



AN OVERVIEW OF GARMENTS PRODUCED IN THE MICRO APPAREL MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

Now, it has been very general that, if you inform your friend that you have bought a new dress, the 1st question to you will be “How about the Quality”. The product of any category is always judged by its quality than its price. The word “Quality” has paramount importance. In India, apparels are produced in a very large scale level to meet the demand of domestic & export markets by both organized and unorganized sectors.

Quality has an important role to play in the competitiveness of the apparel exporting industry. According to a study by the United States Importers of Textile and Apparel (US-ITA), “Consistent Quality was the “TOP MOST” criterion used to decide where to place import orders”. (Source: Cost of Poor Quality, Dr.Rajesh Bheda)

The buyers of readymade garments usually focus on the destinations which could produce quality merchandise at the lowest possible cost/unit. To strengthen our presence in the global market and make India is a favorable place for placing orders, it is inevitable to the apparel manufactures to produce quality merchandise at the first time itself in order to avoid the re-production/alteration costs and also to get continues orders.

The small & medium sized industries, mostly functioning with a separate quality assurance team, but micro apparel units are not having proper quality control mechanism due to its economic condition as they are functioning as supplier unit to the big companies.

Key words: Apparel, Checking, Cost of Poor Quality, Inspection, Mirco Apparel Units and Quality.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indian Textile and Apparel Industry play an important role in the development of Indian Economy and provide employment opportunity in a very large scale in both organized and unorganized sectors. The domestic textile and apparel industry in India is estimated to reach US\$ 223 billion by 2021 from US\$ billion (Source: IBEF, April 2017). Increased penetration of organized retail sector, favorable demographics, and rising income levels in India are likely to drive demand for textiles in retail industry.

Textile and apparel exports from India are expected to increase to US\$ 82 billion by 2021 from 39.66 US\$ in 2016 (Source: IBEF, April 2017). Readymade garments remain the largest contributor to total textile and apparel exports from India. India is the world's second largest exporter of textiles and clothing

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2. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The Quality of the produced apparel must meet the requirements prescribed in the specification sheet provided by the buyer. Quality in any product can be achieved only by following the proper methodology during the each and every stages of its process flow. The manufacturing system must be a quality manufacturing system.

In most of the situation, Micro Apparel manufacturers get order from the large manufacturing companies as they are functioning with less number of machines & man power and cannot get direct orders from the buyers and depend on medium & large scale enterprises. But these micromanufacturing units are the key supporters of medium and large scale apparel manufacturers in both domestic and exports.

Even though they get orders, they face difficulty, particularly in quality and managing lead time as they have no proper monitoring mechanism / quality follow-ups in place. The entire activities of apparel manufacturing are looked after by few personnel in most of the Micro Apparel manufacturers unlike large manufacturers as they have a dedicated Quality Assurance Department to ensure the quality of the merchandise being produced. The Quality Incharge of the main unit will visit their supplier unit (Micro Apparel Manufacturers) once in a while and inspect the quality of the goods produced.

In such cases, there will be no constant monitoring on the quality of the goods. In the final inspections, some of the orders go for recheck and some of the defects would be non-rectifiable.

This article explores the quality of the garments produced and helps the manufactures to produce quality merchandise.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the manufactures think that they have to spend huge amount to maintain quality to maintain consistent quality and it not economically viable for small units. Actually it is not so.

Quality means "A set Inherent characteristics that fulfill the requirements"(ISO 9000:2000)

Crosby defines Cost of Quality as “Quality is measured by Cost, which is the expense of non-conformance –the cost of doing things wrong”. These costs are prevention, appraisal and failure categories.

Juran defines Cost of Quality as “Cost of Poor quality consists of those costs that would disappear if the products and processes were perfect”.

The amount of money going down to drain could be as high as 20 to 25% of the total manufacturing costs (Cost of Poor Quality – Dr.Rajesh Bheda). This cost incurred due to poor quality is called COQ (Cost Of Quality)

According to Dr.Rajesh Bheda (2005) , in his article titled “ Cost of Quality in the Indian Apparel Manufacturing “ and his study showed that an average apparel factory in India covered under the study lost 14.05% of its annual sales on account of poor quality.

The problem here is the quality personnel in the units spend their time for inspecting the already produced merchandise than preventing the defects. Quality is not followed during the process flow of each & every stage.

If each and every stage of all the operations is checked properly during the manufacturing, the rejection level will be very minimal. Leading buyers give primary importance to Quality than any other parameters like low cost, lesser lead time, product development capabilities and social compliance. There are many articles available on apparel quality, but they are not deal with micro apparel units.

4. STUDY ON QUALITY OF APPAREL PRODUCED IN MICRO APPAREL MANUFACTURING COMPANIES.

For this study, Five (A, B, C, D & E) companies in Ambatur were approached. Based on their input,these companies are getting order from the nearby large scale manufacturers. These units got the fabric, trims, accessories etc from the party and only production is done as per the preproduction sample. Once the order is ready and the same will be shifted to the main unit where the final inspection will be carried out. The final inspections were done by the quality team of the respective buying offices. The details of the number of orders shipped were taken. The production capacity of these units are furnished below.

Table 1

S.No	Name of the company	Machine Capacity	Production capacity*
1	A	17	450 pieces /day
2	B	14	380 pieces /day
3	C	18	500 pieces /day
4	D	22	580 pieces /day
5	E	15	400 pieces /day

*Average production- varies based on style,

From the orders completed from 1st January 2017 to 15th June 2017, the details of their reports on final inspection are furnished below.

Table 2

S.No	Name of the company	Number of orders received	Number of orders received passed in 1 st inspection.	Number of orders received passed after Re- inspection
1	A	15	11	4
2	B	12	8	4
3	C	16	11	5
4	D	16	12	4
5	E	11	7	4

The units (B, C & E) have only one person taking care of quality of entire garments produced. The units A & D have employed 2 personnel to look after the quality. As per the requirement of the particular style, sequence of the machineries is arranged by the Production in-charge and the correctness of the cutting and bundling, sewing, pressing and packing is checked by the quality department personnel. The pieces from the production lines are taken directly to the checking table where the quality of the garment is checked. The alteration pieces are sent back to the respective production lines from the checking tables. Records are not available regarding the number of pieces rejected and repaired on daily basis.

The details of analysis are given below. During the study period, 70 orders were placed for final inspection, 49 orders were got approved in the first inspection. The remaining 21 orders were shipped after recheck (Re-inspection).

Table 3

S.No	Name of the company	Number of orders received	Number of orders received passed in 1 st inspection.	% order passed in the 1st inspection	Number of orders received passed after Re- inspection	% order passed after re-inspection
1	A	15	11	73.33	4	26.67
2	B	12	8	66.67	4	33.33
3	C	16	11	68.75	5	31.25
4	D	16	12	75.00	4	25.00
5	E	11	7	63.64	4	36.36

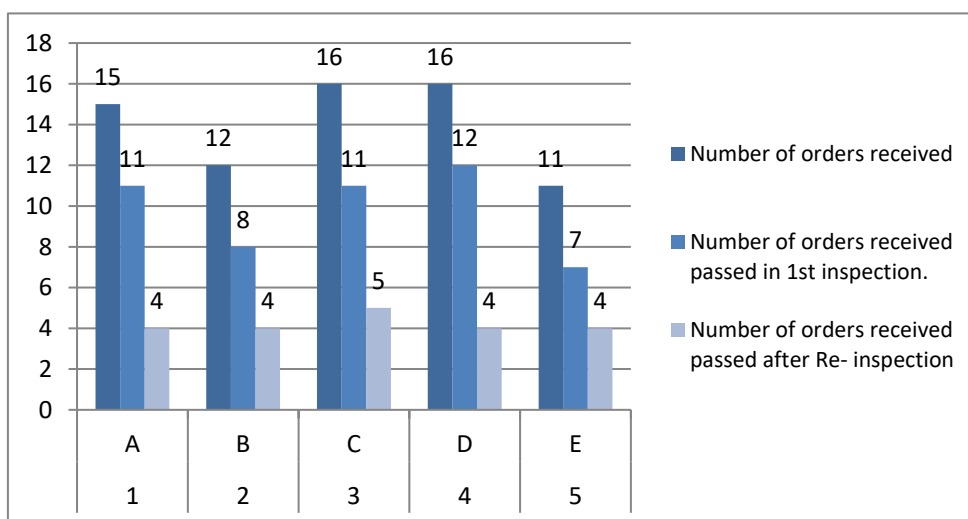


Figure 1

The total percentage of the orders got rechecked were 30.52%. Details of the recheck were not available. As advised by the Quality Inspectors of the respective buying houses, they opened the boxes and rechecked all the pieces and defects were altered / corrected then finally shipped.

The following points are observed during the study:

- All the approvals say Fabric Quality, Dyeing, Printing and embroidery, Size set, and pre production samples were approved by the respective buying houses through the main unit quality team. So there were no major issues raised.
- Few orders are having their garments pre-washed; The Company is facing problems in washing and controlling the shrinkage. There are differences found in the shrinkage of the garments between sample and bulk.
- Shade variations, Stitching defects, placement of packets, print or embroidery, untrimmed threads, raw edges, size variation, stain, wrong attachment are the common problems that lead to the rechecking of entire lot.
- For the overall quality management, all the areas of garment production must be carefully studied before starting the new order. Creation of quality awareness in the areas like Cutting, shade checking, Trims and Accessories inspection, Inspection of thread, Inspection of button, Inspection of Zipper, Inspection of Snap and Rivets, Inspection of poly bags / price tickets/ labels/ cartons, Pre and daily quality procedure, Inline & Middle inspection, End line Inspection and daily review meeting are very important.
- The major reason cited by the micro units that they have to spend more to employ a qualified team for quality monitoring and the cost of improving quality is less than the resulted savings. They are not aware of the important terminology “Cost of Quality”.
- One staff has to look-after the quality of whole production. It was informed by the companies that, it was not economically viable to have separate quality team as it will increase their expenses.
- Finally, it was clear that the care taken for developing samples is not given while making the bulk.

5. CONCLUSIONS

From the observations, the main cause for rejections/alteration lies with sewing department. Each and every attachment must be checked before it passed to the next operation. It is understood that, if the manufacturer gives attention to each and every stages of the process flow, we can eliminate repair/rejections to the greater extent. The units (A & D) engaged 2 personnel show less rejection rate than the other units (B, C & D) functioning with only one quality control staff.

Though the units have details on number order placed and passed, but they did not record the rejection/recheck details. It was informed to have a separate team for managing the quality and importance of documenting the production/ repair/alteration/rejection /final inspection status are emphasized. Number of order passed, rejected and rechecked are to be evaluated. The companies were informed to guide the peoples who are involved in all the stages of production in a systematic manner and they will come to know the actual condition of the product which they produced.

It is very necessary for the production and quality in-charges to conduct a meeting before taking each style in to the production with all the staff to brief about the new style (which will be going to the line) and discuss expected quality issues.

Though the unit is small, keeping system in place will increase the possibility of healthy competition between the production lines /quality team to give high performance. It will be easy for the management to identify where the problem arises. Above all, the reputation of the company will go high and will get orders regularly. This is very necessary for the manufacturer of any product.

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