



Violation of Forest Rights Act in Madhya Pradesh

Why in News?

[The Ministry of Tribal Affairs \(MoTA\)](#) took cognizance of petitions and complaints from 52 villages regarding **non-recognition of forest rights** and forceful eviction attempts around **the Rani Durgavati Tiger Reserve** in Madhya Pradesh.

Key Points

- **Restrictions and MoTA's Directive:**
 - The villagers alleged that after the notification of Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve in September 2023, forest rights claims were denied, and forceful relocations occurred, **violating [the Forest Rights Act \(FRA\) 2006](#) and [Wildlife Protection Act \(WLPA\) 1972](#)**.
 - Villagers claimed restrictions on accessing forest resources, produce, and farms.
 - MoTA's letter emphasized that **denying communities their rights is a violation** and advised that the issues be resolved in consultation with state forest departments, and district collectors.
 - The letter was also directed to the [National Commission for Scheduled Tribes](#), district collectors, and [the National Tiger Conservation Authority](#) for appropriate action and safeguarding community interests.
- **Legal Framework for Relocation:**
 - The Wildlife Protection Act allows the **creation of 'inviolable' areas for [tiger conservation](#)**, but only after recognizing and settling the [rights of tribal and forest-dwelling communities](#).
 - **Relocation of villagers can only occur voluntarily** after their rights are recognized, in accordance with both FRA and WLPA.
 - MoTA stressed the importance of [Gram Sabha](#) **consent and community participation in relocation decisions** for critical wildlife habitats.

The Forest Rights Act, 2006

- It was introduced to formally recognise and grant forest rights and occupation in **forest lands** to **forest-dwelling [Scheduled Tribes](#)** and other traditional forest dwellers who have resided in these forests for generations, even though their rights had not been officially documented.
- It aimed to **address the historical injustices** faced by forest-dwelling communities due to the forest management policies of colonial and post-colonial India, which failed to acknowledge their **long-standing symbiotic relationship with the forests**.
- Additionally, the Act sought to **empower forest dwellers** by enabling them to access and utilise forest resources sustainably, promote biodiversity and ecological balance, and protect them from unlawful evictions and displacement.

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

- It provides a legal framework for the **protection of various species of wild animals and plants**, management of their habitats, regulation, and control of trade in wild animals, plants, and

products made from them.

- The act also **lists schedules of plants and animals that are afforded varying degrees of protection and monitoring** by the government.
- India's entry to the [CITES \(Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora\)](#) was made easier by the Wildlife Act.

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