

Threats faced by CCAs in India

- **Mining, dams, tourism, etc: Policy of economic growth “at all costs”**
- **Imposition of government schemes, conservation and economic policies**
- **Continued “invisibility” in formal conservation circles**
- **Internal inequities, changing aspiration and cultures influence by mainstream economic model of development**
- **Lack of tenure rights**

Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 or the Forest Rights Act 2006 and Rules 2008

Brought in after decades of struggle by forest dependent communities

- 1. Acknowledges and Intends to undo historic and continuing injustice**
- 2. Rights already exist only need to be recognised**
- 3. Vests and acknowledges following kinds of rights:**
 - Right to access and protect biodiversity, intellectual property right and traditional knowledge**
 - Right to protect their surroundings from external threats and hence all development projects to seek consent from gramsabhas (village councils)**
 - Right to manage, protect and sustainably use “community forest resource” defined as, “customary common forest land within the traditional or customary boundaries of the village or seasonal use of landscape in case of pastoral communities.”**
 - Right to claim Habitat Rights to particularly vulnerable tribal Groups (PVTG) and pastoral communities**

Within Protected areas

“Critical wildlife habitats” to be identified through scientific and democratic process...could be made ‘inviolable’

Co-existence to be the priority but rights can be altered in consultation with rights-holders.

Relocation only if coexistence is proven to be not possible, and causes “irreversible” damage to species concerned.

Relocation only after informed consent.

How are communities using the law

- **Challenging undemocratic and destructive forest management practices – e.g. timber felling by state on their traditional lands.**
- **Resistance against development projects such as mines and dams.**
- **Establishing forest based economy by claiming rights over NTFP thru' sustainable harvest and sale**
- **Post rights self-governance and management of forests**

Redefining Tiger Conservation Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Sanctuary & Tiger Reserve – Drafting their own tiger conservation plan



25 CFR titles to Soliga (~25,000 ha), over half of the Tiger Reserve

MENDHA –LEKHA CCA 1800ha of forests conserved

MOVING FROM STATE WELFARE SCHEMES TO LOCAL FOREST BASED ECONOMY - WHILE ENSURING CONSERVATION



- **Has traded bamboo worth >Rs. 10 million in 2010-12. Now paying taxes to the government rather than receiving welfare funds!**
- **Forest planning process initiated (10% area for wildlife)**
- ***Move towards gram dan – from individual ownership of land to community ownership***
- **Do not need any other grant, instead providing equitable employment to others**

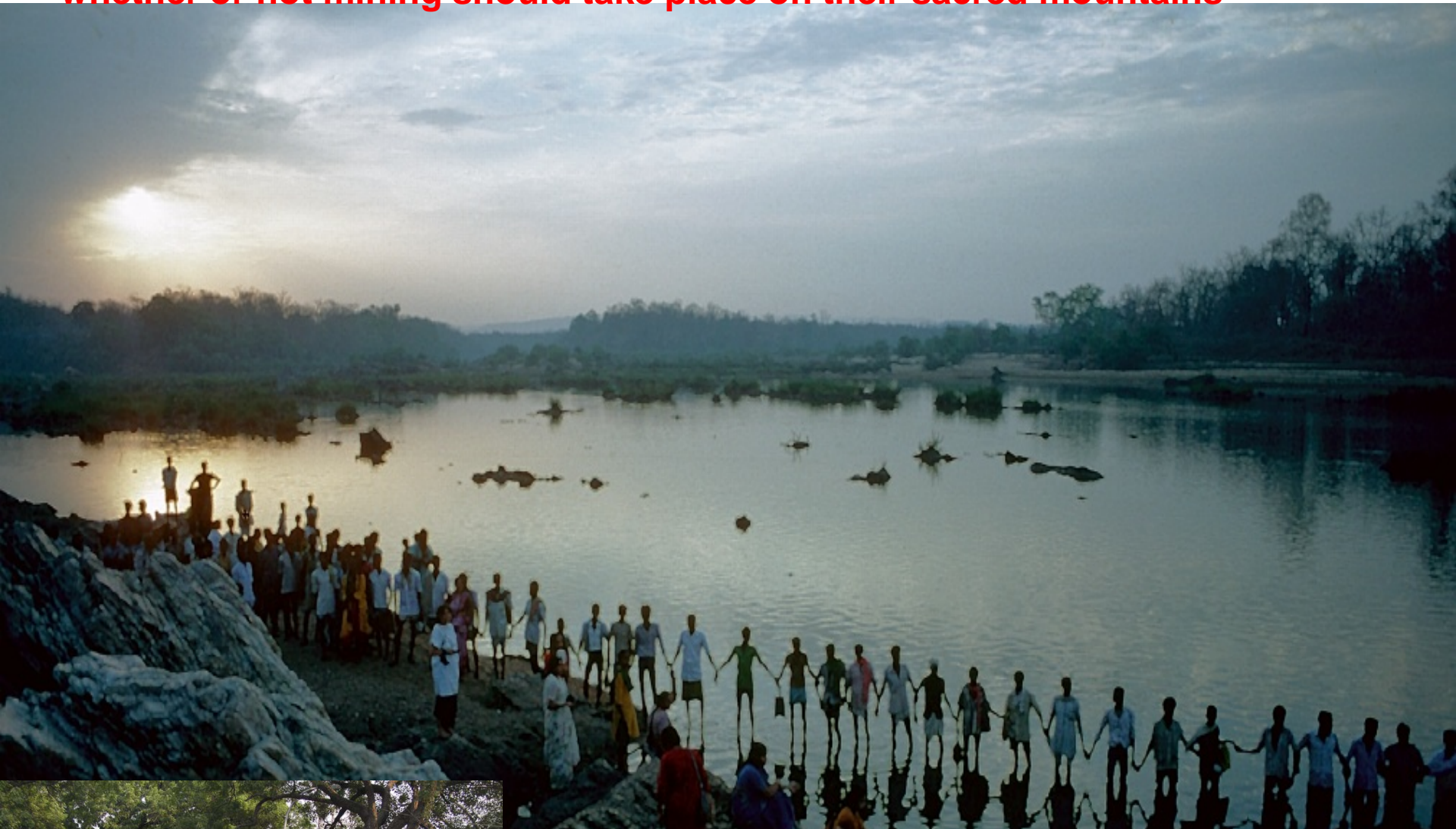
Payvihir village, Melghat



The Discussion on Community Forest Rights under Forest Rights Act brought the Community together to discuss the forest issues and their traditional relationship..it was a realization of what we had saved and what we lost...

Resistance Movements...

Tribal Communities in Niyamgiri in Odisha take mining corporation Vendanta to Court and get the ruling that village councils will decided whether or not mining should take place on their sacred mountains



Challenges in realising its potential.....

State reluctance to implement
...beginning to threaten existing political power and corporate interests

Successful largely where civil society organisations or local movements are strong and active

Violation of provisions by state and corporations – relocation from PAs continues

Efforts at diluting provisions, particularly the consent clauses

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