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Title: Regarding problems faced by mulberry farmers and silk weavers in Ananthpur district of Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI N. KRISTAPPA (HINDUPUR): Hon. Chairman, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak on the problems being faced by the silk cocoon farmers and silk weavers in Andhra Pradesh.

I would like to state that Andhra Pradesh State occupies the second highest position in silk cocoon farming in the country and also it occupies the first position in handloom weaving in the country.

The weakening position of handloom sector has posed a serious threat to the socio-economic status of silk weavers and silk cocoon farmers. Both silk cocoon farming and silk weaving are inter-related activities. Both are under the control of the Ministry of Textiles and are in a major crisis due to various reasons.

On one side, the silk weavers are committing suicide due to debts and on the other side the silk cocoon farmers are also attempting suicide because of not getting the Minimum Support Price.

To save the lives of silk weavers, silk yarn may be provided at a subsidized rate of 50 per cent per kilogram. Then only the silk weavers will survive. Silk cocoon farmers are not getting the Minimum Support Price for the cocoons. The silk farmers may also be provided subsidy at the rate of Rs.150 per kilogram on cocoons. Then only the silk farmers will survive.

Another important issue is that the National Horticulture Board is providing Rs.2 lakh subsidy for horticultural farmers for the unit cost of Rs.4 lakh in the name of pack house whereas the Central Silk Board is providing only Rs.1 lakh subsidy on Rs.5 lakh of unit cost in the name of silk 'rearing shed'.

I would also like to ask the Government why there is discrimination between agricultural farmers and sericulture farmers when both are doing farming activities.

In this regard, I would like to request the Government to increase the subsidy on silk rearing shed up to Rs.2.5 lakh.

Hence, I urge upon the hon. Minister of Textiles, through the Chair, to kindly look into the issue and take necessary steps to overcome the problems of silk weavers and silk cocoon farmers to improve their socio and economic status. Thank you.