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Title: Need to take suitable measures to facilitate growth of powerloom and handloom industry in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR (NAGPUR): Nagpur city was once known as the Manchester of India. A large number of small weavers, private sector companies had set up large textile plants such as Empress Mill and Model Mill about 120 years back and also number of small units along Nagpur in Hinganghat, Amravati, Akola, Achalpur and Pulgaon.

Unfortunately, the current situation is very dismal as all the textile mills have either closed down or been declared sick. There are now about 50000 weavers left in Nagpur and over one lakh in other parts of Vidarbha who are engaged in this profession. The weavers and weaving industry is facing stiff challenges and are struggling to survive and make their ends meet, thus forcing many weavers to search for other avenues of earning their livelihood or to face unemployment.

Urgent measures need to be initiated by the Government to help the weavers survive and compete in the market. The weavers have inter-alia been urging upon the Government to facilitate the growth of their industry by providing incentives and benefits such as supply of electricity at subsidized rates; financial assistance from State and Central Government for the upgradation of their machinery; loan at concessional rates; land under group work-shed scheme at the prescribed Government rates; setting up of cotton-thread sales counters at reasonable rates; purchase of their products directly by the State Government; setting up of testing laboratories, design centres and training centres for workers; special financial assistance to weavers belonging to backward and minority communities; houses for workers and introduction of insurance scheme for workers.

In view of the above, I would urge upon the Government to depute a delegation to Nagpur to assess the magnitude of problems being faced by the handloom and power loom weavers and recommend suitable measures to be undertaken with a view to not just save but to facilitate growth of this cottage industry which has a tremendous potential of generating employment for the poorest section of the society.