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Title: Regarding reduction of GST on Kendu (Tendu) leaves.

DR. PRABHAS KUMAR SINGH (BARGARH): Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak on a very important matter relating to the tribal of Odisha.

This is regarding reduction of GST on Kendu leaves. Kendu leaf, a Minor Forest Produce, is the financial lifeline of the tribal people of Odisha. The tribal people collect the leaves as part of their right defined under Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. They have the right to procure and sell these products.

After the implementation of GST with effect from 1st July, 2017, 18 per cent GST is levied on Kendu leaves. In Odisha, prior to the implementation of GST, there was 5 per cent VAT on Kendu leaves. This hike from 5 per cent to 18 per cent is very high. Due to such hike in the GST rate, thousands of quintals of Kendu leaves are lying at different godowns of Odisha. This has led to the drop in selling price of Kendu leaves sold by the tribal people and also Odisha Forest Development Corporation Ltd, through tender, which has adversely impacted the implementation of social security.

माननीय अध्यक्ष: डॉ. कुलमणि सामल तथा श्री भैरों प्रसाद मिश्र को डॉ. प्रभास कुमार सिंह द्वारा उठाए गए विषय के साथ संबद्ध करने की अनुमति प्रदान की जाती है।

Shri Santokh Singh Chaudhary – not present.

Shri E.T. Mohammad Basheer – not present.