

AUGUST 2024

IN THE LOOP



Vasundhara Newsletter, 6 th September

KIIT Square, Plot No. #1731/C, Das Mohapatra Complex, Opposite of Sai Villa PO: KIIT Campus,
Dist.: Patia Station Road, Patia, Bhubaneswar, Odisha 751024



OVERVIEW :

Jungle kutira inaugurated in Dengajhari village

On August 28, 2024, Dengajhari, Odisha's first women-led Forest Protection village, celebrated a dual milestone. Together this village received Community Rights and Community Forest Resources Rights titles under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, and inaugurated 'Jungle Kutira'; a Community Resource Centre.

This Kutira showcases the forest protection history of the village, including the story of 'Thenga Pali' or rotational patrolling done by women for forest protection, local biodiversity regeneration and traditional knowledge system

and management practices of the community. The 'Jungle Kutira' serves as an information and learning center for researchers, government officials, local children, youth, and other stakeholders.

- Jungle kutira inaugurated in Dengajhari village
- CR/CFR Claim making process
- Habitat Rights Recognition
- Traditional Shantal Cuisine on DD National
- Indigenous Day celebration at Gonashika
- Traditional seeds are under one roof





As a historic step in recognition of the community's forest conservation and management practices, the Community Rights (CR & CFR) titles were handed over to Dengajhari village (Gram Sabha). Along with Dengajhari, the District administration of Nayagarh successfully distributed 27 Community Rights (CR) and Community Forest Resource Rights (CFR) titles to Gram

Sabhas of Ranpur, Daspalla, Gania, and Nuagaon blocks in Nayagarh district. The title distribution ceremony was held at Dengajhari village under Ranpur Block which was facilitated by Vasundhara and the event was graced by the District Administration officials, UNDP as well as officials from SCSTRTI & ST & SC Development Department.

Forest rights implementation saw significant progress across Odisha with multiple districts conducting joint verification activities. Nayagarh district administration approved seven CR/CFR cases and conducted verification meetings in several villages including Charpalli, Gambharikholla, and Barpali under Ranpur tahsil, as well as Bankataila, Pehelaju,

and Takara villages. A CFR mapping training program was held at Kuchinda for Deogarh and Sambalpur districts. In contrast, Mayurbhanj district's Rairangpur tahsil carried out joint field verification of forest rights claims in Suriagada village with participation from key stakeholders including the Revenue Inspector, FRC members, and villagers.



CR/CFR claim making process



Habitat Rights; Recognition

Odisha leads the nation in recognizing Habitat Rights under the Forest Rights Act. DLCs of 5 districts have approved five habitat rights claims to four PVTGs: Paudi Bhuyan, Juang, Chakutia Bhunjia, and Saura from the month of July to August. This is one of the PVTGs in Odisha, primarily residing in Gajapati and Ganjam. Renowned for its paintings and terrace cultivation, this community embraces a rich cultural heritage that includes vibrant dance and music traditions. Through collaboration with Vasundhara, the SCSTRTI research institute has facilitated Habitat Rights for PVTGs under the Forest Rights Act. Apart from this, the District Level Committee (DLC) under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in Nuapada district has officially approved Habitat Rights for the Chuktia Bhunjia PVTG community covering 35 villages in Nuapada and Komna blocks. On August 6, 2024, the District Level Committee (DLC) of Jajpur approved



the Habitat rights of the Juanga Tribe residing in two Gram Panchayats under the Sukinda Block. Habitat Rights, a component of forest rights, aims to preserve the culture, traditional territories, wisdom, and knowledge systems linked to biodiversity.

Traditional Santhal Cuisine on DD National

Sushila Murmu from the Santhal community is set to bring tribal culinary traditions to national television through DD National's popular show "Desi Rasoi Se." The special episode, supported by Vasundhara, will highlight authentic tribal recipes named letha pitha and cooking methods passed down through generations.

"Our traditional dishes tell the story of our community's deep connection with nature," says Murmu, who will demonstrate indigenous recipes using



traditional ingredients and techniques. The episode aims to preserve and promote tribal food culture while showcasing its unique flavors to a national audience.

Indigenous day celebration at Gonashika



On August 9th, we celebrated Indigenous Peoples' Day at the Government Higher Secondary Educational Complex in Gonasika. The school principal led the programme, bringing 180 people from the community. The event included special guests like the Juanga Development Agency program manager, who shared insights about tribal community practices. During the celebration, Gonasika was named a women-friendly panchayat, with support from the Vasundhara. The event was made special by the participation of women leaders from three different Gram Panchayats, teachers from local schools, and Vasundhara staff members. Together, everyone celebrated the rich culture of Indigenous communities and helped make the day meaningful and successful.

Traditional seeds are under one roof

A Seed Fair (Seed Mela) was held during Indigenous Day celebrations to showcase traditional farming practices. Local community members gathered to display more than 60 different types of indigenous seeds that their families have preserved over generations. The collection included traditional grains like Mandia, Kangu, and Ruma, various vegetables like Pitaalu and Ladies Finger, and important medicinal plants such as Bata Pahira and Lajakulilata. Visitors were impressed by both the large variety of seeds and the community's deep knowledge about traditional farming. The fair showed how these indigenous seeds and natural farming methods help protect plant diversity, keep soil healthy, and support sustainable farming practices that have been part of the community's heritage.

