

**SPEECH OF SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK,
HON'BLE CHIEF MINISTER, ORISSA,
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 2 – DAY CONFERENCE ON
*“IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF SCHEDULED
TRIBES AND OTHER TRADITIONAL FOREST
DWELLERS (Recognition of Forest Rights)
ACT 2006”*
(4th – 5th November 2009)**

Venue:

**A.P. SHINDE SYMPOSIUM HALL,
NATIONAL AGRICULTURE SCIENCE CENTRE,
DEV PRAKASH SASHTRI MARG (PUSA ROAD),
NEW DELHI.**

Honourable Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singhji; Honourable Union Minister, Tribal Affairs, Shri Kanti Lal Bhuriaji; Honourable Union Minister of State, Tribal Affairs, Dr. Tushar A. Choudhuryji; Esteemed Chief Ministers of various participating States and Union Territories. I thank Honourable Prime Minister for having arranged this meeting to take stock of the implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

2. My State has the unique distinction of having 62 different types of Scheduled Tribe communities, which is the highest number among all the states and union territories of the country. It also has the privilege of having 13 numbers of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs) in the state. The tribals constitute 22.13% of the total population of the state. The State Government has been sincerely trying to bring all round development of this section of population by extending various development programmes to bring them to the mainstream. Though there has been marked improvement in the living condition of ST population in the state over the years, there are many critical areas of concern which need to be addressed on an urgent basis to achieve speedy development of these communities.

3. The Government of Orissa has undertaken a number of initiatives for ensuring development of the Scheduled Tribes (including the PTGs). These 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 to ensure quality education for the tribal boys and girls. Besides, the State Government is also committed to establish 5000 more ST Girl's Hostels (1000 hostels each year over a period of five years) to accommodate 5 lakh ST Girls in these Hostels to ensure higher rate of enrolment among the ST Girl Children. In addition to the above, the Government has also made special effort to provide employment opportunities for the ST families.

4. After the promulgation of the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights Act), 2006, the Government of Orissa has taken pro-active measures to settle the land rights (both individual and community) in favour of the tribals and other forest dwellers which they have been occupying / enjoying for ages without any record of rights. Since there was an interim stay order of the Honourable High Court of Orissa on the distribution of Certificates of Titles under this Act from 02.09.2008, the pace of implementation had slowed down. After the stay order of the Honourable High Court was vacated on 12th August, 2009, the state government has been implementing the act expeditiously on a Mission mode.

5. As regards the implementation status of the Forest Rights act in the state of Orissa, I would like to place the progress as on 31st October 2009:

- 1.** A total number of 3,04,539 claims have been received by the Forest Rights Committees out of which 2,63,503 cases have been verified by FRCs and sent to Gram Sabhas.
- 2.** Similarly, 1,99,752 claims have been approved by Gram Sabha and sent to Sub Divisional Level Committees.
- 3.** Likewise, 71,871 claims have been approved by the Sub Divisional Level Committees and sent to the District Level Committees out of which about 67,843 claims have been approved by DLC for issue of certificates of titles.
- 4.** After vacation of the interim stay by the Honourable High Court on 12th August 2009, 55,499 Certificates of Titles have been distributed among the tribal measuring 92,576.13 acres of land within a record time of about 2 months.
- 5.** Out of about 16,000 PTG families staying in the state in the Micro Project Areas, Certificates of Titles has been distributed to 3,698 which is about 25% of the total PTG families of the state.

6. Land and forests are an integral part of the lives of tribal communities. The tribals have been the beneficiaries and protectors of forests for centuries. By recognizing their rights over these lands, we have been able to remove a legal hurdle which has been persisting for many years. It is, however, not

enough to only confer legal right over the land. Steps should be initiated to provide irrigation facilities and improve the productivity of these lands by dovetailing various schemes such as NREGS, NHM (National Horticulture Mission) etc. The Government of Orissa has constituted a Watershed Mission to improve the productivity of rain fed lands. I seek the support of Government of India for this programme so that all the lands being settled with the tribals can be brought within its purview.

JAI HIND.