



TOGETHER
for a sustainable future

OCCASION

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Historical Introduction

The Republic of Singapore as a new developing nation with no natural resources, has a short history of textile industry and man-made fibers is relatively new compared to the well established manufacturing such as Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan in this part of the world.

After the first textile factory (Singapore Spinner Pte Ltd.) was set up in late 1967 for the production of synthetic yarn at the beginning, more other factories engaged in the same line soon followed. The textile industry has grown since then.

At present, Singapore has:

- (a) One synthetic fiber factory for the production of Polyamide products.
- (b) Five textile spinning factories for the production of yarn, the number of Spindles (either conventional or open-end) they possess is between 170,000 and 180,000. Most of the yarn produced will have to be exported because weaving factories in Singapore are not encouraged and there is also lack of weaving looms.
- (c) No less than 20 other big factories are in the production of synthetic texturized yarn, knitted fabric, and man-made garments. The raw materials consumed are mainly synthetic yarn, either Polyamide or Polyester or both, small quantity of Rayon, acetate and Acrylic.

In 1973, there was a great demand for textile goods as well as a shortage of raw materials. Many manufacturers thought that there was going to be a shortage of textile goods and production was stepped up rapidly. Unfortunately, there came a blow, the oil crisis coupled with the world-wide inflation caught up with the consumers and the market for textile goods was reduced considerably, leaving the suppliers and manufacturers with a large quantity of stock to dispose of.

In order to solve this problem, they dumped their goods at a very low price and this spoilt the whole market. Many factories were forced to lay-off part of their workers, reduce the number of working day from six days a week to five days or even four days a week. Although they have been affected to a certain extent by this " hard time " , most of the factories still could withstand the

slump in the textile prices better than factories in East Asia.
The situation has improved over the last few months.

Synthetic fiber production

The production of Polyamide products:

Singapore Nylon Corporation Ltd. which was designed, supplied and set up by one of the world's famous Chemical Engineering Companies (Vicker Zimmer) is the only factory in this region for the production of nylon products from the basic material of caprolactam. This factory, which started production in 1972, has continuous polymerization process, spinning, drawtwisting and texturizing machines for the production of polyamide 6 chips, filament and texturized yarn. The production capacity ^{of} 4 tons per day at the beginning was increased to 8 tons at the end of 1973. Only 10%-15% of its products is consumed in the local market, the rest is exported.

The Present Status

The number of machines employed in the textile industries

(a) False-twisting machines

50 sets in 1973 and 72 sets in this year.

(b) Knitting machines

Circular knitting	450 sets
Flat knitting	30 sets
Warp knitting	21 sets
Sock knitting	130 sets
Glove knitting	unknown

(c) Number of spindles in textile spinning factory

Type of material used	No. of spindles
Cotton	65,000
V. S. F.	4,000
Tetetron/ Cotton	72,000
Tetetron/ Rayon	16,000
Tetetron/ Wool	7,000
Polynosic/ Cotton	5,000

Labour

Singapore has become an international by word for its rapid economic development over the past ten years, a model of political stability, of social discipline and cohesion. It cannot be said that the labour problem has all been solved, but at least in some. At present, about 13,000 to 14,000 people are employed in the textile and synthetic fibre industries; they are respectively 75 to 80% of the total industrial force; no less than half of them are residents from the neighbouring country. The Government has already focused on:

- (a) The control of the migration of workers from one factory to another.
- (b) To train more skilled workers.
- (c) To increase the working efficiency of the workers.

Raw Material

The major problems faced by manufacturers in our country are continuity of supply and stability of prices of the raw materials. The caprolactam used in the synthetic fibre factory is imported from BAW and Japan. Other textile products such as cotton, synthetic yarns, acetate, come from Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Africa and Europe. Although some contracts have been signed for the constant supply of these materials, the change in prices of the raw materials in the foreign markets have reflected directly on our manufactured products.

Technology

Many of the manufacturers use foreign technology and know-how in the production since most of the factories here are joint ventures between Singapore and foreign countries, e.g. the synthetic fibre factory here is built with the technology from West Germany. Other sources of textile technology are mainly Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

The two main sources of Technical Assistance received by Singapore are under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Colombo plan technical development scheme.

Research

Singapore Government have noticed that for its goods to compete in the world market, they must not only be competitive in price but also in quality and reliability. To ensure these, Singapore Institute of Standards and Industrial Research (SISIR) was set up in 1967 to encourage its members to set up quality control units in their factories. Apart from the standardisation

and quality control activities, SISIR's Technical Supporting Services such as technical information services, extension and consultancy, industrial research activities, will be expanded.

Future Prospect:

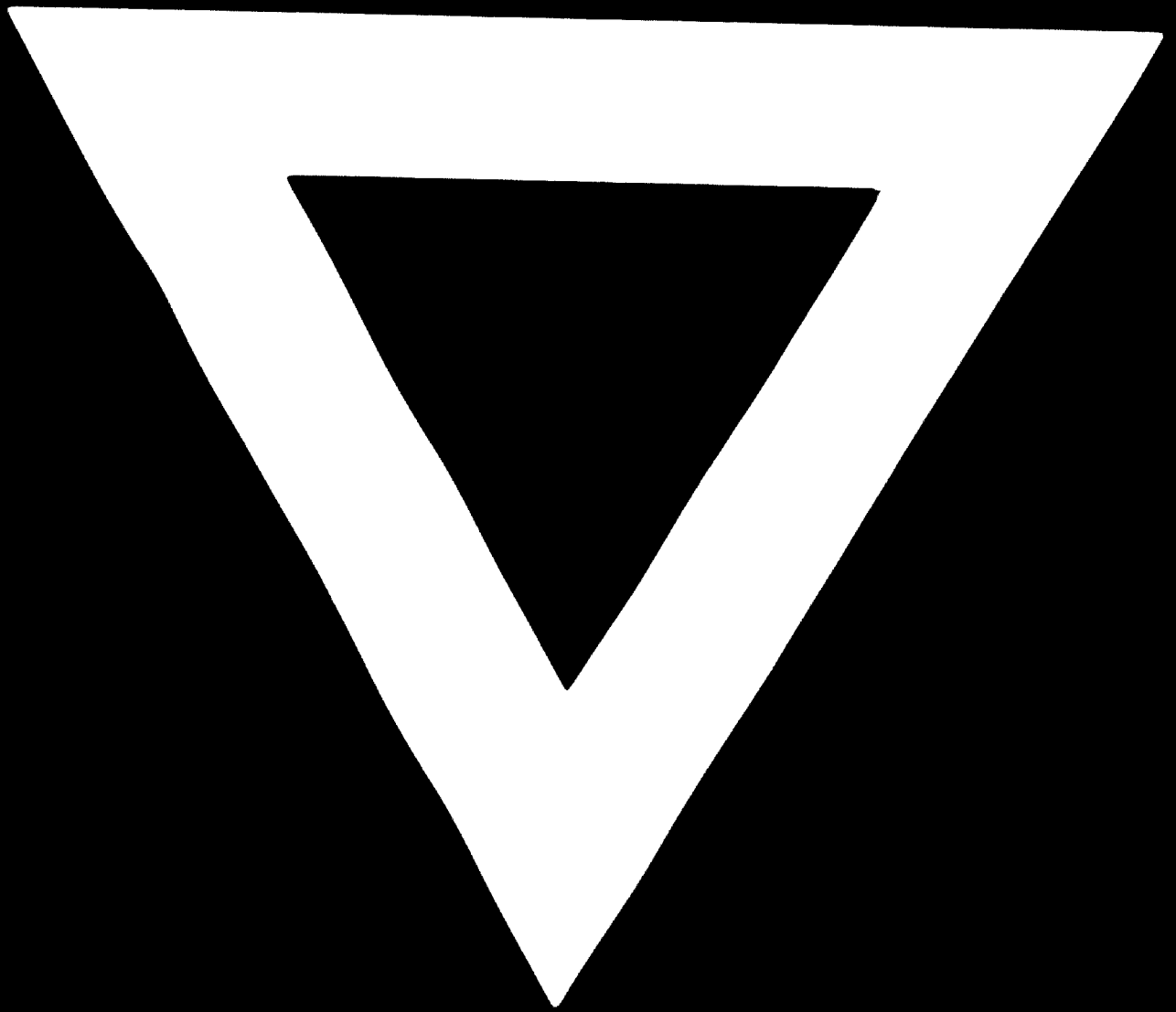
Although there are no definite plans for future expansion due to the existing oil crisis, uncertain market conditions and the recession of the world economy, the following facts show that the prospects of the textile industry both in the domestic and export market, especially the small scale industries are indeed very bright.

- (a) Rapid increase in the world population.
- (b) More end uses for synthetic fibers today.
- (c) High standard of living.
- (d) Technologically advanced countries have not discarded their textile industries.

The future trends of development of the textile industries in this region more or less depend on:

- (a) Technical and Financial assistance given by well developed nations.
- (b) Mutual co-operation between nations to recover the world economy.
- (c) The co-operation between Government and the private sector.





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