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Parliamentary panel demands stricter implementation of land acquisition law to protect tribal rights

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development has urged the government to fully enforce the Land Acquisition Act of 2013 without dilution



By Pratul Sharma | Updated: December 18, 2025 15:52 IST



The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, headed by Lok Sabha MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka, has called for strict and full implementation of the land acquisition law, warning against dilution of safeguards for tribal, forest and coastal communities.

The committee stressed that the law— Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013— must be implemented “in its entirety and true spirit”, especially in Scheduled Areas.

In a major recommendation, the panel asked for strengthening the role of the Gram Sabha by making its consent mandatory for all land acquisitions, not just in Scheduled Areas. The panel also proposed giving Gram Sabhas the power to reject land acquisition proposals that do not align with local development needs.

Highlighting gaps in tribal protection, the committee asked the government to strictly enforce provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, or PESA. It recommended that Gram Sabha consent be formally built into land acquisition procedures and linked to the Social Impact Assessment process.

The report also called for closer integration between the land acquisition law and the Forest Rights Act, 2006. It said land acquisition in forest areas should not proceed until forest rights are recognised and written consent is obtained from the Gram Sabha.

On compensation, the panel recommended that land acquisition in tribal and Scheduled Areas should account not only for land value but also for the loss of livelihoods. It said rehabilitation and resettlement should be completed before any physical displacement, including the provision of housing sites, basic services such as roads, drinking water and schools, and protection of community resources.

The committee urged the Centre to strengthen the National Monitoring Committee for Rehabilitation and Resettlement and to establish a centralised grievance redressal mechanism.

It also called for strict monitoring to prevent manipulation of land classification and misuse of procedural exemptions.

Special recommendations were made for sensitive regions and large projects. In Lakshadweep and Great Nicobar, the panel said all livelihood-dependent users, including fishers and forest gatherers, must be recognised as affected families, even where land is recorded as government or forest land. For major projects such as the Ken–Betwa inter-basin water transfer and the Polavaram project, the committee asked for comprehensive social impact assessments covering all affected communities before any further action.

In a significant proposal, the panel recommended the creation of a statutory land acquisition, rehabilitation and resettlement authority and suggested introducing a community profit-sharing mechanism. Under this, affected communities would receive either a share in project equity or a portion of project revenues for at least fifteen years, in addition to existing compensation.