



DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

**FROM FIBRE TO FUTURE: WEAVING
SUSTAINABILITY INTO INDIA'S
TEXTILE GROWTH**

www.nextias.com

FROM FIBRE TO FUTURE: WEAVING SUSTAINABILITY INTO INDIA'S TEXTILE GROWTH

Context

- India's textile sector is targeting a **\$350 billion industry by 2030**, making sustainability central to export competitiveness, market access, resource efficiency and responsible employment-led growth.

About India's Textile Sector

- India's textile and apparel sector spans **fibre, yarn, fabric, processing, apparel, technical textiles and made-ups**, directly supporting **over 49 million livelihoods**.
- Its domestic market is valued at around **\$196 billion**, projected to reach **\$250 billion by 2030**, while textile exports are targeted at **\$100 billion**.



- PM Modi's vision of **'Fashion for Environment and Empowerment'** reflects the emerging approach: **sustainability is increasingly a component of industrial competitiveness** rather than merely an environmental obligation.
- India's Climate Commitments** i.e. 500 GW of non-fossil electricity capacity, 50% of energy requirements from renewables and net-zero emissions by 2070 reinforce the transition towards low-carbon textile production.

Concerns & Issues in India's Textile Sector

- Sustainability:** Textile processing is resource-intensive, particularly in water, energy and chemicals. Global brands increasingly demand sustainable supply chains.
 - Export markets are tightening requirements on **recycled content, traceability, chemicals, water and energy use**.
- Textile Waste:** A 2026 Ministry study covering **15 states and more than 250 stakeholder interactions** estimated annual textile waste at **70.73 lakh tonnes**.
- Post-consumer Waste Gap:** Post-consumer textile waste remains inadequately collected, segregated and recycled. While over **70% of textile waste is recovered**, and pre-consumer waste recovery exceeds **95%**, collection, segregation and economically viable recovery of post-consumer waste remain weaker.
- MSME Constraints:** Smaller units often face limited access to green technologies, finance, technical expertise and reliable sustainability data.
- Global Compliance:** Export markets increasingly demand traceability, recycled content, chemical safety and lower water, energy and carbon footprints.
- Blended Textiles:** Mixed fibres and non-recyclable materials make fibre recovery technologically and economically difficult.

Advantages with India

- India possesses a substantial manufacturing base, diverse raw materials, technical capabilities and an established recycling ecosystem.
 - ♦ Circularity also has deep cultural roots through practices such as **rafugari, kantha, godhadis, chindi durries and khesh weaving**.
- The textile recycling market could reach about **\$3.5 billion by 2030**, potentially generating around **one lakh green jobs** across collection, sorting, recycling, repair and upcycling.

Related Key Efforts & Initiatives

- **Circular Economy & Waste Management:** Textile Recovery Facilities are being piloted in cities.
 - ♦ In **Navi Mumbai**, a pilot diverted more than **3,323 kg** of textile waste from landfill/incineration, reaching more than **12,000 families**.
 - ♦ **31 upcyclers** have been certified under the Upcycled Textile Mark; **27 categories and 40 products** are live on GeM.
- **Cleaner Production:** A programme with **UNIDO, GEF and partners** targets reduction of **10,530 tonnes of toxic chemicals directly and 21,000 tonnes indirectly**, besides mitigating **147,000 tonnes CO₂ equivalent directly and 294,000 tonnes indirectly**.
 - ♦ It is expected to directly reach **40,000 people, 60% women**.
- **PM MITRA:** The **seven PM MITRA parks**, with expected investment of about **\$10 billion**, envisage integrated water, wastewater and common-processing infrastructure.
- **National Technical Textiles Mission:** It supports waste-to-fibre technologies, while IIT Delhi's Panipat campus researches recycling of materials such as **aramid fibre waste**.

Other Related Efforts

- The **ESG Task Force** works on certification, cluster-level handholding, capacity building, sustainable fashion technology, AI and digital traceability.
 - ♦ **EU-India Resource Efficiency & Circular Economy Initiative (EU-I RECEI)** has supported textile-waste assessment, a **Tamil Nadu circular-economy roadmap**, a **Panipat MSME toolkit** and SOPs for Textile Recovery Facilities.
- **Tex-Eco Initiative:** It was proposed in **Union Budget 2026–27** integrates sustainability into textile growth **through four pillars:** resource recovery and recycling; water stewardship and decarbonisation; institutional capacity; and innovation and digitalisation.
 - ♦ It proposes an **India Sustainability Mark**.

Way Forward

- India needs to move from pilots to **scalable, measurable and market-linked solutions**.
- Priorities should include stronger post-consumer collection, reverse logistics, recycling of blended fibres, affordable green finance for MSMEs, renewable energy, cleaner chemicals, ZLD systems and credible ESG traceability.
- The objective should be a **just transition**, combining environmental gains with worker welfare, formalisation and green employment.
- Sustainability, therefore, need not constrain textile growth; it can improve **resource productivity, export-market access, innovation and resilience**.

Source: BL

Daily Mains Practice Question

- [Q]** Discuss the major challenges to making India's textile growth sustainable and examine the role of circular economy, green technologies and MSME-focused policy interventions in enhancing the sector's global competitiveness.