

Title: Need to review the increase in excise duty on hand made Beedi.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): For the year of 2007-2008, it has been proposed, inter-alia to increase the rate of excise duty on non-machine made beedis from Rs. 7 to Rs. 11 per thousand. As you are aware we had requested to revoke the notification issued by Government of India prescribing "skull, Bones & corpse symbol" on the labels of the beedi products as it affects millions of people, especially women, who will be thrown out of the employment. In Andhra Pradesh, particularly in North Telangana region (Karimnagar, Mahabubnagar, and Adilabad Districts) more than million women workers, mostly belonging to weaker sections, have been employed to roll beedis with the dried leaves and other material provided by the beedi companies. Consequent upon the issue of notification several beedi manufacturers have stopped their business throwing lakhs of people out of employment. This is a labour intensive trade employing the artisans, especially women. The tribal women folk are employed to collect the beedi leaves from the forest areas. On an average they earn Rs. 100/- per day. If this will be applicable in the state, it will adversely affect the Beedi workers. This will result in the closure of Hand Made beedi manufacturing units and throw out millions of beedi rolling workers out of employment. If they have no employment they cannot make out their living without any working alternative. As such I request the Government of India to with draw the proposal to increase the rate of excise duty on non machine made beedi from Rs.7 to Rs.11 per thousand, as proposed in para 149 of the Budget proposals for 2007-08.