

## Chhattisgarh govt confers community forest rights to tribals

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The Chhattisgarh government on Wednesday announced that more than 4,41,000 individual and over 46,000 community forests rights have been distributed to the Scheduled Tribes community and other traditional forest dwellers. "In this manner, 51,06,000 acres of individual and community forest rights have been distributed to local communities in the state. 1 hectare of forest land has been recognized for forest rights holders on an average, which is comparatively better than the rest of the nation," the state government said in a statement.

Community forest rights include the right of disposal, ownership of minor forest produce, right to use fish and water bodies products, grazing, especially the habitat of vulnerable tribal groups and pre-agricultural communities.

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel virtually distributed around 1,300 community forest resource conservation rights of more than 5 lakh hectares among the Gram Sabhas. "For the first time in the state, the state government has provided consent and recognition to the Gram Sabhas, regarding the management of 26,000 hectares of forest land, under 23 cases of community forest resource rights after January 2019," it said.

The state government also stated that the recognised beneficiaries are also being provided with various facilities like irrigation, manure-seeds, agricultural inputs 'by the convergence and integration of government-run schemes on their recognized forest lands'. It informed that so far, a total of 1,49,762 beneficiaries in the state have been benefited by land levelling and fencing.

"With an aim to make the forest dwellers self-reliant by providing resources of extra income along with a life of respect, individual and community forest right holders of 1110 hectares of land will be provided with 1150 hectares of irrigated land to plant fruits, small forest produce and medicinal plantations, vegetable production, etc, who's implementation is under the scheme of MNREGA," it added.

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