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कृपया इस स्थान
में प्रश्न संख्या के
अतिरिक्त कुछ
न लिखें।

18/12/23

UPSC

Answer Questions in NOT MORE THAN the Word Limit specified for each in the Parenthesis.
Content of the Question is more important than length.
(Specimen Answer Booklet - For Practice Purpose Only)

Even after 17 years of enactment, the Forest Rights Act, 2006 has not fully delivered its promise of freeing forest-dwellers from historic injustices and democratizing forest governance. In this context, examine the challenges and suggest measures to overcome the situation. (250 words)

The Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, widely known as the Forest Rights Act was enacted. The act promised to set free forest-dwellers from historic injustices. The local communities had their rights over the forests and lived in peace even during the rule of kings and queens. Their customary rights were taken off when colonialism began in India. The Indian forest Act, 1878 was passed with a fallacious thought of 'eminent domain' and the forests, which were perceived as a timber resource by the colonial rulers, were taken off.

Then, an improper and a faulty settlement of agricultural lands had happened. A concept called 'Forest villages' was created for ensuring supply of labour for forestry activities. Access to forest produce was limited, temporary and changeable. These are modified on the whims and fancies of the Imperial ruler. The local community had no right to manage the forest, even if access was given, they ~~are~~ ^{were} at the mercy of the existing bureaucracy at that time. Any concession given was classified as 'privileges' which can be

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modified at any time.

Post-Independence, these forest areas were declared as the 'state property' without proper enquiry on who were properly residing, as a result they became 'encroachers' overnight. Several forest areas were diverted for developmental projects ^{without} obtaining Prior Consent from the local community and they were forcefully displaced from their habitat.

The Forest Rights Act recognised the local community's historical habitat and cultivation through Individual Forest Rights (IFR). Along with this, the rights of village communities to access & use forests to own and sell minor forest produce is also permitted. This act democratizes and decentralises forest governance by allowing the locals to manage their area, including sanctuaries and national parks. It lays down a democratic manner for identifying a place for conservation that may require curtailing community rights.

The biggest challenge in Forest Rights Act implementation is the slow and incomplete recognition of community rights to ^{access} and manage forests. Next major challenge is that, the local community ~~are~~ members are still not got consent for any decision taken ~~on~~ regarding their habitat, as higher officials are yet to yield community rights to them.

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Several Protests and unrests arise as a result of hasty, non-inclusive decisions made on the relocation of the locals due to diversion of land for new developmental project. Another Challenge is that, while declaring a place for conservation, the local community must be engaged in dialogue, if not given veto power, atleast they must have a say in demanding compensation.

The way forward would be to effectively implement the Forest Rights Act. ^{By} Not stopping here, proper monitoring has to be done, so as to stop (or) prevent any disruption in implementation. Most of the challenges can be resolved by providing community Forest rights to the local residents and including them in decision making and also providing them with management authority, thereby leading to democratic, decentralised and inclusive growth in the future.