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Title: Need to permit construction of roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and other State roads stalled due to provisions of Forest Conservation, Act 1980 in Idukki Parliamentary Constituency, Kerala.

ADV. JOICE GEORGE (IDUKKI): The forest department has been obstructing the road work under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) citing the provisions of the Forest Conservation Act 1980 which came into force on 25-10-1980. The department is stalling maintenance work of roads which were in existence prior to this act coming into being even for National Highways, road Maintained by Public Work Department, Gramin roads leading to Tribal settlements etc. Since the forest conservation act does not have retrospective effect as regards the maintenance and improvement of infrastructure including roads, the act of the forest department is arbitrary, unlawful and deny the right of the People guaranteed under the Part 3 of the Constitution. In this regard, the Ministry of Environment & Forests had issued guidelines No. F. No. 5-3/2007-FC on 07-01-2011 making it clear that even the forest roads constructed before 25-08-1980 can be converted into pucca roads without attracting the provisions of the act. Even then the construction of seven PMGSY roads, 32 roads maintained by state PWD and maintenance of the National Highways are being obstructed by the Kerala Forest department in my Idukki Parliamentary constituency. Hence, I urge upon the Government to intervene in this matter for facilitating the development of infrastructure in rural and backward areas.