

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether Government has requested to Ministry of Rural Development to include Khadi in MNREGA; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Based on a preliminary study carried out by Khadi and village Industries Commission (KVIC) through its State Office at Ahmedabad and consultations held with Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Rural Industrialisation(MGIRI), Wardha, Maharashtra and other stakeholders, setting up of a Khadi Research & Development Centre for Khadi technology in Gujarat as an extension centre of MGIRI with Gujarat Khadi Gramodyog Mandal, Ahmedabad as regional partner is under consideration of KVIC. The Centre is expected to provide services for design development of khadi, quality testing and technological guidance to khadi institutions in Gujarat as well as nearby states.

(c) No fund has so far been allocated by KVIC for this purpose. However, the details of project cost are under consideration of KVIC.

(d) and (e) KVIC has finalised Rate Contract (RC) with Directorate General for Supplies and Disposals (DGS&D) for supply of KVI items to the Government departments. Presently 26 items under Khadi are under RC. Different Government departments including Defence, Railways, etc. have been requested to use khadi items in order to support the khadi sector. Ministry of Commerce (Department of Supply), Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Railways have issued internal notifications/circulars from time to time for the use and purchase of Khadi & VI products. Many State Governments have also issued notifications to purchase Khadi/Handloom items.

(f) and (g) Ministry of Rural Development has been requested to consider the inclusion of khadi activities in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act to give a boost to production and providing gainful employment.

Artisans' Welfare Fund Trust

3525. SHRIMATI GUNDU SUDHARANI: Will the Minister of MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the aims and objectives of the Artisans' Welfare Fund Trust (AWFT) functioning in various States of the country;

(b) the help AWFT extends to artisans, with a particular reference to Andhra Pradesh; and

(c) the details of assistance/help extended by AWFT to artisans and others in the State of Andhra Pradesh during the last five years, year-wise and district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Khadi Institutions registered with the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)/Khadi and Village Industries Boards (KVIBs) of States/Union Territories are required to create Artisans Welfare Fund (AWFs) with a view to extending security and other help in the hour of need to the artisans. The main functions of the AWFTs include providing financial security as and when required by the artisans on occasions such as daughter's marriage, medical treatment, etc. Amount accruing to AWF is usually kept in fixed deposits in nationalized Banks. Khadi institutions are required to contribute 12 per cent of wages of artisans to AWF whose benefit is extended to all artisans except those who are salaried employees of khadi institutions. Separate accounts in respect of each artisan showing the subscriptions made by him/her together with the contribution made by the institution are maintained. Each artisan, subscribing to this fund is issued a pass book by the khadi institution. In the case of death of an artisan, the entire amount to his/her credit in AWF is paid to his/her legal heirs or nominees. District-wise information in respect of assistance /help extended to artisans by AWFTs in the country including Andhra Pradesh are not maintained centrally. However, assistance provided by AWFT to artisans in the State of Andhra Pradesh during last five years are as under:

S.No.	Year	Amount disbursed (Rs.)
1.	2006-07	3,52,124.00
2.	2007-08	4,64,300.00
3.	2008-09	3,69,153.00
4.	2009-10	1,00,000.00
5.	2010-11 (Nov. 10)	11,30,715.00