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Title: Reported entry of big companies in retail trade in the country.

PROF. M. RAMADASS (PONDICHERRY): Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you I would like to draw the attention of this august House to one of the ominous trends that is emerging in the Indian economy. The trend is that there is a large scale entry of large business houses in this country into the retail business which is causing great havoc to the people.

Retail trade occupies a very important position in the life of the nation where a large number of petty traders, a large number of marginal and small businessmen are employed and eking a livelihood. This becomes a source of employment and livelihood to the people. A large number of people are dependent on that. These people are unorganized in nature. They are from down-trodden and poor communities. Now, if you allow these big companies there, they lose in the competition. This creates three important consequences.

One is that it creates an unfair and unhealthy competition between the big business and tiny, small and marginal businessmen. As a result of which these people are not able to withstand the competition and they are marketed out.

Secondly, Sir, these people lose their job, lose their income and livelihood in the market. People argue that the big companies can ensure efficiency. Efficiency may be there but equity is sacrificed. In the name of economic reforms and liberalization we should not initiate the process of marginalization. Already there is marginalization in agriculture and industry and if the marginalization takes place in the trade also all the backwash effects of the economic reforms would be found in the human face of the people. Therefore, economic reforms without human face, economic reforms without taking into the welfare of the people is not going to answer any of the problems that we are facing. One the one side we are discussing about the rise in price and on the other side we are talking about unemployment. [\[R66\]](#)

We are not able to do anything to improve the working conditions of the unorganized labour. This segment comes under that. Therefore, there is a large scale opposition to the entry of large business and big companies into the retail trade. You must have heard two-three days' back, in Ranchi, Jharkhand, the vegetable vendors went on the streets and they broke the shops and other things.

In Tamil Nadu, there is an incessant agitation against this by our Party demanding that the big business companies should not enter into the retail trade. There is no difference of opinion among the political parties in Tamil Nadu. All political parties irrespective of their political affiliations support the move that the small and petty shops should not be affected by their entry. The hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has also agreed to this in principle and he has said that he will write to the Centre asking it to regulate the entry of big business into retail trade.

I urge upon the hon. Prime Minister or to whichever Minister it is applicable to see that the small and petty trade is not affected by the entry of large scale business houses. So, let us not add one more woe to the sufferings of the people. Therefore this trade must be regulated and the entry as far as possible should be kept away from the small trade and let them confine to their own business and companies.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have made your point but you are repeating the same thing.

PROF. M. RAMADASS : Therefore, I urge upon the Government to regulate the entry of big business houses.

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL (KOPERGAON): Sir, I associate myself with this matter.