

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the Message of Selvi J Jayalithaa,
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, read out on the
First National Handloom Day function held at Chennai on
7.8.2015

It is most appropriate that the first National Handloom Day function is being held in Chennai as Tamil Nadu holds pride of place in the textile sector and in particular in Handlooms. 3.19 lakh persons are engaged in handloom weaving in Tamil Nadu and several lakhs more are employed in the mill and power loom sectors of the Textile Industry. Handloom products from Tamil Nadu have won universal renown. Kanchipuram and Arani silk saris are household names the world over. "Madras checks" is a globally well recognized cotton textile design motif.

The National Handloom Day, August 7th, commemorates the day on which the Swadeshi Movement was launched in 1905. Tamil Nadu played a very important role in the Swadeshi Movement.

The Government of Tamil Nadu implements a number of special and innovative schemes for the benefit of Handloom weavers. There is a scheme for supply of free sarees and dhoties to 1.64 crore families in the State. Further, 54 lakh school children in Government and Government aided schools are supplied four sets of uniform annually free of cost. These schemes provide Handloom weavers with continuous employment throughout the year and the wages paid to the weavers under the scheme have been enhanced from 2012-13 onwards.

I have pioneered the construction of Solar Green Houses in Tamil Nadu. A specially designed Solar Green House with a work shed, having a total plinth area of 360 sq ft is being constructed for 10,000 weaver families in the State at a cost of Rs.260 crores.

The Government of Tamil Nadu provides free electricity to 1.34 lakh weaver households. I have enhanced the Old Age Pension to weavers and family pension to Rs.1000 per month. The State's share under the Savings and Security Scheme for weavers has also been stepped up.

Tamil Nadu has also launched several innovative initiatives to ensure that the interest of the younger generations in the traditional craft of handloom weaving is maintained. These include promoting the use of pedal looms, electronic jacquards, pirn winding machines, motorized warping machines and jacquard lifting motors. These innovations reduce the drudgery of the weaver and increase productivity.

Tamil Nadu has been at the forefront in implementing all the Central schemes intended for the development of the handloom sector and the welfare of the weavers like the Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Yojana, Weavers' Credit Card Scheme and Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana.

The co-operative movement has played a significant role in the growth of the handloom sector in Tamil Nadu. Handloom weavers are organized into 1163 Handloom Weavers Co-operative Societies. Co-optex, which is completing 80 years of its existence, is the largest apex co-operative institution in India for marketing products of handloom weavers through a chain of over 200 showrooms. Co-optex is one of the best recognized brands from Tamil Nadu. Co-optex supports weavers and primary handloom co-operative societies through a number of innovations including setting up a Design Studio, Textile Testing Laboratories, a Textile Library and has now launched an e-shopping portal.

I thank the Prime Minister for having chosen Chennai as the venue for the First National Handloom Day, as there could not have been a more appropriate venue.

On this occasion, I would like to reaffirm my Government's commitment to the preservation and development of the handloom sector and the welfare of weavers. Textiles, particularly Handlooms, are part of the rich heritage of Tamil Nadu and we will continue to pay special attention to preserve this heritage. We shall continue to strive for the welfare of weavers, who represent a very significant proportion of the State's population. My Government is determined to maintain Tamil Nadu's leading position in the textile industry as a whole and in the handloom sector in particular.

* * * * *

Issued by: Director of Information and Public Relations, Chennai – 9

Date: 7.8.2015