

Bill No. 101 of 2022

THE BETEL GROWERS (WELFARE) BILL, 2022

By

DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR, M.P.

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BILL

to provide for payment of remunerative price to betel growers, free of cost insurance of betel crop, comprehensive welfare of betel growers and setting up of betel research centre and for matters connected therewith.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-third Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Betel Growers (Welfare) Act, 2022.

(2) It extends to the whole of India.

5 (3) It shall come into force on such date, as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Short title,
extent and
commencement.

Definitions.	<p>2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:—</p> <p>(a) “betel” means the leaf of a plant grown in South and South East Asia and chewed as mild stimulant;</p> <p>(b) “betel grower” means a person who cultivates betel;</p> <p>(c) “Centre” means Betel Research Centre established under section 3;</p> <p>(d) “Fund” means Betel Growers Welfare Fund constituted under section 7; and</p> <p>(e) “prescribed” means prescribed by the rules made under this Act.</p>	5
Betel Research Centre.	<p>3. (1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, establish a Centre to be known as Betel Research Centre to study, research and suggest measures to increase the productivity and quality of betel farming in the country.</p> <p>(2) The headquarters of the Centre shall be at Kolkata in the State of West Bengal with four regional offices at Lucknow in the State of Uttar Pradesh, Patna in the State of Bihar, Hyderabad in the State of Andhra Pradesh and at Mumbai in the State of Maharashtra and the Centre may, with the previous approval of the Central Government, establish branches of the Centre in different parts of the country.</p> <p>(3) The Centre shall consist of such number of experts, officers and employees to be appointed by the Central Government in such manner as may be prescribed.</p> <p>(4) The salary and allowances payable to and other terms and conditions of experts, officers and employees of the Centre shall be such as may be prescribed.</p> <p>(5) The Centre shall be operated by such rules as may be prescribed.</p>	10 15 20 25
Procurement of betel crop.	<p>4. The Central Government shall procure the entire betel crop from the betel growers in the country through such agency and in such manner as may be prescribed.</p>	
Fixation of remunerative price of betel.	<p>5. The Central Government shall after considering the following, determine the remunerative price of betel every year,—</p> <p>(a) expenditure on construction of structures including <i>bareja</i> and <i>mandap</i> for betel farming;</p> <p>(b) increase in the price of pesticides, fertilizers and other inputs;</p> <p>(c) total investment of betel growers; and</p> <p>(d) such other factors as may be prescribed.</p>	30 35
Insurance.	<p>6. The entire betel produced by the betel growers shall be compulsorily insured free of cost by the Central Government against natural calamities, fall in the productivity of betel, fall in the price of betel and such other eventualities as may be prescribed.</p>	
Betel Growers Welfare Fund.	<p>7. (1) The Central Government shall constitute a Fund to be known as the Betel Growers’ Welfare Fund for carrying out the purposes of this Act.</p> <p>(2) The Central Government and the State Government shall contribute to the Fund in such ratio as may be prescribed.</p>	40

8. The Fund shall be used for the following purposes, namely:—

Utilisation of
Fund.

(a) to provide financial assistance to betel growers for the expenditure on construction of structures like *bareja*, *mandap* for the betel farming, loss to crop due to pesticides, fertilizers, storm, excessive rain, hailstorming, flood,
5 drought or in condition of loss of productivity of betel;

(b) for the payment of compensation to the next kin of betel growers in the event of their death;

(c) to provide free medical services to betel growers and their families;

(d) to provide assistance to betel growers in the event of disability; and

10 (e) for such other purposes as may be prescribed.

9. (1) The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

Power to make
rules.

(2) Every rule made under this Act shall be laid as soon as may be after it is made before each House of Parliament while it is in session for a total period of
15 thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or successive sessions aforesaid both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or both Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall
20 thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Agriculture is the main source of income in the country. Since many decades, condition of agriculture economy is fragile and due to many reasons people are forced to leave the betel farming due to no support and protection from the Government. There is a need to upgrade the agricultural technology, agriculture infrastructure development, investment, easy loan availability and simple agriculture insurance scheme for betel growers in the country. With the continuous and integrated efforts, the condition of betel growers may be improved in the country.

The vast economic potentiality of the betel crop can be adequately established by the fact that about 15-20 million people consume betel leaves in India on a regular basis besides those in other countries of the world which may include over 2 billion consumers. That apart a small boroj of about three decimal area can generate employment opportunity for an agricultural worker throughout the year helping him to maintain his family. Further, as far as the national employment generation is concerned, it is estimated that about 20 million people derive their livelihood directly or indirectly, partly or fully from production, processing, handling, transportation and marketing of betel leaves in India, which includes about 5 million workers from West Bengal.

In this way, the betel crop provides a National Income to the tune of rupees 6000-7000 million every year and at the same time it also provides an income of rupees 800-1000 million to the State of West Bengal. In addition to this, the Railways earn about rupees 100 million every year from transporting betel leaves from State of West Bengal to different parts of India like Bilaspur, Cochin, Gondia, Gandhinagar, Hyderabad, Jabalpur, Jalgaon, Katni, Nagpur, New Delhi, Raipur, Srinagar and Trivendram, etc. The leaves are also in great demand in several other countries of the world where it is either not grown at all or the demand exceeds the local supply. Consequently, leaves worth about rupees 30-40 million are exported to the countries like Bahrain, Canada, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Italy, Kuwait, Nepal, Pakistan, Saudi Arab and many other European countries. This clearly indicates the foreign exchange earnings.

The deep green heart shaped leaves of betel vine are popularly known as *Paan* in India. It is also known as *Nagaballi*, *Nagurvel*, *Saptaseera*, *Sompatra*, *Tamalapaku*, *Tambul*, *Tambuli*, *Vaksha Patra*, *Vettilai* and *Voojanganalata* etc. in different parts of the country. There are about 100 varieties of betel vine in the world, of which about 40 are found in India and 30 in the State of West Bengal. In spite of its alienness, the plant is much more popular in India than in any other country of the world since the antiquity. a well-prepared betel quid is still regarded as an excellent mouth freshener and mild vitalizer, routinely served on the social, cultural and religious occasions like marriage, *puja* (religious festivals) and *Sraddha* ceremony, etc. It is also used as a special item offered to the guests in order to show respect.

In fact, this edible leaf has achieved an esteemed position in the human society right from the dawn of civilization, particularly in the countries like

Bangladesh, Burma, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand etc. where leaves are traditionally used for chewing in their natural raw condition along with many other ingredients like sliced areca nut, slaked lime, coriander, aniseed, clove, cardamom, sweetener, coconut scrapings, ashes of diamond, pearl, gold and silver (Ayurvedic preparations), jelly, pepper mint, flavouring agent and fruit pulp etc.

This Bill, therefore, seeks to provide for improvement in betel production methods through new research and special provisions for the welfare of betel growers.

Hence this Bill.

NEW DELHI;
8 *April*, 2022.

SUKANTA MAJUMDAR

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for establishment of Research Centre to study, research and suggest measures to increase the productivity and quality of betel farming. Clause 4 provides for procurement of betel from betel growers by an agency to be set up by the Central Government. Clause 5 provides for fixation of remunerative prices for betel by the Central Government. Clause 6 provides for compulsory free insurance by the Central Government of betel against natural calamities, etc. Clause 7 provides for constitution of a Betel Growers Welfare Fund to which the Central Government and the State Governments shall contribute in such ratio as may be prescribed. The Bill, therefore, if enacted, would involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India. It is estimated that a recurring expenditure of about rupees one thousand crore will be involved per annum from the Consolidated Fund of India.

A non-recurring annual expenditure of about rupees one hundred crore is also likely to be involved.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 9 of the Bill empowers the Central Government to make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. As the rules will relate to matters of detail only, the delegation of legislative power is of a normal character.

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