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Title: Need to relax Central Reserve Forest rules and regulations in order to facilitate the tribals of Tiruvannamalai Parliamentary Constituency of Tamil Nadu to carry out their traditional occupations.

SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (TIRUVANNAMALAI): In my Tiruvannamalai Constituency, there are many remote villages situated in the forest area. These remote hamlets, which are traditional habitations of Scheduled Tribes and others, do not have proper connectivity except for narrow paths and hill tracts treaded by foot. There is need to take various developmental activities to those areas for which proper road connectivity is essential. The Central Forest officials under whom these reserve forest areas lie come in the way of extending public service like moving essential commodities for Public Distribution System and also Health and Education facilities. The Government of the day evolves many schemes aimed at benefitting the poor tribal people living there but the hurdles also keep on continuing. The Government of Tamil Nadu, has been taking up with the Centre to make certain amendments in the Laws and Rules to protect the traditional rights of the tribal people living in the remote forest areas. Ancient worship places are also there which attract at least once in a year pilgrims from the surrounding villages and towns. Places with tourism potential like Elagiri, Jamna Maruthur, Parvatha hills are there. The natural resources available there are most often left untouched. These poor tribal people are also not permitted to carry on with their traditional occupation like collecting the natural resources available there.

I urge upon the Union Government to take up with the Central Reserve Forest Authorities to relax their stringent rules and regulations and to permit the poor tribal people to carry on with their traditional occupation without affecting the environment. These tribal people will be protecting the forest in their own interests and this must be taken into consideration. In a permissible way, road connectivity must be provided to take several welfare measures and health facilities to those people provided by both the State Government and the Union Government.