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Title: Need to convert forest villages into revenue villages in Nandurbar Parliamentary Constituency, Maharashtra.

DR. HEENA VIJAYKUMAR GAVIT (NANDURBAR): Ministry of Tribal Affairs issued a circular reminding the states to convert all forest villages, old habitations, unsurveyed villages etc into revenue villages under Section 3(1)(h) of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006. It also includes villages inside the sanctuaries, national parks and tiger reserves. Though FRA has been in force for the past six years, forest officials did not implement the decision as they considered that provisions of the FRA did not supersede provisions of Forest (Conservation) Act (FCA), 1980, that requires environment ministry's permission to de-notify any forest land to give it revenue status.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs has also clarified that FRA envisages recognition and vesting of rights of forest dwellers and other traditional forest dwellers on all forest lands including those in sanctuaries and national parks and hence such villages inside these parks are also, therefore, required to be converted into revenue villages. In Maharashtra, barring 73 villages in Nandurbar, all forest villages have been declared as revenue villages. The development of these villages is very slow and the condition of farmers is very bad. The decision by Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs to convert forest villages into revenue villages in Nandurbar Maharashtra is still pending.