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Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein Friday suggested formulation of a policy for small tea growers of the state to overcome official hurdles in getting land possession certificates (LPCs) and NOCs for establishing tea gardens.

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Itanagar, Aug 27 (PTI) Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein Friday suggested formulation of a policy for small tea growers of the state to overcome official hurdles in getting land possession certificates (LPCs) and NOCs for establishing tea gardens.

Taking part in a short duration discussion in the House on the issuance of LPCs for small tea growers, Mein said a few NGOs from the state had moved the Supreme Court in 1999 against destroying forest cover on the pretext of tea cultivation in the state, saying that it violated the apex court's 1996 order banning timber operations.

"The Supreme Court in 2000 ordered a ban on tea cultivation and despite efforts of Chief Minister Pema Khandu, the ban is yet to be lifted," Mein said adding, a law was enacted which mentioned that tea cultivation would not be allowed till No Objection Certificate (NOC) is granted by the Union Environment and Forest Ministry.

"It is time for the state and the Centre to give a serious thought to the issue for the interest of the small tea growers," the deputy chief minister added.

Initiating the discussion, Congress MLA Ninong Ering sought lifting of the ban and urged the state government to facilitate financial help from Tea Board India or banks for the sustenance of self-employed ventures of the small tea growers.

Responding to Ering, Environment and Forest Minister Mama Natung informed the House that the Union Minister of Environment & Forest and Climate Change had written a letter to the Tea Board asking for a ban on registration of small tea growers.

"Following the Supreme Court order of 2000 banning tea cultivation in the state, the Union forest ministry had directed the state government not to issue LPCs and NOCs for tea cultivation and its violation will amount to contempt of court," the minister pointed out.

Natung added that he along with Khandu, Mein and Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar had a meeting with the Union Environment and Forest Minister Bhupender Yadav in New Delhi on August 3, requesting him to look into the plight of the small tea growers.

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