

Regarding problems faced by traditional forest dwellers due to eviction process in Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve in Theni, Tamil Nadu.-laid

SHRI TAMILSELVAN THANGA (THENI): I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the difficulties faced by traditional forest-dwelling families, including Scheduled Tribes and small farmers residing for several generations in Kadamalai-Mayilai Union, Varusanadu and adjoining villages of Theni District, Tamil Nadu, following eviction proceedings in the Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve. While conservation of forests and wildlife is of paramount importance, legitimate rights of eligible forest dwellers under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 also deserve due consideration. Essential public facilities such as schools, Anganwadi centers, healthcare institutions, drinking water and electricity services should continue without interruption. Wherever relocation becomes unavoidable, comprehensive rehabilitation, including alternative land, housing and sustainable livelihood support, should be ensured before displacement. I, therefore, urge the Government to coordinate with the Government of Tamil Nadu to adopt a balanced, humane and lawful approach that safeguards biodiversity while protecting the rights, livelihood and dignity of traditional forest-dependent communities.