



D.D. No.: MTA/VIP/BBS/41/2017
Dated: 03/07/2017

Dear Shri Naveen Pattnaik ji,

I am writing to you to highlight the plight of villagers/ Kendu leaf gatherers of Golamunda block of Kalahandi district. This matter was brought to my notice last month and a report in this regard was sought from Government of Odisha vide letter dated 23.06.17. Several newspapers of Odisha also reported this issue.

2. I am made to understand that there is a conflict between the provisions of Forest Rights Act'2006 and Odisha Kendu Leaves (Control of Trade) Act' 1961. Since Govt. of Odisha has not taken any steps to amend the provisions of Odisha Kendu Leaves Act'1961 in line with those of FRA' 2006, these poor villagers are deprived of their rights, thereby losing livelihood and facing unspeakable difficulties. Though they had knocked the doors of District Administration, Collector, Kalahandi has found it very difficult to resolve the issues as the provisions of both these Acts are not in conformity with each other and therefore, poor villagers are caught in between the legal provisions of aforementioned two Acts.

3. You are well aware that FRA has overriding effect over other Acts as far as implementation related to rights of tribals and other forest dwellers is concerned. Owing to the apathy as well as lackadaisical attitude of the State Government towards the whole issue, poor people are suffering badly and running from pillar to post to address their grievances. I am told that State Government has issued an office Order only in respect of Nabarangpur district for sale of Kendu leaves through Gram Sabha. By doing so, all other districts have been deprived of this facility.

4. The State government instead of implementing the Provisions of FRA' 2006 in letter and spirit, has approached my Ministry to amend the existing provisions so as to benefit the other forest dwellers. I am to remind you that the implementation of FRA is the sole responsibility of State Govt, for which the District and Sub-divisional level officers should be sensitized as rejection cases are higher at these levels, even though Gram Sabha level committees are clearing the cases. It's also a fact that even after distribution of titles/pattas, lower level officials are not allowing the title holders to take possession of the land. This shows lack of seriousness on part of State Administrative towards the rights of Tribals.

5. Therefore, I would request your urgent intervention in the matter so as to remove the existing discrepancies in procurement of Kendu leaves, which will facilitate the sale of these products and provide relief to thousands of villagers depending upon the Kendu leaves.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Jual Oram)

Shri Naveen Pattnaik,
Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Government of Odisha,
Secretariat,
Bhubaneswar, Odisha.