

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following
O R D E R

In these batch of matters, the constitutional validity of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and also the questions pertaining to the preservation of forests in the context of the above-mentioned Act, fall for the consideration of this Court.

Mr. Shyam Divan, learned senior counsel for the petitioner placed before us certain statistical data which indicates that as on 30th September, 2015, approximately 44 lakh claims for recognition of the Rights under the above-mentioned Act and grant of Pattas came to be filed before the authorities competent to deal with those claims in various States out of which some of the claims were accepted and some were rejected. From the information placed before this Court by the petitioners, it appears, approximately 20.5 lakh claims were rejected in the above-mentioned 44 lakh claims.

Obviously, a claim in the context of the above-mentioned Act is based on an assertion that a claimant has been in possession of a certain parcel of land located in the forest areas. If the claim is found to be not tenable by the competent authority, the result would be that the claimant is not entitled for the grant of any