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Title: Need to exempt the match industry from excise duty.

SHRI S. R. JEYADURAI (THOOTHUKKUDI): The Union Government has set apart Rs. 40,100 crore to create and provide job at least for 100 days in a year through Employment Guarantee Programme.

But the labour intensive match industries have been levied heavy duty at an enhanced rate of 10% increased from 8%. This has been levied even on semi-mechanised match units that employ lakhs of people as manual labour thereby providing job opportunities. These units now face closure due to heavy tax. About 5 lakh people in Tamil Nadu of which about 1 lakh people in my Thoothukudi constituency alone shall have to lose jobs. This danger is looming large now.

There used to be uniform 8% duty on matches manufactured either ways both mechanized and semi-mechanised. Since the smaller match units manufacturing entirely manually, have not been able to face the stiff competition, switched over to semi-mechanised manufacturing of match boxes.

I had urge upon the Finance Ministry to either reduce the duty from 8% or fully remove this from levy of duty. But in this year's Budget, this duty has been enhanced from 8% to 10%.

As the smaller semi-mechanised match units provide job opportunities to may, I urge upon the Union Finance Ministry to reduce the duty from 10 to 8% immediately and later on, semi-mechanised units may be fully exempted from this duty.