Appendix-IV

The New Textile Policy, 1985

Important provisions highlighting handloom sector are mentioned below:

The textile industry has an unique place in the economy of our country. Its contribution to industrial production, employment and export earnings is very significant. This industry provides one of the basic necessities of life. The employment provided by it is a source of livelihood for millions of people, most of whom live in rural and remote areas. Its exports contribute a substantial part of our total foreign exchange earnings. The healthy development and rapid growth of this industry is, therefore, of vital importance.

(1) In the weaving sector, the distinct and unique role of the handloom sector shall be preserved. The growth and development of this sector shall receive priority. The composite mills and the powerlooms have their own respective strengths and weakness. For the purpose of policy, powerlooms in the organised mill sector and in the unorganised powerloom sector shall as far as possible, be treated at par and allowed to compete on the basis of their inherent strengths and capabilities.
(2) Effective measures would also be taken to see that the powerlooms do not encroach upon articles reserved for exclusive production by the handloom. The organisational setup required for the purpose shall be strengthened.

(3) In order to preserve the unique role of Handlooms and enable them to realise their full potential as also to ensure higher earnings for the handloom weavers, the following main steps shall be taken:

(i) The development of handlooms through cooperatives, Central and State level Corporation shall be intensified.

(ii) Greater emphasis will be placed on the modernisation of looms and provision of technological and other inputs for improving productivity of handlooms and the quality and finish of handloom products.

(iii) Special efforts would be made to ensure adequate availability of yarn and other raw-materials to the handloom sector. The infrastructure for procurement and supply of such inputs at reasonable prices to the handloom weavers shall be strengthened through the operations of the National Handloom Development Corporation and the State level handloom agencies.

(iv) The production of mixed and blended fabrics on handlooms shall be encouraged with a view to improve the wages and earnings of the weavers.
(v) Protection to handlooms will be provided by reserving articles for their exclusive production in the handloom sector under the "Handloom (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985." The provisions of the Act shall be strictly enforced and the machinery for doing so shall be suitably strengthened.

(vi) To improve the competitiveness of handlooms, steps would be taken to remove as far as possible the cost handicap of the handlooms by suitable fiscal measures.

(vii) To improve the marketing of handloom products, infrastructure of marketing complexes, training of marketing personnel and intensive publicity shall be organised. Steps would be taken to upgrade the technical, managerial, administrative skill of personnel employed in the handloom sector.

(viii) To strengthen the data base for the handloom sector for better planning and execution of handlooms development programmes, a census of handloom shall be undertaken. The machinery for implementation, supervision and evaluation of handloom programmes shall be strengthened.

(iv) In order to improve the working conditions of the handloom weavers and to provide direct benefit to them the following schemes, amongst others would be introduced:

(i) a contributory Thrift-Fund Scheme to provide assistance to the handloom weavers during times of need;
(ii) a workshed-cum-Housing Scheme to provide a better place for work and living to the handloom weavers.

(5) The responsibility for the entire production of controlled cloth shall be transferred to the handloom sector by the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan. The quantum of controlled cloth and Janata cloth which was fixed at 650 million metres shall be suitably increased in order to provide a larger quantum of cloth at affordable prices to the poorer sections of the population. Measures will also be taken to improve the quality of cloth and to ensure that it reaches the target group. The public distribution for controlled cloth would be strengthened and streamlined.

(6) For modernisation of the handlooms, research for evolution of improved types of handlooms and adequate arrangements for ensuring swift and smooth transfer of technology from the research institutions to the handloom weavers will be given priority.

(7) It would be necessary to intensify efforts in the area of product and market development, re-orient marketing strategy and create capabilities for fashion and design development. Exports of products from the handloom sector including silk products, have considerable potential in the world market. All encouragement would be given to assist in the realisation of this potential.
(8) The Government would continue to lay emphasis on the development of sericulture on account of its employment potential in the rural areas, high income generating capacity and ability to earn valuable foreign exchange through exports. Greater attention will be given to schemes relating to production of quality seeds, plantation of improved varieties and expansion of sericulture activities over larger areas and achieving a higher yield per hectare. The existing extension and training services for educating the farmers in the improved techniques of silkworm rearing and control of diseases would be strengthened. Efforts shall be made for the development of technology in reeling, weaving and processing for improving the quality of the silk fabrics.

(9) The Government would continue to promote the growth of the wollen sector in order to ensure adequate availability of wollens and blankets at reasonable prices to economically weaker sections. Programmes would be undertaken to augment the indigenous raw wool production in terms of both quantity and quality. The liberal import policy as well as research and development programmes would also be undertaken for the purpose.

(Source: Government of India, Ministry of Supply and Textiles, Department of Textiles)

(Ref. Jagriti, August 1, 1985)