

## Addressing land tenure issues among the Adivasis:

### A holistic approach by NIRMAN

Land is a key resource for many societies across the world, irrespective of their tribal or non-tribal status. But for the resource-poor vulnerable groups largely dependent on common property resources both community lands as well as the marginal individual lands hold a great value for their survival. Realizing the importance of land for survival of marginalized groups like the forest dwellers and adivasis(tribals) etc. NIRMAN has been working with a comprehensive approach so as to secure the land rights and also to help improve the efficient use of land resources in the tribal belts of Odisha state in India where forest lands dominate as legal tenures under the government despite a customary tribal practice of ownership over a part of them since ages. This contrast is chiefly because of the faulty survey & settlement policies & procedures adopted since the colonial period which the Government of India has attempted to rectify through a progressive law namely the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA) allowing the customary users of forest lands get legal rights over the same.

#### **PODUCHUAN: A MODEL SITE OF NIRMAN'S COMPREHENSIVE INTERVENTIONS:**

Poduchuan padar (19.426957<sup>0</sup>N, 83.280236<sup>0</sup>E) is a small tribal village in the Budaguda Gram Panchayat of Kalyansighpur Block in Rayagada district, Odisha. The residents are Kandha tribals with a population of 115(2011 census). They are dependent on subsistent farming in marginal lands, forest produce collections, and wage labour, etc.. The old habitation as well as the customary lands under cultivation mostly belonged to the forest land category and controlled by Forest Department through a formal forest tenure which is why the villagers could not exercise a legal right to assert their ownership despite having the eligibility to receive benefits under various welfare schemes of government. They could not afford transforming their thatched houses into concrete ones despite a government support available for that under the Indira Awas Yojna(IAY) scheme; and were under a regular threat of Departmental action against their cultivation. The adjoining hill forests, which the villagers considered as their 'own', legally belonged to government; and as such they had no formal rights to exercise their control over the same.

NIRMAN sensitized the Adivasi village community about their rights under the Forest Rights Act, and facilitated the process of claim filing under the same both for individual and community rights, along with follow up with the concerned authorities for a timely recognition of the legitimate rights. This led to government's formal recognition of both these rights, and the villagers now got titles for their homestead & cultivated lands at individual levels, and also the Community Forest Resource Right(CFRR) that allowed them to protect, manage, and sustainably use their customary forest resources. NIRMAN then linked them with various welfare schemes against their individual land titles as a result of which they transformed their houses with support from IAY, and also got financial support under the Millet Mission programme of the government to improve their customary practice of millet cultivation. The legal recognition of their customary rights under FRA not only saved the villagers from a Departmental plan to raise forest plantations in their cultivated lands, but also led to some feasible land development. Moreover, the CFRR helped resolve the conflict with the neighbouring villages over the forest resource, and there is now a management plan outlining the steps to be taken for the conservation of this resource.

NIRMAN went a step ahead and is helping the villagers to construct rain water harvesting structures both in their individual and community lands. Farmers have also received support for horticultural plantations.



# THE TRANSFORMATION IN IMAGES



Poduchuan in August 2015 after the old houses were demolished for reconstruction under the Indira Awas Yojna. Inset: An old view of the village (left), and after reconstruction (right). Inset (middle): for a poor widow like Nilima Pidisika, who had lost her only son, a land title(showing) brought a remarkable hope.

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ପରିଶିଷ୍ଟ - ୩  
(ନିୟମ ୮ (ଏସ୍) ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ)

ପଦ୍ମଶିଳ୍ପ କମ୍ପାନୀ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ପଦ୍ମଶିଳ୍ପର ଉପକ୍ରମ କରାଯାଇଛି।  
(କେନ୍ଦ୍ରୀୟ ଉପକ୍ରମ କରାଯାଇଛି) ଡି.ଏମ୍. ୧୦୦୯  
ଝାଡ଼ଖଣ୍ଡ ସରକାର  
ଝାଡ଼ଖଣ୍ଡ ରାଜ୍ୟ

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୧. ଗୋଟିଏ ଜମାଦାର ଅଧିକାର (ନାମ) : ଡକ୍ଟର ଗୁମ୍ଫାମାଳୀ ଦେବୀ  
 ୨. ଜମା / ଜମା ପତ୍ର : ଡକ୍ଟର ଗୁମ୍ଫାମାଳୀ ଦେବୀ  
 ୩. ଜମା ପତ୍ର : ଗୁମ୍ଫାମାଳୀ  
 ୪. ଉପକ୍ରମ : ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀନିଧି  
 ୫. ଚିତ୍ର : ଉପକ୍ରମ

୬. କେଉଁଠି ଏ ଅନ୍ୟ ପଦ୍ମଶିଳ୍ପର ଉପକ୍ରମ କରାଯାଇଛି :  
 ୭. ବି ପୁନର୍ଗଠନ ଅଧିକାର :  
 ୮. ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟନ :  
 ୯. ଶିକ୍ଷାପାଳକ ବିଭାଗ-ଡି.ଏମ୍. ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ କମ୍ପାନୀ ଏବଂ / କି  
 ପୁନର୍ଗଠନ ବିଭାଗ - ଝାଡ଼ଖଣ୍ଡ / ଝାଡ଼ଖଣ୍ଡର ଉପକ୍ରମ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ  
 ପୁନର୍ଗଠନ - ନିମ୍ନଲିଖିତ ଶୁଳ୍କ ସହିତ  
 ଉପକ୍ରମ - ଡକ୍ଟର ଗୁମ୍ଫାମାଳୀ ଦେବୀ  
 ବିଭାଗ - ଝାଡ଼ଖଣ୍ଡର ନିମ୍ନଲିଖିତ ଉପକ୍ରମ ସହିତ

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ଝାଡ଼ଖଣ୍ଡର ଉପକ୍ରମ କରାଯାଇଛି, ଏହାକୁ ଉପକ୍ରମ କରାଯାଇଛି ଏବଂ ଉପକ୍ରମ କରାଯାଇଛି ଉପକ୍ରମ କରାଯାଇଛି ଝାଡ଼ଖଣ୍ଡର ଉପକ୍ରମ କରାଯାଇଛି ଝାଡ଼ଖଣ୍ଡର ଉପକ୍ରମ କରାଯାଇଛି ଝାଡ଼ଖଣ୍ଡର ଉପକ୍ରମ କରାଯାଇଛି ।

Head  
Divisional Forest Officer  
Rayagada Division

Collector, Rayagada  
District, Odisha

Dist. Village Officer  
Rayagada



(Left) The CFRR title for Poduchuan signed by government authorities. (Right-upper) Farmers like Tamana Pidisika could grow sunflower & other crops in their fields with confidence & care after their land rights got recognized and they were no more treated as encroachers in their own lands; (Right-lower) Percolation tanks are a part of the rain water harvesting structure being developed in Poduchuan.