

Forest Rights Committee set up in most of the states for the Implementation of Forest Rights Act

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Most of the States have constituted committees to monitor implementation of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and have initiated process of convening Gram Sabhas to elect the Members of Forest Rights Committees. In a response to the request from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for speedy implementation of the Act, States have informed that besides constituting committees at various levels for inviting and verification of claims, efforts were being made for time bound action at various levels for implementation of the Act. Awareness campaigns were being launched about the rights of the forest dwellers provided in the Act.

In Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, State level monitoring committees and committees at sub-divisional and district level have been constituted. Chhattisgarh has informed that by the end of June verification of claims at the level of Forest Rights Committees would be completed. In Gujarat, Forest rights Committees have been formed in 4403 villages and one lakh claims forms have been printed for the distribution among the claimant. Madhya Pradesh has informed that Gram Sabhas had been called in 55000 villages for constitution of Forest Rights Committees. A legal interpretation cell was being constituted at the State level to deal with the queries and questions related to the Acts and rules. In Orissa, the act and rules have been translated in Oriya language and 30000 copies have been distributed among the stakeholders.

According to the Act, the Gram Sabhas will prepare list of claimants of forest rights and forward the same to the sub-divisional committee. The sub-division level committee will examine the resolutions and the maps of the Gram Sabhas to ascertain the veracity of the claims. It will also hear and adjudicate disputes between Gram Sabhas on the nature and extent of any forest right. The district level committee headed by District Collector and District Commissioner will consider and finally approve the claims and records of forest rights prepared by the sub-divisional committee. It will also hear petition from persons aggrieved by the orders of the sub divisional committees. The state level monitoring committees constituted under the chairmanship of chief secretary will monitor the process of recognition, verification and vesting of forest rights in the concerned State.

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