

>iscose - The Greater Fibre

Today, clothing is a fashion statement, reflecting the wearer's personality and image. But this comes at a cost to the environment. In a bid to minimise the negative impact world over, there has been a rise in activism towards responsible fashion, eventually leading to solutions such as recycling and circular economy.

Let us deep dive into the raw material of clothing to understand it better. Fibres are the basic raw material for the production of apparel. Typically, fibres are grouped into two broad categories—natural fibres and manmade fibres. Natural fibres include cotton, wool, silk, hemp, and jute while manmade fibres include polyester, nylons, and acrylics. There is also a third category that exists between natural and synthetic fibres known as regenerated fibres i.e. Manmade Cellulosic Fibres (MMCF) such as viscose, modal, and lyocell.

Regenerated cellulose fibres, commonly called viscose or rayon, are not new to the world of textile fibres but probably the most misunderstood of all fibres. The viscose fibre is made by chemically dissolving wood-based cellulose and then rebuilding it in the form of fibre that can be used in textile.

Responsible suppliers source the raw material for MMCF from sustainably managed forests and produced using closed-loop manufacturing process, which reduces the impact on natural resources. At the end of the lifecycle, these fibres are biodegradable and compostable.

Below are some of the key sustainability and performance attributes that differentiate responsibly made MMCF.

Superior from Environmental Perspective

- Made from renewable natural source

It is made from wood, a fully renewable natural source. Sustainably managed forests not only continually regenerate the raw material but also act as great sinks for the absorption of GHG emissions.

- Lower water usage compared to other natural fibres

Water scarcity is one of the biggest societal concerns. Two-thirds of the world's population live in water-deficient areas. Other natural fibres consume large amounts of water during cultivation. Viscose, on the other hand, is wood-based and needs a small fraction of water.

- Minimal land requirement

With an increasing population and the subsequent food demand, arable land will become more limited, and this will challenge society's ability to supply adequate food in the future. Viscose uses a small fraction of land compared to natural fibres.

- No land and water pollution due to chemicals and fertilisers

The raw material for viscose – wood – does not require added fertilisers or pesticides. The fertilisers and chemicals necessary for other natural fibres have the potential to runoff and cause significant pollution to land and groundwater.

- End of life-biodegradable

Viscose is fully biodegradable and compostable. It does not cause harm to human and environment health, including marine life. On the other hand, synthetic garments do not biodegrade and are now recognised as causing marine pollution.

- Circularity

Newer technologies are utilising pre- and post-consumer waste as a feedstock for producing viscose fibre. This offers the opportunity for circularity for the cellulose value chain.

Superior Quality from a Product Attribute Perspective

- Outstanding comfort and style

Viscose is way ahead of other fibres when it comes to comfort and fashion. Its breathability and moisture absorption are much higher than other natural cellulosic fibres. The fibre is lightweight, inspires soft drapes and effortless style. Viscose fibres are easy to style due to their colour range, brilliant lustre, and good drape.

- Ability to stand out

Viscose derives good qualities of both man-made and natural fibres. Like synthetic fibres, viscose has lustre and can be styled easily. At the same time, it is based on a natural renewable raw material.

- Ability to blend easily

Viscose is one of the most easily blendable fibre options. It blends easily with natural as well as synthetic fibres enhancing their characteristics. It lends a luxurious feel to other fibres.

Superior in Versatility of Applications

- Viscose is a technologically versatile fibre. It can run on all types of technologies – conventional as well as modern spinning techniques such as Ring Spinning, Open End and Air Jet.
- Viscose-based yarns have a large number of applications ranging from apparel, home textiles such as carpets, and upholstery.
- Viscose is a preferred choice for non-woven wipes due to its high absorbency, eco-friendly properties, and comfort in next-to-skin applications.

More Sustainable Fashion, yet Affordable

Conventional wisdom has been that products made of sustainable materials are more expensive or lack the performance expected in today's fashions. Viscose fibres offer many sustainability advantages over natural and synthetic fibres and have high-quality performance characteristics necessary in higher fashion while still being at an affordable price range.