

Need to safeguard the interests of beedi workers, particularly in Rengali area in Orissa.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (DHENKANAL): Sir, I draw the attention of the House to the plight of the beedi workers in Orissa, particularly of Rengali and Chhendipada areas. About 80 per cent of the total beedis made in the State are from Rengali and Chhendipada areas and more than thirty thousand beedi workers are engaged in beedi making in that area. These simple, innocent and illiterate workers are passing their days in great misery as they are being exploited by their employers. The Government is not paying due attention to their children's education, housing and health care, etc. The dispensaries at Rengali and Chhendipada are not adequately equipped with doctors and medicines. As a result, the workers and their family members are not able to get proper treatment from those dispensaries.

The local labour unions are also not able to help the beedi workers in getting their payment from the employers according to their dues. The names of workers enrolled in the Muster Roll are being changed after a short interval just to deprive them the payment of bonus, etc. The children below 14 years are engaged in making beedis in the fake names of the adults. This is being done despite the child labour being banned.

In the interest of the beedi workers at Rengali, Chhendipada and other areas in Orissa, I demand that their services be regularised and all the benefits including minimum wages, bonus, etc. be paid to them on a regular basis.

In addition to this, adequate health care and children education may be provided to these beedi workers as per rules.