

Project titled
Strengthening Livelihood Security of Marginalized
Tribal and Forest Dwelling Community in Poor
Tribal region- Nayagada and Rayagada Districts of
Odisha.

Implemented by
NIRMAN, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Supported by
Paul Hamlyn Foundation,
New Delhi

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACF-Assistant Conservator of Forest
BCC: Behavioural Change Communication
BDO-Block Development Officer
CBOs: Community Based Organisations
CFR-Community Forest Rights
CFRR-Community Forest Resource Rights
CFRMC-Community Forest Resource Management Committee
CFRMP-Community Forest Resources Management Plan
DFO-Divisional Forest Officer
DLC-District Level Committee
FD-Forest Department
FRA-Forest Rights Act, 2006
FRC-Forest Rights Committee
GPS- Global Positioning System
GOI: Government of India
JFM-Joint Forest Management
IFR-Individual Forest Rights
MFP- Minor Forest Produces
M & E: Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation
MFP-Non-Timber Forest Products
MIS: Management Information System
OBC: Other Backward Class
ITDA-Integrated Tribal Development Agency
PF-Protected Forests
PRA-Participatory Rural Appraisal
PHF: Paul Hamlyn Foundation
PRI-Panchayati Raj Institution
PCCF-Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
RF-Reserved Forests
RoR-Record of Rights
RI-Revenue Inspector
VSS- Vana Samrakshan Samiti

SC: Scheduled Castes

ST: Scheduled Tribes

SDLC-Sub-Divisional Level Committee

SLMC-State Level Monitoring Committee

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction to the organisation

NIRMAN is one of the premier civil society organisations in Odisha that focuses primarily on enhancing the food, nutrition and livelihood security of poor farmers, tribals, forest dwelling and small fisher communities. Its interventions are fundamentally based on land and forest governance, sustainable agriculture, biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, small fishery, women empowerment and skill building. Empowerment of rural, tribal and fisher communities and marginalised groups through collective action and nurturing local self-governing institutions are at the core of ethics.

As a leading development resource organisation in Odisha, NIRMAN has contributed to the socio-economic development of the small holder farmers, scheduled tribes, and marginalised communities in 11 districts namely Nayagarh, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Deogarh, Kalahandi, Jajpur, Puri, Balangir, Keonjhar, Bargarh and Boudh. It has evolved its core competencies in bio-diverse farming systems, securing legal tenure over forest for poor communities and sustainable management of natural resources in Rayagada, Kandhamal, Nayagarh and Kalahandi districts of Odisha. NIRMAN has facilitated community conservation, restoration and management in terrestrial forest areas in 191 villages in Odisha. Out of this, 159 villages received tenure rights over 14800 acres of forest land under progressive legislation titled “Forest Right Act 2006.”

1.2 Vision

A just, equitable and resilient society where ecological and social wellbeing of marginalised communities are ensured.

1.3 Mission

Promote inclusive, holistic and sustainable development of marginalised communities through regenerative eco-system and empowerment of the local community and resource poor.

1.4. Introduction to NIRMAN and PHF collaboration

The collaboration initiative with PHF is planned for 8-10 years based on the outcome of each phase. 1st Phase Intervention (1st October 2019 to 30th Sept 2021) was focused on enhancing tenure security of Tribal and forest dwelling communities over their customarily used land and forests through implementation of an empowering legislation namely “Forest Rights Act, 2006” in poor Tribal regions of Rayagada and Nayagada district. The second phase emphasized on sustainable conservation, management and governance of Community Forest Resource (CFR) areas by community and implication of such community conservation initiatives for wider policy initiatives alongside the realization of rights under the Forest Rights Act(FRA). In this current phase (October 2021-September 2024), 13 new villages were added. Based

on the outcome of the 2nd phase the third phase will be planned in collaboration with PHF.

1.5. Project Goal

To improve livelihoods and food security of 1000 forest dependent Tribal families in Rayagada and Nayagada Districts of Odisha through facilitation of legal rights over customarily used land and forest resources and sustainable management of these resources using participatory forest governance under FRA.

1.6. Project Objectives

The broad objective of the project is to enhance access and control of forest dependent Tribal families over traditionally used land and forest resources through facilitating legal rights over them under FRA for improving their livelihoods and food security. Apart from rights, the project will also facilitate sustainable management and participatory governance of Community Forest Resources (CFR) as mandated under the law by building capacity of community institutions and promote ecological and integrated farming system for revival of depleted Ecosystem. The revival of ecosystem and range of provisioning, cultural and other services obtained by community is expected to contribute significantly to livelihood and food security of these communities.

Specific Objectives

- To build capacity of all stake holders including Tribal leaders, govt. officials and PRI members on FRA through training, awareness building and sensitization
- To strengthen and empower community institutions by ensuring their participation in legal settlement of forest rights and governance of CFR areas
- To facilitate collective action for filing legal claims by 300 Tribal families over forest land and by 30 villages on CFR for community rights under FRA
- To enhance consumption and income from CFR through protection, conservation and sustainable management of forest resources

STRATEGY

- Facilitating wider community level discourse on historical and evolving relationship of people with forest in the region
- Building capacity of community by facilitating their participation in forest governance (settlement of rights, conservation, management & governance of CFR areas)
- Strengthening the capacity of community institutions (FRC, Gram Sabha, VDC etc) by facilitating their engagement with different stakeholders including govt. officials and PRI members through joint verification, interface meetings and continuous dialogues
- Supporting the community institutions in raising and addressing injustices perpetuated within the existing forest governance system using the democratic framework
- Facilitating community initiative in demarcation of traditional boundary of villages cutting across RF, PRF, etc engaging other stakeholders including forest officials

- Establishment and strengthening of Gram Sabha federation for effective and participatory local forest governance
- Sensitizing Government officials & PRI representatives on the context of historical injustices and the empowering provisions of law
- Facilitating convergence of forest rights holders with other government development programs
- Participating in the government facilitated platforms like DLCC meetings, FRA cell, SDLC meetings and sharing policy and implementation issues

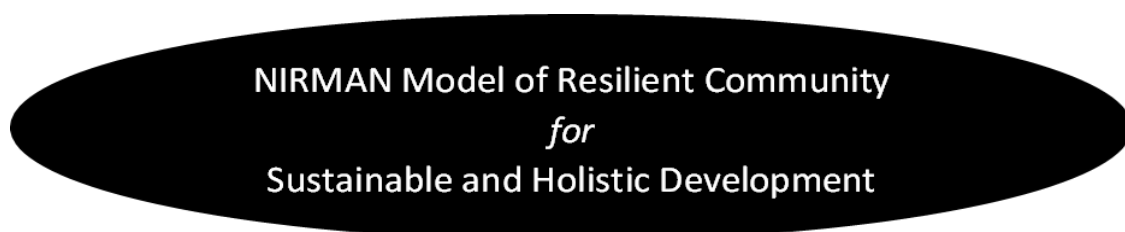
1.7. Project Coverage

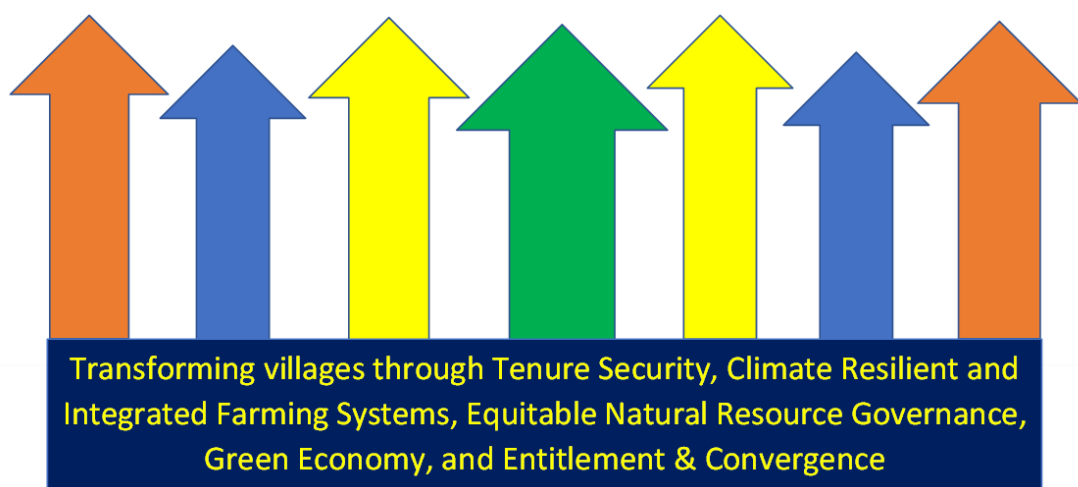
The project is being implemented in 15 villages each in Kashipur Block of Rayagada District and Dasapalla block of Nayagada district in Odisha and 13 new villages have been added in the second phase. Both the Tribal pockets illustrate high degree of forest dependency and vulnerability in terms of poverty status, food and livelihood insecurity.

Key Activities

- Meeting and Orientation on forest rights & Conservation
- Preparation of IEC and Training material
- Training and Exposure on FRA
- Training of community members on SIFS and Ecological Farming
- Participatory mapping of Community Forest Resources
- Collective action for legal title overland and forest
- Conversion of forest villages into revenue villages
- Convergence with other development programs of Govt
- Networking meetings, exposure& campaign
- State and District level consultations
- People's Bio-diversity registers
- Sustainable Forest management plan:

1.8. NIRMAN Model of Sustainable and holistic development





2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

2.1 Evaluation scope and thematic coverage

The evaluation covered both qualitative and qualitative aspects of the project implementation in its evaluation effort. There were four intense group discussion of variety of groups including direct project participants and other stakeholders like. Two In-depth Interviews were conducted with the beneficiaries. A feedback and clarification session were held at the end of the visit. This approach intended to promote adoption of participatory and empowering approach includes front line staff and intended beneficiaries.

2.2 Evaluation sampling and Coverage

The following sampling distribution and coverage was used to gather information for the evaluation.

Category	Number of Interviews /Discussions
NIRMAN office staff	State programme Facilitator, Executive Director
NIRMAN Field Staff	Programme officers, District facilitator
Key stakeholder Interviews and discussions.	8-Community Forest Resource Management Committees, women groups, youth group. Right holders of Individual Forest (land) Rights. Members of Gram Sabha Samuha, Bamboo artisans,

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Project Objectives and the Forest Rights Act 2006

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 (in short FRA) is enacted as a legislative and historic forest tenure reforms that recognises the customary rights of ownership of forest dwellers over forestlands and community forest resources for their livelihood needs. It recognises the STs and OTFDs as integral to the very survival and sustainability of the forest ecosystem hence vested the authority with Gramsabha/community the rights of conservation and governance of community forest resources.

The Act provided-(i) a framework of recording and vest forest rights and occupation in forestland in forest dwellers residing in forestland for generations whose rights could not be recorded, (ii) to strengthen conservation regime of forests by ensuring their livelihood and food security, including the responsibilities and authority for sustainable use, conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological balance, (iii) to address the historical injustice done to the forest dwellers on their ancestral lands and their habitat, which were not adequately recognised during consolidation of State forests in colonial as well as in independent India, and (iv) to address the long standing tenurial insecurity and access rights of STs and OTFDs including those who were forced to relocate their dwelling due to State development interventions.

The most historic and progressive part of the law is its “institutional reforms” which prescribed the bottom-up” process and procedures of implementation and vested the power with Gramsabha to determine, verify and approval of claims/rights with support of its Forest Rights Committee (FRC). The responsibilities and authority is vested with Gramsabha, therefore, the implementation of the Act would mainly depend upon the capacity building and empowerment of Gramsabha. The role of Gramsabha is vital and critical for proper implementation of the law.

To achieve the stated objectives of the current project Nirman has been consistently working as a process facilitator for proper implementation of FRA to realise the above objectives envisaged in the FRA 2006 and to ensure that the Act is implemented with proper spirit to recognise the ownership rights over individual forest land as well as community rights and community forest resource rights of the STs and Other traditional forest dwellers families. The organisation adopted “community empowerment and capacity building as the key to success” strategy in its intervention process. Some of the important steps taken in this direction are mentioned below.

NIRMAN facilitated wider discourse on forest people relationship to reflect on the age-old customary tenure and revive the collective ownership over customarily claimed forest in the face of increasing control imposed by forest administration

Such community level discourse encouraged the elders to narrate their tales of struggles surrounding forests and younger mass to connect with their forests and empowering provisions of the Forest Rights Act,2006.

These initiatives were followed by engaging the entire village communities in the demarcation of customary boundaries cutting across different categories of forests including Reserve Forests(RF), PRF, PF etc, as part of right settlement process under the FRA paving the way for collective action

Demarcation of forests revived a sense of ownership and authority over forests and facilitated collective initiatives including conflict resolutions over boundary disputes, sharing of forest resources, protection of community forests from fire and thefts helped mobilizing the community around forest resources

3.2 Community Empowerment

Nirman has been constantly providing facilitation support in skill and capacity building, empowerment of village community, their gramsabhas and Forest Rights Committees - as key institution of decision making, to

As an empowering legislation, FRA not only involve recognition of rights over forestland under occupation or cultivation but most importantly a reforms for “the democratisation of forest/natural resource governance”. It is not like an entitlement schemes. Therefore, Nirman has been prioritising its focus on working towards establishing a strong and capable Community Conservation Governance regime of Gramsabha as statutory institution for protection, conservation or regeneration and management of community forest resources. Facilitation support was provided for making the community to assert, exercise and control their ownership over CFRs and governance.

The organisation engaged the village communities / Gram Sabhas and Govt. Officials in interaction and created an environment of trust and cordiality in getting positive official response to their problems and adding smoothness in the process. Such initiatives have made significant impact on biodiversity, reduced harassment from the forest officials , stopped un authorised use of their forests by outsiders besides starting selling of bamboo and fuel wood locally. More than that the assertiveness among the villagers for their rights over their community customary forests and land has increased.

3.3 Empowerment of Women-Ownership and Governance

Women empowerment is the most significant and inevitable part of community empowerment process. FRA is the first legislation which has clear provision for recognition of land rights of women. Second, women have equal or mandatory representation in institutional process of decision making. Nirman has been emphasising to ensure that the women's rights over individual forestland and Governance (decision making) of community forest resources is ensured. The recognition and issue of joint IFR (individual forestland) title in the name of both husband and wife, single women or women headed are ensured in all intervention villages to ensure gender justice, equity and property rights. All together 303_ number of women have received legal title over forest land under the Forest Rights Act. The active representation of women members in Community Forest Resources (CFR) Management Committee ensure that women remain in active decision-making of CFR conservation, regeneration, protection and management.

The women have played very significant and active role in mapping and assessment of biodiversity and resource conditions within the locations of CFRs areas and suggested the proposed conservation and regeneration plan on-site for preparation of CFR Management Plan.

The women of Dasapalla are much vocal and active in leading in CFR Management Committee, finance management, forest protection through rotational patrolling, plantations and regeneration, fire protection, etc. They contributed significantly in mapping and

assessment of biodiversity and resource conditions within the locations of CFRs areas and suggested the proposed conservation and regeneration plan on-site for preparation of CFR Management Plan.

During the period of intervention, the judicious use of forests and the freedom to access forest has created great **“sense of security”** among the women than earlier. Earlier they were feeling unsafe, facing harassment and were scared of forest officials and guards. Now with the process of FRA implementation, they have turned far more assertive while arguing with forest officials regarding their unauthorised entry and access to the CFRR area of the village without the permission of the Gramsabha, even where the villagers are yet to receive the CFR and CFRR title. The villagers were also of the opinion that due to increased biodiversity the availability of forest produce and collection of forest foods have increased.

3.4 Tenure Security bring change in livelihood security and quality of life

FRA has great potential in bringing significant change in the quality of life and livelihood of tribal and other forest dwellers. The recognition of forest rights in both the districts helped in ensuring the longstanding tenure security over housing and land rights. Besides, it also enhanced the livelihood and food security of targeted tribal and other traditional forest dwellers families.

For the post-recognition IFR the state government has created several opportunities for livelihood improvement of tribal households by using the IFR land under convergence.

Nirman has facilitated various convergence activities of the State govt which impacted positively in improving the livelihood of forest dwellers. Various convergence activities like land development, horticulture, housing, vegetables/flower cultivation, farm ponds, improved irrigation, micro-enterprises and other economic activities were facilitated contributing to the economic empowerment. The IFR title holders of Siripai GP of Kashipur block received better access and benefits from the convergence activities than Dasapalla area by establishing better link with the administration. For instance, in Rayagada district, 114 forest rights holders families received support for housing under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAYG). In addition to housing support, 58 loose boulder structures in 4 villages and 397 staggered trenches were constructed in 3 villages as part of land water conservation intervention with the support of forest department through MGNREGA scheme for checking high run off along the slopes and enhancing soil moisture for farming.

In Dasapalla, trenches were constructed below the hills in Munduli and Pehelaju village to check the high run off rain water inundating farm fields with the support from District Administration through NREGS scheme of the government.

3.5 Establishment of Community Conservation Governance of CFR

The capacity building of Gramsabhas and CFR Management Committee for preparation of the Management Plan of Community Forest Resources was the basic need for keeping community control over community forest resources.

Nirman trained the field facilitators and members of the CFR Management Committee in both the district intervention area. The facilitators, community leaders and members of CFRMC were provided training for preparation of management plans of CFRs along with their exposure training to various places of good practices in Kalahandi and Kandhamal districts of Odisha, where Gramsabha had prepared the management plan, managing the CFR and

set examples in right assertion and improvement in livelihood. The assessment and documentations of resource situations in CFR areas has been completed in all the villages, series of discussion has been completed. Draft CFR Management plan has been drafted for Kashipur villages and Daspalla villages of both the districts.

There has been significant change observed in villages of Kashipur and Daspalla, where community has been more conscious and assertive to their community forest resource areas. The villagers have started developing more attachment and ownership on their CFR areas. They started protecting the forest from fire and regularising unauthorised entry of outsiders to their community forest resource boundary.

3.6 Conversion of Forest Village into Revenue Village

The survival of forest, unsurveyed villages and old habitation located inside inaccessible areas surrounding forests was quite challenging and the villagers dwelling in those areas were deprived from minimum access to service delivery facilities, roads, communication, land rights, housing facilities among others. Due to non-recognition of their land and forest rights, the population living in those villages have been very critically and continuously reeling under all kinds of deprivations in comparison to other villages and habitations. FRA has provision to recognise, convert and settle those villages into revenue villages.

Nirman has facilitated very successfully conversion of two forest villages into revenue villages by following the very elaborate “survey and settlement” procedures sincerely with the district administration. The Perag and Lamberi village of Kashipur block under the intervention areas of Nirman successfully completed all the process of conversion of these villages into revenue villages. District Level committee(DLC) Rayagada has already approved and recommended the proposal for final notification to Board of Revenue, Cuttack. IFR and CFR and CFRR Titles have been issued to the villagers. Now they are availing access to rights and entitlement facilities and have started getting access to road, solar light, etc under various government schemes.

3.2 Status of Incremental Progress

The organisation followed a strong process oriented approach for intervention of the activities under FRA implementation. Many qualitative changes are taken place during the period which can be clearly seen in the ground. However, few quantitative informations provided to see the incremental progress of the detailed activities undertaken by Nirman are attached in **Annexure 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4.**

3.3 Key achievements in 2021-22 and 2022-23

CFR/CFRR & IFR Rights settlement status in Rayagada under PHF project								
Sl. No.	Village	G.P.	Block	ST / OTFD	No. of HH	Areas	IFR status	CFR/CRR status
1	Kalakani	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	20	25.94	Title distributed	Title distributed
2	Ambabali	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	12	22.5	Title distributed	DLC approved

3	Sikapai	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	14	22.99	Title distributed	Title distributed
4	Otughati	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	16	16.59	Title distributed	DLC approved
5	Chanakhal	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	9	15.58	Title distributed	DLC approved
6	Perapa	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T				SDLC
7	Sirilijodi	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	28	61.05	SDLC	DLC approved
8	Kichikhal	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	33	52.15	SDLC	SDLC
9	Sarapas	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	35	33.51	DLC approved	DLC approved
10	Balkapai	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	26	39.92	SDLC	Title distributed
11	Leliguma	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	28	41.5	SDLC	SDLC
12	Bhalumaska	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	40	51.86	DLC approved	SDLC
13	Siripai	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T				DLC approved
14	Keshkeri	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T				SDLC
15	Baharaduluki	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T				SDLC
16	Perag	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	24	68.27	DLC approved	DLC approved
17	Balangiri	Siripai	Kasipur	S.T	18	25.33	DLC approved	DLC approved

3.4 Project relevance and coherence

3.4.1 Coherence between community felt needs and project interventions

There is a strong coherence between community needs and project interventions. The people in the project area are poor and belong to marginalised community. The organisation identified the underserved area and conducted a study to assess their need. Based on the finding of the need assessment study and the findings, intervention were planned. Community had limited understanding of CFR and IFR. Hence the programme was designed to address it.

3.4.2 Building upon and leveraging existing efforts and infrastructure

The organisation has been working with the tribal community in other parts of Odisha since 2006, hence they have adequate experience in working with them. It also successfully

implemented its work in other areas so it took less time to start it without much difficulties. NIRMAN had involved government and other stakeholders in their programmes earlier. Hence it had in-depth understanding of some of the key issues. The existing functional partnerships with key stakeholders especially government and communities enabled the project to takeoff quickly without investing too much time or resources.

3.5 Project Effectiveness

3.5.1 High level of satisfaction and ownership among the community

The collective initiative has brought about confidence among the people which has increased the effect of the programme. For example, the villagers resisted cutting of timber from their CFR area in several occasions by forest development corporation. The community leaders further said they were protecting forest as it was their life and livelihoods and would not part with their forest even if they were offered millions of rupees. During the field visit it was also noticed that more women wanted to play active role in the process. They expressed their willingness for the trainings and sharing of information provided by the organisation.

3.5.2 GIS mapping of CFR in 32 villages showed the changes in status of forest, water and other land use

In several villages, including Mitukuli, Pehelaju, Manjari, Tilabari, Bidapaju, Upper Dikri, Munduli, Banka Taila etc the availability of water in the streams inside the CFR have increased. The forests protection initiatives helped the water flowing down the slopes to get trapped by the newly growing trees and fallen leaves resulting in recharging of some old springs.. The community members shared that additionally around 2-3 months of water is now available from these springs compared to the earlier flow.

3.5.3 Active engagements with community groups have increased the effectiveness

Due to the active engagement with the community there is an increased participation of women who have at times led many of the initiatives voluntarily. Initially, the people were not ready to have basic discussion with the project team as continuous restrictions imposed by the forest administration had alienated them from their own forests and they had gradually started believing that nothing much could be done to alter the situation. . But with relentless efforts of the staff gradually the community was sensitized.

3.5.4 Interface with District Administration increased the effectiveness of the community Initiative

The delay in processing of claims under the FRA prompted the community leaders from the villages to visit the District Collectors office and meet the district collector, Nayagada in 2022. Interaction of the community leaders with the District Collector was very positive. The collector found the entire community initiative very interesting and she instructed the government officials from different departments to expedite the process of claim settlement. Besides assuring the community leaders to expedite the claims under the FRA, she immediately sanctioned Rupees two lakhs for Munduli and Pehelaju village for construction of water tank and trenches through NREGS after hearing the issue of runoff water flooding and inundating the agriculture fields. She called up the BDO to facilitate the construction of the water tanks and trenches at the foot hills for collection and recharging of water. The water tanks were completed in time now supporting farming in both the villages.

The overall project effectiveness in spite of limited time is encouraging.

4. Project Outcomes

This project was conceived and implemented in the backdrop of trailing historical injustices experienced by forest dwelling communities through successive forest governance system. Hence it is too early to experience all the changes as envisaged within the project period. Yet there are significant positive changes observed within the project period which need to be consolidated further. The details of the progresses made against the outcomes envisaged in the project document are mentioned below.

4.1 Village level institutions actively engaging with their own development concerns

Collective initiative against deforestation strengthening community resilience

The discourse on forest people relationship while generated lots of debates on forests, the successful resistance of people to attempt of forest corporation to fell timbers and sell them from the Community Forest Resource (CFR) areas laid the foundation for mobilisation of community against forest degradation.

In 2019 December, when the forest corporation cut down timber from the traditionally managed forest areas formally under the JFM of Mitukuli village without informing the community, the community members resisted. They cited the examples of the empowering provisions of the “ Forest Rights Act,2006” and they would not allow the corporation to take away timbers from their customarily managed forests. The women members sat on the logs felled by the corporation and did not allow them to take away the logs. A detail measurement of logs in CFT was done in front of the community members and the community was paid Rs 87,700 after two years when the timbers were sold.

Resurgence of collective ownership of community over forests:

The communities have decided the course of action for various activities under the Forest Rights Act and resorted to collective initiatives like mobilising the entire community for demarcation of traditional boundary, raising resources for setting up permanent boards reflecting ownership of community in Community Forest Resource(CFR) area, organizing traditional rituals and worshipping of deity of forest in CFR area in the presence of entire community.

The process of demarcating traditional boundary of villages involving all villagers across the Reserve Forests (RF), Protected Forests (PF), Proposed Reserve Forests (PRF) using lime and stone was itself an empowering process. These were the same forests where their access was restricted legally and they were made to pay either fine or bribe for bringing forest produce including forest foods.

4.2 Claims under FRA concerning both individual and community rights for 45 villages approved

The claims under the Forest Rights Act,2006 comprised of formal claims made by individual families over forest land and the village communities over the Community Forest Resources (CFR) accessed and protected by them. The claim process facilitated by NIRMAN could be

4.2.1 Empowering community and institutions through claim filing: NIRMAN facilitated the democratic framework laid out under the Forest Rights Act by engaging community groups and institutions like the FRCs, Palli Sabahas, in the right settlement process.

- Extensive forest people discourses organized in all 45 targeted villages including elders, youth, women, PRI members
- NIRMAN facilitated reconstitution of the dormant and inactive FRCs in _% of targeted villages and representatives of marginalized groups like women, ST, SC etc were included in the committee as mandated under the law replacing the inactive committee members hailing from dominant groups.
- The identification and demarcation of traditional boundaries of villages across RF, PRF etc where peoples access was restricted and over which community claimed their traditional rights mobilized the forest dependent community to such extent that they reestablished their forest deities, put up fencing and erected boards. This
- 99% of the targeted villages in Dasapalla and _% of targeted villages in Rayagada demarcated and reclaimed their traditionally accessed forest areas located in Reserve Forests(RF, PRF, PF)as part of CFR claims under the FRA.
- The demarcation of Community Forest Resource (CFR) areas was an empowering process where the community who were earlier restricted from accessing reserved forests by forest officials now invited the officials to witness the process of mapping of traditional boundary within forest areas.
- Enhanced awareness of community groups like the women groups, PRI members, community leaders etc and institutions like the FRCs, Gram Sabhas, Village Development Committees (VDC) enabled them to participate actively in the joint verification process carried out with govt. officials for ascertaining the veracity of claims.

4.2.2 Collaboration with government and PRIs : NIRMAN played a significant role in implementation of the FRA in both the districts of Rayagada and Nayagada which laid the foundation for collaboration with the authorities responsible for implementation of the law comprising government officials and PRI representatives.

- NIRMAN played an important role as part of the District Level Coordination Committee(DLCC) constituted at the district level comprising government officials, PRI members and civil society groups to review the progress of activities on FRA implementation
- NIRMAN was entrusted with a lead role in the FRA cell of government for Kashipur CD block in Rayagada District where it provided orientation to the field staff of the FRA cell and monitored the progress of implementation in the block. The review meetings were conducted every month at the block level and was attended by revenue, forest and FRA Cell officials along with NIRMAN staffs.
- The prominent role played by the villagers from all 28 villages in Dasapalla block to douse forest fire prompted the forest administration to rope in the villages to control and manage forest fire alongside the forest department.

4.2.3 Status of claims and rights settlement:

NIRMAN has continuously followed up and facilitated filing of legal claims by Individual families over forestland and village communities over the CFR. In fact, the organization

facilitated continuous engagement of communities, PRI members and government agencies in the process of forest rights settlement using the democratic framework of the Forest Rights Act so that the process of engagement of communities with local forest governance turns into an empowering experience.

Status of claims and rights settlement in Rayagada

In all most all the villages in Rayagada, both Individual and community rights have either been approved or are in the final stage of approval. The claims that are already approved in the Sub Divisional Level Committee (SDLC) mostly get approved in the DLC without any issue.

[illegible]

							Total	2064.53		
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Status of claims and rights in Dsasapalla

In Dasapalla, Out of 28 villages, 9 villages have already received the Community Forest Resource Rights(CFRR) title, while the claims of other 18 villages have been submitted in the SDLC and claim of one more village is in the final stage of submission. The GPS maps delineating the customary boundaries and the areas of CFR drawn in the map accompanying the claims have been highly appreciated. In the entire process of claim filing, the community has taken lead in mapping their CFR rights and in the submission of rights claims to the administration.

Conversion of 2 forest villages into Revenue Villages:

The Rayagada project team along with leaders of Gram Sabha and other community groups took the lead and mobilised all stakeholders including the PRI members, government officials for conversion of forest villages into Revenue village in Kashipur block on the basis of proclamation letter (Letter no - 2464/2018) furnished by district collector regarding forest village conversion. Despite, COVID-19 restrictions, the project team and community leaders mobilized local revenue and forest officials to initiate the land survey for both individual and community rights in Peraga and Lamberi forest village under Kashipur block, Rayagada.

With the support of revenue and forest officials, the Peraga and Lamberi Gram Sabhas conducted the process of determining and defining land ownership and boundaries & recorded land parcels and associated nomenclature as per Forest Rights Act, 2006 & Odisha survey and settlement Act. The technical team conducted survey of the entire villages including the individually occupied land, community land such as roads, goachar (Grazing land), community forest, etc. The DLC has approved both the claims and sent to Board of revenue, Odisha for their approval.

4.3.3 Facilitating enabling policy environment in collaboration with government : Some of the important learning from implementation and related policy issues led the NIRMAN team to share it with government officials and PRI members representing the Sub Divisional and the District level committees responsible for implementation of the law. Such sharing in the District level coordination committee (DLCC), Meetings of FRA cell and SDLC led to inclusion of several enabling policy decisions in the implementation plan of the government in Rayagada district.

- NIRMAN's continuous effort to sensitize the government officials from these committees on the empowering provisions of the law paved way for legal settlement of forest rights within the reserve lands. Earlier the forest officials were opposed to settlement of rights within Reserve land and forests.
- A large portion of forest areas in villages of Rayagada District were demarcated under the revenue land and as per the provision of the Forest Right's Act,2006 such land could be settled under this law. The district officials were however opposed to settlement of those lands citing their revenue status. Nirman played an important role in clarifying the status of such lands by sharing related government orders (GO) and organizing orientation meetings with government officials which led to settlement of

large proportion of Pahada kism land under the FRA benefitting several Tribal families and villages.

- NIRMAN's continuous follow up on the issue of Record of Rights (RoR) correction after issuance of land and CFR title in the SDLC meeting led to the correction of land records and inclusion of land details of forest rights holders in to the land records of villages

4.3 Forest management plans of 45 villages prepared and approved by the gram sabha and part of GPDP

The preparation of forest management plans in 45 targeted villages have followed participatory, extensive and field based survey and assessment of forest resources within the CFR areas. Importantly, the process of survey of varied forest, land and water resources, their economic, cultural and social usage , possibilities of regeneration of lost plant species including the medicinal and NTFP species etc within the CFR areas helped to reconnect the youths with their forests.

Some of the important outcomes of the sustainable conservation, management and governance of the CFR areas through forest management plans are mentioned below.

4.3.1 Sustainable conservation and management of Community Forest Resources (CFR):

- The demarcation of Community Forest Resource(CFR) areas within the traditional village boundaries through collective initiatives led people to engage with protection, conservation, management and governance of these forest areas with renewed vigour.
- The institutional framework for internal and external regulation covering areas like access and use, sustainable collection, management and harvesting, protection and conservation etc were finalized for each village with complete participation of women and men members of community
- In all most all villages in Dasapalla, the Forest Management Committees (FMC) and Gram Sabhas sat regularly to discuss matters relating to forest and rules were finalized for accessing, use and harvesting of NTFPs with high economic and cultural importance. Receipts were also printed for keeping records of use, fine and collective businesses
- Earlier people used to cut trees from roots and destroy the plants in the process. Now the forest committee prescribed sustainable process of plucking and collecting NTFP of high economic importance based on local knowledge of elders.
- Institutional processes apart, the age-old traditional practices like “Thengapali” and “Chuli Chanda” prevalent in Nayagada district for forest protection and management were also followed in each village with zest. The active participation of women and men in “Thengapali” or patrolling of the forest turned this process far more engaging
- Hunting and killing of wildlife were prohibited in all most all the villages despite loss of crops due to grazing by these wild animals. And in many villages, the care was taken

to see that water sources get collected in some place for quenching the thirst of these animals

- All villages were engaged in raising awareness on forest fire and took active part alongside the forest department to douse the engulfing forest fires every year. Their support in dealing with the forest fire led the forest department to include them in forest fire management
- The loss of vegetation and biodiversity from the CFR area also moved the villagers to conserve the seeds of Sialai, Adanaga, Balangi bamboo etc and replant them in their CFR areas. In many villages they used seed balls during monsoon to revive their plant species. The initiative taken by 6 villages in replanting diverse plant species is now followed by many other villages.
- The forest protection and conservation initiatives by the community led to regeneration and reappearance of several NTFP plant species which had either disappeared or were in the verge of extinction from the area. The best examples included the rare species of Adanga, Balangi bamboo, several tuber species etc.
- The community members shared that conservation and protection efforts have led to the return of Peacocks, Kutra (Barking deer) and other animals to the forest due to conservation efforts. The community members also shared that many new animals like wild boar, peacocks, wild hens, monkeys, barking deer, etc are also sighted frequently.
- The organisation has sensitised the communities regarding conservation of the rare variety of Cycad plant which exists in Nayagarh forest range. Now the communities have taken several steps to conserve and regenerate the plant. In 6 villages, this year the community has planted 500 Argha plants in Daspalla. The gram sabha federation in Daspalla has decided that this year they will preserve the argha seeds and next year they will plant more than 2000 argha plants in their CFR areas.
- In several villages including Mitukuli, Pehelaju, Manjari, Tilabari, Bidapaju, Upperdikri, Munduli, Bankataila etc the availability of water in the streams inside the CFR have increased. The forests protection initiatives helped the water flowing down the slopes to get trapped by the newly growing trees and fallen leaves resulting in recharging of some old springs. The community members shared that additionally around 2-3 months of water is now available from these springs compared to the earlier flow.

Increase in Productivity

- The yield of agricultural crops in dangar/hilly lands has improved because of the abundant supply of nutrients from the forest. This has led to an increase in agriculture productivity, highlighting the positive impact of the forest on local farming practices.

Sustainable Collection and Harvesting of MFP by Tribal women

- Availability of MFP in terms of variety and quantity also enhanced in the community conserved areas leading to increased consumption of MFP at the household level and additional income for the family. Increased availability of forest foods and MFP helped the community to cope with food scarcity during lean season of agriculture and seasonal migration.
- Collection and processing of MFP have been initiated and need to be strengthened,

5. Project efficiency

5.1 Cost efficiencies

The project was planned and implemented looking at the optimum cost. The organisation has kept sustainability in mind so that minimum but adequate resources are utilised. The resources have been utilised in a judicious manner.

5.2 Timeliness

The project was implemented in timely manner although there was some delay during pandemic. The organisation has inducted professional staff for timely implementation of programmes and reporting to donor.

6. Project Sustainability

6.1 Sustainability of essential resources for key project activities

The organization's approach is focused on ensuring sustainable livelihood development of the tribal community by protecting and conserving the forest. The village community has taken ownership regarding social economic issues and are in the process of developing them as entrepreneurs. Technological advancement through digitization of federations will streamline financial records. However, it is the convergence with government schemes and technological advancement that will pave the way for a sustainable livelihood.

The organization has initiated forest based enterprise which is being facilitated to become community owned.

6.2 Socio-Political Sustainability of forces driving change

The organisation has been able to organise the communities at the grass root. There is a need to engage with elected representatives and government officials for accessing government schemes. The government schemes need to be simplified and disseminated through the meetings of the Gram Sabha.

6.3 Sustainability of community level activities by mobilising youth.

Sustainability at community level activities shall depend on the capacity and activeness of the youths. The project needs to build sustainable mechanism by empowering adolescent boys and girls to play an active role in strengthening systems through capacity building and technical support. This would ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the federation.

6.4 Timely Conflict Resolution has paved way for ensuring Equity and sustainability.

Bankataila and Munduli are neighbouring villages separated by the Bhurtunga river which cuts across the vast stretches of forest often used by both the villages in the past. The forest of Bankataila was comparatively smaller in area and contained lesser vegetation and fell short of meeting the requirements of the village. As a result, the villagers of Banka Taila often entered into the forest areas of Munduli and collected MFP for their livelihood. Since both the villages earlier considered these deviations as part of livelihood adjustment surrounding forest, the minor squabbles did not go so far as to create any serious conflicts. This however changed with the possibility of formal demarcation of traditional boundaries under the Forest Rights Act that created conflict during sharing of resources.

After the intervention of NIRMAN staff, it was finally agreed that Munduli village will allow Bankataila village to include part of its forest area within the claim of Bankataila village under the FRA. However, the villagers of Munduli could collect MFP and forest foods at time of their need from the forest gifted by them. They not only helped the forest to protect and regenerate successfully within last two and half years but also revived the rare species of Adanga (*Cycas Nayagarhensis*) plant by preserving the seeds of the plant and planting 400 plants. Importantly, the protection and conservation measures contributed immensely in enhancing the resilience of the community by multiplying income and consumption from MFPs like Kendu, Siali leaves, tubers etc during lean season of food insecurity.

4. KEY CHALLENGES

Issues and Challenges

- Exclusion of Tribal and forest dwelling communities from local forest governance process
- Increasing restriction imposed by forest administration on access of community to customarily claimed forests areas
- Timber felling by Forest corporation for business without the consent of villages protecting forest
- Timber theft and deforestation
- Covid 19 delaying the forest rights settlement process
- Lack of marketing facility and poor valuation of NTFP products resulting in poor return from selling of forest products
- Bureaucratic hassles and delays affecting the pace of rights settlement process

5. LESSONS LEARNT

5.1. The community have started experiencing the benefits of CFR

The organisation has been able to organise the tribal community and made them aware about their rights both IFR and CFR. After the demarcation of CFR, the community started protecting their forest and there has been increase in collection of forest produce. Now they are taking active interest in protection, conservation and management of their community forest resources.

5.2 Best Practices for wider dissemination

- The unique practice of "Thenga pali" adopted by the community could be documented .
- The preparatory study done by the organization on community conservation efforts that have increased biodiversity and growth of new plants need to be consolidated further.
- The organisation should train the staffs and community on Bio-diversity act and in turn they could disseminate to the community in a simplified manner.
- NIRMAN could document its best practices and share with PHF partners working in the similar issues.

5.3 Bringing together a group of committed youth from the locality to support and sustain the initiative

It will be worthwhile to identify and cultivate youth from the locality. They can be motivated to give some time to understand the benefit of the programs. They could be appreciated in larger forum for their contribution which will motivate to get involved in the program. The organisation has already started working with them. But the organisation has to identify youth from each village and train them systematically and small support as a token of appreciation from community should be encouraged.

6. WAY FORWARD

The ongoing interventions so far provided several learnings, achievements and success stories, and also provided challenges and potentials. It also gives the idea and need for more focus and some continuity of ongoing interventions with special attention on the areas of conservation governance of CFR, institution building, women empowerment, post claim intervention for improved livelihood security and quality of life (convergence), nutrition and uncultivated nature food and conservation for climate justice. Besides continuity of the ongoing planned activities there is need of more emphasis and conscious effort on the following few points to achieve the main and long term objectives envisaged in the FRA 2006 as well as the objectives of the current project.

6.1 Strengthening the Federations is the key to sustainability

- Since the first and second phases of the project was focused on the claim filing and settlement process, the next step need to be focused to strengthen the federation and establish alternative livelihoods for forest-dwelling communities. This will enhance acceptability of federation among people.
- The federation was established to deal with historical injustices perpetuated within the centralized forest governance system, facilitate settlement of legal rights under the forest rights act under the democratic framework of the law and strengthen participatory forest governance.. NIRMAN need to further strengthen the federation by facilitating visioning exercise with the leaders for sustainability of the initiative.

- The federation could play a leading role in facilitating participatory forest governance including conflict resolution, regulating internal and external use of resources, sustainable conservation and management of the CFR, engagement with other stakeholders and sharing of policy related developments with villages, consolidating effort in forest fire control etc.
- The federation could also take lead in promoting forest based enterprise by facilitating scale of NTFP business, control quality and support business by engaging with the traders and marketing platforms.
- To ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the federation, more youth should be mobilised and integrated into it.

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6.2 Establishing & Strengthening the Institution of Community Governance of CFRs

. The CFRMC constituted in all the intervention villages are now in the process of managing the affairs related to management of accounts and finance, conservation and regeneration, patrolling, fire protection, etc. However, they are in formative stages and have not yet developed the capacity to manage their institution (CFRMC).

- The process of making the institutions capable would take more time to realise the actual dream envisaged in FRA of ensuring livelihood security through conservation and governance of CFRs. Hence there is a need of continuous facilitation support and handholding till an effective institution is put in place.
- It is inevitable to build and put a capable and empowering institutions (CFRMC) at village level permanently to manage their community forest resources. Unless the community takes control over management and conservation of their CFR, the rights have no meaning therefore institution building and systematic training and capacity building for community empowerment is needed.
- During assessment and making of conditions of forests in CFR areas the CFR MC of all the villages have identified degraded and open land within the customary boundary. As part of their CFR conservation and regeneration plan most of the villagers are willing to create food forests in those open areas and also do plantation of other economically viable species like special variety of bamboo (Balangi) from which jewellery are prepared.
- . A healthy environment should be created to transfer and share the indigenous and ecological knowledge on conservation and biodiversity from the older generations to these new generations. Selected and innovative events and activities should be undertaken by the organisation for engaging the youth, students in interaction with the older generations, individuals carrying forest wisdom, members of CFRMC, , local medicine men and village community.

6.3 Women empowerment can accelerate the progress.

- The participation of women in the community meeting was very encouraging. Their active involvement in decision-making, planning, and activity implementation could

lead to gender equality and empower women. This can also inspire other women to become more engaged in the community and take on leadership roles.

- NIRMAN can lead the way by integrating gender perspectives into all policies and field operations followed by sensitising the senior management staff.
- Special Empowerment Initiatives for women taking leadership of the CFRMC and decision making must be planned

6.4 Economic resilience-MFPs can be a source for alternative livelihood

- Availability of MFP in terms of variety and quantity also enhanced in the community conserved areas leading to increased consumption of MFP at the household level and additional income for the family. Increased availability of forest foods and MFP helped the community to cope with food scarcity during lean season of agriculture and seasonal migration.
- MFP can be big source for alternative livelihood opportunity. However a detail study on potential of business opportunity of MFP may be carried out. However, all the business must be carried out through collective-Federation.
- Promotion of sustainable practices in MFP collection, ensuring the preservation of natural resources and biodiversity must be followed. This would contribute to environmental conservation and the long-term sustainability of the project.
- Although there may be multiple business opportunities but the Federation could focus on item at a time with a comprehensive business plan.
- Create accounts on popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn specifically dedicated to the project.

6.5 Ensuring Livelihood and Food Security focusing more for Improved Quality of Life

One of the main objectives of FRA is to ensure tenure security over forest land for housing and agriculture for ensuring the livelihood and food security of tribal and traditional forest dwellers. Therefore, after ensuring tenure security, special focus needed to be given to ensure livelihood and food security of the IFR title holding families through various convergence programmes through facilitating sincere promotion of ecological farming, improved agriculture, horticulture, farm ponds, nutrition/vegetable cultivation, livestock rearing and poultry, etc suitable to them.

Various convergence programmes and schemes are available with the government for post-recognition intervention for improved livelihood and income of the tribal households.

Nirman needs to give proper attention to bring change in the quality of life and livelihood of tribal households through post-recognition convergence activities.

6.6 Ecological Farming with involvement of youth can increase income level of family

- Multi-layered cropping, intensification of horticulture should be practiced in the field.

- There is a need to involve and train youths on sustainable harvesting practice.

Suggestions

- NIRMAN can make a concrete plan for marketing the products but business plan can throw more light and strengthen the marketing. Social media could be used to highlight the quality and utility of the NTFP product. The current marketing strategy may be reviewed .
- The organisation needs to provide training on cleaning, packaging and marketing of Non Timber Forest Products(NTFP) with higher marketing potential . These updated new skills would not only enable them to actively participate in income-generating activities but will also enhance their self-confidence.
- The organization could document traditional knowledge and utility of different plants and herbs. It can also encourage traditional medicine practitioners to share their knowledge which can be disseminated.
- A strategic plan may be initiated looking at 10 years ahead and all the activities can be derived from the plan. The organization in collaboration with PHF could mobilize adequate resources both finance and human in order to create a sustainable model which may be replicated in another tribal area.
- Tribals are known as for cultivating small land with millets production and using the low water system for producing organic agricultural activities. The community can be advised to engage in collective farming for more quality production. They could be encouraged to grow millets for their own consumption and grow cash crops or high value vegetables for selling in the market by using modern technology.
- The organisation needs to be proactive and make profile of each family in the four hills. Detail information of family relating to education, health, livelihood and access to government schemes must be documented and followed up. This will help in identifying the needs of each members of the family at different point of time. It will build trust with the community and help in effective local governance

Study and Documentation

A socio-economic, cultural and scents study on biodiversity should be conducted as the initiatives of conservation and management of community forest resources has been started by the community. It should focus on examining and understanding the impact of Conservation and Management of CFR on ecosystem, forest biodiversity, forest cover, wildlife, agriculture, forest food, climate change, water bodies and various other aspects.

Time to time documentation of good practices and short studies related to conservation impact, effective institution of conservation governance, climate change, livelihood and better quality of life, and any other good practices need to be undertaken which can be used in replication and complement in other areas of intervention.

7. CONCLUSION

The Scheduled Tribes of India are the most marginalised section of the society and Kondhs tribe is one of the neglected community among tribes. The socio-economic development of Adivasis community of Kashipur, Rayagada district depends upon more employment opportunities and sustainable income generation opportunities by conserving, protecting and utilizing the forest resources. The additional income can supplement for the promotion of health and education for the community. But this can be possible by enhancing the skill and capacity of the community and more importantly building confidence that they can do it. Strengthening women leadership will accelerate the process.

NIRMAN with its consistent effort has been able to create some impact over the years for the tribal population in the areas of Health, Education and Livelihood. It has organized series of training on value addition of non-Timber Forest products. Many planned exposure visits and exhibitions were conducted at different places.

The project staffs are committed and has mix of both experienced and young women. The nature of work is women centric hence it moved to all women staff which seems to be more effective. The project director has encouraged the staff to work independently and be innovative. However more time they spend with the community they will win trust faster and can understand their needs much better.

The organization in collaboration with PHF can create an alternative model of sustainability with optimum use of forest resources. This model with emphasis on protection and conservation forest can benefit from carbon credit.

However continuous compassionate hearing of the community voice will build up trust among them and would be a strong force for success.

8. ANNEXURE

8.1 Case studies

8.1.1 A Case Study on Implementation of FRA Ambabali village

Village: Ambabali; **Panchayat:** Siripai; **Block:** Kashipur; **District:** Rayagada

Situation prior to land recognition

The village called Ambabali was a small world for all the fifteen households belonging to the Kondh tribe. As forest dwellers, they previously depended on the forest produces, coarse grains, maize and small millets grown by clearing patches of land on the mountain slopes. However, there was a perpetual fear pervading among them due to harassment by forest officials and Revenue department in the name of encroachment and they were forced to pay heavy fines for cultivating in the forest lands. Often, they were embroiled in tussles with them and they had to fall back on the forest products such as roots, tubers and fruits for their sustenance. In addition to these issues, they lacked basic facilities of life and livelihoods and wellbeing. With no proper roads, lack of education and health facilities nearby, they were ignorant about many things that impacted their lives. In short, their simple living was an everyday struggle for sustenance.

Intervention by NIRMAN

The FRA 2006 provided many organizations opportunity to address the challenges faced by such forest dwellers and tribal communities. NIRMAN, as a lead NGO, took up this challenge as a priority basis and started a lot of activities related to FRA such as raising large scale awareness among the stakeholders, advocacy and liaisoning with related departments on various aspects of FRA. Number of workshops and conventions were conducted to familiarize on the guidelines of FRA. Consistent meetings with community leaders in select districts (in this case, Rayagada) were held at village, block, district and state levels.

Implementation in Ambabali village

In Ambabali village, through consistent meetings with the community people, they were made aware of the landmark legislation and the benefits they would get. A Forest Right Committee (FRC) was constituted after many deliberations. Roles and responsibilities of the committee members were explained through regular village meetings. Consequently, a Gram Sabha was held regarding the claims under FRA. Once, all the claims were accepted by the FRC, they were sent to the forest department and Revenue department for joint verification. After 15 days of anxious waiting by the community, the joint verification team came for verification of CFR and IFR claims. A final special Gram Sabha was held for this purpose and ultimately forms were submitted at SDLC.

After few days, a bigger issue cropped up when the officials denied to grant the claims because it was DLC forest land. Community members went to complain at grievance cell and met the District Collector many times.

NIRMAN also collected DLC forest guidelines and govt letter as per forest act and taught the community leaders how to write letters and approach the officials for grievance redressal. Armed with such guidelines and govt letters, NIRMAN along with the community leaders took up the challenge to convince the various departments. Letters were issued to PA, Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Rayagada; ACF, Rayagada; Dist collector and sub collector, Rayagada; DWO, Rayagada; Ranger Tikiri and Kashipur; Tehsildar and WEO, Kashipur and all RI kashipur. Finally, after more than two years of struggle their claims were processed and 12 households out of the 15 were granted land deeds(Titles). (among the three households not received title – one has migrated to Kerala and two belong to Gauda caste – however their cases are pending)

Impact on livelihood and wellbeing

After getting their respective lands under the FRA, both families are expressly happy as there is no fear of harassment by forest officials or others. They are free to cultivate as per their wishes.

Sustenance: They have started to grow diversified crops on their lands and are able to sustain their families throughout the year. All the crops grown are mostly for their own consumption and very less is sold if there is any surplus. They grow Parkuli grain (desi dangar dhan) dussuhra paddy, maize, arhar, ragi, kahada, kosala, kangu, black gram, long bean, balijhata (gram), kating, jana, forest tomato (peja), forest brinjal (Heiyan), arka, rani kanda (sweet potato), langala kanda, etc. Apart from this, they also get grains through PDS. They conveniently maintain livestock such as cattle and goat.

Income: They collect and sell MFP for whatever income they could get that comes to Rs. 5000 more or less. Last year they had income of Rs 1000 from Mahua; Rs 1500 from tamarind; Rs 1500 from maize; and Rs 1000 from millets.

Wellbeing: After intervention, infrastructure such as roads, electricity, drinking water facility has come up. The village has been declared an ODF village. There are no major health issues and the nearest CHC is at Sikarpai. They also conveniently visit CHCs at Tikiri and Kashipur. The eligible children get grains and eggs from the Anganwadi that is two kilometers away at Minakhunti. ASHA and ANM visit regularly. There are no dropouts among school going children in the village.

Community Empowerment: One of the greatest impacts of FRA implementation in the village was that, it provided a platform for both the elders and the youth to come together and discuss village issues. It bound the villagers together and brought unity and a sense of ownership among them.

They have realized and are well aware that the land and forests belong to them and no one can snatch it away from them. The relationship with officials is better now and their awareness level is high regarding govt. schemes and current affairs. They are now thinking of using mobile phones as tool to take up social causes and address issues.

Among best practices of management of biodiversity, they cultivate mixed crop – maize, pigeon pea and ragi on their stipulated land. Cutting of trees in the forest is strictly not allowed. The FRC members take leading role in conservation of forest. Thus, FRA implementation has empowered the community people to a considerable amount.



8.1.2 Story of Change - Tenure security ensured livelihood security

Village Ambaballi, Kashipur block of Rayagada District.

Ramesh Majhi is a 32 years old man living with his wife Smt Kamsil Majhi aged 28 years and a daughter residing in his ancestral village Ambaballi. The family got recognition of title

over individual forest (land) rights (IFR) for an area of 1.94 acres under Forest Right Act 2006 with facilitation support of NIRMAL.

The main difference in between before and present: - Before also he was producing different crops on the same land but he was not taking care of that land due to monopoly of the forest and revenue department. When he got the "**Title Page (Sironama)**" from Government of Odisha, under FRA, he took care of that land as it is his own land and nobody will deprive him from that land.

The key benefits to him from that land:

1. Now he saving Rs 30,000/- per annum from the product of the same land after consumption of his family.
2. After got the title, he introduced some nutritional vegetable garden in that land and al so some tubers cultivated in the same land. Though, he can getting some nutritional foods for his family consumption and rest of sold in the market.
3. Before that he could not getting any residential and caste certificate from the Govt to access govt schemes. But now he got the residential and caste certificate for accessing govt schemes after got the title of his occupied forest lands.
4. He also collected MFP products like Mohua, Tamarind, Mango and Siali leafs from the same land and getting Rs5,000 /- per annum to sold the products after his family consumption.



Kallash Majhi with wife Kamsil holding his land Title issued under FRA 2006

5. Now his income is raised and he changed his food practices like consumed some nutritional fruits, fish and sweets in some times when he goes to the market.

6. He is very much satisfied with that land after the **FRA law** was enacted & got the "**Title page**" in his own name.

He got that land under FRA with the intervention of NIRMAL organisation. All the lands are up land so now he is adapting in up land short duration paddy, Millets, Maize, some vegetables like Brinjal, Ridge guard, Bitter guard, pumpkin etc, pulses like black gram, cutting, Arhar, oil seeds like ground nut and Till and some tubers in his back yard for his family consumption and for marketing purpose. Apart from he has some domestic animals

and birds like 10 nos cows, 20 nos goats and 10 nos poultry. Which he gets bio fertilizers from them and applied the bio fertilizers to his crop field and getting better yield. He getting Rs.12,000/- per annum to sold the domestic animals and birds. His wife also helps to him in cultivation and harvesting time. He also engaged in other non-agricultural activities as a wage labourer and getting some wages. He always practiced to sold his products in exchange process with local vendors and with his neighbouring households according to the need of family like purchase of Soap, Oil, and Potato etc by barter system. He has also *BPL card*, by which he gets 10 kg of rice from Grama Panchayat .

Before getting title he had land, but he has no officially rights over that lands. During that time he faced many problems while cultivating and harvesting of the crops and collection of MFPs. The officers came to him in the harvesting time and collecting some shares of crops from him. Forest officer couldn't allow to him to his land for cultivating crops or to do any activities.



NIRMAN is a non-profitable NGO who is working in grass root level on Forest Right Act – 2006, both Individual Forest Rights and Community Forest Rights and started works at Ambabali village in 2020. In the process of work, NIRMAN came to know that, entire house hold of the village (11 families) have no any title over the land that they have practicing cultivation. The organisation helped to the villagers as well as Ramesh Majhi got recognition of 1.94 acres forest land under FRA and,

By all these he got title over her land And mo government officer also trouble him for that land. Through which he lives with his family very happy and smoothly. He is always happy and thankful to NIRMAN organisation for the facilitation in that situation.

8.1.3 FRA CASE STUDY – FRA has protected my land rights and livelihood

Village Kalakhani, Kashipur block, Rayagada District

Raina Majhi 48 years old and S/O- Kadia Majhi, residing with his wife Smt Palme Majhi 45 years old and three sons at his native village Kalakhani. He got 3.14 forest lands under Forest Right Act 2006 with the facilitation of NIRMAN organisation. Among the lands 2.36 acre is Parvata Kisama and 0.78 acre land is Gramya Jungle.

The main difference in between before and present: - Before also he was producing different crops on the same land but he was not taking care of that land. When he got the **"Title Page (Sironama) "** under FRA, he took care of that land sincerely as it is his own land and nobody will deprive him from that land. The production also increases due to security of tenure.

The key benefits to him from that land:

1.Now he saving Rs 20,000/- per annum from the product of the same land after consumption of his family

2. After getting the title, he introduced some nutritional vegetable garden in that land. Though, he can get some nutritional foods for his family consumption and rest of sold in the market.
3. Before that he could not get any residential and caste certificate from the Govt for his children's admission at school. But now he got the residential and caste certificate for his children's schooling to get the title of his occupied forest land.
4. Now his income is raised and he is getting better education for his children and maintaining day to day needs of his family and children.
5. He is very much satisfied with that land after the **FRA law** was enacted & got the "**Title page**" in his own name.

He got that land under FRA with the intervention of NIRMAL organisation. All the lands are upland so now he is cultivating upland short duration paddy, Millets, Maize, some vegetables like Brinjal, Tomato, Lady Finger, pumpkin etc, pulses like black gram, cutting, Arhar, oil seeds like ground nut and Till for his family consumption and as well as to sell it. His wife also helps to him cultivation and harvesting processes. He also participated in other non-agricultural activities like



working as labour, Collection of Mango, MFPs products like Mahua and Tamarind. He always used to exchange his products with local vendors and with his neighbouring households according to need base like Soap, Oil, and Potato etc by barter system. He has also *BPL card*, by which he gets 25 kgs of rice from Grama Panchayat.

Before getting the title he had land, but he had no legal rights over that lands. During that time he faced many problems while cultivating and harvesting of the crops and collection of MFPs. Forcefully, he paying Tax to local forest department in each and every crop season. The officers came to him in the harvesting time and collecting some shares of crops from him. Forest officer couldn't allow him to his land for cultivating crops or to do any activities.

NIRMAL is a non-profitable NGO who is working grass root level on Forest Right Act – 2006, both Individual Forest Rights and Community Forest Rights and started works at Kalakani



village in 2019. In the process of work, NIRMAN came to know that, entire house hold of the village (28 families) have no any title over the land that they have practicing cultivation. NIRMAN helps to the villagers over land rights under FRA and Raina Majhi got 3.14 acres forest land,

8.1.4 Bidapaju village choosing CFR rights over JFM

The continued opposition by the villages in the entire stretch of the forest area to take timber from their CFR areas didn't stop the forest corporation to attempt timber cutting from some of the villages left earlier. They planned for cutting timber from the Community Forest Resources (CFR) area of Bidapaju village where the community had already filed legal claims under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 in 2021. Yet the forest officials and officials of forest corporation visited the village in 2022 to convince the villagers for allowing the matured timbers to be cut from the CFR. The villagers resisted cutting of timber from their CFR area. The community leaders further said they were protecting forest as it was their life and livelihoods and would not part with their forest even if they were offered millions of rupees. After some time when the argument between the forest officials and the community further intensified, the forest officials suddenly asked the community to show their records of any forest protection initiatives. The villagers brought all the records including records of regular meetings, rules and regulations for forest management, legal claims filed under the FRA, common bank pass book, resolution of gram sabha etc. It was more than the records they had asked for. The forest officials left the meeting quietly without any further objection after verifying the records.

8.1.5 Story of Change in Uppardikiri Village, Daspalla.

Till 2019 the villagers were not much aware about the Forest Rights Act and rights of the villagers/gramsabhas over the community forests. Nirman organisation came as the messenger, organised awareness meetings and trainings since 2019 in the village.

Through FRA implementation villagers got strongly united. The villagers protecting the community forest resource areas through forest patrolling the boundary of the forests, which has been locally called / conceptualised as Thengapali (watching forest rotationally with groups carrying Thenga (lathi/stick)).

Many varieties of mushroom available in our areas for five months till the time of Dasaharra (October). With organised protection and conservation initiatives of the Community Forest areas the availability of mushrooms are increasing which not only consumed as nature food items for the families but also add to the income of the family through sale to the local traders.

Forest department was coming to fell the timber from the community forest area of Uppardikiri which they were doing as usual earlier, as part of their timber harvesting operation. Few timbers they have already cut and were loading on the trucks. Villagers unitedly protested and successfully stopped the transportation of timber by forest department. This is the result of united and collective assertion of forest rights of community forest rights by the villagers/gramsabha. The department finally left empty.

Adanga otherwise called adgha is a local forest species, the fruit of which is used as food and preparation of cakes. This specie is unique to the Nayagarh forests. During Covid19 lockdown villagers said they were eating Adanga fruit in raw.

Villagers collect use medicinal plants and herbs from the forest for their diseases and common ailments. The forest has been improving and the cover and biodiversity has been increasing significantly during last three years.

The CFR Management Committee has been constituted in the village. The committee has installed a broad in the boundary and writing restriction and regulations under FRA 200. It The villagers identified and demarcated the customary boundary, with the participation of neighbouring villagers.

The village institution i.e., CFR Conservation and Management Committee (CFRMC) have been strengthened to take the work of Conservation and management of community forest resources in Uppardikiri village. The villagers regulated and restricted the free entry of anybody into the area of community forest resources without the permission of the CFR Management Committee.

The Forest Department officials were insisting the villagers for formation of VSS/JFMC. Villagers strongly opposed and refused the proposal.

The benefits villagers getting after initiating the process of effective conservative and management of community forest resources.

1. Destruction of forests by free entry of outsiders for timber and bamboo extraction has been restricted completely
2. Now the availability of honey and jhuna has been increasing.
3. The fertility of down hill agricultural lands increasing with increase in soil humus and stopped use of chemical fertiliser.
4. Checked erosion of soil and siltation over paddy land.
5. Increased birds and wild animals in the community forest areas. The peacocks which was about to extinct has now increased due to increase in forest cover during last three years of conservation. A types of bird (harada) has also increased.
6. Availability of mushrooms in the forests is plenty, which is now adding income to the family.
7. Restricted outsiders illegal cutting and taking of bamboo and timbers.

8.1.6 Dudukipaju Village Taking Management Control over CFR

In 2019 the Forest Rights Committee was constituted in village Dudukipaju. Nirman created sensitisation on FRA. The neighbouring villagers started forest protection initiative. Inspired from them and the facilitation of Nirman the villagers started protection of forests. A CFR Management Committee was constituted then. Each family contributed Rs 10 (as Chulichanda) towards creating now fund for the protection and management of their community forest resources.

The customary boundary was identified and demarcated with the participation of the committee members of neighbouring village. Forest patrolling the concept locally popular as “Thengapali” started systematically since 2019 after learning from the neighbouring village. The villagers have identified the open and degraded lands and did plantations of natural species and fruit bearing trees as part of the regeneration activity. Collectively and voluntarily participated in extinguish forest fire in summer.

The villagers are allowed to take 4 bamboo free but pay Rs.2/- for each additional piece of bamboo. For outsiders sell bamboo to outsider for Rs 5/- per piece. Now people feel free access to forests. They are protected from harassment from forest department and now stopped the monopoly of forest corporation for timber felling.

Outsiders are restricted and prohibited except bonafide families traditional depending for their livelihood collection. Outsiders coming previously for timber are not daring to enter and cut the timber from our forests.

Conflict resolution by Gram Sabha Samuha:

There was a conflict between three villages namely Gunduribari, Janipadar and Dudukipaju relating to customary boundary of the village. The Gram Sabha Samuha (the Collectives of Village Council) was involved in dispute resolution process and successfully resolved the dispute.

Gram Sabha also played a major role in resolving conflicts during demarcation and GPS mapping process. For instance, Dudukipaju, Gunduribadi, and Janipadara villages in Daspalla are adjacent to each other. A conflict arose during GPS mapping concerning the delineation of their boundaries, leading to a significant dispute among the three villages. This dispute resulted in the suspension of GPS mapping activities for the day. Subsequently, the villagers discussed this matter during a Gram Sabha Samuha meeting. After deliberation, the Gram Sabha Samuha scheduled a date for a joint conflict resolution meeting. Representatives from all three villages and leaders from the Gram Sabha Samuha participated in this meeting. Using historical village maps and records as reference, they successfully resolved the boundary issue among themselves.

8.2 Incremental progress from 2021 - 2023 of NIRMAN - PHF programme

Sl.No.	Activities Implemented	Progress 2019 Oct to 2021 Sept	Progress 2021 Oct to 2023 August	Remarks
1	Identification and selection of Potential villages of forest dwellers and forest rights	17		

2	Conducted Introductory Meetings	17		
3	Constituted / Reconstituted of Forest Right Committee by Convening Gram Sabha	17		
4	Letters sent to SDLC providing Maps and Voter lists of the selected villages for claim filing	17		
5	Notice served for organising Gram Sabha	17		
6	Conducted Gram Sabha in all operational villages	17		
7	Prepared Hand Village resource Map	17		
8	Organized Joint Forest Right Committee Meeting with Neighbouring Village.	17		
9	Community Rights (Form-B) and Community Forest Resource Rights (Form-C) Claims Filled up.	8	9	
10	Intimation letter sent to by Forest Rights Committee to Range Officer (Forester) and Tahasildar for Joint Verification	7	10	
11	Joint Verification Meeting Completed	7	10	
12	Prepared Trace Map of IFR Land Claims and submitted to SDLC	162	206	
13	Notice Served for Final Approval of Claims by Gram Sabha	7	10	
14	Approval of CFR and CFRR Claims (B&C) by Gram Sabha	7	10	
15	Approved Claims of CFR and CFRR Claims (B&C) Submitted to SDLC	7	10	
16	Customary boundaries Indicate /Marking use for PRA method	7	10	
17	Approval of CFR and CFRR Claims (B&C) by SDLC		12	

18	Approval of CFR and CFRR Claims (B&C) by DLC		12	
19	Distribution of Title for CFR and CFRR		3	other village -60
20	IFR claim filing ongoing process		159	
21	Approval of Claims of IFR by DLC		144	
22	IFR Title distribution		65	36 title issued on DLC forestland.
23	Title validation / ROR Correction		65	
24	Participatory survey of existing and potential Bio-diversity, MFP, forest food in CFR areas		17	
25	Preparation & Compilation of Forest management plan report and its legal endorsement in Gram Sabha		17	
26	Building of Gram Sabha Federation		1	
27	Plantation and management of MFP & other forest food plants in selected CFR areas		Villages-4	
28	Forest Village converted to revenue Village SDLC approved		5 Forest Villages	
29	Forest Village convert to revenue Village claim form submitted to SDLC		1-Forest Villages	
30	Bio-diversity, register	1		

8.3 Consolidating Peoples' led Approach to Conservation and Livelihood

Progress of the process during Oct 2019 to Sept 2021				
Process	Kashipur		Daspalla	
	Baseline	Achievement	Baseline	Achievement

Identification of potential villages	Assessment of status in village meetings	15 villages	NIRMAN	15 villages
Multiple village meetings to build the rapport with the community and to assess the current status of IFR/CFR/CFRR	Few community members submitted IFR claims.	15 villages	NIRMAN assisted in filing up of IFR claims	15 villages
Constituted / Reconstituted of Forest Right Committee	Committees were not functional.	Reconstituted FRC in 15 villages	The committees were not functional.	Reconstituted FRC in 15 villages
Letters sent to SDLC for Map / Voter List		15 villages		15 villages
Notice Served for organising Gram Sabha		15 villages		15 villages
Conducted Gram Sabha in all operational villages		15 villages		15 villages
Prepared hand resource Map of the villages	Resource map was not there with the community	15 villages	Resource map was not there with the community	15 villages
Documentation and recording of rights		15 villages		
Organized Joint Forest Right Committee Meeting with Neighbouring Villages.	Two or more villagers were dependent on same forest Forest boundaries redrawn and regulation established	Resource sharing mechanism with other villages established in 15 villages	Two or more villagers were dependent on same forest Forest boundaries redrawn and regulation established	Resource sharing mechanism with other villages established in 15 villages
Filling up of Community Forest Rights and Community Forest Resource Rights Claim		8		15
Letter sent to Range Officer and Tahasildar for Joint Verification		7		15
Joint Verification Meeting held		7		15

Prepared trace maps of IFR lands claim submitted to SDLC		162	All the eligible households claimed/received IFR	
Notice served to undertake Gram sabhas for Final approval of claims.		7		15
Gram Sabha Approved B & C Claim Forms		7		15
B & C Claim Form submitted to SDLC		7		15
Identification of Customary boundary by using PRA methods		7		15
Preparation of bio-diversity register and endorsement at Gram Sabha		1		2
Identification of forest villages		2		
Formation of Community Forest Management Committees	0	15	0	15
Village Boundary Signboard by the community	0	0	0	6

Activity during October 2021 to Sept 2023 in Rayagada and Nayagarh				
Process	Kashipur		Daspalla	
	Progress till Sept 2021	Achievement	Progress till Sept 2021	Achievement
Filling up of B and C Claim forms. (CFR)	8	9	15	12
Letter sent to Forester / Tahasildar for Joint Verification	7	10	15	12
Joint Verification Completed	7	10	15	12

Prepared Land Map oil trace paper, IFR Claims and submitted to SDLC	7	10	15	12
Prepared Land Map oil trace paper, IFR Claims and submitted to SDLC	162	206		Recognition of IFR completed before
Notice sent to convey of final Gram Sabha	7	10	15	12
Approved CR and CFR (B & C) Claim by Gram Sabha	7	10	15	12
Submitted approved CR and CFR (B & C) Claim to SDLC	7	10	15	12
Identification and marking of Customary Boundary by using PRA methods	7	10	15	12
Approval of CR and CFR Claims by SDLC	0	12	9	3
Approval of CR and CFR Claims(B & C Claim Forms) DLC	0	12	9	15
Distribution of B & C Titles by DLC	0	3	0	9
IFR Title distribution		65		
RoR Correction & Title validation		65		
Constitution of Community Forest Resource Management Committees (CFRMC)	17	17	15	28
Opening of Passbook of CFRMC	0	0	0	7
Village Boundary Signboard by the community	0	0	6	12
Participatory survey of existing and potential Bio-diversity, MFP, forest food in CFR areas	0	17	0	28

Preparation & Compilation of Forest management plan report and its legal endorsement in Gram Sabha	0	17	0	20
Plantation and management of MFP & other forest food plants in selected CFR areas	0	4	0	4

8.4 Progress of Activity during October 2021 to Sept 2023

8.5 Process Progress

IFR and CFR claim process

In the initial phase of the project, the team identified 15 villages in Daspalla and 15 villages in Kashipur where the community had not yet claimed Community Forest Rights (CFR) or Community Resource Rights (CRR). These areas were situated in remote regions that had not been reached by government departments.

Once the villages were finalised, the team conducted several meetings to gain insights into the ground reality of individual and community resources, along with the associated challenges. The team actively engaged the community in understanding the Forest Rights Act and its provisions, mobilising both individuals and Gram Sabhas. Subsequently, Gram Sabhas played a pivotal role in mobilising the community to prepare and submit claim forms for the customarily used forestland of individual families and shared forest resources for the entire village community.

In the course of the traditional boundary demarcation process, the communities also consulted neighbouring villages those are dependent on same forest to avoid future conflicts. This ensures that the demarcation process is inclusive and takes into account the needs and perspectives of all the communities that are dependent on the forest. By engaging with neighbouring villages, the community work together to define and protect traditional boundaries in a way that is collaborative and respects the rights and interests of all stakeholders. After demarcation, they build a signboard and written the names of their traditional boundary. This helps in educating people about the traditional boundaries and it prevents disputes and misunderstandings in the future. In some cases, there was conflict among villages whose were sharing same forest. For instance, Bankataila village lacked forest land and relied on Munduli village for forest resources. During the demarcation process of Munduli village, Bankataila villagers agitated fearing that it might jeopardize their livelihoods. In a collective effort, comprising villagers of all age groups, including elders, women, and youth, a meeting was arranged between Bankataila and Munduli villages. During the discussions, Bankataila village requested a portion of forest land from Munduli village to sustain their livelihoods. After extensive deliberations, Munduli village agreed to this proposal, and a patch of forest was allocated to Bankataila village.

When NIRMAL started its intervention, in Rayagada, they found that in some villages people have their customarily used land coming under the Pahada and Parbata kism land which earlier the administration refused to settle under the "Forest Rights Act,2006" as they belonged to a subtype of forestland coming under larger category of revenue land. Many such lands having forest growth had been identified by District Level Committee(DLC) of government in 1997 in response to the case of Godaverman case of 1995 and were barred

from settlement under the revenue laws in favour of the landless Tribal communities. Later, a state government circular of 2nd February, 2011 clarified that these lands could be settled under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. We sensitized the FRC and volunteers on FRA and prepared and submitted the claims for DLC forest land. The line departments were not aware about the 2012 amendment, so they denied joint verification.

NIRMAN is a member of district level committee (DLC) on FRA. They discussed this issue in district monitoring committee meeting and in the year 2020, organised a consultation by involving sub-collector, ACF, PA-ITDA, RIs, ADWO in Rayagada and discussed about the law and its amendment and shared the Government order (Government ordered that people can claim and get rights over DLC forest). NIRMAN also organised block level orientation by including RI, Forester, Tahasildar, Ranger, BDO and distributed the copy of government order to all line departments. After that the joint verification team visited villages and prepared their report.

After few months, when the FRC leaders followed up to know the status of their claim, they found that Forester denied to sign the joint verification report. Then the FRC members along with NIRMAN team again met sub-collector and shared the same. Sub-collector called ACF immediately to a meeting and instructed him read the law thoroughly and do the needful process immediately.

After that the ACF instructed ranger and foresters to sign the joint verification report. After the instruction from ACF, foresters signed the joint verification report. After regular follow up, till today 63 households have received title in Kashipur from which 63 households have received title from PHF villages and 27 households are from Non-PHF villages.

Claim in Municipality area (Which is also first in Rayagada)

After the above learning, in 2022 NIRMAN team facilitated the communities in Rayagada municipality area to submit the claims. A total of 38 households submitted their claims and all the claims have been approved by DLC.

Strengthening Community Forest Management Committees:

NIRMAN has formed 45 CFM committees in all intervention villages with active participation of women. In Dasapalla, 13 villages have prepared village boundary signboards and 7 CFM committees have opened their bank accounts. All the committees have prepared rules and regulations for conservation, protection, regeneration and management of community forest resources. In Dasapalla, almost all villages have adopted Thangapali as a way for watch and ward of their forest.

Women members of project villages are now very much active in forest protection and conservation initiatives. During a village meeting, one such women member shared that “previously we used to feel hesitant in expressing our views, as we were too scared of being judged and made fun of, so we always decided to stay quiet. But after attending these Gram Sabha meetings, we are now able to understand and articulate the problems we face and have the confidence to speak our minds.”

Gram Samuha Process:

The Gram Sabha leaders played a significant role in rights assertion process in CFR areas by engaging with wide range of stakeholders. Further strengthening of Gram Sabha and mark their footprint in district level and to increase their bargaining and negotiation powers vis-à-vis the state and market agencies with regard to the disposal of MFP, the Gram Sabha

leaders have decided to form an informal network of these Gram Sabhas into a federation and have started the process by selecting village level representatives to the federation. In both the districts, the Gram Sabhas have formed their Samuha (federation). Each Gram Sabha nominated both male and female members to represent in the federation. The women members are equally active and engaging in their response to FRA implementation process and any issue related to CFR conservation and management. The Gram Sabha Samuha has initiated to be self dependent and autonomous to mobilise, share and manage their own resources for any meetings, visiting offices and administration.

The members of Gram Sabha Samuha have gone to different successful Gram Sabha federations like Kalahandi, BR hills etc for exposure learning.

The Gram Sabha Samuha played an important role in the conservation, protection, right assertion of CFR areas. For example in Bidapaju village of Daspalla block, the forest corporation marked a huge area for cutting down of trees from community managed CFR areas. When the forester and ranger reached forest for cutting of trees, the whole villagers went to the village and prohibited the forest department people from cutting trees. They returned without cutting trees. Then Forest corporation officials also came to the village and tried to convince the villagers by offering bribe. But the community strongly denied their offer. Then after 14 days, the DFO visited the village and discussed with the community. He suggested to form Joint Forest Management (JFM) Committee promoted by forest officials and shared lucrative benefits for the JFM but the villagers stuck to their view of going for Community managed and controlled CFR rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. They also argued in favour of such participatory and sustainable practice of managing community owned forests. The DFO verified their bank passbook, resolution register, Thenga pali register and other documents and finally appreciated the villagers for their initiative on conservation and regeneration of their CFR areas.

The Gram Sabha Federation leaders in both the districts have met District Collectors of Nayagarh and Rayagada and apprised them about lack of progress in soil and water conservation measures in forest areas. The districts collectors have taken positive initiatives and instructed block officials to expedite the work under MGNREGA for trenches to store runoff water. In few village, the gram sabhas mobilised the forest department for getting fruit and medicinal plants.

Gram Sabha Samuha has been playing an active and effective role in conflict resolution related to forest use, illegal tree felling, resolve boundary dispute between villages while taking of GPS mapping and traditional boundary demarcation, etc. Women leadership from each Gram Sabha played active role in management and protection of forests fire.

8.6 Photos from the field visit

IMAGES FROM FIELD VISIT

Interacting with bamboo artisan artisan family in Putubari



Interacting with bamboo artisan artisan family in Putubari



Meeting with project participants

Understanding the Facilitation of FRA





Distribution of IFR Title to claimants of Kashipur Villages



Showing seed balls for forest regeneration Kashipur Village



Exposure Visit by SHGs for leaf plate making



Preparation of CFR Management Plan by Bhalumaska Committee Team



Distribution of IFR Titles by District Administration Rayagada



Training on CFR Management Plan