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Title: Issue regarding dilution of the Forest Rights Act.

SHRI R. DHYUVANARAYANA (CHAMARAJANAGAR): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I want to raise an important issue regarding dilution of the Forest Rights Act. The Forest Rights Act, 2006 was launched during the year 2008 during our UPA Government and it provides rights to forest dwellers to own access and take decisions regarding forest areas.

Under the Forest Rights Act the Gram Sabha can regulate access to forest resources and stop any activities which adversely affect the forest. Up to May 31st, 14,12,712 individual titles had been issued, 23,578 community titles had been issued, and 46.5 lakh acres of forest area rights had been vested to forest dwellers.

There have been various news reports regarding the alleged intention of the Central Government to dilute the Forest Rights Act. On 28th October, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change had sent out a letter to all the States. That letter violates the rights of forest dwellers and gives the rights to the District Administration to divert forest areas for other purposes.

I would request the Government to take back any letters sent which are in violation of rights of forest dwellers, and to ensure that the Forest Rights Act is not diluted in letter and spirit. The interest of forest dwellers must not be compromised in the name of development. Thank you.