

Karnataka's Jenukuruba Community Fights for Forest Rights

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In a significant development in Karnataka, 52 families from the Jenukuruba community are actively seeking their forest rights as outlined in the Forest Rights Act of 2006. These families have relocated to the AtturKolli forest area under the K. Badaga Gram Panchayat in Ponnampet Taluk, located within the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve, to press for their claims.

According to Shri Durgadas Uikey, the Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs, the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, rests with the state governments. Currently, provisions of this act are being executed across 20 states and one union territory. In Karnataka, the state government reported a total of 52 claims filed by Jenukuruba families, out of which 39 have been rejected at the Gram Sabha level due to insufficient evidence. The remaining 13 claims are still under review.

Following the rejection of their claims by the Sub-Divisional Level Committee (SDLC) due to similar reasons, the affected families have escalated the matter by filing a writ petition

in the High Court of Karnataka. The SDLC's decision was reached during a meeting on May 22, 2025, where all 39 claims were dismissed again for lack of adequate evidence.

The families are currently residing in the AtturKolli area, and the State Tribal Welfare Department has requested local forest officials to halt any eviction efforts until the legal matters are resolved. The situation emphasizes the ongoing struggle of tribal communities to secure their rights to the land and resources they have traditionally inhabited.

The state has also released statistics on the claims related to the Jenukuruba community, highlighting that:

Individual Claims Overview

- Total Applications Received: 5,993
- Title Deeds Distributed: 1,680
- Claims Rejected: 3,953
- Pending Claims: 360

Community Claims Overview

- Total Applications Received: 139
- Title Deeds Distributed: 72
- Claims Rejected: 50
- Pending Claims: 17

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been proactive in [administering](#) the Forest Rights Act, providing guidelines and conducting discussions with state officials and civil society groups. These efforts aim to enhance the implementation of the Act and ensure that the rights of tribal communities are safeguarded while promoting conservation efforts. The Forest Rights Act recognizes the rights of Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers to live on and utilize forest land for their livelihood. This includes community rights over customary forests and access to biodiversity, thereby allowing these communities to engage in conservation practices that reinforce their cultural ties to the land.

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