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Title: Need to address the problems being faced by the small savings agents in the country.

SHRI S. SEMMALAI (SALEM): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for calling me to speak.

I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Minister of Communications and Information Technology to the plight of the small savings' agents due to the reduction of commission amount for their agency. Our economy is mainly dependent on savings. So, the savings habit has to be popularized among the people. Post Office service is a vital source of savings. The small savings' agents are the backbone of the Scheme. The commission for their agency service is very paltry. They serve as a main link between the depositors and the Post Offices. While such is the fact, recently the Government has reduced the commission amount with effect from first December. More than five lakh agents are being employed in the profession as full-time agents. Most of them are women who are housewives. For rendering their service in this field, they have to be adequately compensated through a higher commission. I understand that on the recommendations of the Shyamala Gopinath Committee, the commission has been reduced. Earlier, they were getting one per cent commission. Now, it has been reduced to half a percent. After all half-a-per cent! By this reduction, how much amount is going to be added to the Exchequer? In what way is the Government going to be affected if it pays one per cent?

So, I would like to draw the attention of our hon. Minister to this matter. I would request him to look into this matter and restore the same commission amount - at least what they received earlier. I hope the hon. Minister will address this genuine demand with due consideration.