

Tailoring to Perfection – Enterprise Model in Apparel Sector

The textile industry is one of the oldest industries in the country contributes to about 14% to industrial production and 4% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 17% to the country's export earnings while generating employment for over 40 million people. Most of the entrepreneurs are the womenfolk . They have very little exposure to formal education, but the job at the garment manufacturing units has helped many to make the ends meet.

Kerala handlooms have caught the imagination of the world. Its impeccable quality and elegant designs is deeply embedded in the tradition and culture of Kerala. The garment and made up sector is not much developed in Kerala. Even though there are traditional weaving community inhabiting Kerala, fashions and trendy designs using the weaved materials is less

Kudumbashree is an organization working for the economic empowerment of women. Women prefer tailoring works as they can utilize their free time. As compared to other states the raw material production facilities for tailoring is less in Kerala. One of the major players in the raw material production is Hantex. Hantex, the Apex Co-operative Society of Handloom weavers' in Kerala is having over 440 production centres and 150 sales outlets with most modern infrastructure to produce hand crafted fabrics, garments, furnishings, made-ups, sarees, traditional wears etc.

Different types of enterprise models in Kudumbashree

Kudumbashree have set up 19 Apparel parks and more than 1400 tailoring units throughout Kerala. Men's wear is branded as NAP STAR and women wear are branded as 'Kadambari'.

- **Tailoring units**- are micro enterprise units which can be formed by individuals or groups.
- **Mini Apparel Parks**- are Apparel manufacturing units in which 25 to 40 members are engaged in production of readymade garments
- **Mega Apparel Parks** are apparel parks having 100 or machineries and engaged in production or readymade garments.
- **Common Facility centers** - are centers in which high value machineries for production are available and the member units can use the facilities for a predetermined user fees.

SWOT Analysis

The Indian Apparel & Textile Industry is one of the largest sources of foreign exchange flow into the country with the apparel exports accounting for almost 21% of the total exports of the country. A systematic SWOT analysis of the Kudumbashree apparel units indicates the following:-

STRENGTH

- Raw material Availability

India has high self sufficiency for raw material particularly natural fibres. India's cotton crop is the third largest in the world. Indian textile Industry produces and

handles all types of fibres. But the raw material base in Kerala is not that developed. Units has to depend on Tamilnadu, Surat, Ahmedabad etc for bulk procurement of raw materials.

- Labour

Cheap labour and strong entrepreneurial skills have always been the backbone of the Apparel and textile Industry. The Kudumabshree women can be trained and skilled to suit to the clothing expectations of the customers.

- Flexibility

The small size of manufacturing which is predominant in the apparel industry allows for greater flexibility to service smaller and specialized orders.

- Domestic market

Natural demand drivers including rising income levels, increasing urbanization and growth of the purchasing population drive domestic demand.

WEAKNESS

- Lacks modernization and there is a need of introducing new technology
- Poor Infrastructure
- Low labour productivity
- Less attention on man power training
- Poor quality standards
- Lack of professionalism and integration of supply chain

- Very low investment on Research and Development
- Limited exploitation of economies of scale

OPPORTUNITIES

- Growing Industry

The Apparel industry is growing with the rising income level and high working women folk. Also the demand for cloth bags created by banning of plastics is a big opportunity in Kerala.

- Market access through Government level interventions

Government has given exemption for Kudumbashree Apparel units from stock purchase rules for stitching works outsourced by Government departments

- Integration of Information technology – Integration of Information technology in order and delivery management.

THREATS

- Decreasing Fashion Cycle

There has been an increase in seasons per year which has resulted in shortening of the fashion cycle.

- Competition from Private Players.

Conclusion

The apparel sector especially the readymade garments have immense growth potential. In order to utilize this opportunities, modernization of technologies,

skill enhancement and proper marketing mechanisms needs to be devised. Professional Tieups with established institutes in Fashion Technology and Design Managment will bring more professionalism among the Kudumbashree women. Also Kudumbashree members have to be trained in designing gowns, bridal dresses and trendy wears, Kids costumes, Costumes of Youth etc so that they can cater to the clothing expectations of a wider customer segment.