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Title: Need to renew the existing licences of salt manufacturers in Tamil Nadu and also roll back the increase in assignment fee, land rent for such manufacturers in the State.

SHRIMATI K. MARAGATHAM (KANCHEEPURAM): Salt is one of the most essential things in our day-to-day life. Without salt, we cannot eat food, nor can we live.

Ministry of Commerce and Industry, had on 9th October 2013, spelt out the policy with regard to renewal of lease by the Salt Commissioner for manufacture of salt. The policy states that there would not be renewal of lease and that the fresh tender will be called for. It also said that the existing lessees may also participate along with the fresh applicants. Secondly the Central Government has increased the land rent abnormally without consulting the stake-holders.

Due to these unfavourable decisions, the small salt manufacturers are in great difficulty, especially, the existing lessees who have invested heavily in salt manufacturing and are in dire straits.

The Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce & Industry met the Salt manufacturers in Chennai on 14th June, 2014, heard their grievances and assured that the existing lessees would not be disturbed and their licences would be renewed. But now, the Salt Commissioner had called for fresh tenders, inviting applications. They are all very much disturbed by the action of the Salt Commissioner.

Hence, I request the Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industry to personally intervene in the matter so that the existing lessees are allowed to renew their licences.

I also request the Government of India to roll back the increase in assignment fee and land rent as demanded by the salt manufacturers.