

Seventeenth Loksabha

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Title: Need to control 'Black Thrips', a pest damaging the chilli crop in Andhra Pradesh-laid.

**SHRI KESINENI SRINIVAS (VIJAYAWADA):** Andhra is the largest producer of red chilli in the country, accounting for 44% of the country's chilli produce. It is consumed both domestically and exported internationally. This year, due to market demand, farmers in Andhra planted chilli in more than 2 lakh hectares, a big jump from previous years. But unfortunately, a new pest called Black Thrips has ravaged the chilli crop. The un-untimely heavy rains have further aggravated the pest attack. It is estimated that the chilli farmers will suffer losses to the tune of 80% of their crop. Farmers have invested nearly Rs. One lakh per acre, anticipating a healthy chilli yield of 20-25 quintals per acre. But given the devastating pest attack, they will just get a yield of 5 quintals per acre. The chilli farmers are incurring huge losses. This has now become a question of survival for the chilli farmers of Andhra. Expeditious action is warranted in this regard. I urge the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare minister to press the Indian Council for Agricultural Research into action to study the pest and develop an alternative pesticide to control Black Thrips, immediately. In the meantime, for this crop year, the Central Government should declare adequate financial compensation to the affected chilli farmers.