

India has the potential to become a leader in traceable cotton supply chain: Tushar Sheth of Shankar-6 Cotton Fibers

India's cotton sector stands at an important crossroads. Shifting global supply chains, policy debates, traceability demands and volatile macroeconomic conditions are redefining the structure of the global cotton market.

With deep roots in the cotton trade and an expanding international footprint, Mr. Tushar Sheth, Director of Shankar-6 Cotton Fibers Pvt. Ltd., represents a new generation of leadership that blends traditional market understanding with modern global trading practices.

In this conversation, he shares his perspectives on India's evolving cotton balance sheet, structural reforms needed in the sector, global competitiveness, and the future of cotton trade in a rapidly changing geopolitical environment.

A Century-Old Legacy Meets a Modern Cotton Enterprise

Tecoya Trend: Shankar6 Cotton India represents a rare continuum between a century-old trading legacy and a modern export-oriented cotton enterprise. How has the company evolved institutionally over the past decade?

MR. TUSHAR SHETH: Our cotton trading roots go back more than a century, where the business was built primarily on relationship-driven domestic trade. Over the past decade, however, we have consciously transformed into a more globally integrated cotton enterprise.

We focused on three strategic areas. The first was strengthening procurement and quality control at the sourcing stage. The second was expanding international engagement with spinning mills across Asia and other markets. The third was improving transparency through digital platforms and market information systems.

In cotton trade, credibility is not built overnight. It comes from consistently honouring commitments, delivering reliable quality, and



maintaining long-term relationships across the supply chain.

Discipline in Sourcing and Risk Management

Tecoya Trend: In an industry where scale, trust and timing define long-term relevance, what differentiates Shankar6 Cotton's operating philosophy today?

MR. TUSHAR SHETH: Scale alone does not define sustainability in cotton trading. What truly matters is discipline.

Our sourcing philosophy focuses heavily on fibre selection and contamination control. Cotton must meet consistent parameters for staple length, micronaire and strength before entering export channels.

Risk management is equally critical. Cotton markets are volatile due to weather events, currency fluctuations and global economic trends. We manage this volatility through prudent hedging strategies and disciplined contract structures linked to international futures markets.

Most importantly, we maintain continuous dialogue with our customers. Cotton trading today is about building long-term trust with spinning mills rather than short-term opportunistic transactions.

India's Changing Cotton Balance Sheet

Tecoya Trend: India's cotton balance sheet has tightened in recent seasons. Do you see this as cyclical or structural?

MR. TUSHAR SHETH: The changes we are seeing appear to

Continued on Page 4

Irrigation practices will be critical to maintaining India's global position in cotton production

Continued from Page 1 Col 4

be structural rather than temporary.

Yield stagnation in certain regions, climate variability and shifting cropping patterns have begun influencing production dynamics. At the same time, domestic consumption remains significant due to India's large textile sector.

This means imports are occasionally required during tight supply cycles, something that historically was not common for India.

Going forward, improving farm productivity through better seed technology, agronomy and irrigation practices will be critical to maintaining India's global position in cotton production.

Structural Reform in Ginning and Quality Infrastructure

Tecoya Trend: India continues to face concerns around contamination and fragmented ginning infrastructure. Does the sector require deeper reform?

MR. TUSHAR SHETH: Yes, structural improvements are necessary.

India produces a large volume of cotton, but quality consistency remains a challenge. Contamination control, modernised ginning infrastructure and standardised bale classification systems are essential for improving global competitiveness.

Technologies such as HVI testing and improved bale packaging standards should become more widely adopted.

If India wants to compete consistently with major exporting origins like Brazil and the United States, the focus must shift toward fibre quality, standardisation and traceability.

Competing in a New Global Textile Landscape

Tecoya Trend: How should India reposition its cotton trade strategy against origins such as Brazil, the United States and West Africa?

MR. TUSHAR SHETH: Global cotton trade today is influenced by logistics efficiency, reliability and supply chain integration.

Brazil benefits from large-scale mechanised farming and efficient logistics networks. The United States offers standardised quality and strong supply chain infrastructure.

India must strengthen its competitiveness through improved port logistics, reliable shipping schedules, and stronger adherence to international contracting norms.

At the same time, India has a unique advantage — a strong domestic textile manufacturing ecosystem that integrates cotton production with downstream value addition.

From Commodity Trading to Supply Chain Assurance

Tecoya Trend: Is the cotton trade moving beyond price competition toward supply chain assurance?

MR. TUSHAR SHETH: Absolutely. Cotton trading is no longer driven purely by price.

Global spinning mills and brands increasingly look for consistent fibre performance, logistics reliability and traceability from farm to bale.

This means cotton must now be viewed as part of an integrated supply chain rather than simply a commodity.

India's policy framework will need to recognise this transition and support infrastructure that enhances transparency, traceability and standardisation.

MSP and Market-Led Price Discovery

Tecoya Trend: Is India approaching a stage where market-led price discovery should take precedence over administrative price support?

MR. TUSHAR SHETH: The MSP mechanism has historically provided stability to cotton farmers, which is important in a sector exposed to weather risks and price volatility.

However, when domestic prices remain disconnected from global market realities, export competitiveness can be affected.

A balanced approach may be required — one that protects farmer incomes while allowing market signals to play a greater role in price discovery.

Debate Over Cotton Import Duty

Tecoya Trend: What is your view on the 11% cotton import duty reinstated in 2026?

MR. TUSHAR SHETH: The debate over import duty reflects the broader challenge of balancing farmer interests with textile industry competitiveness.

Spinning mills argue that duties increase raw material costs when domestic supply is tight or quality availability is limited. Farmers, on the other hand, rely on price stability.

Ideally, cotton policy should remain flexible and responsive to market conditions so that both producers and the textile sector can remain sustainable.

Traceability and Premium Cotton Markets

Tecoya Trend: Could India risk marginalisation in premium cotton markets without traceability systems?

MR. TUSHAR SHETH: Traceability is becoming increasingly important as global brands commit to sustainability and transparency.

Without scalable traceability mechanisms, countries may struggle to maintain access to premium segments of the textile market.

However, India also has a significant opportunity here. With the right digital systems and supply chain coordination, India could become a leader in traceable cotton supply chains.

Geopolitics, Energy Markets and Cotton Trade

Tecoya Trend: How do geopolitical tensions and rising crude oil prices affect cotton trade?

MR. TUSHAR SHETH: Energy markets influence cotton trade in several ways.

Higher crude prices increase freight costs and shipping expenses, which directly impact export competitiveness. Currency fluctuations and inflation expectations also influence textile demand globally. In such environments, mills tend to shorten contracting cycles and prefer purchasing cotton closer to consumption periods.

Macroeconomic stability therefore plays a significant role in shaping global cotton demand.

Closing Perspective

For Mr. TUSHAR SHETH, the future of Indian cotton will depend on productivity, quality consistency, supply chain transparency and global competitiveness.

While India remains one of the world's largest cotton producers, sustaining leadership in global markets will require coordinated progress across farming, ginning, logistics, policy and international trade integration.