

Bangladesh RMG needs more focus on sustainability, product diversification, and market to survive in the global business crisis - Speakers on IBF seminar series.

Mohammad Nurul Alam



Intex South Asia, one of the biggest international textiles sourcing shows for fibers, yarns, fabrics, trims, and more for the apparel industry was held from 22-24 June 2023, at the International Convention City Bashundhara, Dhaka. At present Intex Bangladesh is firmly established as the premier international textile sourcing show in South Asia. This time the organizer organized International Business Forum (IBF)

which was managed by Textile Focus, the leading textile magazine from Bangladesh.

The 3 days show was the international textile sourcing platform where attended trade visitors from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Japan, Malaysia, Brazil, Italy, Germany, and more. Reviving and revitalizing face-to-face business meetings through the physical format, the Intex South Asia – Bangladesh

Edition concluded on a positive note in Dhaka.

Exhibitors and buyers also witnessed the renowned Interactive Business Forum (IBF) seminar series where curated sessions and panel discussions were delivered about sustainability and quality market intelligence to support industry efforts to upgrade and move up the value chain to help manufacturers gain a competitive edge globally.

There were 02-panel discussions:

Session-01 on 22-06-2023: Sustainability in Textile Industry- Reality and Challenges

Session-02 on 23-06-2023: Innovation & Product Diversification are ways to move forward.

Session-01 on 22-06-2023: Sustainability in Textile Industry- Reality and Challenges



Moderator
Prof. Dr. Engr. Humaun Kabir, Dean, Faculty of Science & Engineering & Advisor, City University.

The 1st-day session was held on 22 June, on the key theme of 'Sustainability in the textile industry reality and challenges' moderated by Prof. Dr. Engr. Humaun Kabir, Dean, Faculty of Science & Engineering & Advisor, City University. In the panel discussion speakers from buyer's representatives, Industry owners, Textile experts, and traders expressed their concern about the present and future of Bangladesh RMG issues. As distinguished speakers Rajib Kamrul Islam, Managing Director, Allure Sourcing Ltd.; Ehsan Haq, Director, Knittext Industries; Ananta Ahmed, Manag-

ing Director, Total Solution Limited (360 TSL); Iqbal Ahmed F. Hasan, Founder & Managing Director, Divine IT Limited were present.



Better human life and sustainable development require an integrated approach, contribution, and responsible practices from all the stack holders, supply chains, and manufacturers.



Rajib Kamrul Islam
Managing Director Allure Sourcing Ltd

The current concept of sustainability is widely used by people and their mind is engaged with it and so they often talked about sustainability for

life, sustainable relationship, or sustainable food because the word is concerned with sustainability to protect the planet, climate, and living being. There are three pillars - people, profit, and the planet as tools of sustainability, and all these three are interconnected to keep security and sustain humanity around the world. Better human life and sustainable development require an integrated approach, contribution, and responsible practices from all the stack holders, supply chains, and manufacturers. This is not only the Brand's responsibility, rather every single individual must be part of sustainability. Only then we could say functioning sustainability for a good quality of life.

The rising question that customers are not ready to pay for sustainability is judgmental. This is not a matter of paying for sustainability but a concern and awareness approach. This is a collaborative effort to maintain a strong mindset for sustainability, taking ownership, to be committed to the consumer. So,

everybody should pay for sustainability because this is not partly a liability for buyers or manufacturers, but both should pay for future generations.



The real challenges lie in achieving fair prices from buyers and building a new sourcing network to grow further for a sustainable business.



Ehsan Haq
Director, Knitex Industries Ltd

The history of Bangladesh's apparel industry, if we consider ten years back was a huge disaster where we had to face many incidents including a big one. At present, there are lots of achievements that have been observed as remarkable improvements like structural development, positive progress about safety and human rights issues, achieving and building a standard workforce, continuous improvement of living, product innovation, and value addition. But still, we need to go a long way to grow more and achieve lots of things. Furthermore, the real challenges lie in achieving fair prices from buyers and building a new sourcing network to grow further for a sustainable business.

The question about demanding too many audits and certifications is now a bursting issue for the industry because maintaining too many certifications is a huge energy expenditure, time waste, and misuse of the workforce for the

same purpose repeatedly. Because the average cost of certification is more than 2000 USD. But it has been seen different customers are demanding different standards of the certificate as their business nature and so arranging endless demand from various customers is now the biggest issue for the industry. But the demand for certificates must be common and centralized based on international standards and regulations.



The software helps us to get a reputation with customers, generate revenue from production, and to sustain for a longer time in business.



Iqbal Ahmed F. Hasan
Founder & Managing Director
Divine IT Limited.

The first thing to do for a production process is to collect data. The collection of data from the various production process is important to analyze them to change and improvement. Maintaining data is important, no matter if the data is prepared by paper or software. But to analyze and keep a record of the data, software is an important tool to record properly. Because there are different parameters in the process and the key matter like man, machine, and plant can be sustainable and profitable only by proper use of them with the software. Finally, the software helps us to get a reputation with customers, generate revenue from production, and to sustain for a longer time in business.



We must illuminate the green concept to a minimum at the time of construction as well as operation for a sustainable workplace.



Ananta Ahmed
Managing Director
360 Total Solution Limited (360TSL)

Sustainability is the concept of making a profit and the profit can be generated only by reducing waste in the industry and from its entire production process. The green concept is the best investment because the construction of a green building can be done by 5-7% less than the cost of a regular building constitution, the running production cost is less than about 30% and people in the building can live in a healthy environment. This is a win-win situation in the green process. So, we must illuminate the green concept to a minimum at the time of construction as well as operation for a sustainable workplace.

The owner's feedback about the green initiative is very positive because green factories are always profitable and so, many groups of companies are increasing green building Masco group has 19 green factories, and DBL group has 17 factories. We must understand that green building is for both structure and the application of processes to reduce overall cost. In this regard, buyers will ask for products that are made from the cheapest process like the green concept. That means green factories are for profit, safety, and saving the environment.

Session-02 on 23-06-2023: Innovation & Product Diversification are ways to move forward.



Moderator
Mohammad Ashraful Islam
Editor & Publisher, Textile Focus

The 2nd-day session was focused on 'Innovation & product diversification ways to move forward for Bangladesh RMG sector' held on 23 June and moderated by Mohammad Ashraful Islam, Editor & Publisher, Textile Focus. As distinguished panel speaker Abdullah Al Mamun, Director, Abed Textile; Vice President, BTMA; Engr. Selim Reza Sr. VP of ITET & MD of Arian Knit Composite.; Dr. Karthik ND, Regional Managing Director, South Asia, Eurofins Product Testing India Pvt. Ltd.; Khaled Chowdhury, Business Head Fifth Alliance Global Trading Ltd; Mir Shahriar, Country Head-Bangladesh, 360 TF were present.



We must develop an understanding of capacity and improve efficiency and innovation.



Abdullah Al Mamun
Director
Abed Textile, Vice President BTMA

The present worldwide trade situation reminds us of the diversification of products and markets. We must identify and make unique products of various cultures and traditional clothes. Because recently in a seminar at Calcutta, one delegation of Bhutan asked me if we could make traditional clothing that wear people in Bhutan. I think the query is a big call for us to explore new markets for traditional clothing in the Middle East, North Africa, or South Africa. So, this is the best time for us to find a new

product lineup and market, not only focus on the traditional EU or US market. We must develop an understanding of capacity and improve efficiency and innovation.



The new generation of textile engineers should have to adapt to new technologies including digital printing, all over new techniques, jacquard design, knowing new fancy yarn as well as building a mindset for learning new things and quest for exploration.



Engr. Selim Reza Sr
VP of ITET & MD
of Arian Knit Composite.

The apparel industry in Bangladesh is the core economic wheel that exports more than 42 billion of USD whereas the world apparel-market

size is 468 billion USD. That means we have huge scope to grow in the sector by developing expertise and dynamic professional from the 27 country's Textile universities. The new generation of textile engineers should have to adapt to new technologies including digital printing, all over new techniques, jacquard design, knowing new fancy yarn as well as building a mindset for learning new things and quest for exploration. They must be involved in various activities to be critical thinkers, gather current information, and read textile magazines like Textile Focus. Besides knowledge, the development of soft and hard skills, leadership quality, and perseverance are also equally important to get success in the sector.



Sustainability has been a key focus factor for the apparel industry so now this is highly important to assess the products to find how they are sustainable and made from recycled materials.



Dr. Karthik ND
Regional Managing Director
South Asia, Eurofins Product
Testing India Pvt. Ltd.

Eurofins is a testing service provider 1st formed for assessing pesticides in food and beverage in Europe. But now it has been widely providing commercial testing for industry, earth, and people as well. During the Covid period, we did not provide services for Covid tests only rather we tested the Covid test kit in a wide range. Sustainability has

been a key focus factor for the apparel industry so now this is highly important to assess the products to find how they are sustainable and made from recycled materials. The worldwide apparel and related business is now 1.5 trillion whereas only 3.9% is consumed as recycled or sustainable. So, this is a very important matter to identify how much the industry is going for sustainability in full pledge in its process and materials. We assess materials such as yarn, fabric, and whatever coming into the production line up, identify process waste from a solid base, and check liquid form-waste or gas form-waste to determine sustainability.



To survive in the crisis period apparel industry must improve its innovative power for new and unique products.



Khaled Chowdhury
Business Head Fifth Alliance
Global Trading Ltd

As you know we are passing a crisis period in the industry where order flow went down and so the sector is facing numerous problems. This is the right time to go for product diversification, explore new markets, and do innovative work to get new business. Concerning the crisis issue our organization is making new sketches for the buyer from the R&D department, offering new products with sustainable materials such as recycled and organic cotton. So, to survive in the crisis period apparel industry must

improve its innovative power for new and unique products.



We have a Programme to provide support and services in different countries for financial solutions.



Mir Shahriar
Country Head-Bangladesh, 360 TF

We are passing a difficult situation because of worldwide crises such as the Russia-Ukraine war, before that it was covid crisis that directly impacted Bangladesh's RMG sector. This is a ten-year cycle where good shape in one turn will come and then the cycle will come for go down trend. In the downturn flow financial market will experience many difficult situations and to rise, the only solution is diversification of financial sources and services. In this regard, 360TF is a tread financing solution provider for export and import.

We have a Programme to provide support and services in different countries for financial solutions. We manage and have relations with more than 40 countries, and work with 1100 corporate organizations and 100 Banks to provide services for export-import and fund solutions. So, this will be alternative and diversified fund sourcing rather than depending only on local banks and institutions.