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Title: Need to amend the Employees Pension Scheme in order to increase the amount of pension of EPF pensioners in the country.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): I would like to place before this House some serious issues with regard to the EPF pensioners and also the EPF Pension Scheme. There are about two and a half crore people, who are enrolled in this Scheme now. This Act has come in our country in the year 1952. After 43 years of big gap, the Scheme has come in 1995. Before this 1995 Scheme, the employees could enroll or join in the family pension scheme. There is a very serious lacuna in the 1995 Scheme because every employee has to complete 10 years service in this Scheme. But, it is not possible because only the new one, who joined after 1995, can complete it. So, a large number of employees are not able to get the minimum pension. It is surprising to note that many of them are getting only pension below Rs.100. There are persons who are getting only Rs.10 and Rs.2. The former Labour Minister, Shri Oscar Fernandes had visited Kerala and he himself was aware of the fact that many of the workers are not getting it. Irrespective of the political affiliation, all the trade unions have demanded the Government for a new Act.

Sir, it is also surprising to note that for the last 11 years there was no revision in the pension as far as this Scheme is concerned. There is revision after every five year for the Central and State Government employees. On the one side, Government says that there is financial difficulty. But, we know that every year the Provident Fund amount is increasing. So, there is no justification on the side of the Government. The trade unions have demanded that the minimum pension has to be raised up to at least Rs.3000. We know that the NREGA workers are getting Rs.150 or Rs.200. But, at the same time, the workers, who have served this nation for a long time, are getting Rs.100 as pension. The pensionable service should be counted from the date of the enrolment in the EPF. Then, this lacuna can be rectified.

The entire wages should be considered as pensionable salary. Now, there is a ceiling of Rs.6500. Earlier, commutation facility was allowed. But, now, it is stopped. That has to be restored. The capital return scheme may be reinstated. So, this is the most important issue as far as a large number of people are concerned. They have worked for this nation for a long time, but there is no one to hear them. I request the Government to take up these issues. A delegation is coming to meet the Prime Minister and the Law Minister. The Government should give this issue due importance.