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Title: Regarding deteriorating financial situation of Jute growers in West Bengal.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY (BERHAMPORE, WEST BENGAL): I would like to draw the attention of this House to the deteriorating financial situation of jute growers in my State. They are suffering severe financial constraint due to non-availability of adequate support price. More than four crores of our population earn their livelihood either by producing jute or by manufacturing it. Every year, as much as Rs.700 crore of foreign exchange is pouring into our Central coffers by exporting jute related materials. You are well aware that this year, flood has wrought a havoc in the agricultural sector in West Bengal.

All purchasing centres under JCI have stopped purchasing the jute since occurrence of flood. Therefore, jute growers in my State are undergoing precarious situation. Due to non-existence of crop insurance scheme, the jute growers could not retrieve their losses. We came to know that this Government is generous to Andhra Pradesh and Punjab farmers. I am not nurturing any jealousy against them. What is sauce for the goose should be the sauce for the gander also. I know that compulsion of coalition politics has impelled the Government to extend cooperation to these States. I would urge upon this Government to take up the matter seriously so that jute growers of my State can get proper value for their produce. They are now facing pauperisation. The middlemen and *faria* are exploiting and fleecing the jute growers. Out of desperation, they are selling their produce for a song. This matter should be considered seriously. May I request you to extract a statement from the Minister concerned because it is a serious problem in my State?...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You can also associate with him.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? I am not able to understand this type of discussion. One Member is raising the issue and immediately all other Members get up and start speaking.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, please understand that this is 'Zero Hour'.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? You are not allowing the Minister to give the reply.

...(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): Sir, the hon. Member has said that JCI has stopped purchasing jute. I will talk to the Minister concerned and see what can be done. ...(Interruptions)