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Title: Problems being faced by the handloom weavers due to withdrawal of interest subsidy scheme.

SHRI ABU AYES MONDAL (KATWA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to raise a matter of most public importance in the House today.

The handloom weavers of Kalna-Katwa-Purbasthali and some other parts of West Bengal are in pitiable condition.

I would also like to mention that our handloom weavers all over the country are struggling hard for their survival. They are now in stiff competition with power loom and textile mills.

Under these circumstances, the Government of India has stopped the interest subsidy scheme from the month of April 2005. As a result, the Weavers' Cooperative Societies have been facing much trouble especially to repay the bank loan with interest. On the other hand, the production costs of the clothes of handlooms have enhanced in comparison to that of the power loom made production.

It is rather hopeful that the Government of India has ultimately started 10 per cent rebate scheme from the month of April 2006. The Government has also launched the 'Handloom Mark' preventing from selling of the power loom made goods in the name of the handloom made goods. The Government has also been implementing 'Cluster Development Programmes' from 2005-06, under which 120 clusters have been selected.

Sir, keeping in mind the miserable condition of the weavers, the Textile Ministry, Government of India, should include more and more clusters under this cluster approach programme and also to re-introduce the interest subsidy scheme for their survival and upliftment.