

NEED OF AN ECO FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVE IN TEXTILE INDUSTRY



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The textile industry is one of the oldest and the second largest industry in the world, employing over 25 Million people. For context, consumers spend around \$1.3 Trillion on textiles every year, most of it on clothes. Due to this rising demand, the textile chemical industry, which is an integral part of the system has seen a rapid growth in the past years and is now being called a new sunrise sector.

However, all is not well. The textile industry use different chemicals in different processes like, dyeing, finishing, scouring, bleaching, softening, washing etc. which are often harmful to the environment. According to reports, nearly five percent of all landfill space is consumed by textile waste and about 20 percent of all fresh water pollution is made by textile treatment and dyeing.

To give a perspective, the water consumption ranges between 10–645 L/kg product, and for mills with finishing and dyeing processes, the range is 21–645 L/kg product. Depending on the fiber and technology used, the amount of water consumed per kilogram of product could exceed 932 L/kg.

However, with rapid innovation and focus on sustainability the picture is now slowly changing. The introduction of white technology and green chemistry has the potential to change the game and make the industry not only sustainable but also eco friendly. We at Cosmo Speciality Chemicals are committed to this cause and all our products are made using sustainable science with the use of enzymes in textile preparatory processes. The enzymes are applied in various stages of textile processing namely desizing, scouring,

bleaching, dyeing, finishing and composting. At present, we have 56 products across these ranges and all of our products are made using sustainable science and are eco-friendly.

Another positive change which is driving the shift is the fact that brands and consumers have become aware and wants to know where the product is coming from. It is no more a look good industry but a feel good industry as well. Brands have a responsibility: choosing well where they source their materials and where they out-source the production. The consumer, getting information easily on internet is more and more aware of those issues, which reflects in its purchasing choices. Sustainability concerns have only been increasing since the 1990s and in 2015, 66% of global consumers were willing to pay more for environmentally sustainable products.

One of the major players or game-changers in this category is textile chemicals. As per reports, there are around 8,000 synthetic chemicals used by this textile industry to manufacture the raw materials into finished goods. These chemicals are harmful and pose serious health hazards especially for people working with them without proper protection. Moreover, many of these chemicals often end up in freshwaters.

With the advancement of technology and newer sustainable ways, the market now offers an array of safer and more sustainable chemicals to work with. Brands and manufacturers should therefore be concerned about the amount of chemical usage in production, and where a possible transition to sustainable fiber sources and alternative natural dyes and processing methods.

Technological fixes aside, reshaping behavior and practices often requires working with changing the values associated with production and consumption and doing so in a way sensitive to different cultural, geographic, and political contexts.

A major role in this will be re-skilling and up-skilling the already on the job workforce. The current manufacturing conditions of the textile businesses need to change and become more sustainable. The employees need to be trained to adapt to the changing environment. It is these men and women with the right set of skills and knowledge that will play a crucial role in the coming days in making green production processes and sustainable investment strategies to bring about a real change.