

IGNTU, Amarkantak Becomes Hub of Tribal Empowerment with the Establishment of New Centre of Excellence on PESA

“PESA in Action” Compendium Unveiled, Highlights Best Practices in Grassroots Governance

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The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj, in collaboration with the Government of Madhya Pradesh and Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU), Amarkantak, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** today in Bhopal, **to establish a Centre of Excellence on PESA**. The initiative marks a major step towards strengthening local self-governance in tribal areas and the effective implementation of the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA). **This Centre of Excellence at IGNTU, Amarkantak will serve as a dedicated platform for research, capacity building, participatory planning, and policy support, aligned with the broader goals of tribal empowerment and localized sustainable development.**

The event was graced by Shri Vivek Bharadwaj, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj; Smt. Dipali Rastogi, Principal Secretary, Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Government of Madhya Pradesh; Smt. Mukta Shekhar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj; Prof. Byomakesh Tripathy, Vice-Chancellor (I/c), IGNTU; along with other senior officials. A key highlight of the event was the formal **launch of the PESA Compendium titled “PESA in Action: Stories of Strength and Self-governance”**, a curated document capturing best practices, case studies, legal provisions, and field innovations from across the PESA-implementing States.

In his address, **Shri Vivek Bhardwaj, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj**, emphasized that only strong and resilient institutions endure and play a vital role in sustaining policy outreach. In this context, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU), Amarkantak has been identified as a strategic partner for establishing the Centre of Excellence. The initial partnership has been formalized for a period of three years, with a shared vision that the collaboration will extend well beyond to ensure deeper and sustained engagement with tribal communities across the 5th Scheduled Areas.

A panel discussion on the theme “Strengthening PESA through Capacity Building, Research and Institutional Support” was held as part of the event. The panel discussion emphasized that institutions like the Centre of Excellence are vital for advancing the spirit of the PESA Act by helping communities realize their rights and governance powers.

Objective of the MoU:

The objective of this MoU is to address persistent challenges in effective PESA implementation by strengthening institutional mechanisms and community capacities in Scheduled Areas. The Centre of Excellence at IGNTU will serve as a hub for innovation, training, research, and advocacy, aligned with the broader goals of Localised Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) and tribal empowerment.

Key Functions:

- Promote awareness and understanding of PESA
- Facilitate participatory GPDP planning

- Build leadership among tribal representatives
- Document customary laws and preserve cultural heritage
- Develop Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and conduct research
- Support State/ District-level PESA Resource Centres

Expected Outcomes:

- Improved PESA implementation
- Regular training of officials and elected representatives
- IEC campaigns in tribal areas
- Research and documentation of traditional practices
- Long-term institutional support for tribal self-governance

This Centre of Excellence will play a key role in documenting traditional tribal customs, cultures, and their medicinal practices. It was noted that IGNTU, through the Centre of Excellence, will promote tribal knowledge and facilitate learning for other communities, aligning with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat. The establishment of the Centre of Excellence is a significant step towards translating the spirit of PESA into action and reinforcing the Government's commitment to inclusive, participatory, and culturally responsive governance in the 5th Scheduled Areas.





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