

**Seventeenth Loksabha**

an&gt;

Title: Regarding plight of Areca nut growers of Karnataka due to illegal trade

**SHRI B. Y. RAGHAVENDRA (SHIMOGA):** Hon. Chairman Sir, I thank you for allowing me to raise an important issue regarding the problems of areca nut farmers.

Sir, areca nut is cultivated in more than ten States of our country. In Karnataka, areca nut is grown in 16 districts including my Lok Sabha constituency, Shimoga. Around ten lakh families are depending upon areca nut cultivation in Karnataka.

My State produces about 69 per cent of areca nut of the total production of the country which comes to 16,50,000 metric tonnes. It is contributing a huge revenue of Rs. 24,750 crore to the exchequer in the form of GST and cess on various by products.

The growers of areca nut are really in a very pathetic condition. They are reeling under the attack of leaf spot disease.

So, there is a huge decline in the yield and it has come down to less than 40 to 50 per cent. The growers have received another major blow due to the drastic collapse in the price of areca nut. The farmers are living in helpless condition.

Sir, in the last week of September this year, the price of areca nut was Rs.58,000 per quintal which was reduced to Rs.39,000 in the second week of December. So, my request to the Union Government is to impose heavy import duty on imported areca nut, introduce scientifically-developed medicine to cure the diseases and put a stringent mechanism to prevent illegal trade of areca nut to protect the interests of the areca nut growers of Karnataka. Thank you.