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Title: Need to declare minimum support price of chillies – Laid.

SHRI Y.V. RAO (GUNTUR) : Chilli is cultivated as one of the important commercial crops throughout India. On an average, it is cultivated in 8.77 lakh hectares producing 7.46 tonnes of dry chillies. Among all the cash crops under the Ministry of Commerce, this is the only crop which does not have the Minimum Support Price though it is the largest crop in volume among the cash crops. Andhra Pradesh is the major producer of chillies in India with 3.26 lakh tonnes and Guntur district occupies the first position in the State. From Guntur District nearly 1.5 lakh tonnes of chillies is exported to other States, namely West Bengal, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, etc.

Guntur District also has an important position by earning foreign exchange through export of 30,000 tonnes of chillies to other countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Singapore. More than 50,000 farmers are involved in cultivating this crop in Guntur District and it may increase in future because of reduction in tobacco-growing area owing to various factors. However, these farmers are experiencing difficulties as they are not getting remunerative prices for their produce in the market. I request that the Government of India to consider fixing minimum support price for chillies so that farmers get remunerative price for their produce.