

FACES OF CADASTA



Protecting the Rights of Indian Forest Dwelling Communities

In the Indian states of Odisha and Jharkhand, Cadasta Foundation is working in partnership with the local non-profit organization **Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN)** to document and strengthen the rights and livelihoods of marginalized forest-dwelling communities.

Indian forest dwelling communities rely on having access to forests for their food, resources, and livelihoods. However, many of the forest communities do not know exactly which land belongs to whom and where the village boundaries lie. This lack of clarity has created discrepancies and occasional conflict in land rights and use.

Through the Recognition of Forest Rights Act of 2006 and the Community Forest Resources Rights (CFRR), PRADAN works with eligible local communities to apply for government recognition of rights to forest reserves. Utilizing Cadasta's tools and training, PRADAN works with the communities to map and demarcate agreed-upon forest boundaries to develop a system of protection for the community forest areas. The data collected on Cadasta's Platform enables the communities to develop their own land use and management plans, governance processes, and mechanisms for forest protection.



Rajimai Malik

Meet Rajimai Malik, a 60-year-old farmer living in Jaikikia, a village in Odisha State, India. Rajimai lives with six members of her family and together they grow vegetables, such as tomatoes and peanuts, and raise goats.

Rajimai is working with Cadasta and PRADAN to clarify the boundaries of her land ownership. Rajimai has government titles for ten pieces of land but these titles do not indicate the specific boundaries of each plot. Without this information, families such as Rajimai's cannot tell who has claim or official ownership to each plot, making it difficult to plan their agricultural land use accordingly.

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We don't know if my name is on the title issued from the Forest Rights Act, so that is a problem. We have the titles but we don't know where each piece of land is and how much land we have available. We cannot identify the area of the land.

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While they have the preliminary certificates, Rajimai's family is eager to work with Cadasta so they can clarify the boundaries of their property. When discussing what she hoped the results of this project would be, Rajimai elaborated,

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We are in possession of ten pieces of land but we don't know for which piece of land the title applies and for other pieces of land we don't have any title yet. That's why we need to map it and document it properly so that we can get an accurate title of possession.

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Using Cadasta's data collection tools, families like Rajimai's can efficiently document and map their land which will enable them to make better-informed decisions for their agricultural and business practices.



Botomailka

Meet Botomailka. Botomailka is a 60-year-old resident of Jaikikia, a village in Odisha State, India where he lives with his wife and six children. Botomailka's family relies on their forest land for agriculture. Like Rajimali, Botomailka hopes that by documenting his community's land using Cadasta's tools, he will have a better sense of his property boundaries for agricultural planning.

Currently, Botomailka does not have any issues accessing or using the land for agriculture but would like to have a clearer sense of which property belongs to his family.

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With this work, I foresee that we will have the right certificate, right and new, and upcoming generations of my family will have secure land rights.

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By working with PRADAN and Cadasta, Botomailka hopes to secure his land titles for the future. He hopes that through this project, he will receive an official land certificate that will accurately document his land ownership.

