

Title : Need to check deforestation within 15 Kms radius of Bandipur and Nagarahole National Forests in Mysore district, Karnataka.

SHRI C.H. VIJAYASHANKAR (MYSORE): Hunsur is one of the Sub-Division headquarters of Mysore District. It consists of Heggadadevanakote, Piriapatna, KR Nagar and Hunsur taluks being surrounded by two National parks, Bandipur and Nagarahole. Tobacco is a major commercial crop in these taluks. Ninety percent of the total production of tobacco of the country is produced in these taluks. Virginia tobacco grown here is of extremely high quality and has huge demand from exporters. But, the process of baking and seasoning of this tobacco consumes lot of fuel, which is mainly wood. At an average 15 MTS of wood is consumed for backing one barren (one unit) and there are 57000 authorised barrens and it consumes approximately 9 lakh metric tonnes of wood. Growing tobacco for well over three decades has taken out all fertility out of our soils. If the deforestation continues for another 4-5 years, the whole National Forests area in this sub-division will be converted into a dry-land.

So as to ensure the retention of the ecological and environmental balance I request the Government to take these steps-to ban all Tobacco Barrens within 15 kms of radius attached to the National Forests (Bandipur and Nagarahole), to promote other forms of fuels to burn these barrens, to encourage fuel sources out of agriculture, this could serve the Brigade Maneuvering Units, to give subsidy to entrepreneurs for setting up these BMUs, to supply coal at a subsidized rate through the Tobacco Board as was done earlier and to constitute an Expert Committee to study the situation.