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Title: Regarding construction of Polavaram Multipurpose Irrigation Project in Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Thank you, Mr. Chairman for giving me an opportunity to highlight one of the very important issues in this august House.

Recently, I had asked a question to the Minister of Environment and Forests. You will be surprised to know, that the reply I have received from the Government is that they have acquired 38,000 hectares of land for having a multi-purpose irrigation project; and in Andhra Pradesh, 1,77,000 odd population will be affected in Andhra Pradesh; also in Chhattisgarh, more than 11,000 people will be affected; and in Orissa, more than 6000 people will be affected. The hon. Minister has stated this in reply to my question yesterday only.

My question is: "What specific measures have been taken by the Government to ensure the rights of the tribals or the people who will be uprooted by the construction of this particular project?" The reply has come, and, Mr. Chairman, Sir, you will be surprised to know the reply. I quote:

"For the diversion of forest land, Government of Andhra Pradesh is required to raise Compensatory Afforestation over the equivalent non forest land handed over to the State Forest Department at the cost of the user agency. For settlement of the rights in terms of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, no claims have been received under RoFR Act, 2006 in the diversion/submergence area of Polavaram project."

Sir, how can it be? Nearly 1,77,000 people will be uprooted in the State of Andhra Pradesh; 11,000 and odd people will be uprooted in Chhattisgarh; and also nearly 6,000 people will be uprooted in my State, that is, Orissa, then how can he say that no claims have been received? That means, I should say that the State Governments concerned have not given any opportunity to the dwelling people or to the tribals to claim their compensation for their land.

Sir, this is certainly a very serious one. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now.

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, I have not yet started it. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You know very well that you can take only two minutes' time in 'Zero Hour'.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, I do not want to speak against any particular Government but I want that the Act that we have made for ensuring the rights of the dwelling tribals in the country should be implemented. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PINAKI MISRA (PURI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, we associate ourselves with our hon. Leader. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can send a slip for associating with him.

SHRI PINAKI MISRA : Sir, the hon. Minister should make a site visit because he has promised that a wall would come up ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can send a slip for associating with him on this issue.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. PRASANNA KUMAR PATASANI (BHUBANESWAR): Sir, I have given a notice. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI : Sir, I have a fact-finding Report. This team was led by no less a person than Dr. B.D. Sharma, former Commissioner of the National Commission of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who visited this area along with his eminent followers for four days. They have given the details of the facts which they have seen.

Sir, method of coercion has been adopted. No Gram Sabha has been conducted. No avenues have been provided to the people to express their grievances. In my State, nearly 6,000 tribals will be uprooted. Do you mean to say that the Orissa

Government will not claim for the losses on behalf of the Scheduled Tribes who will be uprooted? Sir, this is something unheard of.

Sir, I am very much thankful to the hon. Minister, Shri Jairam Ramesh ji. He has answered to the letter which I have written to him saying that everything will be done to protect the rights of the tribals. How can it be? When they are divested of their land, how can their rights be protected? This is something unheard of.

Moreover, this matter is pending in the Supreme Court of India. It is being adjudicated by the Supreme Court. How can the Ministry give the final environment and forest clearances for this project? This is a very serious issue. ...(*Interruptions*)

Therefore, I would request the Government that they should make a statement on the floor of the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The names of Shri Rudramadhab Ray,

Shri Yashbant Laguri,

Shri Laxman Tudu,

Shri Mohan Jena,

Shri Prasanna Kumar Patasani,

Shri Pinaki Misra and

Shri B. Mahtab

will be associated on this issue raised by Shri Arjun Charan Sethi.