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Cotton Marketing Strategies: A Comparative, Broad Analysis between Developed Countries and India

EXPERT'S COLUMN

Shri. Pankaj Mepani
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Shri. Pankaj Mepani has worked in the cotton industry for almost 49 years, having worked in both trading and textile companies. He started his career with reputed cotton trading companies like M/s Gill & Co. Ltd in 1974 and then went on to work with M/s Bhaidas Cursondas & Co. His longest tenure – 27 years – was with M/s Forbes Gokak from the Shapoorji Pallonji Group.

Shri. Mepani has actively participated as a member on various committees of Cotton Association of India. He has been a Board Member of CAI for several years and is also an Executive Council Member of the Indian Fibre Society and Indian Society for Cotton Improvement at CIRCOT, Mumbai. He has also been a visible member of the International Cotton Association, Liverpool and member of the Value Difference Committee.

Cotton is one of the most important agricultural commodities globally, with a rich history and a diverse range of applications, from textiles to industrial use.

The marketing and trade of cotton play a vital role in the economies of both developed countries and India.

Cotton is a vital cash crop that serves as the backbone of the textile industry worldwide. It is a versatile fibre that plays a crucial role in the global economy. Developed countries and India are prominent players in the cotton market, each employing distinct marketing strategies to harness the potential of this valuable commodity.

Cotton marketing in developed countries like the United States, Australia, Brazil, etc. and some European nations have well-established cotton marketing systems characterised by modern infrastructure, advanced technology and efficient supply chains.

Here are briefly some key aspects of cotton marketing in these countries:

Their marketing strategies are characterised by:

Technological Advancements: Developed countries have invested heavily in technology for cotton farming, including genetically modified cotton varieties and precision farming techniques. This results in comparatively higher yields and better quality cotton.

Infrastructure: These countries have a robust infrastructure for cotton processing, ginning, and grading. Advanced machinery ensures that cotton is processed efficiently and is of high quality.

Mechanisation: Developed countries have invested heavily in mechanized farming, using state-of-the-art technology for planting, harvesting, and

processing cotton. This results in higher productivity and quality control.

Quality Assurance: Quality standards are rigorously maintained in developed countries. Developed countries have stringent quality standards for cotton, which helps in maintaining consistency and reliability in their cotton products. The Cotton Incorporated Seal of Cotton and various certifications ensure that cotton meets specific quality parameters, making it more attractive to global buyers.

Market Research: Extensive market research and analysis are conducted to identify emerging trends and consumer preferences, allowing developed countries to produce cotton varieties that cater to specific market demands. Some developed countries have government backed marketing boards that regulate and support the cotton industry. These boards often provide subsidies, insurance, and other incentives to cotton farmers.

Branding and Promotion: Developed countries are major exporters of cotton and have a significant presence in the global cotton market. They often engage in international trade agreements to promote their cotton products. These countries emphasise branding and promotion.

India lacks a distinct branding for its cotton whereas countries like USA and Egypt have established their own branding for their cotton. The use of innovative marketing campaigns and branding strategies has created a premium image for their cotton products.

Sustainable Practices: Sustainability is a key focus, with developed countries adopting eco-friendly practices, such as reduced pesticide use and water-efficient irrigation methods, which align with global sustainability trends.

Cotton Marketing in India

India is one of the largest cotton producers in the world, has its own unique marketing strategies. India produces a wide variety of cotton, ranging from extra-long staple, long-staple to short-staple cotton. India is the only country where all four species of cotton is grown. This diversity allows India to cater to various market segments and price ranges.

The marketing strategies in India are characterised by:

Fragmented Farming: Cotton farming in India is primarily small-scale and fragmented, with millions of smallholders. This makes it challenging to implement modern farming techniques uniformly. Unlike developed countries, India still relies on traditional farming methods in many regions. This can lead to variations in quality and yield.

Diversity of Cotton Varieties: In dia produces a wide variety of cotton, ranging from long-staple to short-staple cotton. This diversity allows India to cater to various market segments and price ranges.

Quality Variability: India is an exporter of cotton, with a focus on global markets. Exports account for a substantial portion of its cotton revenue. Indian cotton often exhibits quality variations due to diverse agro-climatic conditions and farming practices. A large number of varieties/hybrids are grown in the country. This can affect its marketability.

Lack of Standardisation: The lack of standardised grading and pricing mechanisms can lead to price disparities and disputes in the cotton supply chain.

Government Policies: The Indian government plays an important role in cotton marketing through minimum support prices (MSP) and procurement schemes, providing price stability and income security to cotton farmers.

Comparative Analysis

Sustainability: Developed countries prioritise sustainability practices, whereas India is slowly embracing sustainable farming methods. The global demand for sustainable cotton could incentivise Indian farmers to adopt eco-friendly practices.

Quality vs. Quantity: Developed countries emphasise quality, while India often focuses on increasing cotton production. Finding a balance between quality and quantity is essential for India's global competitiveness.

The government is very keen on the improvement in the quality of the cotton by promulgation of quality control order regarding cotton bales.

Branding and Promotion: Developed countries excel in branding and promotion, giving them an edge in premium markets. India has scope to learn from their strategies to enhance the image of Indian cotton. In order to fetch premium price for Indian cotton as well as to enhance export opportunities and foreign earnings, Govt. of India has launched the brand "Kasturi Cotton India" for the Indian cotton. The Kasturi cotton branding is being promoted by TEXPROCIL in the country.

Conclusion

The marketing of cotton in developed countries and India differs significantly due to factors such as technological advancements, infrastructure, quality standards, and government policies.

The marketing of cotton in developed countries and India reflects distinct strategies and priorities. While developed countries have advanced systems in place, India faces challenges related to fragmentation, quality variability, and infrastructure gaps. Efforts are being made in India to modernise its cotton marketing system, improve quality standards, and provide better support to farmers.

As the global cotton market continues to evolve, it is essential for India to adapt to changing dynamics and embrace innovations to enhance its competitiveness and maintain its position as a major player in the cotton industry. The developed countries focus on quality, sustainability and branding, to thrive in the global cotton market, India can adopt some of the best practices from developed countries while preserving its unique strengths. Finding the right balance between quality, quantity, and sustainability will be crucial for India's success in the ever-evolving cotton industry.

Cotton ever be with us!

(The views expressed in this column are of the author and not that of Cotton Association of India)

India's Dr. C.D. Mayee: From Humboldt Fellow (1980) to Global Cotton Leader (2026) - ICAC

From being an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at the University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart in 1980 to receiving the 2025 ICAC International Researcher of the Year in 2026 at the Parliament House in Bremen, Germany, the journey of Dr. Charudatta Mayee is a remarkable testament to lifelong dedication, scientific excellence, and global impact.

At the 83rd Plenary Meeting of the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) held at the historic Parliament House in Bremen, Germany on 23 March 2026, Dr. Mayee - eminent cotton scientist and President of the South Asia Biotechnology Centre was honoured with this prestigious global recognition. This award celebrates over five decades of pioneering contributions to agricultural science and the cotton sector worldwide.

The ceremony featured a heartfelt tribute by ICAC Chief Scientist Dr. Keshav Kranthi, in the presence of Mr. Eric Trachtenberg, Executive Director of ICAC, Mr. Shreyans Gupta, Standing Committee Chair, ICAC and Mr. Fritz Grobein, President of Bremen Cotton Exchange along with delegates from ICAC member countries across the globe.

In recognizing a lifetime of dedication, the ICAC citation highlighted Dr. Mayee's transformative role in shaping cotton research, policy and farmer-centric agricultural development impacting not only India but the global cotton ecosystem.

A Global Platform for the Future of Cotton The ICAC Plenary (March 23–24), in collaboration with the Bremen Cotton Exchange, is followed by the International Cotton Conference Bremen (March 25–27) - a premier global forum addressing cotton cultivation, quality, textile innovation and the entire value chain.

Heartiest congratulations to Dr. Mayee for this exceptional global honour and for an inspiring journey that continues to guide generations in agricultural science and leadership.

83rd ICAC Plenary Technical Session:
Cutting-edge Tech for Managing Pests and Diseases

The second day of the 83rd ICAC Plenary Meeting, held March 23-24 in Bremen, Germany, featured one of the staples of the annual conference: the Technical Seminar. The theme this year was, "Deep Learning and Sensor Technologies for Automated Detection and Monitoring of Cotton Diseases and Insect Pests."

Pests and diseases might not be pleasant to think about, but they are virtually ubiquitous in cotton fields, so dealing with them is unavoidable. Fortunately, two of the world's top cotton scientists — 2025 ICAC Researcher of the Year Dr Charudatta Mayee (at left) and ICAC Chief Scientist Dr Keshav Kranthi (winner of the inaugural Researcher of the Year award in 2009) — offered some guidance on how to deal with the creepy crawlies during the Third Open Session, held from 9:00-10:30 am on March 24.

Among the many issues they discussed during the 90-minute session:

- Current management practices — both chemical and non-chemical
- Traditional detection, diagnosis and warning systems
- Sensor and AI-based technologies application
- New research programs
- Robotic and radar monitoring
- Mating disruption, and more

While the audience was completely engaged as they learned about the many new technologies available for managing pests and diseases, Dr Kranthi left them with one very important takeaway: As exciting as these new technologies might be, sensors, smart phones and drones cannot completely replace integrated pest management.

"These sophisticated tools are very helpful, but they really should be supporting IPM decisions, not replacing them," he said. "Technology will probably never be able to replace a farmer's agronomic experience."

Source : ICAC

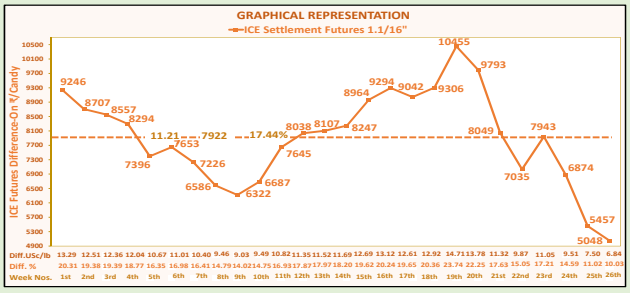
Basis Comparison of ICS 105 with ICE Futures – 30th March 2026

SEASON 2025-2026

Comparison M/M(P) ICS-105, Grade Fine, Staple 29mm, Mic. 3.7-4.9, Trash 3.5%, Str./GPT 28 with ICE Futures

Date	CAI (₹ /Candy)	Conversion Rate (US$ = ₹)	CAI (USc/lb.)	ICE Settlement Futures 1.1/16" Front Mth. May'26 (USc/lb.)	Difference-ON/OFF ICE Futures		
					USc/lb.	₹ /Candy	%
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Cotton Year Week No-26th							
23rd Mar	55500	93.97	75.33	67.18	8.15	6004	12.13
24th Mar	55500	93.87	75.41	67.62	7.79	5733	11.52
25th Mar	55500	93.97	75.33	68.18	7.15	5268	10.49
26th Mar	55500	93.97	75.33	69.41	5.92	4361	8.53
27th Mar	55500	94.81	74.67	69.46	5.21	3873	7.50
Weekly Avg.	**55500**	**94.12**	**75.21**	**68.37**	**6.84**	**5048**	**10.03**
Total Avg. frm 1st Wk to 26th Wk (Weekly Basis)	**53533**	**86.63**	**75.70**	**64.49**	**11.21**	**7922**	**17.44**

Note:- Weeks taken as per Cotton Year (October To September).
Values in BLUE Indicates Previous Close Considered due to HOLIDAY's Resp.
26th Mar 2026 - RBI & Domestic market remain CLOSED due to Shri Ram Navami.



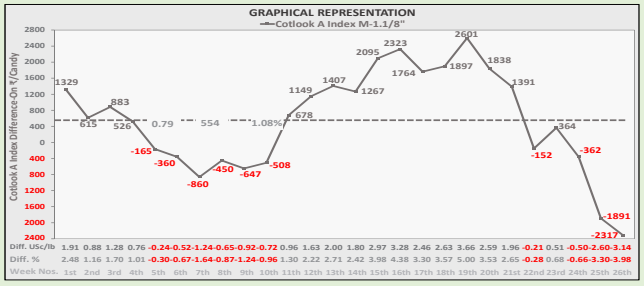
Basis Comparison of ICS 105 with Cotlook A Index – 30th March 2026

SEASON 2025-2026

Comparison M/M(P) ICS-105, Grade Fine, Staple 29mm, Mic. 3.7-4.9, Trash 3.5%, Str./GPT 28 with Cotlook A Index

Date	CAI (₹ /Candy)	Conversion Rate (US$ = ₹)	*CAI (USc/lb.)	Cotlook A Index M-1.1/8" C & F FE Ports	Difference-ON/OFF Cotlook A Index		
					USc/lb.	₹/Candy	%
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Cotton Year Week No-26th							
23rd Mar	55500	93.97	75.53	77.85	-2.32	-1709	-2.98
24th Mar	55500	93.87	75.61	77.75	-2.14	-1575	-2.75
25th Mar	55500	93.97	75.53	78.20	-2.67	-1967	-3.41
26th Mar	55500	93.97	75.53	78.85	-3.32	-2446	-4.21
27th Mar	55500	94.81	74.87	80.10	-5.23	-3888	-6.53
Weekly Avg.	**55500**	**94.12**	**75.41**	**78.55**	**-3.14**	**-2317**	**-3.98**
Total Avg. frm 1st Wk to 26th Wk (Weekly Basis)	**53533**	**90.20**	**75.90**	**75.11**	**0.79**	**554**	**1.08**

Note:- Weeks taken as per Cotton Year (October To September).
*Converted to C & F FE Ports by adding 20c/lb. to CAI spot rates.
Values in BLUE Indicates Previous Close Considered due to HOLIDAY's Resp.
26th Mar 2026 - RBI & Domestic market remain CLOSED due to Shri Ram Navami.



Glimpses of Ram Navami Celebrations

at Shree Ramchandraji Mandir, Cotton Green from 19th March 2026 to 27th March 2026





























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UPCOUNTRY SPOT RATES

(Rs./Qtl)

Standard Descriptions with Basic Grade & Staple in Millimeters based on Upper Half Mean Length As per CAI By-laws								Spot Rate (Upcountry) 2025-26 Crop March 2026					
Sr. No.	Growth	Grade Standard	Grade	Staple	Micronaire	Gravimetric Trash	Strength /GPT	23rd	24th	25th	26th	27th	28th
1	P/H/R	ICS-101	Fine	Below 22mm	5.0 – 7.0	4%	15	12963 (46100)	13244 (47100)	13244 (47100)		13526 (48100)	
2	GUJ	ICS-102	Fine	22mm	4.0 – 6.0	13%	20	10629 (37800)	10517 (37400)	10517 (37400)	H	10517 (37400)	H
3	M/M (P)	ICS-104	Fine	23mm	4.5 – 7.0	4%	22	13779 (49000)	13779 (49000)	13779 (49000)		13779 (49000)	
4	P/H/R (U)	ICS-202 (SG)	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	4.5%	26	14341 (51000)	14426 (51300)	14426 (51300)		14622 (52000)	
5	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	4%	26	14538 (51700)	14622 (52000)	14679 (52200)	O	14875 (52900)	O
6	M/M(P)/ SA/TL/GUJ	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.0 – 3.4	4%	25	13638 (48500)	13779 (49000)	13779 (49000)		13779 (49000)	
7	M/M(P)/ SA/TL	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	3.5%	26	14988 (53300)	14988 (53300)	14988 (53300)		14988 (53300)	
8	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.5 – 4.9	4%	27	15016 (53400)	15100 (53700)	15100 (53700)	L	15382 (54700)	L
9	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.9	3.5%	27	15325 (54500)	15325 (54500)	15325 (54500)		15325 (54500)	
10	SA/TL/K	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.9	3.5%	27	15297 (54400)	15213 (54100)	15213 (54100)		15213 (54100)	
11	GUJ	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	27	15550 (55300)	15550 (55300)	15466 (55000)	I	15494 (55100)	I
12	R(L)	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.9	3.5%	27	15185 (54000)	15185 (54000)	15185 (54000)		15325 (54500)	
13	R(L)	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.9	3.5%	28	15607 (55500)	15607 (55500)	15607 (55500)		15747 (56000)	
14	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.9	3.5%	28	15607 (55500)	15607 (55500)	15607 (55500)		15607 (55500)	
15	SA/TL/K	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	28	15438 (54900)	15438 (54900)	15438 (54900)	D	15438 (54900)	D
16	GUJ	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	28	15775 (56100)	15775 (56100)	15775 (56100)		15803 (56200)	
17	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	30mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	29	15888 (56500)	15888 (56500)	15888 (56500)		15888 (56500)	
18	SA/TL/K/O	ICS-105	Fine	30mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	29	15803 (56200)	15803 (56200)	15803 (56200)		15803 (56200)	
19	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	31mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	30	16310 (58000)	16310 (58000)	16310 (58000)	A	16310 (58000)	A
20	SA/TL/K/ TN/O	ICS-105	Fine	31mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	30	16338 (58100)	16253 (57800)	16253 (57800)		16253 (57800)	
21	SA/TL/K / TN/O	ICS-106	Fine	32mm	3.5 – 4.9	3%	31	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)		N.A. (N.A.)	
22	M/M(P)	ICS-107	Fine	34mm	2.8 - 3.7	4%	33	20443 (72700)	20443 (72700)	20584 (73200)	Y	20724 (73700)	Y
23	K/TN	ICS-107	Fine	34mm	2.8 - 3.7	3.5%	34	20528 (73000)	20528 (73000)	20809 (74000)		20949 (74500)	
24	M/M(P)	ICS-107	Fine	35mm	2.8 - 3.7	4%	35	20809 (74000)	20809 (74000)	21090 (75000)		21231 (75500)	
25	K/TN	ICS-107	Fine	35mm	2.8 - 3.7	3.5%	35	21090 (75000)	21090 (75000)	21371 (76000)		21512 (76500)	

Note: *(Figures in bracket indicate prices in Rs./Candy)*