

Govt says **Forest Rights Act** being implemented in 'varying degrees'

New Delhi: Government on Monday said states have progressed in "varying degrees" in the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, rejecting claims that some of them have failed to implement the law in an "effective manner".

In a reply to a written question in Rajya Sabha as to whether some states have failed to implement the Forest Rights Act in an "effective manner", Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Tushar A Choudhary said, "no sir".

"The states have progressed in varying degrees in the implementation of the Act," he added.

The Minister said that the responsibility of implementing the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and vesting the rights to the beneficiaries under the Act lies with state governments.

"While the states like Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura and West Bengal have established the prescribed structures and procedures, have received a large number of claims and have started distributing the titles (land deeds), other states are still to catch up because of various reasons," Choudhary stated.

He informed the House that more than 24.90 lakh claims have been filed across the country and more than 5.68 lakh titles have been distributed among the beneficiaries till October 31. "More than 43 thousand titles are ready for distribution," he added.

Ministry has advised the states to ensure completion of work relating to vesting of forest rights by the year end, Choudhary stated.

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