

State tops in settlement of forest rights, land pattas

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The State Government while having provided land pattas to 3,27,496 tribals under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) till date, has decided to provide land Pattas to 23,000 tribals very soon.

It may be noted that Odisha has emerged as the top State in terms of FRA settlement and providing land Pattas to the tribals and forest-dwellers under the aegis of the Department of SC & ST Development.

This was revealed at a high-level review meeting on FRA presided over by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday, where Minister of ST & SC Development Lal Bihar Himirika was present. The Chief Minister directed the concerned departments to provide land Pattas to tribals after considering their claims at the earliest.

It was also informed at the meeting that 12,000 landless families have been provided with Pattas under the Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihood Project (OTELP) till date.

For identification of landless tribals under the OTELP, the Government has appointed 550 Community Resource Persons in 30 blocks who have identified 26,000 landless tribal families.

The landless tribals are being provided land under a number of welfare programmes including Basundhara, Mo Jami Mo Diha, OPLE and OGLS coming under the OTELP. The Government has set a target to provide land to five lakh tribal families of 18,000 villages under 118 Tribal Sub Plan Blocks by 2016-17.

This apart, the Government has provided land Pattas with 26,900 acres of land to 17,706 ST families. It has also taken steps for development of the land and houses of these land allottees under various programmes including Indira Awas Yojana, Mo Kudia, Mo Pokhari, MGNREGS and Bamboo Mission.

It was also revealed that the Government has taken up construction works for hostels for tribal students. While construction of 379 hostels was completed in 2011-12, works for 621 hostels are underway of which construction of 350 hostels would be completed before the coming academic year.

Out of the total 1,000 hostels to be constructed during 2013-14, 110 would be earmarked for tribal college students. The process for construction for five urban hostel complexes in Rourkela, Bhubaneswar and Brahmapur has already started.