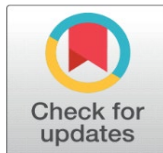
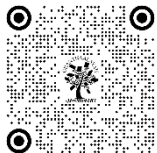


JHARKHAND TRIBAL GRAM SABHA: FOREST GOVERNANCE DYNAMICS UNDER FRA 2006

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ABSTRACT

Jharkhand tribal Gramme Sabha Forest governance under the 2006 Forest Rights Act (FRA) is examined in this study. A key law, the FRA, protects forest-dwelling communities, particularly indigenous tribes, from losing their ancestral lands and resources. Within the FRA 2006, the study examines the Jharkhand Tribal Gramme Sabha's effects on local communities, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable forest management. It examines tribal Gramme Sabha responsibilities, obstacles, and decision-making to understand forest governance dynamics and indigenous community empowerment in Jharkhand. In Jharkhand, a forest-rich state, the 2006 Forest Rights Act sought to right historical wrongs against indigenous communities. This legislation gave Scheduled Tribes (ST) and traditional forest dwellers more control over local forests and resources. The Panchayati Raj Act, which limits local self-governing bodies' autonomy, has hampered FRA implementation in Jharkhand. Individual and community forest rights are recognized by the FRA to promote sustainable forest management and conservation and protect forest-dependent people. It takes a Gramme Sabha-level process to assert these rights, making verification and approval difficult. The Forest Rights Act has increased forest cover in Jharkhand despite these challenges. Forest cover has increased in Ranchi and East Singhbhum, demonstrating the law's benefits. In some locations, issues remain, emphasizing the need to safeguard traditional forest rights. The Forest Rights Act is a major step towards empowering indigenous tribes in Jharkhand and closing historical injustices, but it requires ongoing efforts to ensure equitable distribution and sustainable management of forest resources for forest-dependent communities.

Keywords: Jharkhand, Tribal, Gram Sabha, Forest Rights Act

1. INTRODUCTION

In forest areas like Jharkhand, the 2006 Forest Rights Act (FRA) helps recognize indigenous tribes' historical injustices. This act grants Scheduled Tribes (ST) and other traditional forest residents more control over local forests and resources [1]. The FRA highlights tribal self-government dynamics in Jharkhand and the relevance of local governance in fifth designated regions. To prevent property alienation and safeguard community ownership and management rights in ST regions, the legislation grants individual and community forestland rights [2].

In Jharkhand passed the Panchayati Raj Act, amended in 2003. This act does not grant ownership rights to minor forest produce, recommend minor mineral licenses/leases, or control liquor sales like PESA. Additionally, the state government can limit Gramme Sabha powers. The Panchayati Raj Act allows multiple Gramme Sabhas in scheduled areas, but this raises questions about the relationship between the traditional village leader or Gramme Pradhan and the elected Mukhiya, the relationship between ward members and traditional village leaders, and the allocation of funds. This act was not implemented until 2010. After its first Panchayat Election that year, the state held two successful PRI elections. Modern PRIs have reduced local self-governance after a decade. The encroachment of meta-governance entities on their lands, rivers, and forests threatens land and forest autonomy.

This has greatly affected their forest-dependent lifestyle. Their self-sustaining environment has suffered, causing mass migration, poverty, starvation, and health difficulties. Forest-based sustainable livelihoods are giving way to market-driven economic activities. Another constitutional provision supposed to strengthen traditional self-governance (TSG), the 2006 Forest Right Act (FRA), has also been unfulfilled. Only 17% of potential forest area was recognized and mapped under FRA in 2018, 12 years after its implementation [3].

On 29 December 2006, Parliament passed the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, which became law on 31 December 2007 [4]. It's been implemented nationwide except in Jammu & Kashmir. The act defines 'forest land' as unclassified, undermarketed, existent, supposed, protected, reserved, sanctuaries, and national parks in forest areas. The act guarantees forest residents' schedule tribes' rights over the forest for their subsistence. The term 'forest dweller schedule tribe' refers to a scheduled tribe's pastoralist groups and members who live in and depend on forests for their subsistence. World's largest forest-dependent population lives in India [5]. Forest dwellers must reside in their claim for three generations or 75 years. Land rights, use and collection rights, and protection and conservation rights are recognized. The act grants tribe and other forest residents' individual property rights on forest land and permits them to cultivate and manage it, as well as total ownership rights on NTFP/MFP with communal rights (Act, 2006). The forest and trees give food, housing, medicine, livelihood possibilities, cooking and heating fuel, and economic and environmental emergency safety [6]. The forest supplies 250 million of the world's poorest with goods and services (FAO and UNEP, 2020) [7]. Many people use forests to meet their daily requirements and stay healthy [8]. Tribal people have always been related to forests and forest products.

1.1. THE FOREST RIGHT ACT

The Indian Supreme Court ruled that tribes had a claim to the woods and must consent to diversion or eviction. In June 2004, the Indian government admitted that tribal forest dwellers had suffered "historical injustice" and required their traditional rights over forests and forest land recognized promptly. On 13 December 2005, India introduced the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005 in Parliament. Many today view this law as an important step towards social justice and indigenous empowerment. Schedule Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. The statute grants the "right to hold and live in forest land under individual or common occupation for habitation or self-cultivation for a livelihood by a forest-dwelling ST or other traditional forest dwellers." Section 3(a) of Forest Rights Act 2006 [9].

This Act defines forest land as any land within a forest area, including most types of forests. Forest rights are recognized and vested in Scheduled Tribes who occupied forest land before 13 December 2005 and other traditional forest dwellers who occupied forest land for at least three generations, or 75 years, up to 4 hectares. Rights are heritable but nontransferable. Forest rights include the right to occupy and live on forest land for settlement, self-cultivation, etc. The Act also grants rights to "community forest resource"—customary common forest land within the village's traditional or customary limits, including protected areas. One of the most important components of the Forest Rights Act is defining the "critical wildlife habitat" (CWLH) to realize forest rights in protected areas.

1.2. INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY FOREST RIGHTS UNDER FRA

FRA ordered thirteen bundles of Individual Forest Rights (IFRs) or Community Forest Rights (CFRs). These rights permitted tribals and other forest dwellers to own and reside on forest land, self-cultivate, and use forest resources for income. These rights allow forest regeneration, conservation, and management while conserving wildlife and biodiversity. Forest land ownership distinguishes IFRs from CFRs. IFRs and CFRs are inalienable. However, CFR requirements are diverse and affect a community's access to forest resources, forest management, and food and

livelihood security. CFRs are granted to settlers, ranchers, seasonal migrators, and disaster survivors to graze and collect Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP). There is no way to document every right recognized, hence CFRs are given under broad rights areas. IFRs must be owned by an individual, family, or community at the start of the Act and must not exceed 4 hectares. The 4 hectares includes self-cultivation, cow rearing, post-harvest activities, tree crops, and rotational fallows. Heritable but non-transferable land is awarded. If a family is headed by a single individual, it is registered in the name of the single head. In the absence of an heir, the inalienable right passes to the next-of-kin. All FRA titles have legal deeds of ownership and other rights over forest resources that can be enforced in court [10].

1.3. PROCESS OF THE FRA 2006 ACT

Hierarchical procedures have been created to apply the FRA 2006 at the grassroots level. Tribal people and forest residents must pursue this method to assert FRA 2006 forest rights. The lowest level where they applied was gramme Sabha. After verification, the application form is sent to the next higher authority. Nodal officer approves claims after assessment and verification. In any committee, claims may be rejected during assessment and verification if there are contradictions.

1.4. GRAM SABHA

Gram Sabha is a Constitutional Body of people registered in the electoral lists of a local Panchayat under Article 243(b) of the Indian Constitution. A Village Level Panchayat or Gramme Panchayat has multiple Gram Sabha. Gram Sabha is the main IFR and CFR standardizer and Forest Rights Committee (FRC) for claim authentication. Gram Sabha elects the FRC in the first Gramme Panchayat meeting. FRC has 10–15 members, with at least two-thirds Schedule Tribes (ST) and one-third women. When GS calls, FRC receives and acknowledges claim applications in the prescribed format. Additionally, FRC produces CFR claims for Gram Sabha. Gram Sabha creates wildlife, forest, and biodiversity committees [11]. Gram Sabha monitors and controls committees that produce conservation and management plans for sustainable and equitable community forest use. The conservation and management plan must be integrated with FD's micro or working plan. Gram Sabha finalizes the transit permit committee's decision, plans forest produce sales revenue expenditures, and evaluates resettlement packages under free informed consent. Gram Sabha meetings are attended by at least half of its members, including one-third women. Gram Sabha forest rights decisions should include at least 50% of forest right claimants or their representatives. Gram Sabha meetings must be decided by a simple majority of voting members. No time restriction is set for claim applications, however they should be submitted within three months or as determined by Gram Sabha, with reasons for extension [12].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Forest Rights Act of 2006 (FRA) in India changed forest governance, especially for tribal groups in Jharkhand. Tribal Gramme Sabhas under FRA have enabled indigenous groups to participate in forest management decisions. Literature reveals that FRA has enabled tribal groups to claim their rights, but bureaucratic impediments and conflicting interests prevent its full potential.

Konstantin, Ardakov (2022) [13] studied the Indian Ministry of Tribal Affairs passed FRA Act, 2006 in 2007. Scheduled Tribes and Forest Dwellers Act 2006. Indigenous people live in forests and are landless. The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 protected disadvantaged tribes under the Indian Constitution. The largest tribe is Indian. British colonial governments owned several forests. Indigenous people struggled economically. First forest law, 1864-65. The 1878 act allowed colonial authorities to declare forest land 'government land'. NFP 1894, Land Acquisition Act 1894, and Madras Presidency Act 1882 followed. It helped Indian tree-dwellers and tribes. It can seize land for 'public purpose'. Forest residents relocated for national development. Forest-dependent individuals are protected by Forest Right Act 2006. Land, forest products, and protection are legal rights. Conservationists and forestry experts opposed the rule because it could affect wildlife and forests. The FRA examined Jharkhand forests. Univariate and multivariate regression and basic statistics were employed. The analysis suggests Jharkhand should speed FRA implementation as it trails behind its neighbours. Forest cover increased after installation.

Tapas, Kumar et.al (2022) [14] evaluated the implementation process and livelihood impact of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 in selected communities in Odisha and Jharkhand, based on extensive fieldwork. The study found that

forests are crucial for livelihoods in all villages, particularly for disadvantaged tribal households. Implementation development in Jharkhand is slow and unsatisfactory compared to Odisha. Slow progress is attributed to problems such as insufficient manpower, claimant knowledge, and weak legal, political, and social mobilization. Various implementing agencies have high ambiguity regarding the implementation procedure. Proper implementation of the FRA in both states to ensure the stable property rights on forest land and enforce forest inhabitants' entitlement to forest produce, including non-timber forest products. Better livelihood prospects and well-being will result from increased access to land and forest produce.

Suren, Pawas (2024) [15] described the Forest Rights Act, 2006, took effect on December 31, 2007, and the Forest Rights Act Rules, 2008, were notified on January 1, 2008. Neither the Act nor the Rules have an implementation deadline. Historical injustice against forest residents stems from institutional frameworks, social, political, and economic inequalities. The Forest Rights Act and its rules, which contradicted prior laws, caused more uncertainty than clarity in forest management and governance. Clearly, implementing agencies lacked the ability and experience for efficient implementation. However, the perseverance for justice depends on adapting to problems arising from the Act's implementation. As the pursue sustainability, the rights of 275 million people living in and around forests are being overlooked in the pursuit of development and conservation.

Sarang et.al (2013) [16] proposed global forest policy, and practice have focused on resource rights and community conservation projects for the past two decades. Several nations' forest tenure changes grant indigenous and local people's rights to forests and natural resources. Community engagement and rights-based conservation are emerging alongside forest tenure reforms. Reforms are ongoing because globalisation and neoliberal development threaten indigenous peoples' lands, forests, and livelihoods. Indian forest dwellers have suffered from forest rights breaches. India's 2006 Forest Rights Act was influenced by progressive political groups, civil society, and intellectuals. Odisha, Jharkhand, and others have adopted since January 2008. Many challenges have hindered the Act's implementation in both states. Effectively implementing this Act would improve forest growth and beneficiary livelihoods. Inalienable land titles reduce tenure risk. The encourage households to enhance their land, enhancing livelihoods. Their forest utilization also decreases. The institutional implementation, success factors, and potential beneficiaries in Odisha and Jharkhand.

Sharma, Alok Kumar et.al (2023) [17] studied self-governance in Adivasi communities has dominated tribal policy discussions. The Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act of 1996 and the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006 theoretically empowered Gramme Sabhas. After two decades, most Schedule V states, including Jharkhand and Odisha, have yet to create PESA 1996 laws, hence the promised results are mostly absent. The Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Act of 2001's poorly drafted and uneven restrictions limit Gramme Sabha self-governance. The old Manjhi-Pradhan structure has been disrupted in the tribal regions of the state, giving Mukhiya and Tekedaar (Gramme Panchayat and money lender heads) authority. These changes and their effects on the Santal community in Jharkhand's Dumka district are examined in this case study using 2021–2022 data. The Gramme Sabha's reduced position has significant socio-economic effects, such as increasing migration, erosion of forest and land rights, and involvement from outsiders (Diku) in proceedings. It may empower the Gramme Sabha during the state's PESA Act of 1996 public consultation.

Prasad et.al (2023) [18] discussed gramme Sabha is India's lowest grassroots democracy functionary. A strong democracy requires an empowered Gramme Sabha. The stresses the importance of Pathalgadi in empowering Gramme Sabha. Local government in fifth designated regions was addressed in a Jharkhand High Court tribal self-governance case. The Jharkhand High Court honours Gramme Sabha in Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas. The tribal self-governance and PESA Jharkhand Panchayati Raj rules. The addresses Gramme Sabha's history, standing, and how the PESA Act, 1996 and Forest Rights Act, 2006 affect democratic decision-making. It also investigates how Pathalgadi empowers Gramme Sabha. The government shouldn't violate indigenous tribes' rights.

Hembram et.al (2022) [19] discussed in 2007, Indian Ministry of Tribal Affairs ratified Forest Right (FRA) Act, 2006. 'The Schedule Tribes and Other Tribal Forest Dwellers Act, 2006'. Most natives live in the jungle and are landless and destitute. Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 protected them as deprived under Indian Constitution. The largest tribe is Indian. Colonial Britain had a lot of forest land. This hurt indigenous people economically. First forest act passed in 1864-65. The 1878 act gave the colonial administration broad discretion to declare forest land 'government land'. NFP 1894, Land Acquisition Act 1894, and Madras Presidency Act 1882 followed. The act helped Indian tribal and forest dwellers. It can seize land for 'public purpose'. It act relocated forest residents for national development. Forest

Right Act 2006 protects forest-dependent populations. Land, forest product, and conservation rights are legal. Because of potential forest and wildlife damage, conservationists and forestry officials opposed the measure. Jharkhand was chosen to study FRA's forest cover effects. The data suggests that Jharkhand lags behind its neighbours, suggesting FRA implementation. Forest cover rose after deployment.

Table 1 Comparison of Review

Author & Year	Focus	Key Findings
Konstantin, Ardakov (2022) [13]	Jharkhand forest cover under FRA 2006	Implementation of Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 in Jharkhand should accelerate to catch up with neighboring states. Forest cover increased in Jharkhand since the enactment of FRA.
Tapas, Kumar et.al (2022) [14]	Implementation and livelihood impact of FRA 2006 in Odisha and Jharkhand	Forests are vital for livelihoods, especially for disadvantaged tribal households in selected communities in Odisha and Jharkhand. Implementation progress of FRA is slow and unsatisfactory in Jharkhand compared to Odisha due to various challenges.
Suren, Pawas (2024) [15]	Impact and challenges of FRA 2006	Historical injustices against forest residents stem from institutional frameworks and socio-economic inequalities. Implementation challenges of FRA due to lack of capacity and experience among implementing agencies. Forest conservation and development efforts often overlook the rights of forest-dependent communities.
Sarangi et.al (2013) [16]	Forest tenure reforms and FRA 2006	Forest tenure reforms grant indigenous and local people's rights to forests and natural resources, improving livelihoods and reducing tenure risk. Challenges hinder the effective implementation of FRA in Odisha and Jharkhand.
Sharma, Alok Kumar et.al (2023) [17]	Impact of tribal policy on Gram Sabha	PESA 1996 and FRA 2006 theoretically empowered Gram Sabha but implementation challenges persist, affecting socio-economic conditions in tribal regions. Changes in governance structures and outside involvement impact the role of Gram Sabha in tribal communities.
Prasad et.al (2023) [18]	Empowerment of Gram Sabha	Pathalgadi movement plays a crucial role in empowering Gram Sabha. Jharkhand High Court recognizes Gram Sabha's power under PESA, highlighting the importance of tribal self-governance. Government interference in tribal rights should be avoided.
Hembram et.al (2022) [19]	Impact of FRA 2006 on forest dwellers	FRA 2006 protects forest-dependent populations but faces opposition from conservationists and forestry officials. FRA implementation challenges observed in Jharkhand, suggesting the need for acceleration. Increase in forest cover observed after FRA deployment.

3. RESEARCH METHDOLOGY

The research methodology for examining Jharkhand Tribal Gram Sabha's Forest governance dynamics under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 will employ a mixed-method approach. It providing a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and effectiveness of FRA within the context of Jharkhand's tribal Gram Sabhas.

Research Design

The research design is the strategy used to answer the questions. To explore forest governance dynamics under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 in Jharkhand's tribal Gramme Sabhas, this study may use a descriptive research design. It describes a population or phenomenon's traits or behaviour. This study may describe tribal Gramme Sabhas in Jharkhand, their decision-making, and their relationships with forest governance organizations under the FRA 2006. A

qualitative approach seeks to understand people's motives, viewpoints, and justifications. This study may examine tribal communities' and Gramme Sabha members' forest governance views using a qualitative approach.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods are used to gather study data. Interviewing tribal community members, Gramme Sabha delegates, government officials, and professionals to understand forest governance dynamics. Conducting surveys to gather quantitative or qualitative data on forest governance and Gramme Sabha operations. Reviewing official documentation, reports, and records on FRA 2006 implementation and tribal Gramme Sabhas in Jharkhand.

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria are the traits or qualifications used to select study participants. This research may require tribal community membership in Jharkhand and understanding of Gramme Sabhas and forest governance.

Study Area

Jharkhand, a state of India, has twenty-four administrative districts. Jharkhand is a state in eastern India. It is home to a large number of tribal communities, who have traditionally relied on the forests for their livelihood and cultural practices. The Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006 is a law that recognizes the rights of tribal and other traditional forest dwellers to forest land and resources.



Figure 1 Map of Jharkhand Districts

Table 2 Forest Cover in Tribal districts in some selected states (Area in sq. Km)

States	Jharkhand
No. of Tribal district	85
No. of Tribal Population	86,45,745
Geographic area in tribal districts	54670
Forest Cover	235590
Rank in number of tribal populations	10
No. of title distributed	90077

In Table 2 shows forest cover in selected state tribal districts, focusing on Jharkhand. With 85 tribal districts, the state has 86,45,745 tribal members. These districts cover 54,670 square kilometers, including 235,590 square kilometers of forest. Jharkhand has 90,077 land titles in tribal areas despite ranking 10th in tribal population. This

research emphasizes the necessity of conservation and sustainable resource management in tribal territory due to the relationship between tribal communities, their habitat, and land rights.

Table 3 Forest Cover change (2005-2024) after implementation of FRA 2006 in Jharkhand

Districts	Forest Cover 2005	Forest Cover 2024	Change in Cover	Percentage Change (%)
Ranchi	2450	2870	420	17.142857
East Singhbhum	3100	3350	250	8.064516
Dhanbad	350	420	70	20.000000
Bokaro	520	580	60	11.538462
Giridih	1800	1920	120	6.666667
Koderma	480	530	50	10.416667
Hazaribag	1200	1300	100	8.333333
Chatra	750	820	70	9.333333
Lohardaga	1500	1650	150	10.000000
Gumla	900	1020	120	13.333333
Simdega	850	970	120	14.117647
Khunti	1100	1250	150	13.636364
West Singhbhum	2700	2800	100	3.703704
Seraikela-Kharsawan	1000	1080	80	8.000000
Garhwa	400	450	50	12.500000
Latehar	620	700	80	12.903226
Palamu	800	870	70	8.750000

The table displays forest cover changes in Jharkhand districts after the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006. The data compares 2005 and 2024 forest cover. Forest cover has increased in all districts. Ranchi has the largest increase at 420 sq km, followed by East Singhbhum at 250 sq km. West Singhbhum has the smallest forest cover increase at 100 sq km. Simdega has the biggest percentage rise at 14.12%, followed by Gumla at 13.33%. Most districts have increased forest cover by 8-14%. This shows that FRA 2006 has improved forest cover in Jharkhand.

Table 4 Multivariate regression model of the association between predictor variables and distribution rate (n = 23) in Jharkhand

Predictor Variable	Coefficients (95% level)	t-stat	p-value
Tribal Population	-5.16337E-04	-1.185	0.251
% of tribal population	1.159501340	2.155	0.054
Rural population	3.74727E-04	1.958	0.062
% of rural pop	-0.232219451	-0.509	0.619
Forest Cover (sq.km)	-0.003567048	-0.459	0.645
R ² = 0.30 F = 1.51 Standard Error = 23.72			

Jharkhand has approved 56135 claims. Ranchi had the most forest claims accepted (14673), followed by RCCF, Singhbhum, and 10386. The table shows a 23-sample multivariate regression study of predictor factors and Jharkhand distribution rate. Predictors include tribal population, rural population, and forest cover (sq.km). The coefficient, t-statistic, and p-value of each predictor variable are presented. Distribution rate effects of predictor variables are estimated by coefficients. Higher absolute values of the t-statistic indicate coefficient significance. P-values under 0.05 indicate statistical significance for coefficients. % tribal and rural population have p-values near 0.05, while the other components are not significant. Predictor factors explain 30% of distribution rate variance with an R-squared of 0.30. Good fit and precision are shown by the model's F-value of 1.51 and standard error of 23.72.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Jharkhand's tribal Gramme Sabhas' forest governance dynamics after the 2006 Forest Rights Act were examined in this mixed-method study. Tribal Gramme Sabhas and forest governance were described descriptively. In qualitative research, tribal and Gramme Sabha members' forest management attitudes were examined. Data was collected from community members, Gramme Sabha members, government officials, and forestry experts. Surveys of government data

revealed Jharkhand's forest governance and FRA implementation. Jharkhand forest cover appears to have improved with FRA. Forest cover rose in all areas between 2005 and 2024. Simdega rose 14.12% most. The FRA may increase tribal forest protection, but further research is needed. FRA land title distribution characteristics were evaluated using multivariate regression. Only the tribal population percentage achieved statistical significance (p -value = 0.054) despite the model explaining 30% of variance. Tribal population concentration may affect dispersal. Finding other land title distribution factors requires more research. The study demonstrates the FRA may empower tribal tribes and improve Jharkhand Forest governance. Growing forest cover promotes ecology. Understand the social and institutional factors affecting FRA implementation and its long-term impact on Jharkhand Forest governance.

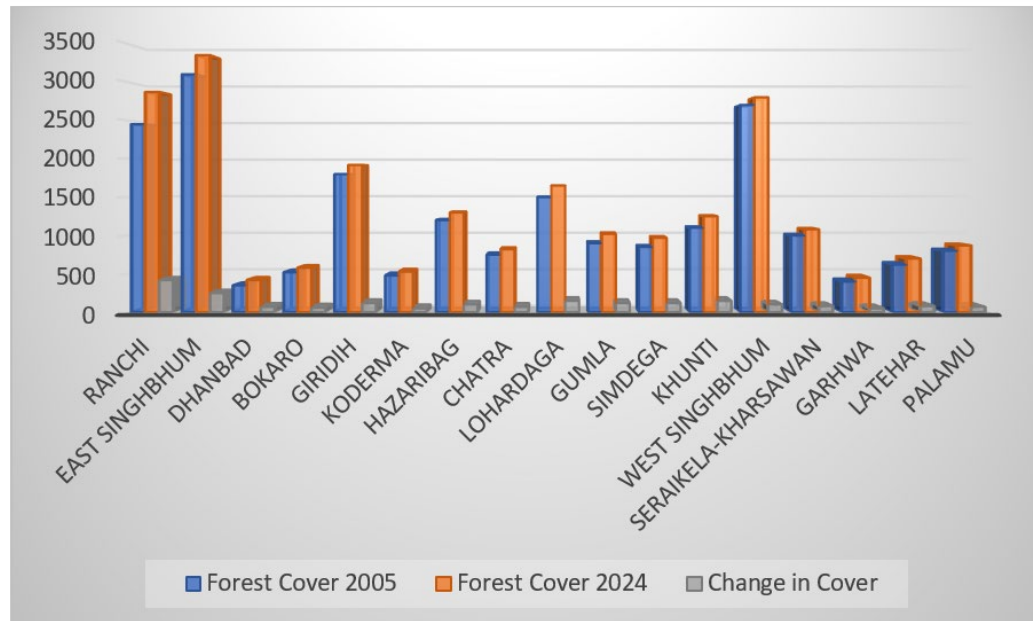


Figure 2 Forest Cover change (2005-2024) after implementation of FRA 2006 in Jharkhand

The graph shows forest cover changes in Jharkhand districts between 2005 and 2024, after the 2006 Forest Rights Act (FRA). Forest cover is rising in most districts. Ranchi leads with 420 sq. km growth, followed by East Singhbhum at 250. Districts like Dhanbad, Bokaro, and Giridih have also grown. Simdega had the biggest change (14.1%), followed by Gumla (13.3%) and Khunti (13.6%). Some districts, like West Singhbhum, exhibit a small, positive increase. There are two exceptions, Seraikela-Kharsawan and Palamu, and Garhwa, which has seen little alteration.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the 2006 Forest Rights Act (FRA) helps indigenous communities in forest areas like Jharkhand recognize and remedy historical injustices. To empower and protect Scheduled Tribes (ST) and other traditional forest residents, the FRA gives them more control over local forests and resources. Although the FRA was passed, its full implementation has been difficult, resulting in only a portion of the potential forest land being recognized and mapped. In 2003, Jharkhand revised the Panchayati Raj Act, but tribal people still want ownership rights over minor forest produce, mineral regulation, and spirits sales. This act's capacity to limit Gramme Sabha powers by the state raises doubts about local governance's ability to defend tribal rights and autonomy. External entities have encroached on tribal lands, rivers, and forests due to ineffective law execution, jeopardising these tribes' traditional livelihoods and self-sustaining environment. Thus, forest-dependent lives have been affected, causing widespread migration, poverty, famine, and health issues in tribal groups. After the FRA, forest cover increased in several Jharkhand districts, but tribal rights and sustainable resource management remain difficult to achieve. To protect indigenous communities' rights and forest ecosystems' ecological balance, the government must address these issues and effectively enforce current laws.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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