

Bill No. L of 2014

THE JUTE GROWERS AND WORKERS (WELFARE) BILL, 2014

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BILL

*to provide for the remunerative prices for the raw jute to the jute growers fixed on the basis of cost of production of jute under the Minimum Support Price Scheme of the Government, compulsory purchase of raw jute by Government, agencies, compulsory insurance of Jute crops free of cost by the Central Government and certain welfare measures to be undertaken by the Central and concerned Governments of the States for the jute growers and jute workers engaged in jute related works and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.*

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Sixty-fifth year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Jute Growers and Workers (Welfare) Act, 2014.
- (2) It extends to the whole of India.
- (3) It shall come into force with immediate effect.

Short title,  
extent and  
Commence-  
ment.

Definitions.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, —

(a) "appropriate Government" means in the case of a State the Government of that State and in other cases, the Central Government;

(b) "fund" means the Jute growers and Workers Welfare Fund established under Section 4;

(c) "jute grower" means any person who cultivates Jute and obtains fibre therefrom;

(d) "jute worker" means any person engaged in jute related works as a wage earner, whether in cash or kind for his livelihood and includes a person engaged through a contractor or middleman etc.;

(e) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act.

Fixation of remunerative price of raw jute.

3. (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, the Central Government shall in consultation with the concerned Governments of the States fix and declare remunerative prices of raw jute under the Minimum Support Price regime on the basis of cost of production of jute before every sowing season.

(2) While fixing the remunerative prices of jute under sub-section (1), the Central Government shall take into account the following factors, namely:—

(a) Cost incurred by jute growers in sowing, growing and harvesting of jute and obtaining its fibre;

(b) Cost incurred on seeds, fertilizers or manure, insecticides and pesticides;

(c) Cost incurred on labour;

(d) Maintenance cost of the field;

(e) Cost incurred on transportation of raw jute to the market or yard or mandi or factory, as the case may be;

(f) Climatic conditions and occurrence of natural calamity; and

(g) Any other contingency expenditure incurred by Jute growers.

(3) The appropriate Government shall give wide publicity to the remunerative prices fixed for raw jute under this Act through print and electronic media and the village Panchayats.

(4) The agencies of appropriate Government shall purchase the raw jute from the jute growers at the prices fixed by the Central Government in case the jute growers fail to sell their raw jute in the open market.

(5) It shall be the duty of the appropriate Government to keep a watch on the dubious activities of jute traders and middlemen during the immediate post harvest period to ensure that prices of raw jute do not fall as a result of speculation and take such measures, as it may deem necessary to protect the interests of Jute growers.

(6) The entire jute crop and the yield thereof shall be compulsorily insured free of cost by the Central Government against natural calamities, fall in the yield of jute, fall in the prices of raw jute and such other eventualities as may be prescribed.

Establishment of Jute Growers and workers Welfare Fund.

4. (1) The Central Government, shall, by notification in the official Gazette establish the Jute Growers and Workers Welfare Fund for the purposes of this Act with initial corpus of rupee thirty thousand crore to be provided by the Central Government by due appropriation made by law by Parliament in this behalf and thereafter the Central and concerned State Governments shall contribute to the Fund to such extent and in such manner, as may be prescribed.

(2) The Fund may also receive moneys from corporate houses, financial institutions, individuals and bodies in the form of contributions or donations.

5. (1) The Fund shall be utilized for the following purposes, namely:—
- Utilization of Fund.
- (a) to provide financial assistance to jute growers for purchasing seeds, manure, fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides etc. for low yield of jute or loss of crop due to natural calamities, fire, wild life etc.;
- 5 (b) to pay compensation to the next of kin of jute grower or jute worker, as the case may be in the event of his death;
- (c) to pay insurance premium on behalf of the jute growers;
- (d) to provide free healthcare facilities for the jute growers and jute workers and their families including maternity facilities to the female members of the families.
- 10 (e) to provide education including technical, medical, higher education, Information Technology and Vocational training to the children of Jute growers and Jute workers free of cost;
- (f) to provide financial assistance to the jute growers and jute workers in the event of their disability; and
- 15 (g) for such other purposes as the appropriate Government may deem fit and necessary for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) For the purposes of this Act, the appropriate Government shall, —
- (i) maintain district-wise register of all the jute growers and jute workers with such particulars and in such manner as may be prescribed.
- 20 (ii) make provisions for payment of old age pension to the jute growers and jute workers.
6. The Central Government shall provide, from time to time, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, requisite funds for carrying out the purposes of this Act.
- Central Government to provide funds.
- 25 7. The provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any other law for the time being in force.
- Act to have overriding effect.
8. The provision of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of any other laws for the time being in force dealing with the subject matter of this Act.
- Act to supplement other laws.
- 30 9. The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.
- Power to make rules.

## STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The State of West Bengal is the major Jute producing State of the nation followed by Bihar. Though it is grown in some other States also but in small quantities mainly for local consumption. Jute fibre which is also known as golden fibre, used to hold a glorious position in our country. Even today jute is one of the main commercial crops of the country. Jute fibre is used to make bio-degradable, eco-friendly and cheap bags known as gunny bags used to keep wheat and other agricultural produce including sugar. Earlier almost every product used to be filled in jute bags but with coming of polymer synthetic bags in the market now jute bags are used only for foodgrains.

Of late jute growers in West Bengal and other parts of the country are facing various problems and they are not getting remunerative prices for their produce. Jute cultivation is becoming non-profitable for the growers due to various factors such as increase in the prices of jute seeds, fertilizers, manure, insecticides and pesticides and other inputs. Due to high investment involved in cultivation of jute, jute growers take loans on very high interest rates and unable to repay the loan becoming debt ridden and distressed. Since jute is a commercial crop insurance facility is not available to the jute growers and the growing use of synthetic fibre bags is adding to the miseries of jute growers. In some cases their financial condition or getting into debt trap is compelling many of them to take extreme step of committing suicide.

Ours is a welfare state and therefore it is the responsibility of the Central Government to ensure the welfare of the Jute growers and their families. The Central Government should fix remunerative prices of Jute and implement various welfare measures for them and for the jute workers who are dependent on the jute crops for their employment and livelihood. Their condition is also pitiable because of the plight of jute growers. The Central Government has to establish a Welfare Fund for the jute growers and jute workers to meet their various needs which will make them feel that our welfare State will take care of them.

Hence this Bill.

KANWAR DEEP SINGH

#### FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 4 of the Bill provides for the establishment of the Jute Growers and Workers Welfare Fund with the initial corpus of rupee thirty thousand crore to be provided by the Central Government. Clause 6 makes it mandatory for the Central Government to provide requisite funds for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. The Bill, if enacted, will involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India. It is expected that it may involve rupee five thousand crore as recurring expenditure per annum.

A sum of rupee one thousand crore may also involve as non-recurring expenditure.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 9 of the Bill gives power to the Central Government to make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. The rules will relate to matters of details only.

The delegation of legislative power is of normal character.

RAJYA SABHA

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*(Dr. Kanwar Deep Singh, M.P.)*