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Title : Problems of handloom weavers in the country.

\* SHRI P. LINGAM (TENKASI): Madam Speaker, in order to protect the traditional rights of the handloom weavers, the Government of India has enacted a law listing out certain items of handloom varieties to be manufactured exclusively in the handloom sector based on which the handloom weavers were getting the benefits of it for more than 150 years. The handloom weavers of Bhavani have had the rights vested with them to manufacture carpets and hard variety bed spreads based on geographical regions to which such exclusive rights are conferred.

Bhavani carpets are well known world over and are exported widely. In Tamil Nadu, there are about 30,000 handloom carpet weavers in Bhavani Taluk of Erode District. In the neighbouring districts like Namakkal and Salem and areas adjoining them, these carpets are being manufactured as a traditional occupation by the handloom weavers there. All of them put together, there are about 50,000 handloom weavers in that area.

Unfortunately, for the past few years now, certain powerloom entrepreneurs have resorted to illegal manufacturing of carpets. In places like Sethunampalayam, Nallamooppapur, Anthiyur, Thavittuppalayam, Brahmadesam, Annamaduvu in Bhavani Taluk in Erode District of Tamil Nadu and also in Sholapur and Nagpur in Maharashtra, small size carpets that were exclusively set apart for the handloom sector are being manufactured by the powerloom units illegally and are sold in the market as if they are Bhavani carpets. These carpets manufactured in Sholapur are taken to Erode textile market affecting the interests of the local traditional handloom weavers of the region.

In the past one year, the impact of this unfair trade practices has seriously affected the traditional Bhavani handloom carpet weavers. They are left high and dry. They cannot carry on with their livelihood. They have to be hungry as they cannot earn and feed their family members too. There is also a threat to their

cooperative societies that are facing closure because of fall in trade activities. Powerloom carpets are sold at a cheaper rate than the handloom-woven carpets. This has greatly affected the handloom sector and the stock manufactured by them remains unlifted and unsold.

Since the Government of India's rule has been violated by the illegal powerloom units, Centre must intervene to protect the traditional rights of the handloom weavers in Bhavani area. I urge upon the Union Government to act fast to save the poor handloom weavers there.