

Title: Request the Central Government to restore its contributions for the Coir Workers' Welfare Fund Scheme in Kerala.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Sir, I take this opportunity to bring in a very serious issue regarding the coir workers of Kerala.

Coir industry is traditionally an age-old industry, which has a centuries-old tradition. Now, there is a Coir Workers' Welfare Fund Scheme in Kerala. The Central Government was giving contribution to the Welfare Fund so that the pension scheme could be implemented. The Central Government was kind enough to give grants towards that Scheme also. It was continuing as such, but now, by an order of the Union Government, they have withdrawn contributions to that Scheme. It has resulted in a very serious crisis towards the industry as far as the industry is concerned.

More than that recently by an initiative taken by the Ministry of Textiles, the Minimum Export Price is also withdrawn. So, the coir industry, as a whole, is facing a very serious crisis.

I request the Central Government to restore the *status quo* and continue with the concessions that were granted to the coir workers. It is only just and proper that such a course should be followed by the Central Government which was there in existence for years. This is an anti-workers decision and should be withdrawn.