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## Community Forestry and Sustainable Development in India

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*Forestry basically means the process of planting, managing, and caring for the forest and its land. This community forestry is perceived as surrounded by the activities of households, men, women, farmers, cattle rearers, and other people. There is an exclusive right for the community people in that area to use the land and protect it in the same way. It has guaranteed by the forest rights act, stating the right to use, conserve and manage forest resources. They can also legally hold the forest land, which they had used for cultivation and residence in forest domicile communities. This community forestry is a branch of the forestry process that deals with the communal management of forests for generating income from forest products such as downstream settlements that benefit from watershed conservation, aesthetics, carbon sequestration, and timber products. Awareness regarding the forest depended tribal community people is decreased so their rights also. As stated above there are various rights that are immediately available to the people residing there, but day by day when modernization occurs it inflicts the rights of the community people there. Sustainable forest development is required in major parts of India. Analyzing the limits of forests to withstand collective, environmental change, and individual managing the human activities and pressures to produce the uttermost benefits within limits. Sustainable living hood expects the participation of the community around. So the state will have to secure the people of the forest areas who will be involved in Community forestry and have to secure their basic rights and life essentials.*

**Keywords:** *community forestry, community rights, scheduled tribes, forest act, sustainable development, forest pollution.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Community forestry means any situation to which collectively involves the local people around to work on it. Forestry basically means the process of planting, managing, and caring for the forest and its land. This community forestry is perceived as surrounded by the activities of households, men, women, farmers, cattle rearers, and other people. And these people form a community surrounding a particular place. There is an exclusive right for the community people in that area to use the land and protect it in the same way. It has guaranteed by the forest rights act, stating the right to use, conserve and manage forest resources<sup>1</sup>. They can also legally hold the forest land, which they had used for cultivation and residence in forest domicile communities. This community forestry is a branch of the forestry process that deals with the communal management of forests for generating income from forest products such as downstream settlements that benefit from watershed conservation, aesthetics, carbon sequestration, and timber products. Community forestry is considered as the main matter of conservation and sustainable development as they protect other communities and neighbourhood from resource degradation, landslides, soil erosion, etc.

## RIGHTS OF COMMUNITY, FOREST RESOURCES UNDER FOREST RIGHTS ACTS, 2006

The various rights that are recognized and can be claimed are as follows<sup>2</sup>:

Right to hold and live in forest land under common or individual occupation for self-cultivation or habitation. Whereas later possessing this right the people are disallowed to use or occupy their own land in name of resource extraction by outsiders. Which basically violates their constitutional rights. Nistar is a community right that is considered a user right and used in erstwhile princely states as zamindari or such intermediary regimes for protection. Based on these rights the scheduled tribes earn a basic living without much living.

The right to dispose of, collect, own and use small forest products that have been traditionally collected outside or within the village. Small forest products include all non-timber forest products of plant origin bamboo brushwood, medicinal plants, herbs, roots, tubers, etc., and

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<sup>1</sup> Forest Act 2006

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

products of animal origin such as honey or wax. Use or ownership rights by other communities, such as the rights to fisheries and other aquatic products, and the traditional seasonal access rights of herders or nomadic communities to natural resources. Community tenure of habitat for particularly vulnerable tribes or pre-agricultural communities. These tenures are sometimes violated by the higher class of people in the nation which affects the livelihood of the scheduled tribes. In any state where there is any dispute over land and territory claims, rights or rights to land under any classification are regulated to solve the disputes aroused by the authority by law.

The right to convert forest land concessions and leases issued by any local authority or any state government into the substantive ownership of the property contract. This right is advantageous to the rural areas mostly because they advantageously convert agriculture and forest areas for real estate purposes and make infrastructure better for the economy. The right to resettle and rebuild forest villages, old houses, uninvestigated villages, and other forest villages into income-income villages.

The right to regenerate, protect, manage and protect any community forest reserve and forest reserve, which communities or individuals have traditionally protected and protected for sustainable use. Any right recognized by the laws of the autonomous region assembly and state laws or accepted as the rights of tribal peoples under any tribal tradition or customary law in any region or state. The right to obtain community rights and intellectual property rights over biodiversity with respect to traditional knowledge related to biodiversity and cultural diversity. Any other traditional rights not mentioned above can be improved. However, this excludes the traditional right to hunt, trap or extract parts of the body of any wild animal species, even outside the protected area.

The right of restoration on the land currently occupied by individuals or communities or on alternative land, if they are illegally evicted or moved from forest land without obtaining their legal right of restoration. The right to develop facilities. The central government will use forest land to provide government-managed development facilities (such as schools, health centers, irrigation, roads, etc.), and these land and facilities will be exempt from forest protection actions. The law of 1980. However, the use of woodland is only allowed if the woodland used in each

case is less than one hectare and no more than 75 trees per hectare are cut down, and it is recommended that such development projects be cut down by gram sabha (village council). Communities in India's major ecosystems claim rights to customary territories, including Dongria and Juang in Orissa (Eastern Ghats), Soliga in Karnataka (West Ghats), and Maldhari (Bani) in Gujarat. Prairie, Baiga, and Maria in Madhya Pradesh.

In Bamlagar, Maharashtra. Approximately 600 villages in Vidarbha, Maharashtra have over approximately 700,000 acres of community forest rights. Some of these villages are planning protection and sustainable use initiatives. In particular, the villages of MendhaLekha and Marda were among the first villages to discuss possible management strategies and what role they hoped the forest sector and other institutions would play. Overall, throughout India, more than 1 million acres of land are recognized as community forest resource rights, most of which are located in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Orissa.<sup>3</sup> Dozens of villages in the Dangs and Narmada districts of Gujarat established protection committees even before guaranteeing the community's forest rights.

Some villages have seized trucks loaded with stolen wood and stopped cutting bamboo at the central paper mill. Villagers in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra eliminated the invasion of outsiders in areas where they claimed to have community forest rights, and began to control several wetlands, forcing the government to revoke outsiders' fishing contracts; Communities began to use community forest rights clauses to prevent or resist destructive "development" projects and processes, such as industry, dams, mining, and logging; for example, FRA was used to resist the POSCO steelworks and Odisha's Vedanta mining proposal. Madhya Pradesh government logging in the Baiga Chak area and paper mills replaced logging in Maharashtra with bamboo. The representatives of Gram Sabha gathered together to map and coordinate their respective claims and resolved the conflicts that multiple villages claimed that the same forest may cause in each state.

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<sup>3</sup> G Seethraman, 'How community rights under the Forest Rights Act could transform the lives of millions of forest dwellers' (*Economic Times*, 9 August 2015)  
<<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/how-community-rights-under-the-forest-rights-act-could-transform-the-lives-of-millions-of-forest-dwellers/articleshow/48405279.cms>> accessed 16 September 2022

In some places, such as Dediapada village in Gujarat and Ahmed Nagar in Maharashtra, they also leave room for nomadic or seasonal users to use community forest rights, otherwise, they will be excluded. Some protected areas also have people claiming community rights to the forests. At Badrama and Karapat Shrine in Orissa, Bili Giri Rangaswamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka, Shorpaneshwar Shrine in Gujarat, and Tai cooperation with the Ministry of Forestry. So far, Bili Giri and Shulpaneshwar and the Sinlipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha have recognized community forest rights. The main goal of the Forestry Law is to eliminate the historical injustice suffered by forest communities, protect the land use rights, livelihoods, and food security of forest tribes and other traditional forest residents, and strengthen the forest protection system by including responsibilities. The holder's power to sustainably use, protect biodiversity and maintain ecological balance.

### **DEPRIVATION OF FOREST RIGHTS**

Awareness regarding the forest depended tribal community people is decreased so their rights also. As stated above there are various rights that are immediately available to the people residing there, but day by day when modernization occurs it inflicts the rights of the community people there. There are various commissions available but few make it effective to hold the right. Why is this remaining a constant fundamental problem for Tribal community people totally dependent on the forest? The one and only reason can be discrimination. Discrimination paved the whole way for corruption and destroying the lives of people in India. So that same happened, happening to people in India till today. These community people cannot always fight for their rights, even nobody in real life can keep on fighting for their rights. And as these people are unaware of their rights and duties they accept it as it is. Even when they get to know about it they do not get the accessibility and accountability to judicial proceedings.

Few rights of the community people are decreased when the act bends upon the individual people and other industrial interests. Even many policies and legislations tame it reserved forest area making the Government the righteous one and harming the Forest-dwelling people. The system has to understand that "*No place can compensate the atmosphere and value of motherland*" and no compensation and other acts can satisfy the life of Scheduled tribal people. The Administrative apathy had created a sinful circumstance for these scheduled tribes living in

forest land. In the case of *Orissa mining corporation ltd. v Ministry of forest and environment*<sup>4</sup>, it has clearly stated the fundamental rights being violated on behalf of the people (Dalits and primitive tribal groups) residing in the unreserved forest area.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY**

Sustainable forest development is required in major parts of India. Analyzing the limits of forests to withstand collective, environmental change, and individual managing the human activities and pressures to produce the uttermost benefits within limits. Nepal is one of the richest countries<sup>5</sup> following this kind of management and development process, they encourage the local people to participate in farming in forest land and maintaining it. In which they can earn their livelihood and as well as the nation's sustainable resources develop. It is difficult to the immense forest into sustainable development because they regulate the carbon atmosphere, and earth's climate, harbor biodiversity, and importantly create a working system for the local community people in the hills. It is announced that more than 14% of the land is owned by the community forestry groups in order to strictly improve sustainable development. International organizations have merged natural resource conservation with human development. Since India is a developing country it is notable that community farming is a growing one guaranteed by Indian legislation. Sustainable development also prevents forest pollution. Forest pollution is one of the most crucial natural pollution occurring in this era, people are less aware of its prevention and safety. As modernization gets more influenced nature gets more induced its vitality.

Community forestry also prevents and protects forest pollution. These community people being brought up from childhood doesn't greatly affect their practice of managing their circumstances and living in the forest even during these problems. At last, no proper modernization can predict nature wholly. But these people can prevent and protect nature and forests in name of community forestry. It is really beneficial when the Government introduces and recognizes these community people for protecting and preserving nature. It is guaranteed by the

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<sup>4</sup> *Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd v Ministry of Forest & Environment* WP (Civil) No 180 of 2011

<sup>5</sup> United nations, 'Nepal' (UN) <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/nepal>> accessed 24 august 2022

constitution to protect wildlife and nature for environmental purposes and also for the well-being of Living creatures in India. In such a way community forestry also prevent pollution and preserves nature even in enigmatic ways to protect. It is highly appreciable nowadays that State Governments are taking steps to create awareness among community people via workshops, camps, and campaigns but these can be effectively implemented only when the Community people are left undisturbed to make their own decisions, they cannot be forced as the forest life prevails and the well-infrastructured life cannot be forfeited.

## **CONCLUSION**

Sustainable living hood expects the participation of the community around. So the state will have to secure the people of the forest areas who will be involved in Community forestry and have to secure their basic rights and life essentials. Due to the financial crisis, the afforestation program had been a difficult one. But still, efforts need to be made in an increasing manner to cover the land with forest areas and trees with agroforestry and social people participation. It is necessary for sustainable development. Present day the forest is considered more than a resource and due to upgrading science & technological impact, many biodiversities are suffering which indirectly influences the living of community forestry people.

It is also important to note that community forestry will decline if the same situation prevails, due to infrastructure and livelihood people living in forest areas, are migrating to towns and nearby villages which will create a sooner impact on sustainable development and forest farming. Due to the rising population, the country will face a greater impact on resource development and sustainable development.