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Title: Problems faced by the farmer due to the fall of areca nut prices in various parts of the country in the wake of recent Supreme Court verdict.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): Madam, I stand to raise the issues faced by the areca nut farmers in many of the States in our country. Lots of areca nut farmers in the States like Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and in other States are facing very difficult position just because the price of areca nut has gone down to a great extent.

According to the report of the Karnataka Government, the cost of areca nut per kilo is Rs.120 but at the same time the price that the farmers are getting is at the rate of Rs.60 or Rs.70. Not only the areca nut farmers but lakhs of agricultural workers, who are depending on them, are also in great difficulty. The farmers have taken loan from the banks. They are not able to repay the loan or the interest.

At this time, the Supreme Court has given a new verdict banning some of the areca nut products. Of course, there may be health reason because the Government is not promoting areca nut plantation due to health reason. But, Madam, as you know well that in areca nut, a plant has to take at least 6-7 years to get the yield. So, the Government has to take further step to really assist the areca nut plantations. The Government should also take some steps to go to the Supreme Court to give a temporary relief to the areca nut farmers thereby giving some assistance to them.

MADAM SPEAKER: The names of Shri Anant Kumar Hegde, Shri G.M. Siddeshwara and Shri D.V. Sadananda Gowda are associated on the matter raised by Shri P. Karunakaran.