

HANDLOOM AND POWERLOOM INDUSTRY

Solapur is the home of Handloom and Powerloom weaving industry which provides employment to a large number of workers. There are around 6000 powerloom industries operational in the district. Out of these 300 establishments are registered under Mumbai Shops and Societies Act 1948 and the other 3000 are registered under Factories Act 1948. There are about 25000 Powerloom and about 30000 workers are employed. On the Jackard powerloom the main production is Chadders, Towels and Napkins. These products are exported to various countries in the world.

For the benefits of these workers the following worker unions have been formed and the employed workers are connected to one or the other unions.

1. Lal-Bawta Shramik Workers Union (CITU)
2. Powerloom Workers Union (AITUC)
3. National Powerloom Workers Association (INTUC)
4. Beedi and Powerloom Kamgar Sena (Shivsena)

A separate association for the powerloom industry owners 'Solapur District Powerloom Holders Association' is functional to look after the welfare of the powerloom industry.

Most of the powerloom industries are operational in day shift only from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. with two hours break for lunch and recess. Some of the industries are operational in two shifts from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00.p.m. and from 4.p.m. till 12.00 midnight.

The employees working on the handloom/powerloom machines mainly manufacture Jackard Chadders, Towels and Napkins. These workers receive their payments on the 'Piece Rate' basis, based on category of the product. As the 'Piece Rates' of various products are different there is variation in workers earnings. As per the traditional piece rate system the worker gets Rupees 70 to 90 per day on an average.

BEEDI INDUSTRY

Beedi industry is the second important industry in Solapur. There are 115 units of 29 various beedi factories. In these 115 units there are about 70000 lady workers. and 1725 factory workers in the district. Four beedi unions are working for the welfare of these workers. These are,

1. National Beedi Majdoor Sangh (INTUC)
2. Lal-Bawta Beedi Workers Union (CITU)
3. Solapur Beedi Workers Union (AITUC)
4. Beedi and Powerloom Kamgaar Sena (Shivsena)

Out of these unions National Beedi Majdoor Sangh (INTUC) union, is recognised under 'Maharashtra Kamgaar Sanghtana Recognition and Prohibition of Illegal Workers Tradition act 1971' and is functional in six Beedi factories.

AMENDED MINIMUM WAGES

The Govt. of Maharashtra has recommended the minimum wages for the beedi workers effective from 18.03.2000. The present minimum wages effective from 01.07.2000 to 31.12.2000 is Rs.39/- per 1000 beedis and Rs.11/- as special allowance. But as per the agreement made between the beedi producers and workers unions, the minimum wages are Rs.33/- per 1000 beedis and Rs.6.78/- as special allowance for the above period. As per this agreement the payment given to workers is still below the minimum wage prescribed by the Govt. and is illegal. Hence the Asst. Commissioner of Labour office has initiated 218 Court cases against the beedi producers. A total of Rs.5,12,72,588/- amount is involved in these court cases.
