

Hand-Loom Weavers' Role
in
National Co-operative
Socialist Economy



By

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**Presidential Address, by Prof. N. G. Ranga, M. P.,
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AWAKENING AMONG ARTISANS AND HAND-LOOM WEAVERS

This is the twentieth year after our All India Handloom Weavers Congress took its birth and tenth year since it took the present organisational shape.

During this period, not only the weavers but also all the artisans as a whole, who number not less than four crores in our great country, have been awakening themselves to shoulder the responsibilities that Swaraj India would place on their shoulders. It stands to the credit of our weavers that they have taken the most effective initiative in this by developing this All India Organisation with its more or less fully developed and conscious state organisations in most of the States with a good tradition of handloom weaving. Our weavers have realised earlier than other artisans the need for and advantages of the cooperative reorganisation of this great industry and as many as eight lakhs have joined the cooperatives during this period. They have also recognised the indispensability of modernising their implements, designs and methods of working and production and have therefore been quick to replace the old-throw shuttle looms by fly-shuttle looms and equipped themselves with such improved implements as the dobby, warping, reeling, sizing and calendering machines and take-up motion attachments.

There used to be the period 1914-24 when most of our weavers were either unaware of these new implements

and machines or were not convinced of their greater advantages when it became so necessary for doing propaganda among them for their adoption. During the past twenty years, our weavers' organisations have been co-operating with the State Governments in popularising these improved implements, machines and methods of production. This task is now being ably aided by the All India Handloom Board.

Triumph of Gandhian conception of Socio-Economics

I am glad to say that our handloom weavers-nay-all artisans are on the threshold of freedom from the two centuries long fear of being driven out of our sources of employment in our traditional arts and crafts. Thanks to the triumph of the Gandhian conception of Socio-economic duty of the State, our National Leadership and Planning Commission have realised the creative role that our handloom weaving and other hand industries are playing in our national life. So, they are bent upon giving the maximum recognition and support to our hand industries, that is, the handicrafts, because of their organisation and higher employment potential. Therefore, there is no longer any fear of the textile mill industry, or rice hulling industry or oil crushing industry monopolising the whole production front and denying any sector of the market to the products of the handicrafts. The national leadership has atlast undertaken the responsibility of finding a growing sector of the national market for the products of our handicrafts and providing the necessary pre-requisites and facilities for the votaries of handicrafts to enable them to fulfil their role in our national socio-economy.

It augurs well for social progress that the progressive demand of all our artisans to be allowed to enjoy

their freedom from capitalist exploitation and managerial dictatorship, which are the hall-marks of both Capitalism and Sovietism of this century, is accepted by our National Planners and that they are to be permitted to work in their own handicrafts, in their own homes, with their own tools and with the aid of their own leadership. The other demand of all toilers for self-governance in industry, which has been vouchsafed in part to our artisans, is to be assured in full measure to the votaries of our hand-industries through the organisation of Co-operatives for all artisans.

Need to reorganise and rehabilitate Hand industries recognised by Government and Planning Commission.

Yet another of our gains is that the National Planning Commission has accepted the responsibility of financing our handicrafts and organising the marketing for the products of handicrafts, as far as possible through our own co-operative sales emporiums.

Thus, on the ideological front, our artisans have no longer any fear that large-scale industries may be permitted to encroach upon their handicrafts, to rob them of their employment and to get them enslaved to the employers or ~~managers~~ ^{Managers} of either capitalist or State-owned large-scale industrialisation. They are now assured that there will be reserved for them big enough sector of the national market for all their products.

Therefore our four crore artisans can congratulate themselves for their age-long loyalty to their arts and crafts, despite the greatest odds. Indeed the country too has as good reason to feel grateful to our artisans for

having remained in their crafts during all these centuries of scalding neglect, gnawing and growing unemployment or under-employment and official discouragement and also for having retained their traditional but precious gifts of craftsmanship and inventiveness and genius.

Our handloom weavers declared in their Nagpur Congress of 1945 that the ideology of the artisans is superior to that of Marxism and our Handloom Weavers Congress remained loyal to our ideology of decentralised, self-governing, industries, owned, and worked by free and independent artisans and their allies, the freedom loving and cooperative-minded intellectuals such as the designers, organisers, managers, accountants and salesmen of our co-operatives.

We have had to pass through anxious times, since the advent of Swaraj, because of the inability of the Planning Commission and the State and Central Governments to accept this Gandhian ideology. For years, it was not certain whether our National leadership would shoulder the responsibility of reserving an adequate share of the national market for the products of our handicraftsmen ; because the Governments could not evercome the powerful influence of the organised industries. There was also the difficult question of finances and even though the Indian Central Oilseeds Committee repeatedly recommended the imposition of a cess on the oil pressed in the oil-crushers in order to develop the bullockdriven oil-pressing cottage industry and the First Five Year Plan favoured the proposal, Government would not take any action. So the prospects appeared to be very gloomy for our handicrafts. Only three years ago our weavers were faced with a serious degree of unemployment and wide-

spread starvation. Fortunately the Weavers Congress of Andhra, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamilnad either organised or threatened to organise Satyagraha and Hunger-marches and the State Governments hastened to provide unemployment relief. Soon after that the All India Handloom Board also decided upon its policy of giving a rebate on the sales of hand-woven cloth to encourage consumers to patronise handloom cloth and that helped to relieve the situation.

Fortunately for the country and more especially for our artisans, the authors of the Second Five Year Plan have chosen to lay primary stress upon employment for maximum number of people, as being the most direct and effective source of increasing national wealth and that has naturally turned the plan in our direction and placed the hand-industries in their proper setting and helped our National leadership to realise the key and vital role of our cottage industries, as employment yielding agency. This is indeed a progressive turn both for our country and artisans.

Certain official notions require revision

There are however threatening clouds of inaction or wrong action by the Central Government, because of the growing power and influence of the industrial interests and also of the nineteenth century economic thought, in which so many of the top-level officers of both Central and State Governments have been nurtured.

Let us remember that the Kanungo Committee has recommended that for the sake of so-called efficient production and introduction of greater degree of mechani-

sation in textile production and higher per capita production, such steps of reorganisation should be taken that with 50,000 weavers, all the cloth can be produced which we produce at present by providing employment to all our weavers, whether for the whole year or for part of the year. It is true that our Handloom Weavers Congress has protested against this recommendation and contested the untenable claim made by the Commission that such a reduction in the number of weavers would be in the interests of our weavers themselves. It is also true that the All India Handloom Board has refused to accept this recommendation. But the Ministries of Commerce and Industry have not yet given up their faith in this recommendation. Nor has the Government, as a whole, denied its faith in this proposed disastrous deviation.

The National Planners have not yet made up their mind as to the permanent role of hand industries, organised on a cooperative basis, functioning on a decentralised and largely cottage scale and financed fully by the Reserve Bank and State Bank and Cooperative Credit Society. It is most essential for the Handloom Weavers Congress to be vigilant about this matter and persist in its agitation to see that our National leadership realise and recognise the permanent and progressive role that our Co-operatively re-organised hand-industries can play in the socialist society that we are striving to achieve.

The National Planners have yet to realise the need for providing, for some more time, rehabilitating aids to all our hand-industries, in order to place them on a commercial basis, almost on a par with other industries and business, before, the State Credit and Marketing institutions of the Government can be permitted to deal with

them in the same way as the other but better organised industries are treated. Unfortunately, owing to the absence of such a realisation, the authorities in charge of the Reserve and State Banks and the Cooperative Credit Banks are unwilling to appreciate such initiative as was taken by the Handloom Board. That is, the Handloom Board has been advancing interest free loans, at the rate of Rs. 200 per loom towards working capital in order to enable weavers cooperative societies to finance the ways and means needs of weavers while they are at work on their looms and this is sought to be stopped by the conference of the Registrars of Cooperatives and Banks, recently convened by the Union Government. The Handloom Board which realises more intimately the real need of the Handloom Industry for rehabilitation finance has declined to accept this recommendation of the Banks.

Utilisation of Cess Fund

The Government of India and Reserve Bank have been stressing that the Cess Funds should not be used for providing business finance to primary weavers Cooperative Societies or to Apex-Societies and that the Reserve Bank of India, State Banks or Cooperative Banks should be approached to provide the necessary business finance. The need for and the extent of such business finances are bound to be continuously increased through the implementation of the Cess Schemes. Therefore, while the aid of the Reserve Bank, State Banks or Cooperative Banks should be sought for providing business finances, the All India Handloom Board must continue to provide out of the Cess Funds a certain amount of rehabilitation finance that come in the form of interest-free loans, subsidies and grants. The business finance to be provided by Banks

should not be in the form of time loans. It must be in the form of rotating credits which alone can meet the requirements of Cooperative Societies which cannot afford to repay completely the amounts advanced to them as business finance at any fixed intervals. Any funds advanced to them are bound to be mostly locked up in the form of raw materials advanced for the manufacture of goods or in the form of finished goods given for processing or stocked in sales depots.

Implementation of Cess Schemes has thrown many financial and other burdens over Apex-Societies. For instance, through the increase in the number of sales depots run by them, Apex Societies are obliged to find more capital to provide adequate stocks in such selling units. The increased capital, mostly borrowed from different sources, cannot be easily repaid within a specified period as the need for more capital is progressively increasing with the coming in of more weavers into the cooperative-fold and the consequential increase in the production of cloth by the weavers in the Cooperative sector.

If and when the financial aid, now being provided by the All India Handloom Board out of the Cess Funds comes to be withdrawn, the Apex Societies must be in a position to maintain selling units now opened with their own resources. This is only one aspect of the manifold development in different directions through the implementation of the Cess Schemes, such as opening of more pattern making Factories, Dye-Factories, starting of Training Centres and calendering or other processing plants etc. Therefore the All India Handloom Board must in time arrange to provide permanent credit sources which

can finance the various activities undertaken by the Apex Societies in the new set up of things. Steps will have to be taken by the Board to cushion the losses that Apex Cooperatives may sustain in storing yarn and cloth for months in advance of their consumption, because of fluctuations in prices.

Our Handloom Weavers Congress has to press, in Co-operation with the leadership of other artisans employed in all other Hand Industries, the need for our National leadership to realise the duty to rehabilitate these industries and to that end, to provide rehabilitation aids, principally rehabilitation finance and marketing.

It is to get over the obstructive attitude and atmosphere of the present financial institutions, that we suggest that the State Governments should be persuaded to constitute special Rural Industries Finance Corporations, charged with the responsibility of advancing credit, both for rehabilitation and for commercial transactions, both for ways and means purposes and for marketing of handloom cloth. The Handloom Weavers Congress has to press Government of India to see that the Handloom Board and other Boards continue to advance much more money free of interest than at present for the next ten years, and that the State Governments become partners in the functioning and financing of Hand Industries Finance Corporations and the Reserve Bank deems it its duty to fully finance these industries.

Opposition still active :

It is a great pity that despite the past 50 years of educational propaganda carried on by Mahatma

Gandhi in favour of our Hand-Industries and the terrible sufferings caused to our crores of artisans by the freeplay of the vicious and destructive competition of mechanised and large-scale industries, imposed by the British regime and its ideological agents, the capitalist and Indian industrialists and a large majority of the heads of our administrative departments continue to think in terms of Marshallian and American nineteenth century socio-economics and are unwilling to accept and implement even the welfare-economics of pigon and the postwar British Welfare State. It appears as if the United Nations' faith in the socio-economics of full employment and social securities and dynamism of development of welfare of all is beyond their ken. Hence the continued obstruction from most of them in the administrative machinery even to the implementation of the halting policies of the First Five Year Plan. How can we then feel sure that they will offer any better response to the more fulsom^e and favourable attitude of the Second Five Year Plan towards our Hand-industries and artisans? Therefore there is a great need for all the artisans and their leadership and more especially for this Handloom Weavers Congress to continually propagate the Gandhian ideology regarding our hand-industries and this decentralised and cooperatised sector of our national economy, as represented by our arts and crafts. They have to urge that more and more of those intellectuals, hailing from the ranks and homes of these artisan masses or believing in this reorientated and progressive approach of the National Leadership, are recruited to man the services, and societies that are expected to deal with the socio-economic problems of our Hand-industries.

There is an interested move on the part of some large-scale industrialists and officials to under-

estimate even the employment potential of our hand-industries and over-estimate the employment potential of large scale industries. They seem to be anxious to prove that the nation can gain so little by encouraging our hand-industries, even by way of providing employment to an ever larger number of workers. They seem to think that large scale industries are capable of yielding substantial degree of ancillary employment, even though, only very limited quantum of employment is provided by their industrial units. They assume, but wrongly, that only the industrial workers will demand so many socio-economic services from so many others, as their incomes go on increasing. On the other hand it is a fact that as the larger number of weavers come to be employed on the handlooms and that too more profitably and for longer periods and earn bigger incomes, their combined capacity to provide employment to all those who provide ancillary socio-economic services would be much larger. We have to take note of the mischievous purpose of this wrong trend of thought and argument by our opponents; that, since the weavers and the votaries of other hand-industries are incapable of demanding many auxiliary as well as ancillary services, the nation loses nothing by giving them up, though gradually. The Kanungo Commission has unfortunately lent its authority to this wrong argument. It is the duty of this Weavers Congress and the other leaders of Hand-Industries to expose the falsity of this thought and argument and to demonstrate how our hand-industrial workers, that is, artisans provide much more employment both directly and indirectly than any type of mechanised and industrial reorganisation.

There is an erroneous impression that decentralised Cottage Industries and Handicrafts are always depending

upon and are being spoon-fed by the State. This impression is mostly created and propagated by interested capitalists who are in fact perpetually agitating for and securing State Aid for their organised industries in different forms from their formative stage till they find assured markets for their products within this country and abroad. The public money that is spent for rehabilitating our long established national cottage industries is very insignificant when compared to the millions of rupees spent to organise, promote and protect the large scale mechanised industries. The protection that is being given to the large scale mechanised industries against the competition of foreign manufacturers is much more than the help demanded by the decentralised cottage industries to secure at least a specified sector of local market to sell their products. This aspect can be clearly understood when we recollect the strong opposition of the Textile Mills for the reservation of sarees and dhoties for production exclusively on handlooms. After all these varieties are required only for local consumption and the handloom industry has been traditionally meeting the demand for these varieties.

We are glad that the National Planners have recognised the special suitability of our hand-industries to produce most of the essential consumers' goods such as cloth, and other textile products, wheat-floor, rice, leather goods, especially foot-wear, oils, furniture and household utensils and toilet equipment and articles. It augurs well for our artisans that our planners have decided to give the fullest scope for the development of our hand-industries and to this end, to gradually lessen the scope for the operations of large scale industries, especially like the textile, rice-hulling, flour and oil-crushing mills. We are however keen

on the gradual capture of the whole field of production of consumers' goods by our hand-industries, so that all the special advantages, such as a high margin of profits accruing from Consumers' favours and fashions and the inelasticity of their demand for basic daily necessities, can reach our artisan masses.

Karve Committee's Recommendations

The Karve Committee, appointed by the National Planning Commission has actually strengthened this demand of ours and provided the necessary economic justification for it. Naturally enough, the leaders of the large scale industry have seen a serious threat in this to their vested interests and have therefore trotted out the usual objections of higher costs of production of the cottage industrial goods and unorganised character and inadequacy of productive capacity of hand-industries. The spokesmen of the Industry and Commerce Ministry have, however, raised more ingenious objections. They said, for instance, that the demand for more cloth cannot be met by the existing weaving mills and handlooms, that the present spinning mills are unable to produce enough yarn needed for the production of all the cloth that our growing population would demand and our rising export markets would ask for. Therefore, they make out a strong case for more spinning mills and also for more power-looms and weaving mills. If private enterprise is unable to meet these national needs, then the State and Cooperatives must come forward to start a number of spinning mills with about a million spindles and so on. We of the Handloom Weavers Congress maintain that as a large percentage of our Weavers are under-employed, and a good number are even now unemployed, the present pro-

duction of handloom goods can be augmented considerably even with the present equipment. And if better looms, dobbies and other implements can be adopted and they are being so adopted enthusiastically by our weavers on the inspiration of our cooperatives and the better sales—the total production can be stepped up from the present rate of 5 yards per day per loom to 8 yards and from the present total estimated production of 3000 million yards to 6 to 8 thousand million yards.

As for the yarn supplies, it is fortunate that the Ambhar Charkha bids fair to supply as much yarn as will be needed during the Second Five Year Plan to effectively supplement the production of the existing spinning mills. It is true that experiments, on a large scale, are still being made, in different parts of the Country, over the working and production of this Ambhar Charkha and therefore there is need for caution. Yet, sufficient is known of its success to encourage us to feel a high degree of confidence. Therefore we feel emboldened to request the Government not to be in a hurry to give licenses for the installation of any more mill-spindles. We feel confident that we run no serious risks of shortage of yarn for domestic consumption by not increasing the number of mill-spindles and by depending upon the Ambhar Charkha for additional supplies of yarn.

Is Factory system useful ?

Past experiences of private capitalists or Co-operative enterprises have amply established that centralised units, however small they may be, like weaving factories, dye-factories, processing factories etc., with their overhead charges and their obligations to satisfy the provisions

of factories Act or workman's compensation acts, involving periodical threats of labour strikes or lock-outs, are not really as economic as the decentralised domestic industries. The wage-minded labourer in the factory is always more discontented and less managable than the decentralised independent labourer working in his own house. Many weaving factories in the West Coast and similar other factories of artisans of different types in several States, managed by private capitalists or by Cooperatives, were being closed in recent years as they were uneconomic and proved to be perpetual sources of labour troubles. It is therefore worth re-considering whether the cess funds should be utilised in large amounts to encourage the formation of such factories.

The problem of working the 'Rebate'

The rebate on the handloom cloth sold through the Cooperative sales depots or by depots managed by State Governments, or Private bodies has to some extent created a greater consumer preference for handloom fabrics than before. But stray instances of abuses of the rebate have been reported in some States. It is therefore felt after the experience of last 2 years that, when the production through the cooperative sector is considerably increased it may not be possible to pay rebate on the sales of entire production through cooperatives. Even now many societies are able to get rebate only on a certain percentage of their production which is sold directly to the consumers. Therefore, one way of preventing the reported abuses may be to allow rebate only on the stocks sold by the primaries to the Apex Societies. The Apex Societies may then be in a position to market a greater percentage of production

from the primaries. The primaries can be assured of getting the same amount of rebate which they have been getting till now; the only difference being that the benefit of a part of rebate going to the private merchants, through the alleged abuses, will be diverted to the Apex Societies. In other words this will completely eliminate the scope of private merchants getting stocks under the guise of retail sales.

Necessity of paid Office-bearers

The old orthodox conception, which originated in the earlier days of Cooperative movement when it was only providing credit to rural agriculturists, that the office bearers of the Cooperatives should work honorarily will have to be replaced by new concepts with the day to day expansion of the movement. The services of the office bearers like the President or Secretary, who devote their whole time or part time must be adequately remunerated. It is no doubt necessary to keep in view the financial stability of the Cooperative Society in fixing the remuneration of the office bearers. This is all the more necessary in the case of small artisans with meagre incomes who have to neglect their own profession in order to safeguard the interests of the Society, by devoting their entire time for the economic uplift of their co-artisans.

Too much dictation or domination by benevolent outsiders are prone to chill the enthusiasm and kill the initiative of the actual workers engaged in handicrafts, who have not begun to appreciate the need for and advantages of organising themselves on Cooperative lines. The workmen must be given opportunity to grow wiser through correcting their own mistakes.

Triumph of Hand-loom Industry :

It stands to the credit of our ten to twelve million weavers that despite the bitterest and most powerful competition of the mill-industry, backed as it was by the imperial powers of the State, they have kept alive this great handloom industry. This industry is second only to agriculture in its ability to yield employment to so many millions, and in assuring the largest degree of industrial freedom and independence to its votaries and in keeping alive the inspiring light of economic self-governance in the face of the aggressive economic totalitarianism of capitalism. Not less than 100 crores worth of property is invested in it, in the shape of implements and machines and houses of all the artisans employed in it. Most of it has been provided by weavers' families or the master-weavers and merchants. They do not create such complicated problems as are associated with the mill industry such as the strikes or lock-outs, slums and housing shortage, and other Municipal problems, nor do they intensify the capitalist exploitation. Our employment potential can be developed by comparatively small additional capital; Our artisans are amenable to training and introduction of new patterns, designs, and even machines. About the same can be said of most other hand-industries. Therefore, they are the best and easiest means for the development of socialist economy in our country. Our weavers have demonstrated the great traditional aptitude of our artisans for cooperative work and leadership, in that 8 lakhs weavers have already joined the cooperatives, thus leading the way to the development of cooperative producers' democracy. Our artisan masses have resisted wage-slavery with much success. Factory system has not gained any strong foot-

hold among them. Although they are so cooperative by tradition, they are unwilling to lose their basic economic self-governance. So they can be the best medium for Guild Socialism. As such, they deserve the maximum help. We trust that the leaders of the Ministries of Industry and Commerce and Finance as well as the Planning Commission would take the same view of our progressive role in our National Social Economy and give us all the encouragement and assistance needed by us.

State Partnership

One of the important issues on which our Weavers Congress and the leaders of other artisans have to formulate their attitude is the degree of State' Partnership in the management of their cooperatives to which more and more collective functions are being delegated. The Rural Bank Credit Survey Committee has suggested and the All India Cooperative Union has agreed, that the State should underwrite our cooperative credit and marketing, also subscribe upto 50% of the share capital of cooperatives. But it is also suggested that, in order to safeguard its investments and also to strengthen public confidence in the management of the cooperatives, the State should seek effective representation on the Boards of Management of the Cooperatives. The Cooperative Union said that such State Partnership in management should depend upon the decision of the concerned cooperatives. It is for the Hand-loom Weavers Congress to consider this aspect and decide whether such State Partnership in share capital and management in our Weavers' Coperative Societies will be conducive to the rapid and sound growth of economic democracy among

reviews, that the Finance Ministry is accustomed to insist upon, can be avoided. This demand is specially reasonable in view of the fact that most of the funds of the Board will come to be utilised only as grants-in-aid to State Governments and the Apex State Weavers Cooperative Societies, and the All India Handloom Fabrics Marketing Cooperative Society.

We are glad to say that despite the fact that its constitution has not been as popular and as satisfactory as could have been wished for by our Congress, the present Hand-loom Board has been able to lay sound foundations for the development of our Industry, from both the Governmental and Cooperative aspects; thanks to the funds provided by the Cess and the active interest displayed by Ministries of Commerce and Finance. Fairly satisfactory conventions have been built up, whereby the Board tries to reach unanimous decisions on most occasions even when official members are unable to go the whole-hog with the non-official members and the concerned Ministries try to respect the decisions of the Board. Certainly the upgrading of the status of the Board, as suggested by us, is needed in order to ensure further improvement in the relations between the Board and the Central Ministries.

There is our need for strengthening the organisational and administrative aspects of the State Governments vis-a-vis our Hand-looms. It is well-known that many of the State Governments are unable to prepare their schemes in time and utilise the funds granted for implementing the schemes sanctioned by the Hand-loom Board. If the Second Five Year plan, in its Hand-loom Section is to be fully implemented and if our Hand-loom Weavers

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our ranks and in our industry. I am inclined to welcome such State Partnership for the next five or ten years provided that the representatives of Governments do not have the right to vote in the elections of the office bearers and do not enter into the politics of the management.

We are thankful to the Government of India and to Shri T. T. Krishnamachari the present Minister for Commerce and Industry for having piloted the Bill providing the present Cess fund for the development of the Handloom Industry and also for having decided, so unequivocally, in favour of giving the greatest phillip to the development of Cooperation among our Weavers. We are also glad that both the Ministers of Commerce and Industry and the Finance have been persuing a healthy convention of trying their best to accept the resolutions of the Hand-loom Board, although there is room for improvement in their present procedure.

Need for Statutory Hand-loom Board

Yet, it is our duty to express our long-time demand that the constitution of the Hand-Loom Board should not be left, as it has been till now, to the discretion of the Ministry and that its powers, tenure, personnel should be regulated by an Act of Parliament to ensure the development of its popularity among our Weavers and its authority in the new administrative set up of our planned economy. Therefore, we request Government to take early steps to establish Statutory Hand-loom Board, at the centre with its complements in all the States. It is not a mere conventional demand. Our experience of the personnel, funds and working of the various Hand-loom Boards and Hand-

loom Committees and the present Hand-loom Board has only strengthened the need for the establishment by an Act of Parliament, the Hand-Loom Board. It should have adequate sources of finances. There should be definite procedure for the appointment of its members. The representative organisations of Weavers, such as their Cooperatives and well established All India Hand-loom Weavers Congress and its constituent organisations in the States, should be provided adequate and effective place on its personnel. The Ministries of Finance, Commerce and Industry and Production may be represented by one nominee each and Textile Commissioner may also be a member. Representatives of the Textile Mill Industry, and its labour, as represented by the INTUC, the organised Khadi Spinners, the Power-looms and also departmental heads of the Hand-loom sections of the Textile Departments of the major Hand-loom Industry such as Madras, Mysore, Andhra, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Assam, Uttarpradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala and Punjab may be provided representation on the Board. But care will have to be taken to see that the officials representing the State Governments and the Union Government as well as the non-handloom interests do not outnumber the accredited representation given to the weavers, in their popular organisations and Cooperatives. It is most essential that the President and Vice-President of the Board should be non-officials, and preferably those chosen from among the representatives of the Weavers. It is equally important that the Board should be allowed to have the same powers, regarding the utilisation of its funds, as the other autonomous statutory bodies have been granted, so that the usual delays, obstructions and redundant

are to be enabled and inspired to fulfill the targets placed before them and achieve much more, and if the Cooperative sector is to come to embrace more than 50% of our Weavers, market much greater percentage of their cloth production, besides supplying to them, the needed factors of production; that is, yarn, dyes, implements, designs, then the State Governments have to take energetic steps to strengthen their administrative equipment. I trust that every State Government will soon organise a separate Department for Hand Industries, more especially for the Hand-loom and Khadi.

Urgent steps have also to be taken to organise Apex State Hand-loom Cooperative Societies and provide them with ample funds for working capital and also for organising large enough emporiums in all towns, having more than 5,000 population. High priority has to be given to the organisation of a chain of emporiums, with flexible and business-like procedures for exchange of cloths produced in different parts of India as between the emporiums of different States.

Training in Business Management

Training courses have to be organised to prepare the youths of Weavers as well as their experienced elders, not only in the technical operations of this industry but also in the salesmanship, organisation and keeping of accounts and auditing of accounts of the Weavers Cooperative Societies and Emporiums. Dynamic steps have to be taken both by the State Governments and Weavers Cooperatives to build up the required organisational setup to enable our industry to fulfill its role and justify national expectations of us.

It is high time that the Apex State Hand-Loom Weavers Co-operative Societies organise their All India Weavers Cooperative Council to play the same role among Cooperative Weavers as the All India Cooperative Union does among Cooperators in general and thus promote the spread and practice, of Cooperative ideals and organisation among our weavers. Such a Council can function as one of the auxiliary bodies of the All India Cooperative Union and undertake the responsibility of educating the non-official members and office bearers of the Weavers Cooperatives.

Weavers' Duty to contribute towards National Productive Targets

Our own Weavers- men and women, youths and especially our Cooperatives have to shoulder this great responsibility that our plan-minded nation has chosen to entrust us with. We have to work hard, with all the skill, inventive ability and technical dexterity that we can command and produce ever increasing quantities of clothes of ever new designs with increasing skill, trueness and artistic excellence and justify our Nation's hopes in us. For the first time for many centuries, India's national leadership has decided to stand by us, to trust us and rely upon us for an ever increasing quota of production of cloth both for home consumption and exports. The Planning Commission and Parliament are prepared to give us the fullest scope for development. It is now for us to achieve our national duties fulfill our own 'Kalakar' destiny and justify Bapu's confidence in us. We can rise to the occasion by displaying both our skill and cooperative spirit. We can raise ourselves in the estimation of the world and make the biggest contribution to the building

up of the "Kisan Mazdoor Kalakar Democracy" by learning to love work, to achieve our national duty and to display our self-governing capacities and consciousness of our 'Kalakar Dharma'.

SREE RAMAKRISHNA, VIJAYAWADA-2