

The role of Superior Cottons Certification Scheme in the marketing of improved varieties of Cotton in Madras State*

by

P. S. CHANDRAMATHI¹ and A. NARASIMHAN²

Synopsis: The working of the Superior Cottons Certification Scheme in the Madras State, its impact on the cultivators, traders and Mill Industry and its usefulness in maintaining the purity of the improved strains have been described in this article.

Introduction: As a result of intensive research work, the character of Madras cottons has undergone enormous changes and is keeping pace with the increasing demands for the superior quality cottons of the textile industry. Thus the inferior short staple cottons that were in cultivation in 1930 to 1940 have been completely erased from the cotton map of Madras and in turn contributed to the development of textile industry and the connected subsidiary industries which added to the prosperity of the State. During the last four decades, the research workers were engaged in improving the quality of the irrigated *cambodia* and rainfed *desi* cottons by resorting to intensive plant breeding methods.

To fall in line with the strides of cotton research, separate organisation for the supply of pure seeds of the above improved strains were also concurrently functioning in the State. Apart from the nucleus stock which was maintained at the breeders' plot, the onus of maintaining the purity of the different strains thereafter was vested with these seed multiplication and distribution centres. Bridging the gulf between cotton research worker and the actual cultivator, a separate cotton development wing is also functioning in the State. Apart from cotton research, multiplication, distribution and extension, the cotton improvement work in this State had extended its activities even to the marketing of the raw produce. The Superior Cotton Certification Scheme had been playing an important role for the past twelve years in maintaining the quality of the superior cottons right from the crop, upto the stage of marketing.

Superior Cotton Certification Scheme—Its origin and Development: With the object of encouraging the production of long staple cottons in a pure state and to help the cultivators to realise better prices for such cottons, the Government of India while fixing the floor and ceiling prices of Indian cottons under the Cotton Control Order 1953 were exempting MCU. 1. and MCU. 2. cottons of the Madras State from the operation of price control, provided

(a) Every grower of superior cotton should register himself with the Department of Agriculture of the State concerned indicating the area planted.

¹ Gazetted Assistant to the Certification Officer, Rajapalayam, ² Certification Inspector, Rajapalayam.

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(b) The seeds required for sowing such cottons were approved and supplied by the Department of Agriculture of the State concerned.

(c) The superior variety of cotton possess a staple length of 1-1/32" or more for cambodias and 30/32" and above for K. 6.

(d) The ginning and pressing of the produce as certified cottons be done under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture of the State concerned and a certificate of purity issued by the said department.

To implement the provisions for granting exemption from price control, the Government of Madras sanctioned this scheme for certification of superior cottons during 1951 after formulating the necessary provisions under the Superior Cottons Production and Certification Order. Under this Scheme, certificates of purity and staple length were issued in respect of specified improved strains grown in the State by the State Agriculture Department. Later in 1959-'60 these improved strains were also brought under price control and Government of India introduced the compulsory survey of all Indian cottons by the East India Cotton Association and its regional committees. After a representation from the State, due recognition was accorded to the departmental certification also, for surveying these cottons. The certification process commences from the crop stage in the field and proceeds upto ginning of produce and completion of pressing of lint into bales before the final lint certificate for purity is issued. According to the present cotton price policy, every variety is required to be not less than 95 per cent pure in crop and *kapas* stage, possess a staple of 1-1/32" and above for MCU. 1., MCU. 2., MCU. 3. and 30/32" and above for K. 6 (Pandyan) to satisfy the provisions of the Superior Cottons Production and Certification Order.

Working of the Superior Cottons Certification Scheme: The three main stages of certification are (a) Crop registration and inspection (b) Produce registration and (c) lint certification.

(a) *Crop Registration and Inspection:* The ryots desirous of getting purity certificates for their crop are required to sow departmental seeds only, as evidenced by the seed bill along with the application for crop registration. A fee of Rs. 1-50 for Cambodias and Re. 1/- for *Karunganni* is collected as registration charges for each acre and part thereof. The registered crop is inspected by the scheme staff for purity and any crop which is less than 95 per cent pure is subjected to roguing to reach standard purity. Highly impure crop is rejected. The purity certificates are then issued to the ryots.

(b) *Produce Registration:* The produce obtained from the certified crop may not in all cases be marketted in a pure condition and to safeguard any malpractice, the produce even though obtained from certified crop is required to be again registered under the scheme afresh for further inspection and certification. A certification fee of Rs. 3/- per bale of 1.778 quintals of lint or

part thereof is collected from the merchants who buy the *kapas* from the ryot. The *kapas* is arranged to be brought to specially licenced ginning factories under the Superior Cottons Ginning and Pressing Rules where it is critically examined for purity and staple length and is permitted to be ginned under departmental supervision by the certification staff.

In the pressing factories also the weight of lint is again checked to detect admixture before it is permitted to be pressed under departmental supervision. The full pressed bales of such cottons are given distinguishing marks and numbers in addition to the usual press mark and press numbers given by the factory.

(c) *Lint Certification*: Representative samples are again drawn from the pressed bales or in loose stage and are jointly examined by the Certification Officer and a representative of the Textile Industry nominated by the Southern India Mill Owners' Association at each of the Marketing centres and passed for staple length, quality and percentage of purity before the final lint certificates are issued. This procedure ensures quality control and creates confidence among the consuming mills and trade circles in the transaction of certified cottons.

Benefits to cotton growers, merchants and mill industry: The urge for better standards of living, calls for a higher standard of technology which in turn, demands a better raw material. Hence in cotton, greater accent is laid on quality of lint even though a higher yield is the prime concern of the agriculturist. The wealth of the farmers in cambodia area is due to the introduction of improved strains evolved by the department and in the larger interests of the cotton farmers, registering their crops under this scheme, provides better monetary value for such produce apart from keeping up the standard of quality cottons.

All the care taken by the ryots get wasted if these registered superior cottons are mixed with inferior type and hence the registration of the produce under the scheme is essential for purity and quality up-keep of the final product. Furthermore, not only is the reputation of a particular cotton, but even the entire locality which produced a definite improved variety, is jeopardised by the malpractices resorted to by mixing inferior and superior cottons. Thus, purchase of cotton from such registered areas ensures better price for the merchants for these superior cottons.

Summing up, the Superior Cottons Certification Scheme brings about the following advantages for the growers, traders and the consumers:

1. The interest of cotton growers is safeguarded by the premium prices offered for certified cottons issued by the Government of India and announced by the Textile Commissioner, Bombay every year.

2. Purity of the produce is controlled from the plant to produc

3. The consuming mills will be able to get good quality cottons which spin higher counts cutting down the expenditure on import of foreign cottons.

4. Since the mills prefer quality cottons and offer higher prices for certified lint, the incentive to grow good quality cottons will be on the increase which will in turn help the country in reaching self sufficiency in the production of superior type of cottons. The differential price levels that prevailed in the Rajapalayam, Uganda market for the past six years are furnished below.

Year	Average price in Rs. per candy of MCU. 2 lint			
	Certified under the Scheme		Non-certified	
	From	To	From	To
1958	1316	1380	1123	1233
1959	1312	1353	1052	1113
1960	1166	1510	1089	1154
1961	1398	1500	1123	1267
1962	1516	1629	1183	1367
1963	1421	1443	1233	1329

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