

Sakina Ansari
National President, Handloom Council

14/01/2021

Smt. Nirmala Sitharamau,
Honourable Finance Minister,
Ministry of Finance,
Government of India

Subject: Seeking for sector-specific financial concessions, incentives and policies

Respected Madam,

I am honoured to introduce myself as the National President of the Handloom Council. The Handloom Council is a national platform which believes that in order to bring about self-reliance among artisans and better business management models among small businesses, affirmative and inclusive action is required. Our council represents women from various fields of the handloom and textile industry. I am glad to introduce my fellow council members:

1. Mrs. Arita Kashyap – Vice President, National Handloom Council
2. Ms. Irengbam Ronita - Vice President, Manipur Handloom Council, WICCI
3. Ms. Chanthoisana Aheibam - Member, Manipur Handloom Council, WICCI
4. Ms. Bina Sougajam - Member, Manipur Handloom Council, WICCI
5. Ms. Mumtaz Begum - Member, Manipur Handloom Council, WICCI
6. Ms. Savitha Suri- State President, Maharashtra Council, WICCI
7. Dr. Shaheen Desai - State Vice President, Maharashtra Council, WICCI
8. Ms. Suparna Tandon - Member, Maharashtra Council, WICCI
9. Ms. Varsha Panicker - Member, Maharashtra Council, WICCI
10. Ms. Rupa Naik- Member, Maharashtra Council, WICCI
11. Ms. Niveditha Koppiker - Member, Maharashtra Council, WICCI
12. Ms. Thasneem Masood, State President, Tamil Nadu Handloom Council, WICCI
13. Ms. Divya Nathaniel – State Vice President, Tamil Nadu Handloom Council, WICCI
14. Ms. Revathi Muthumanikam – Capacity Building, Tamil Nadu Handloom Council, WICCI
15. Ms. Rekha Shetty – Head of Communications, Tamil Nadu Handloom Council, WICCI
16. Ms. Swati NS – Digital Marketing Evangelist, Tamil Nadu Handloom Council, WICCI
17. Ms. Archana Priyadarshini – Design Innovation Expert, Tamil Nadu Handloom Council, WICCI
18. Ms. Chanchal Badsawal – State President, Karnataka Council, WICCI
19. Ms. Vrunda Sekhar - State Vice President, Karnataka Council, WICCI

The National Handloom Council would like to propose the following recommendations to the Ministry of Finance, with respect to the upcoming budget. These suggestions have come from members of the Handloom Council across the country who work with the weavers and run small and medium businesses related to handloom.:

1. Exempting handloom products from GST
2. Weaving to be covered under Minimum wages Act
 - a. Enabling contributory provident fund
 - b. Provident fund scheme
 - c. Special incentives for women in ancillary weaving production
 - d. Providing loans with low margin of interest and long-term repayment options.

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3. Looms upgradation (Jacquard) for better productivity with less time consumption. Special trainings to be done for this.
4. To have more programmes/ trainings on natural & organic dyes
5. Emphasis to be given on Documentation & Research related work on the rich handloom culture.
6. Exhaustive research and documentation of people working in the handloom value chain , adding to existing census data. Existing traditional practices and design languages also are in need of documentation.
7. imparting Digital literacy to the weaker links in the chain as one of the means to empower them access the online marketplace.
8. Financial inclusion schemes and initiatives that will help them take ownership of their work , not merely as a cog in the wheel but as entrepreneurs in their own right.
9. Imparting legal literacy that makes them aware of the laws that govern their work so they can work more effectively (esp. on design trademarks, copyright infringement and GI tag rules)
10. Imparting requisite Sales & Marketing skills so they are empowered and encouraged to access markets independently.
11. Facilitating a transparent and broad based platform that will connect producers at all levels with each other and their customers so strong networks can be built for better appreciation and value realisation of the products.
12. Weaving in Scholastic Curriculum
 - a. Introduce weaving as a chapter in the History text books
 - b. Specialised subject for graduate school
 - c. Permanent programme with NIFT and other design institutes
 - d. Skill and training for natural dyes for yarns
13. Private Public Partnership.
 - a. Private companies to be given incentives to invest and support more hand loom weavers so that it serves as an incentive for younger generation to continue this.
 - b. Support and handholding by the government.
14. Strengthening Weaver Service Centres
 - a. Sales to happen without the wholesalers - direct to retailers though the Centres
 - b. Service Centres to act as repository of designs and library to house the weave samples
 - c. Technology driven Service Centres
 - d. Intervention from students of design to strengthen the eco system

We look forward for your cooperation and attention to the requests that have been made, from our end

Thank you.

Regards,

Mrs. Sakina Ansari

National President, Handloom Council & Managing Partner, Maalgaadi.com