Forest Rights Act in J&K

Why in news?

J&K government decision to implement the Forest Rights Act is a cause of concern.

What is Forest Rights (FRA) Act?

It provides Adivasis access and ownership rights, forest-based livelihood rights, and minor forest produce rights.

How is FRA implemented?

- The forest rights committees will assess the nature and extent of rights being claimed at the village-level.
- Subsequently, these claims would be scrutinised by the sub-divisional committees which will then prepare a record of forest rights.
- District-Level Committees will give the final approval and grant forest rights.

Why the act is now a concern?

- On October 31,the J&K government's decided to declare **State Land (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001**, also known as the **Roshni Act**, null and void.
- This Act was struck down due to the questionable transfer of ownership of state land to many influential people, including Ministers, legislators, bureaucrats, and police officers.
- But some say that it provided ownership rights to many poor, landless Adivasis & now the land will be retrieved from them.
- In case of J&K, there is no cut-off date mentioned in the FRA unlike rest of India, where the act provides recognition of forest rights to forest dwellers who had occupied forest land before December 13, 2005.
- Without a cut-off date & declaring the **Roshni Act** null and void, will lead to forceful evictions & tribal families will not benefit from the implementation of the FRA.
- In the last few weeks, there was intensified eviction and demolition drives against nomads without any rehabilitation plans in place.

- Moreover Adivasis largely depend on non-tribal leadership to represent their issues and demands as they lack of political reservation leading to further marginalisation.

Source: The Hindu

