

**Regarding need to formulate a national policy to grant land rights to ancestral land of the people-Laid**

**SHRI RAJU BISTA (DARJEELING):** The Forest Department in India was set up in 1864, whereas Tea Gardens in Darjeeling was set up in 1850s and Cinchona gardens in 1861 which means the Tea gardens and Cinchona gardens are older than the Forest Department. But today, the West Bengal Forest Department claims that even Tea Garden and Cinchona Garden land belongs to the Forest Department of State. But the State Government has not yet implemented the Forest Rights Act, 2006 passed by the Parliament. When the Tea Gardens and Cinchona Gardens were developed, the British appropriated our ancestral lands and they refused to give land documents to our ancestors. Even though 77 years have been elapsed since independence, the Government of West Bengal is yet to grant Parja Patta land rights to the workers of Tea garden and Cinchona Garden. The people from Darjeeling region have done four Andolans for 'LAND' and in recent days, the ownership of people's ancestral land is claimed by the State Forest Department. Hence, I request the Central Government to form a National Policy to grant land rights to ancestral land of the people.