Accrington are the important weaving centres. The recent history of British industry has been marked by severe competition from Japan and India. British exports have declined due to increasing competition in the world market. Also the cost of production has risen due to higher costs of manpower in Europe. Therefore the Asian producers like India and China have stolen a march over the traditional European leaders in cotton textile industry.

China China ranks among the leading cotton textile producers in the world today. Here like India, cotton textile industry is both cottage as well as factory industry. The first modern mill of China was started in 1890. Others followed suit mostly in coastal areas and Manchuria. The industry being largely export oriented nearly 80% of the Chinese cotton textile capacity till 1949 was concentrated in a few ports or nearby cities. The most important centre was Shanghai. However, during the period of planned development, the industry has been developed systematically. Most of the new mills have

been established in the cotton producing region north of the Yangtze Valley, Manchuria and the western region. China has several advantages in cotton textile industry, viz. (i) a large cotton producing area and increased output, (ii) cheap and abundant labour, (iii) cheap power supply from coal, petroleum, gas and hydroelectric power stations, and (iv) a vast domestic market. Her major cotton textile centres are Shanghai, Hanchow and Chunking in the Yangtze Valley, Tientsin, Kaiteng and Nonanfu in the Hwang Ho Valley, and Tsingtao in the Shandong Peninsula; Canton in south China and Chengchow, Sian and Wuhan in north China.

Japan Japan is also one of the important producers of cotton textiles. The main geographical factors helping the growth of cotton textile industry here are: (i) suitable climate, (ii) water power, (iii) transport facilities, (iv) the proximity to the large markets of southeast Asia, (v) abundant and cheap manpower, and (vi) efficient organisation. Japan also has the advantage of easy access to the world markets by means of cheap water transport. The cotton textile industry of Japan is concentrated chiefly in the *industrial belt* on the inland sea. The chief centres are Osaka, Kobe, Tokyo, Nagoya, Wakayama and Hiroshing. The Japanese industry like that of UK, flourishes mainly on exports. Around 30% of the production finds its way into the international market.

Besides the major producers in the textile industry listed above, cotton textiles are produced in a number of other countries. Among the European countries, Germany is an important producer of textiles. The industry is centred largely in the Ruhr region. Recently, the countries of South and East Asia have also developed this industry.

Though a large number of countries produce cotton textiles, this product enters into the international trade in a big way. India has a commendable position in the world's export trade of cotton textiles. She is the second largest exporter surpassed only by Japan. In the order of importance, UK, Sudan, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Australia, Aden, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Myanmar are the principal customers of Indian product.