

Seventeenth Loksabha

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**Tite: Regarding the problems faced by the rubber growers and labourers in the country.**

**SHRI ANTO ANTONY:** Sir, I take this opportunity to invite the kind attention of this august House to the pathetic condition of over 13-lakh natural rubber growers and five-lakh labourers in the country. Due to the continued drop in natural rubber prices, lakhs of families in the country are in acute financial distress. Ten years ago, the price of rubber was Rs. 240 per kg. After that, production was doubled. Now, it is Rs. 140 per kg.

Actually, the rubber industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the country. The real reason for the drop in natural rubber prices in the country is the greed of rubber-based industries for more profit.

Hence, I would like to request the Government to kindly take the following steps to help our rubber growers and support the economy. The first step is the restriction of large-scale rubber imports to arrest further sinking rubber prices. The second is to protect rubber cultivation by including it in the "Make in India" scheme. The third step is to increase the subsidy amount for natural rubber replantation.

In the North-East, it was Rs. 1.5 lakh per hectare, but in Kerala, it was only Rs. 25,000. Lastly, I urge the Government to include natural rubber under the category of an agricultural crop.