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HIGHLIGHTS OF UNION BUDGET 2026-27

Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman
 FINANCE MINISTER



An Interview
DR SEEMA SRIVASTAVA
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
INDIA ITME SOCIETY



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Walking the Talk:

India ITME's 46-Year Legacy

From Vision to Global Leadership in Textile Technology

As the India ITME Society nears its 46th anniversary, continuing its legacy as a cornerstone of India's textile machinery landscape since 1980, R.K. Tripathi of *Communion* engages in an exclusive interaction with Executive Director Dr. Seema Srivastava to explore the organization's pivotal role in fostering indigenous engineering and technology adoption. Dr. Srivastava reflects on the Society's journey and flagship initiatives like GTTS and ITME Africa, offering critical insights into how sustainability, automation, and digitalization are reshaping manufacturing, while highlighting the Society's ongoing commitment to empowering MSMEs, facilitating global partnerships, and ensuring the Indian industry remains competitive in a technology-driven global market.

As the India ITME Society nears its 46th anniversary, reflecting on Mr. Suresh Mehta's 1980 vision, how do you see the institution's evolution?

Having been associated with the India ITME Society for 16 years, I have witnessed its evolution into a global platform for India's textile and textile engineering ecosystem. While Mr. Suresh Mehta & other members laid the foundation in 1980, subsequent chairmen have

contributed to reaching this 50-year milestone overcoming numerous challenges along the way. The Society was created to address India's post-Independence challenge of abundant raw materials but limited access to modern machinery dominated by European players. From 123 participants in its first edition to over 1,500 exhibitors from 93 countries today, ITME India has played a pivotal role in strengthening India's

textile industry by democratizing access to both cost-effective and high-end technologies, ensuring solutions for businesses of every scale.

You expanded the portfolio with the Global Textile Technology Engineering Show (GTTS) and ITME Africa.

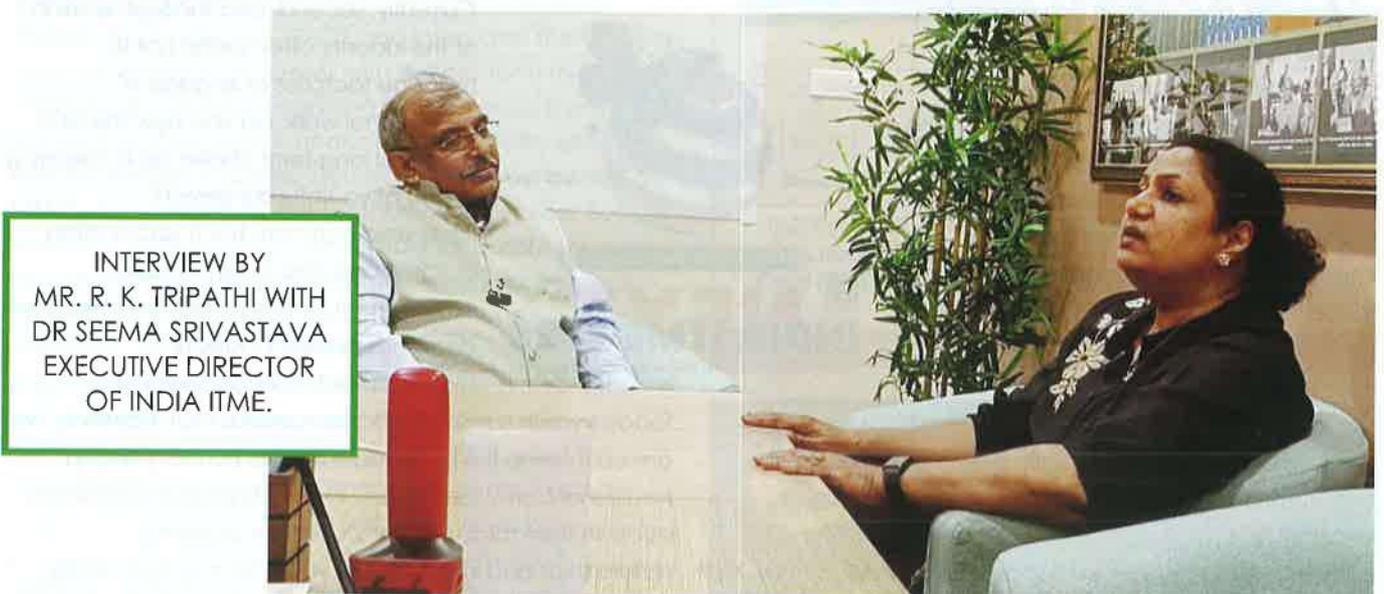
What was the strategy behind these moves?

GTTS was launched to give exhibitors an alternative platform, since missing ITME meant waiting eight years and Mumbai's space constraints left many companies waitlisted. It focuses on regional MSME hubs like Bhiwandi and Surat, supporting post-spinning sectors such as weaving, digital printing, and processing. The facilities and overall support are on par with ITME India, ensuring businesses can grow and diversify without long gaps.

international exhibition. Unfortunately, the footfall dropped significantly as it wasn't a natural textile hub and we were forced to move back to Mumbai. In 2020, we eventually moved to the India Expo Centre & Mart (IEM) in Greater Noida because it offered the space and infrastructure we needed. Despite initial anxiety about the distance, the response in 2022 was phenomenal. When COVID restrictions lifted, the exhibitors explicitly requested we stay at IEM.

With recent reports suggesting that major global players like Italy export a significant portion of their machinery to India, what are your expectations for international participation in this year's edition?

We follow a strict, fully automated allocation policy,



ITME Africa, however, was born from a different necessity. Indian machinery occupies a strategic niche, superior to Chinese options yet more affordable than European tech. To gain a first-mover advantage, we took the exhibition to Africa. Uniquely, it builds an ecosystem by integrating financial conferences for credit lines and technical training, ensuring the local market grows alongside our exports. It is important to note that both remain strictly dedicated to machinery.

Reflecting on your 15-year leadership and the Society's history, what strategic factors drove the decision to shift venues from Mumbai to Bangalore, and ultimately to Greater Noida?

Mumbai was the natural hub since all the Textiles mills were located around this region. However, it lacked a planned exhibition centre with the necessary floor loading for heavy, live machinery. We moved to Bangalore in 2008 for better facilities and also the fact that it was an

reserving 60% of exhibition space for Indian companies and 40% for international exhibitors on a first-come-first-served basis via an automated system. Unlike ITMA Europe, which is jointly managed by nine countries, India ITME independently hosts a show of comparable scale, reflecting the strength and self-reliance of India's textile engineering sector. While India remains strong in the spinning sector, dependence on foreign technology in other segments continues. As an open, politically stable market with strong purchasing power, unlike China's closed and domestically dependent market, India has emerged as a key destination for machinery manufacturers from Italy, Germany, and Switzerland. Despite occasional geopolitical challenges, our robust local networks and virtual support systems ensure uninterrupted business.

Is there a specific focus on sustainable technology in this edition?

INTERVIEW....

We update our chapters every edition to reflect global trends, and this year the focus is strongly on sustainability, recycling, and waste management. For the first time, we have also introduced a packaging segment. Our objective is that anyone connected to the textile value chain should find relevant solutions and competitive technologies at the exhibition. We are equally focused on the future workforce, offering free entry to students and faculty, complimentary booths to textile institutes, and active coordination with placement cells for internships. Beyond exhibitions, the Society contributes to social causes through the ITME Technical Awards, instituted in 2019 on the occasion of completing 40 years, which recognise excellence among MSMEs, students, researchers, and women entrepreneurs, with cash awards of Rs. 2.5 lakh to support grassroots innovation.

As you commence the campaign for the 12th edition, what is the core theme and outreach strategy?

Our core mission is to showcase the immense opportunities within the Indian textile industry to the world. Achieving participation from 94 countries requires a rigorous, multi-tiered strategy. We conduct aggressive international roadshows and participate in global exhibitions. Domestically, we target every textile hub large or small through press conferences, direct engagement, and digital media. It is this relentless outreach that ensures the global industry recognizes India as the premier destination for textile technology.

With Europe primarily positioning itself as a technology supplier, which regions are you targeting as the primary buyers for this edition?

We have an aggressive outreach program across ASEAN, the Middle East, Africa, and CIS countries, along with neighbours like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. For example, when hosting Afghanistan, we fund their participation, coordinate with the Indian Embassy, and introduce them to bankers to explore credit options. We support all countries, regardless of size or industry strength, encouraging them to buy anything from small machinery to garmenting and embroidery equipment. India excels in fabric and yarn dyeing, textile testing, and machinery, and we actively promote these strengths globally.

With the industry shift from legacy communication to digital

platforms post-COVID, how do you maintain an accurate database and manage the complex logistics of such a massive event?

When I took charge in 2010, my philosophy was to "walk the talk"—a technology exhibition must be run by technology. We moved away from manual processes early on. We established a proprietary CRM and Exhibition Management System that is updated year-round by dedicated staff to track changes in contact details, ensuring our data remains current despite industry shifts. Because our booking, promotion, and ticketing systems are fully automated, we are able to manage this global-scale event with a core team of just 11 people. This system-based approach ensures efficiency and removes any scope for partiality.

Currently, second- and third-generation of the industry often prefer not to manage factories or engage in operational work. Do you view this as a potential long-term challenge or merely a phase of youthful disinterest?

It is a valid concern. The IT sector offers quick returns and a comfortable environment, whereas the textile industry demands patience, labour management, and groundwork so

today's youth is more attracted towards that. However, we are countering this by broadening our horizon beyond traditional family succession. We see immense potential in students from rural and Tier-2 cities. By providing scholarships and internships to youth from economically weaker sections, we are cultivating a workforce that views this industry not as a burden, but as a gateway to global opportunity. Ultimately, I believe the tide is turning, with many entrepreneurs' children now joining their family business. As AI and automation saturate employment in the service sectors, the stability and tangibility of the "real economy" manufacturing will become attractive again. Finally, on a personal note, you recently completed your PhD in September 2025. Could you tell us about your research focus?

My thesis focused on Brand Equity and Exhibition Marketing, a subject directly applicable to my work here. I am a firm believer that learning should never stop, regardless of age. I strive to earn a new certification or degree every year to ensure I remain evolving alongside the industry I serve.



FOR LIVE INTERVIEW CLICK ON : <https://www.youtube.com/@communionmagazine>