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Title: Need to implement the rights of forest dwellers under the law in the country particularly in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu.

SHRIMATI J. HELEN DAVIDSON (KANYAKUMARI): Kanyakumari District, the southernmost land area of mainland India, is an International Tourist and Spiritual destination. The district has a varied topography with sea on three sides and lush green mountains of the Western Ghats bordering the northern side. 52% of the district's forests are classified as dense forests. More than ten thousand people are living in forest area in Kanyakumari District. They are Scheduled Tribes, economically poor and under privileged and do not enjoy most of the government schemes. Government of India introduced the Recognition of Forest Rights Act, 2006 for the Scheduled Tribes and Traditional forest dwellers, which is yet to be implemented in Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu.

This Act gives the privileges to the Scheduled Tribes and traditional forest dwellers to get the Right for their Lands, where they live from the beginning. They depend on their traditional livelihoods like harvesting honey, Vegetation, Cattle Breeding and selling of minor forest produce. As the Recognition of Forest Rights Act, 2006 has not been implemented, these tribal people are living in hilly and forest areas without availing the opportunities of various Government Schemes. They are not eligible for getting assistance under IAY Scheme; they can't get any Agricultural loan etc. And the areas where these people live are not well connected with tar roads in Kanyakumari District.

I would like to add one more point that most of the agricultural crops are frequently damaged by forest pigs and monkeys, as a result these people suffer heavy loss of money, manpower and time. Especially these animals cause damage to Plantain, Rubber, Tapioca, Coconut trees, fruits and vegetables and no compensation is given to the forest dwellers. In order to save these crops from the forest animals, the forest department may put up a solar fence in such fields and maintain the fence.

I urge upon the Government for taking necessary action to implement the Recognition of Forest Rights Act, 2006 in Kanyakumari District and in other Districts of Tamil Nadu and other states, wherever the act is not implemented so that the poor, unprivileged tribal population can have the rights to live in their lands and improve their livelihoods.