

# NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON FOREST ISSUES

A three-day National Consultation on forest issues took place in New Delhi from December 11-13, 2024. Over 200 delegates representing grassroots organizations, experts, lawyers, and civil society from 20 states participated. Discussions focused on the Forest Rights Act's implementation, on-the-ground challenges, decentralized forest governance, and empowering Gram Sabhas and communities. The consultation aimed to build a strong, democratic forest governance system through collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including Parliamentarians.

The Panels were designed to encourage thematic sharing covering-

- background & context setting,
- state-specific sharings,
- changing landscapes & emerging challenges,
- democratising forest governance,
- constitutional & legal framework
- interface with Parliamentarians

*"The pace of FRA implementation continues to be slow-paced in the State. It is being taken forward only in schedule areas, community rights claims are being rejected without due reasons among other on-ground challenges"*

- Madhullika, Rajasthan



In Photos: (top) Panelists sharing state-level updates for Jammu, Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Assam, Mizoram, and Sikkim  
(bottom) Panel discussion on interface with Parliamentarians



These comprehensive discussions helped highlight a thorough understanding of present challenges and opportunities for advancing Forest Rights on ground.

The platform facilitated extensive dialogue on vital forest issues encompassing community rights over natural resources, democratising forest governance, social and ecological justice, the pivotal role of women in forest conservation, and the powers and wide range of responsibilities of the Gram Sabhas over their natural resources.

The sessions gave insights into the complex relationship between the changing legal frameworks, forest conservation and management, and rights of indigenous communities, as well as emerging challenges being faced in the due implementation.

The discussions at the Consultation tabled suggestions and recommendations, including producing and disseminating research and knowledge, building chapters & networks at the state and national level, facilitating experiential sharings through workshops, trainings, local-level conferences, exposure visits, and building collective insights through public consultations involving stakeholders at all levels.

***“I express my solidarity and firm resolve to take forward the recommendations of the Consultation.”***

*- Shri Bhuvaneshwar Kalita, Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment, Forests & Climate Change*



*In Photo: The Consultation was attended by Chairperson of the Standing Committee on S&T, Environment, Forests & Climate Change alongside, Members of Parliament, leaders of collectives & fellows*