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Title: Regarding Polavaram Project being implemented by Andhra Pradesh Government.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY (DHENKANAL): Sir, I wish to raise an issue which involves two States. This is about the Polavaram project in southern Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. Polavaram irrigation project being implemented by the Andhra Pradesh Government has put the lives of people living in southern Odisha at great peril. No public hearing was conducted before issuing environmental clearance to the project and the project violates the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, so far as the diversion of forest land for submergence was concerned. In the absence of upstream projects – which is within the State of Odisha – which have not been undertaken by the Andhra Pradesh Government, there will be a large reservoir making huge backwater submergence within Odisha, which in turn would result in large scale human habitat displacement.

Water is a scarce resource and it is our duty to use it in a very sustainable manner. I urge the Central Government in the Ministry of Water Resources to act as a mediator and encourage both the State Governments to resolve the matter via mutual agreement. Such matters should not be taken to court as they only result in additional burden on the taxpayers of both the States, taking several years to reach a consensus and thereby continuing wastage of valuable national resources.

Both State Governments could divide responsibilities for building the dam so that people from both States could benefit equally. Cost could be incurred by both States, including compensation paid to displaced people, where I think the Government of India and most States are at a loss because when people are displaced, the compensation is never ever paid on time and properly. This way an essential matter could be solved and without stalling the project, people from both States could benefit as there is water scarcity for drinking water and irrigation.