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Title: Need to include Tapioca starch, sago and modified starch in negative list to Free Trade Agreement.

SHRI P.R. SUNDARAM (NAMAKKAL): There are currently about 450 starch and sago manufacturing units operating in various districts in Tamil Nadu generating employment directly or indirectly to over 70,000 workers, a majority of whom are women. About 1.2 lakh farmers are dependent on cultivation of tapioca, a raw material for starch and sago industry. Abolition of Special Additional Duty of 4% and reduction in customs duty on modified starch from 30% to 20% has resulted in indiscriminate imports from Thailand, etc. As a result, the domestic price came down drastically threatening the entire industry. To protect domestic industry, there is a need to include Tapioca starch, sago and modified starch in negative list to Free Trade Agreement. Therefore, I urge upon the government to raise tariff rates and effective rates of customs duty for these 3 commodities to protect the domestic industry as demanded by our Hon'ble Chief Minister.