

Weavers to Modi: Don't just do cosmetic surgery

[Rajeev Dikshit](#), TNN | Nov 7, 2014, 11.20AM IST

VARANASI: While Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to make some big announcements for weavers and inaugurate a trade facilitation centre, the local artisans are of the view that the NDA government is just replicating the policies of the UPA government as far as weaving community is concerned and has failed to diagnose the real problem. Weavers say instead of cluster and trade facilitation centre, they want real solution to problems like crisis of yarn, dyeing and finishing unit and power to become leaders once again as Surat counterparts.

Banarasi saree industry that started dreaming for its revival and competing Surat on the arrival of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to represent Varanasi, is now losing hope as weavers consider that instead of diagnosing the real problems, Modi is seemingly interested in cosmetic surgery of the industry like UPA government.

"It is difficult for us to understand that what purpose will be solved by the trade facilitation centre, craft museum and powerloom service centre at Bada Lalpur, which has no links with any weaver locality," Mahfooz Alam of Bunkar Bachao Andolan said, mentioning how previously launched projects like housing-cum-workshop project at Karsada on Varanasi-Mirzapur border proved a flop show.

President award winner in 2001 for his Banarasi sari design Noman Abdin said: "Most of the artisans, who are master in weaving real Banarasi sari, have become old. How an art can be saved without encouraging new generations to learn it? The government should think in the direction of initiating measures for encouraging students to learn the art of Banarasi weaving since early age and the expertise of veteran weavers should also be utilized in its teaching."

After facing the worst phase in '90s, Banarasi sari industry took a time of over a decade to revive as Banarasi textile industry when maxim weavers and weaving houses switched over to power looms. In the same period, high number of weavers migrated to Surat, Bangluru and other centres. After the revival of industry, the demand of yarn other than silk also increased.

Haji Abdul Rahim said: "When it was decided that Modi would represent Varanasi, we had started hoping that yarn producers, finishing and dyeing units would come to this city to enable the industry for competing with Surat. But, instead of bringing such units, huge investments are being made on developing clusters and trade facilitation centres."

People from this industry are not looking interested in measures like trade facilitation as it

will encourage red tapeism and corrupt practices while buyers prefer competitive market. Nizamuddin revealed, "We had huge orders from the international markets like gulf and Europe. In view of less availability of power, the manufacturers increased the numbers of powerlooms two to three times. But, when power scene worsened, more manufacturers failed to supply orders within time and became defaulter. Today we have lost export almost completely as international buyers are not ready to see even our samples."

The industry is seeking Modi's help in finding out solution for their problems. Noman and Rahim said: "Weaving industry in other cities like Surat are developing by copying our designs. We are still capable in emerging as leaders if our basic requirements are fulfilled."

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