

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TRIBAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:279

ANSWERED ON:16.03.2015

DEVELOPMENT OF FOREST VILLAGES

Muddahanumegowda Shri S.P.;Shetty Shri Gopal Chinayya

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any specific programme for development of forest villages has been implemented by the Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the State/UT-wise amount of funds allocated, released and utilized for the development of forest villages during the last three years and the current year;
- (c) the number of forest villages/ habitations in various parts of the country, State/UT-wise along with the details of forest villages developed at present;
- (d) the number of persons benefited so far along with the time by which the remaining forest villages are likely to be included under the scheme; and
- (e) the various steps taken by the Government, State/UT-wise towards development of various forest villages in the country?

Answer

MINISTER TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JUAL ORAM)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No.279 (19th Position) for answer on 16.03.2015 asked by Shri Gopal Shetty and Shri S.P. Muddahanumegowda

(a) to (c): Ministry of Tribal Affairs had implemented a programme for development of forest villages since 2005-06 as a one-time measure for integrated development of forest villages with a view to raise the Human Development Index (HDI) of the inhabitants of the forest villages and for providing basic facilities and services in the 2,474 forest villages/habitations spread over twelve States in the country. The programme was implemented as a part of the Special Area Programme 'Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Plan'. The programme included infrastructure works relating to basic services and facilities viz., approach roads, healthcare, primary education, minor irrigation, rain water harvesting, drinking water, sanitation, community halls etc. and activities related to income generation. A statement showing the State-wise number of forest villages/habitations in various parts of the country, covered under the aforesaid programme, is at Annexure-I. A statement showing funds allocated, released and utilized under the said programme is at Annexure-II. No fund has been released during 12th Five Year Plan period.

(d) & (e): Besides, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs also implements the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, which seeks to recognize and vest the forest rights and occupation in forest land in forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who have been residing in such forests for generations but whose rights could not be recorded. Implementation of the provisions of FRA is a continuous process and so far, out of 39,61,194 claims (38,64,161 individual and 97,033 community rights) received for grant of titles across the country, a total of 15,61,932 titles (15,32,034 individual and 29,898 community rights) have been distributed as on 31.01.2015. Once rights are settled in a village in a forest area, it is entitled to all the Government interventions under various schemes/programmes meant for those areas. The Forest Rights Act also provides, under Section 3(2), that, notwithstanding anything contained in the Forest Conservation Act 1980, the Central Government may provide for diversion of forest area for certain public facilities, managed by Government, such as schools, electricity/telecommunication lines, dispensaries, anganwadis, drinking water facility, vocational training centers, roads etc., involving felling of trees not more than seventy-five trees per hectare, subject to the conditions that the forest area diverted would not be more than one hectare in each case and the project should be recommended by the concerned Gram Sabha.

Section 3(1)(c) of Forest Rights Act confers right of ownership, access to collect, use and dispose of minor forest produce (MFP) which has been traditionally collected. As a social safety net, the Ministry has recently launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which has a package of interventions to realise better prices for MFP amongst other things for MFP gatherers/collectors.

Forest Rights Act requires conversion of all forest villages, old habitations, unsurveyed villages and other villages in forest whether recorded, notified or not, into revenue villages. The States have been asked to take necessary action for such conversion as per guidelines issued by this Ministry. The States have also been advised that the entire records should follow the protocol of the revenue code/law.