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Regional Media Briefing Workshop

THE FIGHT OVER A RIGHT

How forest communities are using the Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRR) provision in the FRA to reclaim their ownership rights

September 22-23, 2022, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Kandhamal

Loyendia and **Kamtana** villages of Kandhamal district of Odisha got Community Forest Resource Rights titles in 2012.

The picture for both villages has changed since then



Petra Kanhara, founder of Loyendia

Loyendia

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- Loyendia got CFRR and CR in 2012 over 500 hectares
- The locals worked for a private bamboo mill.
- It was given the contract by Orissa Forest Development Corporation (OFDC)
- The bamboo-cutter of Loyendia barely earned Rs 30 a day.
- The bamboo mill was selling the bamboo worth lakhs for mere Rs 180 per tonne.
- The forest was being degraded due to constant exploitation



Kamtana

- Kamtana got CFRR in 2012, shortly after Loyendia.
- The forest around Kamtana had been completely degraded due to forest department's tree-oriented management
- Lot of herbs, shrubs, tubers and mushrooms had vanished from the forest near Kamtana
- The residents were unable to collect forest produce without greasing the palms of the forest officials.



After getting FRA

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- The bamboo forests in Loyendia have regenerated because of traditional forest management. They have 500 bushes with 100 stalks now.
- In Kamtana, the locals have managed to regenerate the local herbs, tubers and mushrooms
- They have formed a CFMC and the interference of Van Suraksha Samiti (VSS) has stopped
- The locals are now freely able to collect MFP from the forest and earn extra income by selling



- The locals of Loyendia are in the process of monetizing bamboo and timber at a reasonable price, and in a reasonable limit.
- The money from the sale of bamboos will go to the CFMC for forest conservation.
- Locals of Kamtana sell the excess forest produce in the local market, making additional income besides farming.
- They have also started process MFP, like mahua, chironji, medicinal herbs etc, which they could not earlier.



Economic benefits

- Unlike other FRA villages, these two have not seen huge economic boom.
- Local women of Kamtata earned Rs 2000/- in 6 months selling MFP
- Locals still have to rely on independent buyers to sell tendu patta, bamboo, sal-leaf, mahua etc.
- But the prevention of degradation of the forest has paved a way to capitalize the MFP in future



Way Ahead

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The two villages are still facing economic hardships despite getting CFRR.

- Loyendia village is still a forest village despite getting the title in 2012.
- It lacks amenities like schools, hospitals and electricity. Residents of the village have raised the demand to be turned into a revenue village.
- Kamtana, though a revenue village, still does not have proper linkages to the market. They don't get good rates for MFP
- Phulbani MLA Angad Kanhar said that he will bring up the two issues in the local Legislative Assembly sessions so that the locals of the two villages can lead better lives

