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## **Orissa gives forest land rights to 28,400 tribal families**

Monday, October 12, 2009, 19:43 IST

Bhubaneswar: Orissa government has distributed 81,865 acres forest land among tribal families since August under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, state Land Revenue Minister S N Patro said.

"Of the total 3,04,530 applications by tribals living in forests, 28,400 people had been provided with land rights documents (pattas) by October 9 this year," he said.

Patro, who attended a review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik here on settlement of forest land rights to tribals, said the government began providing documents to tribals on August 19.

A maximum of two acres of forest land under cultivation could be allotted to each tribal family, Patro said.

With a large number of applications pending for disposal, the chief minister directed the revenue and tribal welfare department to expedite the land distribution activities.

Patnaik has also asked officials to immediately start survey of land and convert forest land to revenue land so that the tribals do not face any problem.

The southern division disposed maximum of 68 per cent of applications, followed by northern division of 50.8 percent and 28.81 per cent by central division, official sources said.

Bureau Report