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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR
(2013-2014)**

FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF TEXTILES

**[Action taken by the Government on the
Recommendations/Observations contained in the Thirty-Sixth Report of
the Standing Committee on Labour on the Demands for Grants of the
Ministry of Textiles for the year 2013-14]**

THIRTY- NINTH REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

December, 2013/Agrahayana, 1935 (Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 12th December, 2013

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 12th December, 2013



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

December, 2013/Agrahayana, 1935 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR

(2013-14)

SHRI DARA SINGH CHAUHAN - CHAIRMAN

MEMBERS
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3. Shri Ismail Hussain
4. Dr. Manda Jagannath
5. Dr. Virendra Kumar
6. Shri Nara Hari Mahato
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8. Shri Bal Kumar Patel
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12. Shri Ratan Singh
13. Shri Dinu Solanki
14. Shri Makansingh Solanki
15. Shri K. Sugumar
16. Shri Bibhu Prasad Tarai
17. Shri Suresh Kashinath Taware
18. Shri Om Prakash Yadav
19. Vacant
20. Vacant
21. Vacant

Rajya Sabha

22. Smt. T. Ratna Bai
23. Shri D. Bandyopadhyay
24. Shri Thaawar Chand Gehlot
25. Shri P. Kannan
26. Shri Mohd. Ali Khan
27. Shri Ranbir Singh Parjapati
28. Smt. Renubala Pradhan
29. Shri Rajaram
30. Shri G.N. Ratanpuri
31. Shri Jai Prakash Narayan Singh

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri A.K. Singh - Joint Secretary
2. Shri P.V.L.N Murthy - Director
3. Smt. Bharti S. Tuteja - Deputy Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Labour having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, do present this Thirty-Ninth Report on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Labour (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Textiles for the year 2013-14.

2. The Thirty-Sixth Report was presented to Lok Sabha and also laid in Rajya Sabha on 29th April, 2013. The Ministry of Textiles furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in that Report on 22nd July, 2013. The Report was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on Labour at their sitting held on 07th October, 2013.

3. An analysis of the action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Labour (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix-II.

4. For the facility of reference and convenience recommendations/observations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report.

New Delhi;
3rd December, 2013
12 Agrahayana, 1935 (Saka)

DARA SINGH CHAUHAN,
CHAIRMAN,
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR

CHAPTER-I

REPORT

This Report deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Thirty-Sixth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Textiles for the year 2013-14.

1.2 The Thirty-Sixth Report was presented to Lok Sabha and also laid on the Table in Rajya Sabha on 29th April, 2013. It contained 11 recommendations/observations. Replies of Government in respect of all the recommendations have been received and are categorized as under:-

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

Para Nos. 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5,4.7 and 4.8

(ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply –

-NIL-

(iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration –

4.3, 4.6, 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11

(iv) Recommendation/Observation in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature -

-NIL-

A. Access to institutional credit to weavers through Post Offices**(Recommendation at Para No. 4.3)**

1.3 The Committee noted that general apathy of the banks in implementing Institutional credit component of Integrated Handloom Development Scheme had resulted in low issuance of the weavers credit cards. The Committee, therefore, observed that since banks are already over burdened with the responsibility of implementing many of the schemes of the Government of India, the Ministry should devise ways to reach out to the beneficiaries. The Committee were of the view that where banking services are not available, the scheme could be operated through local post-offices which are more wide-spread. The Committee also desired that steps be taken for betterment of the poorest of poor weavers who were suffering at the hands of local money lenders.

1.4 In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Textiles stated that ... as regards implementing the "Institutional Credit through post offices, NABARD, the implementing agency has informed that post offices are not covered under the supervisory role of the Reserve Bank of India. Hence, it may not be feasible to carryout activities like loan appraisal, documentation etc., aspects related to credit dispensation, nor the norms related to provisioning and NPA are

applicable to post offices. Further, at present Department of Post, Government of India is not implementing any loan scheme through post offices.

1.5 The Committee note from the reply of the Ministry that though certain steps have been initiated by them under IEC activities to increase awareness, to help beneficiaries in registration and to boost coverage of the scheme, they, however, find that their observation regarding need for measures to help poor weavers who have taken loans from the local money lenders have not been responded to by the Ministry. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their recommendation and desire that such weavers may be identified and financial assistance may be considered for their betterment. The Committee also note that the reply of the Ministry that it is not feasible to carry out the credit component of the scheme through Post Offices without due diligence i.e. without getting the matter examined in consultation with the Department of Posts, Ministry of Finance, RBI etc. but merely on the premise that Post Offices are not covered under RBI's supervisory obligations shows the casual approach of the Ministry in dealing with their important recommendations. The Committee, therefore, desire that their proposal/recommendation be taken up with the Department of Post, Reserve Bank of India and Ministry of Finance etc. for their views. The Committee may be apprised of the response so received and the action taken in this regard.

B. Definition of `Handlooms`**(Recommendation at Para No. 4.4)**

1.6 The Committee observed that a proposed modification in the definition of handlooms had lingered for a long time. The Committee were of the firm view that the modification in definition may be expedited to enable handloom weavers to modernize without any adverse effects on the benefits received by them. They were also hugely concerned about the pathetic conditions of small powerloom weavers who are too small to sustain on their own in a vast decentralized powerloom sector. The Committee, therefore, desired the Ministry to take steps to include these small powerloom weavers/ workers (to be identified on the basis of number of looms and electricity load) under the schemes meant for handloom weavers so that they also get similar benefits.

1.7 In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Textiles stated that ... the Advisory Committee on Handloom Reservation Act, 1985, under the chairpersonship of the then Secretary (Textiles), with the objective to reduce the drudgery of handloom weavers discussed the definition of handloom and recommended modifications in the definition of handloom in the meeting of the Committee on 10th December, 2012... However, the issue of amendment of definition was subsequently opposed by many handloom experts and civil society members in the National Consultation on Handloom Sector held on 1st March, 2013...In view of the above, the Advisory Committee in its meeting held

on 12.4.2013, has constituted Sub-Committee to study the various aspects in details. The terms of reference (ToR) of the sub-committee are as under:

- (i) To study different types of looms being operated by handloom weavers in handloom clusters across the country.
- (ii) To study the extent of modernization being carried out in different parts of the country, scope for further improvement/upgradation of looms to reduce drudgery without compromising with the quality of handloom fabric and possibility to replace those interventions in other handloom clusters/pockets.
- (iii) To examine the feasibility of mechanizing any 2 out of three basic motions i.e. shedding, picking and beating to reduce drudgery and enhance productivity without losing the artistic creativity of weavers.
- (iv) To examine and analyse the present definition of 'handloom' in view of changing scenario of textile sector, to assess the impact of proposed change in the definition of 'handloom' with the objective of improving living conditions of handloom weavers.
- (v) To examine the possibility of categorizing small powerloom units/weavers into separate group so as to extend certain benefits on the lines of handloom weavers.

The Ministry while sharing the concerns of the Committee about the problems being faced by the small powerloom weavers, constituted a sub-committee of the Advisory Committee mandated to examine the possibility of categorizing small powerloom units/weavers into a separate group so as to extend certain benefits on the lines of handloom weavers.

1.8 The Committee note from the reply of the Ministry that the issue of amendment of definition was opposed by many handloom experts and civil society members since it was felt that this change in definition of handloom would gradually eliminate the difference between handloom and powerloom resulting in the loss of uniqueness of the handloom ultimately. The Committee also note that a sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee has been constituted to study the various aspects in detail which included examination of the possibility of categorizing small powerloom units/weavers into separate group so as to extend certain benefits on the lines of handloom weavers. The Committee, however, note that no time frame has been fixed for this sub-Committee to complete their deliberations and the reply also does not indicate the composition thereof. They, therefore, desire that the sub-Committee be requested to expedite its deliberations and give report at the earliest. They may also be apprised of the findings/ recommendations of the sub- Committee as and

when received along with the action taken/proposed to be taken to implement the recommendations.

C. Periodic revision/fixation of Minimum Wages

(Recommendation at Para No.4.6)

1.9 The Committee were disappointed to note the Ministry's lack of concern for the job workers and the hired Powerloom workers. The Committee desired that the Ministry of Textiles should also take up with the State Governments the issue of periodic revision/fixation of the minimum wages paid to these weavers in tandem with Ministry of Labour and Employment regarding effective implementation of labour laws for the welfare of these weavers/workers.

1.10 The Ministry in their action taken reply stated that in respect of the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Labour to take up the issue of periodic revision/ fixation of Minimum wages paid to these workers, the Ministry may take up the issue suitably with State Government(s) in tandem with Ministry of Labour and Employment.

1.11 The Committee note that Ministry have enumerated their present and proposed schemes for the powerloom workers in their reply. The Committee further note the Ministry's lackadaisical attitude in regard to the recommendation of the Committee to take up the issue of minimum wages with the concerned agencies, wherein they have merely stated that they `may' take up the issue of revision of minimum wages with the

Ministry of Labour and Employment and State Governments and have not indicated any concrete steps that have been taken to address the problems of wage revision in respect of these job workers or the hired powerloom workers. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that the issue of periodic revision/fixation of the minimum wages paid to these weavers should be taken up in right earnest with the State Governments and Ministry of Labour and Employment in a time bound manner.

D. Marketing of Powerloom products

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.7)

1.12 The Committee observed that the Ministry have no definite strategy to help poor powerloom weavers who are not able to sell their products and the efforts of the Ministry are limited to organizing a few Buyer-Seller Meets in a year. The Committee were of the strong view that a multi-pronged strategy is needed which may include finding dedicated buyers for these weavers and following it up with improved infrastructure, modernization, training and market/ demand driven production.

1.13 In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Textiles stated as follows:

“The Buyer - Seller Meets (BSM) for marketing the powerloom products are organized at regional and cluster level across the country in which powerloom units/weavers are participating to market their product directly, eliminating the middlemen. The BSM provides a platform to Powerloom units to directly interact with the buyers (New & Existing) to demonstrate their products and offer their best deal. In turn the BSM helps to build a relation with buyers for long term business. Further, it has been brought to the notice of the Ministry of Textiles by some Powerloom Associations that the Defence Ministry has changed their uniform cloth etc. procurement policy favouring purchases only from composite mills depriving a big institutional marketing opportunity earlier available to the powerloom sector. Ministry of Textiles shall now liaise with Ministry of Defense to try restoration.

For improving the infrastructure, Group Workshed Scheme has been implemented to provide improved working condition in terms of more space, work environment to enhance the work efficiency and to facilitate the establishments for modern looms to provide required scale of economy for business operations. Under TUFSS, 20% Margin Money subsidy on investment in modern powerloom and other weaving preparatory machines is provided for upgradation of technology in turn for improvement of the Powerloom fabrics. The Scheme for In-situ Upgradation of the Plain Powerloom is also under consideration for 12th plan Period for upgrading the plain powerloom so that defect free fabrics can be produced on plain powerloom. Integrated Skill Development Scheme (ISDS) has been implemented by the Ministry across the country through various organizations/ institutions to provide training for upgradation of skills to Textile workers including powerloom weavers/workers."

1.14 The Committee observe that the Ministry have referred to the Group Workshed Scheme in its reply which has been discontinued from the current year according to the Back ground note on schemes submitted by the Ministry during examination of Demands for Grants. The Committee ought to know the reasons for different versions and reiterate their earlier recommendation that the Ministry should, in addition to its on-going efforts, take steps to find dedicated buyers for the poor powerloom workers and follow it up with improved infrastructure, modernization, training to make these weavers self sufficient besides responding to the market forces. They further desire that bulk purchasers of powerloom products such as the Defence Ministry be requested to reconsider their decision with regard to purchase of powerloom products so as to enable them to avail of institutional marketing opportunity for overall betterment of the powerloom sector. They would like to be apprised of the steps taken and positive outcome thereof.

E. Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.9)

1.15. The Committee noted that the coverage of the TUFSS has been skewed as the already industrialized States garnered major portion of the subsidy sanctioned under the scheme. The Committee desired that the disadvantaged areas and sectors be identified on the lines of priority sector lending of the

banks and 40/50% of the total allocation be kept for this sector. The Committee also desired that ways to reach out to the priority sector may be devised and they be encouraged to upgrade/ invest in the latest technology with the help of elected representatives of the area, if necessary.

1.16 The Ministry of Textiles in their action taken reply stated as follows:

“TUFS is not a region specific scheme. The Scheme is entirely demand driven. The design of the scheme is non-discriminatory and all inclusive. The scheme in spite of being investor friendly has not been able to attract investment uniformly across the country as in some of the states raw material are not easily available, uninterrupted supply of power is not provided, allied support services are not available and moreover markets do not exist for sale of production.

In order to reach out to the priority sectors, Ministry of Textiles is instructing office of Textile Commissioner to involve local MPs and MLA to hold awareness campaign, road shows, seminars, workshop to promote TUFS in remote/industrially backward areas.”

1.17 The Committee are disappointed to note the lack of will at the Ministry’s end to make the scheme beneficial for all strata of the society. It would not be out of place to mention here that the loan assistance given by the banks is also demand driven and not region specific, still, public sector banks have priority sector lending demarcated. The Committee feel that a scheme which is meant for technology upgradation

should target/reach the regions and sectors where technology used is obsolete and needs urgent upgradation. The Committee are of the firm view that although the Ministry has instructed the Textile Commissioner to hold awareness campaigns in remote/ industrially backward areas, yet, setting specific targets would be more fruitful. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that the disadvantaged areas and sectors be identified on the lines of 'priority sector lending' of the banks and 40/50% of the total allocation be kept for this sector. They desire to be apprised of the action taken in the matter.

F. Implementation of R&D Schemes

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.10)

1.18 The Committee were perturbed to find that the non-plan expenditure of the Ministry over the years on the eight TRAs is more than the Plan expenditure on R&D. The Committee were of the view that the innovations/ achievements of these TRAs, which were formed in 1960s was lackluster and, therefore, the industry should fund the TRAs to improve their performance and the Ministry should invest in research projects undertaken by institutions/ individuals across the spectrum. The Committee desire that the immediate focus of the R&D efforts of the Ministry should be to provide easy

upgradation/ modernization solutions which are region-specific, non-polluting technology and latest designs and designing techniques for the poor weavers.

1.19 In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Textiles stated as follows:

“During the 12th Five Year Plan special focus would be on ‘green’ R&D initiative which would support inter-alia research innovation, benchmarking studies, dissemination, compliance with identified best practices and other related activities to encourage the adoption of green initiatives. The thrust would be on ensuring contract research, dissemination and commercialization of the R&D projects which are taken up. There is also special focus on jute and efforts would also help in decreasing the reliance on sacking and promoting the innovation in Jute Diversified Products to boost their exports which have huge markets worldwide. The efforts would also help in further development of the machineries in Jute sector to increase the overall efficiency, productivity, environmental/health compliance.”

1.20 The Committee find that the Ministry have not replied to the recommendation of the Committee regarding funding of TRAs by the industry. They also take strong exception to the evasive and incomplete replies furnished to them. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their recommendation that the Ministry should, instead of funding these TRAs invest in research projects undertaken by institutions/ individuals across the spectrum. To increase the efficiency and output of the TRAs, the industry should fund them instead. The Committee also desire that the

Ministry should focus on providing easy upgradation/ modernization solutions which are region-specific, having latest designs and designing techniques to the poor weavers.

G. Health Insurance Schemes

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.11)

1.21 The Committee were of the view that instead of implementing separate health insurance schemes, the Ministry should endeavour to operate one umbrella scheme for all the weavers/ workers in the industry. The Committee desired that the Ministry of Textiles take up the issue of implementing the RSBY with Ministry of Labour and Employment for all the weavers/workers of the textile industry and not for handloom workers only.

1.22 The Ministry of Textiles in their action taken reply stated as follows:

“...DC Handlooms office is implementing separate Health Insurance Scheme of handloom workers. From 2013-14 onwards the scheme is proposed to be run on RSBY pattern of Ministry of Labour& Employment with additional component of outpatient treatment which is not a part of RSBY as on date.”

1.23 The Committee find that instead of replying to the recommendation of the Committee for implementing an umbrella scheme, the Ministry have only given its present status. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that one umbrella scheme for all the weavers/ workers in the industry may be operated instead of separate ones for each category of weavers. They desire to be apprised of the action taken to implement their above recommendation at an early date.

CHAPTER-II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.1)

The Committee observes that the Ministry could not utilize their budgetary allocation of Rs 7000 crores for Plan expenditure during the year which stood revised to Rs 4500 crores. According to the Ministry, the two schemes pertaining to Handloom sector namely „Revival, Reform and Restructuring Package for Handloom sector“ and Mill Gate Price Scheme did not take off as expected, resulting in shortfall in the expenditure. The budgetary estimates of Rs 2900 crores under the head „Revival, Reform and Restructuring Package for Handloom sector“ were reduced to Rs 600 crores at the revised estimates stage, however, the Ministry could spend Rs 291 crores only during the year since a total of 23 Apex, 3750 Primary Weavers Cooperative societies (PWCs) and 52000 individual weavers could be covered under the norms of the package as against targeted 45 Apex, 16000 PWCs and about 6 lakh commercial weavers exclusively. The Ministry has informed that definite requirements of the funds could only be determined after carrying out statutory audit of the functional cooperatives upto 2009-10 followed by special audit by NABARD. The Committee recall that the package was announced amid much fanfare by the Finance Minister in his budget proposals for the year 2011-12 and now they find to their utter dismay that Ministry are not able to find beneficiaries for loan waiver and debt restructuring. The Committee note that though a revised package is under finalization, it is beyond their comprehension as to why, in the first instance, a populist package was announced without doing any ground work. The Committee are of the view that the Ministry routinely formulate schemes/ programmes without even estimating the numbers of targeted beneficiaries thereof. The Committee had also observed in their Twenty-Ninth Report on Demands for Grants for 2012-13 that “formulation of schemes, without a fair assessment of the target group and the dimensions of the problems afflicting them, is a shot in the dark” which has been proven “to the hilt” in the instant case too. The Committee, while reiterating their earlier recommendation, expect the Ministry to be extra cautious in the future and take steps to complete all the pending surveys in time and initiate new surveys wherever considered necessary before new schemes are proposed to the Planning Commission for approvals etc.

The Committee note that the Ministry have been provided Rs.175 crores for the Revival, Reforms and Restructuring Package in the current year.

The Committee find from the reply of the Ministry that they have proposed relaxation in eligibility norms and extension of cut-off eligibility date and, therefore, additional funds would be required under the scheme. The Committee strongly desires that the Ministry of Textiles approach the Ministry of Finance for enhanced allocation so that maximum weavers get the benefit of the loan waiver scheme.

Reply of the Government

It is re-iterated that Revival, Reform and Restructuring (RRR) Package for Handloom Sector was formulated based on the audited reports received from 14 State Governments to the extent of overdue loans on primary weaver's cooperative societies (PWCs), apex societies and the requirement of funds for waiving of loans and recapitalization of handloom cooperatives. Subsequently, States were consulted many times before finalization of the RRR package. Later on, when statutory audit was conducted by States in respect of functional handloom cooperatives up to 2009-10 and special audit was conducted by NABARD, only then definite requirement of funds was known.

Further, the States had assessed position on the basis of available audit reports as on 31.3.2007 but the package has been implemented with a cut-off date of 31.3.2010. During this period many societies which were eligible in 2006-07 became non-viable and thus un-eligible mainly due to stringent norms of viability / potential viability under the RRR package. This is the one of the main reasons due to which initial projections made in the package did not correspond with the actual outcome. However, this does not undermine the importance or necessity of the scheme.

Now based on audited data and feedback received from States and NABARD, MoT is moving CCEA note for seeking further modification in the guidelines of RRR Package so that viable and potentially viable handloom cooperative societies, which were left out, could be covered under the revised package which is proposed to be on realistic estimates. The EFC has recommended the proposal in its meeting held on 9.5.13. The Ministry, however, noted the suggestion of the Standing Committee that the Ministry to be extra cautious in the future and take steps to complete all the pending

surveys in time and initiate new surveys wherever considered necessary before new schemes are proposed to the Planning Commission for approvals etc.

The Ministry is thankful for the concern expressed by the Committee and its support for enhanced budgetary allocation for handloom sector. The Ministry has approached to Finance Ministry & Planning Commission for additional allocation under RRR package vide D.O. letters dated 14th February, 2013 from Minister of Commerce, Industry & Textiles addressed to Finance Minister and Dy. Chairman, Planning Commission. Once the CCEA approves the modifications in the RRR package, the Ministry of Textiles will again approach to Ministry of Finance for additional allocation in the supplementary Demands for Grants.

(Ministry of Textiles' O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 22.07.2013)

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.2)

The scrutiny of Demands for Grants reveals that the Ministry have not been able to utilize allocation in respect of Mill Gate Price Scheme due to the lack of demand under the newly introduced 10% hank yarn subsidy scheme. The Committee note that the Ministry were able to cover only 30% of the looms for issuing yarn passbooks which are needed to avail the benefits of the 10% hank yarn subsidy by individual weavers. The Committee strongly feel that adequate publicity to the hank yarn subsidy and local yarn depots schemes should be given and registration camps be organized with the help of district administration and Gram Panchayats to cover maximum number of weavers. The Committee observes from various reports that the smallest of weavers are not able to even purchase the minimum selling quantity and are, therefore, dependant on master weavers for supply of yarn who exploit them. They, therefore, desire that more and more yarn depots/ banks may be opened across the handloom dominated areas in all States to ensure that the small weavers are able to purchase smaller quantities. They also desire that feasibility of making yarn available on credit may also be explored. They desire to be apprised of the action taken in the matter at an early date.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is thankful for the concern shown by the Standing Committee and has taken note of the observation regarding inadequate publicity of hank yarn supply scheme. On this issue, National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd.(NHDC) has been instructed to organize awareness camps with the help of state handloom directorates and district administration. The state governments have also been requested to make available the services of state handloom corporations to operate the yarn depots where NHDC does not have reach so that more and more number of weavers can be supplied the yarn. NHDC also proposes to open yarn retail stores so that weavers can buy yarn across the counter. As regards making the yarn available on credit the GOI is already making available the subsidized credit to the weavers under which 3% interest subvention and Rs. 4,200/- margin money is provided. The same has been proposed to be increased to Rs. 10,000/- and interest on credit to be limited to only 6% under the RRR package.

(Ministry of Textiles' O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 22.07.2013)

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.4)

The Committee note that the Ministry have prepared a proposal to modify the definition of "handloom" to reduce the drudgery of handloom weavers. As per proposed definition of handloom, "handloom" means any loom, other than powerloom, and includes any hybrid loom on which at least one process for weaving requires manual intervention or human energy for production. The Committee also note from the reply of the Ministry that in the ensuing Advisory Committee meeting, various issues involved in the proposed amendment in definition of "handloom" and in particular how norms and mechanisms should be evolved so that power looms could be differentiated from handlooms would be discussed. The Committee are of the firm view that the proposal has lingered on for a while now and that the modification in definition may be expedited to enable handloom weavers to modernize without any adverse effects on the benefits received by them. The Committee also feel that after changing the definition a complete overhaul/review of the schemes meant for handloom sector may also be done to give handlooms a big boost. They also note that though some of the handloom schemes have been merged, still a lot

more needs to be done particularly for the ancillary workers, women weavers/ workers and weavers/workers belonging to the disadvantaged sections of the society. They are also hugely concerned about the pathetic conditions of small powerloom weavers who are too small to sustain on their own in a vast decentralized powerloom sector. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to take steps to include these small powerloom weavers/ workers (to be identified on the basis of number of looms and electricity load) under the schemes meant for handloom weavers so that they also get similar benefits.

Reply of the Government

Due to sharp decline in number of handlooms and handloom weavers in last one decade and non adoption of hand weaving especially by younger generation owing to low generation of income and hard labour required to operate looms, the Advisory Committee on Handloom Reservation Act, 1985, under the chairpersonship of then Secretary (Textiles), with the objective to reduce the drudgery of handloom weavers discussed the definition of handloom and recommended modifications in the definition of handloom in the meeting of the Committee on 10th December, 2012.

However, the issue of amendment of definition was subsequently opposed by many handloom experts and civil society members in the National Consultation on Handloom Sector held on 1st March, 2013.

It was observed that this change in definition of handloom would gradually eliminate the difference between handloom and powerloom, and uniqueness of handloom would therefore, be ultimately lost. This would also lower the quality of many handloom products which are so unique and special when made on handlooms. Besides, a representation has also been received opposing the proposal to modify the definition.

In view of the above, the Advisory Committee in its meeting held on 12.4.2013, has constituted Sub-Committee to study the various aspects in details. The terms of reference (ToR) of the sub-committee are as under:

- (v) To study different types of looms being operated by handloom weavers in handloom clusters across the country.
- (vi) To study the extent of modernization being carried out in different parts of the country, scope for further improvement/upgradation

of looms to reduce drudgery without compromising with the quality of handloom fabric and possibility to replace those interventions in other handloom clusters/pockets.

- (vii) To examine the feasibility of mechanizing any 2 out of three basic motions i.e. shedding, picking and beating to reduce drudgery and enhance productivity without losing the artistic creativity of weavers.
- (viii) To examine and analyse the present definition of 'handloom' in view of changing scenario of textile sector, to assess the impact of proposed change in the definition of 'handloom' with the objective of improving living conditions of handloom weavers.
- (ix)** To examine the possibility of categorizing small powerloom units/weavers into separate group so as to extend certain benefits on the lines of handloom weavers.

The Ministry share the concerns of the committee about the problems being faced by the small powerloom weavers, who have serious difficulty to sustain on their own in a vast decentralized powerloom sector. To address their problems, the sub-committee has been mandated to examine the possibility of categorizing small powerloom units/weavers into a separate group so as to extend certain benefits on the lines of handloom weavers

(Ministry of Textiles' O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 22.07.2013)

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No.1.8 of Chapter I of this Report.

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.5)

The Committee note that Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology (IIHT) have been set-up to provide qualified and trained manpower to the handloom sector and to undertake experimental and research programmes on all aspects of the handloom industry. They further note that the criteria for opening an IIHT in any area is concentration of weavers and production of handloom in that particular area/ State. The Committee desire that these

IIHTs should invariably involve themselves in “extension programmes” wherein these institutes should help in spreading awareness of the various schemes of the Ministry, equipping the weavers with the modern technology, identify the strengths of the local weavers and helping them in marketing their products. They further are of the view that exuberance of the youngsters studying in the institutes be harnessed fully by involving them in developmental efforts of the Government can go a long way in improving the livelihood of the poor local population.

Reply of the Government

Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology (IIHTs) are academic institutions providing qualified manpower to handloom sector through diploma and post diploma courses in handloom technology and also undertake research & development programmes for the handloom industry. In view of limited manpower and inadequate infrastructure facilities, it's currently difficult for the IIHTs to immediately start extension programmes for the Ministry. However, Weavers Service Centres (WSCs), which are 25 in numbers and located across the country are responsible for spreading awareness of govt's programmes and schemes among weavers. The Ministry supports the valuable view expressed by the Standing committee about harnessing to the youngsters studying in IIHTs to the fullest by involving them in developmental efforts of the government. The IIHTs have been advised to engage their students in cluster development programmes especially technology upgradation and also to revise their course curriculum to suit the emerging requirements of handloom sector especially at clusters level.

Ministry of Textiles' O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 22.07.2013)

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.7)

The Committee observe that the Ministry have no definite strategy to help poor Powerloom weavers who are not able to sell their products and the efforts of the Ministry are limited to organizing a few Buyer-Seller Meets in a year. The Committee further note that the Ministry have explained the marketing assistance given to the handloom weavers which affirms that nothing concrete

is being done to help Powerloom weavers. The Committee are of the strong view that a multi-pronged strategy is the need of the hour to help these weavers. The Ministry should, in the first instance, make efforts to find dedicated buyers for these weavers and follow it up with improved infrastructure, modernization, training and market/demand driven production.

Reply of the Government

The Buyer - Seller Meets (BSM) for marketing the powerloom products are organized at regional and cluster level across the country in which powerloom units/weavers are participating to market their product directly, eliminating the middlemen. The BSM provides a platform to Powerloom units to directly interact with the buyers (New & Existing) to demonstrate their products and offer their best deal. In turn the BSM helps to build a relation with buyers for long term business. Further, it has been brought to the notice of the Ministry of Textiles by some Powerloom Associations that the Defense Ministry has changed their uniform cloth etc. procurement policy favouring purchases only from composite mills depriving a big institutional marketing opportunity earlier available to the powerloom sector. Ministry of Textiles shall now liaise with Ministry of Defense to try restoration.

For improving the infrastructure, Group Workshed Scheme has been implemented to provide improved working condition in terms of more space, work environment to enhance the work efficiency and to facilitate the establishments for modern looms to provide required scale of economy for business operations. Under TUFSS, 20% Margin Money subsidy on investment in modern powerloom and other weaving preparatory machines is provided for upgradation of technology in turn for improvement of the Powerloom fabrics. The Scheme for In-situ Upgradation of the Plain Powerloom is also under consideration for 12th plan Period for upgrading the plain powerloom so that defect free fabrics can be produced on plain powerloom. Integrated Skill Development Scheme (ISDS) has been implemented by the Ministry across the country through various organizations/ institutions to provide training for upgradation of skills to Textile workers including powerloom weavers/ workers.

(Ministry of Textiles' O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 22.07.2013)

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No.1.14 of Chapter I of this Report.

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.8)

The documents furnished to the Committee reveal that the regional office of Textile Commissioner in Kanpur has been shifted to Noida and a new regional office has been opened in Indore. On further scrutiny, they found that the Annual Report of the Ministry still states that there are eight regional offices of the Textile Commissioner in India, one of which is in Kanpur. According to the Ministry, the decision to shift the office from Kanpur was taken on the basis of the report of IIM Bangalore on redefining the role of the office of Textile Commissioner. To their utter dismay, they find that IIM Bangalore did not conduct any survey of textile industry or powerlooms in Uttar Pradesh before making such a recommendation. Recommendation of IIM Bangalore was based only on the discussion with the office of Textile Commissioner and NITRA primarily an industry body which participated in the workshops conducted by IIM Bangalore. Further, it has been stated in the reply that since textile industry is declining in Uttar Pradesh, the office may be shifted to Indore which has a flourishing textile industry. The Committee are of the view that the office of textile Commissioner is all the more required in a State where the industry is dying to take care of the poor weavers who are suffering and migrating to other occupations. The position, however, is contradicted by the Ministry themselves through the information supplied by them under RTI Act 2005 which shows that number of powerlooms and other textile units and machinery in Uttar Pradesh outnumber the machines and production in Madhya Pradesh. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry to review its decision to shift the office from Kanpur in light of the latest data and situation prevalent in textile industry in Uttar Pradesh.

Reply of the Government

A review be made of the Textile activity in the State of Uttar Pradesh (especially in Kanpur) and adequacy of policy/service support requirement from Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India through the Institution of the Textiles Commissioner there, in the present scenario. The Textile Commissioner has, therefore, constituted an Internal Committee 04.04.2013 comprising of 3

officers in the Office of the Textile Commissioner to examine and work on the job. The terms of Reference for the study have been communicated to the Committee on 26.4.2013. The Internal Committee has submitted its report on 05.06.2013 which is under consideration.

(Ministry of Textiles' O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 22.07.2013)

In continuation of this Ministry' s O.M of even no. dated 22.7.2013, undersigned is directed to say that in compliance of the observation of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour in Para No.4.8 of Thirty-Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Labour on Demands for Grants regarding shifting/closure of Regional Office of Textiles Commissioner from Kanpur to Indore, it has now been decided with the approval of the Hon'ble Minister of Textiles 'to continue a sub-office of RO, NOIDA, at Kanpur for the 12th Plan Period'.

(Ministry of Textiles' O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 27.08.2013)

CHAPTER-III

**RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT
DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLY**

NIL

CHAPTER-IV**RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND WHICH REQUIRE REITERATION****(Recommendation at Para No. 4.3)**

The Committee observe that the Ministry are dependant on banks for implementation of some of their schemes like Revival, Reforms and Restructuring Package for the Handloom Sector and Institutional Credit component of the Integrated Handloom Development Scheme among others. According to the procedure, either the weaver has to approach the banks with a request on plain paper for waiving the loan or the banks have to suo-moto examine their records and find out loans taken by weavers and submit the claims to NABARD for loan waiver and the ultimate responsibility of implementing the scheme successfully lies with the lending institutions. Further, the Ministry have stated that general apathy of the banks in implementing Institutional credit component of IHDS has resulted in low issuance of weavers credit cards. The Committee are of the view that banks mostly in the public sector are already over burdened with the responsibility of implementing many of the schemes of the Government of India across various Ministries. It, therefore, becomes imperative that instead of depending on banks, the Ministry need to evolve other methods to implement their schemes successfully. The Ministry should devise innovative ways to reach out to the beneficiaries by organizing camps in collaboration with banks and State Governments not only in clusters but also in the rural and far-flung areas. Further, where banking services are not available, the institutional credit component of the IHDS could also be implemented through post-offices which are more wide spread. The Ministry should also take steps for the betterment of the poorest of poor weavers who are suffering under the burden of loans taken from the local money lenders and the debts of master weavers and consider involving local school teachers in identifying the weavers who have overdue loans by interacting with both banks and weavers.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is aware that there has been reluctance on the part of public sector banks/financial institutions in extending credit support to handloom sector and handloom weavers due to past history of poor repayment and being overburdened with the responsibility of implementing many other schemes of Government of India. Keeping this in mind, the Ministry has taken following steps under IEC activities:

(a) To organize awareness cum registration camps across the country by associating all the local stakeholders such as banks, State government officials, NABARD, NHDC etc to make the beneficiaries aware of the scheme, fill up the applications for issuance of WCC and sanction of loans etc. The Government of India is providing financial assistance of Rs. 40,000/- per camp to organize such camps. So far 769 Weavers' Credit Card (WCC) Camps have been organized across the country.

(b) Banks have been authorized to engage Bunkar Facilitator (BF) for collection and preliminary processing of loan application for completeness in all respects, submission of application to the correct bank branch and post-sanction monitoring till disbursement of loan.

(c) Government of India will pay an incentive of 0.5% of loan amount disbursed subject to minimum of Rs 200 and maximum of Rs. 2000 per WCC to the bank, for onward payment to the Bunkar Facilitator.

Further, Bank-wise intensive monitoring has been initiated in consultation with Department of Financial Services and State Governments to improve the issuance of weavers' credit card and sanction and disbursement of loan to handloom weavers. A meeting with CMDs/CEOs of nationalized banks under Chairmanship of Ministry of Commerce & Textiles was held on 12.2.2013. Prior to the meeting, only 18,600 WCCs were issued. Since then 35028 WCCs have been issued till 31st March, 2013. D.O. letters have been issued to CMDs of banks & a monitoring proforma has been prescribed to monitor the progress of issuance of WCC. As on 30.06.2013, 70,404 Weavers Credit Cards have been issued. Further review meeting with CMDs of national banks has been held on 11/7/2013 under the Chairmanship of Minister of Textiles.

- Before CITM meeting i.e. 12.02.2013 18,600 Weavers Credit Card have been issued.
- After CITM meeting held during March, 2013, 53,628 Weavers Credit Card have been issued.

Regarding implementing the “Institutional Credit through post offices, NABARD, the implementing agency has informed that post offices are not covered under the supervisory role of the Reserve Bank of India. Hence, it may not be feasible to carryout activities like loan appraised, documentation etc., aspects related to credit dispensation, nor the norms related to provisioning and NPA are applicable to post offices. Further, at present Department of Post, Government of India is not implementing any loan scheme through post offices.

(Ministry of Textiles’ O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 22.07.2013)

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No.1.5 of Chapter I of this Report.

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.6)

The Committee are disappointed to note the Ministry’s lack of concern for the job workers and the hired Powerloom workers. The fact that Ministry have not thought of any welfare measures for such category of workers shows the apathetic approach of the Ministry towards this very poor class of weavers. The Committee are of the view that the Ministry ought to take steps for the betterment of weavers who are working on powerlooms owned by others so that they are not exploited by the affluent weavers. The Ministry of Textiles should also take up with the State Governments the issue of periodic revision/fixation of the minimum wages paid to these weavers in tandem with Ministry of Labour and Employment regarding effective implementation of labour laws for the welfare of these weavers/workers.

Reply of the Government

In this regard, it is informed that aiming at the welfare of powerloom workers the Group Insurance Scheme has been implemented by the Ministry of Textiles in association with LIC from 1st July 2003. The Scheme is implemented for

welfare of Powerloom workers/ weavers irrespective of any category of weavers/workers of Powerloom sector including job workers or hired workers. Group Insurance Scheme provides benefits of Rs. 60,000/- on natural death, Rs. 1,50,000/- on accidental death, Rs. 75,000/- on partial permanent disability and Rs. 1,50,000/- on total permanent disability for which the premium payable by the worker is only Rs. 80/- Per annum. This scheme has been continued in the 12th plan on increasing premium contribution from Government from Rs. 150/- to Rs. 290/- per worker keeping workers' contribution to premium unchanged at Rs. 80/- per year. Health insurance, so far not available to powerloom sector workers, is also proposed to be introduced for 12th plan period for powerloom workers. In respect of the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Labour to take up the issue of periodic revision/ fixation of Minimum wages paid to these workers, the Ministry may take up the issue suitably with State Government(s) in tandem with Ministry of Labour & Employment.

(Ministry of Textiles' O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 22.07.2013)

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No.1.11 of Chapter I of this Report.

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.9)

The Committee NOTE THAT THE Ministry have spent Rs. 16399 crores under the Technology Upgradation Fund Schemes (TUFS) since its inception. The Committee, however, are shocked to note that Ministry do not maintain any data regarding the location, category or class of the beneficiaries. Furthermore, in respect of Restructured TUFS, there were only 5 cases out of total 3741 approved cases where investment was less than Rs. 5 lakhs. On perusal of the data regarding State-wise subsidy sanctioned under restructured TUFS, it is clear that already industrialized states like Gujrat and Maharashtra top the chart while poor States like Bihar, Assam, Uttar Pradesh etc. lag far behind. This speaks volumes about the reach of the flagship Scheme of the Ministry. The Committee is of the view that it is high time that the TUFS be

given a focused approach since there has been a skewed technology upgradation so far. The Committee desire that the Ministry identify the disadvantaged areas and sectors on the lines of 'priority sector lending' of the banks and 40-50 % of the total allocation should be kept for this sector. The Committee find that the Ministry do not have any specific plan for spreading awareness about the scheme to the remote/industrially backward areas. They desire that the Ministry devise other ways to reach out to the priority sectors and encourage them to upgrade/invest in the latest technology for which the involvement of local MPs and MLAs may also be considered, if necessary.

Reply of the Government

TUFS is not a region specific scheme. The Scheme is entirely demand driven. The design of the scheme is non-discriminatory and all inclusive. The scheme in spite of being investor friendly has not been able to attract investment uniformly across the country as in some of the states raw material are not easily available, uninterrupted supply of power is not provided, allied support services are not available and moreover markets do not exist for sale of production.

In order to reach out to the priority sectors, Ministry of Textiles is instructing office of Textile Commissioner to involve local MPs and MLA to hold awareness campaign, road shows, seminars, workshop to promote TUFS in remote/industrially backward areas.

(Ministry of Textiles' O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 22.07.2013)

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No.1.17 of Chapter I of this Report.

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.10)

The Committee observe that Research & Development Scheme of the Ministry of Textiles is implemented mainly through the eight Textile Research Association. They are perturbed to find that the non-plan expenditure of the Ministry over the years on these eight TRAs is more than the Plan expenditure on R&D. They further find that these TRAs are industry bodies which have been partially funded by different Ministries over the years latest being Ministry of Textiles. The Committee are of the view that the innovations/ achievements of these TRAs, which were formed in 1960s are lackluster and, therefore, the Ministry should, instead of funding these TRAs invest in research projects undertaken by institutions/ individuals across the spectrum. The Committee strongly feel that to increase the efficiency and output of the TRAs, the industry should fund them instead. The Committee desire that the immediate focus of the R&D efforts of the Ministry should be to provide easy upgradation / modernization solutions which are region-specific, non-polluting technology and latest designs and designing techniques for the poor weavers while simultaneously striving to conserve/preserve the art of the master weavers.

Reply of the Government

Comments: During the 12th Five Year Plan special focus would be on 'green' R&D initiative which would support inter-alia research innovation, benchmarking studies, dissemination, compliance with identified best practices and other related activities to encourage the adoption of green initiatives. The thrust would be on ensuring contract research, dissemination and commercialization of the R&D projects which are taken up. There is also special focus on jute and efforts would also help in decreasing the reliance on sacking and promoting the innovation in Jute Diversified Products to boost their exports which have huge markets worldwide. The efforts would also help in further development of the machineries in Jute sector to increase the overall efficiency, productivity, environmental/health compliance.

(Ministry of Textiles' O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 22.07.2013)

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No.1.20 of Chapter I of this Report.

(Recommendation at Para No. 4.11)

The Committee observe that the Ministry of textiles are implementing separate health insurance scheme for workers of each sector namely Rajiv Gandhi Swasthya Bima Yojana, Health Insurance Scheme for Handloom Workers and Newly introduced health insurance scheme for powerloom weavers. Similarly, separate life insurance schemes for weavers/ workers under various sectors are also being implemented. The Committee are of the view that instead of implementing separate schemes, the Ministry should endeavour to operate one umbrella scheme for all the weavers/ workers in the industry. The Committee desire that the Ministry of Textiles take up the issue of implementing the RSBY with Ministry of Labour and Employment for all the weavers/workers of the textile industry and not for handloom workers only.

Reply of the Government

Yes, DC Handlooms office is implementing separate Health Insurance Scheme of handloom workers. From 2013-14 onwards the scheme is proposed to be run on RSBY pattern of Ministry of Labour & Employment with additional component of outpatient treatment which is not a part of RSBY as on date.

(Ministry of Textiles' O.M. No.2/12/2013-Parl. dated 22.07.2013)

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No.1.23 of Chapter I of this Report.

CHAPTER-V

**RECOMMENDATION/OBSERVATION IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF
THE GOVERNMENT ARE INTERIM IN NATURE**

NIL

**New Delhi;
7th October, 2013
15 Asvina, 1935 (Saka)**

**DARA SINGH CHAUHAN,
CHAIRMAN,
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR**

Minutes of the Sitting of the Committee

The Committee sat on 7 October, 2013 from 1500 hrs. to 1615 hrs. in Room No.53, Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Dara Singh Chauhan – CHAIRMAN

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Ashok Argal
3. Dr. Virendra Kumar
4. Shri Narahari Mahato
5. Shri Hari Manjhi
6. Shri Mahendra Kumar Roy
7. Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Lalan)
8. Smt. J. Shantha
9. Shri Ratan Singh
10. Shri K. Sugumar
11. Shri Bibhu Prasad Tarai
12. Shri Suresh Kashinath Taware
13. Shri Om Prakash Yadav

Rajya Sabha

14. Smt. T. Ratna Bai
15. Shri Thaawar Chand Gehlot
16. Shri Mohd. Ali Khan
17. Shri P. Kannan
18. Shri G.N. Ratanpuri
19. Shri Rajaram
20. Smt. Renubala Pradhan

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Shri A.K Singh | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Shri. P.V.L.N Murthy | - | Director |
| 3. | Smt. Bharti S. Tuteja | - | Deputy Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the members and apprised them about the draft Action Taken Report on the recommendations/ observations contained in the Thirty Sixth Report on Demands for Grants for the Ministry of Textiles (2013-14) and Memorandum No.2 for consideration and adoption.

3. The Committee considered Memorandum No.2 and after some discussion adopted the draft Action Taken Report without any modification.

4. The Committee then authorized the Chairman to present the report to both Houses of Parliament after factual verification from the Ministry concerned.

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|----|----|----|-----|
| 5. | xx | xx | xx. |
| 6. | xx | xx | xx. |
| 7. | xx | xx | xx. |

8. xx xx xx.

9. xx xx xx.

The Committee then adjourned.

XX Matters do not pertain to this report.

APPENDIX-II**(Vide Para No. 3 of the Introduction)****ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON RECOMMENDATIONS
CONTAINED IN THE THIRTY-SIXTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
LABOUR (FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

	Total	Percentage
I. Total number of Recommendations	11	
II. Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by Government (Rec. Para. Nos.4.1, 4.2, 4.4,4.5, 4.7 and 4.8	06	54.55%
III. Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's reply	NIL	NIL
IV. Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee (Rec. Para. Nos. 4.3,4.6,4.9,4.10 and 4.11)	05	45.45 %
V. Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are of interim in nature	NIL	NIL
		----- 100% -----