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Forest Rights Act: 25.42 lakh titles, over 80% claims settled - progress and challenges



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Why in News

During the Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwada (1-15 November 2026), the government released the latest status of implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA). As of 31 August 2026, 43.56 lakh of over 54 lakh claims (80.64%) have been disposed of and 25.42 lakh titles (24.18 lakh individual and 1.24 lakh community) have been issued, covering about 238 lakh acres. A National FRA Digital Platform was also launched during the fortnight. The Act is currently implemented in 20 states and the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

Introduction: what is FRA

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006: The Act received Presidential assent on 29 December 2006 and came into force on 31 December 2007. Its Rules were notified on 1 January 2008. This law redresses the 'historical injustice' done to forest dwellers since colonial times. It gives legal rights over forest land and resources to Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs). For OTFDs, the condition is that the family must have depended on forest land/resources for 75 years (three generations) before 13 December 2005. The nodal ministry is the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Main Body: types of rights

- **Individual Forest Rights (IFR):** Rights of land ownership and cultivation; up to a maximum of 4 hectares; the title is issued jointly (in the names of both spouses).
- **Community rights:** Traditional rights over water, seeds, collection of forest produce (including minor forest produce), silk and grazing.
- **Community Forest Resource rights (CFR):** The right to protect, regenerate and manage community forest resources within the area.
- **Consent in development projects:** The consent of affected gram sabhas is mandatory for diversion of forest land.

The claims process

A claim is presented before the **Gram Sabha**, which verifies it and sends it to the Sub-Divisional Level Committee (SDLC); after scrutiny the SDLC forwards the case to the **District Level Committee (DLC)**, whose decision is treated as final. A State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC) reviews implementation.

Latest figures (as of 31 August 2026)

- Total claims: over 54 lakh; disposed of: 43.56 lakh (80.64%).
- Titles issued: 25.42 lakh - of which 24.18 lakh individual and 1.24 lakh community; about 238 lakh acres of land.
- The National FRA Digital Platform was launched during the Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwada - for claim tracking and transparency.

Exam relevance

For Prelims: The year of the Act, the 75-year/three-generation condition for OTFDs, the 4-hectare limit, the Gram Sabha-SDLC-DLC chain, the nodal ministry and the latest figures are direct question areas.

For Mains: Tribal rights, forest conservation versus livelihoods, the slow progress of community rights, the Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwada and social justice - GS-II analysis.

Way Forward

Recognition of Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights remains limited; the digital platform is expected to bring transparency and speed to claim settlement. Implementation in the remaining states and a stronger review process for rejected claims are the challenges ahead.

Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. With reference to the Forest Rights Act, 2006, consider the following statements:
Statement 1: Other Traditional Forest Dwellers must prove dependence on forests for three generations (75 years) before 13 December 2005
Statement 2: An Individual Forest Rights title can be issued for up to a maximum of 4 hectares
Statement 3: The Gram Sabha is the institution that grants final approval to claims

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer and Explanation

Correct answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct: OTFDs must show 75 years (three generations) of dependence. Statement 2 is correct: an IFR title covers up to 4 hectares. Statement 3 is incorrect: the Gram Sabha verifies claims; final approval is given by the District Level Committee (DLC).

Q2. Which statement is correct about the number of titles issued under FRA as of 31 August 2026?

(a) Fewer than 10 lakh titles were issued

(b) 25.42 lakh titles were issued, covering about 238 lakh acres

(c) 54 lakh titles were issued

(d) Over 1 crore titles were issued

Answer and Explanation

Correct answer: (b) 25.42 lakh titles were issued, covering about 238 lakh acres

Explanation: As of 31 August 2026, 25.42 lakh titles (24.18 lakh individual, 1.24 lakh community) have been issued; 54 lakh is the number of total claims, of which 43.56 lakh (80.64%) have been disposed of.

Mains Practice Question

The Forest Rights Act, 2006 is described as a 'redressal of historical injustice' towards forest dwellers. Evaluate this statement in the light of roughly two decades of implementation data. (GS-II; 250 words)

Answer Outline:

Introduction: Introduce the purpose of FRA 2006 and the recent milestone of 25.42 lakh titles.

Main Body: Achievements - individual titles, community rights, 80% disposal, the digital platform; challenges - slow CFR recognition, review of rejected claims, inter-state variation, the burden of proof; the balance between conservation and rights.

Conclusion: Conclude that the Act is a major step towards rights-based governance; attention to community rights and quality implementation is needed.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Short answer: Under FRA 2006, as of 31 August 2026, 25.42 lakh titles (24.18 lakh individual, 1.24 lakh community) have been issued granting rights over about 238 lakh acres; 80.64% of the 54 lakh claims have been disposed of.

Q: Who is an OTFD?

Other Traditional Forest Dweller - a family that shows dependence on forest land/resources for 75 years (three generations) before 13 December 2005.

Q: Who grants final approval to a claim?

The District Level Committee (DLC); the Gram Sabha verifies the claim and the SDLC forwards it to the DLC after scrutiny.

Q: What is the National FRA Digital Platform?

A digital platform launched during the Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwada (1-15 November 2026) for claim tracking and transparency.

Sources

- PIB (Ministry of Tribal Affairs) - FRA implementation status and Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwada (detailed document): https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2026/nov/doc_10498_20261116_13385601.pdf

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