

Title: Need to look into the problems of the Beedi industry in event of the Kerala High Court judgement banning smoking and imposing punishment on smokers.

SHRI T. GOVINDAN (KASARGOD): I would like to draw the kind attention of the Government especially the Labour Minister towards beedi industry. Beedi industry provides more than seventy lakh rural employment, of which majority are women. There are more than 10 crores of unemployed people in this country.

Beedi workers are unorganised villagers. They are compelled to enter into the beedi industry because of lack of employment opportunities. It is also a declining industry. Now-a-days, propaganda against smoking through official and non-official means are high. Courts also order banning of smoking and imposing punishment on smokers. I would like to draw the attention of the Minister towards the recent Kerala High Court judgement banning smoking and imposing punishment on smokers. This has caused panic and anxiety among beedi workers in Kerala. They took a protest march on 27th September last in front of the Kerala High Court.

Now, it is understood that the Government is going for more and more tax and excise concessions to the big industry like cigarette industry. It is needless to say that this kind of attitude of the Government will adversely affect the employment opportunities in this field. So, I invite the attention of the Government towards this socio-economic problems related to tobacco industry.