

People's Forest

Advancing a people's agenda for 2024 general elections

Mapping Forest Rights Potential

SUMMARY

The objective of this research is to assess the Forest Rights Act's minimum potential in advancing the rights of Adivasi and other forest dwelling communities to their forests and resources against the backdrop of the upcoming 2024 General Elections. It offers critical information for political parties and forest rights groups to advance the agenda of forest rights recognition through the implementation of FRA in the upcoming election and address the major issues affecting the implementation of FRA- forest rights of STs and OTFDs in the potential constituencies.

The analysis has been computed using two Major sources of data – the Parliamentary Constituency wise Election Data of 2019 General Elections recorded and published by the Election Commission of India and the FRA Potential of Parliamentary Constituencies which is based on the Census of India, 2011. Multiple assumptions have been made to calculate the minimum potential of FRA.

The analysis categorizes parliamentary constituencies in five categories as per the estimate of electors eligible for FRA as a potential influencing factor in the elections, namely,

- Critical Value
- High Value
- Good Value
- Medium Value
- Marginal Value.

The first four together in this report are called **Core FRA Constituencies**. Marginal Value Constituencies have been excluded from Core FRA Constituencies. These valuations are based on the following criteria

Table 1 : Criterion for Categorisation of Parliamentary Constituencies

Value of FRA as an electoral Factor	Core FRA Constituency (Yes/NO)	Criterion for deciding Value of FRA in PC (% Electors are potential FR holders)	
		For ST reserved PC	For Unreserved PC
Critical Value	Yes	>10% or	>60%
High Value	Yes	<10% or	50-60%
Good Value	Yes	NA	30-50%
Medium Value	Yes	NA	20-30%

Value of FRA as an electoral Factor	Core FRA Constituency (Yes/NO)	Criterion for deciding Value of FRA in PC (% Electors are potential FR holders)	
		For ST reserved PC	For Unreserved PC
Total No of Core FRA Constituencies	NA	NA	NA
Marginal Value	No	NA	<20%
Grand Total	NA	NA	NA

The findings of the study indicate that Forest Rights can be seen in a scale of value from Critical Value (where FRA is most significant an issue) to Marginal Value (where FRA is of least significance as an issue) in the following number of Constituencies.

Table 2: Valuation of PCs as per FRA priority

Value of FRA as an electoral Factor	PC reserved for SC	PC Reserved for ST	Unreserved PC	Grand Total
Critical Value		40	5	45
High Value	2	2	7	11
Good Value	7		36	43
Medium Value	11		43	54
Total No of Core FRA Constituencies	20	42	91	153
Marginal Value	24		93	117
Total Constituencies where FRA is an issue at all	44	42	184	270

Of total PCs where FRA is relevant as seen above, the below table shows the performance of INC, BJP and others in the 2019 General Elections.

Table 2 : Comparing performance of Political Parties in 2019 General Elections in Parliamentary Constituencies basis importance of FRA

Value of FRA as an electoral Factor in PC	No of PCs	BJP		INC		Others	
		Won	Runner Up	Won	Runner Up	Won	Runner Up
Critical Value	45	34	5	3	28	8	12
High Value	11	7	3	1	2	3	6
Good Value	43	26	8	5	19	12	16
Medium Value	54	36	2	2	30	16	22
Total No of Core FRA Constituencies	153	103	18	11	79	39	56
Marginal Value	117	73	12	8	50	36	55
Total Constituencies where FRA is an issue at all	270	176	30	19	129	75	111

Of the 153 Core FRA Constituencies, the BJP won 103 seats, while the INC won just 11 seats. However, INC remains in the running in these 153 Constituencies, as it came in 2nd place in 79 out of the 153 constituencies. Others won 39 seats, mostly in Andhra Pradesh (25), Bihar (22), Maharashtra (24), Odisha (12), Tamil Nadu (31), Telangana (10) and Uttar Pradesh (17). The breakup of others who won in these seats is as follows :

Thus, it is clear that INC, which enacted the FRA, albeit under pressure from People's movement for tribal rights has done quite poorly in PCs where FRA is a core issue. Although they are runners up in as many as 79 out of 153 core FRA constituencies. Out of the 153 constituencies, INC and BJP ran directly against each other in as many as 74 Constituencies, of which INC won only 5.

Other expanded Data sets that are available:

1. Statewise breakup of Core FRA Constituencies won by 'Other' Political Parties
2. *State wise breakup of 74 Core FRA Constituencies where BJP and INC are in direct competition*
3. Statewise breakup of core FRA PCs reserved for STs
4. State wise breakup of PCs with ithe following information information
 - a. winning party
 - b. losing party
 - c. margin of win
 - d. total number of electors eligible for FRA rights
 - e. % of electors eligible for FRA rights
 - f. minimum forest area eligible for FRA recognition
5. State wise break up of PCs that are relevant to FRA and the % of voters from highest to lowest