

Textile industry joins hands with ILO

Move aimed at having better labour standards in cotton farms

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With cotton still figuring in the list of commodities that are produced using practices such as child labour, the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) has entered into an understanding with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to create awareness, share technical know-how and knowledge about better labour standards.

These standards, which are part of ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights to Work (FPRW), will be tried on a pilot basis in major cotton-growing districts of Madhya Pradesh for one year starting in 2024.

The principles aim to build an ecosystem to contribute towards decent work and better livelihood to all in need, particularly workers and small and marginal farmers engaged in cotton cultivation. They focus on promoting five crucial aspects within the cotton value chain — effective recognition of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, elimination of child labour, abolition of forced labour, elimination of all forms of discrimination, and promotion of a safe and healthy working environment among the cotton-growing community in India.

“By ensuring that our cotton is pro-

ICAR study says sugarcane ‘not’ a water-guzzler

Sugarcane is not a water-guzzling crop, according to a study prepared by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research, Lucknow, and initiated by the Indian Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers' Association and . The report titled “Improving Water Use Efficiency and Economizing Water Use in Sugarcane Cultivation in India” said sugarcane demonstrated exceptional water utilisation efficiency, producing approximately 7.14 kg of cane per cubic metre of water, which was more than the productivity of maize, rice, and wheat. The water required to produce 1 litre of ethanol from sugarcane is about 2 kilolitres (kl), compared to 3 kl for other crops. The crop required 1,313 cubic metres water per hectare per month, which was lesser than crops like maize and rice, that need over 1,600 cubic metres water per hectare per month.

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duced under fair and dignified conditions, we not only uplift our farmers but also enhance the reputation of Indian cotton on the global stage,” Chandrima Chatterjee, secretary general of CITI, said.

Around 6.5 million farmers grow cotton in India, which is the world's second-largest producer and consumer of the commodity.

The crop is grown in around 11 states across the country and the average land-holding is around 1.26 hectares. An over-

whelming 40 per cent of cotton farmers in India are women, which is amongst the highest in the world.

However, for several years, countries such as the US have blamed India for producing cotton and even textiles through unpopular practices such as child labour and forced labour.

This has an impact on the export potential of not only raw cotton but also textiles and garments produced in the country.