

Title: Threat to match manufacturing industry due to mechanization in southern districts of Tamil Nadu.

SHRI VAIKO (SIVAKASI): Mr. Speaker Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government, through this 'Zero Hour' mention, to a very important problem affecting nearly eight lakh people in the Southern districts of Tamil Nadu. Sir, this is regarding the match-manufacturing industry. When the United Front Government was there, licences were given and they permitted import of machinery. Once the machineries are brought into this field, these eight lakh families, who depend only upon this tiny sector of hand-made matches, will be deprived of their livelihood because it is a dry area without rains and these people do not have any other means of livelihood. Therefore, we made a representation, with a big delegation representing trade unions of all political parties, to the hon. Prime Minister, and he was kind enough to see that since 1998, no licence or permission has been given to import any machinery from abroad and also to recognise the industry. But, Sir, utilising the loopholes in the liberalised policy, the machines are being dumped like Chinese toys, and advertisements are made, now-a-days, even to sell machines, in the public. Therefore, the entire area is very much agitated. Therefore, I would like to request the Government to totally ban import of machinery in any form and also to ban the match-manufacturing units where they are using these machineries. So, it is a very grave problem affecting the future and the very survival of these people, particularly, these eight lakh families. Mostly women are working in these match-manufacturing units.

SHRI C. SREENIVASAN (DINDIGUL): On behalf of AIADMK, I also associate with what Shri Vaiko has said.