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Title: Issue regarding proposed levying one per cent excise duty on non-silver jewellery.

DR. SHRIKANT EKNATH SHINDE (KALYAN): Thank you, Chairman, Sir. I wish to bring to the notice of this august House, through you, a very burning issue that has currently grappled the jewelers of this country. The jewelers of this country are facing a very bad situation. The hon. Finance Minister has proposed in his budget to levy one per cent excise duty on non-silver jewellery. The jewelers across the nation are on indefinite strike since 2nd March. While I appreciate his efforts to raise the additional resources to meet the ever increasing needs of the country, it is pertinent to note that this particular measure is going to bring a lot of hardships not only to jewelers but also to lakhs of *karigars* or artisans that are involved in actually manufacturing the jewellery.

Jewellery making in India is mostly dependent on human skill rather than machine. Most of the *karigars*, though at top of their skills, are hardly literate. Therefore, it will be difficult for them to maintain records as it will involve a lot of paperwork. There is a fear among jewelers that it will lead to the inspector raj, confiscation of gold and other precious metal and loss of jobs to lakhs of *karigars*.

So the collateral damage of this proposed tax is huge as compared to the gain that we are expecting from it. Therefore I request the hon. Finance Minister, through you, Sir, to find out some other means to raise the resources he is expecting from this one per cent excise duty. I am sure, the jewelers would be very happy to contribute to the nation's cause and would not mind if they are made to pay by some other way which is less troublesome and seamless.

Thank you, Sir.

HON. CHAIRPERSON:

Shri Ajay Misra Teni,

Shri Bhairon Prasad Mishra,

Dr. Manoj Rajoria and

Shri Rahul Kaswan are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Dr. Shrikant Eknath Shinde.