

Title: Need to take adequate welfare measures for the beedi workers living in Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu.

*SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (TIRUVANNAMALAI): In order to discourage smoking habit which is injurious to health several measures like legislation, prohibiting smoking in public places, ban on ads, compulsory display of signs depicting ill effects and punitive measures like levying of fine have been taken up by the Union Government. This has affected thousands of people making their livelihood by way of manufacturing and selling tobacco products. Daily-wage workers of the Beedi manufacturing units have been pushed below poverty line due to lack of welfare measures for them. Handling tobacco to fill beedis, rolling the same with tendu leaves, pasting labels and arranging beedi bundles all in their own tiny dwelling units have left thousands of Beedi workers and their family members exposed to the harmful tobacco powder. So many of them are suffering from diseases for want of medical facilities that are to be provided to the Beedi workers. Though there are schemes to provide medical facilities and non-formal education to the children of Beedi workers, they mostly remain on paper. They do not have opportunity for skill development and training and hence they are not getting other jobs. Housing facilities for the families of Beedi workers still remains a dream for them.

Hence, I urge upon the Union Government to cover thousands of Beedi workers living below poverty line in and around my Tiruvannamalai constituency like Vellore, Tiruppattur, Vaniampadi in the centrally sponsored housing schemes meant for the needy poor in villages and small suburban towns. I also urge upon the Government to take it up now as a Pilot project in my Tiruvannamalai Lok Sabha constituency.

* Treated as laid on the Table.