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**ELEVENTH REPORT
COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
(2006-2007)
(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

'WORKING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN IN HANDICRAFT SECTOR'

MINISTRY OF TEXTILES

*[Action Taken on Fifth Report of Committee on Empowerment of Women
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)]*

ELEVENTH REPORT

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**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

February, 2007/Phalgun, 1928 (Saka)

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(2006-2007)

(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)

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MINISTRY OF TEXTILES

*[Action Taken on Fifth Report of Committee on Empowerment of Women
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)]*

Presented to Lok Sabha on 8th March 2007

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 8th March 2007

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NEW DELHI

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**COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON
EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
(2006-2007)**

Hon'ble Chairperson - Smt. Krishna Tirath

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Smt. Priya Dutt
3. Smt. Jayaprada
4. Smt. Preneet Kaur
5. Smt. Sushila Kerketta
6. Smt. Manorama Madhvaraj
7. Shri Tek Lal Mahato
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RAJYA SABHA

21. Smt. Shobhana Bhartia
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24. Kumari Nirmala Deshpande
25. Smt. N.P. Durga
- 26.* Smt. S.G. Indira
27. Smt. Brinda Karat
28. Smt. Hema Malini
29. Smt. Maya Singh
30. Smt. Syeda Anwara Taimur

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Shri S.K. Sharma | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Shri J.P. Sharma | Joint Secretary |
| 3. | Smt. Veena Sharma | Deputy Secretary Grade I |
| 4. | Shri V.P. Goel | Under Secretary |
| 5. | Smt. Archana Pathania | Committee Officer |

* Nominated to the Committee w.e.f from 1st September, 2006

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of Committee on Empowerment of Women, present the Eleventh Report (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Fifth Report of the Committee on Empowerment of Women (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Working Conditions of Women in Handicraft Sector' relating to the Ministry of Textiles.

2. The Fifth Report (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Empowerment of Women was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 12th May, 2006. Replies of the Government to all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report have been received.

3. The Draft Report was considered and adopted by the Committee on Empowerment of Women (2006-2007) at their sitting held on 15th February, 2007. The Minutes of the sitting form Part II of the Report.

4. For facility of reference and convenience, the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report and have also been reproduced in a consolidated form in Appendix – I of the Report.

5. An Analysis of the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Fifth Report (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given at Appendix II.

NEW DELHI
27th February, 2007
8 Phalgun, 1928 (Saka)

KRISHNA TIRATH
CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

CHAPTER I

REPORT

1. This Report of the Committee deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Fifth Report (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Empowerment of Women on the subject 'Working Conditions of Women in Handicraft Sector' relating to the Ministry of Textiles.

2. The Fifth Report of the Committee was presented to Lok Sabha on 12th May, 2006. Replies of Government in respect of all recommendations have been received and are categorized as under:

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government.

Para Nos.:-54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71 and 72.

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government.

Para No.- 64.

- (iii) Observations/Recommendations, replies to which have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration.

Para Nos.-. 55, 69 and 70.

- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which the Government have furnished interim replies.

Nil.

3. The Committee desire that replies in respect of recommendations contained in Chapter I should be furnished by the Government expeditiously.

4. The Committee will now deal with those action taken replies of the Government, which need reiteration or merit comments.

Recommendation Para No. 55

Need to conduct study/survey to identify the problems faced by women artisans.

5. The Committee in their Original Report had noted that majority of the handicraft artisans including women artisans did not have good working conditions at their work place and they faced problems such as paucity of space, inadequate ventilation and light at the work place and so on. The environment in their houses was not conducive for the production of quality

handicraft. The Committee had found that no study or survey had been carried out by the Ministry to identify the problems being faced by the artisans including women artisans. The Committee had regretted to point out that despite knowing well about the lack of conducive working conditions for handicraft artisans, the Ministry had not initiated any steps in this direction. The Committee, therefore, had desired that the Ministry should conduct a study/survey to identify the basic problems being faced by the artisans including women artisans and take remedial measures to mitigate their basic problems without further delay.

6. The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have simply stated that the recommendation of the Committee has been noted for compliance.

7. While noting that there was lack of conducive working conditions for handicraft artisans, the Committee had in their Original Report desired the Ministry to conduct a study/survey to identify the basic problems being faced by the artisans including women artisans and take remedial measures to mitigate their basic problems. The Committee are unhappy to note that the Ministry, instead of initiating any suitable steps in the direction, have simply kept the recommendation of the Committee in abeyance. The Committee deprecate the casual approach of the Government in handling the matters. The Committee are of the opinion that unless the Ministry

are aware of problems of the artisans, specially women artisans, they cannot take appropriate measures for the improvement of their conditions. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that the Ministry should take urgent steps to conduct study/survey in order to identify their problems and help their cause. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard within a period of three months of presentation of this Report.

Recommendation Para No. 61 & 62

Need for training programmes for women artisans.

8. The Committee in their earlier Report had noted that three Schemes viz. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilip Vikas Yojana (AHVY), Special Handicrafts Training Project (SHTP) and Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme had been launched by the Government for upgrading the training skills of the artisans. The Committee were informed that under AHVY about 481 clusters had been taken up benefiting 1,40,000 artisans including 62,000 women artisans. The Committee had found that 5365 artisans including 2802 women had been imparted training under SHTP and 9670 were undergoing training under this Scheme. The Committee also found that under Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme only 1974 women artisans had been benefited during the last three years. The

Committee were not happy with the number of women artisans trained under all these Schemes. The Committee were of the view that women artisans could not face the ever- increasing competition in the market and improve their productivity unless they acquired adequate skill and were imparted proper training. The Committee felt that with their limited skill and resources and inadequate knowledge of market trends, the need of training for women artisans assumed more importance. The Committee had, therefore, expressed the opinion that there was an urgent need for training of more and more women artisans under various training programmes hence, adequate quota in training programme needed to be fixed for women artisans to enable them to upgrade their skills, to produce innovative and value-added items, to cope with the fast-changing market demands and further improve their productivity.

9. The Ministry of Textiles in their Action Taken Note have stated that the Scheme of Design & Technology Upgradation is not gender specific. However, the efforts have been made to involve women artisans as well in various Design/Technology Upgradation workshops/projects organized by this office from time to time across the country. The observation of the Committee for providing skill upgradation to more numbers of women through such programmes has been noted and efforts should be made to ensure greater participation of women in such activities.

10. As regards the recommendation of the Committee at Para No. 62, for training of more women artisans under various training programmes and fixing of adequate quota for women artisans, the Ministry of Textiles have stated that the observation of the Committee has been noted for future compliance.

11. The Committee in their Original Report had expressed their dissatisfaction with the number of women artisans trained under the three training programmes viz. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilip Vikas Yojana (AHVY), Special Handicrafts Training Project (SHTP) and Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme. The Committee had, therefore, desired that adequate quota in various training programmes be fixed for women artisans to enable them to upgrade their skills and to improve their productivity. The Committee are dismayed to note that the Ministry, instead of taking concrete steps to implement the recommendation of the Committee, have adopted an evasive approach by noting it for future compliance. The Committee strongly disapproves the lackadaisical manner of treating their recommendations. While reiterating their original recommendations, the Committee desire that the Ministry should take concrete steps in this direction so that every women artisan is imparted training and and apprise them accordingly.

Recommendation Para No.66**Delay in construction of Work-sheds**

12. In the aforesaid paragraph of their Original Report, the Committee had found that out of 1765 sanctioned worksheds only 100 worksheds (90 for men and 10 for women artisans) had been completed. The Committee were not satisfied with the reasons advanced by the Ministry for the delay in the completion of worksheds viz. snowfall in J&K and the scheme being only two year-old, etc. The Committee further found that out of the 1765 worksheds sanctioned, 823 were for women. They felt that delay in provision of the worksheds to artisans would deprive them especially women artisans, of the benefits of better working conditions. The Committee had also found that the performance of this Scheme was also not satisfactory in other States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The Committee, therefore, had desired the Ministry to take appropriate steps to provide worksheds to artisans not only in Jammu and Kashmir but in other States also in a time-bound programme.

13. The Ministry of Textiles in their Action Taken Note have stated that the scheme of Work-shed, which was being implemented in the State of Jammu & Kashmir has been extended to other parts of the country. All implementing agencies have been requested for speedy completion of the projects in a time bound manner. Due care has been taken for construction

of these work-sheds in and around places where there is concentration of artisans.

14. Having noted the fact that out of 1765 sanctioned Worksheds paltry 100 Worksheds were constructed out of which only 10 related to women artisans, the Committee had in their Original Report expressed their displeasure on the slow pace of construction of Worksheds. The Ministry have not indicated any further progress made in the construction of Worksheds during the last six months which indicates the lack of seriousness on the part of the Ministry. The Committee while reiterating the recommendation, feel that simply issuance of instructions to the implementing agencies is not enough. The Ministry should monitor the scheme effectively and apprise the Committee about the progress made in this regard.

Recommendation Para Nos. 69 and 70

Need for strengthening of Monitoring mechanism.

15. In the aforementioned paragraphs, the Committee had noted that implementation of the schemes were monitored through the concerned Regional Offices, Marketing and Service Extension Centres and Regional Design and Technical Development Centres, etc. Further, Social Security Schemes were monitored through Assistant Directors to Marketing and Service Extension Centres of Regional Offices and the Head Office. The

Committee, however, did not agree with the Ministry that the existing monitoring mechanism was effective and adequate as they found that there were shortcomings like under-utilisation of funds allocated for various schemes, poor performance of schemes like Workshed Scheme, inadequate training facilities available for women artisans, inadequate credit facilities for artisans, etc, which were coming in the way of the development of handicraft sector. So, the Committee felt that there was an urgent need for its strengthening.

16. The Committee had, therefore, desired that the Ministry should take concrete steps in close coordination with the State Governments and other implementing agencies for strengthening the existing monitoring mechanism, so that the schemes meant for artisans were implemented in the best possible manner.

17. In their action taken replies, the Ministry have stated that the observation of the Committee has been noted for future compliance. However, they have stated that under the Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY) for integrated development of selected craft cluster, the sanction order was issued in favour of various implementing agencies viz. State Handicrafts Corporations/NGOs/Apex Societies etc., a copy of the sanction order has also been enclosed to District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA), State Handicrafts Industries Development & District Magistrate for compliance of the scheme. The representatives of the State

Governments are also involved in the inspection of the events being implemented under the scheme falling under their ambit.

18. While noting various shortcomings in the implementation of the schemes meant for handicraft sector, the Committee had emphasised the need for strengthening of the existing monitoring mechanism. The Committee are shocked to find that the Ministry have so far not initiated any steps in this regard and have merely mentioned about the directions issued to various implementing agencies with regard to Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilip Vikas Yojana. The Committee desire that the monitoring mechanism should be strengthened for proper implementation of all the schemes meant for artisans including women artisans. While reiterating their earlier recommendations, the Committee desire the Ministry to take urgent steps for strengthening of their monitoring mechanism for proper implementation of various schemes meant for handicraft sector.

CHAPTER II**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN
ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT****Recommendation**

The Committee are surprised to find that no gender specific schemes are being operated by the Government for women handicraft artisans in spite of the fact that out of 47.61 lakh artisans, 22.57 lakhs are women, constituting approximately 47.40% of the total handicraft artisans, and even when certain crafts, like embroidery, bead work, applique, durries, shawls, cane & bamboo, artistic textile, weaving and mat-weaving etc. are being practiced predominantly by women. The Committee are not satisfied with the reasons given by the Secretary, Textiles, during evidence that “the schemes are gender neutral and the Ministry have not been discriminating the male artisans or female artisans as they all are people living below the poverty line.” The Committee are of the view that women artisans, who have to discharge the dual responsibility of looking after their household and earning livelihood, face many problems arising out of their job. Besides, taking into consideration their numerical strength in this sector, the Ministry should have formulated some specific schemes for these women artisans. Even the Secretary during evidence admitted “if the Committee feel then the Ministry would give more money to women artisans. From this year onwards, the Ministry would be more sensitive to the needs of the women and focus their schemes towards the requirements of women.” The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to formulate not only specific schemes for women artisans but also incorporate some specific provisions in the existing schemes for the benefit of women artisans to cater to their needs.

(Para No.54)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The various initiatives taken by the Office of the DC (Handicrafts) have benefited all Sections/Regions of the country in an equitable manner including women artisans. The funds have flown more or less in proportion to the gender population. The beneficiaries of the schemes of this office includes a sizeable number of women artisans which constitute more than 40%. It is evident from the results obtained that even though the schemes have not been made gender specific, yet the intended benefits have reached to the women artisans substantially. In the 11th Five Year Plan (2007–2012), specific scheme for women has been proposed, which includes the scheme of skill Upgradation under Special Handicrafts Training Project, instead of 75%, 90% grant to women based organization for participation in marketing events and conducting design & technology workshop under Design & Technology Upgradation scheme.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee find that in Handicraft sector, since more than 90 per cent of the Schemes are being implemented through the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as such the growth of this sector mostly depends upon their performance. The Committee feel that NGOs, being grass-root functionaries, can play a vital role in the generation of awareness among the women artisans about the salient features of various schemes and in their implementation. The Committee, therefore, desire that while selecting the NGOs, due consideration should be given to their strong financial integrity and the working experience in the field so that only suitable and eligible NGOs with sound financial credentials are involved in the development process of this sector.

(Para No. 56)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

A process has since been initiated to short-list NGOs at the regional level by grading them on the basis of their performance and strong financial integrity, to decide their eligibility for undertaking implementation of different schemes of this office. A Committee has been set up for this purpose at Regional level and proposals of the deserving NGOs recommended by the above Committee are considered thereafter

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee find that Artisans Credit Card (ACC) Scheme is being implemented by the Ministry to provide credit facilities to artisans to meet their credit requirements, for investment as well as working capital. So far only 37,369 number of cards have been issued by the banks upto 2004-2005 which, in the opinion of the Committee, is not a satisfactory state of affairs taking into consideration the existing population of the artisans. The Committee are of the view that the low coverage under this Scheme may be due to lack of adequate publicity and awareness of the benefits of this Scheme among the targeted group of beneficiaries. The Committee desire that adequate publicity of the scheme should be made so that artisans including women artisans could come forward to avail the benefits.

(Para No. 57)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

After taking the initiative as suggested by the Committee in its 5th report, 81,000 Artisans Credit Card (ACC) have been issued so far to handicrafts artisans including women artisans. In order to publicize the scheme amongst the artisans, 12 awareness workshops have been organized in different parts of the country with the participation of Member Lending Institutions (MLI's) Banks,

Credit Guarantee Funds Trust for Small Industries (CGTSI) Officers, NGOs, State Corporations, artisans etc. for issue of ACC Cards under Credit Guarantee Scheme for handicrafts artisans. Besides, organizing awareness workshops, all State Handicraft Corporations/Industries Departments have been requested to give wider publicity to this scheme. Pamphlets of ACC have also been distributed among the artisans, NGOs, Corporations, handicrafts clusters etc.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee are perturbed to note that though the women artisans constitute a large segment of handicraft artisans, there is no specific provision for providing credit facilities to them at concessional rates under any of the Schemes being implemented by the Ministry. The Committee are of the opinion that credit facilities at concessional rates would encourage more women to avail the benefits of the credit thereby improving their productivity. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to examine the feasibility of providing financial assistance/credit facilities to women artisans at concessional rates in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Banking Institutions.

(Para No.58)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The recommendation of the Committee has been noted for future compliance.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee have been informed that Marketing and Support Service Scheme and Export Promotion Scheme are being implemented by Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) for improving the marketability of handicraft products. Under Marketing and Support Service Scheme, marketing events are organised in big and small cities to project Indian handicrafts and create awareness among the masses and also to provide direct marketing outlets to the craftpersons living in far-flung and remote and hilly areas by inviting them to participate in the events in different cities for augmenting their sale and eliminating the role of middle men. The Committee, however, find that there is no special incentive for women artisans under this Scheme. Two special Craft Bazars for women artisans were organised in Delhi and Bhubaneswar during 2004-05 which benefited 200 women artisans. Under Urban Haat Component of Marketing and Support Service Scheme, built-up stalls are allotted to artisans on fortnightly rotation basis at normal rent and five Urban Haats have become operational at locations like Tirupati, Bhubaneswar, Jammu, Uchana-Karnal, Gohar Mahal - Bhopal. Under this Scheme also, there is no provision to provide any special incentive to women artisans for participating in such Haats. Mahila Utsav was organised during 2004-05 exclusively for women artisans at Delhi Haat which benefited 139 women artisans. The Committee are unhappy to be informed that under both these Schemes, there are no special incentives for women artisans. The Committee desire that specific provisions giving incentives to women artisans be incorporated in the existing schemes and more special events to give sufficient marketing boost for women artisans be organised in sub-urban and small towns as the artisans living in these areas find it difficult to go to far off places and avail the benefits of such schemes.

(Para No. 59)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

Noted for future compliance.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee are unhappy to be informed that only five Urban Haats have become operational and only one Mahila Utsav benefiting only 139 women artisans was organized during 2004 under Urban Haat Scheme launched in 1999-2000. The Committee emphasize the need to organise frequent marketing events at regular intervals and arrange more Urban Haats, throughout India and give priority in the allotment of stalls to women artisans so that the objectives of these Schemes could be achieved and women artisans could get more marketing outlets.

(Para No. 60)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

So far 7 Urban Haats have become operational at Ahmedabad, Bhubneshwar, Tirupati, Uchana (Karnal), Jammu, Gohar Mahal (Bhopal) & at Srinagar. The Urban Haat authorities have been advised to organize at least 2 crafts bazaar in a year in Urban Haat. Artisans including women artisans, who, apply for participation in such events are provided opportunities to display and sale their products.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee note that three Schemes viz. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY), Special Handicrafts Training Project (SHTP) and Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme have been launched by the

Government for upgrading the training skills of the artisans. Under AHVY, artisan clusters are organised into Self-Help Groups/Cooperatives to enable them to take up economic activities. The Secretary of the Ministry during evidence informed that about 481 clusters have been taken up benefiting 1,40,000 artisans including 62,000 women artisans which works out to be about 44% of the total. The representative during evidence admitted that the percentage of women should have been 47.5% instead of 44%. The objective of the SHTP Scheme is to provide training to semi-skilled handicraft artisans to upgrade their skill so as to be responsive to changing market requirements. The Committee find that 5365 artisans including 2802 women have been imparted training and 9670 are under going training under this Scheme. The representative of the Ministry during evidence admitted that there is no separate scheme for training of women artisans belonging to SCs/STs. The Committee also find that under Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme, which was launched to upgrade the artisans' skill through appropriate design and technical upgradation to enable them to produce innovative and value-added items to cope with the fast-changing market demand, only 1974 women artisans had benefited during the last three years.

(Para No. 61)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The scheme of Design & Technology Upgradation is not gender specific. However, the efforts have been made to involve women artisans as well in various Design/Technology Upgradation workshops/projects organized by this office from time to time across the country. The observation of the Committee for providing skill upgradation to more numbers of women through such programmes has been noted and efforts should be made to ensure greater participation of women in such activities.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee are not happy with the number of women artisans trained under all these Schemes so far. The Committee are of the view that women artisans cannot face the ever-increasing competition in the market and improve their productivity unless they acquire adequate skill and are imparted proper training. The Committee feel that with their limited skill and resources and inadequate knowledge of market trends, the need of training for women artisans assumes more importance. The Committee are, therefore, of the opinion that there is an urgent need for training of more and more women artisans under various training programmes hence, adequate quota in training programme needs to be fixed for women artisans to enable them to upgrade their skills, to produce innovative and value-added items, to cope with the fast-changing market demands and further improve their productivity.

(Para No. 62)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The observation of the Committee has been noted for future compliance.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee further desire the Ministry to monitor all the training programmes at regular intervals to enable the Ministry to take necessary corrective measures, if and when required.

(Para No. 63)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The monitoring of the training programmes is conducted regularly by Field Officers and the Officers from the Regional and Hqrs. Office. Necessary corrective measures are being taken after getting feed-back through these inspections. Strengthening of monitoring system is on the anvil.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee find that the Master-craft persons in indigent circumstances who are recipient of National Awards/National Merit Certificates/State Awards are eligible for being considered for financial assistance, if their income is less than 15,000 per year. The Committee have also been informed during evidence that 'the Ministry approve 25 new proposals every year and Rs. 1000 is payable to the artisans who are above 60 years and whose annual income is less than Rs. 15,000 per year.' The Committee are of the view that this income limit which was fixed during Ninth Plan period needs to be revised. The representative of the Ministry during evidence admitted that "We have to adjust it to the inflation..... for five years, atleast we can get Rs. 25000 if the Committee recommend, it will help the Ministry." The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to raise the limit of the income of the artisans in accordance with the inflation rate.

(Para No. 65)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The observation of the Committee has been noted for future compliance.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee have been informed that Workshed Scheme is being implemented with a view to provide improved working conditions with emphasis on the provision of ample space for work with ventilated and healthy working environment to handicraft artisans for better productivity and enhanced contribution to the national income. The Committee find that out of 1765 sanctioned worksheds only 100 worksheds (90 for men and 10 for women artisans) have been completed. The Committee are not satisfied with the reasons viz. snowfall in J&K and the scheme being only two year-old, etc, as advanced by the Ministry for the delay in the completion of worksheds. They cannot but deplore this casual attitude of the Ministry in the provision of worksheds to artisans. The Committee further find that out of the 1765 worksheds sanctioned, 823 are for women. They feel that the delay in the provision of the worksheds to artisans would deprive them especially women artisans, of the benefits of better working conditions. The Committee also find that the performance of this Scheme is also not satisfactory in other States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to take appropriate steps to provide worksheds to artisans not only in Jammu and Kashmir but in other States also in a time-bound programme. The worksheds should preferably be constructed in and around places where there is concentration of artisans so that the scheme could be implemented for the benefit of the artisans without much dislocation. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken by the Ministry in this regard within three months after the presentation of the Report.

(Para No.66)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The scheme of work-shed, which was being implemented in the State of Jammu & Kashmir has been extended to other parts of the country. All implementing agencies have been requested for speedy completion of the

projects in a time bound manner. Due care has been taken for construction of these work-sheds in and around places where there is concentration of artisans.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee have been informed that the Government is contemplating to launch Health Insurance Scheme i.e. Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana for handicraft artisans for which Planning Commission has accorded their in-principle approval. They desire the Ministry to finalise and implement this scheme without further delay in consultation with the Planning Commission and United India Insurance Company so that protective cover is given to the artisans who are prone to health hazards, at the earliest.

(Para No. 67)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The proposal for “Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana” for handicrafts artisans on the modeled of the scheme being implemented by DC (Handloom) i.e. “Health Insurance” has been formulated & sent for approval of Planning Commission.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee are perturbed to find the poor performance of the Ministry in utilising the funds meant for the development of handicraft sector. A scrutiny of the funds allocated and the actual expenditure incurred during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 reflects that there was under-utilisation of funds. During the year 2002-03, Rs. 7165.28 lakh were spent against the allocation of Rs. 8570 lakh. Similarly, during 2003-04 against the allocation of Rs. 7816.06 lakh an amount of Rs. 6432.44 lakh was incurred. Again, in 2004-05 as against the allocated amount of Rs. 8957 lakh an expenditure of Rs. 7707.00 lakh was incurred.

Similarly, there are cases of under-utilisation in several other schemes during the last three years. As against the allocation of Rs. 2560 lakh in Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme during the year 2002-03, the actual expenditure was of Rs. 2205 lakh. Similarly, under Marketing Support and Service Scheme funds to the tune of Rs. 1485 lakh were allocated and actual expenditure under this scheme was Rs. 1401.68 lakh during the same year and during the year 2003-04, an amount of Rs. 1460 lakh was allocated for the scheme, while actual expenditure was only Rs. 1114.77 lakh. The Committee have been informed that under-utilisation was due to the various reasons viz. non-submission of basic documents in time, delay in the settlement of accounts of earlier grants, saving on account of vacant posts, austerity measures, etc. which are not convincing to the Committee. The Committee are of the view that the Government should look into the causes of this recurring under-utilisation of funds and take suitable remedial steps to ensure timely and proper utilisation of funds. The Committee, further desire the Ministry to be realistic while making provisions for various schemes.

(Para No. 68)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The observation of the Committee has been noted for future compliance. However, to ensure timely and proper utilizations of funds periodical meeting are taken at the level of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) & Secretary (Textiles) to ensure utilization of funds allotted to this office.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee have been informed that in order to create awareness among artisans including women artisans about various social security schemes, regional, State and local workshops are being organized from time to time by the field units. Information about the various schemes is also made available to the

State Governments Handicraft Development Corporations etc, for their wide publicity. The Committee feel that the existing mechanism for generating awareness of various schemes is not adequate and effective. The Committee are of the view that Ministry should conduct a study/survey to know the impact of publicity of various schemes among the targeted beneficiaries and the extent to which the actual beneficiaries have got the information and knowledge about these schemes. The Committee as such desire the Ministry to get a survey done so that suitable steps may be taken for generating awareness among artisans, especially women artisans. Further, the Committee would also like the Ministry to create awareness through publicity campaigns in electronic and press media throughout India so that the artisans including those residing in remote and hilly areas become aware of the benefits of the schemes. The Committee would also like the Ministry to allocate sufficient funds for publicity purposes.

(Para No. 71)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

Awareness programmes are conducted regularly about the schemes in the craft clusters. Workshops to disseminate the details of the various schemes are conducted at the local, Regional, State and National Level where the artisans including women participate. Publicity campaigns through Electronic and Press Media are being initiated. However, a study to know the impact of publicity of various schemes amongst the targeted beneficiaries would be commissioned as desired.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee find that the grievances of artisans at the Central level are redressed through the concerned sections of the Office of Development Commissioner and at field level by the concerned Regional Offices. The Committee have been informed that during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05, 175, 263 and 286 grievances were received and disposed of, respectively. The

Committee do not agree with the figures furnished by the Ministry about the number of complaints received during this period, in view of the large number of artisans throughout the country. The Committee are of the view that the existing mechanism is not adequate and effective and the artisans are not aware of the existence of any of the grievance-redressal mechanism in the field and regional offices. Hence, less number of complaints have been received. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to take concrete measures for generating awareness about the grievance-redressal mechanism among the artisans through publicity and placing complaint boxes at Headquarter, Regional and field offices so that they could submit their grievances/complaints for redressal. The Committee would like to be apprised of the concrete action taken by the Ministry in this regard.

(Para No. 72)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

Appropriate directions have been given to all the field officers of the office to create awareness about the grievance redressal mechanism existing in those offices amongst the artisans. They have also been requested to install complaint boxes in all offices show that craftpersons could submit their grievances/complaints for redressal. All the field officers have also been requested to sort out the grievance/complaints instantly.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

CHAPTER III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES RECEIVED FROM THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation

The Committee regret to note that under Bima Yojana, an amount of Rs. 80 lakh was allocated during 2004-05 and only 3569 artisans including women artisans have been covered against the target of 66,000 artisans. The Committee feel that with this tardy pace, the Ministry would not be able to achieve the set target. The Committee are of the opinion that lack of awareness about the scheme among the beneficiaries is the main reason for the poor performance of the scheme. They feel that the scheme should be popularised by roping-in NGOs, voluntary organizations in this process. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to take appropriate measures to achieve the target of covering 66,000 artisans in a time-bound manner.

(Para No. 64)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The achievement made under the Bima Yojana can be gauged from the figures given below:-

Year	Amount Released to LIC	Target	Achievement
2003-2004	60 lakhs	66,000	63,596
2004-2005	62.50 lakhs	66,000	61,427
2005-2006	100 lakhs	66,000	71,484
2006-2007 (upto Sept.06)	Nil	66,000	52,000
Total	222.50 lakhs	2,64,000	2,48,507

The measures taken to achieve the targets under Bima Yojana include facilitating depositing artisans share of premium in designated branch of Bank

instead of LIC Branches; Organizing special and focused camps at clusters to create more awareness about the scheme amongst target beneficiaries.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND WHICH REQUIRE REITERATION.

Recommendation

The Committee find that majority of the handicraft artisans including women artisans do not have good working conditions at their work place and face problems such as paucity of space, inadequate ventilation and light at the work place and so on. The existing environment in their houses is not conducive for the production of quality handicraft. The Committee find that no study or survey has been carried out by the Ministry to identify the problems being faced by the artisans including women artisans. The Ministry, however, obtain the feedback from field formations, developmental partners and other stake holders on the effectiveness of schemes and problems faced by the artisans and based on the feed back and findings of evaluation studies, modifications in schemes have been undertaken from time to time with a view to minimising problems faced by the artisans. The Committee regret to point out that despite knowing well about the lack of conducive working conditions for handicraft artisans, the Ministry have not initiated any steps in this direction. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should conduct a study/survey to identify the basic problems being faced by the artisans including women artisans and take remedial measures to mitigate their basic problems without further delay.

(Para No. 55)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The recommendation of the Committee has been noted for compliance.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendation

The Committee have been informed that implementation of the schemes is monitored through the concerned Regional Offices, Marketing and Service Extension Centres and Regional Design and Technical Development Centres, etc. Social security schemes are monitored through Assistant Directors of Marketing and Service Extension Centres of Regional Offices and the Head Office. No committee, however, has been constituted for implementation of various social security schemes as the existing mode of monitoring mechanism through field officers appears to the Ministry to be adequate for the present. The Committee do not agree with the Ministry that the existing monitoring mechanism is effective and adequate as they find that there are shortcomings like under-utilisation of funds allocated for various schemes, poor performance of schemes like Workshed Scheme, inadequate training facilities available for women artisans, inadequate credit facilities for artisans, etc, which are coming in the way of the development of handicraft sector. So, the Committee feel that there is an urgent need for its strengthening.

(Para No. 69)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

Noted for future compliance.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

Recommendations

The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should take concrete steps in close coordination with the State Governments and other implementing agencies for strengthening the existing monitoring mechanism, so that the schemes meant for artisans are implemented in the best possible manner.

(Para No. 70)

Reply of the Ministry of Textiles

The observation of the Committee has been noted for future compliance. However, under the Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY) for integrated development of selected craft cluster, it is stated that the sanction order issued in favour of various implementing agencies viz. State Handicrafts Corporations/NGOs/Apex Societies etc., a copy of the sanction order has also been enclosed to District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA), State Handicrafts Industries Development & District Magistrate for compliance of the scheme. The representative of the State Government are also involved in the inspection of the events being implemented under the scheme falling under their ambit.

(Ministry of Textiles O.M.No.1/65/2004-Parl. Dated 27th December, 2006)

CHAPTER V

**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE
GOVERNMENT HAVE FURNISHED INTERIM REPLIES**

- Nil -

NEW DELHI
27th February, 2007
8 Phalgun, 1928 (Saka)

KRISHNA TIRATH
CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

APPENDIX I

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl. No.	Para No.	Ministry/Department	Observations/Recommendations
1.	2.	3.	4.
1.	7.	Ministry of Textiles	While noting that there was lack of conducive working conditions for handicraft artisans, the Committee had in their Original Report desired the Ministry to conduct a study/survey to identify the basic problems being faced by the artisans including women artisans and take remedial measures to mitigate their basic problems. The Committee are unhappy to note that the Ministry, instead of initiating any suitable steps in the direction, have simply kept the recommendation of the Committee in abeyance. The Committee deprecate the casual approach of the Government in handling the matters. The Committee are of the opinion that unless the Ministry are aware of problems of the artisans, specially women artisans, they cannot take appropriate measures for the improvement of their conditions. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that the Ministry should take urgent steps to conduct study/survey in order to identify their problems and help their cause. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard within a period of three months of presentation of this Report.
2.	11.	Ministry of Textiles	The Committee in their Original Report had expressed their dissatisfaction with the number of women artisans trained under the three training programmes viz. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilip Vikas Yojana (AHVY), Special Handicrafts Training Project (SHTP) and Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme. The Committee had, therefore, desired that adequate quota in various training programmes be fixed for women artisans to enable them to upgrade their skills and to improve their productivity. The Committee are dismayed to note that the Ministry, instead of taking concrete steps to implement the recommendation of the Committee, have adopted an evasive approach by noting it for future compliance. The Committee strongly disapproves the lackadaisical manner of treating their recommendations. While reiterating their original recommendations, the Committee desire that

the Ministry should take concrete steps in this direction so that every women artisan is imparted training and and apprise them accordingly.

3. 14. Ministry of Textiles Having noted the fact that out of 1765 sanctioned Worksheds paltry 100 Worksheds were constructed out of which only 10 related to women artisans, the Committee had in their Original Report expressed their displeasure on the slow pace of construction of Worksheds. The Ministry have not indicated any further progress made in the construction of Worksheds during the last six months which indicates the lack of seriousness on the part of the Ministry. The Committee while reiterating the recommendation, feel that simply issuance of instructions to the implementing agencies is not enough. The Ministry should monitor the scheme effectively and apprise the Committee about the progress made in this regard.
4. 18. Ministry of Textiles While noting various shortcomings in the implementation of the schemes meant for handicraft sector, the Committee had emphasised the need for strengthening of the existing monitoring mechanism. The Committee are shocked to find that the Ministry have so far not initiated any steps in this regard and have merely mentioned about the directions issued to various implementing agencies with regard to Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilip Vikas Yojana. The Committee desire that the monitoring mechanism should be strengthened for proper implementation of all the schemes meant for artisans including women artisans. While reiterating their earlier recommendations, the Committee desire the Ministry to take urgent steps for strengthening of their monitoring mechanism for proper implementation of various schemes meant for handicraft sector.

APPENDIX II

(Vide Para 1.2 of the Report)

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE FIFTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (14TH LOK SABHA)

(i)	Total No. of Recommendations	- 19
(ii)	Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: Para Nos. 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71 and 72.	
	Total	15
	Percentage	78.95%
(iii)	Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government: Para No. 64.	
	Total	1
	Percentage	5.26%
(iii)	Observations/Recommendations, replies to which have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration: Para Nos. 55, 69, and 70.	
	Total	3
	Percentage	15.79%
(iv)	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies have not been received.	
	Total	Nil

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (2006-2007)

The Committee sat on Thursday, the 15th February, 2007 from 1130 hours to 1245 hours in Committee Room 'B', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Smt. Krishna Tirath - Hon'ble Chairperson

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Smt. Sushila Kerketta
3. Smt. Kiran Maheshwari
4. Smt. Minati Sen
5. Smt. C.S. Sujatha
6. Shri P.C. Thomas
7. Shri. M.P. Veerendra Kumar

RAJYA SABHA

8. Smt. Prema Cariappa
9. Kumari Nirmala Deshpande
10. Smt. N.P. Durga

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri J.P. Sharma - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Veena Sharma - Deputy Secretary
3. Shri V.P. Goel - Assistant Director

2. At the outset, the Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee to the sitting. Thereafter, the Committee took up for consideration the draft Action Taken Report on the subject '**Working Conditions of Women in Handicraft Sector**'. After some deliberations, the Committee adopted the draft Action Taken Report and authorized the Chairperson to finalise the Report and present the same to Parliament in the ensuing Budget Session.

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4. A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.
