

apparel



FAIR UPDATE

Bharat Tex 2024:

A Mega Celebration
of Textiles

The FAB Show 2024:

The Best Textile
Sourcing Event

Coming Home to *Siyaram's*

THE 2024
COLOUR WHEEL



The Manchester of India

Located 30 km from the municipal limits of Mumbai, Bhiwandi, a small town in Maharashtra, is known for power loom fabric manufacturing activities.

Text | **Bindu Gopal Rao**

Bhiwandi is a fabric manufacturing hub that supplies low-cost fabrics to millions of people, especially the lower middle class and below poverty line segment population. In fact, other fabric clusters source their raw material from here, earning it the moniker

‘Manchester of India’.

Considering its proximity to the trade and marketing centre in Mumbai, textile processing activities at Bhiwandi are believed to have started in the 1970s. The cluster has attracted numerous textile manufacturers as

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Challenges faced by the cluster

- Cheaper Chinese fabric that is 25-30% lower in prices
- Demonetisation and GST causing the reduction in power looms
- Upgrading workers' skills needs to be addressed

it has low power tariff, cheap labour and lower taxes. Catering to the processing needs of the power loom industry, the woven fabrics that are processed here are sent to other textile clusters like Pali, Balotra, Surat, Bagru, Barmer, Banswara, Jodhpur, Jetpur, Sanganer and Bhilwara, among others.

THE TEXTILE HUB

With nearly 25 million sq ft of legal warehousing space, Bhiwandi is home to the largest textile market in India and has extensively exported its manufactured produce to the overseas market as well. This is the place where fabrics are bulk purchased and denims, cotton and artificial silk garments are usually traded here. The market, however, is now in the throes of change as the power looms need

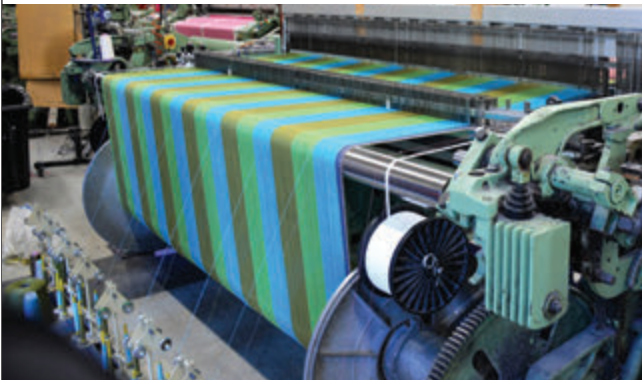
to be upgraded to automated looms. The number of power looms that once stood at 14 lakh is now down to six lakh.

Among the many challenges that the cluster is facing is the cheaper Chinese fabric that is almost 25-30% lower in prices. Other issues include demonetisation and GST, which have also caused the reduction in the number of looms. Upgrading the skills of workers is also being seen as an issue that needs to be addressed. There have been several traders who have executed this change with the help of the Centre's Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFFS).

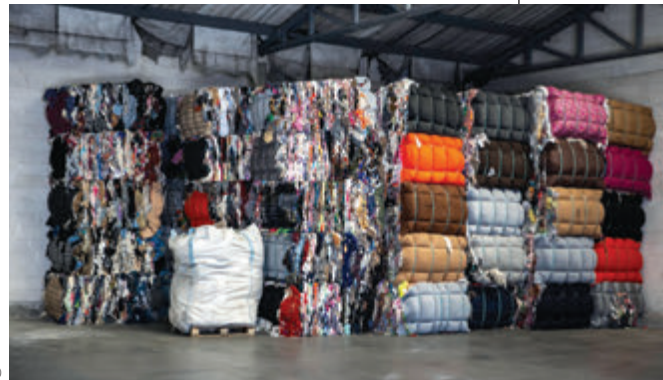
During the pandemic, this area emerged as a logistics hub where MNCs have their warehouses. Bhiwandi is now one among Asia's foremost warehousing centres and has provided a good source of income especially with the decline of power looms. Apart from Amazon's first warehouse, there has been significant activity in the warehouse sector here.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

To compete with China and the steady and unchanged government policies, the local traders are looking at more government support that includes subsidy for electricity, fixed prices of



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With nearly 25 million sq ft of legal warehousing space, Bhiwandi is home to the largest textile market in India.



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Bhiwandi Cluster

- Established in the 1970s
- Nearly 25 million sq ft of legal warehousing space
- Located 30 km from the municipal limits of Mumbai
- Well connected to the international and domestic airports in Mumbai
- Gives livelihood to close to 3.5 lakh people
- 35-40% of online retail sales across players and categories

yarn and modernisation of the textile industry. There is also an urgent need to improve working conditions for the weavers as well as have better infrastructure in the region that is currently struggling with narrow roads and high pollution. The textile manufacturers association and the government need to iron out these issues to help ensure that Bhiwandi regains its lost lustre as far as weaving is concerned.

There is also a need for key stakeholders—that include the loom owners, yarn suppliers, state administrators, municipality and textile commissioner office—to talk to each other to ensure that the largest warehousing cluster is up and running soon. 🚦