

**Seventeenth Loksabha**

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Title : To withdraw GST on Kendu leaves

**PROF. ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA (KANDHAMAL):** Hon. Speaker, Sir, through you, I, on behalf of my Party, Biju Janata Dal, would like to urge the Central Government, particularly, the Minister of Finance to withdraw the GST on Kendu leaves in the greater interest of the lakhs of Kendu leaf pluckers and associated staff. Kendu leaf is a minor forest produce and is the financial backbone of around eight lakhs of Kendu leaf pluckers, binders and seasonal workers of Odisha, who mostly belong to the tribal community and also are among the poorest of the poor in the society.

The tribal people call it their right as defined under Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006. They have the right to procure and sell these leaves. An eighteen per cent GST on Kendu leaf is affecting the trade and livelihood of Kendu leaf pluckers. This tax needs to be withdrawn in the greater interest of the people of Odisha, particularly in the interest of the tribal people. This, in turn, affects the livelihood of Kendu leaf pluckers, binders, seasonal workers and also impacts the implementation of social security and welfare schemes meant for them. Our hon. Chief Minister of Odisha also has expressed his concern and written a letter on this issue to the Central Government and also the hon. Finance Minister. Thank you.