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Title: Regarding problems faced by rubber growers in Kerala.

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): My submission is in respect of the fall in rubber prices totally in India. Kerala is very much concerned about the fall in prices of natural rubber. About 11 lakh small scale rubber cultivators face crisis due to fall in prices of rubber. The main reason for decline in rubber prices is indiscriminate import of natural rubber. In order to arrest the price fall, import of rubber should be stopped with immediate effect. Import of rubber is increased due to less import duty of rubber and rubber products. At present, rubber price has come down to Rs.120 per kg. which was about Rs.240 per kg. a few years back. This has made rubber cultivation not remunerative at all and farmers are leaving rubber cultivation. This affects the economy of the State also.

Madam, 95 per cent of the rubber cultivation is from Kerala. So, an appropriate scheme for natural rubber price stabilization or Income Stabilization Fund to support the small and marginal farmer is necessary and essential. I also urge upon the Government of India to restrict the import of natural rubber from outside. This is a very serious matter to be considered. ...(*Interruptions*) In the last Session also, we have raised the same issue but no response is coming from the Government. It is very unfortunate. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Adv. Joice George has given a notice. Hon. Members, please take your seats.

...(*Interruptions*)

ADV. JOICE GEORGE (IDUKKI): Madam Speaker, I am also raising a very same issue. This morning, I have received a rubber sheet from my constituency. People of my constituency are saying that this rubber is cheaper than paper there. This is a very serious issue. In Kerala, 80 per cent of the people are depending on rubber for their livelihood. Due to deep fall in prices of rubber, people are finding it very difficult to meet the expenses of educational expenses of their school going children, repay their loans and to meet their medical expenses. It has become a very social issue there.

Hence, I urge upon the Government to look into the issue. There should be a Price Stabilization Fund as pointed out by my learned friend, Shri N.K. Premachandran. Some concern should be showered by the Government. Otherwise, it would lead to very disastrous consequences in my State. I urge upon the Government to initiate some measures to mitigate the problem being faced by the people of Kerala. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: All the hon. Members who wanted to associate with the issue raised, may do so. I cannot compel the Government. Yes, the problem is serious. I can understand. You can associate with the issue.

Shri P.K. Biju,

Shri M.B. Rajesh,

Dr. A. Sampath,

Shri Innocent,

Shri Jose K. Mani, are allowed to associate with the issue raised by Adv. Joice George.

Shri Dhruvanarayana,

Shri B.N. Chandrappa, and

Shri B.V. Naik are allowed to associate with the issue raised by Shri D.K. Suresh.

Shri P. Karunakaran is allowed to associate with the issue raised by Shri N.K. Premachandran.

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN : No response has come from the Government....(*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): Madam, I appreciate the issue raised by Mr. N.K. Premachandran and all other colleagues from Kerala. It is certainly a very important issue. It has been raised several times in the House. I remember because I have also dealt with this issue as a former

Commerce Minister. I understand the issue of rubber price. A lot of factors do affect it but we are all concerned about the farmers. It is a major source of the economy there in Kerala. Seeing the concerns of the farmers, I would definitely request the Commerce Minister to hold a meeting with the Members of Parliament and do the needful.
