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Title: Need to waive off the unpaid loans of handloom weavers.

SHRI ABU AYES MONDAL (KATWA): Sir, I would like to raise a serious problem of the handloom weavers in the country.

The handloom sector which is basically an unorganized in nature occupies second place to agriculture in providing livelihood to the people in our country.

As per the joint census of handlooms and power looms conducted in 1995-96, 65.50 lakh persons are engaged in the handloom weaving and allied activities in our country. Out of these, eight lakh weavers are in West Bengal, and they are now under stiff competition with power looms and textile mills. Furthermore, the competition has become too tough because of power loom products are being sold in the name of handloom products. It is also a matter of great concern that this sector is paying around 12 per cent interest on handloom loans, which is also a prime cause of their most distress condition.

Under these circumstances, more than a year ago West Bengal Government and other State Governments requested the Central Government to waive the handloom loans. A survey which has been made by the Central Government's Development Commissioner for Handloom has been submitted to the Finance Department for its approval, and it is still pending with the Finance Department.

I, therefore, urge upon the Finance Minister, Government of India to kindly take initiatives immediately so that the large amount of unpaid loan be waived as has already been done for the debt-hit farmers in the country. [\[H8\]](#)