

Tiruppur weaves recycled fashion goals as global brands queue up

Seeing interest from Primark, Marks & Spencer, Tesco, Decathlon

SHINE JACOB
Chennai, 13 December

total to ₹62,350 crore. Of this recycled products account for around ₹1,000 crore worth of business. Though the concept of recycled clothes was started in India way back in the 1980s by Futura Polyesters, it gathered steam in Chennai only in the last two years.

According to the Tiruppur Exporters' Association (TEA), a team of officials from the UK-based Primark recently visited the city to investigate the sustainability norms followed by the company. Others such as M&S and Tesco are among the prominent buyers of the sustainable range. "They have invested in sustainability and recycled products. Among the recycled products, they are looking at cotton with polyester mixing, PET bottle recycling, and recycled fabrics," said KM Subramanian, president of the Tiruppur Exporters Association (TEA).

At present, Tiruppur accounts for 90 per cent of the country's cotton knitwear exports and 55 per cent of all its knitwear exports. Turn to Page 6 ▶



PHOTO: INDUSTRY

Workers at Ecoline Clothing manufacturing unit in Karur

GOING PLACES

Foreign exchange earned by Tiruppur garment industry

YEAR	Value (₹ cr)
2014-15	21,000
2015-16	23,050
2016-17	26,000
2017-18	24,000
2018-19	26,000
2019-20	27,500
2020-21	25,000
2021-22	33,490
2022-23	34,350
2023-24*	15,241

* Till Sep; Sources: Govt of India, Tiruppur Exporters Association

"Made from recycled materials" is a tag that's hard to miss in branded stores while shopping for anything from apparel to accessories. As recycled fashion moves from being niche to mainstream in India, the country's largest textile industrial cluster Tiruppur is upping its game in that space.

Taking a cue from international brands, companies in Tiruppur are targeting as much as 30 per cent of their business to come from recycling sources within a few years. Having started out on sustainable fashion recently by manufacturing garments using recycled fabrics and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, Tiruppur is already seeing interest from European majors including Primark, Marks & Spencer, Tesco and Decathlon.

Tiruppur's exports are pegged at ₹34,350 crore in 2022-23 and the domestic business at around ₹28,000 crore, taking the