



Community Forest Rights

Context:

Residents of the four villages in Chhattisgarh's Mungeli district have received Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRR).

- Achanakmar became the second tiger reserve in Chhattisgarh to get CFRR, following Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve in Dhamtari district.

Relevance:

GS III- Environment and Ecology

Dimensions of the Article:

1. What is a community forest resource?
2. What are Community Forest Resource rights?
3. Why is the recognition of CFR rights important?
4. Forest Rights Act, 2006

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; and for seasonal use of landscape in case of pastoralist communities.
- Each CFR area has a customary boundary with identifiable landmarks recognised by the community and its neighboring villages.
- It 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?



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- The Community Forest Resource rights under **Section 3(1)(i) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (commonly referred to as the Forest Rights Act or the FRA)** provide for recognition of the right to “protect, regenerate or conserve or manage” the community forest resource.
 - These rights allow the community to formulate rules for forest use by itself and others and thereby discharge its responsibilities under Section 5 of the FRA.
 - CFR rights, along with Community Rights (CRs) under Sections 3(1)(b) and 3(1)(c), 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.

Why is the recognition of CFR rights important?

- Aimed at **undoing the “historic injustice”** meted out to forest-dependent communities due to curtailment of their customary rights over forests.
- It is important as it recognises the community’s **right to use, manage and conserve forest resources**, and to legally hold forest land that these communities have used for cultivation and residence.
- It also underlines the integral role that forest dwellers play in sustainability of forests and in conservation of biodiversity.
- It is of greater significance inside protected forests like national parks, sanctuaries and tiger reserves as traditional dwellers then become a part of management of the protected forests using their traditional wisdom.
- But while CFR rights are an important empowerment tool, getting a consensus amongst various villages about their traditional boundaries often proves a challenge.

Forest Rights Act, 2006

- Schedule Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers Act or Recognition of Forest Rights Act came into force in 2006.
- The Nodal Ministry for the Act is **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.
- It has been enacted to recognize and vest the forest rights and occupation of 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.
- This Act not only recognizes the rights to hold and live in the forest land under the individual or common occupation for habitation or for self-cultivation for livelihood, but also grants several other rights to ensure their control over forest resources.
- The Act also provides for diversion of forest land for public utility facilities managed by the Government, such as schools, dispensaries, fair price shops, electricity and telecommunication lines, water tanks, etc. with the recommendation of Gram Sabhas.
- Rights under the Forest Right Act 2006:
 - Title Rights- ownership of land being framed by Gram Sabha.



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- Forest management rights– to protect forests and wildlife.
 - Use rights- for minor forest produce, grazing, etc.
 - Rehabilitation– in case of illegal eviction or forced displacement.
 - Development Rights– to have basic amenities such as health, education, etc.

-Source: Down to Earth

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