

1	2	3
21.	Punjab	24210
22.	Rajasthan	84614
23.	Tamil Nadu	709564
24.	Tripura	137936
25.	Uttar Pradesh	647482
26.	West Bengal	736829
Total		6686659

*Number of persons working in handloom sector includes Household Members engaged in weaving activity and preparatory work (Full Time and Part Time) and number of Hired Weavers in Non-household Units.

India's Share in World Flower Market

3576. SHRI MADHAV RAO PATIL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

- whether India's share in the World Flower Market is very low;
- if so, the reasons therefor and the details of the actual share at present; and
- the steps being taken by the Government to boost the export of flowers?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The floriculture industry in India is in a nascent stage and India is a new entrant in the international floriculture market. Production of flowers that meet the requirements of the international market such as having long stems and long vase life has started only during the last 3 to 4 years with the setting up of Units with Green Houses. The lack of appropriate infrastructure for maintenance of the cold chain, high cost of investments and airfreight incidence compared to our competitors have also affected the export performance of the Indian floriculture industry. The share of India in the world exports of floriculture has been around 0.3% during 1997-98.

- Some of the steps taken to enhance production and exports of floriculture products include the following :
 - Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, quality testing equipment;
 - Providing financial assistance to exporters/growers/Cooperative Societies for development of infrastructural facilities such as purchase of specialised transport units, establishment of pre cooling/cold storage facilities;
 - Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging and strengthening of quality control;

- Grant of Air Freight Subsidy for exports of selected fresh horticulture & floriculture products;
- Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs, flower shows and exhibitions;
- Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as floriculture and horticulture products; such a facility at the Indira Gandhi International Airport at New Delhi has recently started functioning;
- providing technical advisory services and other support services to trade and industry including training to farmers for export production, quality control, packaging, transport, etc.

[Translation]

Branches of Indian Banks Abroad

3577. SHRI D.S. AHIRE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

- The policy being followed by the Government to open Overseas branches of private and public sector banks;
- the number of Overseas branches of Indian banks functioning in other countries at present; and
- the steps taken by the Government to open more Overseas branches of Indian banks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) and (c) RBI has reported that requests from banks for setting up of branch offices abroad are considered on the basis of certain criteria which, inter alia, include financial strength of the banks, their standing in the domestic sector, compliance with regulatory requirements and the policy followed by the host country regulatory authorities including the reciprocity conditions, trade and commerce between India and host country. The assessment also takes into account commercial and political risks involved. Only such requests which are found meeting these feasibility/viability criteria are considered suitable. Applications received from the Indian Public Sector Banks are considered for opening their branches abroad taking into consideration these factors.

- As at June 1998 eight public sector banks and one private sector bank are having 97 branches abroad in 25 countries.