Recognition of Community Forest Rights

Why in news?

The Chhattisgarh government has become only the second state in the country to recognise Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights of a village inside a national park.

What is a Community Forest Resource?

- The community forest resource area is the common forest land that has been traditionally protected and conserved for sustainable use by a particular community.
- The community uses it
    - to access resources available within the traditional and customary boundary of the village
    - for seasonal use of landscape in case of pastoralist communities
- Each CFR area has a customary boundary with identifiable landmarks that may include forest of any category – revenue forest, classified & unclassified forest, deemed forest, DLC land, reserve forest, protected forest, sanctuary and national parks etc.

What are Community Forest Resource rights?

- The Community Forest Resource rights are provided under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act.
- It provides for recognition of the right to "protect, regenerate or conserve or manage" the community forest resource.
- It allows the community to formulate rules for forest use by itself and others and thereby discharge its responsibilities.
- CFR rights, along with Community Rights which include nistar rights and rights over non-timber forest products ensure sustainable livelihoods of the community.
- These rights give the authority to the Gram Sabha to adopt local traditional practices of forest conservation and management within the community forest resource boundary.

What is the significance of the recognition of CFR rights?

- To undo the historic injustice meted out to forest-dependent communities due to curtailment of their customary rights over forests
- To recognize the community's right to use, manage and conserve forest resources
- To legally hold forest land that these communities have used for cultivation and residence
- To underline the integral role that forest dwellers play in sustainability of forests and in conservation of biodiversity
- To make forest dwellers a part of management of the protected forests using their traditional wisdom

What about Chattisgarh's recognition?

- The Chhattisgarh government recognised, for the first time, the community forest resource (CFR) rights of a village located inside a national park.

- The CFR rights of Gudiyapadar hamlet comprises of 403 hectares of forest area and consists of four reserved forest compartments inside the Kanger Ghati National Park.
- According to the Chhattisgarh government, it has recognised more than 4,000 CFR titles till mid-May.
- Kanger Ghati National Park is the second national park, after Simlipal in Odisha, where CFR rights have been recognised.

References

1. https://indianexpress.com/article/india/in-a-first-chhattisgarh-recognises-cfr-rights-of-village-inside-national-park-7936375/
2. https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-are-community-forest-rights-why-do-they-matter-7939921/

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