Need For Proper Implementation of FRA

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n
- Many forest dwellers across India are in vulnerable condition due to improper implementation of Forest Rights Act (FRA).
\n
- Respective governments needs to take measures in this regard.
\n

\n\n

What is Forest Rights Act?

\n\n

\n
- The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 or FRA was a landmark legislation that sought to restore the rights of forest dwellers over land, community forest resources and habitats, and the governance and management of forests.
\n
- It concerns the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land and other resources, denied to them over decades as a result of the continuance of colonial forest laws in India.
\n
- The Act grants legal recognition to the rights of traditional forest dwelling communities, partially correcting the injustice caused by the forest laws.
\n

\n\n

What is the significance of FRA?

\n\n

\n
- The community forest titles enable all the villagers, including landless people, to access, use and sell minor forest produce and use other forest resources.

\n
- There are evidences that after recognition of community forest rights, the household incomes from bamboo harvesting has increased.
\n
- There are possibilities of reverse migration and reduced forest fires due to regular patrolling and monitoring by the villagers.
\n
- Thus FRA can contribute to their livelihood and sustainable management of forests.
\n

\n\n

What is the implementation status of FRA?

\n\n

\n
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs' latest database reveals that out of 41,89,827 claims for land rights made by forest dwellers, only 18,24,27 have been accepted by the authorities.
\n
- In some cases titles have been given over less area than what was legitimately claimed by forest dwellers.
\n
- Of the total forest rights titles issued so far, the majority are of individual forest rights and only less than 4 per cent titles recognise community forest rights.
\n
- Instead of addressing the implementation problems, governments across the country have introduced conflicting policies that go against the spirit of the FRA.
\n
- Many of these rules place the governance of forests in the hands of committees that are constituted and controlled by the forest department.
\n

\n\n

What are the consequences of non-implementation of FRA?

\n\n

\n
- There are land related conflicts galore across the country arising due to the non-implementation of the provisions of the Forest Rights Act.
\n

- There were diversion of forests for industrial and development projects without settling forest dwellers rights and without their free and prior informed consent has been indiscriminately carried out.
\n
- Majority of the land conflicts (two-third) in India are related to common lands rather than private lands.
\n
- If unsolved these conflicts will increase and will impact hugely on the economic system if the government fails to address them in a rapid manner.
\n

\n\n

What measures needs to be taken by the government?

\n\n

\n
- The government should realise that the Forest Rights Act can enhance the livelihood of people and promote sustainable forest management through collective action with legal sanction, scientific inputs and social process.
\n
- Implementation of the Forest Rights Act will help to resolve many existing conflicts and uplift the economic and social status of forest dwellers.
\n
- The government should understand the potential of the FRA to address rural distress and not subvert its provisions.
\n
- The state governments across the country should bring amendments to their forest law, especially laws related to minor forest produce.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express

\n

