

*FROM THE VILLAGE STAGE TO NATIONAL AIRWAVES:  
KORAPUT'S GRAM SABHAS ORGANISE TO MANAGE AND BENEFIT  
FROM*

## **THE KENDU LEAF TRADE**

In Koraput district's Boipariguda block, 103 Gram Sabhas have formed the Boipariguda Mahasangh intending to reclaim traditional rights over the kendu leaf trade, a key non-timber forest product used in beedi making. Through provisions of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006, the Mahasangh is asserting community rights to manage and benefit from forest produce that was previously controlled by the state.



This collective effort is creating livelihood opportunities, reducing distress migration, and enabling economic benefits to remain within the community. Women play a central role in this initiative, managing collection centers and overseeing processing. The Mahasangh continues to face regulatory hurdles and requires permissions to fully implement its plans.



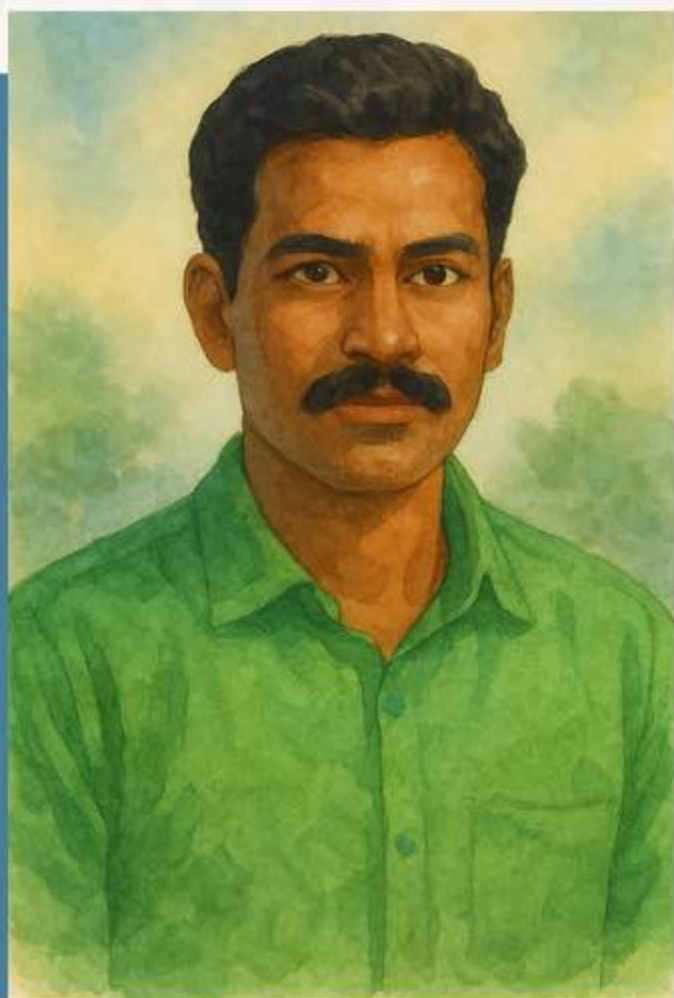
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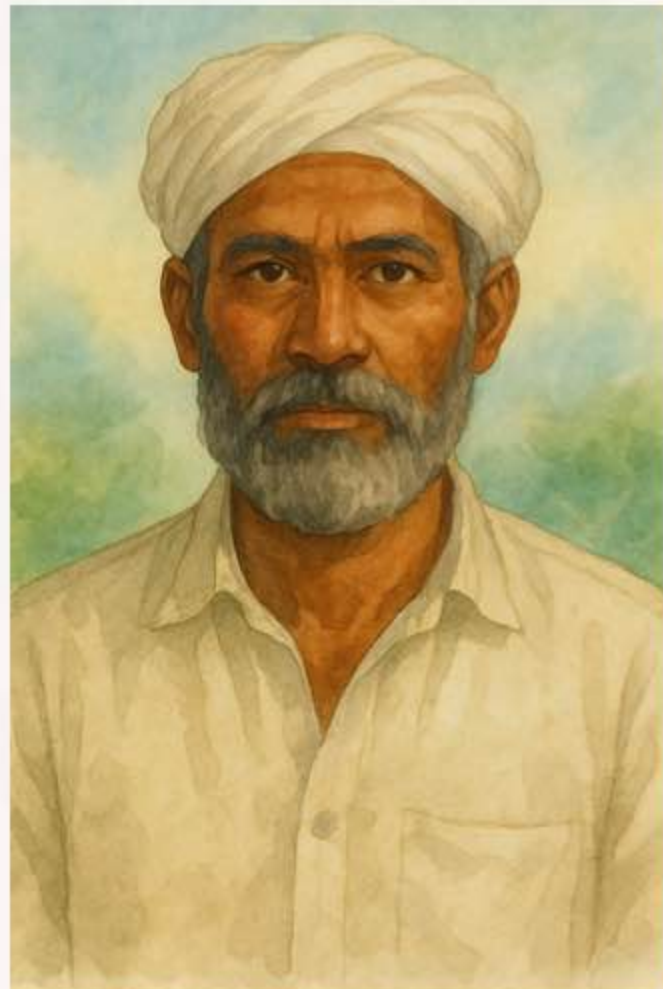
**Laxmi Pangi, young processor and trainer**

“The women of our village have become leaders. We are managing the collection and processing centers and ensuring that our families and communities benefit.”



**Narayan Muduli, gram sabha member**

“Earlier, we had to migrate for work but now the kendu leaf trade is giving us an income here at home.”



**Sukru Jani, elder**

“We need the government to listen to us and speed up the process of giving us the rights and permissions we deserve.”



**Basanti Majhi, woman leader, collection center manager**

“We used to work for others, but now we manage and control our own resources. It has given us confidence.”

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*How Common Ground Supported This*

Aishwarya Mohanty, a member of the Women's Communicators Group in Odisha under Common Ground, worked closely with community members to document and amplify this story. SPREAD (Society for Promoting Rural Economy and Agricultural Development) and NIRMAN (Network for Integrated Rural and Mountain Area Nurturing) partnered with Common Ground to support community efforts on the ground, providing technical and organizational support for Gram Sabha mobilization and resource management.

Common Ground partner Asar supported Aishwarya in documenting the story, ensuring local voices are highlighted and shared with wider audiences, including media and policy stakeholders. By working with partners and local communities, the communicator connected with grassroots actions like the Mahasangh with larger policy discourses around FRA implementation and community rights over forest produce.

Read More: [Koraput's Gram Sabhas Harness Economic Potential Of Kendu Leaves](#)



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