

“Nonwoven market will slowly and gradually grow in India”



India managed to adopt spunbonding technology very fast in the beginning of the decade, and Truetzschler Nonwovens is confident that it will be a likewise development for spunlaced nonwovens.

The companies of Truetzschler Nonwovens & Man-Made Fibers are members of the well-known German Truetzschler group. Truetzschler Nonwovens is a leading supplier of machinery and know-how for the production of fibre-based, especially carded, nonwovens. It is leader in supplying complete production lines as well as single components for fibre opening and blending, web forming and bonding as well as drying, finishing and winding. The company has decades of experience in machinery development and manufacturing and thus turned into an expert in processing a broad range of both natural and man-made fibres. Truetzschler solutions for spunlacing,

thermo- and chemical bonding processes are used worldwide for making wipes, hygiene products, cotton pads, coating substrates, filter materials and various other technical end-products.

Torsten Kaiser, Area Sales Manager, Truetzschler Nonwovens & Man-Made Fibers GmbH, speaks on the nonwovens market globally and how it is shaping up in India.

Please give us brief information on the overall nonwovens market globally and how is it shaping up.

The global market is definitely developing because [nowadays] you can find nonwovens in all the areas. You can find them in hygienic products, technical textiles, building industry, amongst others. There are a vast range of products, and this is what makes nonwovens special. You have different machines doing different kind of job for you. Because of this vast range, we see that the market is still growing worldwide.

Can you give your assessment of the present Indian nonwovens market and do you see it growing in the coming years?

[I think] India is the market that will grow slowly and gradually. It will certainly not grow as fast as it grew in China a few years ago. In China, we had a boom where everyone was going for nonwovens. India is a bit more reluctant. It is a textile country, which comes from spinning.

In Truetzschler, we see a big opportunity for new business in cotton. This is because India is predominately a cotton country. Spinning mills deal with cotton, which are then sold abroad or you can even do a nonwoven, which at the end of the day is biodegradable. There is a perception of Indian customers that cotton is a good material, because it is natural. With regards to that, I think cotton can open a new market for nonwovens in India. Rather than producing for the local market, a big quantity can be exported to other countries wherein biodegradability is a big issue and will continue to be a bigger issue even in the future. This is where we see a chance.

Truetzschler is a machine supplier. We manufacture machines that produce nonwovens. We do not produce the end product. Usually what our customers do is that they produce the nonwovens and then find a way to market it. This is quite challenging in India. I think exporting is much easier.

Also there is lack of cotton in other countries. Cotton is the material for the future. Globally, we see a trend away from plastic-containing materials like synthetic fibres. Of course, synthetic fibres cannot be replaced completely by cotton. The big portion will be taken by biodegradable man-made fibres like viscose fibres. Some may be even replaced by paper. This is where we see the future development. I think this trend will come to India as well. There will always be synthetic fibres for technical garments for the construction industry because there you cannot have biodegradable fibres. But if we talk about wipes, hygienic products or products that can be used only once or twice, then certainly biodegradability is the keyword.

To what extent does sustainability play a role in the development of spunlace and wetlaid nonwovens?

The thing with natural fibres is that the variation in quality is quite high. Fibre length varies a lot which is a challenge in the carding process. The key to produce a good nonwoven web is the carding and this is where Truetzschler has a lot of experience and competence. For fibres with huge difference in length, our carding machines can easily cope with different qualities of fibres. We are participating at Techtextil in Mumbai to promote these machines and show the customers that they can arrive at a very good quality even when using 100 per cent comber noil. The end product will have good properties and sometimes even better properties than we have on a synthetic fibre. So besides to bale opening and blending, web bonding and winding, carding is crucial parameter in the entire process.

What is your take on the Indian hygiene market and do you see it growing due to some growth drivers?

Since I am not from India I can only say from the reports and the visits I am doing here. I think majority of the Indians are from the middle-class economy. However, with salaries getting higher, more and more people are having some money at the end of the month, which they can invest in hygienic products. It is also more of a cultural thing whether I buy diapers or don't. This trend won't change in a couple of years, it will take time. But we see that the demand for nonwovens is growing steadily in India. It may not be growing in the way we would like because India is a traditional country. But in the urban areas we certainly observe that the use of hygiene nonwoven products is steadily increasing.

Which are the factors according to you which are restricting the investments in nonwovens capacity building in India?

In India, textile industry is mostly from yarn. Nonwoven is a completely different segment and is a completely different product. It requires different machinery.

I think, in India, it is easier to market yarns and textiles in general. But to market nonwovens, it is very difficult. You have to first introduce nonwovens to the consumer and then you need to find a way through somebody, who is buying a nonwoven to make a product out of it. This is the challenge. Once this is established, the awareness and the need for nonwovens will come automatically. The real question is: When will it come, and how fast will it come? No one knows the answer to this.

Nonwovens hold maximum potential in which segment?

In India, I see a lot of construction work going on; so definitely geo textiles in construction and building areas. These businesses have developed really good materials, which have been put in the ground. Mumbai has a lot of flooding problem. Geo textiles can be the answer for this. However, nonwovens used in construction are completely different from nonwovens used in hygienic products. For hygiene products the spunlace technology is applied in most cases and Truetzschler is very knowledgeable in this area. Here the cotton and other natural fibres will play an important role. Other applications might require different fibres and different bonding processes. The nonwovens world is really big, but I am sure we will see a lot of movement in the future.

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