

[12 July, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

श्री रवि शंकर प्रसाद : सभापति महोदय , अभी तक वहां कोई केन्द्रीय दल नहीं गया है । (व्यवधान) ... यह बहुत गंभीर विषय है । मैं आग्रह करूंगा कि सरकार बिहार में केन्द्रीय दल भेजे, वहां क्या कठिनाई है , इस पर विचार करे ।

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Problems of jute growers in the country

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA (West Bengal): Sir, my Special Mention is concerning the serious distress that has been confronted with by the jute growers, particularly in the Eastern region.

The United Progressive Alliance Government should be complemented for planning to effect upward revision of the Minimum Support Price of all Kharif crops. There has been no enhancement of the MSP of these crops during 2003, however unfortunate it may be. This year the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices has already recommended an average increase of 3.5 per cent for paddy, pulses, soyabean, sunflower, etc. This will certainly spell a sense of relief in the lives of millions of poor farming community who are, in fact, languishing in a horrifying morass of tremendous crisis. The cost of production has got increased manifold due to the systematic removal of subsidies on fertilizers, electricity, etc. The formidable change in the attitude of the new Government is quite satisfying.

But, I am rather distressed to note that there has been no enhancement in the MSP for jute. Millions of peasants, particularly in West Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Orissa, are jute growers and are already in the vortex of insurmountable crisis due to lackadaisical approach of the Jute Corporation of India and also the undue preference in use of synthetic bags for carrying foodgrains, sugar, etc. There must be a complete reversal of the situation and, to begin with, the MSP of jute must be significantly enhanced and the JCI must be directed to act in time with regard to procurement of jute from the real growers. Usually, these poor people are forced to distress sale in the absence of proper and timely initiative of the JCI.

A few millions of poor people can thus be saved from an ominous disaster of the present. Thank you.

DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with my colleague because Andhra Pradesh produces substantial quantity of jute. So, the MSP for jute should be enhanced so as to help the farmers.

श्रीमती चन्द्रकला पांडे (पश्चिम बंगाल) : सभापति महोदय, मैं इससे अपने आपको संबद्ध करती हूँ।

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, this is an important issue and the entire House is associated with it.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BALAWANT Alias BALAPTE in the Chair)]

Need for sincere efforts to stop female foeticide in the country

SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA (Karnataka): Mr. Chairman, Sir, according to the latest figures of the Census 2001, the child sex ratio at the national level has declined from 945 girls per 1,000 boys in 1991 to 927 girls per 1,000 boys in 2001. The Census has painted a gloomy picture in States like Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat in this regard. Another shocking revelation of the Census is that there are sixteen districts in the country having less than 800 girls per 1,000 boys. Various reasons are cited for this trend such as, son preference, neglect of girl child resulting in higher mortality, female foeticide and infanticide. Unfortunately, female foeticide through pre-birth sex determination is the major cause for the decline in number of girls in the country. Ultrasound machines, scanners and imaging machines can detect sex of foetus and magnitude of this disastrous business can be assessed from the fact that there are more than 21,600 registered centres conducting prenatal diagnosis. The number of unregistered centres conducting such tests is simply unknown. We can imagine at what scale this horrifying business of female foeticide is going on in the country killing the girls before their birth. The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act prohibits determination and disclosure of sex of the foetus. But violation of law is rampant for which serious thought needs to be given. The registered centres should be frequently raided by surprise to curb the misuse, and unregistered centres should not only be sealed but their machines and properties be confiscated and their owners be put behind the bars. The district authorities and local police authorities should be deemed to be guilty if sex determination is confirmed in their area and stern action be taken against them, the Centre should direct all the States to furnish quarterly reports in this regard. The Central Government needs to play its role more effectively in implementing the law so that the girl child is saved in the country. Thank you.