

Date:26/06/2009 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2009/06/26/stories/2009062655520300.htm>

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'Tardy progress in resolving land issues in State'

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Bhubaneswar-based Regional Centre for Development Cooperation conducts study

47 beneficiaries in Koraput district allotted land in 1976-77 yet to get patta

The rate of approval of claims by Forest Rights Committees is only 12 per cent

BHUBANESWAR: Even as the Orissa Government has announced an action plan to address land issues to assuage tribal population in the wake of violence in Narayanpatna block of Koraput district, activists feel that the Government has been making half-hearted attempts to resolve land problem in the State.

Moreover, tardy progress in giving land rights to forest-dwellers, mostly tribals, under Forest Rights Act is fuelling anger in tribal-dominated districts, which are subsequently turning into fertile ground for left-wing extremists.

According to a study conducted by the city-based Regional Centre for Development Cooperation, in Podagada revenue inspector circle of Koraput district ceiling surplus land was allotted to 47 beneficiaries during 1976-77 spreading over six villages. A total of 82.5 acres of land was allotted to them. The allottees took possession of the land without having patta or Record of Rights. Since then these allottees have been waiting to get patta in their names.

MJMD scheme

Realising that various land schemes pertaining to distribution of land among weaker section of society have failed to yield desired result since 1974-75, the Government came up with Mo Jami Mo Diha (MJMD) Scheme in 2007.

Under the scheme administration was supposed to organise fair (mela) to collect grievance from people who were allotted land. First phase of melas were organised while second phase of melas where confirmation of possession on land were to be distributed were not held in most of the districts. Applications from people regarding land disputes have been piling at tehsil level, due to inadequate manpower.

Similarly, under the Forest Rights Act, only 31871 of 288348 claims received by Forest Rights Committees were approved by District Level Committees (DLCs). The approval rate has been about 12 per cent.

In Koraput district, of the 27756 applications from forest dwellers, only 6899 applications had got nod of DLC. Similarly, Kandhamal, where CPI(Maoist) extremists were fast making their presence felt, no claim was finalised by DLC. Slow progress in implementation of Forest Rights Act is another factor that makes tribal population see red. Moreover, in Vasundhara scheme, which was aimed at giving land to landless persons, the State Government has not achieved the target of land distribution. In many of the cases, physical possession of land has not been given to beneficiaries.

At a time when experts on naxalite issue have sounded alarm that Narayanpatna incident would be repeated in other districts to create sympathy wave in favour of CPI (Maoists), half-hearted attempts on part of State government would only make things worse in the State, the study said.

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