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19.19 hrs.

## DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

### (ii) PROBLEMS BEING FACED BY JUTE INDUSTRY

Title: Discussion regarding problems being faced by Jute Industry.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, we will take the next item, Item No.23. Shri Basu Deb Acharia to initiate the discussion.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): Sir, at the outset, I would like to say that jute is an important industry and it has a vital role to play in the economy of Eastern and the North-Eastern India....(Interruptions) When our country was divided, the jute-growing areas went to Bangladesh, the erstwhile East Pakistan and the jute mills remained with West Bengal.

Sir, the first Prime Minister of India assured the people of West Bengal and urged them to produce jute so that some jute mills which were there in the State of West Bengal could survive. The farmers of West Bengal responded to the appeal of the first Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The paddy growing fields were converted into jute growing fields. West Bengal became self-sufficient in the production of jute and thereby all the jute mills survived.

Today, due to the wrong policy of the Government of India, four million jute growers of West Bengal and 2.5 lakh jute workers are facing crisis. What was the situation in 1980s? When there was a stiff competition from the plastic lobby, the Government of India felt that to protect the four million jute growers and 2.5 lakh jute workers, the enactment of a legislation was necessary. The main purpose of that legislation was to protect the jute growers as well as jute workers. The main object behind the enactment of this Act was to protect the jute industry from the plastic industry.

The Jute Packaging Material Act was passed in 1987 and in Section 4, Sub-section 2 of that Act, it was stated that the intention was to maintain the level of usage of jute materials, quality of raw jute available, quantity of jute material available and to protect the interest of the persons engaged in the jute industry and in the production of raw jute and to continuously maintain the jute industry etc.

Sir, after the enactment of this Act, what we have seen is that gradually this Act is being diluted. When this Act was promulgated in 1987-88, for foodgrains 100 per cent jute packages were used. For sugar also, it was 100 per cent. For urea, it was 50 per cent and for cement it was 70 per cent. In 1988-89, it was 100 per cent for foodgrains, sugar and urea and 70 per cent for cement. In 1994-95, it was 100 per cent for sugar and foodgrains, but it was 65 per cent for urea and 70 per cent for cement. In 1995-96, it was 100 per cent for sugar and foodgrains, but 50 per cent for urea and 50 per cent for cement. In 1998-99, you will be surprised to know, in the case of foodgrains and sugar it was 100 per cent, but in the case of urea it came down to 20 per cent and in the case of cement, it was nil. Then in 2001-02, for both, urea and cement, the use of jute packages was nil and today for urea and cement it is nil. In 2002-03, in the case of sugar it was reduced to 90 per cent.

In the Jute Packaging Material Compulsory Use of Packing Committees Bill 1987, there is a provision dealing with violation of the provisions of the Act. There is a provision for penalty. In Section 5, it has been stated, 'that where an Order has been made under Section 3 requiring any commodity, class of commodities or any percentage thereof to be packed in jute packaging material for their supply or distribution, such commodity, class of commodities and percentage thereof shall not and on from the date of specified Order be supplied unless the same is packed according to that Order'.

What we have seen is that there is a recommendation of the Standing Advisory Committee and that recommendation should also be in consonance with Section 4, sub-Section 2(d), 'that protection of interests of persons engaged in jute industry and in production of raw jute'. So, the Standing Advisory Committee's recommendation should also be based on Section 4, sub-Section 2(g), that whenever the Standing Advisory Committee will take a decision or make certain

recommendations, the interest of the workers and also the jute growers should be taken into consideration.

Sir, although the provisions of this Act had been blatantly violated in the case of urea and also in the case of fertilizer, no action has been taken against those who have violated the provisions of this Act. Although the Act is mandatory, they had blatantly violated it in the case of urea and fertilizer.

Sir, why are we raising this discussion today? There were a number of cases. On 6<sup>th</sup> of July, Calcutta High Court has given a judgement. Sir, I would like to quote the Calcutta High Court's Judgement of 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2004. It says:

"We are, therefore, unable to appreciate the action taken by the Central Government in its Ministry of Textiles in publishing the Order dated 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2004, obviously with the motive of rendering the present proceedings in the court infructuous. We, therefore, allow the appeal and set aside the Order passed by the learned single Judge. We also quash the Notification/Order issued by the Central Government in the Ministry of Textiles on 1<sup>st</sup>

July, 2004, as published in the Gazette of India on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2004 and direct that *status quo* with regard to the use of jute packaging material, as was existing prior to the issuance of such Notification of 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2004, will continue until a fresh recommendation is made by the Standing Advisory Committee of the Central Government on the basis whereof a fresh notification can be issued. The Standing Advisory Committee shall fix a fresh date of hearing and give notice to the appellants herein and to such other persons as it may consider necessary, and, after considering the submission made on their behalf, proceed to make fresh recommendation to the Central Government keeping in mind the provisions of Section 4 (2) – it is very important – and in particular, clause 'd' – which I have already mentioned – thereof. And the Central Government shall, thereafter, proceed to act in accordance with the Section 3 of the Act."

Sir, this Notification of 1<sup>st</sup> July was based on what was decided on 16<sup>th</sup> of April. During its tenure, the NDA Government continuously tried to dilute the Jute Packaging Material Act. What did we see in the month of August, 2003? They tried to dilute the provisions of the Act. Why did they feel it necessary to

issue Notification on 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2004 when there was no Lok Sabha? Lok Sabha was dissolved. First phase of election was to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2004.

So, why did the then NDA Government feel it necessary to issue this notification on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, just before the elections? What was the necessity to issue this notification? Was it because of the elections and also to get the financial benefit from the plastic lobby? Why was it necessary? I would like to ask the present Textile Minister as to why he has followed their footsteps. He could have undone the wrong committed by the previous Government because they were out to destroy the interest of the jute growers and the farmers because their policy was anti-farmers policy and anti-working class policy. That was why, a number of attempts were made to dilute the various provisions of this Act.

After the Calcutta High Court's judgment, the Standing Advisory Committee's meeting was called. I spoke to the Textile Minister on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August. I was told by the trade union leaders that on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, they were asked to submit their proposal, if they have any, by the 6<sup>th</sup> of August. I contacted the Minister on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August and I told him as to how could they submit their proposal within one day. It was told to them that if they want to attend the meeting and present their views, they could come on the 9<sup>th</sup>, the date on which the meeting was fixed.

What was the decision of the meeting? The decision of the Standing Advisory Committee was not taken to protect the interest of neither the jute growers nor the jute workers. What was the recommendation of the Standing Advisory Committee? In the case of food grains, it is 100 per cent procurement for public procurement agencies and 80 per cent for others. It was 100 per cent in all respects for both public procurement agencies and others. Now, the Standing Advisory Committee has recommended that 100 per cent for public procurement agencies and 80 per cent for others. Is it not a dilution of the provisions of the Act?

Sir, in the case of levy sugar, it is 100 per cent for public procurement agencies and 75 per cent for others.

What we were demanding, what the trade unions are demanding and what the jute growers are demanding is that it should be 100 per cent in case of foodgrains and 100 per cent in case of sugar also. But the Standing Advisory Committee's meeting, which was held on 9<sup>th</sup> of August, recommended to reduce it to 80 per cent in case of foodgrains and 75 per cent in case of sugar for others. Has the Ministry of Textiles calculated what will be the percentage in case of public distribution and public procurement and in case of delivery of levy sugar? Will the requirements of jute bags be further reduced?

Today, there are 62 jute mills. Out of 62 jute mills, 58 are in the State of West Bengal. Today, more than two lakh workers are in the jute mills. It is one of the vital economies of the State of West Bengal. This decision of the Standing Advisory Committee or Council will definitely affect the jute industry as well as the jute growers of West Bengal adversely. There was an assurance given by the past Prime Minister of India to the West Bengal farmers who responded positively. Today, the farmers as well as the workers are facing crisis.

Why are we asking for use of jute packages? What are the advantages over the plastic packages? This is not our personal view. An independent study, a comparative study of jute and polypropylene in respect of their relative cost and advantages, was made by IIT, Kharagpur in February 2000. I do not know whether the Minister is aware of that study or not. It has revealed some startling chinks in the so-called armour of the plastic industry and established several advantages of jute over plastic. The report stated that India has a natural advantage in its jute industry that not only supports the livelihood of millions of people, but also it is environmental friendly. It is also cost worthy. Jute is the best bet for bulk packaging in India. Unwanted war between jute and synthetic must be stopped.

Environment friendly jute can be disposed of easily. Synthetic bags toxically poison the earth when destroyed, and it has been proved. Jute has a minimum lifetime of five years. It can be re-used a number of times. But in case of synthetic, its loading capacity and material handling properties are inferior to that of jute. Jute is entirely indigenously produced and is one of our foremost cash crops.

Synthetic bags made from imported polyester have a number of additives as well.

Due to its superior life span and handling properties, it is cheaper than plastic. Plastic bags carry much less than jute bags in their lifetime. So, it is advantageous over synthetic bags but the Government of India and the Ministry of Textiles are gradually reducing jute bags and encouraging such synthetic bags. When this Act was enacted, the object stated was: "An Act to provide for compulsory use of jute packaging material in supply and distribution of certain commodities in the interest of production of raw jute and jute packaging material, of persons engaged in production thereof and matters connected therewith." This Act recognised the significance of jute industry in the national economy.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Acharia, how much more time would you take?

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, I have just started. This is a very important subject concerning millions and millions of people. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have not asked you to conclude now. I only wanted to know how much time you would take.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : I would take another fifteen minutes. Give me some more time.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I am not asking you to stop the speech.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : I will take only 15 minutes more because the Chief Whip of my party Shri Rupchand Pal would also speak. He is an expert on this subject.

The Act recognises that jute packaging is the foundation of the industry and hence the need for ensuring stable market for jute bags. The Act acknowledges the immediate need for reduction of plastic packaging. The Act also provides clear penalties for any default together with making it a cognisable criminal offence. In the light of the Act, the Government stipulated compulsory jute packaging for four essential commodities – food grains, sugar, urea and cement. I would like to know whether cement and sugar still continue in that list or they have been dispensed with.

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKARSINH VAGHELTA): They are still continued in the list.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : I am sorry, I wanted to know the position about urea and cement. I want to know what punishment has been given to those who have defaulted.

In West Bengal, there are five nationalised jute mills. The National Jute Manufacturing Corporation, NJMC, has six mills. Five of them are in West Bengal and one in Bihar. When I met the hon. Minister of Textiles after he took charge, he assured that he would make sincere efforts to revive some of the mills of NJMC. The Chief Minister of West Bengal had written to him a letter on the 9<sup>th</sup> August. On the 8<sup>th</sup> August, the BIFR had ordered closure of all the mills of NJMC. Why did the BIFR take such a decision? We had several meetings with the Minister of Textiles. Shri Tarit Baran Topdar has, for the last several years, fought for the revival of NJMC. We have had several meetings but the Government of India has never responded positively. Though the unions have jointly submitted a revival package to the BIFR, the Government of India and the Ministry of Textiles have failed to provide financial assistance for the revival of this public sector jute manufacturing unit.

But the Government of India, the Ministry of Textiles, failed to provide the financial assistance for the revival of these public sector jute manufacturing units. Today, NJMC has 13,000 workers and once upon a time, the NJMC had 22,000 workers. If all the mills are closed down, then what will happen to these 13,000 workers? I would like to know whether the Government of India has no responsibility for the workers who are there in NJMC, in their own public sector units. When the BIFR has given its order, the Ministry of Textiles can approach the AIFR. At the time of reply, the hon. Minister of Textiles, Shri Shankarsinh Vaghela, will tell us whether the Government is planning to approach the AIFR against the order of the BIFR.

I have earlier stated that the Jute Industry is not only for the workers but there are also more than two lakh workers are working in it. But because of the dilution of the Act what will happen to about 40 lakh jute growers? JCI is there. This year the Government has announced the Minimum Support Price for West Bengal per quintal. It is Rs. 930/- to Rs. 1,000/- per quintal. But only a few days back I had been to the District of Murshidabad and I was told that JCI has not opened a single tender for the purchase of jute. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY (BASIRHAT): They have already declared that they will not purchase.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : If JCI will not come to the market, if the purchasing centers are not opened, then how the distress sale can be prevented. The Government of India has announced the Minimum Support Price. Certain percentage of jute is also being purchased by cooperative societies. So, unless the jute which is produced by the jute growers is purchased by JCI, jute growers will not get the Minimum Support Price.

There is another problem which is being faced by the jute industry and that is the recent BIS norm which has been announced. The amendment was made under duress despite objections from jute mills like IJIRA and other related

agencies. All the specifications under IS: 12650: 1997 should be continued because what we want is that the earlier norm should continue. It is because of the new norm, which has been prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standard, the jute industry will face difficulty in producing the jute bag, according to that specification.

19.55 hrs. (Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav in the Chair)

So, the earlier system should continue. This is a question concerning millions and millions of people. The jute industry is vitally connected with the economy of the eastern India. We demand that there should not be any dilution of the Jute Packaging Material Act. The SAC has recommended to reduce the use of jute bags in case of foodgrains and sugar. That should not be implemented. The position that jute bags should be used 100 per cent for sugar and 100 per cent for foodgrains should be restored. There should not be further dilution of the Act in order to protect the jute industry and the four million jute growers of West Bengal.

**SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM):** Thank you Mr. Chairman for giving me an opportunity. The jute sector has been playing a very important role in the Indian economy. In Andhra Pradesh jute farmers are there in my constituency in Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram and Visakhapatnam districts. Four million farmers are dependent on this jute farming and 2.5 lakh people are working in this industry. Every year the farmers are not getting remunerative price for their investment. The Government of India has been announcing minimum support price every year for this jute and mesta crop also. For the last 15 years, from 1989 to 2002, the Government of India has been increasing at the rate of Rs. 25, Rs. 30 and Rs. 35 in the minimum support price in all varieties of the jute and mesta. From 2003-04 onwards, the Government of India has been announcing minimum support price exclusively for TD-5 and some varieties only. In Andhra Pradesh, particularly in my area, the farmers are growing D-bottom and X-bottom varieties for jute and mesta. For the past 15 years they have been enjoying the increase in minimum support price. Since 2003-2004 they are not getting the minimum support price and that is why they are not getting back the investment and the farmers are suffering a lot.

My request to the Government through you is that the minimum support price should be increased to all the varieties like in the past. With this the farmers will get the remunerative price. Every year the Government of Andhra Pradesh and the Government of India have been collecting cess from out of this industry – for every hundred rupees, one rupee as market cess, four rupees as sales tax, four rupees on bags and four rupees on CST and goods tax. The State Government and the Government of India have been collecting different taxes and are getting revenue even though they are not giving the minimum support price for all the varieties. This is a great injustice to the farming community. Now the farmers are suffering a lot.

The second aspect is that for the jute farmers to survive in this industry and to get remunerative price, the Government of India should give more thrust for the diversification activities. There is a lot of demand for jute products in various countries outside India. That is why the Government of India should concentrate on this diversification for jute products. Then the market will grow and the farmers will get remunerative prices.

20.00 hrs.

The second thing is that for the protection of jute farmers and for the survival of the jute industry, the Government of India should implement the Jute Packaging (Compulsory Use in Commodities) Act of 1987 indiscriminately. So, there should be no exemption. This is an eco-friendly industry. So, everybody is supporting this Act. Plastic is a non-biodegradable substance. It will also affect environmentally. That is why, to protect the industry and the farming community, this Act should be implemented *in toto* so that they have to use jute bags for packing of foodgrains, sugar and other commodities. Otherwise, the industry will suffer, the farmer will suffer.

Sir, my request, through you – the Minister knows the ground reality and he is a pro-farmer Minister – is that irrespective of varieties, for all varieties throughout the country, the minimum support price should be implemented like it used to happen in the past. He may go through the records. Previously, they were giving minimum support price for all varieties. In Andhra Pradesh, our farmers are not growing such varieties. So, we should not penalise those farmers. In view of this, my humble request to this Government is that they should give the minimum support price and protect the jute farmer and the jute industry.

**SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY (BERHAMPORE, WEST BENGAL):** Sir, jute is regarded as a golden fibre and today, a new

consciousness has developed all over the world which indicates that the future will contribute a lot to jute industry provided we take appropriate measures without any delay. I do not want to waste my time on blabbering because we have to realise the present plight of this sector in view of globalisation and in view of WTO regime because within a few months or more, the multi-fibre regime will also be introduced.

Sir, everybody knows that jute is an eco-friendly natural fibre. West Bengal is hailed as having the traditional jute industry, which was thriving in the pre-Independence era. After the partition, all the jute mills were left to the Indian side while the areas growing raw jute were left to East Pakistan. Therefore, local cultivators were encouraged to produce or grow jute so as to cater to the jute mills which were located in West Bengal. But the golden era of the golden fibre, that is called jute, has been lost since the advent of synthetic fibre.

In the year 1987, the Government of India had intervened by enacting a law in which jute packaging was made compulsory, in order to supply oxygen to this sector. However, it was a temporary measure. At that point of time, the Government had genuinely recognised the need of the jute growers and the jute mills, which provided livelihood to 2.5 million workers and 4 million jute growers. In addition to that, as many as 2 million livelihoods in the secondary and tertiary sectors are provided by jute itself. Therefore, we all should recognise it as the most vital sector.

This sector also contributes to the exchequer of the State Government and the Central Government. But it is paradoxical to note that since the promulgation of the Act, the area of jute cultivation has been shrinking in Bengal, even as the demand for gunny bags was increasing. Naturally, to maintain the adequate supply of gunny bags, the Government was often compelled to issue permits for

importing jute bags. The advantage of the present market economy consequently helped the producers and the industries in the foreign countries also.

We need to take a holistic approach to this sector because the history of the developed countries reveal that it is the textile industry, which has laid the basic foundation for any developed economy. Jute also belongs to the textile industry. A number of countries of Western Europe, America, and countries like South Korea, China, etc. are thriving on the textile industry, and jute is also a part of that industry.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (BARRACKPORE): It is there for receiving step-motherly treatment.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY : Shri Topdar, you are hailing from a constituency, which has a large concentration of jute mills. But you cannot deny the fact that the Government of West Bengal has failed to take any pre-emptive action in view of the flourishing synthetic industry.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : Can you suggest some measures to solve this problem?

SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE : Shri Chowdhary, you have been misinformed with regard to this issue.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY : In connivance with the bureaucrats in West Bengal, and in collusion with the political apparatchik of West Bengal, fly-by-night operators have been thriving in this sector in Bengal.

You can deny it. For example, do you know that those fly-by-night operators are roaming scot-free after reneging provident fund, gratuity and other employment facilities to the workers? How is it possible? If your Government is sincere enough and vigilant enough, how those fly-by-night operators are roaming scot-free? That is why I was stating that you should forget or abandon the habit of passing the buck to the Central Government for rehabilitation or anything else. You should have explored ways to ensure survival of this sector.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : Speak about the Mandatory Jute Packaging Act which will enable the industry to survive. What is your opinion? Is it to be withdrawn?

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY : No, but it cannot go for long, or for centuries because the situation has been changing drastically. You cannot assume yourself that you are living in an isolated island. In view of the globalised market and in view of the present scenario, you cannot permanently rely upon the Central Government for all kinds of succour and for rehabilitation. I say this because being a State Government you should discharge your responsibility to this sector.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : The State Government cannot issue such orders.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let there be no interruptions please.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY : I am advocating only for those jute growers because in the competitive environment you cannot sustain this sector without adopting any innovative measures. You have to shore up this industry by adopting innovative measures in which you have failed miserably in the State of West Bengal. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary, please address the Chair.

**SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY :** There is a plethora of schemes to revamp and develop this sector such as - Capital Subsidy Scheme, Technology Upgradation Fund, Infrastructure Development Scheme like Jute Service Centres, Raw Material Banks, Design Development Scheme, Duty Entitlement Pass Book Scheme, and for expansion of markets abroad Jute Manufacturers Development Council. In spite of all those measures why have we not been able to develop jute industry? This is to be clarified by the hon. Minister.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** How much time do you need Shri Chowdhary?

**SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY :** Sir, I will take a few more minutes.

Sir, the problems which have been identified by experts and which have so far stultified this sector are as follows:

1. High labour cost;
2. Instability in the production of raw jute;
3. Demand erosion;
4. Obsolescence of machinery; and
5. Competition from synthetic sector

These are identified to be the problem areas. The remedies prescribed are: increase in productivity, upgradation of quality of raw jute and stimulation of additional demand for jute goods both in domestic and international markets. Therefore, holistic measures need to be taken in order to keep this sector alive.

**SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR :** Such as?

**SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY :** Your Government discouraged the Rajiv Gandhi Technology Mission because you were always averse to modernisation programmes. That is why we are suffering till now. ...*(Interruptions)* You cannot shirk the responsibility. You have not set up any institute to study how to promote consumption of jute goods, beyond the compulsory jute packaging.

**SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR :** Do not follow BJP, follow Rajiv Gandhi.

**SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY :** You follow Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu, where there is no jute production, more than 300 units are being run. Raw jute goes there from West Bengal or other jute producing States. ...*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister and say that jute mill owners in the State of West Bengal can be divided into two categories. One of the categories comprises IJMA. Here, workers are being paid by the owners to the tune of Rs.120 to Rs.180 per day. On the other hand are the mills which were bought by the local traders. In the pre-Independence era, most of the mill owners were foreigners. When they left the country, those mills were bought by the local entrepreneurs. Sometimes, expatriates also left the mills to the local entrepreneurs whose only motive was to make profit without making any innovation, without introducing any technological upgradation. That is why the entire jute industry in West Bengal has been suffering from a lack of technological upgradation and modernisation. The entire machinery is obsolete and no innovation has so far been made. That is why jute sector in West Bengal has not been able to compete in the present scenario. That is why I am proposing that investment of fresh funds should be encouraged to upgrade these jute industries.

Private investors need to be encouraged so that in the present situation those mill owners would be able to plough back their income in this sector. Therefore, the Central Government in consultation with the State Government should encourage and make provision for the fresh investment so that this sector could be revived, specially for those jute growers who are really suffering and whose condition are deteriorating from bad to worse, could be survived.

I beg to differ with Shri Basu Deb Acharia, who has just told that the jute procurement has not been started in Mushirabad district. I think, he has not been

informed properly. Jute procurement has already been started in Mushirabad district and the rate is around Rs.900 per quintal because there is some gradation. The JCI is the nodal agency for MSP operation and the Jute Commissioner is

the highest authority. It entirely depends upon the Jute Commissioner to determine the differential prices of Jute.

In the last year, the quota of TD-5 was fixed at 35 per cent but this year this quota has been increased to 39 per cent. I would request the hon. Minister to pay attention to this issue. In the last year, the quota of TD-3 and TD-4 has been five per cent and it has been increased to 22.32 per cent this year. As regards TD-6, last year the procurement was fixed 40 per cent, this year it has been reduced to 20 per cent. As regards TD-5, last year the procurement was 20 per cent, this year it has been reduced to 18 per cent. Here lies the rub. The quality jute under the grade of TD-3, 4 and TD-5 are not abundant in the jute producing districts. Here, the percentage of procurement quota has been raised while the percentage of available grade has been slashed. This problem must be addressed. Otherwise, those jute growers would be adversely affected.

**श्री प्रदीप गांधी (राजनंदगांव) :** माननीय सभापति महोदय, जूट उद्योग पूर्वी भारत, पश्चिम बंगाल, असम, बिहार, आंध्र, उड़ीसा और त्रिपुरा, लगभग 90 प्रतिशत जूट का उत्पादन इन क्षेत्रों से होता है। इन क्षेत्रों में जूट के साथ जो उद्योग लगे हुए हैं, उनमें लगभग दो लाख मजदूर कार्यरत हैं और पूरे जूट के उद्योग के साथ, इसका उत्पादन करने वाले किसान और किसान के साथ यदि हम उनमें लगे हुए व्यापारी और सब को जोड़ लें तो लगभग एक करोड़ लोग इस काम से प्रत्यक्ष और अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से जुड़े हुए हैं। उनके सामने वर्तमान में गहरा संकट है। पश्चिम बंगाल में जूट मिलें नहीं चल रही हैं, जूट की खरीदी नहीं हो रही है। केन्द्र सरकार की कुछ नीतियों के कारण यह संकट हमारे सामने खड़ा हुआ है।

इस संकट के समाधान के लिए आदरणीय बसुदेव आचार्य जी ने चर्चा उठाई। अभी बीच-बीच में चर्चा चल रही थी, मुझे कभी-कभी यह सोचकर हैरानी होती है कि एक तरफ वामपंथियों की बैसाखी के सहारे कांग्रेस की सरकार चल रही है और वहां से दबका दिखाकर कि हम बिल्कुल आपकी बात नहीं मानेंगे, इससे मुझे तो यह विचार करना पड़ता है, अपने वामपंथी मित्रों के बारे में सोचता हूँ कि इस सरकार को किस तरह से आप बैसाखी के सहारे चलाते रहेंगे, जो आपकी भावनाओं की कद्र न करे। जो आप जनहित के मुद्दों को उठा रहे हैं, आपकी अपनी व्यक्तिगत फायदे की बात नहीं है, सारा देश इस बात को मानता है कि पश्चिम बंगाल में मजदूरों के सामने संकट है, उद्योगपति अपने उद्योग ठीक से नहीं चला पा रहे हैं और जब ऐसे संकट की घड़ी में आप इस ज्वलन्त मुद्दे को चलायें तो इस सदन के अन्दर कांग्रेस का एक भी लीडर उपस्थित नहीं है। केवल मंत्री महोदय हैं, चूंकि उनकी मजबूरी है। चूंकि बसुदेव आचार्य जी ने इस विषय को रखा है, लेकिन सरकार चलाना आपकी नैतिक जिम्मेदारी है। इस महत्वपूर्ण विषय को कांग्रेस ने इस हल्केपन से ले लिया कि आज सदन के अन्दर एक भी व्यक्ति नहीं है। मेरा कहने का मतलब यह है कि जूट पर्यावरण का मित्र है और आज इस इंडस्ट्री को बढ़ावा देने से हमारे देश में बहुत से रोजगार के अवसर सृजित हो सकते हैं। (व्यवधान)

**सभापति महोदय :** कबीर साहब का एक वचन है, सब घर देखा, एक ही लेखा, आप जो पार्टियों की स्थिति बता रहे हैं, मैं चेयर से इस बात को नहीं कहना चाहता था।

**श्री प्रदीप गांधी :** माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैं आपका ध्यान इस ओर आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ कि जूट पर्यावरण का मित्र है और पर्यावरण को बचाने के लिए सरकार अनेक प्रकार की कल्याणकारी कार्यक्रम चला रही है। जब सरकार कल्याणकारी कार्यक्रमों के माध्यम से पर्यावरण की रक्षा करना चाहती है और संयुक्त प्रगतिशील गठबंधन की सरकार ने अपने न्यूनतम कार्यक्रम में यह कहा है कि हम रोजगार के अवसर सृजित करेंगे, जब आप रोजगार के अवसर सृजित करने की बात करते हैं तो एक तरफ जिस रोजगार में लगे हुए लाखों-करोड़ों लोगों को आप रोजगार से हटाने के लिए प्रयत्न कर रहे हैं, इसके लिए इस दिशा में गम्भीरतापूर्वक विचार होना चाहिए कि ऐसा कौन सा एक्ट है, जिस पैकेजिंग एक्ट के कारण से क्या परिस्थितियां बन रही हैं, उन परिस्थितियों का अध्ययन हो और अध्ययन होने के बाद न्यूनतम कुछ आइटमों पर जूट के उपयोग की अनिवार्यता लागू हो, अनाज पर हो, शक्कर पर तो अभी लागू है, लेकिन कई चीजों पर प्लास्टिक बैगों का उपयोग होता है, मोएस्चर के कारण से उसमें कई प्रकार की रासायनिक क्रियाएं होती हैं और वह खाद्यान्न उपयोगी नहीं होती हैं, इसके विरुद्ध हमारे सामने जूट है। जूट का मल्टी परपज उपयोग है। बहुआयामी उपयोग करके उससे किसी प्रकार का पर्यावरण का नुकसान न हो तो उसके लिए आवश्यक है कि इस उद्योग को पुनर्जीवित किया जाये। इस उद्योग को पनपाने के लिए किसानों के साथ इस तरह का व्यवहार किया जाये। यह उद्योग धीरे-धीरे 1960 से लेकर 1970 के दशक में जब रूस और अमेरिका को हिन्दुस्तान का जूट जाता था तो सर्वाधिक विदेशी मुद्रा अर्जन करने वाला यह क्षेत्र था, लेकिन आज परिस्थितियां बदल गई हैं। 1980 के बाद के दशकों में विदेशों में इस माल का जाना बन्द हो गया और माल का जाना बन्द होने से उसके कारण विदेशी मुद्रा में कमी आ गई। उमर से केन्द्र की सरकार ने क्या किया कि इसके उमर सैस लगा दिया। अब आप देखिये, एक तरफ इस सैस के लगाने का कारण है कि जो नये उद्योग आएंगे, जो राशि इस सैस से जैनरेट होगी, उस टैक्स के कारण से तो उन उद्योगों के आधुनिकीकरण में उनको सपोर्ट किया जायेगा। इस नाते आप उस पैसे की वसूली कर रहे हैं। मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहूंगा कि इस टैक्स के माध्यम से कितनी राशि वसूल की गई और कितने उद्योगों को आपने इस राशि को दिया ताकि वे वहां पर स्थापित हो सकें। अभी तक ऐसा कोई उदाहरण हमारे सामने नहीं है, केवल इस राशि की वसूली हो रही है।

अगर वसूली के बाद इसका पुनर्विनियोजन नहीं होगा तो वह राशि डम्प होती जायेगी। इसके कारण वर्तमान में इस उद्योग के सामने संकट खड़ा हो गया है। वह कितनी राशि है, उसके आंकड़ें माननीय मंत्री जी के पास होंगे। जब वे बतायेंगे तो निश्चित रूप से हमें इस बारे में जानकारी प्राप्त होगी। मेरा कहना है कि यह

टैक्स हटा देना चाहिए। इस टैक्स की वजह से जूट उद्योग के सामने संकट है, टैक्स हटा देने से उनको लाभ मिलेगा।

जूट उद्योग में तकनीकी सुधार की आवश्यकता है। जब तक तकनीकी सुधार नहीं होगा, तब तक हम परम्परागत रूप से जो काम कर रहे हैं, उसमें सुधार की गुंजाइश नहीं होगी। इस गुंजाइश को किस तरह पूरा किया जाये, इसके लिए आवश्यक है कि हम उन्हें शुल्क ऋण, सॉफ्ट ऋण उपलब्ध करायें ताकि वे तकनीकी उन्नयन की दिशा में बहुत अच्छी तरह काम कर सकें।

सभापति महोदय, पूरे देश में लगभग 71 जूट मिलें हैं। इसके अलावा छोटी-मोटी सुतली तथा अन्य चीजें बनाने के अलग-अलग कारखाने हैं। उसमें से लगभग 59 जूट मिलें पश्चिम बंगाल में हैं और सात आंध्र प्रदेश में हैं। पश्चिम बंगाल में चूंकि वाम मोर्चा की सरकार है, वाम मोर्चा सरकार ने जूट मिल, उद्योगपति और लेबर्स के बीच प्रोडक्शन लिंक वेजेज देने का समझौता किया। बंगाल सरकार, लेबर्स और उद्योगपति के बीच एक एमओयू हुआ। उस एमओयू के अन्तर्गत प्रोडक्शन लिंक वेजेज देने की बात वहां की सरकार ने तय की। जहां तक मेरे संज्ञान में है, अभी तक पश्चिम बंगाल की सरकार ने उस एमओयू को इम्प्लीमेंट करने की दिशा में कोई कारगर कदम नहीं उठाया। उद्योग को पुनर्जीवित और विकसित करने की जिम्मेदारी राज्य सरकार की है। राज्य सरकार अपनी तरफ से उसमें मदद कर सकती है। राज्य सरकार को भी इस दिशा में सक्रियतापूर्वक प्रयत्न करना चाहिए। यदि वहां की सरकार इसे लागू करे तो उसका लाभ निश्चित रूप से मजदूरों और उद्योगपतियों को प्राप्त होगा। उसके माध्यम से वहां के जो उद्योग हैं, उनको पुनर्जीवित किया जा सकेगा। उद्योगों को पुनर्जीवित करने के लिए जो कार्यवाही है, उस कार्यवाही को

करना चाहिए।

चूंकि यह उद्योग 100 वां पुराना है। 100 साल पुराने इस उद्योग के कारण भारत की एक पहचान बनी। इस पहचान को कायम रखते हुए इस दिशा में सरकार को विचार करना चाहिए। इन दिनों खासकर अनाज में जिस तरह से प्लास्टिक के उपयोग की छूट दी गयी है, उसे निश्चित रूप से विदग्ध करना चाहिए। विदग्ध करके इसको समर्थन देने से निश्चित रूप से उसका बहुत बड़ा लाभ देश को मिलेगा।

अभी इंजीनियरिंग के क्षेत्र में भी पटसन के, जूट के उपयोग की तकनीक विकसित हुई है। नयी तकनीक का अध्ययन करके बड़े-बड़े काम किये जा सकते हैं। हमारे यहां आईटीआई यूनिट जैसे अध्ययन करने वाले संस्थान हैं। सरकार ने एक अध्ययन कराया। एक अध्ययन आदरणीय बसुदेव जी ने बताया कि उस अध्ययन के दौरान ये सजेशन प्राप्त हुए हैं। अध्ययन में लाखों-करोड़ों रुपये व्यय किये होंगे। यदि अध्ययन के बाद हम उसे कार्यरूप में परिणत नहीं करेंगे तो फिर समस्याओं का समाधान नहीं होगा। हाऊस में चर्चाएं होंगी और हमको चर्चा का उत्तर मिलेगा। समाचार-पत्रों में छपेगा लेकिन कारगर कदम उठाने के

लिए मिल-जुलकर काम करना चाहिए। कुछ विाय राजनीति से ऊपर उठकर भी होते हैं। उस दिशा में भी हमें गंभीरतापूर्वक विचार करने की आवश्यकता है।

उस आवश्यकता को पूरा करने के लिए सम-सामयिक विाय के रूप में यह विाय सामने आया है। जब विाय सामने आया है तो निश्चित रूप से हमें और आपको गंभीरतापूर्वक इस बारे में विचार करते हुए कदम उठाने चाहिए। मैं आग्रह करूंगा कि इस दिशा में जो अच्छे काम हो सकते हैं, वे किए जाएं। एक विशेषता और है खासकर जिन क्षेत्रों में जूट की खेती होती है, जो किसान उसमें लगे हुए हैं, यह उनकी कैंश क्रॉप है, और कैंश क्रॉप फसल वाले क्षेत्रों में नक्सलवाद कम जन्म लेता है। यह भी अध्ययन का विाय है कि जिन क्षेत्रों में जूट की खेती होती है, उन क्षेत्रों में नक्सलवाद ने कम जन्म लिया। इसलिए आवश्यक है कि इस तरह के उद्योगों को बढ़ाने के लिए हमें प्रयत्न करने चाहिए। यदि हम प्रयत्न करेंगे तो निश्चित रूप से इससे किसानों को स्थाई रूप से रोजगार प्राप्त होंगे। आज किसानों के लिए रोजगार के अवसर सृजित करने हैं। सरकार भी कहती है कि कैंश क्रॉप लें। जो हम परम्परागत रूप से खेती करते हैं, उसमें परिवर्तन हो। उसके लिए बजट में करोड़ों, अरबों रुपये का प्रावधान किया जाता है कि परम्परागत खेती से हटकर दलहन, तिलहन और नकदी फसलों को लेने के लिए किसान अपने आपको प्रेरित करें। उसे इस बात के लिए प्रेरित करने के लिए अनेक प्रकार की सब्सिडी, अनेक प्रकार की योजनाओं में अनुदान प्रदान किया जाता है। यदि हम इस व्यवस्था को लागू कर अपने किसानों को प्रमोट करना चाहते हैं, उनको कैंश क्रॉप लेने के लिए आगे बढ़ाना चाहते हैं तो ऐसे उद्योग पार्टिकुलर क्षेत्रों में फैले हुए हैं। यदि प्रोडक्शन ज्यादा होगा तो राजस्थान के अलवर में भी उद्योग लगे हैं, अन्य प्रान्तों में भी उद्योग लगे हैं। यदि उद्योगों के लिए कच्चा माल सर्व-सुलभ उपलब्ध होगा तो निश्चित रूप से इसका लाभ भी अन्य क्षेत्रों को प्राप्त होगा। कभी-कभी यह कहा जाता है कि जूट के बोरों की कीमत अधिक है, उसकी बनिस्पत प्लास्टिक के बोरों की कीमत कम है। कीमत कौन तय करता है? न्यूनतम वेजेस सरकार तय करती है। बंगाल के एक मजदूर को आठ घंटे मिल में काम करने के बाद 205 रुपये मजदूरी प्राप्त होती है। मजदूरी हम तय करते हैं, बिजली के रेट्स हम तय करते हैं, सारे विाय हमारे हाथ में हैं और जब हम ही सब कुछ तय करते हैं तो यह कहना कि उसकी कीमत बढ़ी हुई है, उसके उपयोग को हतोत्साहित किया जाए, यह तर्कसंगत बात नहीं है। हम अन्य चीजों की कीमतें भी तय करना छोड़ दें तो इसका लाभ मिलेगा। बंगाल के बारे में श्री बसुदेव आचार्य ने कहा कि बीआईएफआर के माध्यम से मिलों को बंद करने के आदेश हो गए हैं जिससे मजदूरों के सामने संकट खड़ा हो गया है, उनके परिवार कट में हैं, उनके सामने रोजी-रोटी की समस्या है। मैं आग्रह करूंगा कि इस तरह की यूनिट्स को कैसे वॉयबल किया जाए, किस तरह पुनर्चलन में लाया जाए, इसके लिए

कोई तर्कसंगत नीति बनाई जाए। संकट यही आता है कि जब तक पुराने मिल मालिकों की पुरानी देनदारियां नहीं देंगे तब तक यूनिट को नहीं चला सकते। यदि हमें मजदूरों की तात्कालिक समस्या का समाधान करना है तो इस बात पर गंभीरतापूर्वक विचार करना होगा, एक सुनियोजित नीति बनानी होगी कि यदि कोई उद्योगपति या मजदूर यूनियन एक ग्रुप बनाकर, एक संगठन बनाकर उसे चलाने के लिए आगे आता है तो पुरानी बातों को थोड़ा किनारे रखकर तात्कालिक रूप से किस तरह समस्या का समाधान हो सके, उस दिशा में विचार करना चाहिए। अगर हम पुरानी परिपाटी को लेकर चलेंगे कि आप अपना पीएफ का इतना पैसा देंगे, ऊर्जा का कितना देंगे, सेल्स टैक्स का इतना बकाया देंगे, जब आप इसे देंगे तब मिल हस्तान्तरित की जाएगी और आप इसे चला पाएंगे तो मुश्किल होगा। कोई भी मिल चलाने वाला व्यक्ति दूसरे की देनदारियां देकर उद्योग चलाने की हिम्मत नहीं करता। वह उद्योग तब चलाएगा जब उसे लाभ दिखाई देगा।

या तो सरकार जनभावना से यह कार्य करे। कहीं सामाजिक भावना से किया भी है, तो वहां जितनी सरकार द्वारा संचालित यूनिट्स हैं, वे कहीं न कहीं घाटे में हैं और हर साल हर मंत्रालय की पी.यू.ज. बजट्री सपोर्ट की मांग करती हैं। कब तक हम बजट के माध्यम से सपोर्ट करते रहेंगे इसलिए आवश्यकता इस बात की है कि यदि कोई व्यक्ति चलाने के लिए आगे आए, तो उसको अवसर मिलना चाहिए। उसके लिए कोई नीति बनानी चाहिए। चाहे आप उनको माफ करें या न करें, चाहे तो पांच-दस साल के लिए एक समय सीमा बांध दें कि इस अवधि में आप किरस्तों में राशि अदा करेंगे। आप यूनिट को भी चलाएं और मजदूरों को रोजगार के अवसर भी दीजिए। खुद भी पैसा जैनेरेट करेंगे, जो बाद में आपको देनदारी के रूप में देना पड़ेगा, यह भी उनके साथ निश्चित होना चाहिए। यदि यह वचनबद्धता हम लेते हैं, स्वीकार करते हैं, तो निश्चित रूप से उद्योग पुनर्स्थापित होकर चल पाएंगे। सरकार के पास आकर पैसा मांगकर कुछ पीरियड के लिए चलाएंगे, इस व्यवस्था से जो मिलें चलेंगे, उनको जो भी पैसा देंगे, उस वक्त तो चलेंगे, लेकिन कुछ समय के बाद पुरानी परम्परा की ओर मुड़ जाएंगी यानी फिर बंद होने की स्थिति में आ जाएंगी। इसलिए आवश्यकता है कि सक्रियतापूर्वक, गम्भीरतापूर्वक विचार होना चाहिए। इस दिशा में समाधान के लिए क्या अच्छा किया जा सकता है, उसके लिए मिलकर प्रयत्न होना चाहिए।

मंत्री जी इस विाय में गम्भीर हैं, ऐसा मैं मानता हूँ। वाम मोर्चा के सहयोगियों ने जो आग्रह किया है, उसको आप स्वीकार करें, नहीं तो कटुता बढ़ेगी। इससे संकट सामने आएगा। इसलिए संकट को न्यौता मत दें। हम तो चाहेंगे कि संकट जल्दी आए।

**श्री तरित बरण तोपदार :** संकट नहीं आने वाला है।

**श्री प्रदीप गांधी :** लगता है आपकी मिलीजुली कवाली चलती है। कांग्रेस और वाम मोर्चा की मिलीजुली कवाली से समस्या का समाधान नहीं होगा।

**श्री तरित बरण तोपदार :** आप पैकेज के बारे में बोलें।

**श्री प्रदीप गांधी :** मैंने कहा है। लेकिन इस समस्या का समाधान दिखाई नहीं पड़ता। यदि इस तरह से मिलीजुली कवाली होगी तो समस्या का समाधान कम होगा। समाधान की दिशा में कोई सकारात्मक दृष्टिकोण अपनाकर प्रयत्न होना चाहिए, ताकि इससे मजदूरों और किसानों की भलाई हो। देश में उद्योग रीढ़ की हड्डी रहे हैं, उनको मजबूती प्रदान करने के लिए आपको सार्थक कदम उठाने होंगे।

**श्री अजय चक्रवर्ती :** सभापति महोदय, मेरा व्यवस्था का प्रश्न है। सदन में गणपूर्ति नहीं है।

**सभापति महोदय :** घंटी बजाई जा रही है।

MR. CHAIRMAN : As there is no quorum, the House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11 a.m. on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, 2004.



**20.47 hrs.**

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock  
on Thursday, August 19, 2004/Sravana 28, 1926 (Saka).*

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