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Title: Need to declare raw cotton under Essential Commodities Act.

SHRI S. SEMMALAI (SALEM): Mr. Chairman, thank you for giving me this opportunity to raise an important public issue regarding the plight of textile industries, sufferings of handlooms, powerlooms and garment units. Now, textile manufacturers are facing turmoil. The textile industry is one of the largest employment providers and highest revenue earners. Next to agriculture sector, textile sector provides more employment.

One of the prime reasons for this situation is the wrong export policy of this Government. Despite knowing the fact, the Government is keen on exporting raw cotton, cotton yarn and waste cotton. If there is surplus, there is nothing wrong in exporting these raw materials, but while there is shortage in the country, then why is cotton yarn being exported and why is the Government encouraging such type of detrimental acts? It is because of this that the yarn prices are soaring high. So, the policy of the Government should be changed. We export raw cotton at lower prices and import finished products and fabrics at higher prices, resulting in consumers paying higher prices.

So, I would like to say that the Government should declare raw cotton under the Essential Commodities Act. There should be a total ban on export of raw cotton and cotton yarn. Cotton Corporation of India should be the exclusive agency to procure cotton directly from the farmers. Centre should ban purchase of cotton by private intermediaries. The Government should also ban future trading and speculative trading as far as cotton is concerned. So, the Government should come forward to achieve these objectives.