

Assam's Garbhanga Reserve Forest villages march towards development

Thursday, May 20, 2010, 14:12 [IST]

Guwahati, May 20 (ANI): With peace gradually returning to insurgent hit Assam the focus is shifting towards development and growth.

Villages in the Garbhanga Reserve Forest of the state's Kamrup District have achieved tremendous progress in the last few years.

Though, there has been no dramatic transformation as such, but hopes are high about reopening the benefits of peace dividend. Garbhanga village is over 15 kilometers from Guwahati.

Located on the Assam-Meghalaya border, it is home to the Kabri tribe, whose main source of income is farming, poultry and daily-wage labour.

Over 65 families live in this village that are looking forward to better living standards and connectivity.

Some of the youths of this village are also working with private companies and one such young and educated girl is Koreena Teron.

Once a month, she collects money from the village and deposits it in a bank in Guwahati. I start from my house at around 6 a.m. and reach Lokhra at 8.30a.m. For One and half hour we do some shopping and then return to the village. It takes six hour for the up and down **trip**. Sometimes, we use jeeps to transport goods," said Koreena.

Under the Forests Rights Act, 2006, tribes living in reserve forest areas are entitled to access government schemes on primary schools, roads and health centres.

Garbhanga has a school that was established in 1960. It has a number of tribal students, but urgently requires better **infrastructure** and teachers.

"The kids left the school because there was no awareness among the parents and their financial condition was not good. But now, students are coming to schools and in the 'Parijat Academy' some 20 to 25 students from nearby villages are getting educated. I hope this will bring progress to this area," said Rajat Chandra Kathar, school's headmaster.

Another village, Jalukpaham, is located over eight kilometers from Garbhanga and is home to over 25 tribal families.

It has a government school and a newly inaugurated healthcare centre.

Unfortunately, there is no doctor and a teacher comes here occasionally.

"We vote during the election, but after they (politicians) win they don't come back. They have not provided us facilities that are needed. We should get the same facilities, which others get," said Dhiren Ch Teron, a Jalukpaham resident.

The problems of tribes in Assam will be solved if they get their due under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. By Peter Alex Todd (ANI)

<http://news.oneindia.in/2010/05/20/assamgarbhanga-reserve-forest-villages-marchtow.html>