

- I. 2 Mega Handloom Clusters are being set up at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Sibsagar in Assam and 2 additional Mega Clusters at Murshidabad in West Bengal and Virudhnagar in Tamilnadu have been approved during 2009-10 under Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme. The each cluster with 25000 looms will be development at an financial outlay of Rs. 70.00 crores in five years.
- II. Interest subvention of 2% on pre-shipment credit for seven employment oriented export sectors including handlooms extended beyond the current deadline of September 2009 to March 31st 2010.
- III. Export Promotion Councils and the Federation of Indian Export Organizations (IFEEO) to be exempt from service tax on the membership and other fees collected by them till 31st March 2010.
- IV. In addition to the above, to protect the handloom sector and weavers engaged in it, the Government of India is implementing five handloom schemes for the development of handloom sector and for the welfare of handloom weavers namely: Integrated Handlooms Development Scheme, Handloom Weavers' Comprehensive Welfare Scheme, Marketing & Export Promotion Scheme, Diversified Handloom Development Scheme and Mill Gate Price Scheme.

(d) and (e) Yes Sir. To boost the exports and for the benefit of handloom sector following benefits in the foreign trade policy proposals for the year 2009-10 have been announced:

- I. The incentive available under Focus Product Scheme (FPS) has been raised from 1.25% to 2%.
- II. To simplify claims under FPS, requirement of 'Handloom Mark' for availing benefits under FPS has been removed.
- III. Machinery and equipment for effluent treatment plants in exempted from customs duty.

#### **Hardships of handloom weavers in Orissa**

270. SHRI KISHORE KUMAR MOHANTY : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

- (a) the total number of handloom weavers in Orissa;
- (b) whether it is a fact that they are distressed and facing hardships due to meager means dwindling handloom weaving work and high prices of cotton;
- (c) whether Government is taking any steps for their upliftment and provide them subsidized cotton; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI) :

(a) As per Joint Census of Handlooms & Powerlooms 1995-96, 2,46,782 persons are engaged in Weaving and Allied Activities in the State of Orissa.

(b) Government of Orissa have informed that they have no information that the weavers are in distress and facing hardship in handloom work due to high prices of cotton yarn. However, the condition of the weavers engaged in the handloom sector is dependent on steady supply of basic inputs like yarn, credit, looms, accessories etc. at reasonable rates especially as they face stiff competition from the organized mill and powerloom sectors and also in marketing of finished products.

(c) and (d) In order to ensure uninterrupted and timely supply of yarn at reasonable prices to the handloom weavers, the Government of India is implementing Mill Gate Price Scheme (MGPS) since 1992-93 throughout the country through the National Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC), a Government of India Undertaking. Further to alleviate the weavers from the problems and to improve their working conditions, the Government of India is implementing following schemes during the XI five year plan in addition to Mill Gate Price Scheme to enhance production, productivity and efficiency of the handloom sector and to enhance the income and socio-economic status of the weavers through skill upgradation, infrastructure input supply and marketing support to handloom weavers :-

- (i) Integrated Handlooms Development Scheme
- (ii) Marketing and Export Promotion Scheme
- (iii) Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme
- (iv) Diversified Handloom Development Scheme.

#### **Fall in production of Muga**

271. SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the harsh climate condition is affecting production of Muga, the organic golden silk of Assam;

(b) whether Government is aware that fall of production of Muga will affect direct and indirect employment of lakhs of the educated youths of Assam;

(c) whether Government has any proposal to enhance the production of Muga in the Assam and to provide direct Central assistance to the Muga farmers; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI) :

(a) Yes, Sir. Muga silk production in Assam has declined during the last two years mainly due to variations in Agro-climatic conditions and also due to acute shortage of basic seeds, because of prolonged summer resulting in temperature rise and low humidity.

(b) and (c) The fall in the production of Muga silk in Assam is indirectly affecting the employment opportunities in Assam. However, Government of India through the Central Silk Board has taken the following measures in Co-ordination with the State Government to improve Muga production: