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Title: Need to reduce rate of GST on Kendu (Tendu) leaves from 18 per cent to 5 per cent.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Kendu (Tendu) leaf, a Minor Forest Produce (MFP) is the financial lifeline of the tribal people of Odisha. They collect it as part of their right defined under Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and sell it. Prior to implementation of GST, 5 per cent VAT was collected on its sale but now, Government has been collecting 18 per cent GST on its sale. Such a high GST has been adversely impacting sale of such leaves, resultant, stocks of such leaves are piling up in various godowns across the State. Consequently, social security and livelihood of nearly 8.5 lakh Kendu (Tendu) leaf pluckers, seasonal workers and binding workers dependent on trade of such leaves are at risk across the State of Odisha. I, therefore, urge upon the Government to take urgent steps to reduce GST on Kendu (Tendu) leaves from 18 per cent to 5 per cent.