

Tribals rally for land rights in Ganjam

TNN Aug 17, 2012, 04.02AM IST

Berhampur: Hundreds of tribals on Thursday took out a rally at Bhanjanagar in Ganjam district, about 80 km from here, pressing for eight of their long-standing demands and threatening to launch a massive agitation if those are not met.

The demands included giving record of rights (RoR) of forest lands to tribal people, increase in rice quota under the public distribution system and electrification of tribal villages under the [Rajiv Gandhi](#) Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana.

Taking up cudgels under the banner of Ghumusara Taluk Adivasi Kandha Kue Samaj, a unit of Nikhila Utkal Kue Samaj, the tribals walked in the procession in the sub divisional head quarters town in the district, and submitted their memorandum to the district collector through the sub collector.

Some non-tribals also joined the rally and demanded the declaration of Bhanjanagar as drought-hit.

Trinath Mallick, a leader of the tribals, said the district administration had failed to ensure the tribals' land rights, even though they applied for the same under the Forest Rights Act (FRA). In stead, forest officials had arrested innocent tribals for encroaching upon forest land. "Around 50 tribal people of the region were arrested by forest staff in a year," he alleged.

Mallick added that several tribal people of Gallery, Bramhanapada and Domuhani areas in Ganjam district were running from pillar to posts to get the RoR for the last three to four years without any avail.

Tribal leaders present at the demonstration also alleged that despite having MGNREGS job cards, tribals were not getting jobs in the state, and were being forced to migrate to states like Tamil Nadu, Kerals and Gujarat.

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