

After the abrogation of Article 370 the government has finally decided to extend the benefits of Forest Right Act 2006 in Jammu and Kashmir.

FRA 2006 recognises the rights of forest dwellers over the forests. These rights enable them to own land, utilise minor forest produce etc. However, the tribal activists are sceptical about the implementation of the act because :-

(i) Delayed implementation about a year later raises questions about the political motivation of the government.

(ii) Conflict with Roshni Act - which earlier provided forest/land right to many tribals has been declared null and void, and making a way for forceful eviction.

(iii) stereotypes about tribes - Gujjar &

Bakarwads are perceived as intruder
& encroachers who can disturb the
demography of the region.

(iv) low awareness among the tribe about
the act, and they also lack the capacity
to enforce these rights in the courts.

(v) No timeline - unlike the rest of
India where 2005 is a date of settlement,
there is no such provision in case of
J&K.

PRA, 2006 is the revolutionary
legislation to empower these people
who remained historically marginalised.

Government need to build trust
with transparency & openness and with
the participation of civil society groups.