

2. The Soviet side would consider additional proposals of the Indian side in the areas of:

- Environmental Protection and Improvement (Department of Environment).
- Relativistic Electron Beam (BARC)
- Material for Fusion Reactors (PRL, DMRL, BARC)
- Coal Utilization (CSIR)
- Development of Computer Software (Department of Electronics/CSIR).
- Semi-Conductors.

It was also agreed that any new areas of interest to either side might be included in the above list by mutual consent.

Production of cheaper T.V. sets

2067. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what steps are being taken by Government to produce cheaper TV sets to bring it within the reach of the common man; and

(b) whether Government propose to promote cheaper Janata TV sets for the weaker sections of the society and to withdraw or reduce various levies and excises at different stages with a view to bringing down the prices thereof, if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI M. S. SANJEEVI RAO): (a) and (b) Since 1976, several measures have been taken by the Department of Electronics to bring down the prices of TV sets so that they are within the reach of a larger section of the population. First, the industrial licensing policy followed has been one which encourages both expansion of existing TV set manufacturers and

approval of new units. This has brought about keen competition in the market and hence pressure to keep prices down. Secondly, the capacities licensed to the organised sector units are being enhanced from their existing capacities to a final capacity of 40,000 sets/year on receipt of applications. The approved capacities in the Small Scale Sector at the minimum level are also being raised to 10,000 nos. This will enable manufacturers to have greater economics of scale in both production and marketing and hence reduce costs. The third measure derives from the fact that the main cost-element in a TV set, is the cost of the components (components and parts constitute about 75 per cent of the final manufacturing cost of a TV set). To reduce the prices of the electronic components used in TV sets (which are mostly made in the country) as also as part of the general policy for the development of the electronic components sector, the DOE has licensed large production capacities to several new companies during 1980 and 1981. Taken together, these projects will involve a total investment on plant and equipment of the order of Rs. 50 crores, and are expected to result in high-volume and hence low-cost component production in the 1983-84 time frame. When this occurs, the cost of production of TV sets may come down still further. Fourthly, to facilitate such price reduction in components, the Government has also reduced the import duty on a large number of raw materials used in component manufacture. Some of the important components used in TV receivers for which a number of raw materials are now available at a concessional duty of 45 per cent (as compared to 120 per cent to 220 per cent earlier) includes: TV picture tubes, semiconductor devices, resistors, capacitors, loudspeakers, TV deflection components, ferrites etc. To reduce the cost of the testing of TV receivers, import duty on a number of TV Test Instruments, has been reduced to 25 per cent. In the Union Budget for 1981-82, broadcast TV Receivers have been

deleted from the list of items in the 11th Schedule. As a result, investments on machinery and plant for production of TV Receivers are now entitled to an investment allowance at the maximum level of 25 per cent. Fifthly, imports (to make up shortfalls in local production) of the most expensive component going into a TV set, viz. the TV Picture Tube, have been arranged by the DOE through the public sector Electronics Trade and Technology Development Corporation on a canalised basis. As a result of the bulking which such canalisation alone makes possible, ETTDC has been able to bring the prices of TV Picture Tubes down from around US \$26 to US \$22, the full benefit of which has been passed on by ETTDC to the TV set manufacturers. While all the measure referred to above have been aimed at and have resulted in, reducing the costs of manufacture of TV sets in the country, to ensure that this is reflected in the final consumer price, a differential excise duty structure devised by the DOE has been in force for TV sets since 1976. According to this duty structure, TV sets having an ex-factory price below a certain threshold, become eligible for excise duty at a much lower rate than the standard excise duty on TV sets as a whole. This has provided a major incentive to TV sets manufacturers to keep their prices below that threshold. As a result of all the above measures, consumers have benefited by way of reduction of Rs. 600 in the price of simple functional TV sets of 51 cm. screen size from Rs. 2,900 in 1976 to Rs. 2,300 in 1981.

Exploitation of Weavers and Workers in Handloom Industry

2068. SHRI M. BASAVARAJU: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed the wages and working conditions of weavers and other workers in handloom industry (Section-wise

i.e. wool, cotton and silk) in various States including Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Master weavers in handloom industry (cotton and silk) expropriate a major share generated by the petty weavers engaged by the Master weavers in their units;

(c) if so, whether Government have considered the question of removing the exploitation of workers; and

(d) what remedial measures are being taken by Government in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI DHARMAVIR): (a) The appropriate Government in respect of handloom workers are the State Governments for the purpose of fixation/revision of the minimum wages and improving their working conditions. The Minimum Wages Act provides for review and revision of minimum rates of wages fixed under the Act. According to available information, the Government of Tamil Nadu had constituted a committee to study the working conditions of the workers engaged in handloom industry and on the basis of its recommendations they brought forward a legislation in this regard.

(b) to (d) A large number of handloom sector covered under the co-operatives. Besides, a good number of weavers are covered under the Intensive Handloom Development Projects and Export Production Projects run by the State Handloom Development Corporations. The handloom weavers who are not covered under the above schemes can be safeguarded from exploitation if minimum wages fixed by the State Governments are enforced strictly. The need for effective enforcement of minimum wages in all scheduled employments is being stressed upon the State Governments from time to time.