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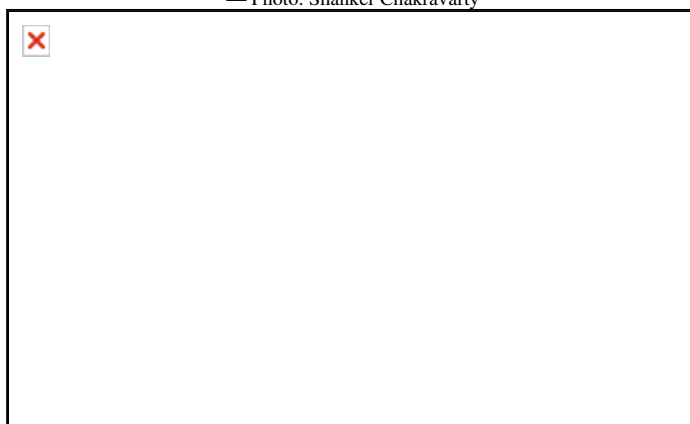
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## Forest rights: State claims good show

Special Correspondent

*Government implementing the Act on a mission mode, says Naveen*

— Photo: Shanker Chakravarty



**LIGHTER MOMENT: Minister of State for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at the conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers (Forest/Tribal Development) to review the implementation of the Forest Rights Act and tribal development/welfare programmes in New Delhi on Wednesday.**

BHUBANESWAR: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday claimed that his government achieved substantial progress with regard to implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, and about 2.64 lakh cases had already been verified out of more than 3 lakh cases filed by the tribals with the forest rights committees by October 31.

Speaking at the Conference of Chief Ministers, State Ministers of Tribal Affairs, Social Welfare and Forest Departments on Implementation of the Forest Rights Act 2006 in New Delhi, Mr. Patnaik said the gram sabhas had approved about 2 lakh cases and out of which the Sub Divisional Level Committees had already approved 72,000 cases.

The State government has been implementing the Act on a mission mode, Mr. Patnaik said.

The Chief Minister said the District Level Committees had approved about 68,000 cases out of which certificates of title had been distributed in more than 55,000 cases.

About 4,000 certificates of title had already been distributed among the primitive tribal groups out of about 16,000 primitive tribal group families in the State, Mr. Patnaik said.

He stated that it might not be enough to only confer legal rights to the tribals over the

land and suggested that steps should be initiated to provide irrigation facilities and improve productivity of these lands by dovetailing various programmes such as National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

### **Watershed mission**

Mr. Patnaik also said that the State government had constituted a Watershed Mission to improve the productivity of rain-fed lands and added that the Central government should support this programme so that it can be extended to development of the lands being settled with the tribals. He said that his government had undertaken several steps to ensure development of the tribal people. The initiatives include setting up of 1004 hostels for tribal girls, enhancement of scholarship for tribal boys and girls, establishment of 19 educational complexes in micro project areas for promotion of education among girls belonging to the primitive tribal groups.

The State government also decided to establish another 5000 hostels for tribal girls over a period of five years to provide residential facilities for five lakh girls, Mr. Patnaik said.

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