



EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL FOR HANDICRAFTS

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EPCH ORGANIZED AN AWARENESS SEMINAR ON SOCIAL COMPLIANCES IN THE HANDICRAFTS INDUSTRY HELD ON 6TH DECEMBER 2013 AT BANGALORE (KARNATAKA)

The Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) Southern Regional Office organized an Awareness Seminar on Social Compliances required for the handicrafts sector on 6th December 2013 at Bangalore.

Sri. H.R.Venkataramaiah, Assistant General Manager, TUV Rheinland, Bangalore, lead the discussions on the need to implement social responsibility in the handicrafts sector. He informed that until 1990, the trade was concerned only about the procurement of a good product, at good price within the right time. In recent times, the conception of good practice in trade has undergone a change and concern has increased over the inhuman conditions in which goods are produced in the developing countries. In 1992, a code of conduct was initiated and Levi was the first company to adopt this code of conduct. Third party auditing of social responsibility in developing countries began. Other companies like Walmart followed suit. Providing good conditions at work place leads to improved products. In 1999, Social Accountability 8000 was introduced and ethical sourcing was given priority over all other methods of business practice. A speaker elaborated on the following code of conduct and their required criteria for compliance:

1. Child Labour – Education is compulsory for children up to 14 years
2. Forced Labour is forbidden
3. Discrimination – No discrimination on the basis of caste, gender and religion
4. Working hours – Working hours should not exceed industry standards and over time should be paid on a voluntary basis
5. Compensation – Regular and over time hours should be paid
6. Health & Safety – A safe, clean and healthy working environment should be provided
7. Freedom of Association – Collective bargaining should be facilitated

After detailed deliberations, the following major questions were raised by the participants:-

- **How genuine is the certification?**
To improve the quality of your products should be your primary concern. Certification by a reputed company gives value to your products.
- **Is certification required for small units of less than 20 workers?**
Certification can be done for all units however small.
- **What are the charges for an audit?**
The charges depend on the parameters. For SA 8000, the charges are approximately 1.2 lakhs and Rs.20,000/- for half yearly audit.
- **Is there an audit of the production process?**

Yes. Suggestions on improvement of production and the closing of gaps in the manufacturing process can be suggested in an audit of production.

