

Development of Forest Village

Development of Forest Villages

After the enactment of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, State Governments faced problems in taking up non-forestry developmental activities relating to infrastructure for improving socio-economic conditions of people living in the villages located in the forest areas. Consequent to the intervention of this Ministry, steps like stopping of illegal eviction of genuine tribal people living in the forests, allowing diversion of forest lands for providing the basic and essential developmental facilities to the tribal/forest villages etc have been achieved.

This programme was launched during the 10th Plan as a one time measure with for Integrated development of 2690 forest villages originally identified with about 2.5 lakh tribal families with a view to:

- i. raise the Human Development Index (HDI) of the inhabitants of the Forest Villages
- ii. provide basic facilities and services like food, safe drinking water, health care, primary education, approach roads, other infrastructural facilities etc.

During the 10th Five Year Plan, Rs. 450 crore was allocated to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for the development of forest villages under Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub Plan (SCA to TSP).

Presently there are 2,474 forest villages/ habitations (reduced from the original 2,690) spread over 12 States (reduced from the original 13 States). As per the latest information available in the Ministry of Environment and Forests on forest villages / habitations based on reports received from States, details are as under:-

S. No.	Name of the State	No. of forest villages/habitations
1.	Assam	499
2.	Chhattisgarh	425
3.	Gujarat	199
4.	Jharkhand	24
5.	Meghalaya	23
6.	Madhya Pradesh	893
7.	Mizoram	85
8.	Orissa	20
9.	Tripura	62
10.	Uttarakhand	61 habitations
11.	Uttar Pradesh	13
12.	West Bengal	170
Total		2474

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has approved proposals covering 2423 forest villages in 12 States and also released Rs.65379.04 lakh (upto 2011-12). No funds were released in 2012-13.

Activities

Under the programme, infrastructure work relating to basic services and facilities viz. approach roads, healthcare, primary education, minor irrigation, rainwater harvesting, drinking water, sanitation, community halls, etc. and activities related to livelihood are taken up for implementation

Process of approval

The project proposals received from the States for the activities to be undertaken in the villages are scrutinized by the Ministry of Environment & Forests and put up for the consideration of the Project Appraisal Committee constituted for the purpose. Joint Secretary in the MTA acts as the chairperson of the Committee in the normal course. As per recommendation of Project Appraisal Committee, the proposals are approved and funds released after getting the financial concurrence.

Implementing Agency:

Forest Development Agency (FDA) - forest division level

Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) - village level, composed of all willing adult members of the village

o Funding pattern

- The funding is done under the programme of '**Special Central Assistance to the Tribal Sub-Plan**' Fund flows from Ministry of Tribal Affairs to Department of Tribal Welfare/ Tribal Development of the States and then to the implementing agencies.

- Since forest villages are most backward and are located in forest areas, they have not got benefits of development over the years. To enable these settlements/forest villages to get the fruits of development, to begin with 100% financial assistance is provided under this special Programme. As a first step, funding of proposals for each forest village has been generally given for Rs.15 lakh each. Additional funding of Rs 15 lakh per village has been initiated in the second phase during 2006-07.

- Year-wise release of the funds so far is as under:

Year	Release (Rs. in crore*)
2005-06	191.81
2006-07	220.97
2007-08	46.47
2008-09	149.51
2009-10	Nil
2010-11	30.03
2011-12	15.00
Total	653.79

* Rounded off.

Impact

Teams comprising of Director/ Dy. Secretary/ Under Secretary level officers of the Ministry had been deputed to various States to get a first hand information on the progress of the activities undertaken in the forest villages for which funds were released by the Ministry. The reports received from the teams has been very encouraging and based on the same and other factors, extension of the programme was done so that sufficient developmental activities could take place in these villages, which were comparatively backward.