

International (IGI) Airport. Airports Authority of India has identified land at Delhi airport for setting up a satellite airfreight city. Besides, certain procedural improvements for exports and imports from various airports, including IGI airport, Delhi have been carried out under the direction of the Export Promotion Board.

37 *As Director, New Delhi*
More Central Aid for Handloom Sector in A.P.

1678. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra State has urged the Union Government that there is a need to increase the budgetary support to the handloom sector;

(b) if so, whether the State Government has pleased for immediate and time bound measures be taken to improve the handloom sales;

(c) whether Meera Seth Committee set up in this regard has recommended that weavers as a whole be brought within the ambit of development programme; and

(d) if so, to what extent the recommendations of the Committee have been implemented?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. However, the enhancement in the Budgetary support to the handloom sector is dependent upon the recommendation of the Planning Commission and availability of resources.

(d) The main recommendations of the Meera Seth Committee and their implementation are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Details of main recommendations of high powered Committee on Handloom Sector and action thereof

1. All major handloom concentrated States may set up a separate Department of Handlooms. State Handloom Corporations and Apex Societies should be revitalised by providing suitable rehabilitation package.

The State Governments have been requested to set up separate department wherever these have not been formed yet.

2. A National Handloom Credit Fund with a Corpus of atleast of Rs. 500 crores may be set up for providing credit to the weavers outside the cooperative fold.

A study has been entrusted to Agriculture Finance Corporation to go into various aspects of problems of weavers.

3. NABARD may consider waiving the provisions with regard to the guarantee cover in respect of limits sanctioned. Loss Guarantee Scheme may be introduced to protect the interest of the Banks. The Credit for trading in yarn may also be re-financed at 9½% interest rate.

NABARD has provided refinance facility for banks for working Capital requirement of handloom weavers and for providing additional credit limit. NABARD has made a major shift in policy for sanction of credit limit to certain categories of scheduled State Cooperative Banks without the requirement of State Government guarantees in respect of good working banks and societies. Refinance to commercial banks for working capital requirements of handloom weavers has also been provided for. The rate of interest has been reduced on refinance. Reduction in interest rates have also been made for marketing activities and trading in yarn.

4. All State Governments may exempt Hank Yarn and Handloom products from any tax, including sales tax, entry tax and octroi.

The State Governments have been requested to consider exemption of hank yarn and handloom products from any Tax etc.

5. Marketing complexes including handloom haats and permanent exhibition sites at Village, subdivision, district and town level in large numbers may be set up by the Central/State Governments or their agencies.

Marketing Complexes have been set up in Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Mumbai, Indore, Cochin, Calcutta and Kollam.

6. A comprehensive project package for development of exportable products should be developed.

A budget provision of Rs. 500 lakhs was made during 1998-99 under the scheme for Handloom Export.

7. A Calamity Relief Scheme may be introduced to provide support for purchase of handlooms and other accessories, subsidy on purchase of Hank Yarn under Hank Yarn Subsidy Scheme, enhanced availability of credit, ensured buy-back of production and to provide immediate relief under various ongoing schemes of the State Governments.

The New Insurance Scheme has been introduced wherein calamity relief together— with accidental death, loss and damage of dwelling units due to flood, fire and earthquake has been included.

8. Welfare schemes may include all handloom workers and not just weavers. Coverage of Handloom workers under the Welfare Schemes of the Handlooms should be substantially stepped up both in cooperative and outside the cooperative fold.

Under the Category of Welfare Scheme, all types of handloom weavers can be covered under the New Insurance Scheme. It would include weavers in both cooperative fold and outside.

9. Special thrust under ongoing schemes of handlooms sector may be given for overall development of North-Eastern States, by providing additional financial input, where required.

North Eastern States are being given special attention. More than 10% of the total funds had been released to N.E. States. Special dispensation is being given under different existing schemes to N.E. States.

India Brand Equity Fund

1679. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited has sought any Central assistance under the India Brand Equity Fund (IBEF) to promote Indian brands in foreign markets;

(b) if so, the amount of assistance sought; and

(c) the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Karnataka a Soaps and Detergents Limited has sought soft loan of about Rs. 5 crores to improve the packing and presentation of Mysore Sandal Soap to suit International requirements, carry out effective sales promotion and participation in trade exhibitions with special emphasis on 'Made in India' theme.

(c) M/s. Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited have been requested to send their proposal with the details required to be furnished for consideration by the IBEF trust.

[Translation]

Amount Spent on VRS

1680. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of amount received by his Ministry from the Union Government under the "Voluntary Retirement Scheme" during each of the last three years;

(b) the number of employees sought retirement under the Voluntary Retirement Scheme during the above period, as on date;

(c) whether the amount provided for voluntary retirement scheme has been spent on other heads; and

(d) if so, the amount provided for VRS and spent on other heads alongwith the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

New Forum for Economic Crisis

1681. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to form new forum to prevent economic crisis on the existing economic forum which met in February 1999;