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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR, TEXTILES AND
SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

(2023-24)

(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF TEXTILES

DEVELOPMENT OF COTTON SECTOR

FIFTY-FIFTH REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

February, 2024/ Magha, 1945 (Saka)

FIFTY-FIFTH REPORT

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 07.02.2024

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 07.02.2024



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NEW DELHI

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*Not appended with this cyclostyled copy.

**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR
(2020-21)**

Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab – Chairperson

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Subhash Chandra Baheria
3. Shri Pallab Lochan Das
4. Shri Pasunoori Dayakar
5. Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi
6. Shri Satish Kumar Gautam
7. Shri B.N. Bache Gowda
8. Dr. Umesh G. Jadhav
9. Shri Dharmendra Kumar Kashyap
10. Adv. Dean Kuriakose
11. Shri Sanjay Sadashivrao Mandlik
12. Shri Khalilur Rahaman
13. Shri D. Ravikumar
14. Shri Nayab Singh Saini
15. Shri Naba Kumar Sarania
16. Shri Ganesh Singh
17. Shri Bhola Singh
18. Shri K. Subbarayan
19. @ Vacant
20. # Vacant
21. \$ Vacant

RAJYA SABHA

22. Shri Dushyant Gautam
23. Shri Neeraj Dangi
24. Shri Oscar Fernandes
25. Shri Elamaram Kareem
26. ^ Shri Mahesh Jethmalani
27. Dr. Banda Prakash
28. * Shri Naresh Bansal
29. Ms. Dola Sen
30. Shri M. Shanmugam
31. Shri Vivek Thakur

@ Vacancy occurred *vice* Shri P.K. Kunhalikutty resigned *w.e.f* 3rd February, 2021.

Shri John Barla ceased to be Member of the Committee *w.e.f* 07.07.2021 *vice* he was appointed as Union Minister.

\$ Dr. Virendra Kumar ceased to be Member of the Committee *w.e.f* 07.07.2021 *vice* he was appointed as Union Minister.

^ Nominated *w.e.f* 11th June, 2021 *vice* Dr. Raghunath Mohapatra expired.

* Nominated *w.e.f*. 23rd December, 2020 *vice* Shri Rajaram retired.

**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR, TEXTILES
AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

(2023-24)

Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab - Chairperson

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Subhash Chandra Baheria
3. Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel
4. Shri Pallab Lochan Das
5. Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi
6. Shri Satish Kumar Gautam
7. Shri Bache Gowda B.N.
8. Dr. Umesh G. Jadhav
9. Shri Dharmendra Kumar Kashyap
10. Adv. Dean Kuriakose
11. Shri Pakauri Lal
12. Prof. Sanjay Sadashivrao Mandlik
13. Shri Dayakar Pasunoori
14. Shri Khalilur Rahaman
15. Dr. D. Ravikumar
16. Shri Naba (Hira) Kumar Sarania
17. Shri Bhola Singh
18. Shri Ganesh Singh
19. Shri Nayab Singh
20. Shri K. Subbarayan
21. Shri Giridhari Yadav

RAJYA SABHA

22. Shri Naresh Bansal
23. Shri Neeraj Dangi
24. Shri R. Dharmar
25. Prof. Manoj Kumar Jha
26. Shri Elamaram Kareem
27. Ms. Dola Sen
28. Shri M. Shanmugam
29. Shri Shibu Soren
30. Shri Vijay Pal Singh Tomar
31. Shri Binoy Viswam

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Jadumani Baisakh - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Sreekanth. S - Deputy Secretary
3. Shri S. Lalengzau Ngaihte - Under Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Labour, Textiles and Skill Development (2023-24) having been authorized by the Committee do present on their behalf this Fifty-Fifth Report on 'Development of Cotton Sector' relating to the Ministry of Textiles.

2. The Committee (2020-21) took oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Textiles on 30th June, 2021. The Committee (2023-24) considered and adopted this Report at the sitting held on 5th February 2024.

3. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the representatives of the Ministry of Textiles for tendering evidence and placing before the Committee all the requisite information sought for in connection with the examination of the subject.

4. For ease of reference and convenience, the Observations/ Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report.

New Delhi;
05 February, 2024
16 Magha, 1945(Saka)

BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB
CHAIRPERSON,
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR,
TEXTILES AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

REPORT

PART-I

1. Introduction

Cotton is one of the most important commercial crops cultivated in India and accounts for around 24% of the total global cotton production. It plays a major role in sustaining the livelihood of an estimated 6 million cotton farmers and 40-50 million people engaged in related activity such as cotton processing & trade. The Indian Textile Industry consumes a diverse range of fibres and yarns and the ratio of use of cotton to non – cotton fibres in India is around 60:40 whereas it is 30:70 in the rest of the world.

Apart from being the provider of a basic necessity of life, i.e. clothing, which is next only to food, cotton is also one of the largest contributor to India’s net foreign exchange by way of exports in the form of raw cotton, intermediate products such as yarn and fabrics to ultimate finished products in the form of garments, made ups and knitwear. Due to its economic importance to India, it is also termed as “White-Gold”.

2. National Scenario

2.1 Acreage under cotton and yield:

India is at 1st place in the world in cotton acreage with 130.61 lakh hectares area under cotton cultivation, i.e. around 40% of world area of 322.12 lakh hectares. Approximately 67% of Indian’s cotton is produced in rain-fed areas and 33% on irrigated lands. In terms of productivity, India is at 36th rank with a yield of 447 kg/ha.

Table-1: Cotton Acreage and yield

Cotton Year	Cotton Acreage (in lakh hectares)	Cotton Yield (Lint in Kg/ha)
2015-16	122.92	459
2016-17	108.26	542
2017-18	125.86	500
2018-19	126.14	449
2019-20	134.77	460
2020-21	132.85	451
2021-22	123.71	428
2022-23 (Provisional)*	130.61	447
2023-24 (Projected)**	127.00	444

*Source: * Committee on Cotton Production and Consumption (COCPC) Meeting dated 1st June 2023.
** ICAC Journal, “Cotton this Month” dated 1st September 2023.*

3. Production and consumption of cotton:

India is the only country which grows all four species of cotton, G. Arboreum & G. Herbaceum (Asian cotton), G. Barbadense (Egyptian cotton) and G. Hirsutum (American Upland cotton). G. Hirsutum represents 90% of the hybrid cotton production in India and all the current Bt cotton hybrids are G. Hirsutum. In India, majority of cotton production comes from 9 major cotton growing States, which are grouped into three diverse agro-ecological zones, as under:-

- i. Northern Zone - Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan
- ii. Central Zone - Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh
- iii. Southern Zone - Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Apart from the above, cotton is also grown in the States of Odisha and Tamil Nadu. India occupied 2nd place in the world with estimated production of 343.47 lakh bales (5.84 Million Metric Tonnes) during cotton season 2022-23, i.e. 24% of world cotton production of 1448 lakh bales (24.62 Million Metric Tonnes). India is also the 2nd largest consumer of cotton in the world with an estimated consumption of 311 lakh bales (5.29 Million Metric Tonnes, i.e. 22.5% of world cotton consumption of 1379 lakh bales (23.45 Million Metric Tonnes).

Table-2: Production and consumption of cotton

Cotton Year	Production (in lakh bales)	Consumption (including MSME, non-MSME and Non Textile) (in lakh bales)
2016-17	345.00	310.41
2017-18	370.00	319.06
2018-19	333.00	311.21
2019-20	365.00	269.19
2020-21	352.48	334.87
2021-22	311.17	322.41
2022-23 (Provisional)*	343.47	311.00
2023-24 (Projected)**	320.50	294.00

Source:
* Committee on Cotton Production and Consumption (COCPC) Meeting dated 1st June 2023.
**ICAC Journal, "Cotton this Month" dated 1st September 2023.

3.1 When the Committee enquired about production of Cotton during the year 2016-17, the representative(s) of the Ministry deposed as under:

“Basically, in production of cotton, the agro-climatic conditions matter and rainfall is a very important part of it. Possibly, in that year the rainfall was quite okay. So, the yield has gone up. The other criteria for it is seeds. In India, 94 per cent of the seeds are genetically-modified BT Cotton. Nowhere in the world genetically-modified BT Cotton seeds are there. They use varieties. The problem with genetically-modified seeds is that the farmer has to buy it every year while in varieties he can produce the seed on his own and use it”.

3.2 When the Committee desired to know whether the new hybrids were introduced from the year 2016-17, the representative(s) of the Ministry stated as under:

“Yes, just within those 2-3 periods because it takes time to come in the seed chain. So, one, High Yielding variety / hybrids were introduced. Secondly, during that period, we had a good rainfall condition. Otherwise, this crop is cultivated in an arid / semi-arid ecosystem. Thirdly, whenever there is an attack of insects, pests and diseases, particularly insects, it causes severe damage to the crop. But that was the exceptional year when we were not having the attack of diseases, particularly, whitefly, pink bollworm, etc. These are the 2-3 points that were most favourable and hence we got more exceptional yield”.

3.3 When asked whether it was rainfall that actually helped during the said year, the representative of the Ministry (Agriculture Commissioner) stated as under:

‘It helps because 70 percent cultivation is in the arid ecosystem’.

3.4 The representative(s) of the Ministry added that:

“Nearly, 60-70 per cent, the figures vary, is actually rainfed. In fact, this is one of the reasons why our yield is lower as compared to some of the other countries because they have 100 per cent irrigated conditions whereas we have 60-70 per cent rainfed conditions in which cotton is grown.”

3.5 When enquired by the Committee whether any study has been made by the Agriculture Ministry relating to the issue of declining yield/production, the representative of the Ministry stated as under:

“Sir, in 2016-2017, if you see the graph, the area has come down because in 2015-2016 the first pink bollworm outbreak was there and resistance breakdown of BT Cotton was reported. Subsequently, from about 122 lakh hectares it has come down to 108 lakh hectares. So, the area came down and production also decreased, but since area has come down productivity is higher.”

3.6 The representative of the Ministry further supplemented as under:

“Sir, I may again add on what he is trying to say. Basically, yield we see from three zones, namely, Northern Zone, Central Zone and Southern Zone. The yield in Haryana is 530 whereas in Punjab it is 373 of 2021 provisional figures. The yield in Maharashtra, which has the largest area and which is basically rainfed is 333 kg per hectare. So, if we tackle these 2-3 States on a mission-mode possibly yield will increase”.

3.7 when the Committee asked the reason for production shrinkages, the representative of the Ministry stated as under:

“Sir, I am clearly stating that we only come into the picture primarily when the farmer brings cotton to the market after growing it. From there, we start procuring it, then we get its ginning, then we get its baling done, then they may sell it or get it's spinning done, weaving to garmenting, that is our chain. What is to be grown is primarily the job of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. It has various issues such as the production, productivity, area cannot be increased, because the cultivated area in India cannot increase. It has to compete with other crops. The crop in which the farmers will benefit more, the farmer will grow the same crop. But as you have seen, the scope of increasing productivity is very high”.

3.8 On the hybrid varieties product of cotton, the representative of the Ministry deposed as under:

“Right now we would like to inform that from the year 2017 to 2021, 108 varieties and hybrid cotton have been developed; out of which 57 are non-Bt, indigenous cotton is included in it. There are four such varieties, which are in long staple

cotton. You must have heard the name of Suvin earlier, it is grown in Tamil Nadu. Now we have also developed four more varieties .Cotton quality is equivalent to that and the yield is also more. We have also developed four staple cotton in hybrids. Similarly, we have developed Bt varieties, as Sharan Sir has told that it's seed does not have to be produced again and again. We have developed eight varieties. These have been just notified. They have been trying to popularize farmers by demonstrating and FLDs. The maximum Bt varieties are hybrids. Since 2016, the pink bollworm attacks are the maximum, due to which the yield is decreasing. As mentioned in the presentation. You may recall that in the year 2017-18, pink bollworm emerged very fast in Gujarat and then we controlled it by integrated pest management. Maharashtra in the year 2018.”

3.9 The representative of the Ministry further added as follows in this regard:

“In the year 2018, there was a lot of devastation due to pink bollworm in Maharashtra, so the government had to give a subsidy of Rs 4300 crores to the farmers. In this, we have developed technology. We do demonstrations for 10 farmers in 10 districts; in which funding is done by DAC and we give technical support. It is quite popular, since then there has been less attack of pink bollworm. The attack of white fly in North India was very fast in the year 2016, there was also a lot of loss. The government had to give a subsidy of about Rs 700 crores. There also we have developed technology, since then there is no problem. The variety we are developing is good in yield and it is developed after testing. When it comes into cultivation, the yield will also be there. As far as ELS cotton is concerned, we have small, medium and large farmers”

3.10 When the Committee enquired about the amount of yield increased through hybrids developed variety seeds, the representative of the Ministry deposed as under:

“Sir, as far as yield is concerned, the maximum area is Maharashtra. That's 33 percent”.

3.11 The representative of the Ministry further supplemented as under:

“The area in Maharashtra is the maximum area. This is 33 per cent of the entire India and it contributes 24 per cent to productivity, because there is a rain-fed condition. Therefore, the yield there does not exceed 280 kg per hectare. It is 100 percent in Punjab, if we look at the data of the year 2018-19, then the yield of Punjab is 720 kg per hectare. Irrigation plays an important role in such criteria. Thereafter diseases etc also occur.”

3.12 When asked about the incentives given for the development in production of Organic Cotton, the representative of the Ministry deposed as under:

“Sir, you stated about organic cotton. The problem is that it takes three years to become organic. Its conversion takes three years. The question of their income sustainability arises for that period. The Secretary had also said that there should be some intervention in this so that the farmers can sustain it. Right now these people are demonstrating about organic cotton at the field level. There is a gap in it that how farmers can sustain the three-year period. Second, the premium that the industry pays in organic cotton in India is much lower than outside.”

3.13 When the Committee asked the amount of rain fall during 2016-17, the yield per hectare, the reason for hike in production and the reason for non-increase in the subsequent year, the Ministry in their written reply vide O.M. dated....January,2024 stated as under:

“The country received annual rain fall of 1083.20mm during 2016 which is around 91% of normal rainfall of 1187mm. During 2016-17, total area under cotton decreased to 108 lakh ha from 123 lakh ha in the previous year. The area decrease in Punjab and Haryana was due to whitefly outbreak during 2015-16. Area also decreased in the central zone due to delayed onset and deficit rainfall during the month of June in the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat. The productivity in north zone increased from 359kg lint/ha to 574kg lint/ha in 2016-17 due to effective management of whitefly pest through coordinated efforts between Central and State agencies. In the central zone, farmers growing cotton in marginal rainfed areas would have shifted to other crops. Productivity from traditional productive areas increased from 424 to 533kg lint/ha due to further well distributed rainfall during July-October leading to additional cotton pickings.

Yield increase did not continue in subsequent years due to outbreak of pink bollworm infestation in the central and southern zone since 2017-18 causing yield loss in the range of 10-30%. Also, increase in cotton area by expansion into less suitable soils in the central and southern states pulled down the average state and national productivity level.

Occurrence of extreme high rainfall events later in the season during 2018-19 and 2019-20 was also responsible for reduction in cotton production and productivity.

In the north zone, no incidence of pink bollworm was reported on BG-II genotypes till 2017-18. However, infestation of pink bollworm above economic threshold level (ETL) has been reported on BG-II cotton during 2018-19 and 2019-20 in the state of Haryana and Punjab in pockets surrounding cotton ginning and oil extraction units. In 2021-22, pink bollworm outbreak was noticed on cotton in Punjab and Haryana. The severe incidence of pink bollworm has also been noticed in 2022-23 in some parts of northern Rajasthan. Spread of resistant populations to the north zone is attributed to transport of infested cotton seeds from central and southern states to Punjab and Haryana by ginning and oil extraction units.”

3.14 When asked about the variety of cotton introduced, the Ministry in their written reply vide O.M. dated....January,2024 stated as under:

“Public sector research organizations of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and State Agricultural University (SAUs) released 107 varieties / hybrids comprising Bt and Non Bt cotton varieties/ hybrids, high yielding extra-long staple variety and long linted desi cotton varieties during 2017-2023. Besides, 125 BG II cotton hybrids developed by the private sector were also released after multi-location testing by ICAR-AICRPon Cotton.”

3.15 When asked why India was unable to have good production, the Ministry in their written reply stated as under:

“After the introduction of Bt Cotton in 2002-03, area under cotton increased from 76.7 lakh ha to 133.7 lakh ha, production increased from 86.2 lakh bales to 360 lakh bales and *yield increased from 191 kg lint/ha to 447 kg lint/ha by 2022-23*. Bt-cotton seed with resistance to bollworms and supporting production and protection technologies are mainly responsible for the significant jump in cotton production and now India is one of the largest producers in the world. Cotton

production attained a peak in 2013-14 season (398 lakh bales with a productivity of 560 kg lint/ha) and stagnated thereafter.

The major constraint responsible for fluctuating growth in cotton production is cotton cultivation in rainfed conditions (67%) experiencing variability in rainfall and frequency of extreme weather events at different vulnerable crop growth stages. Even in assured irrigated areas, irrigation is supply driven (based on release of canal water) and not demand driven (based on crop need).

Another significant reason for low productivity is cultivation of medium to long duration hybrids in rainfed areas of Central Zone (in about 3.8 million ha, 28% of total area) in shallow to medium deep soils at low plant densities (12000 to 18000 plants/ha) leading to low productivity. The problem is exacerbated due to deterioration in soil health as a consequence of continuous cultivation of cotton without crop rotation and proper crop residue management. Better management practices such as legume rotation/intercropping, use of organic manures and balanced fertilizers are not widely adopted by farmers leading to low productivity. Higher area expansion in less efficient districts in the Central zone is also responsible for lower productivity”.

3.16 When asked the steps taken to increase the production of cotton in the country, the Ministry in their written reply stated as under:

“The Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Ministry of Textiles, is executing a special project through ICAR-CICR, Nagpur, named "Targeting Technologies to Agro-Ecological Zones" under National Food Security Mission (NFSM). With a sanctioned budget of Rs. 41.87 crore, the project focuses on enhancing cotton productivity through technologies like High-Density Planting System and production techniques for Extra Long Staple cotton. Implemented in 8 states, 57 districts, and 286 clusters, covering 9,175 hectares, the project adopts a cluster-based, value chain approach with the support of various industry associations and operates in a Public-Private Partnership mode with a Direct Benefit Transfer approach. The goal is to demonstrate best practices and boost cotton productivity during the fiscal year 2023-24”.

3.17 When asked about the practices being followed in Brazil and Mexico for production of cotton, the representative of the ministry in their written reply dated 17 August 2021, stated as under:

“In Mexico, 90% cotton production is irrigated and there is 100% adoption of Genetically modified (GM) seeds with Bt + Herbicide tolerance (HT) traits. Cotton is mainly produced in Chihuahua (63%), followed by Baja California (18%), Coahuila (11%) regions. Weed management generally consists of the application of herbicide (in at least 90% area) that is complemented by deep tillage for soil preparation and in-row cultivation. In about 20% area pre-planting and pre-emergence application of herbicide is followed. Highest yields of GM cotton in Mexico are due to better seed quality, favourable weather conditions, improved training of farming technicians, government campaigns for crop health and pest eradication initiatives. In Brazil, 95% of cotton is intensively produced by farmers and farmers growups in Cerrado in large farm units of over 1000 acres or more under assured high rainfall. High density planting and mechanical picking are key reasons for high cotton productivity in this region. Cotton production in Mato Grosso and Goiás regions is through a second crop cycle “Safrina” with cotton sowing taken up after soybean during the same rainfall season. Early maturing, compact genotypes (Bt + HT varieties) are used which are amenable to high density planting adopting zero till sowing and machine picking leading to higher yields. About 80% of the cotton area, farming practices and harvesting are fully mechanized. High dose of fertilizers is applied to the extent of 150kg each of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, apart from additional applications of gypsum, boron and sulphur. Extensive use of chemicals is made to check insect pest attacks due to aphids, whiteflies, boll weevils and fungal disease which require about 10-14 insecticide applications and 4-5 fungicide applications. Per hectare cost of cultivation is to the tune of US\$ 2500-3000, a significant component for which consumed in use of high level of fertilizers and insecticides. Canopy management and regulation of plant growth and maturity is achieved through extensive use of plant growth regulators. High investment, high mechanization and large-scale farming, fiber processing at the farm level for value addition and forward marketing contracts for export are drivers for higher cotton production in Brazil”.

4 Import and Export of cotton:

One of the exporter of cotton with estimated export of 30 lakh bales (0.51 Million Metric Tonnes) i.e. 6% of world export of 528 lakh bales (8.98 Million Metric Tonnes) in 2022-23. Although India is a leading producer and exporter of cotton, some quantity i.e. about 5% of the total consumption of cotton in India is imported by the textile industry to meet their specific requirement.

Table-3: Import and export of cotton during last 5 years* upto 30th June 2023

Cotton Year	Import (in lakh bales)	Export (in lakh bales)
2017-18	15.80	67.59
2018-19	35.37	43.55
2019-20	15.50	47.04
2020-21	11.03	77.59
2021-22	21.13	42.25
2022-23*	9.95	12.36

Source: DGCIS, Kolkata

4.1 The Committee desired to know about the category of cotton being exported and the following was submitted by the Ministry in response :

Statement showing details of cotton exported by CCI during cotton season 2020-21 is given below:

Category of cotton Exported by CCI during 2020-21				Qty Exported (In bales)	Country of Export
State	Variety	Quality Parameter			
		Staple Length(mm)	Micronnaire (inch)		
Orissa	BB MOD	30	3.5-4.3	13900	Bangladesh
Telangana	BB MOD	30	3.5-4.3	1200	Bangladesh
Telangana	BB SPL MOD	29	3.5-4.3	900	Bangladesh
Maharashtra	BB SPL 29MM+	29	3.5-4.3	3700	Bangladesh
Orissa	MECH MOD	28	3.5-4.7	16497	Bangladesh
Total				36197	

The value (in USD Million) of export of Cotton commodity for FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23 is given below:

Values in USD million		
Commodities	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23
Cotton Yarn	5498	2752
Other textile yarn, fabrics, madeupsetc	650	730
Cotton Raw Includ. Waste	2816	781
Cotton Fabrics, Madeups Etc.	8201	6821
Total	17165	11084

Source: DGCIS”

4.2 The representative(s) of the Ministry of Textiles further added as follows:

“We were talking of extra long staple variety which is our primarily import product. That is a kind of required for premium product. Today, we get it from other countries”.

4.3 When the Committee pointed out that the Cotton Farmers of Raigada are cultivating this extra long staple variety, the representative of the Ministry stated as under:

“... Sir, we need to increase that. That extra long staple variety needs to be increased by at least 7-8 lakhs bales so that what we are importing is not required, because it is very important for premium products. It is required to be mixed.”

4.4 When the Committee sought to know support mechanism in place and or on payment of taxes on Cotton, the representative of the Ministry deposed as under:

“Sir, there is a point here which may have been brought to the notice of Members also. This time 10 percent import duty has been imposed on cotton in the budget. The cotton industry says that it is harmful for us. "We primarily import ELS cotton or import contamination free and specialty cotton. It is not produced in India. Generally, we impose import duty to protect farmers. They say that if the industry is bringing what we are not producing and then there should be no import duty on it. Sir, this is the issue. We are receiving representations and discussions are going on it. I thought I would like to let you know.”

4.5 When pointed out that if import is allowed/permitted, the representative of the Ministry stated as under:

“Sir, it is also to be seen. Right now we have asked to figure out how much import has taken place in the last three-four years. The decision will be taken by looking at how much ELS cotton, specialty cotton and normal cotton has been imported. But this is one burning issue right now.”

4.6 India produces 25 per cent of world’s cotton production. The entire cotton produced in the country is not purchased by the Cotton Corporation of India. Some of it is exported. At the same time, our spinning mills are importing cotton. When the Committee asked the reason for import of Cotton while there is enough cotton product for export, the representative of the Ministry responded as under:

“Sir, you have seen that out of our production of 360 lakhs bales, we have exported 70 lakhs bales. Import is only 11 lakhs bales. "Primarily, our import is the extra-long staple variety and as mentioned Giza, Pima, which is required, people from outside stated that we will buy only export shirts, which has Giza and Pima cotton. That is why that specific variety, contamination free needs to be imported.”

5 Balance Sheet of cotton for last 5 years is given below:

Table-4: Cotton balance sheet for last 5 years

	(Quantity in lakh bales of 170kgs)					
Particulars	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23(P)*
SUPPLY						
Opening stock	43.76	42.91	56.52	120.79	71.84	39.48
Crop (Production)	370.00	333.00	365.00	352.48	311.17	343.47
Imports	15.80	35.37	15.50	11.03	21.13	10.00
Total Supply	429.56	411.28	437.02	484.30	404.14	392.95
DEMAND						
Total consumption	319.06	311.21	269.19	334.87	322.41	311.00

(including MSME, non-MSME & Non-textile)						
Exports	67.59	43.55	47.04	77.59	42.25	30.00
Total Demand	386.65	354.76	316.23	412.46	364.66	341.00
Closing Stock	42.91	56.52	120.79	71.84	39.48	51.95
Source: As per Meeting of the Committee on Cotton Production and Consumption (COCP) held on 1 st June 2023. P-Provisional.						

5.1 The Committee observed that the production of cotton has increased to 365 lakh bales during 2019-20, compared to 335 lakh bales of 2018-19 but there was a sharp decrease in consumption; 311.21 lakh bales in 2018-19 to 269.19 bales in 2019-2020. When enquired the reason for decrease in consumption since there being no COVID/Corona at that time, the representative of the Ministry stated as under:

“Sir, there was consumption, but due to this they had a lot of stock also lying with them. The cotton they had procured was sold later this year. At that time, they had about 21.7 crores bales of cotton in the closing stock. Spinning mills were closed, so consumption could not take place”.

6 International Scenario:

As per ICAC Journal ‘Cotton This Month’ – 1st September 2023”, Global production for 2023-24 is projected at 25.07 million tonnes (1474 lakh bales) which is 2% higher in comparison to previous year’s production of 24.62 million tonnes (1448 lakh bales). Global cotton consumption is projected at 23.21 million tonnes (1365 lakh bales) which is around 1% lesser in comparison to previous year’s consumption of 23.45 million tonnes (1379 lakh bales). Global cotton export is projected at 8.94 million tonnes (526 lakh bales) which is 11 % higher in comparison to previous year’s export of 8.07 million tonnes (474 lakh bales). Global cotton import is estimated at 8.94 million tonnes (526 lakh bales) which is 11% higher in comparison to previous year’s import of 8.05 million tonnes (473 lakh bales). Global ending stocks is estimated at 22.98 million tonnes (1351 lakh bales) which is 9% higher in

comparison to previous year's ending stock of 21.12 million tonnes (1242 lakh bales).

6.1 Details of major country-wise area & productivity, production, consumption, export and import are as under:-

Area & Productivity (Yield)

Table-5: Area & Productivity –Global Scenario for last 5 years

(Area in Thousand Hectare and productivity in Kgs/Hectare)

Countries	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23 (P)		2023-24 (P)	
	Area	Yield	Area	Yield	Area	Yield	Area	Yield	Area	Yield	Area	Yield	Area	Yield
World	33283	811	33041	786	34495	758	31482	762	32717	770	32211	764	33072	758
India	12586	500	12614	449	13477	460	13285	453	12371	428	13061	447	12700	444
USA	4492	1014	4043	989	4654	931	3347	950	4156	918	2957	1065	3490	873
China	3350	1758	3367	1794	3300	1758	3170	1864	3028	1892	3000	1993	2872	1950
Pakistan	2700	665	2373	704	2527	522	2000	480	2110	600	2065	405	2370	687
Brazil	1175	1707	1618	1717	1666	1802	1371	1719	1373	1859	1650	1830	1691	1830

Source: ICAC Journal 'Cotton This Month'-1stSept.2023, India till 2022-23: COCPC meeting 1st June 2023

Production:

Table-6: Production of cotton –Global Scenario for last 5 years

(Quantity in Million MetricTonnes)

Countries	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 (P)	2023-24 (P)
World	27.00	25.98	26.26	23.99	25.18	24.62	25.07
India	6.29	5.66	6.21	5.99	5.29	5.84	5.45
China	5.89	6.04	5.80	5.91	5.73	5.98	5.60
USA	4.56	4.00	4.33	3.18	3.81	3.15	3.05
Brazil	2.00	2.78	3.00	2.36	2.55	3.02	2.80
Pakistan	1.80	1.67	1.46	0.96	1.27	0.84	1.63

Source: ICAC Journal 'Cotton This Month'-1stSept.2023, India till 2022-23: COCPC meeting 1st June 2023

Consumption:Table-7: Consumption of Cotton –Global Scenario for last 5 years

(Quantity in Million MetricTonnes)

Countries	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 (P)	2023-24 (P)
World	26.35	26.01	23.05	25.69	25.81	23.45	23.21
China	8.50	8.25	7.23	8.40	8.31	7.50	7.00
India	5.43	5.29	4.58	5.70	5.48	5.29	5.00
Pakistan	2.35	2.36	2.34	2.15	2.45	1.90	1.94
Brazil	0.68	0.73	0.57	0.69	0.70	0.70	0.66
USA	0.70	0.63	0.47	0.52	0.56	0.45	0.47
Source: ICAC Journal ‘Cotton This Month’-1 st Sept.2023, India till 2022-23: COCPC meeting 1 st June 2023							

Exports:Table-8: Export of Cotton –Global Scenario for last 5 years

(Quantity in Million MetricTonnes)

Countries	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 (P)	2023-24 (P)
World Total	9.14	9.28	9.21	10.83	9.73	8.07	8.94
USA	3.64	3.37	3.47	3.63	3.18	2.79	2.72
India	1.15	0.74	0.80	1.32	0.72	0.51	0.20
CFA Zone	1.06	1.16	1.07	1.19	1.31	0.88	1.46
Brazil	0.91	1.31	1.95	2.42	1.74	1.45	2.05
Uzbekistan	0.22	0.16	0.10	0.10	0.03	0.01	0.02
Source: ICAC Journal ‘Cotton This Month’-1 st Sept.2023, India till 2022-23: COCPC meeting 1 st June 2023							

Imports:

Table-9: Import of Cotton –Global Scenario for last 5 years

(Quantity in Million MetricTonnes)

Countries	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 (P)	2023-24 (P)
World Total	9.04	9.22	8.78	10.63	9.60	8.05	8.94
China	1.32	2.10	1.60	2.84	1.85	1.38	2.15
Bangladesh	1.67	1.54	1.50	1.69	1.70	1.40	1.60
Vietnam	1.52	1.51	1.41	1.55	1.36	1.35	1.40
Turkey	0.96	0.79	1.02	1.19	1.24	0.95	1.03
Indonesia	0.77	0.66	0.55	0.55	0.58	0.34	0.42
India	0.27	0.60	0.26	0.19	0.36	0.17	0.35
Source: ICAC Journal 'Cotton This Month'-1 st Sept.2023, India till 2022-23; COCPC meeting 1 st June 2023							

6.2 When asked about the advantage of having a 100% BT cotton based production while countries like America and Brazil are not doing bad as far as International Market is concerned and the constraint for having of splitting a percentage of production between BT cotton and variety cotton, the Ministry in their written reply datedJanuary,2024 stated as under:

“As per the recent estimate of the Government, 95% of 13.4 million ha of the cotton grown in India is under Bt hybrids containing BG II trait for bollworm resistance. In Brazil, 89.8% of the 1.6 million ha is under genetically modified (GM) cotton varieties with traits such as insect resistance with Bt gene (1%), herbicide tolerance (HT) gene (30%) and stacked Bt+ HT genes (59%). In USA, more than 94% of the cotton is grown under GM cotton varieties with traits that include insect resistance (5% Bt), herbicide tolerance (8% HT) and stacked traits (83% Bt+ HT).

In all the three countries, GM cotton technology has been adopted (more than 90%). In India, the technology is deployed in the form of hybrid seeds while the same is available in the form of straight varieties in USA and Brazil. The methods

adopted for cotton cultivation are highly intensive and mechanized to suit large farms compared to less intensive and manual production in small farms in India. In Brazil, cotton cultivation takes place in fertile soils under assured high rainfall through corporate farming. Quality cotton production and marketing in Brazil and USA is oriented and geared towards exports compared to 75% consumption of cotton produced in India.

Bt-Cotton Hybrid seeds are mostly produced by the private sector seed industry in India as a means of value capture mechanism for the licensed. Bt trait is for bollworm resistance. These hybrids are of longer duration for higher productivity and quality of cotton are mostly suited to medium to deep soils with adequate nutrient supply and soil moisture for expression of high yield potential. Productivity is lowered in the absence of canopy management, nutrient and moisture limitations and pest/disease outbreaks.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is the nodal agency for evaluation and release of both hybrids and varieties after multi-location testing. Recently, Bt varieties from public sector were released, notified and entered into seed chain for commercial cultivation. Development of early maturing and compact varieties and hybrids is being targeted to suit cotton growing areas traditionally having lower productivity and also to avoid yield losses caused due to the breakdown of insect resistance to pink bollworm which is a late season pest.

ICAR-Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur suggests that there is scope to divert at least 20% of the cotton area under long duration Bt hybrids towards early maturing Bt varieties and non-Bt varieties of cotton including other species for niche areas (*Gossypium arboreum*, *G. Barbadense* and *G. herbaceum*). For this to be realized, varieties need to be given protection under PPV FRA to encourage the private sector to develop Bt varieties apart from Bt hybrids. Adequate seed multiplication of released varieties of public sector through seed chain is essential”.

6.3 When asked about the others cotton varieties like Kasturi cotton, the representative of the Ministry stated as under:

“Sir, you had asked about Kasturi cotton. Actually, the parameter it has is 29 plus mm. We have kept it, because we do not have that extra long, so we developed a protocol and trade mark of 29 plus. Generally, we need this much. This time we have opened it to everyone. Whoever develops it, its certification will be given by the textile committee that this will be the brand. This work is now at the incipient stage. Why is it different from other international brands it is completely market

segmented. International brand gives different quality; parameters, whiteness, strength and length are totally different. It is totally different from that. It will create a niche market for us. This is another matter.”

6.4 The Committee wanted to know the major competitors for Indian Brand Kasturi cotton in global market and how far brand has facilitated achievement of the objective of making India "Atam Nirbhar Bharat". It was also enquired whether it enhanced the consumption of cotton in the domestic market and export of cotton to global market. The Ministry in their written reply dated ..January, 2024 stated as under:

“Some of the major global brands in cotton trade internationally are SUPIMA (USA), GIZA (Egypt). Kasturi Cotton Bharat programme of Ministry of Textiles is a first of its kind branding, traceability and certification exercise carried out jointly by the Government of India, Trade Bodies and Industry to promote Indian Cotton. The Ministry of Textiles is driving this initiative in a mission-oriented approach, allocating budgetary support in alignment with Rs.15 crores contribution from Trade & Industry Bodies. Spanning three years from 2022-23 to 2024-25, this collaborative effort anticipates a positive impact on the entire Indian Textile Industry, fostering an elevated global perception and value for Indian Cotton.

Ministry of Textiles hosted 81st Plenary Meeting of the International Cotton Advisory Committee. The theme of this Plenary Meeting was “Cotton Value Chain: Local Innovations for Global prosperity”. The international launch of Kasturi Cotton Bharat was also executed in the aforesaid event. Hon’ble Union Minister of Textile, Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food & Public Distribution, Shri PiyushGoyal unveiled Kasturi Cotton My Stamp along with the inaugural set of products made out of Kasturi Cotton i.e. a stunning T-Shirt and a beautifully designed hand towel during inaugural session of 81st Plenary meeting of International Advisory Committee (ICAC)”.

7. Minimum Support Price (MSP) Operation

7.1 The Cotton Corporation of India Limited (CCI) has been nominated by the Government of India for undertaking MSP operations in the event when prices of seed cotton (kapas) fall below the MSP level for procuring FAQ

grade kapas offered by the cotton farmers in various APMC market yards at MSP rates.

- 7.2** Before commencement of the Cotton Year (Oct. to Sept.), every year MSP is recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) based on the formula of 1.5 times of cost of production (A2+FL) so as to ensure reasonably fair remuneration i.e. at least 50% over cost of production to farmers.
- 7.3** Accordingly, taking into consideration the recommendation of CACP, Ministry of Agriculture declares MSP for two basic varieties of Fair Average Quality (FAQ) cotton viz. Medium Staple length (staple length of 24.5 mm to 25.5 mm & micron aire value of 4.3 to 5.1) and long staple length (staple length of 29.5 to 30.5 mm & micron aire of 3.5 to 4.3). Based on the Support Price of these two basic varieties of Seed cotton (Kapas) and taking into account the quality differential, normal price differential and other relevant factors, the MSP for other classes of Seed cotton (Kapas) of Fair Average Quality (FAQ) is fixed by the Office of Textile Commissioner.
- 7.4** For cotton season 2023-24, Government of India has increased MSP of Fair Average Quality (FAQ) grade cotton by about 9% to 10% as under:

Table-10: MSP fixed by Ministry of Agriculture during last 5 years

Crop Year	Medium Staple (Staple length 24.5 mm -25.5 mm & Miconaire 4.3 - 5.1)			Long Staple (Staple length 29.5 mm -30.5 mm & Miconaire 3.5 - 4.3)		
	MSP rate (Rs./Quintal)	Increase in MSP		MSP rate (Rs./Quintal)	Increase in MSP	
		Rs./Quintal	%		Rs./Quintal	%
2017-18	4020	160	4.15%	4320	160	3.85%
2018-19	5150	1130	28.11%	5450	1130	26.16%
2019-20	5255	105	2.04%	5550	100	1.83%
2020-21	5515	260	4.95%	5825	275	4.95%
2021-22	5726	211	3.83%	6025	200	3.43%
2022-23	6080	354	6.18%	6380	355	5.89%
2023-24	6620	540	8.88%	7020	640	10.03%

Table -11: Procurement under MSP during last 5 years

Cotton Year	Production (Lakh Bales)	Procurement under MSP Operations	
		Qty. in Lakh Bales	%age of Production
2017-18	370.00	03.91	01.06
2018-19	333.00	10.78	03.24
2019-20	365.00	124.61	34.14
2020-21	352.48	99.33	28.18
2021-22	311.17	00.01	-
2022-23	343.47	-	-
In 2021-22 & 2022-23, cotton prices were ruling above MSP. Hence, no MSP support required by farmers			

7.5 During the Oral evidence the Committee pointed out that in 2020-21 the MSP operation of cotton opened 453 centers. The Centers increased procurement centers to 523. So far CCI (Cotton Corporation of India) has undertaken MSP operation equivalent to 91.89 lakh bales valuing Rs.26,720 crore. In response, the representative of the Ministry deposed as under:

“Sir, there was a lot of improvement in the market after February, 2021. The earlier rate was 5 thousand 800, in the midway it became 6 thousand.”

7.6 The representative of the Ministry further stated as follow:

“Sir, the figures are latest but right now no procurement is virtually taking place. Because CCI procures from the market only when the rate is below the minimum support price. When the rate is high, commercial procurement does not take place. One way is that we make money by doing commercial procurement and then selling or exporting the same. This is a difficult task for the government corporation. As soon as the market price exceeds the MSP, however, the Cotton Corporation is not able to procure the Cotton. This procurement has been at this level for a long time.”

7.7 The representative of the Ministry also supplemented as under:

“Sir, after February 2021, the farmer does not need our intervention. They were getting 30 per cent more than MSP rates. Our intervention was not required by them”.

7.8 The Committee pointed out that in the year 2019-2020 21.5 lakhs farmers were provided benefits. In the year 2020-2021, 19 lakhs farmers were provided benefits. The difference was only 2 lakhs compared with the previous years. The bales purchases were 91-92 lakhs bales and the previous year it was 105 lakh bales. In this regard, the representative of the Ministry stated as under:

“This is the latest figure. Why are you confusing? This is the latest figure, but these figures are not changing, because since February they are not actually getting stock at the procurement center. They will buy at MSP, if the price in the market is higher than that, then they are not able to buy right now, so you will see this figure. The same figure will still be seen after a month.”

7.9 When the Committee desired to know the rates of Cotton bales in the market, the representative of the Ministry deposed as under:

“Sir, 6,500 is the minimum rate, which the farmer is getting, while the MSP is 5,800. They are getting almost 30 per cent. This is a good situation. Good for the farmer. They are getting better than the assured price”.

7.10 When the Committee pointed out that there is information that people are selling at low rate, the representative of the Ministry stated as under:

“Sir, the premium quality of 35 per cent in the total crop is not available to CCI and it keep on going 10 to 15 per cent above the MSP. We have around 30 per cent procurement and 20-25 per cent below FAQ, which we cannot procure. It has 18-20 percent moisture.”

7.11 The representative of the Ministry also further deposed regarding MSP as under:

“Sir, secondly, you stated about MSP. In MSP you know that there is a CACP. That is the Commission of Agricultural Costs and Prices. The commission that is there, it is fixed every year by doing a lot of exercise and it is approved by the cabinet. It

is increasing every year. I will not be able to say that the formula is the same that how the farmer gets at least 50 percent return on it.”

8. Steps taken for development of cotton sector:

8.1 Supporting the cotton farmers by procuring cotton under Minimum Support Price (MSP) Operations:

The main objective of MSP is to ensure remunerative prices to cotton farmers by providing them an alternate price at which cotton can be sold by them. MSP system ensures remunerative price to cotton farmers and saves them from distress sales in any eventuality of Fair Average Quality (FAQ) cotton prices falling below MSP.

During cotton season 2019-20, due to lockdown caused by COVID-19 pandemic in India and across the globe from mid of March 2020 had created an unprecedented crisis. In such situation when there were no buyers for farmers' cotton, CCI supported them under MSP operation by operating 423 procurement centres in 11 cotton growing states. CCI made a record procurement of 105.15 lakh bales (equivalent to around 546.80 lakh quintals kapas) valuing around Rs. 28,500 crores. Besides this, 19.46 lakh bales valuing Rs. 5,055 crore were procured from 3.45 lakh cotton farmers by Maharashtra State Coop. Cotton Growers Marketing Fed. Ltd as sub agent of CCI in Maharashtra. Thus, an amount of Rs. 33,555 crores were disbursed to around 25 lakh cotton farmers directly into their bank accounts.

During cotton season 2020-21, when India was at a critical stage in COVID-19 pandemic due to its' deadly second wave, CCI was functioning in 11 cotton growing states with 450 procurement centres to safeguard the cotton farmers and to avoid the eventuality of distress sale by them. With this intervention, CCI procured 91.89 lakh bales (equivalent to around 482 lakh quintals kapas) valuing around Rs. 26,700 crores under MSP operations directly from the farmers. Besides this, 7.44 lakh bales valuing Rs.2102 crore were procured from 1.37 lakh cotton farmers by Maharashtra State Coop. Cotton Growers Marketing Fed. Ltd as

sub agent of CCI in Maharashtra. Thus, an amount of Rs. 28,800 crores were disbursed to around 20 lakh cotton farmers directly into their bank account.

8.2 Developed a Farmer Friendly Mobile App “Cott-Ally”:

In order to increase the awareness among the cotton farmers in the country about MSP of cotton, best farm practices and nearest procurement centres of CCI for selling their cotton, CCI developed an exclusive mobile app, “Cott-Ally” for cotton farmers in their regional language. This mobile app has become an easily accessible platform for the cotton farmers in the country to get authentic information related to cotton. This mobile app also helps CCI to have direct interaction and outreach with the cotton farmers.

8.3 When the Committee enquired how many farmers have been enrolled under the mobile app and how far introduction of this App has facilitated redressal of farmers’ problems/grievances and the steps taken to encourage the farmers to enroll under the App the representative of the Ministry during the oral evidence stated as under:

“Sir, we have been told that 15 lakh farmers have downloaded it”

8.4 The representative of the Ministry further supplemented as under:

‘Our center in-charge also trains them to download and operate it. By the end of this season, I think 21-22 lakh farmers will be registered.’

8.5 Scientific assessment of kapas quality with modern gadgets at the time of procurement:

In order to ensure that farmers get right price for their produce, manual systems are minimized by CCI in the procurement of cotton by using modern gadgets like moisture meters for scientific assessment of quality of cotton at the spot. This systems helps the cotton farmers to get quality based remunerative prices for their cotton on one hand and ensure the availability of better quality cotton to the industry on the other hand.

8.6 Processing of cotton in modernized Ginning & Pressing Factories:

CCI engages Star Rated Modernized Composite Ginning & Pressing factories through tender system for processing of seed cotton procured under MSP

operations. Modernized star rated G&P factories are equipped with state-of-art infrastructure which helps in maintaining the quality in processing of cotton due to grade-wise segregated processing and lesser trash & contamination. Besides this, CCI is fixing quality norms upon ginners for minimum ginning percentage and maximum trash percentage.

Above system is helping in improving the quality and the brand image of Indian cotton. Thus, the textile industry is sourcing good quality cotton at most competitive rates and terms by participating in daily e-Auction of CCI and sustaining their competitiveness in producing value added finished products i.e. yarn, fabric, garments, etc.

8.7 Extension services for improving productivity and quality of Indian cotton including ginning and processing practices:

For creating awareness and extension services on Best Farm Practices to Improve Yield, Quality and Sustainability including ginning and processing practices, CCI has taken up a pilot project in association with ICAR-CICR and funded Rs. 2.54 crore for creating awareness and extension services on Best Farm Practices to Improve Yield, Quality and Sustainability including ginning and processing practices. This will pave a path for a way forward on potential strategies for enhancing sustainability and branding of Indian cotton.

8.8 Efforts for traceability of cotton from processing till sale:

CCI is implementing QR code using Block Chain Technology for traceability from processing of cotton and warehousing till its e-auction sale to the buyers. This will create a benchmark to the textile industry by giving assurance of the quality of cotton and will be a milestone for development of brand image of Indian cotton.

8.9 Increasing the productivity and production of Extra-long staple cotton (ELS):

Production of ELS cotton in India is only about 5 lakh bales and it is estimated that consumption is 10 lakh bales by the textile industry. This balance

requirement is met by imports. This ELS cotton is used to produce high valued fabrics and textile products which is in high demand in the world.

Ministry of Agriculture in association with Ministry of Textiles is undertaking special project through ICAR-CICR Nagpur with a budget outlay of Rs. 41.87 crores under NFSM for targeting technologies such as High Density Planting System (HDPS), closer spacing and production technology for ELS cotton focusing on a cluster-based and value chain approach in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode adopting Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) approach in 8 states, 57 district, 286 clusters in area of 15,358 hectares.

Further, a separate HSN code for import of ELS cotton has been created which will be helpful in ascertaining the actual quantum of import of ELS cotton. This will also help in taking suitable decision for policy intervention by the Govt. after making gap analysis to augment the availability of ELS cotton domestically and have import substitution.

8.10 Branding of Indian Cotton:

Brand name for Indian cotton was launched on the occasion of World Cotton Day as “Kasturi Cotton India” to attain the objective of making India Atmanirbhar and vocal for local in the field of cotton.

Indian cotton has now been endowed with a brand and a logo and as a premium cotton which will represent its’ whiteness, softness, purity, luster and uniqueness in the national and international market.

Further to encourage the Trade and Industry to work on the principle of self-regulation by owning complete responsibility of Traceability, Certification and Branding of KASTURI Cotton India, MoU has been signed between CCI on behalf of Govt. of India and TEXPROCIL on 15.12.2022. For implementing a mission-mode project with budgetary support matching with the contribution of Rs.15 crores from Trade & Industry Bodies over a period of three years starting from 2022-23 to 2024-25, a Steering committee and an APEX Committee has also been constituted as per this MoU.

So far, three meetings of the Steering Committee (13.03.2023, 15.06.2023 & 17.08.2023) and two meetings of APEX Committee (31.03.2023 & 20.07.2023)

have been held, Advertising agency for managing “Kasturi Cotton India” campaign has been appointed, Agency for development of Microsite with QR Code verification and blockchain technology has been appointed, Protocol has been finalized for certification of 29 mm and 30 mm cotton under Kasturi Cotton India programme, On boarding of star rated ginner has commenced from 25.09.2023 and 282 ginner have on-boarded. All preparatory arrangements are under the finalization stage for initiating the “Kasturi Cotton India” project. The project would be implemented in the coming cotton season 2023-24 i.e., from 1st October 2023.

This initiative will help in reduction in import dependency due to availability of quality cotton within India. Authentic quality of cotton will enhance quality of finished product i.e. yarn, fabric, suiting, shirting, garments, sarees, etc and will help the industry in capturing more export opportunities for foreign exchange earnings. This will also motivate the cotton farmers to adopt best farm practices and fetching better price for their quality cotton.

8.11 When the Committee desired to know how cotton farmers can be best educated in selecting the best seeds by adopting the best methods of farming and using the Agriculture machinery and the steps taken to overcome the challenges faced by the farmers, the Ministry in their written reply datedJanuary,2024 stated as under:

“Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is giving training by Subject Matter Service (SMS). The problems specific solutions are suggested to farmers”

9. SCHEME FOR INTEGRATED TEXTILES PARK (SITP)

The ‘Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks (SITP)’ has been under implementation since 10th Five Year Plan to provide the textile industry with world-class infrastructure facilities. Currently, the scheme was in implementation from 01.04.2017 to 31.03.2020. Further, it was extended upto March 2021. The project cost covers common infrastructure and buildings for production/support depending on the needs of the ITP with total financial support of 40% of the project cost subject to a maximum of Rs. 40 crores. There is flexibility in setting

up ITPs to suit the local requirements.

Funding under the scheme is provided under the components i.e. Common Infrastructure like compound wall, roads, drainage, water supply, electricity supply including captive power plant, effluent treatment, telecommunication lines, Buildings for common facilities like testing laboratory (including equipments), design centre(including equipments), training centre(including equipments), trade centre/display centre, warehousing facility/ raw material depot, one packaging unit, crèche, canteen, workers' hostel, offices of service providers, labour rest and recreation facilities, marketing support system (backward / forward linkages) etc, Factory buildings for production purposes, Plant & machinery and Work space for textile units and workers' hostel which may be made available on rental/hire purchase basis.

The total financial support by GoI is limited to 40% of the project cost subject to a maximum of Rs. 40 crores. However, GOI support will be provided @90% of the project cost subject to a ceiling of Rs. 40 crores for first two projects (each) in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and UT of Laddakh and UT of Jammu & Kashmir.

9.1 In the Budget for the year 2021-22, the Government has said that 7 Mega Parks will be built, when enquired the proposed plan of the Ministry, the representative of the Ministry during oral evidence stated as under:

“One or two Members asked about the Mega Textile Park. Right now we have sent the final cabinet note for cabinet approval. We hope that it should get cabinet approval in the next week. We have not fixed any place in it yet. It would be on a challenge method in a sense that there are some criteria, where there is good connectivity, where there is water, electricity, road connectivity, rail connectivity, the biggest thing is that the state government should provide one thousand acres of land there. These are some of the criteria, but it would be on a challenge method in a sense that the one who has the best claim will be there. We haven't fixed a place yet.”

9.2 When enquired about the efforts being made to encourage to start the textile parks, and the places where 7 mega parks are planning to start and the criteria to select those areas, the Ministry in their written reply datedJanuary,2024 stated as under:

“The Government has approved setting up of 7 (Seven) PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks in Greenfield/Brownfield sites with world class infrastructure including plug and play facility with an outlay of Rs. 4445 Crore for a period of seven years upto 2027-28.

All State Governments were requested to send proposals under PM MITRA for consideration. In response, 18 proposals from 13 State Governments were received. 7 sites finalized for setting up of PM MITRA parks by the Government are Tamil Nadu (Virudhnagar), Telangana (Warangal), Gujarat (Navsari), Karnataka (Kalaburagi), Madhya Pradesh (Dhar), Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow) and Maharashtra (Amravati). As per scheme guidelines, the selection of sites was done in a transparent manner using a challenge method”.

PART-II
OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee note that Cotton is one of the most important commercial crops in the country which account for around 24% of the total global cotton production. An estimated 6 million cotton farmers and 40-50 million people are engaged to have their livelihoods related to cotton processing and trade. The Committee also note that cotton contributes largely to India's net foreign exchange by way of exports of raw cotton and intermediate products. Due to its economic importance, it is termed as 'White-Gold'. In term of acreage under cotton and yield, India is at 1st place in the world with 130.61 Lakh hectares area under cotton cultivation,i.e. around 40% of world area of 322.12 Lakh hectares. The Committee are also made aware that India occupied second place in the world with estimated production of 343.47 lakh bales (5.84 Million Metric Tonnes) during cotton season of 2022-23 and is the 2nd largest consumer of cotton in the world with an estimated consumption of 311 lakh bales (5.29 Million Metric Tonnes).

The Committee find that India is one of the top producer and consumer of cotton in the world. They also recognise that such a feat cannot be attained without sustained facilitative action by the Government. The Committee observe that due to the dependence of the livelihood of a large number of people on production, processing and trade, Cotton Sector should be a high priority area for the Government. The commercial significance of cotton trade for the Country also lends cotton sector a prominent place. The Committee desire that the Government should come up with an umbrella policy approach for Cotton Sector encompassing and symbiotically linking the activities in all spheres of the Sector.

2. The Committee are made aware that about 67% of India's cotton is produced on rain-fed areas and 33% on irrigated lands. However, The Committee note that in a country like Mexico, 90% cotton cultivation is

irrigated and there is 100% adoption of Genetically modified (GM) seeds with Bt+ Herbicide Tolerance (HT) traits. In terms of productivity, India rank 36th in the world with a yield of 447 Kg/ha. The Committee observe that majority of cotton production in the country comes from 9 major cotton growing States divided into three zones – Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan (Northern Zone); Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh (Central Zone); Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka (Southern Zone). Cotton is also grown in the States of Odisha and Tamil Nadu. The Committee note that production and yield of cotton in the country depends on agro-climatic conditions and 70% of its cultivation is in the arid ecosystem. The Committee observe that the major limiting factor responsible for fluctuating and largely less than optimal growth in cotton production is cultivation in rainfed conditions (67%) making the crop vulnerable to variability in rainfall and relatively frequent of extreme weather events at different vulnerable crop growth stages. Even in assured irrigated areas, irrigation is supply driven (based on release of canal water) and not demand driven (based on crop need).As informed to the Committee, another significant reason for low productivity is cultivation of medium to long duration hybrids in rainfed areas of Central Zone (in about 3.8 million ha, 28% of total area) in shallow to medium deep soils at low plant densities (12000 to 18000 plants/ha) leading to low productivity. The problem is exacerbated due to deterioration in soil health as a consequence of continuous cultivation of cotton without crop rotation and proper crop residue management. Better management practices such as legume rotation/intercropping, use of organic manures and balanced fertilizers are not widely adopted by farmers leading to low productivity. Higher area expansion in less efficient districts in the Central zone is also responsible for lower productivity.

The Committee observe that the core agro climatic limiting factors in cotton cultivation in India seem to be in our knowledge. Decisive multipronged action needs to be taken to deal with restraints. First of all, it appears to the Committee that in addition to the Bt+ and other similar seed traits, the Country is in dire need of varieties of cotton seeds/plants that are adaptive/suitable for our soil and climatic conditions. This has to be

followed up with improvised farming techniques suitable for such climatic conditions. Since the significant dependence on favourable agro-climatic conditions is hampering production and yield of cotton in the Country, the Committee recommend that the Ministry of Textiles in co-ordination with Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare should commission a comprehensive study on the issues relating to production, productivity, soil system, etc with a view to increasing the productivity of cotton. Sustainable steps should also be contemplated for bringing more area of cotton cultivation under irrigation aiming at gradual achievement of demand driven irrigation. Development of newer farming techniques and effective farmer education and training leading to optimal use of fertilisers, herbicides, etc are also critical needs. The Committee also desire that the Ministry should conduct campaigns for crop health and pest eradication initiatives and demonstrate best practices to boost cotton productivity extensively in all the cotton growing zones of the Country.

3. The Committee reckon the fact that the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and State Agricultural University (SAUs) released 107 varieties/hybrids comprising Bt and Non Bt cotton varieties. Further, 125 BG II cotton hybrids developed by private sector were also released after multi-location testing by ICAR-AICRP on the cotton. The Committee observe that the Government proposes to popularize cotton varieties to the cotton growing farmers by means of Front Line Demonstrations. Demonstrations are conducted to 10 farmers in 10 districts in which Department of Agriculture and Corporation (DAC) provides funding and technical support. The Committee further note that the developed variety cotton have good yield with location testing done by ICAR-AICRP. The Committee observe that Bt Cotton Hybrid seeds are mostly produced by the private sector seed industry as a means of value capture mechanism for the licensed. Productivity is lower in the absence of canopy management, nutrient and moisture limitations and pest/disease outbreaks. The Committee are made aware that the problem with this Genetically Modified seeds is that farmers have to buy the seed every year and the farmers' debt journey starts from buying seed and gets steeper as the pesticides, fertilizer and labour costs add up without

commensurate increase in yield. Cotton cultivation/production plays a major role in sustaining the livelihood of millions of cotton farmers and other people engaged in related activities.

The Committee are of the firm opinion that much needs to be done in the area of availability of affordable and climatically adapted Bt or other Hybrid varieties of cotton seeds in the Country. Farmer education/training initiatives in this connection also need to be given a fillip. Further, farmers should be further supported financially in quality seed procurement and in the adoption of best farming practices. In view of this, the Committee recommend that the Ministry of Textiles in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare should draw up specific interventional initiatives to address the problems faced by the farmers in procuring the genetically modified seeds by appropriation of their meagre resources by considering measures like a cap on prices of the same, impetus of seed development by various government entities, etc. and also review the premium in consultation with the Textile Industries who are paying the premium, for creating better condition of livelihood to the cotton growing farmers.

4. The Committee note that as on 1st September 2023, projected Global cotton production for 2022-23 is 25.07 million tonnes (1474 Lakh bales) which is 2% higher compared to the previous year's production of 24.62 million tonnes (1448 Lakh bales). A comparative analysis of area and productivity (yield) of major cotton producing countries during the year 2022-23 indicates that India's per hectare yield of cotton is extremely low compared to the world's average yield or other major cotton producing countries per hectare yield. For instance, in 2022-23 India has an area of 13061 thousand hectare for cotton production, but productivity yield is only 447 Kgs/hectare, whereas USA has an area of 2957 thousand hectare only, but productivity yield is 1065 Kgs./hectare. China has an area of 3000 thousand hectare but productivity yield is 1993 Kgs./hectare. Pakistan has an area of 2065 thousand hectare, but yield is 405 Kgs./hectare. Brazil has

an area of 1650 thousand hectare for production, but yield is 1830 Kgs./hectare.

Thus kilogramme per hectare yield in India is extremely low when compared with kilogramme per hectare yield of other major cotton producing countries. The Committee note that this low per hectare yield in India is due to the fact that the Bt seed technology in the country has become outdated and there is an urgent need for, new variety of seeds. The Ministry also cite the outbreak of whitefly and pink bollworm infestation which caused yield loss in the range of 10-30% and the reduction in area from 122 lakh hectares to about 108 lakh hectares. The Committee observe that increase in cotton area by expansion into less suitable soils pull down the average State and national productivity level. Further, cultivated area of cotton cannot increase as it have to compete with others crops and farmers grow only that crop in which they get more beneficial. The Committee also note that Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is the nodal agency for evaluation and release of both hybrids and other varieties after multi-location testing. The Committee desire that the Ministry should take steps to augment the development of early maturing and compact varieties and hybrids that suit the cotton growing areas having lower productivity trend. The Committee also want that there should be an effective and symbiotic pest management strategy through coordinated efforts between the Central and State agencies. The Committee recommend that the Ministry of Textiles in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare should overhaul the cropping system of cotton in the country in order to undergo a systematic change, strengthen market linkages to help the farmers, enhance Research and Development to develop new cotton varieties, improve pest management practices and develop innovative technologies to improve cotton farming. The Committee shall be apprised on action taken in this regard.

5. The committee note that on Bt cotton production, the ICAR-Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur has suggested that there is scope to divert at least 20% of the cotton area under long duration Bt

hybrids towards early maturing Bt varieties and non-Bt varieties of cotton including other species for niche areas (*Gossypium arboreum*, *G. barbadense* and *G. Hermaceum*). For this to be realised, varieties need to be given protection under PPV FRA to encourage the private sector to develop Bt varieties apart from Bt hybrids. Adequate seed multiplication of released varieties of public sector through seed chain is also essential. The Committee are given to understand this to be an area of promise and hence shall be apprised of the action taken on the suggestions given by the ICAR-CICR in this regard on the Bt cotton production.

6. The Committee observe that Kasturi Cotton is a welcome innovative initiative of the Government of India. The Government have developed the protocol and their trademark related to the Brand. Kasturi cotton is a long staple parameter of 29 plus mm. Production of the Kasturi cotton variety is open to every stake holder. The Traceability and Certification exercise is carried out jointly by the Government of India, Trade Bodies and Industry to promote the Kasturi cotton. The Committee are highly appreciative of the fact that the Ministry of Textile are driving this in mission mode and have allocated budgetary support in alignment with Rs. 15 crores contribution from Trade and Industry Bodies. The Committee note that Kasturi cotton is completely market segmented international brand that has quality parameter of whiteness, strength and length totally different from other cotton brands. Kasturi cotton is expected to create a niche market for India. The Committee desire the Ministry of Textiles shall take steps to enhance the quality and traceability of the Kasturi cotton and also take necessary measures to strengthen India's competitiveness in the global cotton market through the Kasturi cotton and create a sustainable ecosystem for all stake holders involved. Action taken in this regard shall be apprised to the committee irrespective of the time period taken for the same.

7. The Committee note that India export of cotton is 6% of world export of 528 Lakh bales (898 million Metric Tonnes) in 2022-23. However, about 5% of the total consumption of cotton in the country is imported by the Textile industries. The Committee observe that primarily extra-long staple

variety of cotton which have Giza and Pima fabric with specific requirement are imported. The cotton variety having Giza and Pima fabric are said to be contaminant free. The Committee understand that the Budget for 2021-22 imposed 10% import duty on such cotton variety which is harmful to the cotton industry in the country. The said import duty led to steep rise in cotton prices and eroded the competitiveness of the Textile industry, the main consumer of cotton. However, the Committee also find that the Government exempted all cotton import from custom duty from 14 April 2022. The Committee observe that generally import duty is imposed to protect the cotton growing farmers. In the opinion of the Committee, the move to exempt all cotton imports from custom duties without ensuring assured remunerative prices and procurement of cotton grown by farmers in India could lead to an inflow of cheap cotton from other countries. In the absence of an effective procurement and a price stabilisation fund to ward off adverse impact of such inflow on prices could lead to added burden on the already crisis-ridden cotton farmers in the country. The Committee are of the firm opinion that that the Ministry of Textiles in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare should take necessary measures for protection guaranteed to the cotton farmer in the form of assured procurement at remunerative prices at least one and half time the cost of production of cotton by the farmers. In the considered opinion of the Committee, the Government should, instead of foregoing revenue by scrapping of import duties, should incentivise the cotton growing farmers of the country and handhold them irrespective of the cotton growing zone of the country to which they belong to. Otherwise, the Committee feel that the import/inflow of raw cotton will lead to a debilitating impact on prices and consequently, exacerbate the burden on the hapless farmers. The Committee shall be apprised of action taken in this regard irrespective of the timeframe for the action taken in this regard.

8. The Committee reckon that the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has been designated for undertaking Minimum Support Price (MSP) operations in

the event of prices of seed cotton (Kapas) falling below the MSP level for procuring Fair Average Quality (FAQ) grade Kapas offered by the cotton farmers in various Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) market yards at MSP rate. The Committee note that the cotton year is from October to September and MSP is recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) based on the formula of 1.5 times of cost of production (A2+FL). The Committee are also made aware that that the formula of MSP is such that the same should always ensure that farmer gets at least 50% over cost of production. The Committee observe that based on CACP recommendation, the Ministry of Agriculture declare MSP for two basic varieties of FAQ cotton viz. Medium Staple Length and Long Staple Length. The MSP for the Medium and Long Staple Length varieties for the year 2023-24 is Rs. 6,620/Quintal with a rate of increase of Rs. 540/Quintal (8.88%) and Rs. 7,020/Quintal with a rate of increase of Rs. 640/Quintal (10.03%), respectively.

Since MSP is the pivotal tool to ensure that the farmers get appropriate returns from their crops and they find cultivation as a sustainable means for livelihood, the Committee want the Government to accord high priority to pegging MSP at the best possible remunerative level. Further, in case the price situation in the market warrants the intervention by the CCI for procurement on MSP rates, the same shall be done in the quickest possible time to facilitate the farmers as well as to stabilise the market. Mechanism to forecast situations requiring such intervention should be in place. In the opinion of the Committee opening maximum number of procurement centres by the CCI is very important as this adds to ease of access to the market for the farmer to sell his produce.

9. The Committee note with appreciation that in order to increase awareness among the cotton farmers about Minimum Support Price (MSP) of cotton, Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) have developed an exclusive Mobile App 'Cott-Ally' for cotton farmers in regional languages. The Mobile App also helps CCI to have direct interaction with and outreach to the cotton farmers. The Committee find it encouraging to note that so far about 21-22 lakh

farmers have registered themselves in the Mobile App. The Committee desire that the Ministry should take all necessary measures to make the Application accessible to all cotton farmers in the country which will help them registered therein and enable the cotton farmers have their grievances also redressed through this initiative. Further, the Committee want the Ministry/Cotton Corporation of India to expand the ambit of the Mobile Application to provide other related information like sale of cotton seed, market and trends on demand for various varieties of cotton, aspects related to quality of cotton including how to conform to domestic/international quality specifications, best practices in activities ranging from cultivation to handling of cotton till it reaches the market, etc. Authentic information in such matters could be of help to farmers. In the opinion of the Committee, the App can even be used to disseminate information to farmers on how to avoid middlemen and their activities and how to have access to the market directly to secure maximum benefit to the original producers. The action taken by the Government in this direction shall be furnished to the Committee.

10. The Committee are made aware that Extra-long staple cotton is the most sought-after variety of cotton by the industries in terms of quality. Large portion of the imports of cotton into India also belongs to this variety as there is a demand supply gap in respect of domestic production of this variety. The Committee note that the Government are taking steps to increase the production of the Extra-long staple variety of cotton and also to improve the quality of cotton produced. It is also understood that a Quality Improvement Mission by the Government for cotton is in the works. The Committee are of the firm opinion that to improve global competitiveness of the Country in cotton, a slew of effectively synchronised measures involving multiple Ministries/Departments/Agencies of the Government is required. From seed development to best cultivation practices to efficient marketing measures, all boxes relating to development of cotton sector need to be ticked. The Committee feel that development of seeds that exhibit more drought/arid region tolerance along with resistance to pests and diseases

could be one area that calls for immediate attention. Alongwith such high performance seeds, cutting edge techniques of drip fertigation and other farming practices can be adopted. Countries like Israel are reported to have developed such farming methods to generate outstanding results. The Committee consider partnership with the Private Sector in all spheres of cotton development as an option to further invigorate the bouquet of activities in this direction.

New Delhi;
February, 2024
Magha, 1945 (Saka)

BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB
CHAIRPERSON,
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR,
TEXTILES AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR

(2020-21)

Minutes of the Seventeenth Sitting of the Committee

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 30th June, 2021 from 1100 hrs. to 1300 hrs. in Committee Room No. '139', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Subhash Chandra Baheria
3. Shri Satish Kumar Gautam
4. Dr. Umesh G. Jadhav
5. Shri Dharmendra Kumar Kashyap
6. Dr. Virendra Kumar
7. Shri Naba Kumar Sarania
8. Shri Nayab Singh Saini
9. Shri Bhola Singh

RAJYA SABHA

10. Dr. Banda Prakash
11. Shri M. Shanmugam
12. Shri Neeraj Dangi
13. Shri Dushyant Gautam
14. Shri Vivek Thakur
15. Shri Naresh Bansal

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri T.G. Chandrasekhar - Joint Secretary
2. Shri D.R. Mohanty - Director
3. Shri Sanjay Sethi - Additional Director
4. Shri K.G. Sidhartha - Deputy Secretary

Witnesses

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES

1. Shri Upendra Prasad Singh Secretary, Ministry of Textiles
2. Shri V.K. Singh Additional Secretary
3. Shri Sanjay Sharan Joint Secretary
4. Shri Nihar Ranjan Dash Joint Secretary
5. Shri Jogiranjana Panigrahi Joint Secretary
6. Shri Jay Karan Singh Trade Advisor, Ministry of Textiles
7. Shri Ajit B. Chauhan Secretary (Textiles Committee)
8. Shri Pradeep Kumar Aggarwal CMD, Cotton Corporation of India
9. Ms. Roop Rashi Mahapatra Textile Commissioner, Mumbai
10. Dr. Tarun Bajaj Director, APEDA
11. Dr. R.K. Singh Asst. Director General (CC), DARE
12. Dr. S.K. Malhotra Agriculture Commissioner
13. Dr. Y.G. Prasad Director –ICAR-CICR, Nagpur

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministry of Textiles to the sitting of the Committee, convened to have a briefing on the Subject 'Development of Cotton Sector'. Drawing the attention of the witnesses to Direction 58 of the 'Directions by the Speaker' regarding confidentiality of the proceedings during deposition before the Parliamentary Committees, the Chairperson asked the Secretary, Ministry of Textiles to brief the Committee on various initiatives taken and challenges faced to develop the Cotton sector in the Country.

3. The Secretary accordingly after seeking permission from the Chairperson, nominated the Joint Secretary to give an overview on various issues concerning to the subject matter through Power Point Presentation. The PPT *inter-alia* included performance of cotton sector in last five years *with reference to* area under cotton and yield, production and consumption, Import and Export of Cotton; global perspective with regard to area under cultivation, cotton production, consumption and export; major issues and challenges in cotton sector; Ministry's support to cotton sector; efforts made by the Ministry for development of cotton sector including branding of Indian cotton(Kasturi cotton India) for the first time, reduction in import dependency, organic fibre and products traceability, certification of organic fibre, setting up of MITRA (Mega Investment Textile Park); SITP (Scheme for integrated Textiles Park) and TUFS (Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme) etc.

4. The Members then raised certain specific queries on related issues, which *inter-alia* included; less production of Cotton during other years in comparison of 2016-17; details of cotton yield per hectare, area used for cultivation of cotton, productivity rate of cotton; details of any study made by the Ministry of Agriculture regarding yield productivity rate and area cultivated; details of cotton production in other countries like Brazil etc; details of MSP operation and development of market infrastructure for cotton; importing cotton by spinning mills; steps initiated to procure and distribute quality seeds of cotton; productivity rate of cotton in China, America and other countries; steps taken to educate cotton farmers about the best methods of farming, use of machinery, etc. The representatives of the Ministry attended to the points/ queries raised by the Members.

5. As some points required detailed and statistical data, the Chairperson asked the Secretary to furnish written replies thereon within 14 days. The Secretary assured to comply.

6. The Chairperson thanked the Secretary and other representatives of the Ministry for furnishing the valuable information on the subject matter and responding to the queries of the Members.

(The witnesses then withdrew)

[A copy of the verbatim proceedings was kept on record]

7. XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX

The Committee then adjourned.