

### Consultative Workshop on the Implementation of the Forest Rights Act Held in Raipur

# A Collaborative Effort Under the Dharti Aba - Tribal Village Upliftment Campaign

**Raipur (Prime Day)** The Tribal Department of the Government of Chhattisgarh, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), and Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), successfully organized a consultative workshop on the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) at the New Circuit House, Raipur. This workshop was part of the recently launched Dharti Aba - Tribal Village Upliftment Campaign (DA-JGUA), inaugurated by Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on October 2, 2024. This initiative aims to promote the holistic development of tribal-majority villages by integrating 25 schemes and interventions from 17 ministries, focusing on education, health, infrastructure, and livelihood development. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has issued comprehensive guidelines, focusing on several key components, including:

- 1. Improvement of Infrastructure :** Emphasis on renovation and improvement of ashrams, hostels, and tribal residential schools.
- 2. Establishment of 100 Tribal Multipurpose Marketing Centers :** These centers will support the marketing and trade of tribal products.
- 3. Establishment of Centers for Sickle Cell Disease :** Facilities to raise awareness and offer counseling on sickle cell disease in tribal communities.
- 4. Effective Implementation of the Forest Rights Act :** Ensuring the proper implementation and



facilitation of the Forest Rights Act. The DA-JGUA mission will be implemented across 6,691 tribal-majority villages in 32 districts of Chhattisgarh.

The workshop brought together over 24 leading Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working on FRA in Chhattisgarh, along with key representatives from the Revenue, Forest, and Panchayati Raj Departments, Chhattisgarh Infotech Promotion Society (ChiPS), Assistant Commissioners of the Tribal Development Departments, and District Project Coordinators of District FRA Cells. The main goal of the workshop was to discuss the guidelines issued by the Ministry for the DA-JGUA mission and ensure effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

**Key Points of the Workshop**  
The workshop focused on the following critical areas for the successful implementation of the Forest Rights Act:

- 1. Recognition of Forest Rights.** Ensuring that tribal commu-

nities are legally recognized as rightful owners of forest resources.

**2. Establishment of FRA Cells (Dharti Aba Units) :** Setting up dedicated units for the effective management and implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

**3. Preparation of Community Forest Resource (CFR) Management Plans :** Developing plans to manage the collective forest resources belonging to tribal communities.

**4. Engagement of Technical Support Agencies.** Collaborating with technical experts to help develop management plans and ensure sustainable use of forest resources.

**5. Convergence of State and Central Government Schemes.** Integrating various government programs to benefit both Individual Forest Rights (IFR) beneficiaries and holders of Community Forest Rights (CFR).

**6. Empowerment of Gram Sabhas :** Involving local communities and Gram Sabhas in decision-making processes to play a key role

in managing forest rights.  
**Addressing the Participants**

Sonmoni Borah, Principal Secretary, Tribal, Scheduled Caste, OBC, and Minority Development Department, Chhattisgarh, addressed the workshop participants, emphasizing the importance of the DA-JGUA guidelines. He highlighted the need for better cooperation between different departments and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to ensure effective recognition of rights and facilitation of post-claim processes. He also stressed the role of Gram Sabhas in the process and the need for collective efforts to successfully implement the mission.

**Role of Key Departments and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) :** During the workshop, heads and representatives of key departments shared their thoughts on their role in supporting rights recognition, facilitating post-claim processes, and integrating various schemes for the upliftment of tribal

livelihoods. These departments also focused on the preparation of CFR management plans and the involvement of CSOs in this important task.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) discussed the challenges and opportunities in implementing the FRA and provided valuable solutions to support Gram Sabhas and CFR Management Committees at the grassroots level. Their insights emphasized the need for active participation of tribal communities in the development of CFR management plans.

**Workshop Outcomes and Recommendations**

The workshop concluded positively, fostering collaboration among multiple stakeholders. The following recommendations were made to ensure the successful implementation of the FRA:

**1. Capacity Building for Gram Sabhas and Local Institutions :** There was a consensus on strengthening the capacity of Gram Sabhas and local institutions to manage forest rights effectively.

**2. Convergence of Schemes :** Participants emphasized the need for better convergence of government schemes aimed at promoting livelihoods, infrastructure, and education.

**3. Development of Strong CFR Management Plans :** It was agreed that these plans should align with the aspirations of tribal communities and ensure sustainable management of forest resources.

**4. Sustained Efforts:** Participants stressed the impor-

ance of continued efforts to support tribal communities and ensure that the benefits of FRA reach the grassroots level.

**Significance of the Workshop**

The consultative workshop is considered a significant step in achieving the goals of the Dharti Aba - Tribal Village Upliftment Campaign. It demonstrated the Government of Chhattisgarh's commitment to recognizing forest rights and empowering tribal communities. This initiative ensures the government's dedication to improving the quality of life for tribal communities through targeted interventions in education, health, infrastructure, and livelihood development.

The workshop on the implementation of the Forest Rights Act was successfully conducted, bringing together various stakeholders to discuss strategies for the holistic development of tribal communities. The insights and recommendations gathered from the workshop will play a crucial role in ensuring the recognition of tribal communities' rights and improving their living standards. This workshop represents a critical step toward empowering tribal communities and ensuring they have a strong voice in the management and utilization of forest resources. Through continued efforts, Chhattisgarh is poised to emerge as a leading state in the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, laying the foundation for a more inclusive and sustainable future for its tribal population.