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Naveen tips for tribal welfare

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



Union minister of state for environment and forests Jairam Ramesh and chief minister Naveen Patnaik at the inauguration of a two-day conference at New Delhi. (PTI)

Bhubaneswar, Nov. 4: Chief minister Naveen Patnaik today asked the Centre to initiate steps for providing irrigation facilities to forestlands settled in favour of tribals and improve productivity of these lands by dovetailing various programmes.

The suggestion was made by Naveen while speaking at the conference of chief ministers on "Implementation status of ST and other traditional forest dwellers, Recognition of Forest Rights Act-2006," inaugurated by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at New Delhi.

"It might not be enough to only confer legal rights to tribals. Steps should be initiated to provide irrigation facilities and improve productivity of these lands by dovetailing programmes such as NREGS," he said.

Informing that his government had constituted a watershed mission to improve the productivity of rain-fed lands, the chief minister urged that the Centre would support this programme so that it can be extended to development of the lands being settled with tribals.

Highlighting the unique distinction of Orissa in terms of high percentage of tribal population and the number of tribal groups, Naveen stated tribals constitute almost a quarter of the total population and the state has 62 different types of Scheduled Tribe communities and 13 particularly vulnerable tribal groups.

Giving a vivid account of initiatives undertaken by his government for development of tribals, Naveen said the initiatives includes setting up of 1004 ST girls hostels, enhancement of scholarship for ST boys and girls, establishment of 19 educational complexes in micro project areas for promotion of girls' education among the PTGs, establishment of one BEd training college in Kandhamal and setting up of 11 Ekalavya model residential schools.

The government is also committed to establish another 5,000 ST girls' hostels over a period of five years to provide residential facilities for 5 lakh ST girls, he said.

Holding the progress report of his government in implementation of the Forest Rights Act-2006, Naveen said that about 2.64 lakh cases had already been verified out of more than 3 lakh cases filed by tribals with the Forest Rights Committees by October end. Gram sabhas had approved about 2 lakh cases, out of which the sub-divisional committees had already approved 72,000 cases.

The district level Committees had approved about 68,000 cases out of which certificates of title had been distributed to more than 55,000 cases.

About 4,000 certificates of title had been distributed among the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PTGs) out of about 16,000 PTG families in the state.

