



Orissa CM Naveen Patnaik seeks Central funds to provide irrigation, improve productivity of tribal lands

Report by Dipti Ranjan Kanungo, Bhubaneswar : Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik attended the Conference of Chief Ministers, State Ministers (Tribal/Social Welfare and Forest departments) on "Implementation Status Of Scheduled Tribes And Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) ACT 2006" inaugurated by Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh, at National Agriculture Science Centre, New [Delhi](#) on Wednesday . The Chief Minister addressed the Conference and gave a vivid account of initiatives undertaken by the State Government for development of Tribals in Orissa.



Chief Minister stated that Scheduled Tribes constitute almost a quarter of the total population of the State and Orissa has the unique distinction of having 62 different types of Scheduled Tribe communities and 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs). He informed that the Government of Orissa has undertaken several steps to ensure all round development of the Scheduled Tribes (including the PTGs). The initiatives include setting up of 1004 ST Girl's [Hostels](#), enhancement of scholarship for ST Boys & Girls, establishment of 19 educational complexes in micro project areas for promotion of Girl's education among the PTGs, establishment of one B.Ed Training College in Kandhamal, setting up of 11 Ekalavya Model Residential Schools etc. The State Government is also committed to establish another 5000 ST Girl's Hostels over a period of five years to provide residential facilities for 5 lakh ST Girls, CM stated.

Chief Minister further mentioned that after the promulgation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights Act), 2006, the Government of Orissa had taken pro-active measures to settle the land rights (both individual and community) in favour of the Tribals and other forest dwellers which they had been occupying/enjoying for ages without any legal record of rights. After [vacation](#) of the Stay Order of the Hon'ble High Court of Orissa on the distribution of Certificates of Title on 12th August, 2009, the State Government has been implementing the Act on a Mission mode, he informed.

Chief Minister stated that substantial progress has been made on implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 and about 2.64 lakh cases have already been verified out of more than 3 lakh cases filed by the Tribals with the Forest Rights Committees (FRCs) as on 31st October 2009. He further informed that the Gram Sabhas have approved about 2 lakh cases and out of which the Sub Divisional Level Committees have already approved 72,000 cases. The District Level Committees have approved about 68,000 cases out of which Certificates of Title have been distributed to more than 55,000 cases. About 4,000 Certificates of Title have been distributed among the PTGs out of about 16,000 PTG families in the State.

Chief Minister 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 (NREGS) etc. He also informed that the Government of Orissa had constituted a Watershed Mission to improve the productivity of rain fed lands and desired that the Government of India should support this programme so that it can be extended to development of the lands being settled with the Tribals.

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