

## **Wool Industry in Bikaner**

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Bikaner is in heart of Rajasthan state in India and known for production of very high quality wool and woollen yarns beside world famous Bikaner Sweets and Snacks. Wool trade started in Bikaner app. 100 years back and shepherds were exchanging this golden fiber for food and other daily requirements. But later trade for wool started for money. Generally wool is produced and sold in different cities of Rajasthan but Bikaner wool market is the biggest centre for wool transactions where wool of all kind is cleaned, purchased and sold. Some details about wool and woollen industries are as follows:

### **1. Wool Trading in Bikaner**

Trading of raw wool is approximately 100 years old in Bikaner and it started in old city area of Bikaner and nearby villages. Shepherds from nearby area used to bring raw wool to Bikaner and sold through agents or directly to wool traders. It was a flourishing trade in that area and wool was used for local consumption but later in early fifties wool baling and pressing started here which opened a new gate of international market for traders here. Wool was duly cleaned, sorted and graded in Bikaner and bale pressed for export to UK and later to Russia and other countries. Traders become exporters and came in touch with international wool markets and started using limited means of communication at that time like phones, telegrams and telex etc. Sometime they need to go to Bombay or Delhi to communicate with their buyers as communication was available from these cities only. But it was a great time for Bikaner wool traders as market was growing every day and production of raw wool was increasing. Later started ups and downs of the market but traders faced these changes bravely. At that time wool was cleaned, graded and traded through different shops, godowns and sheds scattered all over the city. Later one separate wool market was developed by Rajasthan govt. and most of the traders shifted to the recognized wool market.

### **2. Quality of Wool Available In Bikaner & Change in Quality**

Bikaner and surrounding area produced very good quality of chokla and magra wool beside regular qualities of wool ranging from 30 to 38 micron and very much suitable for production of carpet and durries. Beside wool for Bikaner area some very good quality of wool is

coming from Basmer, Jaiselmer, Kolayat. In some area wool quality is equivalent to New Zealand wool or better than some quality of New Zealand wool.

### **3. Production of Wool in Bikaner & Rajasthan**

Wool quality is decreasing in most of the parts of Rajasthan due to following reasons:

- a. Slaughtering of sheep on a very high scale in India is the main reason for decreasing quality standard of wool. Industry is getting raw wool from the dead animal's skin which is called Pulled or Slipe wool. As sheep skins are soaked in chemicals like sodium and salt at least for 3-4 days and later wool was pulled from these skins. Because of this process wool fibres becomes weak and loose its shining and give a very bad smell. Later this pulled wool is used for blending with other wools and used in carpets.
- b. Very less wool grading centers and sheep farms are available in India. Because of which it is not possible to develop new and fine qualities of wool in India.
- c. New generation don't want to become shepherd as return is very low by selling wool. They prefer to go to big cities to find out new opportunities of job and business and it is giving a very bad effect on production of wool
- d. Decreasing wool quality because of uncertain weather as weather in Bikaner and surrounding areas has changed a lot and uncertain rains during winters specially affecting the whiteness of wool and main reason for vegetable matters in the wool. Also in summers very hot temperature is affecting the colour and fibre length of yellow wool.

### **4. Spinning Plants in Bikaner**

After spinning the wool by hand and on wooden spinning wheel for a long period of time wool spinning in Bikaner city in early sixties installed its first spinning plant and from here started a new era of industrialization in Bikaner. Later some more plants came in mid 60's and in later years of 70's spinning became a major industry in Bikaner. Some companies took initiatives and installed wool scouring plants and Semi Worsted Plants for better scouring of Raw Wool and Fine spinning of Woolen yarn.

### **5. Carpet Industry in Bikaner**

Weaving of carpet started in Bikaner in Bikaner jail before independence where some very high quality carpets were made and exported overseas also these carpets were very popular in royal families of Rajasthan and other parts of India. Hand knotted carpets were also made in some nearby villages but app. 10 years back some companies started with modern carpets

like hand tufted, handloom, broadloom and shaggy with their quality wool which is a great success and now few exporters and Industrialists are planning to install some huge machine made carpet plants by importing machines from Europe and USA. They are planning to develop carpets made by artificial fibres like Polyester, Poly Propylene, Rayon and Acrylic beside wool. So in coming few years Bikaner will be a great industrial hub of Rajasthan and India producing all kinds of wool, woolen yarn and carpets.

## **6. Problems & Some Suggestions for Woolen Industry**

**A)** *No support from govt. on development of wool grading centers and sheep farms. Because of which there is no improvement in the quality of fibre.*

State Govts in wool growing states should take some initiatives to develop wool farms and grading centers to produce cross breed fibre and arrange to supply it to wool and carpet industry for improvement of quality of yarn and carpets.

**B)** *No control over slaughtering of sheep for meat and export of live stocks. Meat Exporters and Traders are slaughtering as many sheeps as they want to complete their orders. There is no control from any Govt. Authority to check and regularize this slaughtering*

Govt. should strictly control the slaughtering of sheep in small towns and slaughter houses of big cities. There should be some limit on slaughtering or it should be stopped for a period of time to improve the situation of sheep population in India. Also export of sheep meat should be banned like Govt. put ban on export of onion, sugar, cotton etc. Also there should be a complete ban on slaughtering of sheep kids as they were slaughtered before they go to increase their population and produced quality wool.

**C)** *Govt. should remove import duty on import of raw wool to support the industry.*

As situation is very bad for local production of raw wool govt should exempt or reduce import duty on raw wool for the time being.

**D)** *Labour problem in Bikaner wool industry because of govt. NAREGA scheme.*

In Bikaner lot of woolen factories are running under capacity due to shortage of labour to run these units. Govt should join hands with factory owners to sort out this problem and to improve productivity.

**E)** *High investment and low return in the trade.*

Wool prices are very high and investments in the trade has increased a lot but there is no return because of very high rate of interest charged by bank to finance the traders and spinners and very low demand of woolen yarn because of high prices. Govt and banks should come forward to provide cheap finance on sheep farming and wool and woolen yarn industry.

**F) *Late release of payments for wool and woolen yarn.***

Trading of raw wool and woolen yarn is suffering because of late payment trend prevail in the market so wool panchayats, traders and spinners associations should make some rules of trading and payment to improve the situation of this dyeing trade. I tried to highlight some problems and suggestions in a few lines but still there is lot to do for Wool Industry and I request everyone involved in the trade to join hand for betterment of the Industry. I also like to Thanks Dr. Agarwal who is always working hard to save this dyeing industry and he gave me a chance to write a few things about the industry.