



EMBEDDING CIRCULARITY IN INDIA'S TEXTILE REVOLUTION

India's ambition to scale its textile sector to \$300 billion by 2030 must go hand in hand with sustainable practices. By embedding circularity—reusing, recycling, and extending the life of materials—into its growth strategy, the industry can balance economic expansion with environmental responsibility, setting a global example for sustainable manufacturing.

As the Indian government accelerates its plans to scale India's textile sector to \$300 billion by 2030, India's textile & apparel industry is at a promising juncture. This ambitious target signifies strong confidence in India's capabilities that will cement its position as a global manufacturing and sourcing powerhouse. Even with the evolving global trade dynamics, India is uniquely positioned to diversify its trade relationships, enhance value-added production and lead into a new era of sustainable growth and leadership in apparel and textile.

Growth with Responsibility
However, as many stakeholders across the apparel & textile supply



SANJAY JAIN

Group CEO, PDS Ltd

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chains will testify, the question of how we achieve this growth matters just as much as if we will achieve it in the long run. Textile production is one of the world's most resource-intensive industries – demanding massive amounts of water, energy, and chemicals, and is the world's fourth-largest producer of waste. In a growing economy like India, the environmental cost of scaling the sector is becoming harder to ignore. As the conversation around sustainability evolves, there needs to be an accompanying shift in goals – not just to reduce our footprint, but to reengineer the system with the idea of circular use at its centre.

Circular Economy: An Old Idea, Made New

The idea of a circular economy – where materials are reused, recycled, and kept in play for as long as possible – isn't new. Its application, while initially fragmented, is now picking up momentum in India's textile and apparel sector. The idea of circularity instinctively resonates with Indian households, because it's rooted in small practices we've always done. Many of us remember growing up in households where old clothes weren't discarded, but traded for kitchenware or repurposed into

something new.

Built-in Sustainability from Tradition

That tradition of giving possessions a second life reflects a kind of built-in sustainability, and that should be the goal of today's industry as well. Across the country, we're seeing manufacturers rethink their processes, build cleaner supply chains, and invest in materials and technology that can reduce waste and extend product life.

Circularity as a Growth Strategy

It is also not an extraneous expense, as is a common misconception. Circularity can be a viable strategy for long-term growth, and its ethos can be integrated into modern business models. There are several examples of brands turning old garments into new yarns; adopting biodegradable fibres like cotton, hemp, and jute; and reimagining production processes to save water, reduce energy consumption, and minimize packaging. Internationally, companies are upcycling waste into premium products – cutting costs, reducing landfill waste, and even creating entirely new revenue streams. This isn't just better for the environment—it's better for business. In a global

THE CHALLENGE

● **Resource**

Intensive: One of the most water, energy, and chemical-heavy industries globally

● **Environmental**

Impact: 4th-largest producer of waste worldwide

● **Growth Question:**
How we grow matters as much as whether we grow

THE SOLUTION – CIRCULARITY

Circular Economy:

● **Materials are reused, recycled & kept in play for as long as possible**

● **Rooted in Indian tradition – repurposing old clothes into new uses**

CIRCULARITY IN ACTION

● **Converting old garments into new yarns**

● **Using biodegradable fibres (cotton, hemp, jute)**

● **Rethinking production to save water & energy**

● **Minimizing packaging**

market that's becoming increasingly conscious, circularity is a competitive edge, as consumers today value transparency and accountability in the brands they choose.

Policy Support for a Circular Future

Government policy, too, has a significant role to play. The 2024 Textile Policy, the Pradhan Mantri MITRA Parks, and the Technology Upgradation Fund are strong steps to scale up and invest in the future of India's textile sector. Now is the right time for policymakers to further double down – encouraging circular business models through incentives, infrastructure, and support for innovation. It would send a clear signal towards the direction that the future of India's textile sector should take, and engage our best and brightest in that effort.

The Road Ahead

India has all the ingredients to lead this transition: scale, heritage, talent, and a rising generation of consumers who value circular efforts. As we build the framework of India's new textile sector in the coming years, it needs to be one where growth and responsibility are not at odds. In making circularity the cornerstone of its textile sector, India will set itself up for years of continued, sustainable success – and set a shining example for the world as we do it. 