

Seventeenth Loksabha

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Title: Regarding Measures to support the manufacturers of safety matchboxes

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI KARUNANIDHI (THOOTHUKKUDI): Sir, the safety matchbox industry, a century old industrial sector, has put the country as one of the top industrial sectors in terms of production of safety matches and their export. It is now at a peril.

A kilo of cardboard, whose cost was Rs.40 in January, has already increased to Rs.90, and the cost of red phosphorous has increased from Rs.400 to Rs.1,000. These safety matchboxes depend on 14 raw materials. The costs of all the materials have gone up. The inflated capital and the costs have made the situation of this industry really bad.

The matches industry in Thoothukkudi district, my constituency, gives employment to over 10 lakh people. Many of the employees in this industry are women. Nearly, 90 per cent of the workforce is women who get employment through this. These areas are drought-prone areas. This is the only source of income for these people.

There is a lot of illegal import of one-time used plastic non-refillable lighters. This affects the matchbox industry in a very big way. On the one side, they are being affected because of the inflation of prices of raw materials and on the other side, the one-time used plastic lighters have impacted them in another way. The GST has also affected them.

On the GST, we have made repeated requests. Even the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has written to the Union Government but we have had no response. So, this industry is really being ambushed from all sides.

I request, through you, Sir, that the Union Government has to ban the import of one-time used plastic lighters. Also, it should support the matchbox industry by reducing the GST and also ensuring that the cost of the raw materials does not go up. Thank you.

