

APRIL 2024

IN THE LOOP



Vasundhara Newsletter, 10th May

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Kalikaprasad village celebrates assertion of Forest Rights

Kalikaprasad, a village predominantly inhabited by the Ho Adivasi community, recently witnessed a joyous occasion on April 1, 2024, as the villagers celebrated the declaration of their rights over their forests. The event, held in the village, which falls under the buffer zone of Simlipal Tiger Reserve in Dhaulabani Gramme Panchayat of Jashipur, was filled with an atmosphere of joyousness, celebration, and auspiciousness.

On this remarkable the authority of the Gram Sabha and its newly formed Community Forest Resource Management Committee (CFRMC) to manage their community forest resources (CFR) was officially established. The inauguration ceremony involved the unveiling of notice boards declaring the authority of the CFRMC and the rights and responsibilities of the Gram Sabha related to CFR under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006.

OVERVIEW :

- Kalikaprasad village celebrates assertion of Forest Rights
- Vasundhara staff unites to enhance accountability at the annual meeting.
- CFRMC Federation Assembles Inaugural Meet, Charts Roadmap.
- CR/CFR claim-making process.





The ceremony was led by village priests, who inaugurated the notice boards by performing traditional rituals. The occasion was marked by vibrant traditional dances and the rhythmic beats of drums as men and women celebrated this significant milestone.

The inauguration of these notice boards was celebrated with fanfare and religious fervor, ensuring that they would not remain mere symbols but would be owned, embraced, and celebrated by the members of the Gram Sabha. Following the ceremony, it was decided that the CFRMC would

soon begin the process of drafting its CFR management plan and seek approval from the Gram Sabha.

After Vasundhara's intervention, and efforts of the Kalikaprased villagers in asserting their rights over their forests and taking steps towards sustainable management of their community forest resources. This milestone not only empowers the local community but also serves as an inspiration for other villages to follow suit, promoting the preservation of invaluable natural resources.

In a significant stride towards empowering forest-dwelling communities and recognizing their age-old traditions, the process of filing claims under the Community Forest Rights (CFR) provision has been initiated in 187 villages across Mayurbhanj district by Vasundhara. This encompassing effort spans 17 blocks and 35 gram panchayat areas.



CR/CFR claim making process



Vasundhara staff unites to enhance accountability at the annual meeting



The annual staff meeting of Vasundhara, took place from April 18th to 20th, 2024.

"Let us unite to enhance the organization's accountability for the cause we are dedicated to,". The three-day event brought together Vasundhara's teams and leadership to review progress, share insights, and renew their commitment to their mission.

The first day saw each thematic team allotted 30 minutes to delve into their core focus areas, impact creation, and future roadmaps. Highlights included the Forest Rights Act (FRA) Rights & Justice team outlining their strategic approaches centered on collaboration for rights recognition and advocacy. The Women Empowerment and Gender Justice team, led by Ms. Ranjita Patnaik, shed light on the challenges faced by women and their efforts through a central women's committee to assist landless women in acquiring land rights.

Mr. Krupasindhu Parida, leading the accounting team, stressed the importance of adhering to guidelines for better vision and transparency within the organization's

financial operations on the second day. Field teams also shared inspiring stories showcasing their teamwork.

A cherished tradition, the Sarhul festival, celebrating tribal culture, was led by Ms. Sushila Murmu, Anita Oram, and Priyalaxmi Majhi. The community gathered around the revered Sal tree, offering prayers and performing ritualistic dances in a joyous tribute to nature.

The third day commenced with a thorough discussion of Vasundhara's Zero Tolerance Policy, led by the executive director of Vasundhara Y. Giri Rao, who explained the causes and guidelines to prevent instances of misconduct within the organization. Ms. Aditi, joining virtually, provided a comprehensive overview of carbon credit and green credit, highlighting their significance in environmental sustainability efforts.

The meeting concluded with a cultural programme by vasundhara staff.



CFRMC federation assembles inaugural meet, charts roadmap



In a significant step towards strengthening community-driven forest governance, the regional-level Federation of Community Forest Rights Management Committees (CFRMCs) representing Bhogabadi and Tumandi Gram Panchayats of Daspalla block held its inaugural meeting in April.

The meeting saw participation from representatives of 12 villages, out of which 9 have already constituted their respective CFRMCs. The key agenda centered around establishing a robust roadmap for the federation's operations over the next year.

During the proceedings, the federation took decisive steps to solidify its institutional framework, outlining its 3Fs – Function, Functionaries, and Fund. It was unanimously agreed that the federation would convene quarterly meetings, with dates for the next three gatherings being fixed during the inaugural session.

To ensure financial sustainability and shared responsibility, the federation resolved that from the next meeting onward, every participant would contribute half a kilogram of rice, 100 grams of lentils, and

Rs 10 to pay the expenses associated with the meetings.

In a demonstration of collective decision-making, the federation elected its five officebearers unanimously for a one-year term. These representatives will spearhead the federation's activities and serve as a conduit between the individual CFRMCs and the regional collective.

Notably, representatives from each CFRMC set specific targets for the next three months, for which they will be accountable to the federation. This measure aims to foster a sense of responsibility.

The formation of this regional CFRMC federation is a significant milestone in the region's journey towards community-driven forest conservation and management. By establishing a robust institutional framework and fostering collective action, the federation aims to amplify the voices of forest-dwelling communities and empower them over forest resources.