

## Distribution of Land to Scheduled Castes by the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

Chikkala Kranthi Kumar

*Department of Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad,  
Hyderabad 500 046, Telangana, India  
E-mail: krakumr@gmail.com*

**KEYWORDS** Assignment of Government Lands. Comprehensive Land Development Programme (CLDP). Indira Jala Prabha. Land Distribution Programmes

**ABSTRACT** This paper discusses the issue of land distributed to members of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) in the period from 1-11-1954 to 3-11-2013 (as on 24-06-2014, in the seventh phase). There will also be a review of the various government programmes initiated for the development of lands allotted to Scheduled Castes and the problems faced by them during the process of distribution of land. It is envisaged that this work would provide a better understanding and help in identifying the problems faced by certain social groups in accessing the land legally allotted to them.

### INTRODUCTION

In India, agriculture continues to be the major source of livelihood for a vast majority of people living in rural areas. No wonder, land continues to be the pivotal property in terms of both income and employment. Also, socio-economic privileges and deprivations can be determined by the extent of land that a person holds. It is rather ironic that even though many members of Scheduled Castes (SCs) reside in rural areas, and derive their livelihood by working on land, they are among the most disadvantaged group in respect of ownership of land. The bulk of them are agricultural labourers having minuscule holdings, sharecroppers or other types of insecure tenants (Beteille 1972; Murdia 1975; Sharma 1994; Diwakar 1999). The 2004-05 Report of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), found the percentage of landlessness amongst SCs living in rural areas to be the extent of 78 percent, as against 57 percent for non-SCs/ STs. Even though the percentage of persons below the poverty line for SCs is gradually declining, as compared to general population, still the figure is very high. Around 91.32 percent of the Scheduled Caste landholders in the country belong to the category of small and marginal farmers (Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare 2010-11). In so far as economic development indicators are concerned, 45.9 percent of the SC population was found to belong to the category of agricultural labourers; 14.8 percent, cultivators and 36.1 percent, other workers (NITI Aayog 2014-15).

Land distribution in India has been found to closely follow a social hierarchy. While the large landowners almost invariably belong to the upper castes, the cultivators belong to the middle castes, and the agricultural workers, largely to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Beteille 1972; Sankaran 1996). Since land is an important socially valued asset, its unequal distribution can help in maintaining the hierarchical structure and strengthen the dominance by the privileged groups, by perpetuating inequality and deprivation in various socio-economic spheres. Seen from this point, the idea of fair distribution of land directly strikes at the roots of such social relations. Therefore, vested interests among the upper castes have opposed the legislative measures with respect to land redistribution through various methods (Joshi 1975; Hiro 1976; Omvedt 1993; Judge 1999).

The result of the researchers' investigations has been organised into various Sections. The first Section will discuss the review of literature. This will also include the objectives of the study, the methodology of the study and the sources from which data was obtained. In the second Section, land distribution programmes in Andhra Pradesh will be discussed. The patterns of land distributed among the landless poor by the Government of Andhra Pradesh from 01-11-1969 to 25-01-2005 in different phases, spread over four time periods, will be presented in the third Section. Land distributed in Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Telangana States (Phase-wise and District-

wise) will be discussed in the fourth section. The fifth Section will examine the trend of land distribution among the various Social Classes in the individual phases. Land based development for Scheduled Castes like comprehensive land development programme and Indira Jala Prabha will be discussed in the sixth Section. The conclusions will be presented in the last section.

### Review of Literature on Land Reform

Here, the researchers discuss how some of the scholars have viewed the issue of land reforms, with particular emphasis on the extent to which the Scheduled Castes, for whom such reforms are primarily meant, have benefitted. The major finding that emerges is that the implementation has been largely lackadaisical and that vested interests have been able to hold sway in land-related matters. One writer has posited: "It seems that fair distribution of land is not possible through mere legislative measures. The law, however well-framed, cannot succeed in the absence of a vigilant public opinion and an active socio-political organisation to help the underprivileged assert their rights over land" (Mohanty 2001: 3867).

Nancharaiah had expressed a similar opinion when he wrote, "More specific legislative, administrative and other measures than mere general legislation need to be undertaken in order to provide access to land for the landless Scheduled Castes and thus ensure equitable distribution of land in Indian agriculture (Nancharaiah 1988). This view is largely in keeping with that of Prashad who wrote: "The level of mass consciousness can be raised only through mass struggle" (Prashad 1995: 210).

### Implementation of Land Reforms

In Land reforms: An Overview (in BN Yugandhar (Ed.) Land reforms in India, Vol 3 Andhra Pradesh – People's Pressure and Administrative innovations), Francis has posited that land reform entails much more than mere distribution of surplus land (resulting from the implementation of ceiling on agricultural land holdings) to small farmers and agricultural labourers. It should also encompass improvements in the conditions of tenancy, agricultural credit, cooperative organisations, agricultural education, marketing advi-

sory services, etc. The intention should be to significantly improve the productivity of the land. The author critically evaluated some of the important land reform legislations promulgated in Andhra Pradesh. These include: (a) AP (Telangana Area) Tenancy and Agriculture Act, 1950. According to the writer, even though the original Act, and its subsequent amendments, aimed at protecting the rights of the tenants, due to the various confusing categories of rights included in these, it became very difficult to implement the provisions of the Act and (b) AP Tenancy Act, 1950. This Act primarily aimed at forestalling large scale eviction of tenants by the landlords. However, the Act could not entirely meet its intended purpose. For one thing, certain Sections of the Act made it difficult for the tenants to obtain justice. Also, the tenants could not always get the desired degree of justice, due to faulty, or inadequate, understanding of the Act by the lower courts. Another drawback was the intricate procedure involved in approaching the judicial authorities. Also, ignorance of the procedure caused a lot of difficulties for the aggrieved tenants. Despite its well-meaning intentions, the AP Land ceiling and Agricultural Holding Act, 1961 did not take the 'leased-out area' into consideration, while computing the ceiling area. This amounted to a ceiling on owner-cultivation – and not on ownership. The author has also mentioned that, due to the long gap between the preparation of the Bill and its actual enactment, many big landlords, who apprehended that they would be found to be holding land in excess of the ceiling, were able to make fraudulent land transfers. At the time of adoption of the Land Reform Act, 1972 in 1973, it was estimated that effective implementation would yield 20 lakh acres of surplus land. However, due to Benami transactions, the figure soon fell to 10 lakh acres. At the time of actual distribution, the extent of available land dwindled even further. On top of that, significant areas of land become subjected to protracted litigation.

This paper will summarise the entire issue into the following points:

- (a) **Intended:** These will include: (i) Abolition of feudalism, (ii) Reduction of disparities in land-ownership, (iii) Greater protection to tenants, and (iv) Distribution of surplus land, and

- (b) **Unintended:** These will include: (i) The abolition of intermediaries entailed payment of heavy compensation to them, (ii) The intermediaries started cultivating land through hired labour and, in course of time, acquired ownership of the land, (iii) There was large-scale eviction of tenants, (iv) Tension was created over the perception that while distributing land among the rural poor, preference was shown for the SC/ST communities.

This writer is convinced that correct assessment and redistribution of land is possible, provided there is political, bureaucratic and legal will to do so. Some of the suggestions made by him include the following:

- (a) All legislations regarding land reforms need to be radically restructured, by plugging all the loopholes,
- (b) It is imperative to constitute land reform committees (which should invariably also include representatives of the landless poor and small and marginal farmers) at the village level. Voluntary organisations working for the rural poor should be given a prominent role in this set-up,
- (c) The flow of institutional credit to small and marginal farmers should be strengthened further. At present, many tenants are forced to seek financial support from the landlords. Consequently, they are unable to oppose them in any way.

#### **Impact of Land Reforms on the Lives of Scheduled Castes**

A perusal of the All-India reports of Agricultural Census for 1980-81 and 1985-86 shows that the net sown area registered has increased in the case of both SCs and STs, whereas for 'others', it showed a decline. A similar trend was noticed in the case of cultivable land. Another indicator of land use is the area under principal crops. The figures obtained from the All-India Agricultural Census Reports for 1980-81 and 1985-86 shows that the access index in respect of food crops had increased in the case of SCs and STs. However, in the case of non-food crops, it declined for both the social groups. The distribution of surplus land among all social groups, as per the Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Sched-

uled Tribes, shows that the figures, both in terms of percentage to total area and percentage to the total number of beneficiaries, are highly skewed in favour of 'others' (Thangaraj 1994). The writer has, therefore, called for state intervention to ensure a more equitable pattern of land distribution and provide land to the tillers and the landless – more so since Dalits form a major chunk of the landless agricultural labourers.

Mohanty (2001) examined "Land Distribution among Scheduled Castes and Tribes." The study brought out that, even after 50 years of planned initiatives and policy measures, there has not been substantial improvement in the landholding status of scheduled groups, and in some states, it has declined further. A perusal of the above studies shows that the lot of many Dalits 'landowners' has generally not improved to the extent envisaged in the various land reforms legislations. Even today, many poor Dalits have not benefited from the development schemes launched by the government.

Kranthi Kumar (2018a) reported the impact of land distribution on the SCs in three Mandals – Garlandine of Anantapur district, Marripadu of Nellore district and Madhira of Khammam district of the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh. He mentioned that the quality of lives of the beneficiaries have been improved that is, provided better education to the children, savings in banks, etc., and more importantly, SCs have become less dependent on moneylenders. In other words, the land reforms have brought remarkable improvement in the economic conditions of many beneficiaries.

Kranthi Kumar (2018b) examined ground realities about Scheduled Castes in the study area regarding land reforms policies. He found that many of the intended beneficiaries in the study area did not have much awareness about their entitlements to land. Also, the village officials were not doing much to spread awareness on this issue. TV emerged as the most popular medium for informing the residents on this issue. One cannot discount the fact that a large number of respondents considered land distribution as a mere election stunt. Majority of the beneficiaries stated that they did not own any land prior to the distribution of land to them. There appeared to be some ambiguity in the handing over the *Patta* (legal ownership document) to the beneficiaries. Without such a document, the allottee could not

have established that he/she was the owner of the allotted land. An area of disquiet was that most of the respondents stated that they had not received any financial assistance from the SC Financial Corporation for developing their land.

He found out a large number of non-Dalits too were allotted land. However, some of the respondents were charitable enough to accept that some of the non-Dalits were given this land on grounds of poverty. In a nutshell, while some efforts have been made to provide a better deal to the hitherto landless, particularly the Scheduled Castes, there are some shortcomings in the actual implements which need to be seriously looked into.

### **Role of the Caste Factor in the Ownership of Land**

In the study, "Scheduled Caste as Agricultural Labourers" Nancharaiah (1989), sought to examine the position of Scheduled Castes as agricultural labourers, vis-à-vis others, in a south Indian village and the changing proportion of Scheduled Caste as permanent farm servants to the total Scheduled Caste agricultural labourers in the same village and the important factors contributing to it, in the context of the green revolution and various developmental measures initiated by the government - particularly during the period 1971-72 to 1981-82. The major finding of the survey is that there was an appreciable decline in the number of permanent farm servants. The psychological feeling of enjoying freedom was the most permanent reason, besides rise in wages, decline in the pre-requisites and government intervention, for the decrease in the number of Palerulus after 1971-72.

Nancharaiah (1988) explored the changing patterns of land ownership in Kanchakonduru village in Andhra Pradesh, taking into consideration the tie-up of agrarian system with the caste system. He examined the position of Scheduled Castes in the proper perspective. His study brought out the decline in the dominance of Brahmins and the rise in the dominance of non-Brahmins (cultivators) in the agrarian scene during 1930-85. The share of Brahmins in land ownership declined from 77 percent in 1930 to 4 percent in 1982, while the share of non-Brahmins increased from 21 percent in 1930 to 85 percent in 1982 and that of Scheduled Castes from two percent to 12 percent. The

study clearly established the dominance of rich peasants belonging to non-Brahmin castes in the economic and political institutions of the village. It can be surmised from the studies related to the caste factor that, even though land reforms may have improved the economic status of some of the Dalit beneficiaries, the upper castes have generally continued to be dominant in the economic and political spheres, especially in the rural areas. Also, the land reforms have not helped much in improving the social status of the Dalits, who continue to languish at the bottom rung of the social ladder.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study has been undertaken with the objectives of examining the land distribution pattern, with particular reference to SCS in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States. The trend of land distribution among the various social classes in the individual phases and land based development for Scheduled Castes will also be discussed.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The data used herein has been based on the secondary data collected. Secondary data includes Assignment of Government Lands in Andhra Pradesh during the Period 1.11.1969, to 25.01.2005 collected from the Chief Commissioner, Land Administration, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh particulars of 1 to 6 phases land distributed for SCs in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States (Phase-wise and District-wise, as on 15-03-2013).

### **Brief Description of the Study Area**

Secondary data has been collected from three regions namely Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. It is well known that the earlier State has now been divided into Andhra Pradesh (comprising of Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema) and Telangana States in June 2014. As per 2011 Census, male and female populations in all three districts were almost equal. Remarkably, the same was applicable to SCs population. On the other hand, it emerged that the proportion of SCs to the total population of the district was very significant in Nellore (19.82%) and Khamman districts (15.18%),

as against 12.61 percent in Anantapur district. As per the distribution of surplus assigned land to SCs, it was ascertained from Chief Commissioner, Land Administration, Anantapur district was in the first position, followed by Nellore and Khammam Districts. This seems to be rather enigmatic since Nellore District has the largest number of SCs among the three districts.

## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

### Land Distribution Programmes in Andhra Pradesh

Since its inception in 1956, the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has made efforts towards reasonable distribution of land through various programmes like land ceilings, and assigning government waste-land and Bhoodan land to the landless. Around 52 lakh acres of land has been distributed to 31 lakh beneficiaries. The programme has picked steam from 2004 year onwards.

The institutional support for the development of these lands for certain categories had been vested on the SC Corporation. Besides, the State has launched Comprehensive Land Development Programme (CLDP) under the Indira Kranthi Padham (IKP), through which it has initiated the development of distributed land of SC beneficiaries. In addition, some other programmes were also initiated in this direction. These include: Development of lands of the beneficiaries of land-based programmes through the MGNREGA Scheme of the Union Ministry of Rural Development.

In order to bridge this gap, the Government of Andhra Pradesh took some initiatives to redistribute the surplus land among the landless poor. An attempt will be made in this paper to present the patterns of land distributed among the landless poor by the Government of Andhra Pradesh from 01-11-1969 to 25-01-2005 in different phases, spread over four time periods. The details of the same are presented in Table 1.

### Land Distributed in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States (Phase-wise and District-wise)

The present stage of land distribution in the then State of Andhra Pradesh was undertaken in seven phases during the periods January 2005 to

March 2013. The 'progress' in these six phases are depicted in the Table 2. The intention would be to ascertain whether any particular social classes had 'dominated' in the individual districts of both the states in receiving the land-related benefits.

### Andhra Pradesh

**1<sup>st</sup> Phase:** The maximum gainers, both in terms of number of beneficiaries and extent of land allotted to them, were found in Nellore District – 8361 and 9318.89 acres respectively. At the other end of the spectrum was East Godavari District, with figures of 413 and 168.69 acres respectively.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Phase:** The maximum figures, both in terms of number of beneficiaries and extent of land allotted to them, were found in Prakasam District – 3910 and 5410 acres respectively. At the other end of the spectrum, was East Godavari District, with figures of 268 and 160.85 acres respectively.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Phase:** The maximum figures, both in terms of number of beneficiaries and extent of land allotted to them, were found in Chittoor District – 2342 and 2892.1 acres respectively. At the other end of the spectrum, was East Godavari District, with figures of 207 and 135.77 acres respectively.

**4<sup>th</sup> Phase:** The maximum figures, both in terms of number of beneficiaries and extent of land allotted to them, were found in Vishakhapatnam District – 30926 and 31235.26 acres respectively. The lowest figures were seen in Kumool – 2619 and 5366.75 acres respectively.

**5<sup>th</sup> Phase:** The maximum figures, both in terms of number of beneficiaries and extent of land allotted to them, were found in Chittoor District – 3941 beneficiaries and 4773.47 acres respectively. At the other end of the spectrum, was West Godavari District, with figures of 62 and 60.73 acres respectively.

**6<sup>th</sup> Phase:** The maximum figures, both in terms of number of beneficiaries and extent of land allotted to them, were found in Anantapur District – 2096 beneficiaries and 3675.98 acres respectively. At the other end of the spectrum, was East Godavari District with figures of 37 and 38.01 acres respectively.

### Telangana

**1<sup>st</sup> Phase:** The maximum 'gainers', both in terms of number of beneficiaries and extent of land allotted to them were found in Karimnagar

Table 1: Assignment of Government Lands in AP during the Period 1.11.1969, to 25.01.2005

District	SCs		STs		BCs		Others		Total	
	No.	Extent	No.	Extent	No.	Extent	No.	Extent	No.	Extent
Srikakulam	19325	15689.47	25324	21159.34	19158	15279.06	25297	20791.95	89104	72919.82
Vizianagaram	19412	22978.45	24757	30515.67	19086	22076.29	24601	30127.68	87853	105698.09
Visakhapatnam	24323	34653.76	34838	55183.01	24319	33958.21	33253	47561.08	116733	171356.06
East-Godavari	15450	12431.01	20686	20301.43	13805	11235.02	20379	16608.17	70320	60575.63
West-Godavari	15662	19886.79	18764	24857.27	13357	17241.58	19944	26738.82	67727	88724.46
Krishna	19489	19912.87	23720	24439.97	18206	19189.13	25728	27276.8	87143	90818.77
Guntur	21228	21236.68	26405	20400.2	19011	14877.45	28572	22292.90	95216	7807.23
Kurnool	17460	25857.59	21247	31498	16461	24966.44	22856	33859.97	78024	116182
Nellore	64745	100337.72	74291	117921.75	57595	89756.18	78907	12635.08	275538	434750.73
Kadapa	29322	53215.5	34355	63017.83	26778	49131.8	39298	72575.26	129753	237940.39
Prakasam	46055	71292.81	55930	87136.31	41321	64778.45	60967	40730.52	204273	263938.09
Chittoor	63244	86642.64	79014	109261.09	57128	78670.91	84790	117026.69	284182	391601.33
Anantapur	53870	137311.61	67187	171846.88	50826	129325.09	72703	185741.51	244586	624225.09
Adilabad	19763	48877.4	27147	69515.06	18201	45223.78	25674	65115.43	90782	228731.64
Karimnagar	35036	25681.07	40989	30264.85	30919	22973.79	43651	32280.19	150595	111199.9
Nizamabad	33195	37488.65	41671	49006.16	30854	35196.95	44000	49575.14	149720	171266.9
Khammam	28791	59223.28	41794	79377.57	25379	53585.7	38124	79949.72	134088	272136.27
Warangal	39155	39212.27	49278	49368.25	35995	35935.51	52173	52296.68	176601	176812.71
Mahbubnagar	29529	48206.07	35889	59630.66	27611	45120.01	38124	63361.07	131153	216317.81
Ranga Reddy	16530	15947.46	20701	19758.12	15205	14727.78	22122	21052.7	74558	71486.36
Nalgonda	38962	37896.33	44291	44484.18	34497	34010.37	45539	45397.14	163289	161788.02
Medak	36472	54494.53	44697	67895.47	34023	50460.81	48584	73564.51	163776	246415.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>687018</b>	<b>988473.96</b>	<b>852972</b>	<b>1246839.07</b>	<b>629735</b>	<b>907720.31</b>	<b>895286</b>	<b>1250659.01</b>	<b>3065014</b>	<b>4393672.35</b>

Source: Progress Report of Chief Commissioner Land Administration AP, Hyderabad

**Table 2: Particulars of 1 to 6 phases land distributed for SCs in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States (Phase-wise and District-wise, as on 15-03-2013)**

District	(Extent in Acres – Cents)													
	Scheduled Castes													
	1 <sup>st</sup> phase		2 <sup>nd</sup> phase		3 <sup>rd</sup> phase		4 <sup>th</sup> phase		5 <sup>th</sup> phase		6 <sup>th</sup> phase		Total	
No. of beneficiaries	Extent	No. of beneficiaries	Extent	No. of beneficiaries	Extent	No. of beneficiaries	Extent	No. of beneficiaries	Extent	No. of beneficiaries	Extent	No. of beneficiaries	Extent	
<i>Andhra Pradesh</i>														
Anantapur	954	2037.04	636	1363.32	728	1654.9	6208	16627.20	786	1578.03	2096	3675.98	11408	26936.47
Chittoor	1123	1125.23	2189	2442.82	2342	2892.1	10245	14996.05	3941	4773.47	2054	2538.88	21894	28768.55
East Godavari	413	168.69	268	160.85	207	135.77	3870	5366.36	754	653.82	37	38.01	5549	6523.5
Guntur	706	766.19	1174	885.87	1454	1398.4	6371	7459.72	181	195.55	222	298.98	10108	11004.71
Krishna	864	626.44	2482	2797.15	655	599.68	10238	9400.70	421	310.41	91	103.97	14751	13838.35
Kurnool	1074	1784.81	1584	2460.33	1066	2031.8	2619	5366.75	767	1385.16	544	907.34	7654	13936.19
Prakasam	2147	2803	3910	5410.00	1775	1967	3819	6924.00	874	1345.00	1247	1706.80	13272	20155.8
SPSR Nellore	8361	9318.89	1587	1929.86	1292	2154	8799	12858.20	1080	1248.54	1827	2063	23446	29572.49
Srikakulam	736	448.01	1755	1167.24	722	510.25	6165	5218.01	286	136.36	177	70.62	9841	7550.49
Visakhapatnam	1177	655	340	533	0	0	20926	31235.26	515	570.15	523	438.75	23481	33432.16
Vizianagaram	1521	1208	771	497.91	338	1162	3333	4050.32	299	204.38	192	114.58	6454	7237.19
West Godavari	1591	1551.07	1554	1312.68	829	530.58	3169	4094.07	62	60.73	249	159.95	7454	7709.08
YSR Kadapa	1852	3100.51	1210	1803	1313	2185.4	6416	9994.40	1635	2378.15	721	1245.04	13147	20706.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>22519</b>	<b>25593</b>	<b>19460</b>	<b>22764</b>	<b>12721</b>	<b>17222</b>	<b>92178</b>	<b>133591</b>	<b>11601</b>	<b>14840</b>	<b>9980</b>	<b>13362</b>	<b>168459</b>	<b>227372</b>
<i>Telangana</i>														
Adilabad	1143	2058.56	898	1698.56	404	870.59	1024	1729	717	1350.44	594	932.63	4780	8639.78
Hyderabad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Karimnagar	3616	2659.06	2544	2104.33	2542	1795.2	1962	1077.3	1154	789.57	775	606.70	12593	9032.16
Khammam	885	643	622	593	367	216	219	170	0	0	99	98.22	2192	1720.22
Mahbubnagar	1675	2369.48	1254	1338.48	1111	1491.22	1237	1833.6	256	371.25	267	351.23	5800	7755.26
Medak	1652	1656.87	5849	5798.25	1676	2014.07	1055	842.95	994	961.50	246	201.17	11472	11474.81
Nalgonda	2281	1694.37	1079	862.4	1137	1069.5	1204	1247	1342	1605.58	339	294.6	7382	6773.45
Nizamabad	1086	1343.62	1000	1028.07	690	683.57	1235	1379.15	361	420.73	0	0	4372	4855.14
Ranga Reddy	378	601.19	652	902.93	81	152.1	428	567	275	336	529	639.08	2343	3198.3
Warangal	1027	1111.62	947	828.75	1213	1573.46	831	864.57	283	444.37	410	390.48	4711	5213.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>11443</b>	<b>20588.56</b>	<b>14845</b>	<b>15155</b>	<b>9221</b>	<b>9866</b>	<b>9195</b>	<b>9710</b>	<b>5382</b>	<b>6279</b>	<b>3259</b>	<b>3514</b>	<b>43045</b>	<b>46582.56</b>

Source: Chief Commissioner Land Administration AP and Telangana, Hyderabad.

District – 3616 and 2659.06 acres respectively. Khammam (885 beneficiaries and 643 acres allotted) and Ranga Reddy (378 beneficiaries and 601.19 acres allotted) figured at the other end of the spectrum.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Phase:** The maximum ‘gainers’, both in terms of number of beneficiaries and extent of land allotted to them, were found in Medak District – 5849 and 5798.25 acres respectively. Khammam (662 beneficiaries and 593 acres allotted) had the lowest figures in this respect.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Phase:** The highest figures were found in Karimnagar District – 2542 and 1795.20 acres respectively. Ranga Reddy District (81 beneficiaries and 152.1 acres allotted) had the lowest figures in this respect.

**4<sup>th</sup> Phase:** The highest figures could be seen in Karimnagar (number of beneficiaries, 1962, total land allotted 1077.3 acres) and Mahbubnagar (where 1833.16 acres were distributed among 1237 beneficiaries. Ranga Reddy District (428 beneficiaries and 567 acres allotted) had the lowest figures in this respect.

**5<sup>th</sup> Phase:** The highest figures, both in terms of number of beneficiaries and extent of land allotted to them, were found in Nalgonda District – 1342 persons and 1605.58 acres respectively. Mahbubnagar (256 beneficiaries and 371.25 acres allotted) had the lowest figures in this respect.

**6<sup>th</sup> Phase:** There were no SC beneficiaries in Hyderabad and Nizamabad Districts. Otherwise, the lowest figures were found in Khammam (number of beneficiaries, 99 and extent of land allotted, 98.22 acres). The highest figures could be seen in Karimnagar (where 606.70 acres of land were distributed among 775 beneficiaries).

#### **Trend of Land Distribution among the Various Social Classes in the Individual Phases**

After examining the pattern of land distribution in the individual Phases, the next area of interest would be to ascertain the variations, if any, in these Phases. After all, land reforms are primarily intended to provide ‘land to the tillers’, most of whom belong to the deprived sections of society. This issue would be examined state-wise, based on figures available in Table 3. The averages have been worked out on the basis of total area distributed, divided by the number of beneficiaries belonging to that particular social group.

**Andhra Pradesh:** One very striking issue is that the average land distribution for the SC beneficiaries is not necessarily in proportion to their percentage of the total population in the particular district. For instance, while SCs constitute 14.3 percent of the total population of Anantapur district, they had the largest average land distributed (2.36 acres). Similarly, even though Prakasam district had the largest SC population (23.2%), the average land distributed to them was only 1.51 acres. Even SPSR Nellore District, with a highly noticeable SC population (22.5%), had an average of just 1.26 acres distributed to the SC beneficiaries. One could also not fail to notice the variations in East and West Godavari districts (both having 20.6% SC populations). In the former, the average worked out to 1.17 acres and in the latter, it was 1.57 acres). Equally remarkable was Vishakhapatnam (SC population, 7.7 percent), but the average land distribution to SCs, 1.42 acres).

**Telangana:** One need not be surprised at the nil allocation to SC beneficiaries in Hyderabad district, since this is largely urban in character and not much land would be available for distribution among the landless beneficiaries. The trend of the largest share of SC population among the districts not necessarily having the largest average land distribution could be seen in this state as well. Adilabad was found to have the largest average land distribution (1.83 acres) even when the proportion of SC here was only 17.8%). In Nalgonda (18.3% SC population), the average land distributed to SCs was only 0.91 acres. One cannot also ignore Ranga Reddy (SC population 12.3%), but having an average land distribution of 1.36 acres to the SC beneficiaries.

When the pattern of the two states is compared, one found find that the overall average land distributed to SC beneficiaries in Andhra Pradesh was 1.34 acres, while it was 1.08 acres in Telangana.

#### **Land Based Development for Scheduled Castes**

A drive was launched to identify and consolidate village-wise land belonging to SC farmers. As part of this initiative, 17.75 lakh acres of fallow lands, 18.60 lakh acres of low productive lands belonging to SC, were identified and taken up for



development under the MGNREGS. Land inventory of SC/ST farmers was taken up in 2010. Large areas of fallow and low production lands were converted to productive lands. Dry land horticulture started being promoted in the rain-fed cultivable lands belonging to SCs/STs. Irrigated horticulture is also being promoted in SC/ST lands wherever the sources of irrigation exists. SC/ST farmers are also being encouraged to take up boundary bund plantation mainly of Teak.

### **Comprehensive Land Development Programme (CLDP)**

CLDP programme was launched in the year 2004, with the objective of improving the quality of lands allotted to SC beneficiaries. As a result, 2.6 lakh SC families have benefitted due to improvements brought about in 3.49 lakh acres of assigned lands at an expenditure of Rs.336 crore. Works taken up under this initiative include: bush clearance, land levelling, boulder removing, drilling of bore-wells, installation and energisation of motors. Enhancement in irrigation facilities, and increase in incomes and awareness levels about adoption of proper agronomic practices have been some of the outcomes. The State Government re-oriented the programmes so as to implement these in convergence with MGNREGS, APMIP and State Horticulture Mission.

### **Indira Jala Prabha**

The project aims to provide irrigation facilities to consolidate the gains made in the Land Development Programme of MGNREGS. It aims at changing 10 lakh acres of fallow and un-cultivated lands belonging to the poorest of the poor 5.81 lakh SC/ST households in a total of 22 Districts in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. 3.30 lakh SC beneficiaries are covered covering an extent of 5.26 lakh acres, at an expenditure of Rs. 99 crore since its inception (Prashanti 2017).

***NREGS and the Lands of SCs in Andhra Pradesh:*** One of the major justifications for public works, in contrast to cash transfer as a social protection measure, is that these works not only generate employment however it creates assets which would benefit the community as a whole. MGNREGS works is such that there is a built-in bias in favour of agriculture due to emphasis on

conservation and development of land and water resources. It is mentioned that specific importance to poor farmers is the provision in MGNREGS with regard to irrigation facility, horticulture plantation and land development on private lands of SC, ST, and BPL households or beneficiaries of land reforms and IAY; and its later extension to small and marginal farmers (hereafter referred to as EGS eligible farming communities). This provision has extensive significance, particularly to the SC farming community in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Even though some efforts were made by successive governments to allot lands to the landless, in many cases, the assigned land has been of very poor quality, requiring substantial investment if it were to be brought under the plough; most of these assignees could not afford such an investment. Frequently, the assistance by the State Government for improvement of these lands was found to be grossly insufficient. A considerable amount of investment had to be made to bring the poor quality lands under the plough. Only in such cases, where institutional support like that of the Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation was available, investments could be made for land development and provision of irrigation facilities, and the land could be cultivated. Furthermore, in most of the other cases, either the assigned land was kept fallow, used for growing some rain-fed crops, or, in some cases, even abandoned. The erstwhile State saw the opportunity afforded by the provision of MGNREGS works on the lands of the “EGS eligible farming communities” and initiated steps to prioritise these works in the shelf of works planned for implementation under the scheme.

Of the nine categories of works provided under the NREG Act, the fourth one is related to Provision of Irrigation Facility alone refers to works on private lands of certain eligible farming communities. The then Government of Andhra Pradesh classified the fourth category of works into four projects, viz:

- (a) EGS Land Development Project (EGS-LDP) to treat fallow and low productive lands of the eligible farmers - with priority to SC and ST farmers,
- (b) Horticulture and Plantation Project (H&P),
- (c) Irrigation Facilities Project (IFP), and
- (b) Sustainable Agriculture Project (SAP); and spelt out the nature of works to be taken

up and the priority to be accorded in selecting the farmers for implementation.

The participation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) has been enlisted for identifying lands of the poorest of the poor, with special emphasis on the land of the SC and ST households. The then Government of Andhra Pradesh drew up an ambitious plan to develop 2.5 million acres of assigned land belonging to the SCs/STs and small and marginal farmers under the MGNREGS, at a cost of around Rs.7000 crore (Narasimha Reddy 2011).

### CONCLUSION

A review of the progress achieved during the seven Phases of land distribution in the then state of Andhra Pradesh clearly brings out that the allotment has not always been done in the spirit in which the entire exercise was undertaken in the first place. There has also not been much of an endeavour to rectify the mistakes committed in the earlier Phases. While allotment of land to ST households is a laudable step, the step- motherly treatment meted out to the SCs during all the seven Phases in both regions of the then state of Andhra Pradesh cannot be condoned. It is an almost established fact that most of the tillers of the land hail from the depressed classes, yet significant numbers of them appear to have been willfully denied the benefit of owning their own land. Advocates for BCs and 'Others' may try to point out that many of their members are in a destitute condition and they too should be helped. While this argument can be accepted to a certain extent, there is just no explanation for providing such a help by totally ignoring the more deserving claimants. Just as the MGNREGA scheme of the Union Government has sought to remove most of the lacunae found in the earlier rural development initiatives, it is hoped that both the central and state governments will take stock of the genuine grievances of those denied the benefits and ensure that such mistakes do not recur in future initiatives.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The land reforms initiative should ensure that the benefits trickle down to only the neediest and the deserving ones. It is one issue to promulgate any such legislations and another to ensure that

this is being implemented in an equitable and most transparent manner. Governments should never feel that their task is over once the orders with regard to the distribution of land are passed. The most effective monitoring mechanism should be there in place to put down strictly the considerations of nepotism, favouritism and highhandedness of the concerned officials on the field. The land distribution should be based on the rule that the Scheduled Castes the higher the priority for land distribution to them.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author is very grateful to Professor N. Sudhakar Rao for helpful suggestions and comments.

### REFERENCES

- Beteille A 1972. *Inequality and Social Change*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Diwakar DM 1999. Dalit question of inequality, exploitation and mobilisation: A micro view of ground realities. *Man and Development*, XXI: 62-81.
- Francis C 1996. Land reforms: An overview. In: BN Yugandhar (Ed.): *Land Reforms in India, III: Andhra Pradesh*. New Delhi, India: Sage Publications, pp. 28-56.
- Hiro D 1976. *Inside India Today*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Joshi PC 1975. *Land Reforms in India: Trends and Perspectives*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers.
- Judge RS 1999. *Social Change through Land Reforms*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications.
- Kranthi Kumar CH 2018a. Ground realities about scheduled castes in the study area regarding land reforms policies. *International Journal of Innovative Knowledge Concepts*, 6: 36-48.
- Kranthi Kumar CH 2018b. Socio-economic impact of land reforms on the scheduled castes in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Reviews*, 7(3): 1130-1141.
- Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare 2010-11. *All India Report on Agriculture Census*. New Delhi: Government of India press.
- Mohanty BB 2001. Land distribution among Scheduled Castes and Tribes. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36: 3857-3868.
- Murdia R 1975. Land allotment and land alienation policies and programmes for scheduled castes and tribes. *Economic and Political Weekly*, X: 1201-1214.
- Nancharaiiah G 1988. *Land and Caste*. Delhi: Himalaya Publishing House.
- Nancharaiiah G 1989. Scheduled caste as agricultural labourers. *Social Change*, 19(3): 31-41.
- Narasimha Reddy D 2011 *NREGS and Indian Agriculture: Opportunities and Challenges*. New Delhi: Institute for Human Development.
- National Sample Survey Organization 2004-05. *Report on Employment and Unemployment Situation in India*.

- Report Number 522*. New Delhi: Government of India Press.
- NITI Aayog 2014-15. *Annual Report*. New Delhi: Government of India.
- Omvedt G 1993. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Prashad PH 1995. Mass struggle: The only option. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XXX: 208-211.
- Prashanti M 2017. *Over View of Welfare Schemes*. Hyderabad: Government of Telangana Press.
- Sankaran SR 1996. *Introduction*. In: BN Yugandhar (Ed.): *Land Reforms in India*, 3. New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp. 17-27.
- Sharma BD 1994. *Dalit Betrayed*. New Delhi: Har Anand Publications.
- Thangaraj M 1994. *Access to Land for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India*. Chennai: Madras Institute of Development Studies.

---

**Paper received for publication in November, 2021**  
**Paper accepted for publication in December, 2021**