

handloom sector. The financial package for Handloom Sector worth Rs. 1945.77 crore for phase I has been sent to Ministry of Finance for their approval. This financial package to handloom sector shall provide (i) loans to handloom sector at lower rate of interest of 7% (ii) Waiver of overdue loans and interest of Weavers/PWCSS/Apex Societies as on 31.03.2007.

Bio-metric survey of handloom weavers

†2298. SHRI ALI ANWAR ANSARI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has conducted a bio-metric survey of handloom weavers through the office of Development Commissioner, Handloom and it also proposes to issue identity cards to the weavers after the survey;

(b) if so, by when these identity cards would be provided to the weavers; and

(c) by when a direct grant under handloom schemes through the accounts of CBS bank would be made to weavers after the bio-metric survey?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) No, Sir, However, the work of 3rd National Handloom Census and issue of photo identity cards to the eligible Handloom Weavers and allied workers is being carried out for the present. The contract has been awarded to the National Council of Allied Economic Research (NCAER) on 19th March, 2008. It will also issue Photo Identity Cards to all the eligible handloom weavers enumerated during the Census operations, once census work is completed. The work is in progress.

(c) Not applicable as no biometric survey is being conducted.

Converting handlooms into powerlooms in Tamil Nadu

2299. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of handlooms in the State of Tamil Nadu, district-wise;

(b) whether the Union Government proposes to take any steps to convert handlooms into powerlooms;

(c) if so, the details and time-frame fixed for the same; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) As per joint Census of Handlooms and Powerloom Report 1995-96, there are 4,13,174 handlooms in the States of Tamil Nadu. District-wise details of Handlooms are maintained by the State Government.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) Handlooms constitute a timeless facet of the rich cultural heritage of India. Tradition of weaving by hand is a part of the country's cultural ethos. The strength of Handloom lies in introducing innovative design, which cannot be replicated by the Powerloom Sector. As an economic activity, the handloom sector occupies a place second only to agriculture in providing livelihood to the people. Office of Development Commissioner for Handlooms in the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India has been liberally funding the State Governments for implementing various schemes for handloom weavers to address the felt needs of the handloom weavers to enhance their production, productivity and enhance the income and social economic status of the weavers by providing skill up-gradation, infrastructure and input supply support to them. During the 11th Five Year Plan, the Office of Development Commissioner for Handlooms has been implementing 5 Schemes viz. (1) Integrated Handlooms Development Schemes, (2) Handlooms Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme which consisted of Health Insurance Scheme and Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana, (3) Mill Gate Price Scheme, (4) Marketing and Export Promotion Scheme, and (5) Diversified Handloom Development Scheme.

The State Government is also attaching utmost priority in providing continuous employment and regular wages to the Handloom Weavers by extending financial assistance. The Government of Tamil Nadu is implementing the free distribution scheme as well as uniform cloth for students with huge financial outlay, thereby, the handloom weavers are getting continuous employment and reasonable wages throughout the year. Government of Tamil Nadu is providing free electricity of 100 units by monthly to all the handloom weavers. Further, the Government is also sanctioning Rs. 400 as Old Age Pension (OAP) to the weavers who attain 60 years of age and family pension of Rs. 550 p.m. to the legal heir of the weaver for 10 years in the event of death of weaver before attaining the age of 60 years. Under Comprehensive Welfare Scheme, which consist of Health Insurance and Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana of the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms) Medical and Insurance benefits are extended to all the weavers as well as ancillary workers both within and outside the cooperative fold.

In view of the several welfare measures taken by Central Government and State Government for the welfare of weavers, there is no urge from the handloom weavers of Tamil Nadu for conversion from handlooms to powerlooms.

No study to assess the impact of global slowdown on textile industry

2300. SHRI R.C. SINGH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government has not conducted any study to assess the impact of global slowdown on Indian textile and clothing industry;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether any data has been prepared and published by Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Kolkata; and