BACKGROUNDERS
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Forest Rights Act

Recognising Rights, Securing Livelihoods

16 November 2026

The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 recognises the rights of Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers on forest land. Individual and community rights are recognised through titles which are official documents that record forest rights. Entering titles into revenue records makes it easier for the owners to get benefits under PM-KISAN and other agriculture, fisheries and livelihood schemes. As on 31 August 2026, ***25.42 lakh*** *titles had been distributed, covering nearly* ***238 lakh*** *acres of land. The Ministry launched* ***National FRA Digital Platform*** *during the Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwada. This will bring the claims process, from submission to the Gram Sabha to getting digitally signed titles, on a single platform.*

Introduction

For generations, forest-dwelling communities have lived in and depended on forests for their homes and livelihood. Yet the rights of many of them over the land they used went unrecorded when State forests were consolidated during the colonial period and after independence. The Forest Rights Act, 2006 recognises these rights for forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers. It gives legal recognition to both individual and collective rights of these communities on forest land. The Act and its Rules provide for issuing titles to land and entering them in revenue records. The Act received the President's assent on 29 December 2006 and came into force on 31 December 2007.

The objectives of the Act are:

- To recognise forest rights that could not be recorded earlier.
- To give forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers secure rights to their land (land tenure), livelihood and food security.
- To strengthen forest conservation by giving forest rights holders the responsibility and authority to use forests sustainably and to conserve biodiversity and ecological balance.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the nodal agency for the Act. State Governments and Union Territory Administrations implement it. The Act is being implemented in 20 States and one Union Territory, Jammu and Kashmir.

What is a Forest Rights Title?

A title is the official document that records a forest right. It shows who holds the right, in which village, and over which land or forest, with its boundaries. Three district officers sign it for the State Government: the Divisional Forest Officer, the District Tribal Welfare Officer and the District Collector. The holder gets a certified copy. For a community title, the Gram Sabha (the village assembly) gets it. A title passes to the holder's heirs. It cannot be sold or transferred.

Key Milestones

Date	Milestone
29 December 2006	The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 received the President's assent.
31 December 2007	The Act came into force.
1 January 2008	The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Rules, 2008 were notified.
12 July 2012	Comprehensive guidelines on implementing the Act were issued to State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.
23 April 2015	Guidelines on granting Community Forest Resource rights were issued.
11 February 2019	A direction to extend the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) to Forest Right Patta (forest rights title) holders was issued.
12 September 2023	Guidelines for Conservation, Management and Sustainable use of Community Forest Resources (CFR) were issued.
2 October 2024	Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan, a programme to close infrastructure gaps in tribal villages, was launched, with support for dedicated FRA cells at State and district levels.
5 January 2026	Ministry guidelines on Habitat Rights for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups were issued.
24 June 2026	Ministry advisory to expedite incorporation of the Record of Forest Rights into revenue and forest records was issued.
06.07.2021 14.03.2024 27.07.2026	The Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change jointly issued three advisories to enable expeditious implementation, mitigate post-claim issues and converge funds.

Who Can Claim and What the Act Protects

The Act covers two groups. Forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes are members of Scheduled Tribes who mainly live in forests or forest land and depend on them for their bonafide livelihood needs. Other traditional forest dwellers are those who have mainly lived in forests and depended on them for at least three generations (75 years), before 13 December 2005. Rights apply to forest land occupied before that date. For land held for a home or for cultivation, the right covers only the area actually occupied, up to four hectares.

- The rights cover forest land of every kind, including reserved and protected forests, Sanctuaries and National Parks.
- No member of either group can be evicted or removed from the forest land they occupy until the recognition and verification of their rights is complete.
- The Central Government provides for small areas of forest land, each under one hectare, to be used for government facilities when the Gram Sabha recommends it. These facilities include schools, hospitals, anganwadis, fair price shops, drinking water, minor irrigation canals, roads and community centres.

Kinds of Rights and Titles

Three kinds of title

Individual title: for the land a family lives on or farms, up to four hectares. A married couple gets it in both their names (in the case of a single-headed household, it is registered in the name of the single head of the household).

Community forest rights title: for what a village uses together, such as grazing, fishing, water bodies and minor forest produce. The community holds the title. Any conditions are written on it.

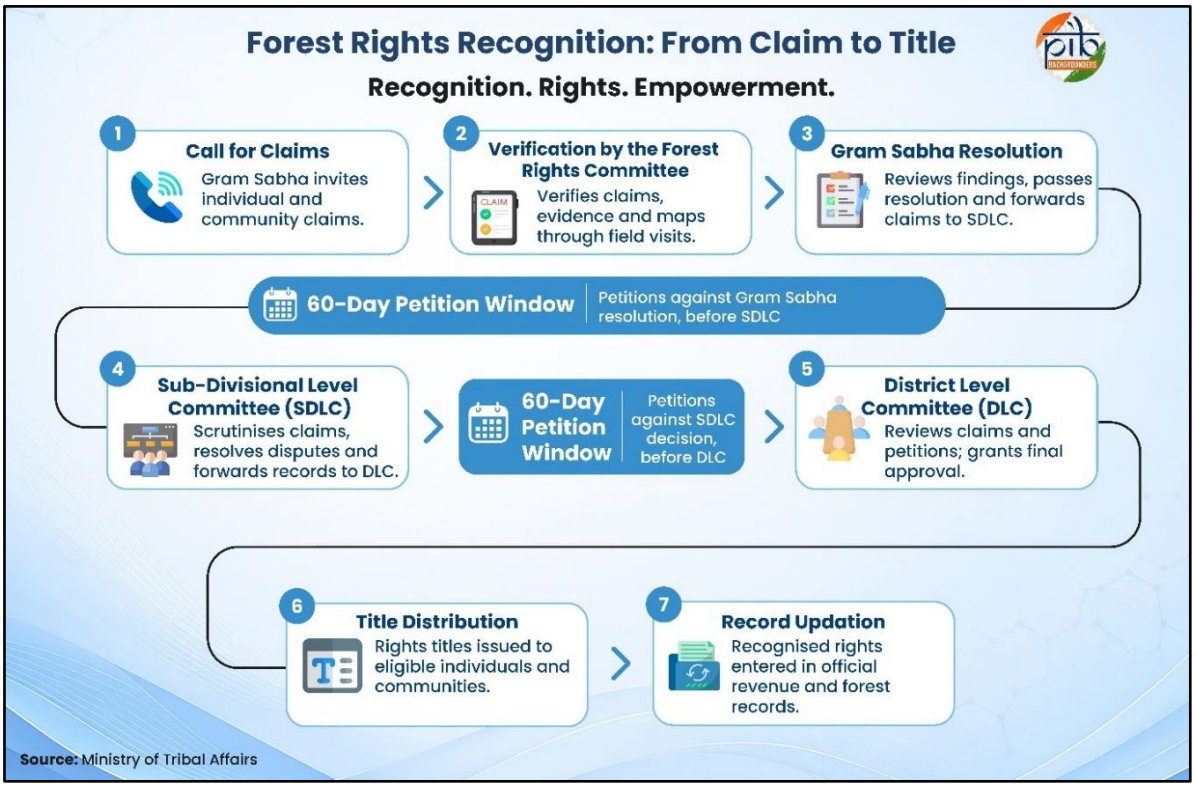
Community forest resource title: gives the Gram Sabha or community the right to protect, regenerate, conserve and manage the forest within its customary boundary. This is the forest the village has traditionally had access to.

- Forest dwellers own the minor forest produce they have traditionally collected, such as bamboo, honey, lac, tendu leaves and medicinal plants. They may collect, use and dispose of it.
- Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups have rights over their habitat, the area they have customarily lived in, including in reserved and protected forests. The Ministry issued guidelines on Habitat Rights on 5 January 2026. Habitat rights have been granted to 11 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in three States: Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.

How a Claim Is Decided

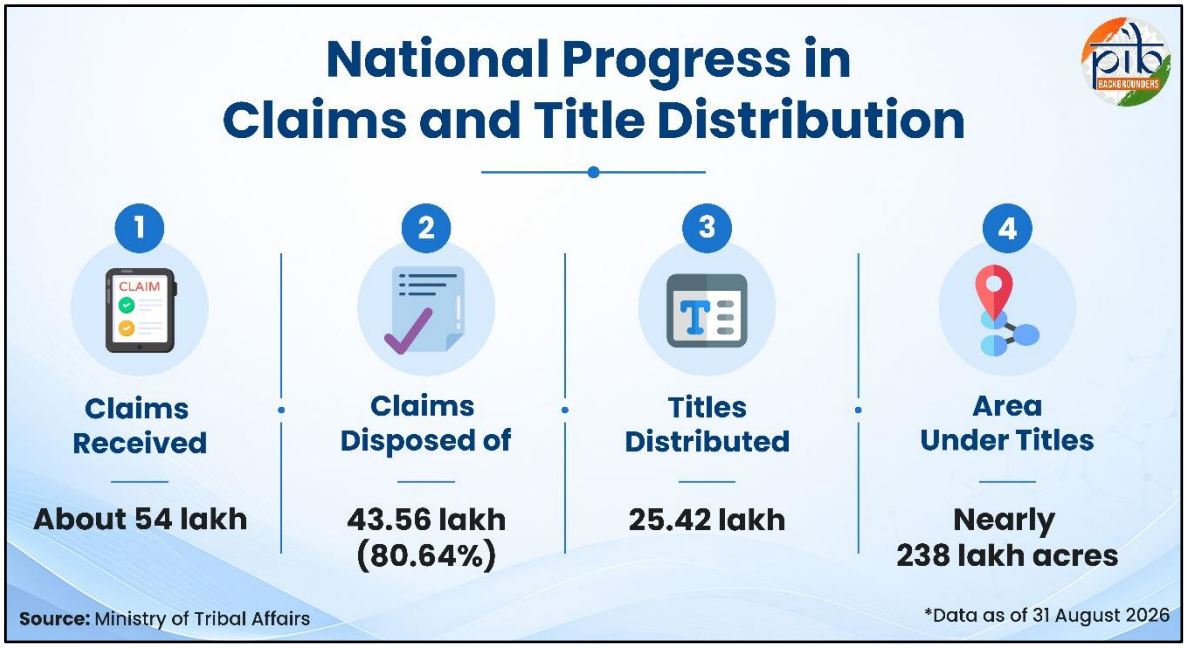
The Gram Sabha starts the process. It is the assembly of all adult members of a village, with the full and unrestricted participation of women. The Gram Sabha elects a Forest Rights Committee of ten to fifteen members. This committee helps it receive and verify claims. At least two-thirds of the committee's members are from Scheduled Tribes, and at least one-third are women. The Gram Sabha receives claims, verifies them and maps the land. It then passes a resolution. This resolution goes to the Sub-Divisional Level Committee (SDLC). The Act also empowers forest rights holders and the Gram Sabha to protect wildlife, forests, biodiversity and water sources.

- The SDLC examines the resolution and prepares the record of forest rights (the list of rights proposed for recognition). It sends this to the District Level Committee (DLC). The DLC's decision is final and binding. Each of these committees includes officers of the State's Revenue, Forest and Tribal Affairs departments. It also includes three members of Panchayati Raj Institutions, two of whom are Scheduled Tribe members and at least one of whom is a woman.
- A person who disagrees with a Gram Sabha resolution or an SDLC decision can petition the next committee within 60 days. Under the Forest Rights Rules, the committee may allow up to 30 more days. The Ministry has stressed that every rejection must come with an order giving reasons. This order must be sent to the claimant so that the right of appeal is kept.
- Once titles are issued, the rights are entered in revenue and forest records. The Forest Rights Rules have required this since 2008, and a 2012 amendment set a time limit of three months.
- The State Level Monitoring Committee monitors the process. It is chaired by the Chief Secretary and is to meet at least once in three months.



Progress So Far

As on 31 August 2026, about 54 lakh claims had been received and 43.56 lakh (80.64%) had been disposed of, and 25.42 lakh titles had been distributed, covering nearly 238 lakh acres.



The latest State-wise data, as on 31 August 2026, shows 24.18 lakh individual and 1.24 lakh community titles.

Five States with the Most Titles Distributed, as on 31st August 2026

State	Community Titles	Individual Titles	Total Titles
Chhattisgarh	52,636	4,81,432	5,34,068
Odisha	9,432	4,64,504	4,73,936
Madhya Pradesh	28,754	2,60,707	2,89,461
Telangana	721	2,30,735	2,31,456
Andhra Pradesh	1,822	2,26,667	2,28,489
All India (covering 20 states & 1 UT) as on 31 August 2026	**1,24,162**	**24,18,207**	**25,42,369**

Support for the States

- States and Union Territories send Monthly Progress Reports on claims, titles and rejections, and the Ministry compiles them.
- The Ministry has demonstrated a national FRA Portal and an FRA mobile app to digitise and map FRA records. It has urged States to link their records with the Portal.

- The Ministry launched the National FRA Digital Platform during Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwada (1 to 15 November 2026): the fortnight of programmes observed across the country. The Platform will bring the whole claims process onto one system, from Gram Sabha submission to digitally signed titles.
- District Collectors and District Magistrates have been advised to dispose of pending claims on time. The Ministry also holds regular review meetings with State Tribal Welfare Departments. Grievances received by the Ministry are sent to the States and Union Territories concerned for action.

Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DA-JGUA)

Under the scheme, the Ministry funds FRA cells at State and district levels for two years. These cells help settle pending claims and help the SDLC and DLC meet on time. Support also covers State FRA portals, including digital mapping of land records, servers, software and security audits. Additionally, under the Support to Tribal Research Institutes scheme, the Ministry provides ₹25 lakh per State for mapping of potential forest area.

Under DA-JGUA, the Ministry provides ₹15 lakh for each Community Forest Resource Management Plan, the plan for protecting and managing a village's community forest, prepared by a Gram Sabha. It also provides ₹1 lakh for technical support. A joint communication of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, dated 27 July 2026, allows these plans to be aligned with Forest Department Working Plans. These are the Forest Department's own plans for managing forests. The Gram Sabha's authority remains central.

- Free courses on the Forest Rights Act are available on iGOT, the online learning platform of Mission Karmayogi. States are also organizing legal literacy camps on forest rights.
- In Maharashtra, a Government Resolution of 10 July 2026 provides separate village forms, 7E (record of rights into revenue records) and 12E (crop register), for individual forest rights holders. These forms help them obtain crop loans, Kisan Credit Cards, crop insurance and Direct Benefit Transfer.
- Andhra Pradesh links its Giribhumi FRA portal with the State's revenue and banking systems. Telangana's online title system is integrated with the BhuBharathi revenue portal.

In September and October 2026, the Ministry held three Regional Review Conferences, in Bengaluru, Kolkata and Srinagar, with 19 States and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. They reviewed progress and called for time-bound action plans.

Conclusion

The Forest Rights Act, 2006, gives forest-dwelling communities the legal basis to claim rights over the forests they have long lived in and protected. With 25.42 lakh titles distributed over nearly 238 lakh acres, the focus now is on three things: entering recognised rights in revenue and forest records, linking forest rights holders to livelihood schemes, and supporting Gram Sabhas to manage community forest resources.

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