

Chhattisgarh second in India in recognising forest rights claims

13 August 2019

Chhattisgarh has become the second State in the country to provide rights to Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers to acquire forestlands.

So far, over four lakh individual forest rights certificates have been distributed, providing recognition to 3 lakh 42 thousand hectares of forestland. Whereas, over 24,000 community forest rights certificates have been distributed providing recognition to 9 lakh 50 thousand hectares of forestland, as per Government Press release.

According to the figures by Union tribal affairs ministry, Odisha is the number one State in distribution of forest rights certificates while Maharashtra is number one in providing recognition to forestlands. Chhattisgarh, on the other hand comes number two in the list of both the categories. Soon after taking charge as Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh on January 23, Bhupesh Baghel organised a State-level workshop on forest rights and reviewed its implementation.

He said that it is the State Governments' priority to provide forest rights to all claimants of forest rights certificates. The Government will also assure that residents in each village get classified community forest rights.

The CM participated in division-level workshops on forest rights at Bastar division headquarters Jagdalpur on May 30 and Sarguja division headquarters Ambikapur on June 3 to encourage ground level workers and provided guidance for its better implementation.

During the workshop, it was found out that due to procedural shortcomings a large number of forest rights claims have been rejected. On this the CM issued directions to review rejected applications and provide forest rights to other conventional eligible forest rights beneficiaries.

He also emphasised on empowerment of the lowest level forest rights committees.

As a result of which, directions have been issued to each collector and forest officer for reorganisation of forest rights committees at village level. Simultaneously directions have also been issued for formation of district-level committees and departments.

After reorganisation of these committees, claims received from these committees after verification will be reviewed again. In the first phase, those claims that have been rejected earlier will be considered. The number of such claims is more than 4 lakh in the State. In the second phase, those applications will be taken for review in which certificates have been issued but discrepancies have been found between area of claimed and approved land.

Forest Rights Act 2006 has been implemented to provide recognition to communities having acquired forest land rights.

Source: <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2019/state-editions/c---garh-second-in-india-in-recognising-forest-rights-claims.html>