

**Shri Kanungo:** We have no information about what the hon. Member says.

**Mat Industry in West Bengal**

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\*1521. { **Shri Subodh Hansda:**  
**Shri S. C. Samanta:**

Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Mat Industry in West Bengal is in a dying condition; and

(b) if so, what are the main causes?

**The Minister of Industry (Shri Manubhai Shah):** (a) No, Sir.

(b) The question does not arise.

**Shri Subodh Hansda:** If the industry is not in a dying condition, may I know what steps Government propose to take to improve the mat industry in West Bengal?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** That is precisely the question put by the hon. Member and we have gone into this matter. This is really not in that condition. However, it may be that in a particular place it is not thriving as much as it should. I will be obliged to the hon. Member if he makes a pointed reference to such cases and we will certainly look into them.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** Is it a fact that artisans who were manufacturing fine mats in West Bengal are taking over to other professions, because their products are not finding market?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** There may be other reasons why they are diverting their energies. But as far as improving the technique is concerned, we have established a research centre. We have a design centre and we are strengthening the co-operative societies. So, by and large, the industry is not in a bad condition. If there are individual cases, as I

have said just now, we will certainly look into them.

**Shri Sadhan Gupta:** May I know whether Government have offered any facilities to enable the artisans to market their products?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** Yes; all these efforts of the different boards and different corporations are aimed at creating markets for them both internally and externally. Several Government departments are also purchasing them.

**State Trading Corporation of India (Private) Ltd.**

\*1522. **Shri Damani:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state the efforts made by the State Trading Corporation of India (Private) Ltd. to know the habits and tastes of the foreign consumers for our indigenous products meant for exports especially shoes, handicrafts etc. with a view to popularise them abroad?

**The Minister of Commerce (Shri Kanungo):** The State Trading Corporation is endeavouring to export indigenous products like shoes, handicrafts, etc. mostly to the East European countries, where trading is a State monopoly. The Corporation is in constant touch with the trade representatives of the East European countries in India. It also receives, from time to time, delegations of the import organisations in those countries.

In addition to the above steps taken by the Corporation, Government of India's Commercial Representatives in foreign countries keep the Corporation informed through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, from time to time, of the possibilities of developing export trade with those countries.

**Shri Damani:** May I know what has been the total quantum of the orders booked by the S.T.C. for handicrafts and shoes during 1957-58

and what portion of them has been exported?

**Shri Kanungo:** I have not got the separate break-up for handicrafts and shoes, but the total orders booked will run into several crores. As a matter of fact, in the trade fairs, we have been able to book orders exceeding Rs. one crore. The total would run up to Rs. 5 crores.

**Shri Liladhar Kotoki:** May I know the items of these exports and the amounts thereof?

**Shri Kanungo:** It is a long list; I will place it on the Table of the House.

**Shri Thimmalah:** May I know whether the Government would open an emporium for these handicrafts in all the foreign countries which are friendly to India?

**Shri Kanungo:** It is not necessary at all, because the trade is a monopoly in the countries mentioned here.

**Shri Panigrahi:** May I know whether any complaint has been received by the State Trading Corporation from these countries with regard to the delay in the export of the handicrafts?

**Shri Kanungo:** There have been occasional difficulties mostly due to shipping and all that.

#### Jute Goods

\*1524. **Shri Heda:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Jute Mills Association has fixed minimum prices for jute goods; and

(b) if so, what are its effects on our exports?

**The Minister of Commerce (Shri Kanungo):** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is too early to assess the ultimate effects, but, so far, no adverse feature is noticeable.

**Shri Heda:** May I know whether it is in the observation of the Government that whenever there is a buyers' market, the raw jute exporters suffer because of the internal competition?

**Shri Kanungo:** That is exactly what this measure of the I.J.M.A. is designed to protect.

**Shri Heda:** May I know whether the Government think that the step taken by the Jute Association is adequate or are Government going to take a few other steps in this regard?

**Shri Kanungo:** At the moment, this is found adequate.

**Shri Kasliwal:** May I know whether this Jute Mills Association fixed this minimum price after consultation with the Government or on their own initiative?

**Shri Kanungo:** This has been done on their own initiative. This is a voluntary act of the Jute Mills Association.

**Shri Ranga:** Is it in any way related to the supplementary steps that are to be taken like assurance of a fixed minimum price for raw jute to the jute producers?

**Shri Kanungo:** There is no statutory fixation of price for jute, but the ratio of the price of jute products to the price of raw jute which was envisaged by the Jute Commission is fairly maintained.

**Shri Rameshwar Tantia:** As raw jute is being sold at much cheaper rates compared to the price of the manufactured goods, may I know whether the Government is advising the mills to buy raw jute at a minimum price?

**Shri Kanungo:** The ratio of raw jute price to the price of manufactured goods which was envisaged by the Jute Commission is fairly maintained.

**Shri Surendranath Dwivedy:** May I know whether there is a recommendation from the Agriculture Ministry to fix minimum price for jute?