

Title: hNeed to safeguard the interests of tobacco growers particularly of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka-Laid.h

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY (KHAMMAM): I have to invite the attention of this august House to the alarming condition of tobacco growers and farmers all over the country especially in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. While more and more consciousness about the risks of tobacco consumption is arising and spreading, tobacco stocks have been piling up undisposed year after year. The situation is also aggravated due to large-scale import of cigarettes.

The soil in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka is specially suited for growing special quality of tobacco but the farmers are finding it worthless because they are not able to locate any buyer. There has been no research in the direction of diversification of soil for cultivation of alternative cash crops. For a few years there has been serious thinking about the research for diversification of the use of tobacco for different purposes like insecticides and medicinal uses.

I hope the Government will pay serious attention to the plight of the tobacco growers and intensify efforts in that direction including restriction of import of tobacco products and also conduct research on diversification of use of soil for other crops.

- Treated as laid on the Table for the House.