

"Banaras Bunkar Samiti's demand for Patent of Banarasi Saree"

Banaras Bunkar Samiti jointly with HWA staged a sit-in at district headquarter on March 27, 2006 demanding registration of Banarasi Saree under Geographical Indication

Addressing the gathering, the BBS president Mr Deepachand said that there was a slump in business and this could make the weavers commit suicide. Though the central government had provided compensation to the kin of the farmers who committed suicide in Andhra Pradesh, no such gesture was shown in the case of weavers' suicide in Varanasi. He further said that patenting of Banarasi Saree is the only way to mitigate the sufferings of weavers who were committing suicide due to import of Chinese silk.

This is worth mentioning here that few months back on 25th November; the weavers' association burnt the Chinese clothes in order to protest and demanded for posing anti dumping duty on the Chinese cloths. This is the first time in Varanasi when weavers burnt Chinese cloths to highlight widespread acute crisis among the weavers of Banarasi Sari.

This time the association organized a rally followed by sit-in and public meeting at Collectorate on March 27 demanding immediate patenting of the Banarasi Saree. Some 400 weavers (men and women) participated and demonstrated their solidarity and unity. The mob started gathering at 10:30 AM and up to 11:30 AM, the '*pandal*' became over crowded by the association members. The rally set in motion at 12.00 noon from Collectorate, passed through circuit house, vikas bhawan, SBI main Office, JP Mehta Inter College, Commissioner's bungalow and took shape of a public meeting in Collectorate at 1.30 after noon.

Dr Rajnikant, director, HWA, said that the traditional art of making Banarasi Saree was on the verge of extinction, as neither the Union, nor the State Government was paying proper attention towards the artisans. He said the government should immediately get Banarasi Saree patented to address the problems of the weavers.

Sheela Devi said more than 40% of men had migrated from their villages to earn a living. Taffail kadri, Lalchand, Munnilal, Reeta Devi, Malti Devi, Nirmala Devi, Rampatti Devi, Jiyut Prasad, Shiv Murat and others also shared their views highlighting the issues and problems of weavers.

The program was conducted by Salilesh Shukla, Coordinator, Tana-Bana project. During his address he said that utter crisis in Handloom sector has raised a big question on the livelihood of the weavers. They are forced to work as wage labor in hot sun and it has been observed that most of the family income is expending on health. Patenting of Banarasi Saree is the only means to save the industry from outer (Chinese) and inner (big traders) threats. The vote of thanks was proposed by Shiv Narayan.

Media Coverage

<u>Hindustan Times</u>	<u>Time to patent Banarasi Saree</u>
<u>The Times of India</u>	<u>Patenting of Banarasi sarees urged</u>
<u>The Pioneer</u>	<u>Weavers demand patent of Banarasi sarees</u>
<u>Swatantra Bharat</u>	<u>Banarasi saree ko tatkal patent kiya jaye</u>
<u>Amar Ujala</u>	<u>Sanad ke liye Banarasi Saree ka patent karaye</u>
<u>Dainik jagran</u>	<u>Stop china cloths</u>
<u>Aaj</u>	<u>Banarasi saree patent kiye jane ki maand ko lekat HWA ka dharana</u>
<u>Hindustan</u>	<u>Banarasi saree karobar ko bachane ke liye jila mukhyalaya par dharana</u>