

of Section 80JJAA of Income Tax Act. Further, the rates under Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) have been enhanced from 2% to 4% for apparel, 5% to 7% for made-ups, handloom and handicrafts *w.e.f.* 1st November 2017. Products such as fibre, yarn and fabric in the textile value chain are being strengthened and made competitive through various schemes, *inter alia*, Powertex for fabric segment, Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS) for all segments except spinning, Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks (SITP) for all segments, etc. Assistance is also provided to exporters under Market Access Initiative (MAI) Scheme. Government has enhanced interest equalization rate for pre and post shipment credit for exports done by MSMEs of textile sector from 3% to 5% *w.e.f.* 02.11.2018. Benefits of Interest Equalization Scheme has also been extended to merchant exporters from 2019 which was earlier limited to only manufacturer exporters.

**Handloom exports facing competition from other countries**

1242. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Indian handloom exports are facing competition from countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh;
- (b) if so, what type of products are hit and from which States; and
- (c) whether any action plan has been drawn up to face competition and to capture new markets from Indian handlooms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI AJAY TAMTA): (a) Yes, Sir. Pakistan and Bangladesh enjoy tariff preference in India's major exports destinations *viz.* European Union, United States of America and United Arab Emirates by way of Generalized System of Preferences Plus (GSP+) and Least Developed Countries (LDC) status etc. Under GSP+ notification, Pakistan products are enjoying duty free access in European Union. Bangladesh became a WTO Member on the date of its inception *viz.* 1st January 1995 and is enjoying duty free access to European Union under the Everything but Arms (EBA) scheme which came into force in the year 2012 for Least Developed countries (LDCs).

- (b) In general, the handloom exports from India consist of made-ups, floor coverings and fabrics, and these products have been hit because of competition. The major states which manufacture handloom products being exported are Haryana, Tamilnadu and Kerala.

(c) Following steps have been taken by the Government to face competition and to capture new markets for Indian handlooms:—

- (i) Increase of Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MSIS), rate to 7% for Handloom Product exports.
- (ii) Interest Equalization Scheme (earlier called Interest Subvention Scheme) on Pre and Post Shipment Rupee Export Credit with effect from 1st April, 2015 for five years for manufactures.
- (iii) With the support of Government of India, Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC) is organizing participation in 15-20 international fairs/trade delegations to explore new and untapped markets.
- (iv) HEPC has been organizing participation of Clusters/Apex Societies in international fairs in order to support their entry into international markets.
- (v) HEPC is also undertaking exclusive exports promotion activity for North Eastern states.
- (vi) Organizing awareness seminars on Handloom Exports and provide market trend inputs for product development for exporters situated in major production areas.

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#### VALEDICTORY REMARKS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Shri Ghulam Nabi Azadji, leaders of various parties and Members of the august House, as we come to the close of yet another Session, we are at a moment of reflection, a stock taking of what we have achieved and what we have not.

With a heavy heart, I have to say that this short but important Budget session of Rajya Sabha turned out to be another wasted opportunity. This only reinforces the 'dysfunctional pattern' that has been evident over the last few years which is a matter of serious concern and it will be a big challenge to democracy.

It is time for all sections of the House to evolve a 'collective conscience' to enable effective functioning of the House further to deep introspection to prevent any further damage to the standing of this august House which is also known as the House of Elders. Elders are usually expected to show the way to others. This was the earnest