

12.05 hrs.

**Title: Regarding difficulties being faced by Jute growers and Jute industry.**

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the House will take up the Calling Attention.

Shri Basu Deb Acharia.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Textiles to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The situation arising out of difficulties being faced by Jute growers and Jute industry in the country and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto. "

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): Sir, at the outset I would like to assure the hon. Members who have moved the notice for discussion on this matter that the Government has always been responsive to the issues concerning jute sector and has been taking various measures to facilitate the growth of this sector.

The production of raw jute is estimated at 94 lakh bales for the jute year 2000-2001 and approximately 100 lakh bales for jute year 2001-2002.

With a view to enable the jute growers to get remunerative prices of their crop, the Government has a Minimum Support Price (MSP) policy and the Jute Corporation of India (JCI) undertakes MSP operations. The MSP for TD5/ex-Assam during 2000-2001 was Rs.785 per quintal, which has been increased to Rs.810 per quintal for 2001-2002. During jute year 2000-2001, JCI through its 171 centres and with the support of 50 Co-operative Societies purchased 4.62 lakh bales of raw jute, which is the highest in the last three years. From October, 2000 the prices of raw jute were ruling well above the MSP. The prices of raw jute touched a high of about Rs.1450 per quintal in June this year.

For jute year 2001-2002, JCI has made all arrangements for purchase through its 171 centres and has also tied up with approximately 90 Co-operative Societies. JCI will enter and intervene in the market as and when prices fall below the MSP. The present level of market prices of raw jute is above the MSP.

The Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in Packing Commodities) Act, 1987 provides for compulsory use of jute in packaging of certain commodities. The Government has been maintaining a balance between the interests of the jute farmers, workers engaged in the Jute Industry, producers of sugar and foodgrains and consumers while deciding the extent of compulsory packaging under the Act.

The production of jute goods had increased to 16.25 lakh tonnes during 2000-2001 as compared to 15.90 lakh tonnes in 1999-2000. Exports had also gone up during this period. During the year 2000-2001, 2.20 lakh tonnes of A.Twill bags were supplied and 6.10 lakh tonnes of B.Twill bags were supplied for packaging foodgrains and sugar. This is higher than the supplies made during the previous year. For Kharif 2001, procuring agencies have so far indicated a demand of 7.35 lakh bales of B.Twill bags out of which 4.62 lakh bales have been supplied.

To make the jute sector more competitive, the Government is committed to launch a Technology Mission on Jute as envisaged in the National Textile Policy 2000 to achieve the objectives of increasing productivity and diversifying the use of this environment friendly fibre.

The Government of India has taken all possible steps to ensure that the jute farmers and jute industry are not in any difficulty.

**श्री काशीराम राणा :** अध्यक्ष महोदय, सदन में जो स्टेटमेंट मैंने रखा है और जो सवाल यहां पर उठाए गए हैं, उनमें से अधिकांश का जवाब उसमें दे दिया है। अन्य दो-तीन प्रश्न उठाए हैं, उनमें से एक जेपीएम एक्ट के बारे में है। कहा गया कि हमने सिन्थेटिक लाबी के प्रभाव में आकर इसको डाइलूट किया है, इसका जवाब भी मैं एक प्रश्न के उत्तर में दे चुका हूँ। लेकिन मैं फिर से कहना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार ने किसी के प्रेशर में इस एक्ट को डाइलूट नहीं किया है।

**श्री बसुदेव आचार्य :** इसमें एक्सटेंशन क्यों नहीं कर रहे हैं ?

**श्री काशीराम राणा :** हमने जो भी डाइलूजिन किया है, वह इसीलिए किया है कि हमारे जूट बैग की रिक्वायरमेंट बढ़ती जाती है। फूड क्राप और शूगर क्राप बढ़ती जाती है, तो उसके आधार पर जूट बैग की रिक्वायरमेंट बढ़ती जाती है। तीसरा बिन्दू यह है कि आइएलओ ने हमें इन्स्ट्रक्शन दी है कि 100 केजी के बैग को 50 किलो में कन्वर्ट कीजिए। इससे भी जूट बैग की डिमान्ड बढ़ती जाती है। इसको देखते हुए, जब-जब भी लगा कि शार्टेज होगी और फूडग्रेन तथा शूगर कहां पैक होगी, ऐसी स्थिति में हमने इसमें डाइलूजिन करने की कोशिश की है।

दूसरी बात यह बताई कि वहां जूट ग्रावर्स को ज्यादा दाम नहीं मिलते। जैसा मैंने बताया कि जेसीआई के जो 171 सेंटर हैं तथा जो कोपरेटिव सोसायटियां हैं, उसके जरिए जब भी एमएसपी से भी प्राइस कम होते हैं, तब मार्केट में आकर हमारे सेंटर्स उसे परचेज करते हैं। (व्यवधान)

आचार्य साहब जो भी कहें लेकिन मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि एमएसपी से ज्यादा भाव जूट ग्रावर्स को मिले, ऐसी कोशिश सरकार की तरफ से होती है। इतिहास में

पहली बार हमारे जूट ग्रोवर्स को जून के महीने में 1450 रुपए हमने दिलवाये। मैं पूरे साल का ब्यौरा देना चाहता हूँ। (व्यवधान)

**श्री बसुदेव आचार्य :** ऐसा हर साल नहीं होता है। (व्यवधान)

**श्री काशीराम राणा :** हमने न सिर्फ एमएसपी का प्राइस बढ़ाया बल्कि इससे भी ज्यादा उन्हें मिले, जो जूट ग्रोवर्स हैं, जो गरीब किसान हैं, उन्हें ज्यादा से ज्यादा मार्केट प्राइस मिले। इसकी भी हमने कोशिश की और उन्हें अच्छे प्राइस दिलाये। इसमें भी हमने एमएसपी बढ़ा कर 810 रुपए किया है। हमारा आज भी 930 रुपए में मार्केट में जूट बिक रहा है और किसान को जूट का अच्छा दाम मिल रहा है। (व्यवधान) एनजेएमसी की बात यहां उठाई गई। इसके बारे में हमने बीआईएफआर को प्रपोज़ल भेजा है। हम भी चाहते हैं, क्योंकि हमारे वर्कर्स कई सालों से एनजेएमसी की मिलों में काम करते रहे हैं, उनके अधिकारों का प्रोटेक्शन किया जाए। हमने जो भी प्रपोज़ल बनाए, वे वर्कर्स के इंटरस्ट को देखते हुए बनाए हैं। हमने पूरे प्रपोज़ल बीआईएफआर के सामने रखे हैं। हमें उम्मीद है कि इसके आधार पर हम एनजेएमसी की जो मिले हैं, जिस पर अभी भी सरकार की ओर से बजटरी सपोर्ट 96 करोड़ रखा है, जबकि लॉस है, हम अपने वर्कर्स को आज भी 133 करोड़ की वेजेस दे रहे हैं। लॉस होते हुए भी, एनजेएमसी के वर्कर्स के इंटरस्ट को देखते हुए हमने आज भी बीआईएफआर के सामने प्रपोज़ल रखा है।

महोदय, यहां आर एंड डी के बारे में बात की गई। मुझे लगता है कि यह सही सवाल है। हमारी जूट की क्वालिटी इतनी अच्छी नहीं है, इसलिये यह बंगलादेश से इम्पोर्ट होता है, क्योंकि हम अच्छी क्वालिटी का जूट प्रोडक्ट्स बाहर एक्सपोर्ट करते हैं, इसके लिए जो रॉ जूट यूज़ होता है, वह इम्पोर्ट होता है। हमारा प्रयास है कि जूट की क्वालिटी अच्छी हो। उसके लिए आर, एंड डी का रुपचन्द पाल जी ने सुझाव रखा। सरकार उसके बारे में टैक्नॉलोजी मिशन ऑफ जूट बनाने जा रही है जिससे एक हमारी जूट की क्वालिटी अच्छी होगी, दूसरी उसके अच्छे रेम्युनेरेटिव प्राइस डोमैस्टिक और इंटरनेशनल मार्केट में मिलेंगे। हम टैक्नॉलोजी मिशन ऑन जूट एग्रीकल्चर मिनिस्ट्री के साथ मिल कर बना रहे हैं और बहुत जल्दी हाउस में टैक्नॉलोजी मिशन ऑन जूट यहां लाएंगे। (व्यवधान)

**श्री रुपचन्द पाल :** बीआईसीपी ओपन टैंडर के बारे में क्या हुआ?

**श्री काशीराम राणा:** यह जूट का सवाल है, यहां कॉटन कहां से आ गया? रैगुलर इंटरैक्शन का सवाल उठाया गया। इसकी स्टैडिंग एडवाइजरी कमेटी है। जेपीएमए एक्ट के अनुसार सभी की राय ली जाती है। इससे संबंधित जो राज्य सरकारें हैं, अगर उनके पास अच्छे सुझाव होते हैं और उन्हें वे देते हैं तो हम उनका स्वागत करते हैं। हम चाहते हैं कि इंटरैक्शन करके हमारे किसान जो जूट गोवर्स हैं, उसके आधार पर हम उन्हें सहूलियत देने के लिए आगे बढ़ें। आज भी जूट की स्थिति सुधारने के लिए भारत सरकार की ओर से जूट गुड्स के ऊपर एक्साइज ड्यूटी नहीं है।

जूट पैकेजिंग एक्ट में जो मैटिरियल एक्ट है उसमें 16 लाख में से हम 8 लाख जूट गुड्स का इस्तेमाल करते हैं। फिर 35 करोड़ रुपया हम जूट कॉरपोरेशन ऑफ इंडिया को उसके प्राइस ऑपरेशन के लिए देते हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त 96 करोड़ रुपया हम एनजेएमसी को चलाने के लिए देते हैं। (व्यवधान), 26 करोड़ रुपया हम एक्सपोर्ट मार्किटिंग तथा जूट एक्सपोर्ट करने के लिए देते हैं। (व्यवधान) 6 करोड़ रुपया हम जूट (व्यवधान) डायवर्सिफिकेशन के लिए देते हैं। (व्यवधान) स्टेट सरकारों की भी जिम्मेदारी है कि जो हमारे जूट ग्रोवर्स हैं और जूट के एक्सपोर्टर्स हैं उनकी स्थिति को सुधारने में वे सहायता करें। (व्यवधान)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : What about the extension of Mandatory Order? ... (Interruptions)

**श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी (रायगंज) :** 31 अगस्त के बाद लाखों लोग बिहार और ईस्टर्न यूपी में बेकार हो जाएंगे। (व्यवधान)

**श्री बसुदेव आचार्य :** मंत्री जी हमें यह बताइये कि 31 अगस्त के बाद एक्सटेंशन होगा या नहीं। (व्यवधान)

**श्री काशीराम राणा :** सीसीईए ने जेपीएमए के बारे में डिजीजन ले लिया है और थोड़े दिनों में हम उसको नोटिफाई कर देंगे। (व्यवधान)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : He has not said anything in regard to extension of the Mandatory Order.

**श्री काशीराम राणा :** वर्कर्स के बारे में जो इन्होंने सवाल उठाया है तो वर्कर्स के हितों को हम देख रहे हैं। (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Basu Deb Acharia, you can ask only specific clarificatory questions.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, this is a question of lakhs and lakhs of jute growers and jute workers. So, you should not be rigid in regard to allotment of time.

I do not agree with the hon. Minister's statement. He has stated that the Government has always been responsive to the issues concerning the jute sector. The Government has not at all been responsive to the problems of the jute sector.

When we achieved Independence and Bengal was partitioned, jute-growing areas went with the erstwhile East Pakistan and jute mills remained with West Bengal. The first Prime Minister of India appealed to the farmers of West Bengal to grow jute. They responded positively and West Bengal achieved self-sufficiency in jute production. ... (Interruptions)

DR. NITISH SENGUPTA (CONTAI): It was not only West Bengal but also Bihar and Orissa.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: But a majority of eighty per cent is grown in West Bengal. ... (Interruptions) All right, it was the case with Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and other jute-producing States also.

Today, both the jute growers and the jute workers are facing a crisis. The JCI was formed to provide a minimum support price to the farmers, the jute growers and to purchase jute directly from the growers. How much jute had the JCI purchased last year out of 94 lakh bales? It was only 4.62 lakh tonnes.

The problem with the JCI is that they do not come to the market at the appropriate time. Later, when there is a distress sale, the JCI comes to the market and there is very little help or assistance from the JCI to the jute growers. Maybe, this year, jute has started coming to the market now. Sometimes, the price is increased but what we have seen is that the jute growers in the jute-growing States do not get even the minimum support price. They have to sell their jute in distress sales at a price much lower than the MSP. Even in the case of the MSP, the price fixed is much lower than the price that the jute grower should get for his jute.

As there was a crisis in the jute industry, to protect the jute industry as well as the jute growers, the Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in Packaging Commodities) Act, 1987 was enacted. It was enacted to protect the interests of the jute industry, jute workers as well as jute growers. The use of jute bags to the extent of 100 per cent for packing of food grains and sugar and to the extent of 20 per cent for packing of fertilizers is compulsory. The period of this Act expired on the 30th July. It was then extended up to the 31st August. There is a Standing Advisory Committee. This Committee was constituted under this Act, under the Chairmanship of the Secretary (Textiles).

Sir, they had undertaken a review. They heard the views of the foodgrain, sugar, fertiliser and even synthetic sectors and also of other interests. They came to the conclusion that the reservation policy in respect of foodgrains and sugar for the year July, 2001 to June, 2002 should be maintained at 100 per cent as at present and in case of any disruption in the supply of jute packaging material the Ministry of Textiles may, in consultation with the Ministry concerned, relax the reservation upto the level of maximum 20 per cent for foodgrains and sugar. This Committee also recommended that the 20 per cent reservation for fertilizers should be discontinued.

This is done because of the pressure from the synthetic lobby. There has been an organised campaign for the dilution of reservation level in respect of both foodgrains as well as sugar by 10 per cent. Their contention is that if 10 per cent dilution were there, there would be an annual loss in production of jute goods by only one lakh MT which will not adversely affect the jute industry. This is not correct. If the Act is diluted, if fertiliser is taken away from the ambit of this Act, this will adversely affect the jute industry. As foodgrains and sugar provide the major outlet for jute goods, even a partial dilution of the reservation order will be the beginning of the end of the jute industry which provides direct employment to 2,50,000 industrial workers and provides livelihood to four million jute growers in jute and mesta growing States in the Eastern as well as in the North-Eastern areas. It will also affect millions of other dependants on jute-related activities.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Basu Deb Acharia, please ask your question.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, what will be the consequential loss? The consequential loss of the market for jute goods will force the closure of a number of jute mills. This will spell a disaster not only to the entire jute industry but also of the Eastern and North-Eastern States, particularly, the State of West Bengal.

Sir, I have copy of a report with me. What is the loss of revenue because of non-implementation of the Jute Packaging Material Act? In 1997, in one year, the non-implementation resulted in loss of revenue of Rs. 3,522 crore. Although there is a mandatory provision that for cement industry, 20 per cent of the packaging material should be of the jute packaging material which should be used, but it is being violated by almost all the cement manufacturing units in our country. What is it that the Government doing? The Government is doing nothing to protect the jute industry. The textile policy was announced in the year 2000. The hon. Minister has said that the Government is taking various measures for the diversification of jute industry.

The period of this Act has already expired and it has been extended for another one month. I would like to know from the Textile Minister whether the provisions of the existing Act will not be diluted and the mandatory provision will continue for several years to protect the jute industry. I would also like to know for the benefit of jute growers whether the Government of India comes forward to assist the JCI so that JCI can go to the market well before and purchase jute directly from the jute growers so that there will not be any distress sale.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Basu Deb Acharia, please cooperate with the Chair.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : There are six units of NJMC, National Jute Manufacturing Corporation. We have seen in the newspaper that Government of India has made a proposal to form workers' co-operative. Five units are in West Bengal and one is in Bihar. I want to know what is the proposal of the Government of India so that the livelihood of 23,000 workers engaged in all the units of NJMC can be saved.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (HOOGLY): Sir, I shall be very brief. I have two questions, rather one question in two parts. First, the promotion and development of the jute sector is looked after by the Union Government through various agencies and JCI is one of them. The Jute Commissioner has a role to play, but there is hardly any regular dialogue with the State Governments, it may be West Bengal or Bihar, where raw jute is grown and where most of the jute mills are situated. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government will set up a regular mechanism for regular interaction, if necessary bi-monthly or monthly? I believe, the hon. Minister is well aware that the Jute

Commissioner is sometimes taking law into his own hands, even violating rules, and without taking any clearance from the Standing Committee, he is himself taking decisions. As has been referred to by the previous speaker, because of the unilateral decisions, partisan decisions, biased decisions in favour of the synthetic bag-manufacturing lobby, not only the jute industry suffers but even the Government's revenue also suffers. The Jute Commissioner deliberately did not take steps to realise the penalty.

Secondly, the jute price is fixed on the basis of the BICP calculation. What happens is that if in one particular year, there is good jute harvest, the result is that the next year, the jute growers are not going to get good price because the price fixed in such a manner by the Jute Corporation of India which is based on BICP calculation. Similarly, the protection price given to the B-Twill bags is fixed on the basis of BICP calculation. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is ready to get into the open tender system?

Lastly, jute is one area where a lot of research has been made, be it for its diversification, be it for eco-friendly use, which has a good and growing market. But in the case of high-yielding variety of jute seeds, there has been only limited research, and there is need to increase the yield. The jute cultivation is declining sharply. It will create a serious problem in the coming days. Due to unremunerative prices and uncertainties involved, the jute cultivators are switching over to horticulture and more cash crops.

In such a situation, whether the Government will consider to give such a boost or emphasis on the cultivation of high-yielding varieties of jute that they may, quality-wise, contribute to eco-friendly and diversification measures and also ensure a remunerative price for the cultivators.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (ULUBERIA): Sir, I will only put questions. On 27.07.94, in a Tripartite Meeting in the presence of the Minister of Textiles, it was decided that a revival scheme would be prepared for the NJMC Mills. Since the Government delayed or did not prepare the project properly, in time, or even provide them with adequate funds, NJMC became sick. I would like to know whether the Government will submit the revised scheme immediately.

Secondly, the Jute Industry is facing a serious problem. We would like to know whether the Government will arrange to grant short-loan to individual jute mill owners in order to enable them to make payment of all arrears, statutory dues, to the workers.

Thirdly, whether the Government will refrain from dilution of the Jute Packaging Compulsory Act and extend it to other crops like groundnut etc.

Finally, as you know, the jute workers are not getting bonus because of not amending the Bonus Act since 1965. I would like to know whether the Government will recommend to the Ministry of Labour to amend the Bonus Act and extend the ceiling of the minimum wage so that bonus can be paid to lakhs of jute mill workers.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): Sir, please give me a minute to speak.

MR. SPEAKER: There are only three names in the list, and also the rule does not permit it.

श्री बसुदेव आचार्य : 31 अगस्त के बाद जूट इंडस्ट्री का क्या होगा?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): Sir, he has not answered a single question asked by Shri Hannan Mollah. They are all relevant questions. ...*(Interruptions)*

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी : ईस्टर्न यूपी और बिहार में 31 अगस्त के बाद लाखों लोग बेकार हो जाएंगे।

श्री राजेश रंजन उर्फ पप्पू यादव (पूर्णिमा) : बिहार में जूट का कोई परचेजिंग सेंटर नहीं है। (ब्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: You are not allowing the Minister to complete his reply.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, this is not a reply. We want a categorical reply to the questions asked.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, you allowed a Calling Attention instead of a proper and full discussion so that pointed questions may be replied to. However, not a single question asked by Shri Hannan Mollah has been answered. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : What about the revenue loss of Rs.3,222 crore on account of ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, this is the occasion when one crosses the line. We strongly object to ...*(Interruptions)* In protest, we are walking out.

12.38 hours

*(At this stage, Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Shri Basu Deb Acharia  
and some other hon. Members left the House.)*

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY (BERHAMPORE, WEST BENGAL): Sir, I have not been able to raise my issue in 'zero hour' for the last four days.

MR. SPEAKER: The House shall now take up Item No.15.

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