

No/23011/18/2015- FRA
Government of India
Ministry of Tribal Affairs

August Kranti Bhawan
New Delhi
Dated: 27.07.2015

To,
The Chief Secretaries of all State Governments

Sub: Guidelines with regard to use of Geo referencing for assessment of potential areas and re-examination of rejected claims under Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA),

1. As you may be aware, Ministry of Tribal Affairs has taken up implementation of FRA on a campaign mode. As part of PRAGATI, Hon'ble Prime Minister had reviewed the implementation of FRA. Hon'ble Prime Minister has desired that Ministry of Tribal Affairs must take a lead in technological support to the States. It was also stated that States need to proactively pursue progress in vesting of rights in time bound manner. Geo referenced database of vesting of rights may be created. Further to this, Ministry of Tribal Affairs had issued a letter on 28th April 2015 (D.O No. 23011/18/2015-FRA) to all the States requesting them create geo- referenced data base.
2. Meanwhile, Ministry of Tribal Affairs have consulted technical resource agencies such as National Remote Sensing Centre, Bhaskaracharya Institute For Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG), Dept of Science and Technology, Govt. of Gujarat, State Governments and Tribal Research Institutes, for inputs on geo referencing on FRA.
3. This Ministry has received reports which suggest that large number of claims have been rejected due to lack of evidence or incomplete evidence. It may be noted that as per Rule 6 (b) of Forest Right Rules, district administration in general and the SDLC in particular are expected to assist the Gram Sabhas and the FRCs by providing forest and revenue maps. In this context geo-referenced maps may be generated and be provided to Gram Sabhas and

FRCs. Accordingly claims rejected on the grounds of insufficient evidences or which prima-facie requires additional examination may be re-examined.

4. It is being reiterated that use of any technology, such as, satellite imagery, should be used to supplement evidences tendered by a claimant for consideration of the claim and not to replace other evidences submitted by him in support of his claim as the only form of evidence. If rights have already been recognised in favour of a claimant, the same may not be reopened.
5. Through **Geographical information System (GIS)**, maps can be prepared for implementing agencies, regarding the eligible areas for the implementation of FRA where maps can be drawn at different administrative levels like nation, state, district, block and village. With the use of GIS, final maps can also be prepared for the village as mentioned under Rule 12 A (9) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Rules, 2008 (as amended up to date) ('FR Rules') with spatial information of physiographic features of that village, area of the forest land in numerical value recognized under the FRA.
6. Based on the inputs, the broad parameters for use of geo referencing data for identification of potential areas for both individual and Community Forest Resource Rights (CFR) are listed. The following guidelines may be applied for use of technology and geo referencing to expedite the process of FRA implementation:
 - a. Geo referenced Satellite image of highest resolution (preferably with 1M or higher resolution) of any satellite may be used for period around December, 2005. Google earth images, especially, the historical images of around the year 2005, or any other reliable open-source images can also be used for this purpose. Images can also be procured from National Remote Sensing Agency, Hyderabad if required.
 - b. The geo-referenced imageries on the Latitude/Longitude grid of the GIS program and digitized and geo-referenced village and forest boundaries can be overlaid on the same if available;
 - c. Identification of cultivated areas through the Satellite imagery needs to be verified through ground-truthing using GPS/ Android Phone etc.
 - d. GPS surveys of all plots of lands of the wrongly rejected (including partially rejected) / pending claims, may be done with active participation of the village FRCs and Gram Sabhas.
 - e. Since the GPS survey is a simple tool and can be handled after simple training and demonstration, the States should involve FRCs (or teams of local youth) in the survey work after providing necessary training and also providing GPS/android devices;
 - f. After processing of the GPS data overlay plots of claimed lands (with unique plot numbers) on the imageries and prepare maps (with

imagery) and lists with area of each plot and provide them to the FRCs and Gram Sabhas;

- g. The FRCs and Gram Sabhas can then consider the evidence from these maps and lists, together with other evidences, while deciding these claims, including determining the area to be approved.
- h. For identification of CFR areas, State Government of Odisha has piloted a process in the Mayurbhanj District by using GIS based technology with the help of the following information:
 - Villages having Forest Land within its revenue boundary
 - Villages having no Forest Land within its revenue boundary
 - Villages located in fringe of Reserved Forests land coming under control of State Forest Department
 - Un-surveyed habitations may also be included
- i. Similar method may be adopted by other states based on various Government Records such as Census, 2011 Data, the State level Economic and Statistical surveys, Forest Survey of India, etc
- j. The State Governments can seek support from BISAG, Dept. of Science and Technology, Government of Gujarat and National Resource Centre, Tribal Research Institute, Bhubaneswar for training of officials, FRCs and community volunteers with respect to use of technology. States can also seek support from the State Remote Sensing Centres for this process.
- k. Since maps or geo referenced images can be procured easily and freely/ or at nominal cost, the State Governments need to proactively take up this activity and complete the process of assessment and review of rejected claims in light of the use of technology within a period of two months.

7. These issues with the approval of competent authority.

Yours faithfully



(Roopak Chaudhuri)

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