



*By Express News Service  
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## Implement Forest Rights Act: Dwellers

BHUBANESWAR: Tribal inhabitants and forest-dwellers today pressed for their forest rights through a huge rally in the city. The Campaign for Survival and Dignity, a national forum for the tribals and forest-dwellers, protested non-implementation of Forest Rights Act by taking out a rally which saw participation of hundreds of tribals from across the State. Its Orissa convenor Nikunja Bhutia said, a total of 2,90,273 individual and 1,616 community claims were filed. As yet, 1,53,051 individual and 351 community claims have been passed by the gram sabhas, while 37,269 individual and 73 community claims have been ratified by the sub-divisional-level committees. The district-level committee has given its nod to 30,749 individual and 45 community claims. Just 78 claims have been rejected. 'Pattas' should be handed over to the tribals in this regard at the earliest, he demanded. Meanwhile, apprehending damage to Niyamgiri, Lok Shakti Abhiyan today said a team from Ministry of Environment and Forests must visit the home of the Dongria Kandh to assess the extent of vulnerability. A team of activists visited the region and said the Niyamgiri hill should be declared a National Ecological Heritage so that abode of the Dongria Kandhs is protected. Alleging dumping of toxic waste in Vansadhara river, the activists demanded a probe into the matter. A commission of inquiry must be constituted so as to investigate corporate crimes and violation of established laws of the land, Prafulla Samantray, one of the activists said. The Lok Shakti Abhiyan also demanded distribution of 'pattas' to the tribals who come under forest-dwellers rights.

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