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FIFTH REPORT

**COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
(2005-2006)**

(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)

WORKING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN IN HANDICRAFT SECTOR

MINISTRY OF TEXTILES

FIFTH REPORT

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**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

April, 2006/ Vaisakha, 1928 (Saka)

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MINISTRY OF TEXTILES

Presented to Lok Sabha on 12th May, 2006

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 12th May, 2006

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E.W.C. No. 34

PRICE: Rs. _____

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Published under

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(iii)
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
(2005-2006)

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Smt. Krishna Tirath

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*Nominated *vice* Smt. Chandra Kala Pandey, MP, w.e.f 10th September, 2005.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of Committee on Empowerment of Women present the Fifth Report (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee, on the subject 'Working Conditions of Women in Handicraft Sector'.

2. The Report is based on the material received from the Ministry of Textiles and impressions gained by the Committee during their study visit to some of the States.

3. The Committee on Empowerment of Women took oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Textiles and Development Commissioner (Handicraft) on 28th April, 2005, in connection with examination of the subject.

4. The Draft Report was considered and adopted by the Committee on Empowerment of Women (2005-2006) at their sitting held on 23rd March, 2006. The Minutes of the sitting form Part II of the Report.

5. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Officials of the Ministry of Textiles and Development Commissioner (Handicraft) for placing before them the detailed written notes on the subject and furnishing desired information in connection with the examination of the subject.

6. For facility of reference, the Observations and Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report.

NEW DELHI;
April, 2006
Chaitra, 1928 (Saka)

(KRISHNA TIRATH)
CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

‘WORKING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN IN HANDICRAFT SECTOR’

The economic importance of handicrafts lies in its high employment potential, low capital investment, high value addition and high demand in domestic and overseas markets. Handicrafts encompass a wide range of artifacts made solely by hand with or without the aid of simple mechanical devices. Exquisite designs, attractive colours, unmatched workmanship and subtle elegance are the distinguishing features which have put Indian handicrafts on world map. This sector being highly labour intensive and spread all over country provides employment to weaker sections of our society both in rural and urban areas including women. The Committee have been informed that as per census of handicraft artisans on all India basis conducted in the year 1995-96 through National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the total number of artisans in the handicraft sector was 47.61 lakhs, out of which 22.57 lakhs were women which constitute 47.40% of the total artisans population. The working group on Textiles and Jute for the Tenth Plan projected a growth in employment in Handicrafts sector @ 3% annually during Tenth Five Year Plan. Total artisans population is estimated to be about 63 lakh at the end of year 2004-05, out of which 30 lakh is estimated women population.

2. The Committee have been informed that there are certain crafts which are practiced predominantly by women like embroidery, beadwork, applique, durries, shawls, cane and bamboo, artistic textile, weaving, mat weaving etc. The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) with its six Regional Offices located at New Delhi, Lucknow, Chennai, Kolkata, Guwahati & Mumbai functions as a nodal office to look after overall development and promotion of Handicrafts in the country. The Committee have further been informed that the Tenth Plan aims at generation of productive employment opportunities to achieve higher standard of living of artisans individually and collectively in rural and urban craft clusters; increased foreign exchange earning for the country and preservation of cultural heritage through research and document, region/craft specific strategies and protection of crafts facing extinction. To achieve these objectives following schemes have been implemented by the office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts):-

- i) Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY)
- ii) Design & Technology Upgradation

- iii) Marketing Support & Services
- iv) Export Promotion
- v) Training & Extension
- vi) Research & Development
- vii) Special Handicrafts Training Project (SHTP)
- viii) Bima Yojana for Artisans

3. In reply to a query as to whether there are specific schemes applicable to women artisans in this sector, the Ministry have stated that the schemes being implemented by the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) for promotion and development of handicrafts are not gender specific and assistance under these schemes is available to all artisans including women.

4. Elaborating this aspect further, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles during oral evidence stated

“With an outlay of Rs. 105 crore we are implementing these schemes; but the schemes are gender neutral. As of now, we deal with artisans as artisans. We have not been able to discriminate male artisans or female artisan because you know, all these people, whether it is handloom weavers or artisans, they are all people living below poverty line and we have not been discriminating so far.”

5. The witness further added:-

“as of now, we do not have a separate scheme for women artisans, but we have scheme for artisans. Artisan is a gender-neutral term. So, schemes are focussed on artisans. If the Committee feels, we would give more of this money to the women artisans. That is what I am trying to say. “

6. In this context, he also added

“From this year onwards we could be a little more sensitive to the needs of the women and focus our schemes towards the requirements of women.

Two things can be done. One, we could take up areas where women are predominantly the artisans, that is, in other words, we could take up more of women clusters. Also, we could focus on certain crafts in which women are there. For example, embroidery, patchwork, zari work, glass painting work, beadwork. All these crafts are where women are employed. We could focus on these trades or crafts in which case the percentage of coverage under our various schemes for the women would go up. Because of the various observations which the Committee had made during the meeting which you had in Bangalore and Chennai and also in the questionnaire which you had sent to us, we had an internal meeting. We took a view that our schemes should be focused more towards women, at least from the current year onwards.”

Working conditions of Women Artisans

7. The Committee have been informed that majority of the handicraft artisans including women are facing the problem of good working conditions at their work place. Normally the working space is insufficient and often it is not properly ventilated and lighted. Mostly these artisans work at their work houses in a family environment, which may not always be conducive for production of quality handicrafts appropriate to upmarket segment. This affects their productivity and income.

8. The Committee desired to know, whether any study/survey has been carried out by the Ministry of Textiles or any independent organisation to identify the problems being faced by the women artisans. The Ministry in their reply have stated that Handicrafts sector is an informal and unorganized sector spread all over the country, covering vast variety of crafts. Though, no specific study/survey has been carried out to identify the problems being faced by women artisans, regular feedback is obtained from field formations, developmental partners and other stake holders on effectiveness of the schemes and problems being faced by artisans. In addition, evaluation of schemes is also carried out. Based on the feedback and findings of evaluation studies, modifications of schemes have been undertaken from time to time to ensure better delivery with a view to minimize problems faced by artisans.

Implementing Agencies

9. The Ministry have stated that Handicraft is a state subject and the Government of India supplements efforts of State Government by way of implementing various schemes for promotion and development of handicrafts through implementing agencies like NGOs, State Handicrafts Development Corporations, Apex Societies etc. However, for effective implementation and monitoring of these schemes, representatives of State Governments are associated through various committees.

10. The representative of the Ministry during oral evidence stated:-

“I would like to add here that virtually more than 90 per cent of the schemes are being implemented through the NGOs itself.”

Credit Facilities

11. The Committee have been informed that **Artisans Credit Cards (ACC) Scheme** is being implemented through the Banks for providing credit facilities to artisans including women at lower rate of interest. This scheme aims at providing adequate and timely assistance from the banking institutions to the artisans to meet their credit requirements both investments needs as well as working capital, in a flexible and, cost effective manner. The Ministry have added that all artisans involved in production/manufacturing process (and otherwise eligible for credit facilities for carrying out the proposed activities under any of the existing bank scheme) would be eligible and preference would given to artisans registered with Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). Thrust in financing would be on Clusters of artisans and artisans who have joined to form Self Help Groups (SHGs). Beneficiaries of other Government sponsored loan schemes will not be eligible for coverage under ACC scheme.

12. As regards to fixation of Credit limit for artisans under the scheme, the Ministry have stated that the credit limit would be fixed based on assessment of working capital requirements as well as cost of tools and equipments required for carrying out manufacturing process. The maximum credit limit to be sanctioned under the scheme would, however, be Rs. 2 lakh. When the Committee asked the Ministry to state the

number of credit cards issued so far, the Ministry have stated that as reported by banks so far 37,369 numbers of ACCs have been issued by the banks upto 2004-2005.

Marketing

13. The Ministry in a note furnished to the Committee have stated that for improving the marketability of the handicraft products, following schemes are being implemented by the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Office:-

- a) Marketing and Support Service Scheme**
- b) Export Promotion Scheme**

14. The objective of Marketing and Support Service Scheme is to project Indian handicrafts and create its awareness among the masses by organising a number of marketing events in big and small cities and to provide direct marketing outlets to the craftspersons living in far flung, remote and hilly areas by inviting them for participation in various marketing events/National level “melas” etc. in different cities for augmenting their sales through eliminating the role of middle men. This scheme also aims at providing financial assistance to State handicrafts Corporations/apex societies/prominent NGOs for opening new Emporia at suitable places to enable the craftspersons to have permanent sale outlets for their products. Asked to state whether any special incentives/facilities under Marketing support and Service Scheme have been provided to the women artisans to link them to the market so as to enable them to respond to the changing market situation and demands the Ministry have replied that there is no provision in the scheme to provide any special incentive to women artisans.

15. The Committee desired the Ministry to furnish the details of National Handicraft Expos/Crafts Bazaar/Exhibitions, if any organized particularly for benefiting the women artisans under marketing and support service scheme. Responding thereto, the Ministry have stated that during the year 2004-05 two special crafts bazaars for women artisans have been organized at Delhi and Bhubaneswar. Approximately 200 women artisans were benefited therein. The Ministry have further stated that one National workshop, 24 State level workshops and 57 local level workshops were organised in various parts of the country during 2004-2005 through Regional offices and Marketing & Service Extension Centres of the office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) under the

marketing & support services scheme to disseminate information on the various schemes of the Government for promotion & development of handicrafts. The representatives from various State Governments participated in these workshops.

16. In reply to a query as to the role of NGOs in these exhibitions/Expo, the representative of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) during evidence stated

“In Handicrafts sector, most of the schemes are implemented through NGOs. NGOs make proposals for the exhibitions in respect of clusters of artisans for approval of the Ministry of Textiles. The Ministry approve the proposals as per the prescribed norms. Maximum Rs. 1,85,000 is granted for such exhibitions and generally one exhibition lasts for seven to ten days.”

17. The Committee desired to know whether these NGOs charge those artisans for putting up their stalls, the witness stated:-

“Actually this craft event is run within a grant given by our DC, Handicraft Office. So, NGOs are not supposed to charge the artisans. Majority of the NGOs request us to nominate artisans and we nominate them from different regions. They do not charge. Rather, we give TA & DA to the participants from North-East, KBK districts of Orissa and Ladakh region of J&K.”

18. **The Urban Haats Component of Marketing and Support Service Scheme** was launched in the year 1999-2000 with the objective of allotting the built-up stalls to artisans on fortnightly rotation basis and at nominal rent. The Committee desired to know the number of approved Urban Haats which are functional till now and whether any special incentives have been provided to women artisans in such Haats. The Ministry in their reply have stated that till now five Urban haats have become operational at locations Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh), Bhubanshwar (Orissa), Jammu(J&K), Uchana – Karnal (Haryana), Gohar Mahal Bhopal (MP). There is no provision to provide any special incentive to women artisans for participation in such Haats. However, during the

year 2004-05, Mahila Utsav was organized exclusively for women artisans at Dilli Haat where 139 women artisans were benefited.

19. The Ministry in a note furnished to the Committee have stated that 'Export Promotion Scheme' has been implemented with a view to promote export of handicrafts including handknotted carpets and floor coverings from India. Therefore, any activity subservient to this ultimate objective is permissible under the scheme. Under this Scheme 41 agencies have been financed during the last three years, out of which 5 agencies are women concentrated agencies.

Training

20. The Ministry have informed the Committee that for upgradation of training skills of the artisans, the following schemes have been launched to impart them training:-

- a) Baba Saheb Ambedkar hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY)
- b) **Special Handicrafts Training Project (SHTP)**
- c) Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme

21. The **Baba Saheb Ambedkar hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY)** was launched in the year 2001-2002 with the objective to organize artisans clusters into Self Help Groups (SHGs)/Cooperatives with a view to enabling them to take up economic activity for sustainable development through a participatory mode. This scheme empower artisans by making them active entrepreneurs cum primary stake holders in the process of development and bringing them to a visible platform for easy access to domestic and overseas markets and upgrade artisan' skill through appropriate Design and Technology Intervention so as to enable them to use quality raw material, tools and equipment to produce value-added items. This scheme provide adequate infrastructure support for improved quality and productivity and to enable artisans' access to a larger market segment, both domestic and international and ensure effective collective participation of all members involved in production and marketing process for optimal growth in human resource, production, business and income.

22. Asked to state the number of clusters which have been developed under the AHVY and the number of women artisans who have been benefited under the scheme, the Ministry have replied that so far 481 clusters have been taken up under AHVY since 2001-02. There is no provision in the scheme to provide any special incentive to women artisans. However, the number of women artisans benefited under the scheme is 62176.

23. Elaborating further, Secretary during oral evidence stated -

“our major, most important scheme under handicraft sector is Ambedkar Hasta Shilpa Vikas Yojana under which we have a cluster development approach for developing various clusters. We have implemented this scheme in about 481 clusters and this has benefited 1,40,000 artisans out of whom 62,000 are women. This works out to around 40 per cent of the total. Since 47.5 per cent of the artisans in the handicrafts sector are women, normally this percentage should have been 47.5. In fact, as the hon. Chairperson has observed, it should be much more because women are handicapped. But since we were not sensitive to this issue, so far we have not been discriminating and as a result these percentages are there.”

24. In this context, the representative of the Ministry stated that under AHVY Scheme they formulate clusters by clubbing several Self Help Groups of artisans. Then training is imparted and for the groups which perform well, there is a provision of common facility centre. Under this scheme, Rs. 60 lakh is provided to the selected groups out of which Rs. 45 lakh is for machinery and computer and Rs. 10 lakhs is for building. Till now 65 clusters out of 481 clusters have been approved as common facility centre.

25. The Committee have been informed that under **Special Handicrafts Training Project (SHTP) Scheme**, training is provided to semi skilled Handicrafts Artisan/Carpet Weavers to upgrade their skill so as to be responsive to changing market requirements. Under SHTP, 10,000 artisans weavers would be benefited under the Tenth Plan. As regards the number of women artisans who have been imparted training under SHTP, the

Ministry have informed that so far 5365 artisans/weavers including 2802 women have been imparted training under the Special Handicrafts Training Project.

26. On being asked to state whether any steps have been taken to popularise SHTP so as to cover 10,000 artisans under the Tenth Plan, the Ministry have stated that Special Handicrafts Training Programme has been popularised among the artisans and other stakeholders through various means by the field staff like workshops and meetings, field visits etc. So far 5365 artisans have been trained and 9670 are under going training.

27. The representative of the Ministry during oral evidence stated
“there is no separate scheme for training for women artisans belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe but under Special Handicraft Training Project, they cover artisans and women through NGOs.”

28. The Committee have been informed that the main objective of the ‘**Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme**’ is to provide adequate support to National level institutes like Indian Institute of Carpet Technology (IICT), Metal Handicrafts Service Centre (MHSC), National Centre for Design and Product Development (NCDPD) etc for design and technological intervention in the respective sector.

29. The Committee desired the Ministry to state the number of women artisans given training under the scheme during the last three years, details of training given and the resultant effect of the training on the women artisans. In their reply the Ministry have stated that under the scheme 1974 women artisans were benefited during the last three years. This scheme aims to upgrade artisan’s skill through appropriate design and technical intervention to enable them to produce innovative and value added items to cope with the fast changing market demand. Under the scheme, they were also trained for development of new design and prototypes to cope with the tastes of the consumers and contribute to enhance the sales of handicrafts in domestic and foreign market. This results in creation of new designs leading to increased marketability of handicrafts products and thus benefitting women artisans also.

Social Security and Welfare Measures

30. The Ministry of Textiles in a note furnished to the Committee have stated that for providing social security to the handicrafts artisans including women artisans, Bima Yojana and Pension Schemes are being implemented by the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts).

31. The objective of Bima Yojana for Handicrafts Artisan's is to provide life insurance protection to the handicrafts artisans, whether male or female between the age group of 18-60 years. The components of this scheme are coverage under existing 'Janshree Bima Yojana' of LIC and Add-on Group Insurance coverage for death. The Ministry have informed the Committee that following type of coverage is provided to the artisans under existing 'Janshree Bima Yojana (JBY)' of LIC.

- (i) Life Insurance cover towards natural death shall be a sum of Rs. 20,000/- per member.**
- (II) For accidental death or permanent total disability, the coverage shall be maximum Rs. 50,000/- per member and for permanent partial disability, the coverage shall be maximum of Rs. 25,000/-per member.
- (III) Added benefits in the form of, an associated scheme of LIC – “Shiksha Sahyog Yojana”, under which not more than 2 dependent children of the beneficiary studying in the classes 9th to 12th are given Rs.300/- per quarter/child as educational allowance for a maximum period of 4 years or till they complete XII standard, which ever event occurs earlier.

32. The Ministry have further stated that for above three categories, out of total annual premium of Rs. 200 per artisan , Rs.100 are provided by LIC, Rs.60 by Government of India and Rs. 40 by the artisan. The Ministry have added that under Group insurance coverage life insurance coverage shall be Rs. 30,000 per artisan for natural as well as for accidental death. Out of total annual premium of Rs. 180, Rs. 90 is paid by the Government of India and Rs. 90 by the artisan.

33. Asked to furnish the total number of women artisans who have been covered under the scheme so far and the steps taken/to be taken to increase coverage of women in the field of Bima Yojana, the Ministry have stated that upto 2004-2005 1,25,023 artisans have been covered including women artisans under the scheme. However, Field offices have been directed/instructed to ensure maximum coverage of women artisan under Bima Yojana.

34. Asked to state the salient features of Groups Insurance Coverage Scheme and funds allocated under this scheme during 2004-2005the Ministry have stated that the group insurance coverage is not a separate scheme but it is one of the components of Bima Yojana and Rs. 80.00 lakhs was allocated under Bima Yojana including Add on Group insurance coverage with a target to cover 66,000 artisans and 3569 artisans have been covered including women artisans under Add-on group insurance. So far it is not mandatory for the artisans to take coverage of Group Insurance. The Bima Yojana has been popularized amongst the artisans and other stake holders through various means by our field staff like workshops meetings, field visits etc.

35. Under Pension scheme grant of financial assistance is provided to mastercraftspersons in indigent circumstances on annual basis for which the following provisions are laid down:

- a) Mastercraftspersons, who are recipients of National Award or National Merit Certificate or State Award in handicrafts are eligible for being considered for financial assistnace.
- b) The private income of the applicant should be less than Rs. 15,000/- per year.
- c) The applicant should not be in receipt of similar financial assistance from any other source.
- d) The applicant should not be less than 60 years of age on the date of application. Age may be relaxed if the maser craftsperson is disabled.

36. In this context, during oral evidence, representative of the Ministry stated that under this scheme Ministry approve 25 new proposals every year and Rs. 1000 is payable to those artisans who are above 60 years and whose annual income is less than Rs. 15,000/-. The private income means income generated by the mastercraftsperson on his own.

37. The Committee wanted to know whether it was not pertinent to increase the ceiling of private income to Rs. 50,000/- per year, the Ministry in reply have stated that though there is no proposal under consideration to enhance the ceiling of income of Master crafts persons at present, some increase could be considered if the committee desires so.

38. **In the same context, the Secretary, Ministry of Textiles during oral evidence stated -**
“We have to adjust it to the inflation. It was fixed during the Ninth Plan Period. So, for five years, at least we can get Rs. 25,000. If you recommend, I think it will help us.”

39. The Committee desired to know as to whether the existing provisions of these schemes are adequate to protect/safeguard the interests of the women artisans of these sectors and whether the government is contemplating to launch some new schemes exclusively for women weavers the Ministry have stated that under the existing social security schemes, there is no provision to take care of health related problems of artisans including women artisans. Accordingly, Government is contemplating to launch “Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana” to provide health insurance to artisans including women artisans.

Welfare Schemes

40. The Committee have been informed that as a welfare measure, **Workshed Scheme** is being implemented with a view to provide improved working conditions with emphasis not only on provision of ample space for work, but also well ventilated and

healthy working environment to the handicraft artisans, leading to better productivity and enhanced contribution to the national economy.

41. The Committee desired the Ministry to state how many such dwelling units were set up during the last two years and to what extent these dwelling units helped in improving the quality of life and earnings of the women artisans. In response, the Ministry have stated that during the last two years, 1765 number of worksheds have been sanctioned. Out of the above 1765 worksheds, 100 worksheds (90 of men and 10 of women artisans) have been completed till date. It was stated that assessment on the extent to which these worksheds have been helpful in improving the quality of life and earnings of artisans including women artisans shall be made in due course.

42. Asked to state the reasons for completion of such less number of worksheds, the representative of the Ministry during evidence stated that this scheme was only two years old. There was problem of snowfall also in Jammu and Kashmir. Worksheds are expected to be complete by this year. He further stated that out of 1765 worksheds 823 worksheds are for women artisans.

43. Asked to furnish the details of worksheds sanctioned under the scheme during past two years, the Ministry have furnished the following information:-

SL. NO.	State	2003-2004			2004-05		
		M	F	Total	M.	F	Total
1.	J&K	711	257	968	169	405	574
2.	Andhra Pradesh	-	-	-	27	10	37
3.	Uttar Pradesh	-	-	-	-	150	150
4.	Madhya Pradesh	-	-	-	35	1	36
	Total	711	257	968	231	566	797

44. The Committee desired to know whether there is any scheme for extending medical facilities to the artisans who are prone to health hazards. The Ministry in their reply have stated that Government is contemplating to launch Health Insurance Scheme for Handicrafts Artisans titled “**Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana**”. The Committee further desired to know the present status of the scheme. The Ministry in their reply stated that Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana was prepared and referred to Planning Commission for approval in January, 2005. The Planning Commission has accorded their in-principle approval. Women artisans are also considered by the concerned field offices while implementing social security scheme.

Budgetary Provisions

45. The Ministry have furnished the following details of total funds allocated and utilised during the last three years in the handicraft sector.

(Rs. in lakh)

Budget	Funds Allocated 2002-03	Actual Expenditure 2002-03	Funds Allocated 2003-04	Actual Expenditure 2003-04	Funds Allocated 2004-05	Provision Expenditure 2004-05
Total:	8570.00	7165.28	7816.06	6432.44	8957.00	7707.00

46. When the Committee desired to know the scheme-wise details of funds allocated and utilized during the years 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, the Ministry furnished the details which are enclosed as Annexure I.

47. Scrutiny of the Budget provision and expenditure incurred during the last three years reflected under utilization of funds, the Committee desired to know the reasons behind the shortfall under various schemes. The Ministry, however, furnished following reasons for shortfall under various schemes:-

- The developmental schemes of the Handicrafts Sector are grant-in-aid Schemes, which are implemented through implementing agencies like NGOs, Cooperatives, etc. Handicrafts being a highly decentralized sector majority of Implementing Agencies often find it difficult to assess the ground level problems of the artisans and come up with good, comprehensive and viable proposals.

- Non-submissions of basic documents in time required for processing the case as per rule.
- Delay in settlement of accounts of earlier grants.
 - **Saving on account of vacant posts.**
- Austerity measures adopted in Govt. spending.

Monitoring Mechanism

48. **The Committee desired to know the monitoring mechanism available at Center, State & District level to monitor the implementation of all the schemes. The Ministry have stated that the implementation of the schemes is monitored through the concerned Regional Offices, Marketing & Service Extension Centres and Regional Design & Technical Development Centers of the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). The implementation of schemes concerning social security is monitored through the Asstt. Directors of Marketing & Services Extension Centres set up in various parts of the country, six Regional Offices of office of the DC (Handicrafts) and the Head Office.**

49. In reply to a query, the Ministry have stated that no Committee has been formed for implementation of various social security schemes as the existing mode of implementation through the field offices of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) appears to be adequate for the present. Eligible women artisans are also considered by the concerned field offices while implementing social security.

50. The Committee further desired to know whether the existing mechanism is adequate and effective. The Ministry in their reply have stated that the existing mechanism is adequate and effective.

Awareness

51. **The Committee desired to know whether any awareness campaign was ever made to make women artisans aware about the social security schemes available for them. Responding thereto, the Ministry have stated that continuous efforts are made to create awareness amongst artisans about the schemes of handicraft sector, including Social Security Schemes through local, State, Regional Level Workshops organized from time to**

time by field units of the Office of the DC (Handicrafts). These schemes are also made available to State Governments/Handicrafts Development Corporations etc. for wide publicity.

Grievance Redressal Mechanism

52. Asked to state the existing mechanism for the redressal of grievances at Centre/State/District level to redress the grievances complaints of women artisans, the Ministry have stated that grievances of artisans, including women artisans, at the central level are redressed through the concerned sections of the office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). At the field level, Grievances of artisans are redressed through concerned Regional Offices and Marketing & Service Extension Centres. In general, grievances of artisans are in the form of requests for participation in various developmental programmes. Number of grievances received and addressed during last three years (year-wise) are detailed below:-

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Grievances Received</u>	No. of Grievances disposed
2002-03	175	175
2003-04	263	263
2004-05	286	286

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

53. The handicraft sector which is highly labour intensive and spread all over the country has acquired a significant role in the country's economy in terms of employment generation and also as an important foreign exchange earner. As per Census of Handicraft artisans conducted by National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) during 1995-96, the total number of artisans in handicraft sector was 47.61 lakhs including 22.57 lakh women which constitute 47.40% of the total artisan population. The Committee have been informed that some of the objectives of the Tenth Plan Period are to generate productive employment opportunities to achieve higher standard of living for artisans individually and qualitatively in rural and urban craft clusters, increase the foreign exchange earnings for the country and preservation of cultural heritage through research and documentation, region/craft specific strategies and protection of craft facing extinction. The Ministry of Textiles through Development Commissioner (Handicrafts,) have been implementing eight Schemes viz. (i) Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (ii) Design & Technology Upgradation, (iii) Marketing Support & Service (iv) Export Promotion (v) Training & Extension (vi) Research & Development (vii) Special Handicrafts Training Project and (viii) Bima Yojana for Artisans Schemes to achieve the aforesaid objectives.

54. The Committee are surprised to find that no gender specific schemes are being operated by the Government for women handicraft artisans in spite of the fact that out of 47.61 lakh artisans, 22.57 lakhs are women, constituting approximately 47.40% of the total handicraft artisans, and even when certain crafts, like embroidery, bead work, applique, durries, shawls, cane & bamboo, artistic textile, weaving and mat-weaving etc. are being practiced predominantly by women. The Committee are not satisfied with the reasons given by the Secretary, Textiles, during evidence that "the schemes are gender neutral and the Ministry have not been discriminating the male artisans or female artisans as they all are people living below the poverty line." The Committee are of the view that women artisans, who

have to discharge the dual responsibility of looking after their household and earning livelihood, face many problems arising out of their job. Besides, taking into consideration their numerical strength in this sector, the Ministry should have formulated some specific schemes for these women artisans. Even the Secretary during evidence admitted “if the Committee feel then the Ministry would give more money to women artisans. From this year onwards, the Ministry would be more sensitive to the needs of the women and focus their schemes towards the requirements of women.” The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to formulate not only specific schemes for women artisans but also incorporate some specific provisions in the existing schemes for the benefit of women artisans to cater to their needs.

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

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

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

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

facilities to women artisans at concessional rates in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Banking Institutions.

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

60. The Committee are unhappy to be informed that only five Urban Haats have become operational and only one Mahila Utsav benefiting only 139 women artisans

was organized during 2004 under Urban Haat Scheme launched in 1999-2000. The Committee emphasize the need to organise frequent marketing events at regular intervals and arrange more Urban Haats, throughout India and give priority in the allotment of stalls to women artisans so that the objectives of these Schemes could be achieved and women artisans could get more marketing outlets.

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

62. The Committee are not happy with the number of women artisans trained under all these Schemes so far. The Committee are of the view that women artisans cannot face the ever- increasing competition in the market and improve their productivity unless they acquire adequate skill and are imparted proper training.

The Committee feel that with their limited skill and resources and inadequate knowledge of market trends, the need of training for women artisans assumes more importance. The Committee are, therefore, of the opinion that there is an urgent need for training of more and more women artisans under various training programmes hence, adequate quota in training programme needs to be fixed for women artisans to enable them to upgrade their skills, to produce innovative and value-added items, to cope with the fast-changing market demands and further improve their productivity.

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

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

65. The Committee find that the Master-craft persons in indigent circumstances who are recipient of National Awards/National Merit Certificates/State Awards are eligible for being considered for financial assistance, if their income is less than 15,000 per year. The Committee have also been informed during evidence that 'the Ministry approve 25 new proposals every year and Rs. 1000 is payable to the artisans who are above 60 years and whose annual income is less than Rs. 15,000 per year.' The Committee are of the view that this income limit which was fixed during Ninth Plan period needs to be revised. The representative of the Ministry during

evidence admitted that “We have to adjust it to the inflation..... for five years, atleast we can get Rs. 25000 if the Committee recommend, it will help the Ministry.” The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to raise the limit of the income of the artisans in accordance with the inflation rate.

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

67. The Committee have been informed that the Government is contemplating to launch Health Insurance Scheme i.e. Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana for handicraft artisans for which Planning Commission has accorded their in-principle approval.

They desire the Ministry to finalise and implement this scheme without further delay in consultation with the Planning Commission and United India Insurance Company so that protective cover is given to the artisans who are prone to health hazards, at the earliest.

68. The Committee are perturbed to find the poor performance of the Ministry in utilising the funds meant for the development of handicraft sector. A scrutiny of the funds allocated and the actual expenditure incurred during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 reflects that there was under-utilisation of funds. During the year 2002-03, Rs. 7165.28 lakh were spent against the allocation of Rs. 8570 lakh. Similarly, during 2003-04 against the allocation of Rs. 7816.06 lakh an amount of Rs. 6432.44 lakh was incurred. Again, in 2004-05 as against the allocated amount of Rs. 8957 lakh an expenditure of Rs. 7707.00 lakh was incurred. Similarly, there are cases of under-utilisation in several other schemes during the last three years. As against the allocation of Rs. 2560 lakh in Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme during the year 2002-03, the actual expenditure was of Rs. 2205 lakh. Similarly, under Marketing Support and Service Scheme funds to the tune of Rs. 1485 lakh were allocated and actual expenditure under this scheme was Rs. 1401.68 lakh during the same year and during the year 2003-04, an amount of Rs. 1460 lakh was allocated for the scheme, while actual expenditure was only Rs. 1114.77 lakh. The Committee have been informed that under-utilisation was due to the various reasons viz. non-submission of basic documents in time, delay in the settlement of accounts of earlier grants, saving on account of vacant posts, austerity measures, etc. which are not convincing to the Committee. The Committee are of the view that the Government should look into the causes of this recurring under-utilisation of funds and take suitable remedial steps to ensure timely and proper utilisation of funds. The Committee, further desire the Ministry to be realistic while making provisions for various schemes.

69. The Committee have been informed that implementation of the schemes is monitored through the concerned Regional Offices, Marketing and Service

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

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

71. The Committee have been informed that in order to create awareness among artisans including women artisans about various social security schemes, regional, State and local workshops are being organised from time to time by the field units. Information about the various schemes is also made available to the State Governments Handicraft Development Corporations etc, for their wide publicity. The Committee feel that the existing mechanism for generating awareness of various schemes is not adequate and effective. The Committee are of the view that Ministry should conduct a study/survey to know the impact of publicity of various schemes among the targeted beneficiaries and the extent to which the actual beneficiaries have got the information and knowledge about these schemes. The Committee as such desire the Ministry to get a survey done so that suitable steps may be taken for generating awareness among artisans, especially women artisans.

Further, the Committee would also like the Ministry to create awareness through publicity campaigns in electronic and press media throughout India so that the artisans including those residing in remote and hilly areas become aware of the benefits of the schemes. The Committee would also like the Ministry to allocate sufficient funds for publicity purposes.

72. The Committee find that the grievances of artisans at the Central level are redressed through the concerned sections of the Office of Development Commissioner and at field level by the concerned Regional Offices. The Committee have been informed that during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05, 175, 263 and 286 grievances were received and disposed of, respectively. The Committee do not agree with the figures furnished by the Ministry about the number of complaints received during this period, in view of the large number of artisans throughout the country. The Committee are of the view that the existing mechanism is not adequate and effective and the artisans are not aware of the existence of any of the grievance-redressal mechanism in the field and regional offices. Hence, less number of complaints have been received. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to take concrete measures for generating awareness about the grievance-redressal mechanism among the artisans through publicity and placing complaint boxes at Headquarter, Regional and field offices so that they could submit their grievances/complaints for redressal. The Committee would like to be apprised of the concrete action taken by the Ministry in this regard.

NEW DELHI
April, 2006
Chaitra/Vaisakha, 1928(Saka)

KRISHNA TIRATH
CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

ANNEXURE-1**BUDGET HEAD-WISE EXPENDITURE INCLUDING NER & SIKKIM FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS (PLAN)**

Budget Head/Name of Scheme	Funds Allocated 2002-03	Actual Expenditure 2002-2003	Funds Allocated 2003-2004	Actual Expenditure 2003-2004	Funds Allocated 2004-2005	Provisional Expenditure 2004-05
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2851 Revenue**(Rs. In lakhs)**

02 Training & Extn.	1801.00	1617.00	62.50	44.84	50.00	49.75
10 Design & Tech. Upgradation	2560.00	2205.00	875.00	847.62	1663.90	1580.46
12 Export Promotion	720.00	364.82	987.00	981.76	1435.00	985.35
24. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Yojana	900.00	840.00	1650.00	1555.85	2305.80	2110.10
25 Marketing Support and Services	1485.00	1401.68	1460.00	1114.77	1844.90	1568.65
26 Research & Development	215.00	156.00	210.00	156.68	200.00	188.74
03 UNDP Assistance under Country Cooperation Framework-I	332.00	332.00	-	-	-	-
27 Integrated Development package for J&K	100.00	88.78	1485.00	969.09	400.00	373.52
Bima Yojna for Artisans	17.00	-	60.00	60.00	62.50	62.50
Special Handicrafts Training	10.00	-	100.00	85.27	339.90	307.54
Total Revenue	8140.00	7005.28	6889.50	5815.88	8302.00	7226.61
Major Head "4851 CAPITAL	430.00	160.00	926.56	616.56	655.00	480.39
Grand Total	8570.00	7165.28	7816.06	6432.44	8957.00	7707.00

STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl. No.	Para No.	Recommendations/Observations	Ministry/Department
1.	53.	<p>The handicraft sector which is highly labour intensive and spread all over the country has acquired a significant role in the country's economy in terms of employment generation and also as an important foreign exchange earner. As per Census of Handicraft artisans conducted by National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) during 1995-96, the total number of artisans in handicraft sector was 47.61 lakhs including 22.57 lakh women which constitute 47.40% of the total artisan population. The Committee have been informed that some of the objectives of the Tenth Plan Period are to generate productive employment opportunities to achieve higher standard of living for artisans individually and qualitatively in rural and urban craft clusters, increase the foreign exchange earnings for the country and preservation of cultural heritage through research and documentation, region/craft specific strategies and protection of craft facing extinction. The Ministry of Textiles through Development Commissioner (Handicrafts,) have been implementing eight Schemes viz. (i) Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (ii) Design & Technology Upgradation, (iii) Marketing Support & Service (iv) Export Promotion (v) Training & Extension (vi) Research & Development (vii) Special Handicrafts Training Project and (viii) Bima Yojana for Artisans Schemes to achieve the aforesaid objectives.</p>	Ministry of Textiles
2.	54.	<p>The Committee are surprised to find that no gender specific schemes are being operated by the Government for women handicraft artisans in spite of the fact that out of 47.61 lakh artisans, 22.57 lakhs are women, constituting approximately 47.40% of the total handicraft artisans, and even when certain crafts, like embroidery, bead work, applique, durries, shawls, cane & bamboo, artistic textile, weaving and mat-weaving etc. are being practiced predominantly by women. The Committee are not satisfied with the reasons given by the Secretary, Textiles, during evidence that "the schemes are gender neutral and the Ministry have not been discriminating the male artisans or female artisans as they all are people living below the poverty line." The Committee are of the view that women artisans, who have to discharge the dual responsibility of looking</p>	-do-

		<p>after their household and earning livelihood, face many problems arising out of their job. Besides, taking into consideration their numerical strength in this sector, the Ministry should have formulated some specific schemes for these women artisans. Even the Secretary during evidence admitted “if the Committee feel then the Ministry would give more money to women artisans. From this year onwards, the Ministry would be more sensitive to the needs of the women and focus their schemes towards the requirements of women.” The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to formulate not only specific schemes for women artisans but also incorporate some specific provisions in the existing schemes for the benefit of women artisans to cater to their needs.</p>	
3.	55.	<p>The Committee find that majority of the handicraft artisans including women artisans do not have good working conditions at their work place and face problems such as paucity of space, inadequate ventilation and light at the work place and so on. The existing environment in their houses is not conducive for the production of quality handicraft. The Committee find that no study or survey has been carried out by the Ministry to identify the problems being faced by the artisans including women artisans. The Ministry, however, obtain the feedback from field formations, developmental partners and other stake holders on the effectiveness of schemes and problems faced by the artisans and based on the feed back and findings of evaluation studies, modifications in schemes have been undertaken from time to time with a view to minimising problems faced by the artisans. The Committee regret to point out that despite knowing well about the lack of conducive working conditions for handicraft artisans, the Ministry have not initiated any steps in this direction. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should conduct a study/survey to identify the basic problems being faced by the artisans including women artisans and take remedial measures to mitigate their basic problems without further delay.</p>	Ministry of Textiles
	56.	<p>The Committee find that in Handicraft sector, since more than 90 per cent of the Schemes are being implemented through the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as such the growth of this sector mostly depends upon their performance. The Committee feel that NGOs, being grass-root functionaries, can play a vital role in the generation of awareness among the women artisans about the salient features of various schemes and in their implementation.</p>	Ministry of Textiles

		The Committee, therefore, desire that while selecting the NGOs, due consideration should be given to their strong financial integrity and the working experience in the field so that only suitable and eligible NGOs with sound financial credentials are involved in the development process of this sector.	
57.		The Committee find that Artisans Credit Card (ACC) Scheme is being implemented by the Ministry to provide credit facilities to artisans to meet their credit requirements, for investment as well as working capital. So far only 37,369 number of cards have been issued by the banks upto 2004-2005 which, in the opinion of the Committee, is not a satisfactory state of affairs taking into consideration the existing population of the artisans. The Committee are of the view that the low coverage under this Scheme may be due to lack of adequate publicity and awareness of the benefits of this Scheme among the targeted group of beneficiaries. The Committee desire that adequate publicity of the scheme should be made so that artisans including women artisans could come forward to avail the benefits.	Ministry of Textiles
58.		The Committee are perturbed to note that though the women artisans constitute a large segment of handicraft artisans, there is no specific provision for providing credit facilities to them at concessional rates under any of the Schemes being implemented by the Ministry. The Committee are of the opinion that credit facilities at concessional rates would encourage more women to avail the benefits of the credit thereby improving their productivity. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to examine the feasibility of providing financial assistance/credit facilities to women artisans at concessional rates in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Banking Institutions.	-do-
59.		The Committee have been informed that Marketing and Support Service Scheme and Export Promotion Scheme are being implemented by Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) for improving the marketability of handicraft products. Under Marketing and Support Service Scheme, marketing events are organised in big and small cities to project Indian handicrafts and create awareness among the masses and also to provide direct marketing outlets to the craftpersons living in far-flung and remote and hilly areas by inviting them to participate in the events in different cities for augmenting their sale and eliminating the role of middle men. The Committee, however, find that there is no special incentive for women artisans under this Scheme.	-do-

		<p>Two special Craft Bazaars for women artisans were organised in Delhi and Bhubaneswar during 2004-05 which benefited 200 women artisans. Under Urban Haat Component of Marketing and Support Service Scheme, built-up stalls are allotted to artisans on fortnightly rotation basis at normal rent and five Urban Haats have become operational at locations like Tirupati, Bhubaneswar, Jammu, Uchana-Karnal, Gohar Mahal - Bhopal. Under this Scheme also, there is no provision to provide any special incentive to women artisans for participating in such Haats. Mahila Utsav was organised during 2004-05 exclusively for women artisans at Delhi Haat which benefited 139 women artisans. The Committee are unhappy to be informed that under both these Schemes, there are no special incentives for women artisans. The Committee desire that specific provisions giving incentives to women artisans be incorporated in the existing schemes and more special events to give sufficient marketing boost for women artisans be organised in sub-urban and small towns as the artisans living in these areas find it difficult to go to far off places and avail the benefits of such schemes.</p>	
	60.	<p>The Committee are unhappy to be informed that only five Urban Haats have become operational and only one Mahila Utsav benefiting only 139 women artisans was organized during 2004 under Urban Haat Scheme launched in 1999-2000. The Committee emphasize the need to organise frequent marketing events at regular intervals and arrange more Urban Haats, throughout India and give priority in the allotment of stalls to women artisans so that the objectives of these Schemes could be achieved and women artisans could get more marketing outlets.</p>	Ministry of Textiles
	61.	<p>The Committee note that three Schemes viz. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY), Special Handicrafts Training Project (SHTP) and Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme have been launched by the Government for upgrading the training skills of the artisans. Under AHVY, artisan clusters are organised into Self-Help Groups/Cooperatives to enable them to take up economic activities. The Secretary of the Ministry during evidence informed that about 481 clusters have been taken up benefiting 1,40,000 artisans including 62,000 women artisans which works out to be about 44% of the total. The representative during evidence admitted that the percentage of women should have been 47.5% instead of 44%. The objective of the SHTP Scheme is to provide training to semi-skilled</p>	Ministry of Textiles

	<p>handicraft artisans to upgrade their skill so as to be responsive to changing market requirements. The Committee find that 5365 artisans including 2802 women have been imparted training and 9670 are under going training under this Scheme. The representative of the Ministry during evidence admitted that there is no separate scheme for training of women artisans belonging to SCs/STs. The Committee also find that under Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme, which was launched to upgrade the artisans' skill through appropriate design and technical upgradation to enable them to produce innovative and value-added items to cope with the fast-changing market demand, only 1974 women artisans had benefited during the last three years.</p>	
62.	<p>The Committee are not happy with the number of women artisans trained under all these Schemes so far. The Committee are of the view that women artisans cannot face the ever- increasing competition in the market and improve their productivity unless they acquire adequate skill and are imparted proper training. The Committee feel that with their limited skill and resources and inadequate knowledge of market trends, the need of training for women artisans assumes more importance. The Committee are, therefore, of the opinion that there is an urgent need for training of more and more women artisans under various training programmes hence, adequate quota in training programme needs to be fixed for women artisans to enable them to upgrade their skills, to produce innovative and value-added items, to cope with the fast-changing market demands and further improve their productivity.</p>	Ministry of Textiles
63.	<p>The Committee further desire the Ministry to monitor all the training programmes at regular intervals to enable the Ministry to take necessary corrective measures, if and when required.</p>	-do-
64.	<p>The Committee regret to note that under Bima Yojana, an amount of Rs. 80 lakh was allocated during 2004-05 and only 3569 artisans including women artisans have been covered against the target of 66,000 artisans. The Committee feel that with this tardy pace, the Ministry would not be able to achieve the set target. The Committee are of the opinion that lack of awareness about the scheme among the beneficiaries is the main reason</p>	-do-

		for the poor performance of the scheme. They feel that the scheme should be popularised by roping-in NGOs, voluntary organizations in this process. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to take appropriate measures to achieve the target of covering 66,000 artisans in a time-bound manner.	
65.	The Committee find that the Master-craft persons in indigent circumstances who are recipient of National Awards/National Merit Certificates/State Awards are eligible for being considered for financial assistance, if their income is less than 15,000 per year. The Committee have also been informed during evidence that ‘the Ministry approve 25 new proposals every year and Rs. 1000 is payable to the artisans who are above 60 years and whose annual income is less than Rs. 15,000 per year.’ The Committee are of the view that this income limit which was fixed during Ninth Plan period needs to be revised. The representative of the Ministry during evidence admitted that “We have to adjust it to the inflation..... for five years, atleast we can get Rs. 25000 if the Committee recommend, it will help the Ministry.” The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to raise the limit of the income of the artisans in accordance with the inflation rate.	Ministry of Textiles	
66.	The Committee have been informed that Workshed Scheme is being implemented with a view to provide improved working conditions with emphasis on the provision of ample space for work with ventilated and healthy working environment to handicraft artisans for better productivity and enhanced contribution to the national income. The Committee find that out of 1765 sanctioned worksheds only 100 worksheds (90 for men and 10 for women artisans) have been completed. The Committee are not satisfied with the reasons viz. snowfall in J&K and the scheme being only two year-old, etc, as advanced by the Ministry for the delay in the completion of worksheds. They cannot but deplore this casual attitude of the Ministry in the provision of worksheds to artisans. The Committee further find that out of the 1765 worksheds sanctioned, 823 are for women. They	-do-	

	<p>feel that the delay in the provision of the worksheds to artisans would deprive them especially women artisans, of the benefits of better working conditions. The Committee also find that the performance of this Scheme is also not satisfactory in other States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to take appropriate steps to provide worksheds to artisans not only in Jammu and Kashmir but in other States also in a time-bound programme. The worksheds should preferably be constructed in and around places where there is concentration of artisans so that the scheme could be implemented for the benefit of the artisans without much dislocation. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken by the Ministry in this regard within three months after the presentation of the Report.</p>	
67.	<p>The Committee have been informed that the Government is contemplating to launch Health Insurance Scheme i.e. Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana for handicraft artisans for which Planning Commission has accorded their in-principle approval. They desire the Ministry to finalise and implement this scheme without further delay in consultation with the Planning Commission and United India Insurance Company so that protective cover is given to the artisans who are prone to health hazards, at the earliest.</p>	Ministry of Textiles
68.	<p>The Committee are perturbed to find the poor performance of the Ministry in utilising the funds meant for the development of handicraft sector. A scrutiny of the funds allocated and the actual expenditure incurred during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 reflects that there was under-utilisation of funds. During the year 2002-03, Rs. 7165.28 lakh were spent against the allocation of Rs. 8570 lakh. Similarly, during 2003-04 against the allocation of Rs. 7816.06 lakh an amount of Rs. 6432.44 lakh was incurred. Again, in 2004-05 as against the allocated amount of Rs. 8957 lakh an expenditure of Rs. 7707.00 lakh was incurred. Similarly, there</p>	Ministry of Textiles

	<p>are cases of under-utilisation in several other schemes during the last three years. As against the allocation of Rs. 2560 lakh in Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme during the year 2002-03, the actual expenditure was of Rs. 2205 lakh. Similarly, under Marketing Support and Service Scheme funds to the tune of Rs. 1485 lakh were allocated and actual expenditure under this scheme was Rs. 1401.68 lakh during the same year and during the year 2003-04, an amount of Rs. 1460 lakh was allocated for the scheme, while actual expenditure was only Rs. 1114.77 lakh. The Committee have been informed that under-utilisation was due to the various reasons viz. non-submission of basic documents in time, delay in the settlement of accounts of earlier grants, saving on account of vacant posts, austerity measures, etc. which are not convincing to the Committee. The Committee are of the view that the Government should look into the causes of this recurring under-utilisation of funds and take suitable remedial steps to ensure timely and proper utilisation of funds. The Committee, further desire the Ministry to be realistic while making provisions for various schemes.</p>	
69.	<p>The Committee have been informed that implementation of the schemes is monitored through the concerned Regional Offices, Marketing and Service Extension Centres and Regional Design and Technical Development Centres, etc. Social security schemes are monitored through Assistant Directors of Marketing and Service Extension Centres of Regional Offices and the Head Office. No committee, however, has been constituted for implementation of various social security schemes as the existing mode of monitoring mechanism through field officers appears to the Ministry to be adequate for the present. The Committee do not agree with the Ministry that the existing monitoring mechanism is effective and adequate as they find that there are shortcomings like under-utilisation of funds allocated for various schemes, poor performance of schemes like Workshed Scheme, inadequate training facilities available for women artisans,</p>	Ministry of Textiles

		inadequate credit facilities for artisans, etc, which are coming in the way of the development of handicraft sector. So, the Committee feel that there is an urgent need for its strengthening.	
	70.	The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should take concrete steps in close coordination with the State Governments and other implementing agencies for strengthening the existing monitoring mechanism, so that the schemes meant for artisans are implemented in the best possible manner.	-do-
	71.	The Committee have been informed that in order to create awareness among artisans including women artisans about various social security schemes, regional, State and local workshops are being organised from time to time by the field units. Information about the various schemes is also made available to the State Governments Handicraft Development Corporations etc, for their wide publicity. The Committee feel that the existing mechanism for generating awareness of various schemes is not adequate and effective. The Committee are of the view that Ministry should conduct a study/survey to know the impact of publicity of various schemes among the targeted beneficiaries and the extent to which the actual beneficiaries have got the information and knowledge about these schemes. The Committee as such desire the Ministry to get a survey done so that suitable steps may be taken for generating awareness among artisans, especially women artisans. Further, the Committee would also like the Ministry to create awareness through publicity campaigns in electronic and press media throughout India so that the artisans including those residing in remote and hilly areas become aware of the benefits of the schemes. The Committee would also like the Ministry to allocate sufficient funds for publicity purposes.	-do-
	72.	The Committee find that the grievances of artisans at the Central level are redressed through the concerned sections of the Office of Development Commissioner and at field level by the concerned Regional Offices. The Committee have been	Ministry of Textiles

	<p>informed that during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05, 175, 263 and 286 grievances were received and disposed of, respectively. The Committee do not agree with the figures furnished by the Ministry about the number of complaints received during this period, in view of the large number of artisans throughout the country. The Committee are of the view that the existing mechanism is not adequate and effective and the artisans are not aware of the existence of any of the grievance-redressal mechanism in the field and regional offices. Hence, less number of complaints have been received. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to take concrete measures for generating awareness about the grievance-redressal mechanism among the artisans through publicity and placing complaint boxes at Headquarter, Regional and field offices so that they could submit their grievances/complaints for redressal. The Committee would like to be apprised of the concrete action taken by the Ministry in this regard.</p>	
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PART-II

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (2004-05)

The Committee sat on Thursday, the 28th April, 2005 from 1500 hours to 1630 hours in Committee Room 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

IN CHAIR

Smt. Krishna Tirath - **Chairperson**

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Smt. M.S.K. Bhavani Rajenthiran
3. Smt. Sushila Kerketta
4. Smt. Preneet Kaur
5. Smt. Minati Sen

RAJYA SABHA

6. Kumari Nirmala Deshpande
7. Smt. Chandra Kala Pandey
8. Smt. Syeda Anwara Taimur

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri M. Rajagopalan Nair - Additional Secretary
2. Shri R.C. Kakkar - Deputy Secretary
3. Smt. Veena Sharma - Under Secretary
- 4. Shri V.P. Goel - Assistant Director**

WITNESSES

1. Ministry of Textiles

1. Shri R. Poornalingam Secretary
2. Shri B.K. Sinha DC (Handlooms and Handicrafts)
3. Shri J.K. Sharma Joint Secretary
4. Shri Inder Dhamija Addl. DC (Handlooms)
5. Shri S.K. Samal Addl. DC (Handlooms)
6. Shri Ajay Kumar Addl. DC (Handicrafts)
7. Dr. Sandeep Srivastava Addl. DC (Handicrafts)

National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd.

8. Shri V.K. Goyal

Managing Director

2. At the outset, the Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the representatives of the Ministry of Textiles to the sitting of the Committee and invited their attention to the provisions contained in the Direction 55 of the 'Directions by the Speaker'.

3. The Committee, then took oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Textiles on the subject '**Working condition of Women in Handloom and Handicrafts sectors**'.

4. Thereafter, the Hon'ble Chairperson requested the representatives of the Ministry to furnish notes on certain points raised by the Members to which replies were not readily available with them during the discussion.

5. The evidence was concluded.

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

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF
WOMEN (2005-2006)**

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 23rd March, 2006 from 1000 hours to 1040 hours in Room No. 130, First Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Smt. Krishna Tirath - **Chairperson**

MEMBERS
LOK SABHA

2. **Shri Joachim Baxla**
3. **Smt. Sushila Kerketta**
4. **Shri Rajesh Kumar Manjhi**
5. **Dr. P.P. Koya**
6. **Shri Mohd. Tahir Khan**
7. **Smt. Tejaswini See-Ramesh**

RAJYA SABHA

8. **Smt. Prema Cariappa**
9. **Kumari Nirmala Deshpande**
10. **Smt. N.P. Durga**
11. **Smt. Kum Kum Rai**
12. **Smt. Maya Singh**

SECRETARIAT

1. **Shri R.C. Ahuja** - **Joint Secretary**
2. **Smt. Veena Sharma** - **Deputy Secretary**
3. **Shri V.P. Goel** - **Assistant Director**

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting. The Committee then took up for consideration the Draft Report on the subject 'Working Conditions of Women in Handicraft Sector'. After some deliberations the Committee adopted the Draft Report.

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3. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalize the Draft Report and make consequential changes, if any, arising out of the factual verification and present the same to both Houses of Parliament during the ensuing session.

4. The Committee, thereafter, decided to undertake on the spot study visit in connection with detailed examination of the subjects selected by the Committee in two phases, each of five-days duration. The Committee decided to visit Kolkata, Darjeeling, Gangtok and Bagdogra, during the Month of May, 2006 in the first phase. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalise the places and dates in respect of the second phase of visit.

5. The Committee then adjourned and proceeded for on-the-spot local visit to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Sucheta Kriplani Hospital, New Delhi to have first hand information of the medical facilities available for women in these Institutions in connection with examination of the subject 'Medical Facilities for Women at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Hospitals and Primary Health Centres'.