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Title: Need to extend assistance to the Government of Kerala for protecting the interests of workers engaged in traditional industries.

SHRI P. RAJENDRAN (QUILON): Sir, the plight of about one crore people who are depending on the traditional industries for their livelihood all over Kerala is very pathetic and pitiable. The lives of these workers, mainly in the handloom, coir, cashew industries, fisheries and construction sector, are being thrown to doldrums following the crisis in agriculture and allied sectors. Amongst these workers, around two million are either completely unemployed or partly employed.

The crisis of cashew industry due to fall in the price of cashew kernels has indeed caused a negative impact on our foreign exchange earnings apart from rendering workers jobless. Coir products worth crores of rupees are accumulated in the godowns for long as the export has shown a diminishing trend, and workers are denied of employment for the last one year.

Application of modern technology, infusion of capital investment and modern marketing are the dire needs of these traditional industries.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Government of India to extend all possible assistance to the State of Kerala so as to save the millions from starvation.