

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2144
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.09.2020

EFFECTS OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

2144. SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI:
SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA VISWANATH:
SHRI KOTHA PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI BENNY BEHANAN:
SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH:
SHRI K. MURALEEDHARAN:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES वस्त्र मंत्री
be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that the textile industry in the country including small scale units and handloom weavers have been badly affected due to COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and many handloom units/ brands have been closed/are on verge of closure resulting in loss of jobs/livelihood of weavers and if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise including Telangana and Karnataka;

(b) the details of various factors hampering the restart of such closed units;

(c) whether textile workers/weavers are being forced to mortgage their homes and jewels to sustain themselves as their work has come to a standstill and if so, the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard, State/UT-wise including Kerala; and

(d) whether the Government proposes to waive off the pending electricity bill arrears of the weavers across the country during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be done?

उत्तर

ANSWER

वस्त्र मंत्री (श्रीमती स्मृति ज़ूबिन इरानी)
MINISTER OF TEXTILES
(SMT. SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) & (b): Textile sector is highly unorganized. The government has conducted a study viz. 'Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on Indian silk industry' to ascertain the crisis caused to the sector. The industry has faced various problems of production, cocoon and raw silk prices, transportation problem, non-availability of skilled workers, sale of raw silk and silk products, working capital and cash flow, reduced export / import orders , besides restrictions.

For example, in the last three months, order and supply showed a decline in jute production during the peak Covid-19 period. But it is substantially improving now.

The current pandemic has affected the existing modus operandi of various textile sectors by posing restriction of social gathering, migration of laborers as well as affecting all the stakeholders right from farmers to traders/exporters in the value chain . At the same time, it has opened new window of opportunities which were previously less explored.

The government has initiated special measures to help ameliorate the conditions in textile sector due to Covid pandemic and to boost production, marketing and job opportunities in the sector.

The Government of India has also announced a special economic package viz. AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan for boosting economy of the country and making India self-reliant. Relief and credit support measures have been announced for various sectors. The weavers & artisans can avail benefits of these relief and credit support measures to revive their businesses which have suffered due to lock down necessitated by Covid-19 pandemic.

Apart from the above special economic package, the Ministry of Textiles has taken following initiatives for the benefits of handloom weavers and artisans across the country: -

- i. To support the handloom and handicraft sectors and to enable wider market for handloom weavers/artisans/producers, steps have been taken to on-board weavers/artisans on Government e-Market place (GeM) to enable them to sell their products directly to various Government Departments and organizations.
- ii. To promote e-marketing of handloom products, a policy frame work was designed and under which any willing e-commerce platform with good track record can participate in online marketing of handloom products. Accordingly, 23 e-commerce entities have been engaged for on-line marketing of handloom products.
- iii. A social media campaign #Vocal4handmade was launched on the 6th National Handloom Day by the Government, in partnership with all stakeholders, to promote the handloom legacy of India and to ensure people's support for the weaving community. It has been reported that the social media campaign has resulted in renewed interest of the Indian public in handlooms and several e-commerce players have reported increase in sale of Indian handloom products.
- iv. The Ministry of Textiles has requested the Chief Ministers of all States and UTs to instruct their State Handloom Corporations/Co-operatives/Agencies to make purchases of the finished inventory available with the handloom weavers/artisans so as to put some ready cash in the hands of the weavers to enable them meet their household needs.
- v. In the face of the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic, it is not feasible to hold conventional marketing events such as exhibitions, melas, etc. To deal with this crisis, the Government endeavors to provide online marketing opportunities to our weavers and handloom producers.

Taking a step towards realizing “AatmaNirbhar Bharat”, the vision of our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Handloom Export Promotion Council has endeavored to virtually connect the Handloom Weavers and exporters from different corners of the country with the International Market.

With more than 200 participants from different regions of the country showcasing their products with unique designs and skills, THE INDIAN TEXTILE SOURCING FAIR was organized on 7, 10 and 11th August 2020. The show has attracted considerable attention of the International Buyers.

- vi. Design Resource Centres are being set up in Weavers Service Centres (WSCs) through NIFT with the objective to build and create design-oriented excellence in the Handloom Sector and to facilitate weavers, exporters, manufacturers and designers for creating new designs.
- vii. Ministry of Textiles is implementing various schemes through the Offices of Development Commissioner (Handlooms) for overall development of handlooms and welfare of handloom weavers across the country. The Scheme details are as under: -
 - National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP)
 - Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS)
 - Handloom Weavers' Comprehensive Welfare Scheme (HWCWS)
 - Yarn Supply Scheme (YSS)

Under the above schemes, financial assistance is provided for raw materials, purchase of looms and accessories, design innovation, product diversification, infrastructure development, skill upgradation, lighting units, marketing of handloom products and loan at concessional rates.

(c): There are no reports from any quarter that handloom weavers are forced to mortgage their homes and jewels to sustain themselves.

(d): There is no proposal in this Ministry to waive off the electricity bill arrears of the weavers across the country.
