



## The Saxena Committee on 'The Forest Rights Act' Implementation Public Consultation in Orissa

Friday, July 23, 2010

**By Kishore Kumar Patnaik, Bhubaneswar:** The Ministry of Forest and Environment (MoEF) and Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) has constituted a committee under the Chairman of Dr NC Saxena, Retd. Secretary, Planning Commission called Saxena Committee to examine the implementation on the "The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and Rules 2007" holding an open public consultation in Orissa on 22.07.2010.

The committee members Dr. Ravi Chellam, Wildlife Conservation Society of India Programme, Bangalore; Dr. Arup Jyoti Saikia, IIT Guwahati; Mr Ashis Kothari, Kalpavriksh, Pune and Mr Achyuta Samanta, KIIT Group, Bhubaneswar were heard and received the written submissions from Adivasis, Adivasis belong to Primitive Tribal Group, Dalits and Other communities, civil society organizations, government departments, interested individuals and others from different places of Orissa.

The SCSTRTI, Government of Orissa, Bhubaneswar has circulated (Letter No. 1567, 17.07.2010) among the communities, Civil Society Organisations and also too other Government Departments etc on 17.07.2010. Dr A B Ota, IAS, Director of SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, Mr Vinod Kumar Special Secretary, Bhubaneswar, Civil Society Organisations and MSW students were cooperated in the public hearing process of committee.

Some of the important presented views are:-

1. The other than Adivasi claims forms are not accepted by the Sub-Divisional Level Committees and Government Officials in the Koraput district and other places of Orissa. The Government Officials straightaway refusing the claims of Non Adivasis.
2. The record of rights on forest land issued to the claimants basing on the Government Officials willingness not on the area of acres land claimed by the claimants.
3. The process of issuing recognition of pattas still continues not yet given in all the areas
4. The issue of community rights over forest land is progressing in slow process.
5. The family level or community level forms are not available to the persons living in the forest area few persons stated.
6. The forest rights committees do not know why for they have formed and they need rigorous training and awareness to involve in the implementation process of Forest Rights Act and Rules
7. The recognition of pattas not issued to all the claimants by the issuing authorities
8. Mr Shakti Deuri an Adivasi from Banobasa Sahi, Kopan Village, Matiyaguda GP, Jasipur Panchayat Samiti of Mayurbhanj District presented the community rights received over forest land in the consultation.
9. The Dongaria Kandhs from Niyamgiri hills of Rayagda District stated, "Some of us received the individual land rights over forest land and the remaining recognition of families pattas has to be issued immediately". The community rights over forest land has not yet filed till today because of unavailability of community forms which we demand here to get the community rights following the procedural ways of Forest land laws as soon as possible.
10. Mr Rabi Behera, President of Samaj Badi Party has presented a memorandum to the committee demanding the purpose of Forest Rightst Act introduction and its implementation is to be taken care for effective results as it depends on the livelihood of forest dwellers.

In the end of public consultation Mr Ashish Kothari, the committee member said we have received many more opinions, grievances, suggestions in written and vocal on the Forest Rights Act implementation form here. We take all these observations made by all of you and would prepare a report and will submit it to the Central Government of India very soon. On behalf of committee he has also requested all of you can send if any opinions or claims left out to the committee through SCSTRTI or Vasundhara organization or else directly also through emails or postal services.

The committee has formed with the following members:-

1. Dr N C Saxena, Retd Secretary, Planning Commission, Chairman
2. Dr Devendra Pandey, Foremer DG, Forest Survey of India, Co Chairman
3. Dr Sharach Chandra Lele, ATREE, Bangalore, Member
4. Dr Ravi Chellam, Wildlife Conservation Society India Programme, Member
5. Dr Arup Jyoti Saikia, IIT Guwahati, Member
6. Dr A K Jha, Commissioner, Tribal Research and Training Institute, Pune, Member
7. Shri C R Sreedharan, Retd. PCCF, Tamil Nadu, Member
8. Shri V R Khare, Retd. PCCF, Madhya Pradesh, Member
9. Representative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Member
10. Representative of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Member
11. Shri Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh, Pune, Member
12. Shri. Ravi Rebbapragada, Executive Director, SAMATA, Member
13. Ms Jarjum Ete, Centre for Environment, Development and Gender Empowerment, Itanagar, Member
14. DIG (Forest Policy), MoE&F, Member
15. Shri R K Dogra, ADG(E), ICFRE, Dehradun, Member Secretary
16. Shri Achyuta Samanta, KIIT Group, Bhubaneswar, Member
17. Shri Raman Lal Meena, IAS Retd, Faridabad, Member
18. Shri Manu Lal Markam, Addl. District Magistrate(Retd), Shahdol, Member
19. Ms Vasavi Kiro, National Alliance for Women, Jharkhand, Member

The committee has formed with an intention to study in detail the implementation of the Forest Rights Act including factors that are aiding and impeding its implementation. The committee hears the submissions on the Forest Rights Act implementation consequences and recommends necessary policy changes in the future management of the forestry sector to the Government of India which will be more effective to takes its importancy.

The committee also identifies the role of official and non official agencies in facilitating forest dwellers in carrying their roles on conservation and management of forests as envisaged in the Act, opportunities for and recommends measures to ensure convergence of various beneficiary oriented programmes for the forest rights holders taken up by various lie departments in the states. The committee shall, wherever possible hold public consultations on all relevant issues soliciting the inputs of the concerned stalk holders.

The committee recognizes the addressed issues that came out from the public consultation and extends its support to the MoTA in their efforts to enforce and implement the Forest Rights Act. It shall suggest a new role for the Forest Department vis-à-vis the Gram Sabha for forest conservation and regeneration. The committee shall submit its report within six months from the date of its constitution.

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