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Title: Demand for discussion and clarification on the management, regularities and modernisation of public sector and private sector companies in West Bengal.

DR. BIKRAM SARKAR (HOWRAH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you I would like to bring to the notice of the Central Government an important, urgent and sensitive matter for discussion and clarification. In the name of liberalisation these days, we find that privatisation is being branded as the panacea of all industrial ills. But if you look at the private sector companies like Metal Box, Sen Raleigh, Dunlop in West Bengal, there are many other private sector units which have failed due to mismanagement and irregularities like siphoning off of funds by the private proprietor. Almost all of them are now a fit case of BIFR. The most recent example is, Dunlop in West Bengal. The State Government of West Bengal has failed miserably in bringing out the corrective measures to protect the interests of the workers. The workers are suffering due to closure of Dunlop units in West Bengal. On the other hand, Bengal Immunity, IISCO, MAMC, TICI, NTC, NJMC units and even Durgapur Steel Plant are not being run properly even though the Central Government has taken over the management in the public sector.

The modernisation of IISCO is being talked about for years. At one stage the Chief Minister of West Bengal requested the Minister of Steel to consider handing over this Public Sector unit to the private sector, when the Central Government was well advanced with the proposal for entrusting the modernisation with the Steel Authority of India. Many of the Public Sector Units have not been given the freedom to run professionally. The managers were not given the opportunity to use their expertise and the concerned Ministries misused them as 'kamdhenu' for milching them for other purposes.

I am of the opinion that if the managers in PSUs are given the freedom to use their expertise and also the responsibility, they would be able to deliver the goods and show good results and performance. Therefore, what is needed is that instead of privatising the existing PSUs, they are to be supported and strengthened.

Where selective disinvestment is thought of, it should be with a view to strengthening the PSU by ploughing back the resources to the PSUs. Any attempt at wholesale privatisation would send wrong signals to the common people, the poor people of India and would thus shake their confidence in the Government's intentions.

This is a very urgent matter which needs discussion and clarification by the Central Government.