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Title: Regarding plight of rubber growers in the State of Kerala.

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMCHANDRAN (VADAKARA): Mr. Deputy-Speake r, Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. I wish to bring to the notice of this august House a very important issue, a burning issue, relating to the plight of more than ten lakh rubber growers in the State of Kerala and elsewhere. Rubber cultivators are in deep distress due to sharp fall in the price of natural rubber following the decision of the Government to allow indiscriminate import of rubber.

As you are aware, rubber cultivators across the country are mostly small and marginal. The present crisis has become a life and death issue for the cultivators. They do not know how to earn their livelihood in the present situation. The Government of India is maintaining a criminal silence in the matter. The Members of Parliament from Kerala, cutting across political affiliations, have represented the matter before the Government. We have, in fact, demonstrated before the Parliament. But all our efforts are in vain. The hon. Chief Minister of Kerala, Shri Oman Chandi, and a group of political leaders are coming to Delhi to apprise the Government of this matter.

Under the circumstances, it is my humble request to the hon. Minister that Government should declare its stand on import of rubber. I would also like to request the Government to ban indiscriminate import of rubber so that justice is ensured to the cultivators.