

Chhattisgarh leads in recognising forest rights

12 October 2020



Model Karra nala in Kawardha division, Lohara range.

Chhattisgarh has emerged as a leading state in terms of recognition of individual and community forest rights, across the nation under the leadership of chief minister Bhupesh Baghel.

According to sources in his government, more than 4.41 lakh people and over 46,000 community forest rights have been distributed to the Scheduled Tribes community and other traditional forest dwellers. Around 51.06 lakh acres of individual and community forest rights have been distributed to local communities in the state. "One hectare of forest land has been recognized for forest rights holders on an average, which is comparatively better than the rest of the nation," said a senior government official.

On the occasion of the 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2, around 1,300 community forest resource conservation rights pertaining to over 5 lakh hectares, was distributed to gram sabhas virtually by the Chief Minister through video conferencing.

"The area of more than 4.41 lakh individual forest rights papers distributed accounts for more than 9,41,800 acres. Similarly, the area of more than 46,000 community forest rights papers, accounts for more than 41,64,700 acres. For the first time in Chhattisgarh, the state government has provided consent and recognition to gram sabhas, regarding the management of 26,000 hectares of forest land, under 23 cases of community forest resource rights after January 2019," he said.

The recognized beneficiaries are not only handed over forest rights letters, but 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.

So far, there are 1,49,762 beneficiaries of land levelling and fencing. The area of their land accounts for more than 58,000 hectares. "Levelling and fencing work was conducted on the beneficiaries

lands who availed the forest rights. Manure-seeds and agricultural inputs have also been provided to them," official said.

The provisions of the Forest Rights Act are meant to provide the Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dweller families, a life which they deserve consisting of their rights, self-reliance and respect. 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.

Under this, till September, 14,970 community forest rights papers have been provided for 9,74,635 hectares of forest land. Under the Forest Rights Act- 2006, 1,158 hectares of forest land has been provided to various departments for conducting 2,309 projects regarding 13 purposes from centres, roads and community centres, which will include the provision of public facilities such as schools, dispensaries, anganwadis, fair price shops, electrical and telecom lines, tanks and small reservoirs, drinking water supply and water pipelines, water or rainwater harvesting structures, minor irrigation canals, unconventional Energy sources, skill up-gradation or professional training.

"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 1,110 hectares of land, will be provided with 1,150 hectares of irrigated land to plant fruits, small forest produce and medicinal plantations, vegetable production, etc, implementation is under the scheme of MNREGA," the official concluded.

Source: <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/chhattisgarh-leads-in-recognising-forest-rights/cid/1794289#>