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Title: Need for introducing attractive schemes to protect and strengthen the National Saving Scheme.

SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI (BADAGARA): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Ministry of Finance regarding the need to introduce an attractive scheme for strengthening and protecting the National Savings Scheme in the country.

The National Savings Scheme which was very vibrant in the earlier days with periodic new Schemes, keeping up with the market trends, is now losing its popularity due to the Government policies.

The interest rates of the Schemes are reduced considerably and even after continuous demand, it is not revised. The interest rates of the Recurring Deposit is 7.5 per cent and that of the Fixed Deposit under the Scheme is only 6 to 6.5 per cent while all the Commercial Banks are having a higher rate of interest of 11 to 11.5 per cent. The Commercial Banks and even the private financial institutions are dominating the savings scenario especially under short term deposits tailored to the tastes of the investing public. There is a steady decline in the number of investors under the National Savings Scheme which is leading to high rate of withdrawal of the existing deposits also. The loan facility provided to the State Governments also is very badly affected due to this.

The withdrawal of the MIS Bonus, the reduction in the interest rate and the denial of institutional deposits, etc. have already led to the losing of the popularity of the Scheme leading to worsening the national economic growth of the country.

Hence, I would request the Finance Ministry to take emergent steps for strengthening and revamping the National Savings Scheme and to make it more attractive with a view to strengthen the national economy.

DR. K.S. MANOJ (ALLEPPEY): I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the need to support the Marine Fisheries Industry in view of the global economic meltdown.

The Marine Fisheries Industry is one of the industries which depends on the export of marine products. More than one million population depend on the industry. But due to the global economic meltdown, there is more than 35 per cent decline in the export of marine products. So, this industry is in crisis. Aroor area in my constituency in Alappuzha, which is considered as the centre of marine products export in the State of Kerala, is declared as a town of export excellence. In that area, the entire industry is in shambles. In order to tide over the crisis, domestic trade should be encouraged. Also, I would urge upon the Government to provide some bail out package for the Marine Fisheries Industry.