

**Title:** Regarding the plight of the jute farmers in West Bengal.

DR. RANJIT KUMAR PANJA (BARASAT): Sir, I would like to talk about the plight of the jute farmers of West Bengal. There are four million jute farmers and most of them belong to West Bengal. They live a very hazardous life. They suffer from many diseases as the cultivation is very hazardous. They have much difficulty in storage of the produce. The Government delays the collection of the materials. Therefore, the middlemen take advantage of these jute farmers who sell them in distress at a very lower price. The Government has fixed the price at Rs.750 per quintal. But I have seen farmers in my constituency selling it at Rs.400 only because of delay in collection. The Government is closing down the outlets of Jute Corporation of India which is causing damage to the farmers.

They are producing this jute in very precarious conditions. They need better environment, they need protective clothes also because when they separate jute, they get plenty of diseases to different parts of their body.

I would request the Government to make this procurement quicker by having more outlets of the Jute Corporation of India. On the contrary, recently the Government has notified that synthetic materials would be used for packaging of edible products which is against the global trend of going back to Nature. We are not using natural products and that can cause variety of diseases. Therefore, jute bags should be reintroduced and used instead of these synthetic products.