



Pathalgarhi Movement

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Why in News

Recently, the Union government withdrew amendments to the **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006** which would have diluted tribal rights over forests. These amendments evoked sustained protests by tribal and environmental activists.

- The state government of **Jharkhand** tried to amend the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908** and **Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act, 1876** to facilitate easier land acquisition norms which added to the problem. They were also withdrawn later on.
- However, these decisions gave rise to the **Pathalgarhi incidents** in the tribal belt demanding implementation of the FRA and provisions of the **Panchayats (Extension of Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996**.
- **Birsa Munda's** struggle against the exploitation and discrimination against tribals led to the passing of the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act in 1908** which restricted the passing of land from the tribal people to non-tribals.
- The **Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act, 1876** prohibits the sale of Adivasi land to non-Adivasis in Santhal Pargana region along Jharkhand's border with Bengal.

Pathalgarhi Rebellion

- It is a **protest** in which tribal people embed stone slabs (pathals) on the outskirts of a village or area, demarcating the limits of where their writ runs, prohibiting the entry of any institution connected to the state.
- It is mainly concentrated in the four districts in the State— namely **Khunti, Gumla, Simdega and West Singhbhum**.
- In Munda tribal custom, placement of a huge stone marks the death of a person. The Pathalgarhi movement draws on this tradition of honouring the community's ancestors.

The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Area) Act, 1996

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- It **safeguards and preserves** the traditions and customs of the people, and their cultural identity, community resources, customary mode of dispute resolution.
 - PESA **empowers** Gram Sabha/Panchayat at an appropriate level with the right to mandatory consultation in land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced persons.
 - It seeks to **reduce alienation** in tribal areas as they will have better control over the utilisation of public resources.
 - It will help **minimise exploitation** of tribal population as they will be able to control and manage money lending, consumption and sale of liquor and also village markets.
 - It **promotes cultural heritage** through the preservation of traditions, customs and cultural identity of tribal population.

Source: TH