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## INFORMATION ON SAKTI

### 1. Full Name of the applicant Organization – SAKTI (Search for Action and Knowledge of Tribal Initiative)

### 2. Legal status and type of institution

(International / national NGO, competence centers, net works / consortiums etc) National NGO

### 3. Year of Establishment- 1985 Registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 with a executive and general body of members.

1. **Contact email:**saktisrk@yahoo.com

2. **Location of head office Country:** India **City:** Hyderabad

3. **Full postal address of the head office:** SAKTI, Flat no 305, 1<sup>st</sup> Block, Janapriya Abodes Gandhinagar, Hyderabad. Telangana State .Pin 500080 Phone: 040 66624788 Mobile 9441427977, 9100931658 (M)

4. **Contact person P.Sivaramakrishna, founder secretary of society**

5. **website:** www.sakti.in

### 6. Main thematic area

1 ) Securing Indigenous and Other Forest-dependent Population's Rights and Interests.

2 ) Mapping vulnerabilities and capabilities with local names in the traditional customary boundary maps for sustainable interventions.

### SAKTI's experience with REDD+ work:

Following activities in conservation and development of natural resources ,documentation of tribal knowledge , training in livelihoods skills, ensuring their rights over natural resources led to REDD+ work

**Skill development & Afforestation programmes:** Tribal youth selfemployment programs viz., carpentry, blacksmith, mechanics and cane furniture weavers etc , were initiated to mould forest felling tribal labourers as skilled community . Taken up afforestation on lands under shifting cultivation with the support of Integrated Tribal development Agency in East Godavari District during 1985-87. Operating weighing balances in markets to check cheating . Provided solar lighting to households of Kachuluru village in Devipatnam mandal.

**Checking deforestation** -- SAKTI was successful in filing PILs ( Public Interst Litigation ) invoking Forest conservation Act, Land Transfer Regulation of V<sup>th</sup> Schedule of Indian constitution by stopping the wood supply from the forest to the local plywood factory (1987), restored rights of tribes on the allotment of trees producing *kattha* - a derivative used for medicinal purpose(1991) , closing laterite mines (1993) and prevented felling of private forests by timber merchants (1990).

Andhra Pradesh (AP) State High Court put on hold the agreements of AP Govt. with alumina companies to excavate bauxite in Visakhapatnam district (2006).

**Supporting land rights movement** -The efforts in restoring the tribal lands emerged as a movement in West Godavari (W.G) and Khammam districts. The State government distributed updated land records to the tribes in advance, followed by verification of enjoyments in the Gram Sabha ( habitation meetings) to identify and evict the encroachers (1997). Govt distributed 750 hectares cashew plantations raised by forest dept to 800 tribal families in Khammam District. State rural development dept engaged SAKTI to train 'bare foot land surveyors'. Supreme Court directed the AP State Govt. to appoint an independent officer to enquire into the atrocities committed against the tribes during the land rights movement (2009).

**Disaster preparedness & developing traditional water bodies** - SAKTI has been active in the disaster preparedness and relief activities during the floods of Godavari river in 1987 and super cyclone in 1996. Renovated drinking water tanks in Dalit habitations. Introduced retrofitted houses, revived the economy of weavers and propagated disaster preparedness skills among the school children. Renovated traditional irrigation tanks as an alternative to the construction of Bhupathipalem reservoir displacing 300 families of 3 villages. Developed iron removal plants to filter soluble iron from the ground water, wheel pump to pump up water, constructed spring boxes with hand pumpsto get drinking water.

**Rehabilitation of dsipalced** - Many irrigation projects are being constructed in the low lands of tribal areas both Godavari Districts, displacing tribals from their habitations. SAKTI is helping these communities in getting due entitlements in rehabilitation and motivating them to take up fishing in the water bodies that are being created.

**Integrating traditional knowledge** -SAKTI Initiated a Tribal Knowledge Complex in its office campus in Rampachodavaram village, brought out calendars on tribal culture and their knowledge systems for three years with the support of ITDA (2008-10). State Tribal welfare dept engaged SAKTI to train social mobilisers in preparing traditional customary boundary maps (TCBM). Published the traditional forest management systems documented by the PVT Chenchu youth. These youth raised up to the level of knowledge partners in the sanctuary management in Rajeev wildlife sanctuary in Nagarjuna Sagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve in Nallamala forests. Chenchu habitat is spread over 10000 Square kilometers of forest in 5 districts Mahaboobnagar, Prakasam, Kurnool, Guntur and Nalgonda. In this forest 3500 square kilometers are under wildlife sanctuary and Tiger reserve. For the first time they were enrolled as voters in local body elections. SAKTI succeeded in motivating the hunter gatherer Chenchu PVT (population 49232, 307 habitations and 12,000 families) to switch over to fishing by gaining rights over water bodies. Developed training modules for the implementation of PESA ( Panchayatraj Extended to Scheduled Areas ) -

**Governance systems :Hill tracts** are fragile eco systems and tribes who live here are vulnerable communities. Indegenous communities are known as tribes in India. Among the population of India 8% are tribes, who live in the hill tracts ( eastern ghats, western ghats, north east etc). Such areas in the hill tracts with highest population of tribes are governed by laws amended/regulated under V and VI Schedules of Indian constitution. So they are known as scheduled areas. Some more laws to strengthen participatory governance systems in these areas are introduced, such as, Panchayatraj (local governance) extended to scheduled area (PESA) and Scheduled tribes and other Forest dwellers recognition of rights, popularly known as

Recognition of Forest Rights (RoFR) or Forest rights act (FRA). Govt institution, ITDA through sub-plans, is working for the development of the tribes.

**Lifestyle of tribes** -Among the tribes, 75 communities living in high forest areas are identified as particularly vulnerable tribes (PVTs), as they are living in pre agricultural stage of life style in inaccessible areas. Tribes in these hill tracts are predominantly food gatherers, collect non timber forest produce (NTFP) to exchange in the markets, practice shifting cultivation.

Each tribal habitation has traditional customary boundaries (TCMB), traditional customary councils (Tcc) which resolve the disputes, celebrate the festival and maintain peace and harmony in their habitation

**Rights over Traditional habitats** -In 2006 Parliament enacted a legislation, RoFR recognizing the traditional practices and livelihood of the tribes in reserve forest covering 1) Rights over minor forest produce, 2) Water bodies, 3) Grazing, traditional resource access for nomadic and pastoralist, 4) Community tenures to PVTs, 5) Right to access biodiversity, intellectual property and traditional knowledge, 6) Other traditional rights along with individual rights for the lands under cultivation within the traditional boundaries of the habitation. Among communities constituted by Govt at different levels to recognise these rights, 50% members are elected representatives of tribes.

Thus, the acts and rules and governance systems recognize the distinct lifestyle of tribes, their development needs and necessity to conserve the fragile forest eco system. The literacy rate among the tribes is below average. Knowledge of governance systems of tribes is not part of school syllabus. So we have to go a long way in understanding and relating to the tribes. Tribes also need lot of motivation in understanding and adapting to these governance systems. The rejection rate of claims for recognition of rights in the forest is high. The land distribution is negligible. The situation of rehabilitation is poor. (Please refer in the internet. 'The Report of High level committee on socio economic, health and educational status of tribal communities in India' - Virginius XaXa 2014)

#### **Action plan to improve the conditions-**

Facilitating the process of conferring land rights, recognition of community and individual rights in the forests as envisaged in the Acts, rules.

- Facilitate the traditional boundary dispute resolution and use of degraded forest lands in a rotation /fallow method to allow rejuvenation of resources.
- Involving the tribes actively in forest conservation and wild life protection activities, promoting use of alternative energies /natural resources viz., solar energy, microhydal power plants etc
- Maintain biodiversity inventories & getting recognition under Bio diversity Act 2002.
- Strengthen the local governance systems PESA.
- Motivating the tribes to learn the improved livelihood options using natural resources on a sustainable manner
- Facilitating the communities in preparing traditional customary boundary maps and superimposing GPS on these maps, maintain Bio diversity registers in the tribal areas of East and West Godavari districts
- Document traditional tribal knowledge to enable them to become knowledgeable partners in Papikonda wild life sanctuary management.

- Provide legal aid .
- Work with Govt in sustainable management of natural resources.
- Ensure proper rehabilitation for the communities facing displacement under Indira Sagar (Polavaram ) multi purpose project.

**Project description**

**Project area -**

East Godavari and West Godavari Districts in eastern ghats were named after River Godavari as it passes through both Districts, , population In E.G total 216629 /Sechuled tribe 146095(W.G total population 110940 Sechuled tribe 52569( 2001 Census). Papikonda wildlife ( bison ) sanctuary is spread over in both districts.Kondareddies are PVTs (83096) predominantly residing in high forest area which is catchment and watershed area. Koya is another tribe preferring settled agriculture, but still practicing shifting cultivation. Kondakapus are farm labourers. Valmikis, though numerically small,have highest literacy rate.

**Adaptation to the climate change** – The floods of the river inundate the habitations on the bank.The communities cultivate dry crops after floods recede. SAKTI takes up preparedness and relief operations. To adjust to the changing climatic situations that are affecting the sweet orange cultivation in these tribal areas, SAKTI encouraged tribes to take up hill broom propagation and annatto seeds plantation locally known as 'Jafrá'. As part of the project, SAKTI plans to facilitate the construction of the agricultural infrastructure through the ITDA to improve the productivity,alternative energy source as well as livelihoods of tribal farmers. New opportunities, ecotourism in the Bison Sanctuary and fishing enable them maintain resources in sustainable way.

**Displacement** – Govt of India taken up Indira Sagar ( Polavaram ) multipurpose project across river Godavari . This project displaces tribes and other forest dwellers of 46909 families in 280 habitations with apopulation of 189041 Responding to the petition of SAKTI, Central empowered committee constituted by Supreme Court directed the government to prepare survey number wise rehabilitation plans for the tribes , complete rehabilitation before taking up the construction of project. Now eviction of 7 villages at damsite is going on. The eviction is for the time being put on hold as the people are demanding completion of rehabilitation and settlement of dues. People are facing hardships due to blasting at damsite

**Project impact –**

- 1)The security of tenures encourages the communities to develop the resources and conserve the forest under community ownership and land restoration provides assured livelihoods
- 2) Proper rehabilitation will enable the displaced to settle and take up emerging livelihoods.
- 3 ) Enable the tribes to become knowledge partners in natural resource management and promote eco friendly tourism
- 4 ) Empowering communities with an understanding on administrative process to ensure proper entitlements.
- 5 ) Equip the tribes to mitigate the disasters such as flash floods, soil erosion etc and build the capacities to adjust to impact of climate change in them to tap the alternative energy sources such as solar energy, microhydal plants etc.

**APPROACH**

The impact of climate change and the sustainable measures at relevant places are classified in four categories

- 1) Forests are reservoirs of water and lungs of environment. At each place with local name in the traditional boundary map on the status of tree cover, bio diversity, livelihoods: threats as explained by the local tribes. Suggested remedial and improvement measures at each place.
- 2) Agriculture diversity, changes, adaptation practices, drought proofing mechanisms followed by local community. Threats, remedial measures and sustainable practices at each place.
- 3) Disaster preparedness. Identification of vulnerable areas (landslides, soil erosion, flash floods, drinking water scarcity due to drying of perennial streams).
- 4) Renewable and sustainable interventions to meet the energy demands through hydrams, solar and biogas technologies at each place.

**Methodology –**

- 1 ) Discussion and trainings with the customary councils, gramasabhas, peoples representatives .
  - 2 ) Tools - Preparation of Traditional customary maps , Biodiversity inventories.
  - 3 ) Advocacy -showcasing best practices and influencing decision makers
  - 4 ) Review and internal evaluation
12. **Main target group:** Tribes and other forest dwellers of Visakha, East and West Godavari, Khammam Districts and Nallamala forest of Andhra Pradesh, India.

**Partnership -**

**SAKTI & donors .**

S.No	Year	Name of the funding agency	Name of the project
1	1985-2002	Oxfam UK	Tribal empowerment programme in East Godavari West Godavari and Khammam Districts
2	1985 to 1990	ITDA Rampachodavaram	Trysems , afforestation
3	1992	Water Aid	Drinking water – protection of springs , construction of iron removal plants to filter ferrous sulfate content in ground water .

4	1992	APCOST – Andhra Pradesh Council of Science – Technology	Solar lights installation
5	1993	SPWD ( Society for Promotion of Waste Lands )	Renovation of irrigation tanks and check dams in tribal areas of East Godavari district.
6	1993	SPWD	Organizing community forest management in Eastern Ghats.
7	2002 to 2014	Aid India	Chenchu Empowerment Project in Nagarjuna Sagar Srisaillam Tiger Reserve
8	2003	SERP ( Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty Govt of AP	Training of bare foot land surveyors
9	2004	Oxfam India Society	South Asia Water Governance Project.
10	2004	HIVOS	Tribal Empowerment Programme.
11	2006	IWMI ( International Water Management Institute	Site Coordinator of the Field Studies in the Strategic Analysis of the River Linking Project of India Godavari – Krishna link
12	2006	UNICEF , Hyderabad	Improving the Water and Sanitation and Nutrition situations in the Tribal areas in East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh
13	2006	WWF International ICRISAT project	Creating data base on Indira Sagar
14	2007	Care STEP	Sustainable Tribal Empowerment Programme.
15	2005 to 2007	Oxfam India (Svaraj )/ SIDA	Strengthening food security and livelihoods through integrated management of water resources by communities programme.

16	2007	SPWD , NRSA & SAKTI	Large scale wasteland mapping and preparation of a methodology for land use information for development planners: A case study of Rampachodavaram Mandal of East Godavari.
17	2008	SPWD	Action research project of a Sub-basin perspective plan Comprising of Practical Scientific Approach on Water Governance and Livelihoods and for Contributing to Policy Dialogue on these at the Sub basin Level.
18	2008	Oxfam Trust	Study on Impact of Climate Change in Godavari basin
19	2008	ITDA , Rampachodavaram	Training on RoFR in preparing traditional customary boundary map.
20	2008	ITDA , Rampachodavaram	Developing and printing of Tribal Calendars.
21	2008	ITDA Rampachodavaram	Developing Tribal Knowledge Complex in the campus of SAKTI.
22	2010	WWF India	Study on Implementation of ROFR in AP
23	2008- to 2011	DST ( Department of Science & Tecnology ) GOI	Empowering the Chenchus in NTFP processing to Enhance the Economic Returns
24	2008	CIDA ( Canadian International Development Agency )	Capacity building of Communities and Civil Society in Governance of Natural Resources in Khammam and East Godavari districts of A.P
25	2012- 2013	Action Aid	Strengthening Adivasi Self Governance
26	2005	Action Aid Chennai	Study on Livelihoods of Marine Fisher folk in South India

27	2004	Oxfam America	Preparation of training material on disaster preparedness
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#### Membership

- SAKTI was member in State Wildlife Board.( 2010
- Member in the Committee constituted by AP Govt to define 'forests.'(1997 )
- Member of CAPART Hyderabad region ( 2003 )
- Partner of strengthening livelihoods around Protected areas network WWF India (2010 )
- Member in Committee to award studies on PESA convened by National Institute of rural Development –UNDP.

#### Citations - Some of the observations on the achievements of SAKTI

1) "SAKTI's strength has been a thorough understanding of administrative and legal procedures, which it has used to ensure that Tribals derive due and effectual benefits from the law'. 'Cyclones in Andhra Pradesh – Oxfam GB publication "

2) "NGO supported community based coconservation : NGOs are supporting community struggle for conservation of their resources in two ways one is to fight the attempts of entrenched classes to do any more damage and the second is to devise positive solutions for conservation. For example SAKTI is a federation of 23 community groups who have been protecting their forests over 10 years , much before the advent of JFM, and because of their strength , are in a position to consolidate their conservation efforts by utilizing JFM provisions."-Aravind Khare in 'Community based conservation in India' 1998.Kalpavrish publication

#### Engaging to train barefoot land surveyors:

'Subject: Training to barefoot surveyors under Velugu program – pilot project – reg.

Velugu program intends to build the capacities of the poor to secure their rights and entitlements. The program envisages nurturing barefoot professionals who are available to the poor to access services and secure rights and entitlements. It is found that land issue is one of the major areas where poor require lot of support and knowledge base. Hence it is proposed to pilot in one mandal in SKLM district, the whole approach to building the capacities of the activists on land issues.

Mr. Sivaramakrishna and his team of experts on land issues have been requested by me to pilot this in one Mandal for a period of one month by conducting training (theoretical and practical) to the activists identified by the PD for land issues. The training program will commence on 25<sup>th</sup> Feb at the mandal identified by the PD. " CEO SERP dated 15-02-200210

3 ) "Two tribal villages are selected from two scheduled mandals from West Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh. Reddi Ganapavaram village is semi forest based and Dhrabhagudem is forest based village . The tribal movements in Reddi Ganapavaram led by political parties under the leadership of non Tribals while, the tribal movements led by Tribals with the help of NGO SAKTI in the Dhrabhagudem village. The efforts of radical organizations and political parties have failed, whereas the effort of an NGO has succeeded with more potential." – IJDS (International Journal of Development Studies) volume V, issue 1 January – June 2013 .

#### CEC recommendations on rehabilitation of displaced under Indira Sagar – Polavaram

"The lessons learnt from the earlier projects such as Sardar Sarovar Project and the other major projects should be taken into consideration while finalizing the R&R Plan. The following specific suggestions are therefore made:

- i) the precise details of the land identified for the rehabilitation of the project displaced persons including the site for the construction of house and agriculture land should be made public. This would also imply that the particulars of the land proposed to be allotted to each of the displaced person should be decided in advance;
- ii) the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the R&R should be done by an independent Monitoring Committee consisting of eminent experts and NGOs with adequate powers to effectively perform its function;
  - iii) concurrent monitoring and evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the R&R should be carried out under the directions and supervision of the Monitoring Committee. If the R&R is found to be lagging with reference to the fixed bench marks, the construction should accordingly be deferred/stopped;
- iv) the R&R should be implemented in such a way that minimum disturbance is caused to the PAP and the compensation for land is in the form of land. Concurrent audit of the R&R works should be carried out. The Monitoring Committee should be capable of taking rational decisions and making recommendations independently uninfluenced by the Government." Recommendations of Central Empowerment Committee in IA No 1572&1578 dated 09-11-2006 , SAKTI vs Govt .

#### Engaging SAKTI in the implementation of Forest Rights:

'Kind attention is invited to the reference cited, wherein Dr.P.Siva RamaKrishna, Director 'Sakthi', RC Varam, East Godavari district was requested to prepare the district wise (ITDAs) Traditional and Customary Boundary map (Resource map) in consultation with the elders of the habitats and traditional usages such as religious places, burial grounds, village council sites along with places of MFP, water resources, bio diversity etc. and also Primitive Tribal Groups tenures for conferring rights under RoFR Act, 2006. "- Commissioner Tribal Welfare.

4 ) "In Nagarjunsagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve (Andhra Pradesh), participatory mapping to claim CFRT has included detailed observations based on traditional knowledge and cultural practices, and the claims would cover virtually all of the tiger reserve (Sivaramakrishnan, SAKTI, personal communication)."

"At some sites, CFRT claims have been processed and accepted. Amongst the first were community rights to a reservoir (for fish, water) and forest produce obtained by the Chenchu tribe in Nagarjunsagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve (Andhra Pradesh),"

"Some state governments actively encouraged such involvement. In Andhra Pradesh, for instance, civil society groups were commissioned by the government to help special groups like the Chenchu PTG to make customary use maps for claiming CFRT (Sivaramakrishna 2010). Manthan in "Report of National Committee on Forest Rights Act "- December 2010 A Joint Committee Ministry of Environment and Forests and Ministry of Tribal Affairs Govt of India

**Riding the storm – 2004 Community experience from diaster preparedness initiatives in AP – Oxfam publication ( see diaster management [www.sakti.in](http://www.sakti.in) )**

**Evaluation–Mukta Srivastava –( now Secretary NAPM ) .(See SAKTI evaluations–[ww.sakti.in](http://ww.sakti.in))**

#### **Land marks in the progress of SAKTI**

##### **I) Land marks in the progress of SAKTI**

- 1987 officials allowed SAKTI to copy land records
- In 1996 officials were forced to distribute land records to tribes
- High Court allowed locus standi of SAKTI in all the courts adjudicating land rights.
- In 2001 SERP engaged SAKTI to train bare foot land surveyors.

##### **II ) Forest –**

- Forest department allowed collection of cane wood by tribes for trysems ( 1995 )
- SAKTI was the member of the drafting committee of JFM guidelines (1992), SAKTI did not participate in the programme as the department ignored implementation of rest of tribal forest interface guidelines of FC act such as regularizing the encroachment, forest villages, minimum wages etc.
- Engaged as trainer in preparing customary boundary maps.
- Chenchu PVT taken up fishing in Rajeev wild life sanctuary.
- Published traditional knowledge documented by Chenchus.

##### **III) Water**

- Drinking water
- Hand pump repair
- Spring boxes with hand pumps , Wheel pump
- Renovation of drinking water tanks in dalit habitations.
- Irrigation –
- Renovation of tanks
- Fishing in water bodies

##### **IV). Rehabilitation**

- Forced the Govt to include 57 households of backwater affected habitation Chodiveedhi in Surampalem rehabilitation
- Supported Bhupathipalem, Musurimilli, Indira Sagar displaced tribes to calculate the compensation, bargain for better package of rehabilitation.
- CEC of Supreme Court directed to complete rehabilitation first, before taking up Indira Sagar project.

##### **V Disaster Preparedness –**

- Retrofitted houses
- Reviving the weaver economy.

- Training the school children in DP &M.

##### **VI Alternative energy – solar lighting to all the households of Kachuluru village in Devipatnam mandal.**

##### **VII Human rights**

- Supreme Court directed to appoint an independent officer.
- Habeas corpus to produce Tokala Mallaiah from illegal police custody.
- Chenchu PVTs were enrolled for the first time as voters in local body elections.
- Elections were conducted to Cooperative societies of Girijan Cooperative Corporation.

##### **VIII PILs to conserve the forests**

- Timber supply to plywood factory stopped ( 1987 – 95 )
- Private forest felling was prevented.( 1990 )
- Mines were closed.(1993 )
- Rights on katha trees restored ( 1991 )
- Eviction of tribes from forests stayed (2003).
- Samata judgment allowing APMDC is challenged; agreements put on hold (2006).
- Proactive steps to recognize the uses in the forest irrespective of applications(2010)

##### **IX Minimum wages**

- Forced Forest and Tribal welfare depts. to pay the arrears in the minimum wages.