

an>

Title: Need to protect the rights of forest dwellers in various states of the country.

SHRI P.K. BIJU (ALATHUR): Hon. Chairperson, I would like to raise an important matter of urgent importance before this august House.

This House had passed the Forest Rights Act on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2006. This law concerns the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land and other resources, denied to them over decades as a result of the continuance of colonial forest laws in India.

This Act came into force after notification on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2007. The rules were framed by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2008. Nearly 250 million people live in and around forests in India, of which the estimated indigenous Adivasi or Tribal population stands at about 100 million. This Act will benefit the marginalized citizens of our country.

Sir, I am not going into the details of the rights enshrined in the Act. Section 6 of the Act provides that the Gram Sabha or the Village Assembly has the authority to decide the future of the tribal lands. But I am sorry to say that the Government is reluctant to implement the Forest Rights Act throughout the country.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Government to implement this Act as early as possible.

Sir, there is a shocking news coming from the State of Chhattisgarh. The Chhattisgarh Government has taken a decision and passed an order to cancel the community land rights of tribal village under the FRA in on January 8, 2016. This is done for the Adani Enterprises and Rajasthan Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited for their coal blocks in Chhattisgarh. This is a direct attack on the rights of the tribals.

So, I would urge upon the Government to withdraw such move and protect the rights of the tribals in the country. Thank you.