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Title: Need to set up a Central Welfare Board for folk artists in the country.

\*SHRI K. PARASURAMAN (THANJAVUR): Hon. Deputy Speaker Sir, Vanakkam. I thank Hon. *Puratchithalaivi* Amma for this opportunity. Art forms are identities of our rich culture. Folk arts are equally important to preserve our culture similar to fine arts like music, dance, architecture and sculpture. Folk arts are intertwined with the lives of the majority of the people of the country. People of poor and marginalized sections of the society perform such folk art forms. These folk artists entertain people but they lives are in a sorry state of affairs. Only when the standard of their lives is improved, these folk art forms can survive the test of time. Poverty-stricken folk artists are forced to find alternate jobs to earn their livelihood. There is a sense of fear that their pathetic living condition would affect the folk art forms leading to their extinction. I urge that the folk artists and folk art forms should be preserved. I urge for setting up of a Central Welfare Board for Folk Artists of the country aimed at their upliftment. There is a welfare board for folk artists in Tamil Nadu. Under the able guidance of Hon. Makkal Muthalvar Puratchithalaivi Amma , the State Welfare Board for Folk Artists in Tamil Nadu implements several welfare schemes. Pension to aged artists, land for constructing a house to live, aid to their children to pursue higher studies, financial assistance to procure musical instruments are some of the benefits extended to folk artists through the State Welfare Board for folk artists. Taking cue from Tamil Nadu, I urge upon the Hon. Minister for Culture to set up a Central Welfare Board for Folk Artists so that they can live with dignity while taking forward various folk art forms to posterity. Thank you.

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\* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.