

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2919

ANSWERED ON:19.03.2008

IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES AND OTHER FOREST DWELLERS ACT

Verma Shri Ravi Prakash

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has requested the State Governments to expedite implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act and Rules as reported in 'The Hindu' dated February 24, 2008 ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ(SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. Under the provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dweller (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, the Gram Sabha is the competent authority for initiating the process of determining the nature and extent of forest rights to be recognized and vested, which are to be scrutinized by the Sub Divisional Committee after which the District Level committee will approve the claims and record of forest rights. After operationalization of the Act 2006 and notification of the Rules, 2007, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs which is the nodal Ministry for implementation of the Forest Rights Act has written to all States/UT Governments on 11.1.2008 to constitute various Committees under the Act immediately and also initiate necessary action for recognition and vesting of the forest rights in the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers under the Act.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has also written to the States /UTs on 15.2.2008 suggesting that the States may organize Gram Sabhas on 28.2.2008 during which the provisions of the Act and the Rules and the roles and responsibilities of PRIs, Gram Sabhas and Forest Rights Committees are explained. This Ministry has also suggested that training for this purpose must be organized for the Sub Divisional Committee members and Pradhans and the PRI representatives so that they understand the entire process and specifically their assigned roles and responsibilities. This Ministry has requested the States to expedite the launch of the process of recognizing the forest rights of Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers.