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Tribals get an identity

MALKANGIRI: Land pattas were provided to a total 5,113 Bonda and Didayi tribals of Malkangiri district in the last 15 days. Belonging to Khairput and Kudmulgumma block spreading across 14,175.18 acres of forest lands under different kissams, these tribals received Provisional Title Certificates under Forest Rights Act 2006.

After the recent uprising of tribals in Koraput's Narayanpatna block, the State Government had resolved to distribute land pattas to at least 30,000 rightful forest dwellers across the State. The certificates have been given to Bonda families living in 774.00 acres of forest land in Bonda Hill. There are 32 villages surrounding the hillock comprising 1,605 households.

The certificates were given away at a function held at Mudulipada recently by the ITDA Project Administrator Sundarlal Seal. "The settlement of forest lands in favour of the traditional forest dwellers is a historic step by the State Government," Seal said.

Certificates were also handed over to Didayi tribals living in 696 acres of land under Kudmulgumma block.

Seal said District Collector Nithin Bhanudas Jawale, tehsildars, block and gram panchayats officials and PRI members were involved in the process and the remaining eligible claimants will be provided the certificates by month-end.

Bondas and Didayis are considered one of the most primitive tribes in the world, who have till date tried to preserve their ancient culture and tradition. They had no legal right over the land on which they lived and cultivated. Implementation of Forest Rights Act enabled the administration to provide legal possession of land to these tribals.

With the distribution of these land pattas, the Bonda and Didayi villages would also start to have their identity on the map of administration and revenue department.

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