

The Forest Community's Rights and Livelihood Stack — What a Non-PVTG Tribal Forest Household Can Access

This note is for NGOs and field workers operating with Scheduled Tribe communities in Odisha's five forested tribal districts — Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Koraput, and Kandhamal — and in forested blocks of other tribal districts. It covers the specific stack of rights and...

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This note is distinct from the Dongria Kondh convergence note. That note covers PVTGs — the 75 most vulnerable tribal communities nationally, with PM-JANMAN as the primary scheme. This note covers the much larger universe of general Scheduled Tribe communities that are forest-dwelling, outside the PVTG classification, and have a different but equally rich set of rights and schemes available to them.

The Population This Note Serves

Odisha has 62 Scheduled Tribe communities totalling approximately 95 lakh persons — 22.85% of the state's population (Census 2011). Of these, 13 are PVTGs (approximately 8.66 lakh persons covered by PM-JANMAN). The remaining 51 ST communities — approximately 86 lakh persons — are not PVTGs but many live in forested or semi-forested areas and depend on forest produce, shifting cultivation, or NTFP collection.

These communities are eligible for the Forest Rights Act, PESA gram sabha protections, TRIFED MSP for Minor Forest Produce, CAMPA employment, VB-G RAM G forest-linked employment, and all general SC/ST welfare schemes. They are not eligible for PM-JANMAN (PVTG-specific) but are eligible for PMJUGA (which covers all tribal majority villages).

Layer 1 — Land and Forest Rights (The Foundation of Everything)

Individual Forest Rights (IFR) Under FRA Section 3(1)(a)

The Forest Rights Act, 2006 grants forest-dwelling ST households the right to own, cultivate, and use forest land they have been occupying for generations — even if that land was never formally given a patta document. The IFR title is the legal recognition of cultivation rights that already exist in practice.

What an IFR title provides:

- Legal land title in the household's name (typically 2-4 acres per household, up to 4 hectares maximum)
- Legal protection from eviction without due process
- The land record that unlocks PM-KISAN, CM-KISAN, Kisan Credit Card (KCC), PMFBY crop insurance, and PMAY-G housing

This is the single most important document for a forest-dwelling tribal family. Without it, they cultivate but cannot prove they farm. Every agricultural scheme that requires "land records" is inaccessible. With it, the full agricultural scheme stack opens.

How to apply: File Form A (IFR application) with the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha processes it through the Sub-Divisional Level Committee (SDLC) → District Level Committee (DLC) → Forest Rights Committee (FRC). The District Collector chairs the DLC and signs the final title.

Odisha status: Odisha has one of India's largest FRA title programmes — over 5 lakh IFR titles have been issued. But millions of eligible households remain without titles, particularly in the interior forest blocks of Kandhamal, Keonjhar, and Koraput (non-PVTG areas).

Community Forest Resource Rights (CFR) Under FRA Section 3(1)(i)

The gram sabha — not individual families but the entire village collectively — can claim rights over the entire traditional forest territory it has customarily used and protected. A CFR title gives the gram sabha:

- **Ownership and management rights** over all forest produce in the CFR area
- **Right to sell NTFP at MSP** collectively through TDCCOL rather than individually to middlemen
- **Legal authority to exclude** outsiders — including contractors, CAMPA plantation teams, and mining surveyors — from the CFR area without gram sabha consent
- **The governance foundation** for a VDVK (Van Dhan Vikas Kendra) — a community forest enterprise

The IFR-CFR combination is the most powerful land rights package available to any community in India. IFR secures individual cultivation rights; CFR secures collective forest governance. Together, they create a legally protected economic foundation.

Layer 2 — PESA Gram Sabha Powers (Governance Rights)

For forest-dwelling ST communities in Odisha's Fifth Schedule Areas — which covers significant portions of Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, and Mayurbhanj — the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) gives the gram sabha twelve specific powers:

1. Safeguard traditions, customs, and community resources
2. Approve all development plans before implementation
3. Identify beneficiaries for all poverty alleviation programmes
4. Issue utilisation certificates for funds
5. Manage minor water bodies
6. **Regulate land alienation** — no tribal land can be sold without gram sabha consent
7. **Manage minor forest produce** — own, collect, use, and sell all MFP in the village area
8. Control money-lending to tribal communities
9. Regulate local markets
10. Manage village markets
11. Control intoxicants
12. Be consulted before land acquisition or displacement

For NGOs: PESA is the governance complement to FRA's tenure rights. A gram sabha with both a CFR title (FRA) and an active PESA gram sabha is the strongest community institution available in India — with legal rights over its forest, its market, its land, and its development.

Odisha PESA status: Odisha has NOT yet notified final PESA Rules (as of June 2026) — one of only two states that has not (along with Jharkhand). This means PESA powers formally exist but implementation enforcement is weak. NGOs must actively facilitate gram sabhas in exercising these powers even in the absence of formal Rules.

Layer 3 — Forest Livelihoods: TRIFED and MSP for Minor Forest Produce

The MSP System — Ending Middleman Exploitation

Every Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) item collected by forest-dwelling communities can be sold to TDCCOL (Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation of Odisha) at government-declared Minimum Support Prices — eliminating the middleman.

Key items and their approximate MSP vs. open-market prices:

NTFP Item	Open Market (Middleman)	TDCCOL MSP	Difference per quintal
Amla (fresh)	Rs. 10-15/kg	Rs. 35-40/kg	Rs. 2,000-2,500
Mahua flowers	Rs. 18-22/kg	Rs. 30-35/kg	Rs. 800-1,300
Sal seeds	Rs. 8-12/kg	Rs. 20-22/kg	Rs. 800-1,400
Honey (wild)	Rs. 100-150/kg	Rs. 220-250/kg	Rs. 700-1,000
Bamboo	Rs. 10-15/piece	At notified MSP	Significant

For a family collecting 5 quintals of amla, 3 quintals of mahua, and 50 kg of honey annually — accessing MSP vs. middleman prices translates to **Rs. 15,000-25,000 in additional annual income without changing what or how much they collect.**

The barrier: Registration on MPAS (Millet Procurement and Sales app) requires a land record. Without IFR title, NTFP collectors cannot formally register. This is why the IFR title is the foundational Layer 1 — it is the land document that unlocks MSP access.

Van Dhan Vikas Kendra (VDVK) — Value Addition Enterprise

Groups of 15 SHGs (300 tribal beneficiaries) form a VDVK — receiving Rs. 15 lakh from TRIFED for processing and value-addition equipment:

- Honey extraction and packaging: raw honey at Rs. 150/kg → packaged forest honey at Rs. 500-700/kg
- Amla candy/juice processing: raw amla at Rs. 35/kg → processed amla products at Rs. 150-300/kg equivalent
- Bamboo product manufacturing: raw bamboo → furniture components, handicraft items

The CFR-VDVK convergence: A gram sabha with a CFR title over its forest area, a registered VDVK for value addition, and TDCCOL procurement at MSP is a complete community forest enterprise — legally founded, commercially viable, and institutionally supported. This is the highest-impact livelihood model available to Odisha's tribal forest communities.

Layer 4 — VB-G RAM G: Employment from Forest Management

The Viksit Bharat Grameen Rozgar Guarantee Act (VB-G RAM G — the successor to MGNREGA from December 2025) funds guaranteed wage employment for forest-adjacent activities:

Natural Resource Management (NRM) works funded under VB-G RAM G relevant to forest communities:

- Water conservation and harvesting structures in forest-adjacent land
- Rejuvenation of traditional water bodies

- Flood protection bunds in forest fringe habitations
- Soil conservation and land development on forest-edge agricultural land

Forest protection employment: VB-G RAM G provisions also cover community-based forest protection activities — fire line maintenance, check dam construction in watershed areas, and similar NRM works that forest communities are best positioned to do.

Convergence with CAMPA: CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund) funds afforestation, enrichment plantation, and catchment treatment in forest areas — which requires physical labour. When CAMPA work is planned in a gram sabha's CFR area (with gram sabha consent and community-designed plantation plans), community members can simultaneously claim VB-G RAM G wages for the NRM work. This is the most underutilised convergence in tribal forest welfare — two government funding streams paying the same community for the same work they would do anyway to protect their forest.

Layer 5 — PMJUGA (Tribal Majority Village Development)

Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PMJUGA) — approved September 2024 with Rs. 79,156 crore budget — covers **all villages with 50%+ tribal population** across 30 states, including Odisha. Where PM-JANMAN covers the 75 PVTG communities, PMJUGA covers the far larger universe of tribal majority villages including the 51 non-PVTG ST communities in Odisha.

What PMJUGA provides for forest community villages:

- Education: EMRS expansion, digital literacy, skill development
- Health: Mobile Medical Units, Health and Wellness Centre upgradation
- Livelihoods: VDK expansion, MSP for MFP, FPO formation, TRIFED market linkage
- Infrastructure: Piped water (JJM convergence), all-weather roads, electrification
- Governance: Gram Sabha strengthening, PESA activation support

Implementation status (June 2026): District-level implementation plans are being prepared — this is the NGO engagement window. Communities in PMJUGA-eligible villages that engage with the ITDA planning process now can shape what PMJUGA delivers for them.

Layer 6 — Agricultural Scheme Stack (Once IFR Title Is in Hand)

After IFR title is obtained, the following agricultural schemes become accessible:

PM-KISAN: Rs. 6,000/year in three installments — requires land records (IFR title qualifies)

CM-KISAN: Rs. 4,000/year in two installments (or Rs. 12,500/year for landless agricultural households without IFR) — covers all farmers in Odisha

Samrudha Krushaka Yojana: Paddy procurement at Rs. 3,100/quintal — requires registration through Agriculture Department portal

Kisan Credit Card (KCC): Revolving crop credit at 4% effective interest — requires land records

PMFBY: Crop insurance at 2% premium — requires land records for voluntary enrolment

The cascading effect of IFR: One document — the IFR title — unlocks PM-KISAN, CM-KISAN, KCC, PMFBY, PMAY-G, and MSP registration simultaneously. This is why FRA facilitation is the highest-leverage single intervention for any NGO working with forest-dwelling tribal communities.

Layer 7 — Social Protection and Education

SC/ST Scholarships: Forest-dwelling ST children are entitled to Pre-Matric (Rs. 3,500-9,000/year) and Post-Matric (full fee reimbursement + maintenance allowance) scholarships. Apply annually on scholarships.gov.in.

EMRS: ST children who qualify through EMRSST get free residential CBSE education Class 6-12. The lateral entry provision (Classes 7-9 against vacant seats) is underutilised in forest community habitations.

PM POSHAN: Every child in a government school gets a daily hot meal — the retention incentive that works better than any awareness campaign in forest habitations.

NSAP + MBPY pension: Elderly forest community members (60+) from BPL households are entitled to IGNOAPS (Rs. 200-500/month) + MBPY top-up = Rs. 500-1,000/month.

GJAY health insurance: All BPL forest households with NFSA ration cards are covered. The Ayushman Vaya Vandana Card (universal for 70+) is separately available regardless of BPL status.

The Complete Convergence — What Unlocks What

IFR Title → PM-KISAN, CM-KISAN, KCC, PMFBY, PMAY-G, MPAS (MSP)

+

CFR Title → Collective NTFP at MSP, VDKV formation, CAMPA consent rights

+

PESA Gram Sabha → Market control, land protection, development plan approval

+

VDVK → Rs. 15 lakh processing equipment, TRIBES India market access

+

VB-G RAM G → Rs. 247/day wages for NRM, watershed, forest protection work

+

PMJUGA → Infrastructure, education, health, skill development, governance

The pathway: IFR application → Gram Sabha activation (PESA) → CFR application → MPAS registration for NTFP sellers → VDVK formation → VB-G RAM G NRM convergence → PMJUGA engagement. Each step builds on the previous. None can be skipped.

The Four Reasons This Stack Is Not Being Accessed

1. IFR applications are incomplete or stalled at SDLC or DLC. Odisha has processed over 5 lakh IFR titles — but millions remain pending. Rejections for insufficient documentation, boundary disputes, and bureaucratic delays are the most common reasons. NGOs can facilitate appeals through SLSA (State Legal Services Authority) and formal written escalation to the DLC.

2. CFR applications are not being filed at all. Despite FRA being a 2006 law, most tribal villages have not filed CFR applications. The reasons are complex: gram sabhas have not been constituted correctly, the mapping process is technically demanding, and forest department resistance to CFR title is documented nationally. NGOs with GIS mapping capability are the most effective facilitators.

3. PESA gram sabhas are not being convened. Without regular, formal, documented gram sabha meetings that exercise PESA powers, the rights remain on paper. NGOs can provide facilitation for gram sabha convening, minutes recording, and formal communication of gram sabha decisions to the Forest Department, Revenue Department, and DLC.

4. MSP awareness is at near-zero. NTFP collectors have never been told the government has declared minimum prices for what they collect. They know only the middleman's price. TDCCOL procurement camp scheduling, MPAS registration facilitation, and MSP awareness — this is the highest-value NGO contribution to forest community livelihoods.

How JaBaSu Helps

JaBaSu's Knowledge Commons covers all the individual schemes in this stack in dedicated primers (FRA/CFR, PESA, TRIFED-MFP, CAMPA, VB-G RAM G, PMJUGA). This convergence note is the synthesis. JaBaSu's Government Interface relationships span the ST&SC Development Department (FRA/DLC), TDCCOL (MSP/VDVK), State CAMPA (afforestation), and DRDA/BDO (VB-G RAM G) — the four institutional touchpoints for this convergence.

Contact Points

Authority	For	Contact
DLC (District Collector)	FRA IFR and CFR titles	At Collectorate
ITDA Project Officer	PMJUGA, tribal scheme convergence	At ITDA HQ
TDCCOL District Office	MSP procurement, VDVK	At district HQ
CAMPA (State CEO)	Plantation consent, CAMPA employment	campa.odisha.gov.in
Block Development Officer (BDO)	VB-G RAM G, PMAY-G	Block office
SLSA	Legal support for FRA appeals	District Legal Services Authority

Last verified: June 2026. FRA: over 5 lakh IFR titles issued in Odisha (estimate). CFR titles: issued for select communities including Dongria Kondh Habitat Rights. PESA Rules: not yet notified in Odisha (as of June 2026). PMJUGA: Rs. 79,156 crore, September 2024; implementation plans being prepared. VB-G RAM G: replaced MGNREGA December 2025; Job Cards valid during transition. Kendu/tendu leaves in Odisha: state-nationalised under TDCCOL — separate from TRIFED MSP for general MFP.

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