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Title: Need to take steps for keeping our folk traditions and arts alive.

SHRIMATI KIRRON KHER (CHANDIGARH): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wanted to ask a question in the Question Hour since the Minister was here related to the artistes and their condition.

You know that I come from the cine world. Not only cine artistes but artistes across India whether in folk or tribal art forms, which I think make the very basis of the art and culture of our country, are going through a really bad time. Everybody knows how Ustad Bismillah Khan sahab, after receiving the highest award, died in abject penury. I feel that we must do something to make their lives a little easier and better.

As it is, children of the people who are traditionally taking part in either handlooms or handicrafts do not carry forward their tradition. Because they do not get enough money, they are becoming peons or looking for railway jobs, etc., and our arts are dying out. This is very important for our country. When we talk about culture, when we talk about tourism, I feel all this goes towards making our culture richer. I think we need to keep these arts alive, and for that we need the Government to help them in some way. If you give Rs.4000 a month, nobody can live on it. I think we need to look after them because they are very precious.

Akbar had nine gems in his court. Like that India has these gems and they are keeping our folk traditions alive, keeping our tribal arts alive, keeping our modern art alive. So, I feel we need to look after our artistes and make sure that we help them so that they live a life of grace and dignity right to the end. And I would urge the Government to do something for that. Thank you.