

## **FRA: State initiative comes in for praise**

The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs is likely to recommend other State governments to translate the Forest Rights Act in tribal dialects as done by the State government to generate awareness about the Act in tribal population.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Vibha Puri Das, Union Tribal Affairs Secretary, said, “translating of FRA Act in tribal dialects is an innovative attempt to generate awareness among tribal communities. Other State governments should follow this practice.”

Odisha has one of the varied groups of tribal communities including 13 primitive tribal groups. As many as 17 micro projects are functioning across the State for upliftment of PTGs.

Recently, two youths from each micro project were recently oriented by the State government for effective implementation of the FRA in tribal areas.

The FRA has been translated in tribal dialects for communities like Desia, Kui, Bonda, Juanga, Saura, Santhal, Ho, Oram, Koya and Kuvi. The population of PTG in the State is 82,000. According to the State Tribal Development Department, only 600 people among PTGs are left to be covered under the FRA. So far 17,229 individual title deeds involving 41,771.22 acres of land among PTGs had been distributed.

In the State, a total number of 3.01 lakh titles were distributed against 5.32 lakhs claims received, which is 56.57 per cent of total number of claims. According to information, Odisha ranks first position and fourth position in terms of number of title distributed under individual forest rights and under community forest rights respectively.

“As of now about 44 lakh acres of forestland have been settled basing on 12 lakh claims received by various Forest Right Committees. The State is among few States those have performed well in implementing the FRA,” Ms. Das said.

The Union Tribal Affairs Secretary was here to attend regional consultation on implementation of FRA Act which was amended this month.

She said amendments that clarify issues pertaining to conduct of gram sabha, rights over minor forest produces, verification of land rights and greater representation of scheduled tribes in FRCs necessitated in order to enhance the pace of FRA implementation.

***Union Tribal Affairs Secretary to recommend other State governments to translate Forest Rights Act in tribal dialect***