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Title: Regarding problems faced by the coir-industry in Kerala.

SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN (ALLEPPEY): Sir, I would like to invite the urgent attention of the Government to the grave situation prevailing in the coir sector of Kerala consequent on abolition of the floor price, that is, the Minimum Export Price for coir and coir products, withdrawal of the purchase price and the discontinuance of the highly effective rebate scheme. There are five lakh coir spinning workers of which 90 per cent are women; 25,000 coir factory workers and 12,000 small scale producers in this area. Being uprooted from their livelihood, these people are extremely desperate and are on the path of agitation. There are reports of starvation deaths in this belt. Altogether, it is a highly explosive situation which is prevailing there. So, I would request the Government to do the following:-

Immediate restoration of the Minimum Export Price considering the human agony and resultant adverse impact;

Re-introduction of the purchase price;

Unconditional continuance of the rebate scheme forthwith;

Sanction of arrears of the rebate scheme amounting to Rs.11.26 crore;

Restoration of quality control; and

Protection to pay and other benefits of the workers and provide Central assistance for immediate relief to the starving workers.

Sir, the unimaginative, short-sighted and counter-productive steps initiated by the Government are responsible for the sad predicament of the poorest of the poor workers.

The repeated pleas from various quarters have fallen on deaf ears. There were many studies which had taken place but no proper ground-level study of the real issues has taken place and no proper experts were involved in it.

So, I would request the Government to set up a High-Power Committee to make an in-depth study into the ground-level predicament prevailing in this sector with a time frame so that remedial measures can be initiated without delay to save the coir industry.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (MAVELIKARA): Sir, this is a very serious issue. The Government should intervene immediately and try to solve the issue....(*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): Sir, I will communicate the concern of the hon. Members to the Minister concerned.