

States in India. Apart from handicapped and blind beggars, there are aged and ill-health beggars also.

The Department of Social Welfare is providing beggars' asylums in some of the States where training-cum-production centres have also been setup. I think such asylums should also be made in those States where there are more beggars. The money allocated to help these specific groups should fully reach the target group. Further, some schemes should be made to help these beggars to become self-reliant. The main problem is that the money allocated under these schemes for these poor and helpless people does not reach them fully. So, the Government should monitor it strictly.

I, therefore, strongly urge upon the Government to formulate more schemes to mitigate the sufferings of homeless, aged and old beggars by making special plans to eradicate the beggars' menace in our country.

Demand for removal of central excise duty exemption on unbranded beedies

SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I wish to bring to the notice of the Government of India the gross misuse of Central excise duty exemption given to the unbranded beedi manufactures in the country. Unbranded beedi manufacturers are exempted from excise duty, provided they manufacture less than 20,00,000 beedies per annum. The problem is, no customer purchases unbranded beedies because literally there is no trade for unbranded beedies, since each trader has his own flavour which is represented by his brand. What the unscrupulous traders do is, they get beedies rolled, claim exemption and, by coercion, get counterfeit labels printed on popular brands and sell them in the market. Thereby, they are evading Central excise duty and the benefits to be given to the labourers under the Beedi and Cigar Workers Act. The unscrupulous traders act cleverly by saying to the labourers that beedi labelling is a specialised skill and hence you will not be able to do it. Hence, exemption granted to small beedi manufacturers becomes redundant. It is because the real beedi roller is not benefited from the exemption since duty is not collected. As a result, facilities extended through Labour Welfare Cess which, otherwise, is given to the statutory labourers, will not reach them.

The Labour Welfare Committee of the Government of India has also recommended that exemption granted to unbranded beedi manufacturers is counter-productive and should be removed forthwith. Hence, I request the exemption granted to unbranded beedi manufacturers be withdrawn and printing of counterfeit beedi labels be made a cognisable offence.

SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with this Special Mention.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shrimati Savita Sharda. Absent.

Demand for harnessing the west-flowing river waters for use in the dry region of Tamil Nadu

SHRI THANGATAMIL SELVAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I wish to bring to the notice of the Government the need to harness the surplus water of the west-flowing rivers for use in the dry region of Tamil Nadu. In 1976, a committee was set up to look into the viability of harnessing the water of west-flowing rivers. That committee found the scheme to be viable. The Planning Commission Report of 1978 also pointed out that 1,25,000 million cubic feet of water of 85 west-flowing rivers of Kerala is running waste into the sea. So far, more than 20 rounds of talks have been held, yet, water continues to flow waste. The water resource of Tamil Nadu is just around 1350TMC. Of the 2500 TMC water resources of Kerala, about 1100TMC water is flowing waste into the Arabian Sea. By harnessing the waste water and diverting it to Tamil Nadu, lakhs of acres in the rain-dependent districts of Madurai, Theni, Thirunelveli, Tuticorin and Virudhunagar could be cultivated. Out of 180 TMC surplus water of Pambaiyaaru in Kerala, only 25 TMC water needs to be diverted. Diverting a part of the surplus water of Anaimalai, Idduki and Kallaru of Periyar delta will benefit Coimbatore and the Southern districts. Tamil Nadu has expressed its willingness to provide electricity, rice and cattle feed to Kerala in return. In view of the urgent requirement of water for Tamil Nadu from upper riparian States, I appeal to the Centre to intervene and take immediate steps to harness the west-flowing river water for use in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN (Kerala): Sir, we strongly oppose this Special mention. There is a move on the part of the Tamil Nadu Government to divert water from the Mekkara dam and the Government is strongly opposing this move. It will create so many problems. So, we record our strong opposition on this matter. ...(*Interruptions*). There is no surplus water in Kerala. ...(*Interruptions*).