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Title: Reported strike by beedi workers in the Country.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, throughout the country, two crore of Bidi workers are against the implementation of 'The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Packing and Labeling) Rules, 2006.' As per this Act, it is mandatory to print on the labels, specially 'The Skeleton & Bone' health warning, adverse effects and health messages etc., of the Bidi and tobacco pouches.

In Tamil Nadu alone, 15 lakh workers are involved in the Bidi industry, and they are manufacturing 50 crore Bidis everyday and earning Rs. 8 crore as revenue, and are paying Rs. 1 crore to the Government of India by way of Excise Duty. The customers of Bidi and other tobacco products are mainly from the rural areas and most of them are illiterate. They generally recognize the brand name from the label. But due to this proposal, they cannot identify the exact brands. There is every possibility now that they would be cheated with duplicate brands. Moreover, they are purchasing, in loose.

Hence, I think, this proposal would not serve any purpose. This proposal would affect the millions of unskilled ladies from the rural areas, who are dependent over the earnings from Bidi and tobacco industry. Moreover, the farmers, paan shopkeepers and many others would be severely affected due to this vigorous rule.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Central Government not to implement 'The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Packing and Labelling) Rules, 2006' and save the industry and the poor workers.

MR CHAIRMAN: Those who have got the written submissions, may just read the first sentence and hand over the remaining part of their submission to the officers at the Table and they would be taken on record. This way, a lot of time can be saved. Kindly do not read the whole thing.