

# Govt Starts Identifying Landless Tribals

## Express News Service

**Bhubaneswar:** The Government has started the process of identifying the landless tribal people in the most backward blocks of tribal-dominated districts of the State.

The programme is being implemented in 30 backward blocks of Koraput, Kalahandi, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Nabarangpur and Rayagada districts. Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme (OTELP), working for enabling tribals to enhance their food security, has now taken up the mission of identifying landless people in 1,024 villages and settle in their favour.

Official sources said that 424 Community Resource Persons (CRP) have been trained in collaboration with RDI, an international organisation which provides



technical and facilitative support, for this purpose. There are about 41 per cent homesteadless persons in Gajapati and Koraput districts.

The first phase of the programme is scheduled to be implemented in 12 blocks of Gajapati, Kalahandi, Koraput and Kandhamal districts during the year. In this phase, 135 micro water-

shed structures (MWS) will be made functional in these areas.

OTELP officials have been directed to implement post-project management plan to ensure sustainability of the progress already achieved. The second phase operation will be started in 1,034 villages involving 56,180 households inhabiting 358 micro watershed

areas.

The programme adopts treatment of micro watershed through various soil, water and forest conservation methods for increasing productivity from these natural resources over a seven-year programme cycle. Initial two years will be devoted to community mobilisation and institution building, making people understand the project, their entitlements and duties before they begin.

Non-government organisations (NGOs) have been taken in as partners for capacity building support at the grassroots level. The assessment done by IFAD through independent enumerators reveals that 90 per cent of the people have been involved in the OTELP and have got wage employment in it.

About 64 per cent of the families have reported that

they have got land titles, 83 per cent got increased returns from agricultural and minor forest produces, 60 per cent reported that they have benefited with health and sanitation services.

IFAD annual outcome survey also indicated that there has been improvement in food security situation in 52 per cent households. Migration has been reduced from 17 to 9 per cent and dependency on moneylenders has drastically fallen from 37 to 14 per cent over the last year.

Official sources said OTELP Plus has been programmed to be implemented in six blocks of Koraput district over 102 MWS projects and six blocks of Malkangiri district over 149 MWS. The total budget for these two districts is ₹ 263.69 crore for seven years which will be funded by the State Government.