

underground static tanks for fire fighting purposes and procurement of more sophisticated equipment from advanced countries. If the hon. Member wants, I can read out what these items are.

SHRI SOMNATH RATH : Sir, we have passed a Bill in this House, it is not as yet an Act. But, I want to know from the hon. Minister, what steps have been taken to implement the urgent need and intention of the Bill? The hon. Minister has said that some funds have been allotted and some more funds are required.

So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, since this is a very important and urgent matter, what steps have already been taken by the Government to combat fire fighting in Delhi?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI : As I had already replied to the previous question, the Rules have already been framed. I think the rules will come into effect in another one week's time. Therefore, once the rules come into effect, we shall have to issue all the details thereof.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Q. No. 148 and Q. No. 149, we will take up together.

Assistance to Handloom Weavers

*148. **SHRI KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN :** Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that the handloom weavers in States like Tamil Nadu are deprived of their daily work owing to heavy glut of their production ; and

(b) whether Union Government are considering to help them by special rebates allowed in handloom producing regions affected by drought ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) and (b). A Statement is given below.

Statement

(a) No, Sir, However, some representations have been received from Tamil Nadu regarding accumulation of stocks.

(b) A Special Rebate of 20% to be shared equally between the Central and State Government is offered to all States, including drought affected areas, on retail sales of handloom fabrics marketed by the Handloom Cooperative Societies and Handloom Development Corporations. In addition, the special rebate is also available for sales effected in National level exhibitions, approved and organised by the Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms.

Evaluation of Janata Cloth Scheme

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*149. **SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI :**

SHRI R. M. BHOYE :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have made any assessment regarding the performance of the Janata Cloth Scheme ;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof ; and

(c) if not, whether Government propose to undertake a comprehensive review of the Scheme with a view to provide employment to handloom weavers and cheaper cloth to the weaker sections of the society ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) to (c). A Statement is given below.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir. A review was conducted in 1983-84 by National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) as part of the study of the working of the controlled cloth scheme.

(b) Some of the major findings of the study in relation to the janata cloth scheme were that at all-India level, weaker sections formed 55.4% of the households buying janata cloth. In terms of volume of janata cloth purchased, their share was marginally lower at 52.7%. A typical janata cloth buying household purchased 13.55 metres of janata cloth in a year and 27% of the total households in the 9 surveyed States purchased janata cloth.

(c) However, the Survey conducted by National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) did not cover all aspects of the scheme. The break up into rural and urban was also not available. Hence, it was decided to undertake a comprehensive survey of the janata cloth scheme, which has been entrusted to the Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association (ATIRA).

SHRI KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answer, which the Minister has given is not satisfactory. The handloom industry is the oldest one next to agriculture in our country; even from the early fifties, rebate and reservation are the two helping lines given to that industry as a walking stick to walk in competition with the running textiles industry. I had raised this question after my tour to my constituency. The glut actually in the primary societies, in small villages, is so much that according to the latest figures, i.e. as on 31.1.87, the size of accumulation in the primaries as well as in the cooptex is nearly 112 crores.

Therefore, I want a categorical reply from the hon. Minister, as to whether he will allow 60 days' rebate instead of 30 days' rebate. The 60 days' rebate was originally allowed on 50-50 basis so that the accumulated stocks will get cleared and poor handloom workers will not be deprived of the work?

The second part of my supplementary is, whether the reservation notification will be adhered to, in accordance the 11.3.86 notification, instead of 5.8.86 notification, so that the reservation benefits which are

actually aimed at the handloom weavers can actually go to them?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : They had reduced the allocations from Rs. 192 crores to Rs. 93 crores in textiles.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, the Government is committed to the protection of handloom sector for which a number of schemes, apart from rebate, have been in force for quite some time. And in this Plan, also, we are pushing those schemes forward as much as is possible. The stock position as at present, I would like to clarify, i.e. in regard to accumulation of stocks. According to the State Government's figures, as on 31.1.87, Tamil Nadu, holds a stock of 38.61 crores with primary societies and 78.63 crores with cooptex. In the past also, they have been having the stocks. One of the reasons why the stocks accumulate is that, under the rebate scheme, there are almost no sales except during the rebate days. The societies hold stocks for months together—5 months, 6 months, 7 months—and wait for the rebate period to come, and then they sell it. So, one reason why stocks accumulate is the way the rebate scheme is being operated. This scheme was introduced long time back and it was only in certain years the period was raised from 30 days to 60 days. But the number of rebate days during National EXPOs which entitled the societies to those rebates were abolished. Today, we have two systems, viz. sales by these cooperative societies, and by the National Expos which are four in number. They can be more, also. They are held all over the country; they are there for 30 days, or even more days. Thirty plus thirty make sixty. At one time, Expos rebates were abolished; and from 30 days the rebate period was increased to 60 days which, we think, is not the proper way, because Expos are a very important element in popularizing handlooms. They attract lakhs of people to see and buy those things. Products from one State go to another region, and people get used to seeing those things and develop preference

for them. So, for the promotion of handicrafts and handlooms as a whole, these National Expos play a very important role. Taking that into account, the old scheme of rebate for 30 days, plus the National Expos has been restored which, I think, is in the overall interests of handloom development all over the country.

SHRI KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN : I am informed that as on 30.9.1986 when the representation was made to the Central Government, the accumulation was 143.3 crores. But today, i.e. as on 31.1.1987—your figures are correct, Sir—the figures are 38.61 crores and 78.63 crores. It means the total is 117.34 crores. Therefore, the statement that the sales are made only when the rebate is there, is wrong. On 30.9.1986 when the State Government represented to you, the accumulation was 143.3 crores. Today, it is 117.34 crores. Therefore, there is movement of the goods, but the 60 days' rebate will help the poor workers. Therefore, I differ from the Minister. Even at Coimbatore, he had stated that only during rebate periods, these handloom sales are there. Therefore, I differ on this point. I want to know from the Minister: when the new textile policy was announced on the floor of the House, it was said that a million handloom workers would be given more employment opportunities, because of the new textile policy. Even under that policy, we are giving Rs. 53 crores subsidy on these, i.e. for controlled cloth and Janata cloth, which were on the textile mills side, and then have been transferred to handlooms. But, comparatively speaking, this Rs. 53 crores is a very meagre amount. That subsidy is not enough. Therefore, I want to know categorically from the Minister as to what is the additional number of employment opportunities created as a result of the textile policy. If employment opportunities are not created, will the Minister increase that allotment of Rs. 53 crores, based on 1985-86, further, for the controlled and Janata cloth allotted to the handloom sector?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : As I said, rebate is only one of the means for the promotion of handlooms. There is difference of opinion between various States as to the continuance of the rebate in its present form. The whole thing is being looked into. We have entrusted the examination of the whole question of assistance to handlooms, including rebate, to certain bodies. There is a sub-committee of the Handlooms and Handicrafts Board which is looking into it. We have entrusted the work to another organization, which will also look into this. I hope that when their reports come, we will be able to take a view in the matter. The Institute of Rural Management, Anand has also been entrusted with this task. We want a very fair and impartial enquiry into the whole gamut of handlooms development, and into the various schemes of the Government; and we would act according to whatever advice we get.

Apart from that, as regards reservation order, about which the hon. Member had asked previously, we have issued an order to reserve certain varieties for the handloom sector. Actually, hundreds of, or more than a thousand, writ petitions have been filed all over the country—a few hundreds in Karnataka, and a few hundreds in Tamil Nadu—and we have requested the Supreme Court to collect all those writ petitions at the Supreme Court, and have them transferred to the Supreme Court, so that a very early decision could be taken. Our petition to them has been accepted, and we want that the reservation order that we have issued, or will issue in future, is strictly enforced, and that the writ petitions do not come in the way of giving relief to the handloom sector, to which the Government is committed.

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI : This Janata Cloth Scheme was introduced in the year 1976. But in reply to my question, the hon. Minister has stated that a review was conducted in the year 1983 and also now again he has entrusted the Ahmedabad Textile Industry for a com-

prehensive survey in the year 1987. But there is no mention about the time limit when the survey report will be submitted to the Union Government. However, when this Janata Cloth Scheme was introduced, the objective was to provide employment to the handloom weavers and the cheap cloth to the weaker sections. I donot know about it ; I will be glad if the hon. Minister will tell us whether we have been able to achieve the objective as yet. In this connection, is it a fact that this benefit under this Janata Cloth Scheme, is not reaching the weaker section and some States are selling this cloth in the open market against the government decision that it should be sold in their designated shops in the respective States and getting benefit of the difference in prices and at the same time they are also getting the benefit of the subsidy from the Union Government, which is detriment to the interest of the weaker section? Has the government received any complaint about it or has it been brought to the notice of the government? Has the government taken any steps to see that this benefit goes to the weaker sections? Will the hon. Minister consider to constitute a supervisory agency to supervise all these things so that the benefits reach the weaker sections.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : There are two schemes for the benefit of the masses for the supply of cloth at subsidised rates. One is the controlled cloth scheme which is operated by, the NTC mill and another is the Janata Cloth Scheme which is operated in the handloom sector. Our Policy is that more and more should be transferred to the handloom under the Janata Cloth Scheme so that handloom gets sufficient work. The production of Janata Cloth in the handloom sector increased from about 80 million sq. metres in 1976-78 to 357 million sq. metres in 1984-85. The rate of subsidy has increased in stages from Re. 1 sq. per metre to Rs. 2 per sq. metre, and the new textile policy enunciated recently in June 1985 stipulates that the opportunity to manufacture controlled cloth will be transferred gradually to the

handloom sector. This is specifically mentioned and we are proceeding on those lines. Now, as regards distribution, there are some problems in this because distribution arrangements have of necessity to be with the State Governments. I have been in touch with them and we are requesting them to open at least one sale outlet at very gram panchayat ; we are requesting them to strengthen their distribution structure ; we are asking them to use public distribution system for this distribution of this cloth, and our dialogues with the States continue ; and whatever distribution arrangements have been found lacking, we will see that in consultation with the States, they are improved.

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI : Will the Minister be kind enough to tell us whether there was any target for the year 1986-87 for the different States for the production of this Janata Cloth and the total amount of subsidy provided to various States, and which State is most benefited for receiving subsidy and not effecting the spirit of the policy?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : I have here a list of statements showing State-wise the amount of subsidy released during 1979-80 and 1985-86. If you like I can place it on the Table of the House.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri R.M. Bhoje. He is not there. Yes, Prof. Ranga.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Let them not change the name of Janata cloth.

PROF. N.G. RAGA : This problem of accumulation of stocks of handloom cloth is not confined to Tamil Nadu alone. You find it in Bihar, in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and even in Maharashtra. And I do not know whether my hon. friend has got the facts in regard to that. I would like him to collect them. In view of the fact that it is already more than three years since the new textile policy has been announced, and then introduced, is it not high time that

Government should not depend upon the *ad hoc* inquiries, studies that are being made in Baroda and some other places by various semi-official study institutes, that the Government should themselves organise a nation-wide review of the working of this policy so far as the handloom weavers are concerned so that with regard to the employment that they should have, or additional employment—that they are supposed to be having—and higher incomes also that they are expected to get and see that this policy, if necessary, is revised, and secondly, that necessary legislation is undertaken at the Centre to get over that particular difficulty, of plethora of these injunctions, petitions that are being raised against reservations in different States right up to the Supreme Court ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : I fully agree with our hon. respected Shri Rangaji about the importance of handlooms. They are important—very much—in Andhra Pradesh, along with the other States and in Maharashtra—in Maharashtra it is not that much,—only a handlooms they have—but it does due play a very important part in the rural economy of our country. There is no doubt about this. And that is why the Government has formulated a large number of schemes for the development of handloom weavers.

As regards this enquiry, firstly I said that a Committee of the All India Handloom Board and Handicrafts Board has been formed. The previous committee consisted of representatives from the weaver organisations and others. So this is a an Inquiry Committee formed by this Board itself which will review the various schemes that the Central Government has initiated, and instead of conducting an inquiry we thought that a committee of this nature should be entrusted with this.

The Institute of Rural Management, Anand, is a very prestigious institution. It specialises in the various aspects of rural development and we have entrusted them to look into the whole problem in

various aspects, have some surveys made out and see that these various schemes are helped to the extent that is possible. I will just give some examples of the types of schemes that we have for the development of the handloom, which I have said ; One is the rebate, second is the assistance for strengthening the primary co-operative societies, third is the strengthening of the apex societies, fourth is modernisation by giving at subsidised rates new looms and important varieties of equipment that they use, fifth is the Janata subsidy which is quite substantial all over, and sixth is provision of worksheds-cum-houses which means improvement in housing and the weavers will stay in the new houses, and in some places nice colonies have come up.

They are all centrally sponsored schemes and the Government would see that these are implemented properly in consultation with the State Governments.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : I fully appreciate and endorse the answer given by the Minister by saying that these six items of help will be given to the handloom weavers. The problem is the marketing and the finance. Those two things are important. May I know whether he would be able to keep up all that he has said in the light of the drastic slashing of the textile allocation ? If so, when will the axe fall on the notorious mill owners who are cornering the financial institutions help, Government allocations in the name of liberalisation of import of the parts in textiles or it will fall on the handloom in the shape of the reduced allocation of subsidy and marketing of the handlooms ? Can he assure us of that ?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Slashing is from Rs. 190 crores to Rs. 99 crores.

SHRI DHAGWAT JHA AZAD : I did not mention that figure. Thank you.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : I can assure the hon. Member and the House through you that this scheme as

well as the other scheme of handicrafts, which again attracts poorer people and artisans in the country and are very important schemes for weavers as well as handicrafts will receive top priority. And we will see that no cuts affect the continuance of these schemes. We do hope with the support and sympathy of the House we might, in the supplementary Grants, get even more money.

[Translation]

SHRI ABDUL HANNAN ANSARI : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, two questions have been combined here and it has created difficulties, because they are connected with two different subjects.

I want to ask the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that after the announcement of the new Textile Policy, the rich businessmen and capitalists who own textile mills have indiscreetly raised the price of cotton from 10 per cent to 35 per cent and the burden of which has to be shouldered by the weavers who are groaning about the consequent glut in their stocks ?

Is it also true that cotton is being exported abroad and because of the resultant shortage, the price of cotton has increased ?

Is it also a fact that the Government agency which provides cotton to the weavers does not keep that variety of cotton which is required by the ordinary weaver ? If so, whether the Government is proposing to provide some relief to the poor people by reducing the artificial and non-practical hike in the price of cotton ? What do you propose to do in this regard ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : The handloom industry gets its raw material from several sources. There are cooperative societies which manufacture cotton yarn in the mills in the cooperative sector. We have also set up a corporation which buys cotton from various places to give it to the weavers. We have not yet received any complaints regarding such

shortages or such exorbitant rise in prices of cotton. Of course, the prices have increased, but we do not think that they are too much. The prices are being watched carefully. The cooperative societies and the corporation, the headquarter of which is at Lucknow, would make an effort together to provide cotton to meet any shortage.

So far as the question of export of cotton is concerned, the Government has framed a policy according to which 6 lakh bales of cotton will be exported every year during the next three years. Along with it, not only cotton, but thread is also being exported, because the international situation seems favourable for it. We are getting a good price in the international market and the internal situation is also not being particularly affected much by it. However, we are aware of the situation and we would continue to watch the situation and would see to it that such conditions are not created which may affect the handloom or other sectors adversely.

Proposal for Export of Groundnuts

*153. **SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK :** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of Government to export groundnuts ;

(b) if so, the broad outlines of the proposal ;

(c) the names of countries to which groundnuts are to be exported ; and

(d) the terms of the export and the foreign exchange likely to be earned as a result thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BRAHMA DUTT) : (a) to (d). A Statement is given below.