



# **POWER TO PEOPLE, POWER TO GRAM SABHA !**

**'RIGHTING WRONGS' BY WRITING RESOLUTIONS**





# HARLEM

LANGSTON HUGHES

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up  
like a resin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore--  
And then run?

Does it stink like a rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over--  
Like a syrupy sweet?

May be it just sags  
like a heavy load.

Or does it **explode**?

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PRODUCED BY: LEGAL RESOURCE CENTRE, DELHI

PUBLISHED BY: LEGAL RESOURCE CENTRE,  
DELHI & VASUNDHARA, ODISHA

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# Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the **Legal Resource Centre (LRC)** and to **Vasundhara** for facilitating this publication by acknowledging its importance to the community. Most importantly, we are indebted to Ms. Shomona Khanna for her warm and kind guidance. She has been very patient with us throughout our long journey in formulating and writing this toolkit. She has helped us understand the nuances of not just legal concepts but also improve our capability to ‘translate the essence of law’ in the language of common people.

We are also very thankful to Mr. Tushar Dash for his guidance and support since the early stages of the conception of this toolkit. Lastly, we are thankful to the forest dwelling communities, local activists, lawyers working on the ground. They have informed us about the importance of such endeavors for claiming rights and accessing justice. This toolkit would not have been possible without them.

**Sanghamitra Dubey & Puja**

Legal Resource Centre, Delhi

June, 2020

# Acronyms

- ACF** : Assistant Conservator of Forest
- CAMPA** : Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016
- COVID-19** : Corona Virus Disease - 2019
- CFR** : Community Forest Rights
- CFRR** : Community Forest Resource Rights
- DC** : District Collector
- DLC** : District Level Committee
- FRA** : The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006
- FRC** : Forest Rights Committee
- FD** : Forest Department
- GS** : Gram Sabha
- IPC** : Indian Penal Code, 1860
- ITDA** : Integrated Tribal Development Agency
- MoTA** : Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- MHA** : Ministry of Home Affairs
- PA** : Project Officer
- PESA** : Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996
- POA** : Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989
- SDLC** : Sub-Divisional Level Committee
- SLMC** : State Level Monitoring Committee
- WEO** : Welfare Extension Officer
- VLW** : Village Level Worker



# WHY AND HOW SHOULD 'WE THE PEOPLE' EXERCISE OUR POWERS?

Since the COVID-19 pandemic engulfed the entire globe, our lives have become more and more unstable and unpredictable. The impact of this pandemic on the lives of marginalized communities has been particularly harsh leading to unimaginable damages to their standards of living. In the meanwhile, the legal changes and policy actions brought during the COVID-19 lockdown period in India in relation to mining, diversion of forest land, CAMPA plantations, land banks, etc. will eventually lead to erosion of democratic space and dilution of powers of the Gram Sabhas. Media outlets have also been continuously reporting that during the lockdown violations of Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA) have increased manifold, particularly by the Forest Department. This trend of violation of constitutional rights of tribals and forest dwellers and derogation of the powers of Gram Sabhas needs to be addressed legally. It is most important to ensure that Gram Sabhas hold on to their powers. The Gram Sabha can pass resolutions denouncing these violations, and initiate the legal process for holding the bureaucratic set-up and officials accountable.

In this context, a Sample Gram Sabha Resolution has been prepared which is provided as **ANNEXURE I**. It can be used as a guide for Gram Sabhas to pass resolutions in order to protect their forest rights. In this format we are taking the example of monoculture tree plantation. However, the issue may vary in different contexts. The Sample Resolution may be altered to accommodate different facts and the ground situation. For example - if the matter is related to collection of MFP or violation of consent of Gram Sabha in context of diversion of forest land for extractive industry, then the narration and use of legal provisions of PESA and FRA may change. Also, please note that the Sample Resolution is prepared for Scheduled Areas. If a Gram Sabha is situated in a non-Scheduled Area, the Gram Sabha may simply remove the references to Fifth Schedule of the Constitution and Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA), while retaining references to all other laws.



We have also provided a Sample Covering Letter for forwarding this Resolution to the concerned authorities for necessary action (see **ANNEXURE II**). The Sample Covering Letter included here is in the format for a notice under Section 8 of Forest Rights Act. Again, this can be modified depending on the context and nature of violation.

In **ANNEXURE III**, we have provided an exhaustive list of possible legal provisions that can be used in different situations. This list will come handy while drafting any resolution because it contains provisions related to the rights of tribals and forest dwellers as well as powers of the Gram Sabha under FRA and PESA. **ANNEXURE IV** provides some important additional advice on passing Gram Sabha Resolutions, especially when addressing violations of the Forest Rights Act.

## HOW TO WRITE A GRAM SABHA RESOLUTION

Date: DD/MM/YYYY

Place : .....

Subject: Gram Sabha resolution regarding illegal [\*] plantation work carried out by [\*] Forest Department officials in [\*] (mention location/place)

We are Gram Sabha members of [\*] Village, [\*] Panchayat, [\*] Block, [\*] District. This Gram Sabha meeting is being convened on [\*]DD/MM/YYYY (date), at [\*] (specify location/place/village), in the presence of [\*] Gram Sabha members (specify number of people present which must be eligible quorum), including [\*] (specify numbers) women. This Gram Sabha is specially being convened to discuss and decide upon the issue of illegal [\*] plantation by the Forest Department.

We had filed individual forest rights (IFR) claim in the year YYYY which was recognized and vested in the year YYYY under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA). In the year, YYYY we also filed our community forest rights (CFR) claim. That claim is still pending final decision before the SDLC/ DLC. We are dependent on the community forest land for minor forest produce and other valuable resources (such as, medicinal plants) found in the forest which are important for our survival and livelihood. The forests are also of vital importance to our cultural and spiritual identity and survival.

On DD/MM/YYYY (specify date), Forest Department officials started digging our claimed CFR land in forest within the jurisdiction of our Gram Sabha. When they were asked about the purpose of digging the land, we were told that the land will be used for plantation of trees.

[\*] (Apart from that provide further details if available such as, the names of the officers who said this and so on. In particular, if there was any threat of violence, verbal abuse, physical or sexual violence).

No consent has been taken from our Gram Sabha for this plantation, and therefore it is a violation of Fifth Schedule of Constitution, PESA, 1996 and FRA, 2006. The concerned officers of Forest Department are liable to be charged under provisions of POA Act, 1989 as well as IPC for preventing the use of community forest land and resources by doing illegal plantation, the use of force and verbal abuse against our Gram Sabha members. The Gram Sabha is of the view that the Forest Department officials are liable for action under the relevant laws, including Section 7 and 8 of the FRA, 2006 and Section 3 of the POA Act, 1989.

Therefore, this Gram Sabha resolves that illegal action of the Forest Department related to plantation of trees and abuse against the rights holders under FRA should cease immediately, failing which the Gram Sabha will take all necessary legal action open to it, including filing an FIR against the concerned officials under POA Act, 1989. The Gram Sabha also resolves to give notice to the State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC) to conduct an inquiry against Forest Department officials under section 8 of the FRA, 2006 read with Rule 10 (d) of FR Rules, 2008.

It is further resolved that a copy of this Resolution should be sent to the State Level Monitoring Committee, Office of the Hon'ble Governor, District Collector [\*] (Name of District), Assistant Conservator of Forest, Forest Department (ACF, FD), Project Officer - Integrated Tribal Development Agency (PA-ITDA), Welfare Extension Officer (WEO), Village Level Worker(VLW), Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, and Secretary Tribal Department, Government of Odisha requiring necessary action on their behalf to stop illegal tree plantation and take necessary disciplinary action against the forest department officials responsible for these illegal actions.

**NAME AND SIGNATURES/THUMB IMPRESSIONS OF GRAM SABHA MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING:**

- 1.
- 2.
3. ....

**NOTE 1 :** This Gram Sabha meeting has been conducted in accordance with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) guidelines and directives regarding physical distancing and other safety considerations, such as wearing face covering and sanitizing hands.

**NOTE 2 :** Clarifications regarding the use of symbols and short hands:

1. [\*] stands for blank space where details of a specific case or an incidence can be filled
2. DD/MM/YYYY- stands for date, month, year in a sequence, which can be specified
3. YYYY- stands for year, which can be specified

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## HOW TO WRITE A COVERING LETTER

To,

The Chief Secretary-cum-Chairman  
State Level Monitoring Committee,  
[City, State]

Subject: Notice issued under Sec. 8 to the State Level Monitoring Committee for conducting proceedings against violations under Sec. 7 of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA 2006).

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

We the undersigned write to you on behalf of [\*](Provide name of the Gram Sabha/village) Gram Sabha as mandated by its resolution dated DD/MM/YY [\*](Provide Gram Sabha resolution as an Annexure to the notice) with great concern and grievance to draw your sincere attention to a matter that that requires your urgent perusal and action.

[\*] (Provide a brief outline of the incident/ situation)

The actions of the concerned officials [\*] (write the name and post of officials and department) are in violation of the Fifth Schedule of Constitution of India, Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA), Section 7 of FRA 2006, Section 3 of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (POA Act, 1989) as well as Indian Penal Code (IPC) and also other laws. [\*] (For more details please see Annexure II: Extracted provisions from FRA, PESA and POA)

Therefore, 60 (sixty) days notice is hereby issued to the State Level Monitoring Committee under Sec. 8 of the Forest Rights Act to take cognizance of acts mentioned above of the above-stated officials which constitute an offense under Sec. 7 of the Forest Rights Act for violations of the above stated sections of the Forest Rights Act and Rules and various provisions of the Constitution and other laws to conduct an inquiry into the conduct of the concerned department officials [\*] (write name of the official and their department).

## Signed:

1. President of Gram Sabha
2. Secretary of Forest Rights Committee
3. Any other members (President of Youth committee, President of Mahila Samiti etc)

## Copy sent to:

1. State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC),
2. Office of the Hon'ble Governor,
3. District Collector (DC),
4. Assistant Conservator of Forests, Forest Department (ACF, FD)
5. Project Officer - Integrated Tribal Development Agency (PA-ITDA),
6. Welfare Extension Officer (WEO),
7. Village Level Worker(VLW)
8. Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), Government of India
9. Secretary Tribal Department, Government of Odisha.

### **NOTE** : Clarifications regarding the use of symbols and short hands :

1. [\*] stands for blank space where details of a specific case or an incidence can be filled
2. DD/MM/YYYY - stands for date, month, year in a sequence, which can be specified
3. YYYY- stands for year, which can be specified

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## EXTRACTED PROVISIONS FROM FRA & PESA

### A. Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA)

#### *1. Right and responsibility to protect, regenerate, conserve and manage forests*

a) Preamble of the FRA recognizes rights and puts responsibility on the forest dwellers for “conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological balance resulting in strengthening of conservation regime”. It also links livelihood and food security of the forest dwellers with community based conservation practices, recognizing that forest dwellers are an integral part of the forest ecosystem.

b) Section 3(1)(i) provides forest right to protect, regenerate, conserve and manage community forest resources which the community has been traditionally protecting and conserving for traditional use.

c) Section 3(1)(k) provides forest right to access biodiversity and community right to intellectual property and traditional knowledge related to biodiversity and cultural diversity.

d) Section 5 provides the power and responsibility to the Gram Sabha to protect preserve and manage the biodiversity, natural resources, wildlife and water sources in its CFR, and also its cultural and spiritual resources, and to prevent any activity that causes harm to these resources.

e) Rule 4(1)(e) gives power to the Gram Sabha to constitute committees for the protection of wildlife, forest and biodiversity.



f) **Rule 4(1)(f)** gives power to the Gram Sabha to monitor and control these committees which are entrusted with the duty to prepare conservation and management plan for community forest resources. Gram Sabha also has the power to integrate such plans with the working plans of the forest department while making modifications in the plan.

## ***2. Recognition, vesting of rights and consent of the Gram Sabha for diversion of land -***

a) **Preamble of FRA** lays down the intention behind legislating and enforcing this Act which is to undo the historical injustice committed against tribal and other traditional forest dwelling community by recognizing and vesting rights of those who have been residing in jungles but their rights could not be recorded. This law recognizes that the forest dwellers have been wronged and are presently being wronged because of the non-recognition and vesting of rights in them, therefore, in order to make the process of recognition and vesting easier, Gram Sabhas have been given authority to decide about the vesting of claims.

b) **Section 4(5)** says that -the forest dwellers (ST and OTFD) cannot be removed from forest land till the process of recognition and vesting is complete. This again reminds us that forest dwellers cannot be removed from forest land which they occupy unless entire process of rights recognition under FRA 2006 and FR Rules 2008 is complete.

c) **Section 5** says that the ST and OTFD and Gram Sabha have the power to protect the wild life, forest and biodiversity. They have the duty to ensure that adjoining catchment areas, water sources and other ecological sensitive areas are adequately protected. They also have the power to ensure that the habitat of ST and OTFD is preserved from any form of destructive practices affecting their cultural and natural heritage. And most importantly, the Gram Sabha should ensure that the decision taken in the Gram Sabha to regulate access to community forest resources and stop any activity which adversely affects the wild animals, forest and the biodiversity are complied with.

Therefore, any decision about the diversion of land for any purpose cannot be made without the consent of the Gram Sabha as it is the ultimate authority to decide upon any activity affecting the forest, use of forest land and community forest resources.

**d) Free, prior, informed consent:** Forest land cannot be diverted without taking the free, prior and informed consent of Gram Sabha. The Supreme Court in the Niyamgiri case<sup>1</sup>, has observed that Gram Sabha will consider the diversion of land in a specially convened meeting after the rights recognition and vesting process is over.

The Forest Department is also obliged to seek consent from the Gram Sabha for plantation work because Gram Sabha has the power to self-govern the community forests and resources under FRA and process provided under FRA for taking consent should be followed.

### ***3. Penal Provisions under FRA for violation of rights and processes :***

**a) Section 7** says that if any “authority, or committee or officer or member of such authority or committee contravenes any provision” of FRA, 2006 or FR Rules, 2008 then they will be deemed to be guilty of a criminal offense under FRA, shall be liable for inquiry and shall be punished with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees.

**b) Section 8** says that any court can take cognizance of an offense under section 7 of the FRA, 2006 when the Gram Sabha passes a resolution against the errant authority, gives a notice of not less than 60 days to the State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC), and the SLMC does not proceed and conduct an inquiry against such authority.

**c) Rule 10 (d)** says that after the receipt of notice under section 8 of the FRA, the SLMC has a duty to take appropriate action against the concerned authorities under FRA.

<sup>1</sup>Orissa Mining Corporation vs. Ministry of Environment and Forests & Ors. (2013) 6 SCC 476.

## B. Additional provisions for Gram Sabha falling under the Fifth Schedule areas governed by PESA

1. PESA vests the control, management and governance of forests and resources in the hands of local tribal communities. PESA also intends to reduce impoverishment, food insecurity, malnutrition and out-migration among tribal populations by providing them better control and management of natural resources which will improve their livelihood and standard of life. Equally important is the recognition that for tribal communities, their economic, social and cultural connection to their lands and forest resources are integral to their identity.

2. Section 4(d) of PESA says that the Gram Sabha is competent to safeguard among other things the community resources. Apart from that, the Gram Sabha has the power to control, plan and manage minor water bodies (section 4 (j)), minor forest produce (section 4 m (ii)) and resources (section 4 m (vii)).

3. In the Fifth Schedule areas it is important that the provisions regarding the powers and duties of Gram Sabhas under FRA and PESA are read together for effective implementation of these laws. It will also result in effectively practicing decentralized democracy in the Fifth Schedule areas, resulting in greater autonomy for the tribal communities which has been a long standing demand of the tribal communities living in scheduled areas.

These provisions under PESA read with the above-mentioned provisions under FRA provide that the conservation, management and protection of forest and forest resources are intrinsically tied with the autonomy and self-governance rights of the tribal and forest dwelling communities. It is also very important to underline here that forest, forest resources, wildlife and forest dwellers together form a 'whole', any deviance from this would mean misery for forest dwellers and devastation for forests.

## C. SC/ ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989

1. **Section 3 (1) (g)** makes wrongful dispossession of forest dwellers from their land or premises, interference with their enjoyment of rights, including forest rights over any land; destruction of crops; and taking away the produce from them, a criminal act which is cognizable and nonbailable offense, with no remedy of anticipatory bail.

2. This criminal act is punishable with a minimum of six months imprisonment, which can extend to five years imprisonment and fine. In case of government officials (public servants) and repeat offenders, the minimum punishment can be enhanced to one year.

[**Note** : Other sub-sections of Section 3 can also be invoked depending on the crime committed against persons of SC/ST community.]

3. Violations under this law also require the state authorities to pay monetary compensation to the victims, which is done in tranches as provided under the law. Upon registration of FIR, for example, 25% of the compensation has to be immediately paid to the persons affected by the crime.

4. Where a public servant has committed the offence under this Act, it is also professional misconduct, requiring disciplinary action including suspension, dismissal from service, or other punishments.

For a detailed discussion, please see Use of the Prevention of Atrocities Act to Advance Rights: A Handbook by Gayatri Raghunandan, available at [https://www.fra.org.in/document/PoA\\_FRA\\_2019.pdf](https://www.fra.org.in/document/PoA_FRA_2019.pdf)

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## **IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL ADVICE**

### **Advise on copying the petition /resolution:**

- If Gram Sabha is addressing the letter to the Tribal Secretary then copy of the petition/resolution must be sent to **District Collector/PA-ITDA** .
- If Gram Sabha is addressing the letter to Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) then copy of the petition/resolution must be sent to **Chief Secretary of the respective state**.

### **Important things to be kept in mind:**

- 1) The resolution must be written in the Gram Sabha register maintained for this purpose.
- 2) The resolution must have a number, date and place of resolution very clearly mentioned on the top.
- 3) The quorum of Gram Sabha, the number of women members present during the meeting must be specifically mentioned.
- 4) The subject matter of Gram Sabha meeting and resolution must be specifically and explicitly mentioned.
- 5) The decision taken or recommendations given by the Gram Sabha must be clearly stated.
- 6) The demand or query to any authority for action must be clearly mentioned.

7) Whole Gram Sabha resolution should be read out loud to the members of the Gram Sabha present and voting.

8) The signatures or thumb marks of Gram Sabha members present in the meeting should be clearly marked in front of their names with this declaration or resolution.

9) Covering letter and Resolution should be sent to the concerned authorities by REGISTERED POST, and the postal receipts kept safely in the Gram Sabha Register for follow-up. This is very important. If postal services have not resumed in your village, please send the Covering letter and Resolution by courier or from a nearby village/ town where postal services have started.

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## ABOUT

### LEGAL RESOURCE CENTRE (LRC)

LRC is a resource centre for strengthening legal knowledge, capacities and strategies relating to rights of adivasis in India, through multi-pronged and inter-disciplinary approaches to law. This includes academic and action-oriented legal research, case support, capacity development, knowledge production and development of curricula for law universities. LRC locates itself firmly at the intersection of professional legal practice and social movements. The areas of practice and intervention of LRC cover constitutional law, laws relating to land and forests, environmental law, criminal law, administrative law, human rights, among others.

While academics can provide theoretical imagination to lawyers and activists, they are also forced to politicize and pragmatize their theories. Alongside, activism thoroughly benefits from critical lawyering, and lawyering (especially one that is bound in traditional notions) benefits from activism in social movements in order to make the legal system a safer space for marginalized communities. At LRC, a fusion of these three pockets of socio-legal communities is considered necessary for any comprehensive reform of the political and has been implemented in any project that we have undertaken to do. Since it formally commenced activities in July 2017, the LRC has attempted to be just such a space, bringing together lawyers, academics and activists who are committed to ensuring social justice for the marginalised in general, and for adivasi an forest dwelling communities in particular.

For practical purposes, we are located in the law office of a practicing lawyer in the Supreme Court at New Delhi. However, LRC is also located in the people who constitute it, thereby having a peripatetic outreach in various states such as, Bhubaneshwar in Odisha, Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh, with outposts in Bangalore and Patna. In coming months, it is expected that these extensions and outposts will be further strengthened, and new areas will be reached.

# What does LRC do?

## **(a) Monitoring of evolving laws and precedent**

LRC monitors various constitutional courts and tribunals where litigations around adivasi and forest rights are ongoing, collating this information for further use as and when required. A nascent jurisprudence evolving around the FRA in particular is being closely observed. Where important developments are taking place/ anticipated, care is taken to alert social movements working on these issues in a timely manner.

Parallel to the monitoring of developments inside the justice system, as a natural corollary, LRC is also monitoring developments in the law in the form of legislative changes, through guidelines and executive instructions, as well as in the form of procedural changes.

## **(b) Capacity building of lawyers at the District and High Courts**

LRC's endeavour is to promote access to justice under the FRA by building capacities and networks of lawyers and legally trained activists capable and willing to provide support in cases of rights violations under the law. The emergence of a rich body of case law under the FRA between 2006 and today demonstrates that the rights under this legislation are being regularly asserted and creatively interpreted. New spaces for strategic intervention within the administration as well as in semi-autonomous bodies has also meant there is an increased role to be played by lawyers who are located at the District centres, where many of these official bodies are to be found. At the same time, given that there are enormous structural obstructions to the advancement of rights of marginalised communities, it is important to be prepared in advance for future challenges before appellate courts/ authorities. Providing training and training resources to lawyers and legally trained activists at the district level is, therefore, a pivotal activity of LRC.



- **Training resources:** The lawyers and researchers at LRC are also available as resource persons/ trainers for other institutions and organisations (grassroots organisations, law universities, tribal research institutions, state line departments, and other institutions) who may require such support from time to time on specific issues.
- **Curricula development:** An important long term goal of LRC is to provide technical support to universities, law colleges, and judicial training institutions to develop curricula in law and praxis around adivasi and forest dwellers rights. Towards this end, LRC has collaborated with leading law universities to prepare teaching modules for undergraduate law courses on a variety of subjects, including constitutional law, property law, civil law, criminal law, international law, and the law of torts. These teaching modules have generated considerable enthusiasm and interest.

### **(c) Research, documentation and development of analysis**

LRC is engaged in legal research, analysis and support in the nature of academic and doctrinal endeavours. This is done through the medium of articles, books, chapters, legal briefs and IEC publications. This literature is on a variety of subject matters pertaining to the areas of LRC's work and is targeted at different audiences.

### **(d) Advocacy, legal reform, litigation and legal intervention**

LRC provides legal advice, strategy inputs, and research support for a variety of grassroots organisations, district level lawyers, activists and other concerned individuals. LRC also provides assistance with drafting of pleadings, in order to ensure creation of court records which will be valuable in the short term as well as in the longer term.

Since LRC comprises of both lawyers and non-lawyers, the advice provided, while being grounded on sound legal principles, is also practical and attentive to detail. Whether it was the sustained advocacy regarding the Compensatory Afforestation Act and its proposed Rules, the Draft Forest Policy 2018, creation of land banks, or amendments to the 2013 LARR, LRC has remained fully engaged and provided comprehensive inputs to activists engaged in advocacy around these issues.

## Where is LRC going?

In the coming months, LRC will take the first step towards establishing an advisory body which can guide and course correct, and most importantly, enable rapid responses to evolving trends in law and process. Such consolidation will be crucial to prevent LRC from wavering in the ebb and flow that is the natural concomitant of legal interventions, from frittering away its accomplishments on the one hand, and despairing its inevitable failures on the other.

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## ABOUT

### VASUNDHARA

Vasundhara, Odisha is an action research & policy advocacy organisation working on natural resources governance, conservation and sustainable livelihoods. Founded in 1991, Vasundhara was registered in 1992 as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. We began with a focus to support and strengthen self-initiated community forestry groups, conserving and managing community forests in the state of Odisha. Our constant efforts have been towards highlighting the critical role that forests play in sustaining rural livelihoods. Our focus has been to facilitate the reflection of livelihood interests of forest dependent communities, especially women, in government policies and also to create an environment in which the primary owners and users of forests are economically and politically empowered to have exclusive control over their lives and livelihoods.

Over the years, our work with communities has expanded to have greater focus on rights of tribal and other forest dependent communities on community forest rights as envisaged under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 or FRA. We have also focused on assessing the impact of community conservation initiatives on mitigating and adapting to climate change.

#### What does Vasundhara do?

##### **Mission**

Sustainable development with an emphasis on empowerment of the rural poor, to further social justice and equity.

##### **Core Values**

- Conservation
- Sustainable
- Democratisation of natural resources governance
- Social justice & equity
- Inclusion of voices of the poor
- Political involvement of the marginalised section
- Women's rights at the centre of all our work

## **Role**

We see our role as a process facilitator and catalyst in developing a supportive and enabling environment for community based natural resources governance. Equally important is our role in building local capacities to strive for changes in the direction of sustainability and democratisation of natural resources governance and socially just and ecologically sustainable development.

## **Where is Vasundhara going?**

Networking, learning from each other, and strong feedback loops are critical in improving the efficacy of those who would like to see a more just and democratic society. With this in mind, Vasundhara continues to consolidate the work and interventions in different areas, with a focus on collaborative learning processes at different scales with different actors. As reflective practitioners, we would like our learning to feed into other social processes more directly. We also strive to play a greater role in fostering learning, reflection, and critique amongst civil society actors.

## **Contact us**

### **Vasundhara**

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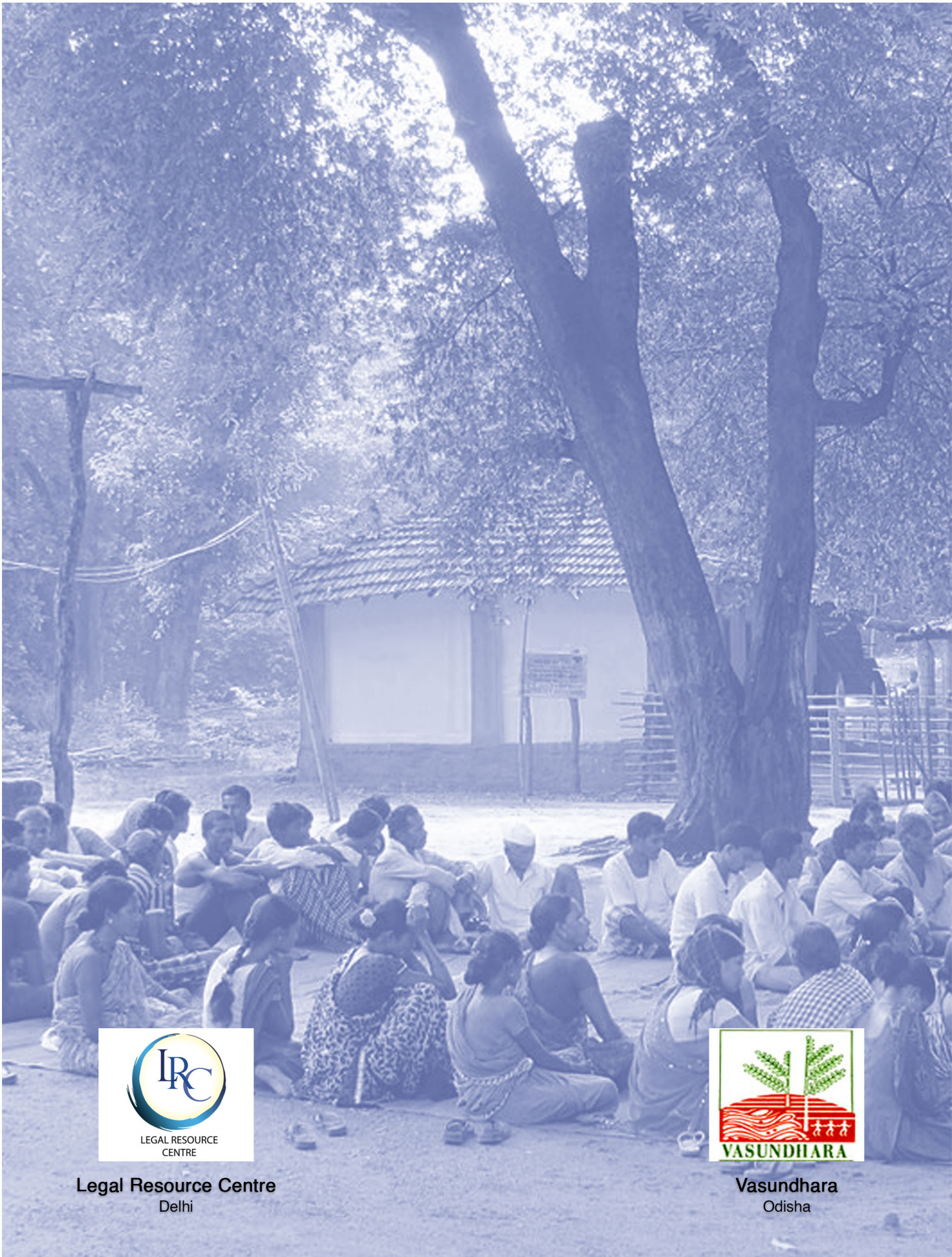
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