

COTTON GINNING FACT SHEET



FAIRTRADE

The textile production chain is long and complex. There is a lack of awareness on the working conditions between harvesting cotton and sewing textiles.

Ginning is one of the least known steps of the textile supply chain. It refers to the process of separating cotton fibers from its seeds.

6-8 MONTHS
IS THE
USUAL TIME SPAN
GINNING MILLS
OPERATE AS IT IS A
SEASONAL BUSINESS

4,000
GINNING MILLS
IN INDIA PROCESSED
37.7 MILLION
BALES
FOR 2017-18

170 KG
IS THE
AVERAGE WEIGHT
OF ONE BALE
OF COTTON

GINNING PROCESS



UNLOADING & HEAPING
The cotton harvest arrives on transporters at the ginning mills and is unloaded and heaped for processing.



PRE-CLEANING
Seed cotton capsules then go through a pre-cleaning process to remove dirt or leaves.



GINNING
Roller gins separate the cotton seeds and cotton fibers through closely spaced leather or rubber rollers and knives.



LINT CLEANING & CONDITIONING
Lint is cleaned using air jets or spiked cylinders and conditioned using humid air.



BALE PRESSING
The cleaned cotton fibers are compressed into bales.



PACKING
Finally, the bale is packed for transport and goes off to spinning mills.

WORKING CONDITIONS IN GINNING MILLS

Although ginning mills have been increasingly modernized in recent years, the ginning process is still highly labour-intensive. Physically demanding tasks and dangerous manual work at the machines result in high accident rates. Social compliance has not been

promoted well in ginning mills. This leads to poor working conditions such as poor wages, lack of work records, excessive working hours (12hrs), no leave, child labour, precarious treatment of migrant and unskilled workers, and poor onsite housing.

RESEARCH FINDINGS ON SOCIAL SITUATION IN GINNING MILLS

Two recent studies verify the poor working environment in the ginning sector. The German Commission for Justice and Peace by Südwind e.V. conducted a study¹ in the ginning sector on the basis of interviews. Its main findings highlight the following problems:

- **Migrant workers:** Workers from other states form the majority of employees. They usually have substantially fewer rights without equal pay or an additional dislocation allowance.
- **Poor wages:** Payment cannot satisfy basic needs. The average wage in the simplest category (unqualified) is only half of the minimum wage required by the state.

- **Workers' rights:** Only few have access to the state social security system. Freedom of association and collective bargaining is usually not implemented.
- **Health:** More than 20% of respondents have no access to safe drinking water. Nearly 40% have limited access to toilets.
- **Safety:** Only 10% of respondents had protective clothing provided by the company. The visited factories reported that they already have had fatal accidents.

¹ Deutsche Kommission Justitia et Pax (2016), Made in India Untersuchung zu Arbeitsbedingungen in westindischen Textilbetrieben, Bonn, Germany.

COTTON GINNING FACT SHEET



STUDY OF GINNING CONDITIONS FOR FAIRTRADE TEXTILE ACTIVITIES

Fairtrade International assigned a study² on working conditions in the ginning sector in India as part of their work introducing the new Fairtrade Textile Standard. In seven ginning mills research has been conducted by the Fairtrade network of Asian and Pacific producers (NAPP) to find out where to start improvement of the current situation. Five of the mills could provide an audit against ILO core criteria and already work in Fairtrade cotton supply chains; two had no social guidelines.

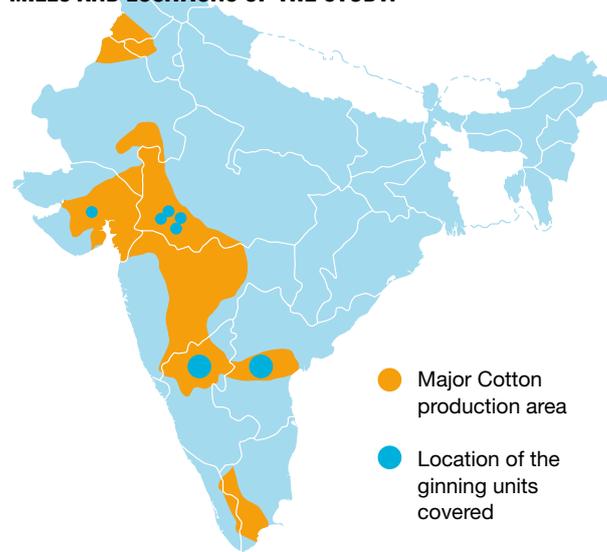
⇒ RESULTS OF THE STUDY ARE:

- **No freedom of association:** None of the mills have trade unions or democratically elected representatives or workers committees as per the Fairtrade Textile Standard requirement.
- **Poor wages & employment regulations:** No employment documentation is provided in most of the mills. Actual working hours, overtime & payments for the contract workers during peak seasons are not recorded. Workers do not receive pay slips. Payments are mostly in cash.
- **No social security:** There is no annual leave or regulation on sick leave.
- **Poor safety & health measures:** Noise, dust and vibration levels in the ginning area are high. No protective equipment like dust masks, earplugs etc. is provided or in use. No health and safety trainings are provided. Not every mill provides toilets.
- **Problematic women related issues:** None of the mills have processes on internal complaints or sexual harassment. No protection of pregnant women is established in any of the mills. There is no maternity leave.
- **High Risk of child labour:** None of the mills have sufficient systems to verify the age of workers.

Both studies make very clear, that social compliance measures need to go far beyond the basic requirements covered by ILO core criteria. The output of the Fairtrade study is currently being translated by Fairtrade into concrete measures that can be implemented to ensure the progress of social compliance at ginning level.

² S&P Fairtrade International, and peer review by consultant Shivaprasad Shetty (2017), Ginning study for Textile Standard, Bangalore, India.

MILLS AND LOCATIONS OF THE STUDY:



HOW DOES FAIRTRADE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

In 2005 Fairtrade International introduced the Fairtrade Cotton Standard. It fully benefits small cotton farmers, but only requires evidence of compliance with ILO core standards in the rest of the supply chain. Therefore, Fairtrade International rolled out a new textile standard in 2016. It focuses on working conditions, living wages and workers' rights along the entire textile supply chain. The Standard aims to empower factory workers and enable them to negotiate labour conditions independently. Brands take responsibility by committing to fair and long-term purchasing practices. With trainings and workshops within the Textile Program, Fairtrade takes action in guiding the mills' management and supporting workers committees in their work towards an environment compliant with the Fairtrade Textile Standard and highest level social compliance.

If you are interested in cooperating with Fairtrade to improve working conditions in your supply chain, please contact Fairtrade at: textilien@fairtrade-deutschland.de.



FAIRTRADE

TransFair e.V. (Fairtrade Deutschland)

Remigiusstraße 21 | D-50937 Köln
Tel.: +49 221 94 20 40 0
info@fairtrade-deutschland.de
www.fairtrade-deutschland.de
facebook.com/fairtrade.deutschland

Fairtrade International

Bonner Talweg 177 | D-53129 Bonn
Tel.: +49 228 94 92 30
info@fairtrade.net
www.fairtrade.net
facebook.com/fairtrade