

Concern over the problems being faced by workers in Handloom sector in the country

SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA (Odisha): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, about 3.8 million handlooms and 3.5 million handloom workers are apprehensive that they are going to lose their jobs due to raw material crisis, market crisis, lack of new designs, lack of technologies and modernisation.

The challenges before the handloom sector are many like competition with power loom sector, low investment, shortage of raw material, lack of infrastructure and non use of latest technology, women weavers, inadequate subsidy and lower budget allocation.

Handloom sector plays an important role in the Indian economy which provides the largest employment opportunities, next to the agriculture sector. India is the world's largest producer of handloom products with a total production of more than 5 billion meters in 2005. The major handloom weaving States are West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Manipur. In India 3.8 million handlooms are in operation providing livelihood to about 12.5 million people. They are all dependent on handloom weaving. They make up 23 per cent textile production in the country. Handloom sector provides great employment opportunities. It earns foreign exchange. It is responsible for one fourth of textiles production.

Their wages have not been increased for the last 15 years. Some sections of the handloom weavers are living hand-to-mouth, with no houses. The Minimum Wages Act is required to be implemented by the Government.

I urge upon the Government to accept the total restructuring proposal for the handloom sector.

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by my colleague.

Demand to take effective steps to ensure smooth running of local trains in mumbai

SHRI HUSAIN DALWAI (Maharashtra): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, local trains are the lifeline of the Mumbai City. A brief breakdown in the service disturbs the whole system and the commuters suffer a lot. Recently, there were many instances of breakdown not only on the Central Railway but also on the Western Railway. The increased traffic and also increased frequency of local trains have put a lot of burden on rolling stock as well as on infrastructure, thus requiring constant monitoring and repair.

Recently, there was instances of breakdown of pantograph resulting in traffic disruptions. This had put a lot of commuters in difficulty. They could not reach their destinations on time as they had to wait a lot for the resumption of local