

UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · [UJIYARI.COM](https://ujiyari.com)**EDITORIAL ANALYSIS**

Korku Adivasis and the Unfinished Promise of the Forest Rights Act

 **DOWN TO EARTH**

17 July 2026

SOCIAL ISSUES**GS1****GS2**

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

 linkedin.com/in/epicbharat**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com → **ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

 epicbharat@gmail.com



Korku Adivasis and the Unfinished Promise of the Forest Rights Act

Down to Earth

17 July 2026

GS1

GS2

Source: ujiyari.com — researched, fact-checked & UPSC-mapped

✔ Every fact web-verified against primary sources (<https://ujiyari.com/how-we-verify/>)

THE LIFT LINE

A land title in a single farmer's name is progress. A forest in the collective care of a **Gram Sabha** is transformation. When **Korku Adivasi** communities across the forest-dependent villages of the **Melghat** belt in Maharashtra and the adjoining Satpura tracts of Madhya Pradesh press for enforcement against **encroachment** (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/encroachment/>) and full recognition of their rights, they are asking a question the country has dodged for two decades: does the Forest Rights Act deliver justice to individuals only, or to communities as stewards?

WHY THIS EDITORIAL MATTERS FOR YOUR EXAM

This is the meeting point of **tribal society**, **constitutional protection** and **governance delivery**, three themes UPSC weaves together in both papers. The FRA is landmark legislation, yet its most transformative provision, **Community Forest Resource** rights, remains the least implemented. That gap between statute and reality is exactly the analytical territory examiners reward.

GS Paper 1: Salient features of Indian society and the issues of tribal communities and their relationship with land and forest. **GS Paper 2:** Mechanisms, laws and institutions for the protection of vulnerable sections, and issues in the implementation of welfare legislation.

For **Prelims**, hold the specifics: the **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006** (<https://ujiyari.com/legislation/forest-rights-act-2006/>), commonly the **Forest Rights Act (FRA)**; its three rights categories, **Individual Forest Rights (IFR)**, **Community Rights (CR)** and **Community Forest Resource (CFR)** rights; the **Gram Sabha** as the authority for initiating and verifying claims; the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** as nodal ministry with state

forest departments in implementation; the **Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA)**; the **Fifth Schedule** (<https://ujjayi.com/terms/fifth-schedule/>) governing Scheduled Areas; and the **Korku** as a tribe of central India concentrated in the Melghat region.

For **Mains**, this editorial arms you with a precise argument: the FRA's revolutionary core is collective, not individual, and its failure is a failure to **devolve** (<https://ujjayi.com/vocab/devolve/>) power to Gram Sabhas.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

For over a century, forest law treated Adivasis as encroachers on land they had lived on for generations. The colonial **Indian Forest Act** and later conservation statutes centralised forests under the state, criminalising customary use. The **FRA of 2006** was framed to correct this **historical injustice**, a phrase written into the law's own preamble.

The Act does two things. It recognises **individual titles** for land under cultivation, and, more radically, it recognises **community rights** over the forest itself, including the right to protect, regenerate and manage **Community Forest Resources**. The Gram Sabha, not the forest department, is empowered to verify claims and govern the resource. In **Scheduled Areas**, **PESA** and the **Fifth Schedule** reinforce this authority. The Korku demand in Melghat is not for charity; it is for the state to honour rights the law already grants.

THE CORE ARGUMENT / ISSUE

Individual titles have been prioritised over collective rights

Across the country, IFR claims have been processed in far larger numbers than CFR claims. Individual titles are administratively simpler and less threatening to departmental control over forests. But they miss the point: for a forest-dwelling community, the forest is a **commons**, and its true value lies in collective use of grazing land, minor forest produce, water and cultural spaces. Recognising only individual plots fragments a living system.

Encroachment enforcement is uneven

Communities like the Korku report that outside encroachment eats into forest land while their own claims stall. When enforcement protects powerful interests but not community boundaries, the FRA's protective intent inverts, and the very people it was written for bear the cost.

Gram Sabha authority is diluted in practice

The law makes the Gram Sabha the pivot. In practice, forest bureaucracies often retain effective veto power, treating recognition as a favour to grant rather than a right to record. Without genuine **devolution** (<https://ujjayi.com/terms/devolution/>), CFR rights remain paper entitlements.

FRA RIGHTS CATEGORY	WHAT IT RECOGNISES	GROUND REALITY
Individual Forest Rights (IFR)	Land under individual cultivation	Widely granted, simpler to process
Community Rights (CR)	Access to grazing, produce, water	Partially recognised
Community Forest Resource (CFR)	Right to protect and manage the forest	Least recognised, most transformative

HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS (ANALYTICAL FRAME)

Use the frame of **rights versus welfare**. The FRA is not a welfare scheme handing out benefits; it is a recognition of pre-existing rights. This distinction matters, because a right cannot be rationed at administrative convenience the way a benefit can. When officials treat CFR recognition as discretionary, they quietly convert a right back into a favour.

A second frame is **decentralisation and conservation**. Evidence from community-managed forests suggests that empowered Gram Sabhas often conserve better than distant bureaucracies, because their livelihood depends on the forest's health. Tribal stewardship and ecological protection are allies, not rivals.

THE DIAGRAM IN WORDS

Historical injustice -> FRA 2006 recognises rights -> IFR granted, CFR stalled -> Gram Sabha powerless -> encroachment unchecked -> livelihoods and forests both weakened. Empowering the Gram Sabha to secure CFR rights reverses the whole chain.

WAY FORWARD

- 1 Prioritise CFR recognition.** Set time-bound targets for processing Community Forest Resource claims, backed by dedicated staff and mapping support, so the Act's core provision stops lagging behind individual titles.
- 2 Empower** (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/empower/>) **Gram Sabhas genuinely.** Align FRA implementation with **PESA** and the **Fifth Schedule** so that the Gram Sabha's verifying authority is real, not ceremonial.
- 3 Enforce boundaries fairly.** Act decisively against outside encroachment while protecting recognised community forest boundaries, restoring the Act's protective logic.
- 4 Build capacity and awareness.** Support Korku and other communities with legal literacy, documentation help and **convergence** (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/convergence/>) with livelihood and minor-forest-produce programmes.

PYQ LINKAGE AND PRACTICE

Ujjayari Current Affairs - ujjayari.com · Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

UPSC has repeatedly probed the FRA and tribal rights, including Mains questions on how the Forest Rights Act reconciles tribal livelihoods with conservation. Prelims regularly tests the Gram Sabha's role and the Act's provisions, making CFR, IFR and PESA reliable factual anchors.

Practice question: “The transformative promise of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 lies less in individual titles and more in Community Forest Resource rights and empowered Gram Sabhas.” Discuss with reference to central India's tribal communities. **(15 marks, 250 words)**

Sources: *Down To Earth* (<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/forests>), *Ministry of Tribal Affairs* (<https://tribal.nic.in/>), *FRA 2006 text* (<https://tribal.nic.in/FRA.aspx>)

Source: Korku Adivasis and the Unfinished Promise of the Forest Rights Act — Ujjayari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

RELATED DAILY ARTICLES

17 Jul **Maharashtra Women Farmers Act 2026 Recognising the...**

15 Jul **Draft National Health Research Policy 2026 Released for...**

14 Jul **Third NAMASTE Day Marks the Push for Mechanised...**

13 Jul **Health Ministry Ends Licensing Exemption for...**

Ujiyari Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · ~~Free Daily~~ Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

 linkedin.com/in/epicbharat [Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/editorials/2026/07/dte-korku-ativasi-forest-rights-fra-2026/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → \[bharatnotes.com\]\(https://bharatnotes.com\)](#)

OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

 epicbharat@gmail.com

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · bharatnotes.com