



LAND ALIENATION PROBLEM IN TELANGANA: HISTORICAL ROOTS AND CONTEMPORARY STRUGGLES

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Introduction

The State of Telangana has been a home to a prominent percentage of the tribal population which is located in different districts of the state like Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam, and Mahaboobnagar. The tribal population constitutes around 8% of the state population and consists of tribals belonging to Gonds, Kolams, Koya, Gotti Koya, Kondareddi, Nayakpodu, Chenchu, Lambadis, and other communities. These tribal groupings have been besieged and plagued by very formidable challenges like abject poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, indebtedness, seasonal diseases and non-tribal intervention along with issues pertaining to land alienation. Among all these intimidating and dreadful problems, the issue of land alienation has proved to be quite telling and salient. It has been the case right from the rule of the Nizamas of Hyderabad till the present-day.

While taking cognizance of the tribal port in India, the study of land alienation plays a very conspicuous and noticeable role. The tribal population of the country in general and the tribals of the Telangana region in particular have been victims of this problem of any nation of land not only during the time of the British colonial rule but also during the post-independence period. Successive governments in the country right from the inception of the nation as an independent nation have been leaving no stone unturned for making positive interventions for finding a lasting solution to this protracted problem. However, the callousness of the bureaucracy laced with indifferent attitude has entangled this issue in many controversies and unwanted litigation. The present research study tries to shed light on the historical process that is involved in the process of alienation of the tribal land during the rule of the British colonial masters and the Nizam rulers and its bearing and implications on the present-day policy process.

Since times immemorial, the tribal communities residing South India have been performing the 'podu cultivation' as a means of earning their livelihood. However, the tribal population resorted to permanent land holdings when the government of the day categorically made a policy to minimize "Podu cultivation". It was during the period of Sir Salar Jung (1960) that the survey and settlement operation was initiated in Telangana region which subsequently converted the land into individual ownership.

The issues pertaining to the tribal agricultural land cropped up because of at least two developments which took place in subsequent periods. They are:

- i. The deprivation of tribals of the agriculture lands in the name of his forests for exploiting the forest wealth by the non-tribals.
- ii Likewise, the advancement of non-tribals into the tribal areas and the subsequent lowering of the tribals by a non-tribals and depriving them of their lands has resulted in the alienation of land to the tribals and which ultimately culminated in pushing them out of their agricultural lands which had resulted in their pauperization.



In order to curtail these developments, the government has been making ceaseless efforts in the form of various Acts, Regulations and Ordinances for preventing and putting 10 and the alienation of land and illegal transfer of the tribal lands into the hands of non-tribals. The prominent among them are

1. The Land alienation Regulations of 1347 F (1937 AD).
2. The agency tracts Interests and Land Transfer Act 1917 (passed by the British Colonial Madras Provincial government).
3. Hyderabad Tribal Area Regulations of 1359 F (1949AD)
(Passed by the Nizam Government in Telangana)
4. The Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Areas Land Transfer Regulation 1959 (The AP Regulation X of 1959.)
5. Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Areas Land Transfer (Amendment) Regulation 1970, Popularly known as 1 of 1970
6. A.P. Scheduled Areas Land Transfer (amendment) Regulation 1971.
7. The Government order of August 1979; G.O. Ms. No.129
(Issued by the Government of Andhra Pradesh)

In spite of many legislations that have been made by the government to prevent the transfer of agricultural land from the tribals non-tribals, the non-tribals were really successful in dodging these legislations and could easily man reply the land records and acquire land from the tribals. The non-tribals, with an intention not to get attracted by the rules and regulations that are being made by the government from time to time, have got the land transfers antedated.

In fact, these enactments put the District Collector or Revenue Divisional Officer as agent and permission of the Agent is mandatory for all land transactions in the Agency area, The non-tribals over a period of time try to influence the bureaucracy to optimize benefits on land issues.

The procedure to detect the malafide transactions on land in agency areas can be done in two forms. Firstly, the aggrieved tribals have to voluntarily bring it to the notice of the responsible officer. Secondly in all the cases where the tribals cannot complaint on their own, the officials have to detect the cases and should try to restore the land back to the tribals.

The present-day tribal youth have gained awareness regarding the manipulations indulged by the non-tribals on the earlier generations of tribal people for gaining control over their agricultural lands. As a result, the cleavage between the tribals and the non-tribals has been widening by the day over this critical land issue. The tribal youth of the present-day have gained knowledge with regard to land rights by going through the previous land records.

The tribal areas of Warangal, Khammam, West Godavari districts and other areas are experiencing volatile and tense situation since the late nineties because of the land disputes between tribals and non-tribals. The successive governments at the state level are alleged to have come under the influence of the industrialists, traders and forest contractors to make land laws very flexible so that they will enable them to acquire and legalize the tribal lands in agency areas. Particularly, the 1of 1970 regulation which was mainly intended to protect the land rights of the tribal peasants is coming for critical review. This facilitates and enables the non- tribals to acquire the lands of tribals.

Secondly, the irregular land transactions which was done both by the plain area people and the native rich against the back drop of prohibiting non tribals acquiring tribals lands, is presently coming under



serious scrutiny of educated and semi-educated tribal youth and has been making the tribals reassert themselves in reclaiming their land rights. This has results in sharp polarization of society into tribal and non-tribal denominations on the one hand and on the other hand leading to serious law and order problems in the aforementioned districts.

In this context, it is highly desirable and warranted that the issue of land alienation can be better understood and appreciated if one can trace and probe the problem of land alienation problem from a historical context and analyse and arrive at the possible solutions to solve the problem. This can be done both at empirical level by studying the situation at the micro level and at the theoretical level for a thorough review of policy dynamics.

The area of Tribal Welfare and development is linked to the nature of Indian State in general and post Independence state in particular. Successive governments in India, both at the union level and provincial level, in the pre-independence era have brought about many a progressive enactment. Again, in the post-independence period also both the Central Government and State Government of Andhra Pradesh have been paying heed to the problems of the marginalized sections, particularly the Scheduled Tribes as a part of their constitutional obligation. Many welfare policies and programmers have been initiated to solve the land ownership question. Political Science has the intellectual impacts to understand these developments.

Various social movements are emerging in the country with rising hands of awareness and assertion of rights by respective communities particularly the Scheduled Tribes movements. These movements have ventilated the interests of Scheduled Tribes in different parts of the Country and also brought to the notice of the authorities concerned. Particularly, the Scheduled Tribes of Andhra Pradesh are up with arms to reclaim their land foregone in the past to land lords, money lenders and petty businessmen. As a part of its academic framework, Political Science studies about the nature of different social movements, methods of protests, demands and interventions.

Political Science also studies the role of Political Parties, Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Rights groups, pressure groups etc. in a give political system either to co-operate or otherwise to the system. Particularly, these political structures are playing a dominant role in bringing the problem of Land alienation to the force.

Conclusion

The problem of land alienation is acquiring wider proportions in the later part of 20th century in the state of Andhra Pradesh in many of the scheduled areas. The present study “Review of Land Transfer Regulations in Historical Perspective - A Case Study of Tribal Villages in Warangal and Khammam Districts of Andhra Pradesh” made certain interesting findings. The study explores the possibilities of resolving the problem of land alienation in agency areas. The study is interdisciplinary nature. Sociologically, it understands the traditions and customs, livelihood patterns and Methodism of dispute resolution among tribals. The topic also has relevance to Political Science and Public Administration it reviewed many enactments and public policies formulated for the welfare of different tribal communities. Though the studies that are done are both comprehensive and organized, the present research study has certain limitations while dealing with the various issues relating to the problem of land alienation. The size of the sample may be much higher. The study suggests that prospective research may be under taken for offering various solutions to this problem in the context of ever changing and dynamic Social, Political, Economic and Demographic principle of the agency areas in the state of Andhra Pradesh.



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