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title: Need to keep customs duty on import of raw silk at 15%.

SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY (CHIKKABALLAPUR): Madam Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me to raise an important issue with regard to sericulture farmers.

In fact, even during the UPA regime, it was once reduced from 30 per cent to five per cent. Then the matter was agitated before this House, and all the sericulture farmers -- not only in Karnataka, but even in the rest of the places --- agitated over the matter, and I think that one or two sericulture farmers also committed suicide. So, having considered this issue, the then Finance Minister again, in fact, increased the Import Duty from five per cent to 15 per cent. Thereafter, the matter was also taken up by the hon. Chief Minister of Karnataka with the Textile Minister and also the Finance Minister.

In fact, the hon. Minister of Textile wrote a letter even to Shri Venkaiah Naidu, the hon. Minister for Urban Development in which he stated that : "It seems proper to keep customs duty on import of raw silk at the present level of 15 per cent as a balanced approach to protect interest of sericulture farmers, reelers, weavers and various stakeholders of the silk textile industry." In fact, the balance was maintained between the weavers and the sericulturists, but all of a sudden the Finance Minister, in his Finance Bill of 2015, again reversed the process and he said that : "In order to promote 'Make in India', I propose to reduce the basic customs duty on raw silk from 15 per cent to 10 per cent." This has really shocked the sericulture farmers.

How can such a decision be taken at the cost of the farmers as against 'Make in India'? ...*(Interruptions)* Madam, I will just conclude. When we say that they are working for the corporate world, then they say that we are accusing them. It is so manifest. In fact, ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: In 'Zero Hour', no speech is allowed.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY: Yes, Madam. I am concluding. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI S.P. MUDDAHANUME GOWDA: Madam, it is a very important matter concerning the sericulture farmers in Karnataka. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI R. DHRUVANARAYANA: Madam, it is an important matter concerning the State of Karnataka. ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Yes, I know it. I am allowing it.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY : In fact, there is a sharp fall in prices of raw silk; sharp fall in prices of cocoons in the cocoon markets; reduction in prices of cocoons and raw silk, which directly resulted in large-scale uprooting of mulberry gardens; and loss of capital invested by reelers and sericulturists, which has affected all the sericulture farmers and they are on the streets. I think that the Government has to reduce it. I do not know what provoked them suddenly to reduce it from 15 per cent to 10 per cent. My appeal to the Government is that it can be restored to 15 per cent if not 30 per cent.

HON. SPEAKER : Shri S.P. Muddahanume Gowda and Shri R. Dhruvanarayana are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri M. Veerappa Moily.