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Title: Need to provide financial package to the coffee growers of Dindigul district in Tamil Nadu with a view to solve the problems being faced by them.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): The planters in my Dindigul District have cultivated coffee in more than 20,000 acres in Lower Pulney Hills Range in the Western Ghats. The coffee is the main crop in that area and is a rainfed crop. The majority of them are small farmers having less than 2 acres. Due to the failure of successive monsoon rains, and prolonged spells of drought the Berry Borer/White Stem Borer attack the coffee crops. The damage caused to the coffee crop was very high during the past four years and the coffee growers harvested very low uneconomic yield of crops. Despite better rains this year, the plants are yet to recover from the four years of acute drought and pests/diseases. Moreover, due to the downfall of coffee prices, increased cost of fertilizers, pest controlling materials and labour cost, the coffee growers are facing severe difficulties. Some small, marginal and big coffee growers who got loans from private money-lenders and nationalized banks could not repay the loan on time. The principle and the accrued high interest forced them to sell their land at throw away prices and they are now a suffering lot. They are expecting assistance both from Central and State Governments.

Hence, I humbly request the Hon'ble Minister to include Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu in the financial package for Coffee growers.

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\* Treated as laid on the Table.