

20 case studies around land rights in India

20 stories gathered on the ground by Ekta Parishad activists



The following stories were gathered in India in various Indian states since 2002 by Ekta Parishad activists. They were collected to document and illustrate the various issues of land rights and landlessness in India. These stories were all gathered in meetings and discussions, and each of them would need a longer, proper research to express all the ins and outs, in matter of legal and human aspects, of the stories. Ekta Parishad is working at the moment on a crowd map to gather and illustrate more than 800 of these stories gathered in the past two years, and a research should also be started, by an impartial researcher, to keep a detailed and verified track of all these cases.

Many of these case studies have been gathered during the Jan Samwad Yatra, a one-year journey through India led by a team of Ekta Parishad activists from October 2011 to September 2012. This yatra was achieved to understand the situation of marginalized communities of the country and to mobilize them for Jansatyagraha, a large foot march which took place in October 2012.



For more information, please check the Ekta Parishad website, www.ektaparishad.com

(1)

Palakkad Attapadi (Kerala).

Years ago Muduga tribes used to live here in the Attapadi Valley. When an irrigation project (Attapadi Valley Irrigation Project) was planned, they were promised that they would be settled on agricultural farms. Four villages (Bengahedwa, Chittoor, Kettegari, Koronbodi) were displaced in this process and only two were later rehabilitated in the agricultural cooperative. Three tribes (Muduga, Irola and Kudumber) used to live in these 4 villages. They were to be a part of an agricultural co-operative and were promised a lease for five acres of land per family to carry out their own farming. They were not given titles to the land but only a lease and the promise that the cooperative will be profitable in five years. However, this lease was not renewed and the tribals were compelled to work as agricultural labor on other people's lands.

In 2007, the tribal people realized that the planned dam had not been constructed and decided to return to their original land to farm. They approached the collector, the revenue department, and the state land tribunal, but a decision in their favor was not taken. The revenue department kept the issue informal, assuring them that they would get land-deeds, but this hasn't happened. Hence the tribals decided in February 2011 to return to this land, for which their forefathers had titles. Once they returned to their lands, the local administration started engaging with them and told them to cap the re-occupation to the 26 families that had returned. As a result, 175 families are still waiting to return to their original villages. They were offered another village for settling down but they refused as their culture is tied to the land they used to have. Their argument is that there is no reason to live in another village when their own village is available and the irrigation project has not taken shape.

Because of the displacement their culture was destroyed. The people were dispersed, which affected their sense of community. Their culture requires them to live together but because of changes in the social-economic conditions of their lives, their culture and ways of living were destroyed. This village was on revenue land for which they had legal documents before the displacement. Even today, they have some legal documents to prove their ownership of the land. The court had also passed a judgment that the displaced families should receive financial compensation for being displaced for 40 years but the community hasn't received any compensation yet. However, the communities say that their struggle is not for any compensation but for their land which is their identity and livelihood and that they will continue this struggle until they achieve their objectives.

(2)

Bholkarin va Gharelu Sanghatan: Aurangabad (Maharashtra)
Land Acquisition Spells Doom for Food and Social Security

According to Mr. Kasim Bhai leader of Shet Mazdoor Sanghatan (Union of Agricultural Labour) there is no social security or right to land for the domestic workers In Maharashtra he also registered his opposition and protest against the acquisition of land for urbanization. In addition to the demand for the implementation of the land reform policy and declaration of the SEZ law as null and void the other demands raised were recognition and acceptance of the right of the Gram Sabha over the common lands and formulation



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and implementation of a law that ensures social security for the domestic workers. Colonel Negri of the Shet Mazdoor Sanghatan said that a plan for the acquisition of about 2,30,000 hectares of land for Greater Aurangabad is underway and is being opposed by a coalition of various local organisations. He said that since the Urban Land Ceiling Act has been removed land of approximately 165 villages is being acquired and will have significant adverse impact on food security for the area and the people. He further added that there is a lot of difference in the rates of labour and the labour workers should be paid before the sweat on their body dries. In the evening a dialogue session was arranged by the Marathwada Socio-economic Research and National Integration Center in which a number of intellectuals participated and seriously discussed the subject of Land Reform. Towards the end of the session in one voice they registered their protest against the commercialization of agricultural land in the name of marketing and proposed that the right to agriculture land should only be given to those who physically till the land.

(3)

Movement for Peace & Justice: Aurangabad (Maharashtra) : 16/12/2011

On 16 December 2011 the Jansatyagraha Samvad Yatra team reached the Ekta Nagar and Jalal Nagar Mohalla localities of Aurangabad where, between 19- 24 May 2011, 119 homes had been raised to the ground without any prior notice on the pretext of beautification of the city. All the residents of these localities are waging a struggle for their rights to their homes. They shared their experiences with the group and in support of the cause for land rights presented Santo Bai and Janaki Behan a fistful of soil from the yards of their broken homes. In the afternoon the team reached Jalna district where a meeting had been organised in the Gandhi Study Center by the Jalna Education Society. Sanjay Lakre of the Manvi Haq Abhiyan (Citizens Rights Campaign) shared that Jalna district has the highest number of cases of encroachment in the entire Marathwada region. Unfortunately today maximum black money is being used in acquiring land for commercial projects and this is the ground reality of corruption, he added. He informed the team that the district has a history of struggle for the right to traditional seeds and under the „Beej Bachao Abhiyan” (Save Seed Campaign) continues to oppose the use of Hybrid and Transgenic seeds. Further there are more than 50 steel rolling mills in the district that are the biggest cause of pollution and land acquisition. More than 200,000 people migrate from the district every year in the search for employment while not a single local person is employed in the local mills and industries. In this district even in the Bidi making industry the local people are not given priority and most of the workers employed are from the state of Andhra Pradesh. Ms Kalpana of the „Zameen Adhikaar Aandolan” (Land Rights Forum) stated that the latest measure adopted for forcing the small farmers to sell their lands at minimum price is that of preventing them for cultivating the land by surrounding the land with barbed wires. She added that due to unhampered industrialization the ground water table is rapidly reducing and its direct affect is felt on agriculture. Ms Kalpana shared that the labour that is involved in the harvest of sugarcane is badly exploited. The Government of Maharashtra gives a subsidy of fifty percent on sugarcane harvesting machines as a result the harvest has become highly mechanized and the workers are being forced to migrate. All the local groups in the leadership of „Beej Bachao Aandolan” pledged their support to the Jansatyagraha and promised to join in the march scheduled later in the year.



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Issue of Gairan (Grazing) land also Raised in Umraogaon (Maharashtra)

19 December 2011, Umraogaon, Hingoli

On 19 December the Jansatyagraha team reached in an organization called „Ugam Gram Vikas Sanstha” located at Umraogaon in Hingoli district. Shri Jayaji Paikrao, leader of the organization said that in addition to the land rights issue the organization is also attempting to organise the women who use the grazing land. Operational in 168 villages the organization is trying to ensure ownership rights of dalits and other landless people over 10,000 hectares of grazing land. He said that about 15 percent of grazing land has been occupied illegally by the forest department while on the other hand the land that was given by the *Nizam*, known as *gairan*, to the revenue department has still not been transferred into the revenue records. The district of Hingoli was formed in May 1999 and since then, no attempts have been made for land reforms at any level, he added. As a result those who have grazing land are still struggling for its regularization and ownership. The „Ugam Gram Vikas Sanstha” is also managing the “Savitri Bai Phule” (Mutual Benefit Trust). The trust chief Smt Nirmala Tai Khare informed that women groups in more than 100 villages are being supported for agriculture and Self-employment through the trust.

(5)

Akola (Maharashtra)

On 21 December the Jansatyagraha team made its first halt at Mahan taluka, Akola, in a meeting organised by „Manviye Haq Abhiyan” (Campaign for Citizens Rights). The National deputy Convener of the organization Shri Dadasaheb Shir Sagar said that failure to secure the rights of dalits and other landless people to the land distributed by the Nizam is not only an insult to the dalit society but an historical mistake that must be corrected while there is still time. He alleged that the process of acquisition and encroachment of *gairan* land begun by the government is a violation of the government order of 1990. He told the team that „Manavi Haq Abhiyan” and „Zamin Adhikar Aandolan” have begun a process of dialogue with the government for people’s rights to the *gairan* land – 5000 hectares in Akola, 3000 hectares in Wasim, 2000 hectares in Amravati and 6000 hectares in Budhlana. However till date nothing positive has come from the dialogue, he said. He announced that incase the government fails to respond to the demands of *gairan* land occupiers by September 2012 thousands of dalit farmers will join the decisive Jansatyagraha in October 2012.

(6)

Villagers imprisoned for asking their right over forest land (Orissa)

At Shilpunji village of Sundergarh district, 30 people were arrested without any crime and kept in prison for years. Residents of the village have filed their claims under the Forest Rights Act but till date no action has been taken on their claims. Known as the crown of Odisha through this Khandhahar region flow two grand rivers Vaitarni and Brahmani. Member of the district panchayat Shri Lothar Uraon said that 17 sponge iron plants already



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exist in this region and now the government is acquiring 6000 acres of land for mining. The proposed iron ore mining in this region will displace as many as 100,000 people of 62 villages. Tribal leader Shri Singrai Munda said that this region is the homeland of the primitive Pahadi Bhuia tribe. The question that the experts should ponder, he said, is whether or not the planned thirty years of iron ore extraction will lead to the complete decimation of a tribe who has been living in this region for hundreds of years. Shri Ashwini of Lohanipada said that SEM Steel is responsible for pollution in the region that is an important factor in the damage caused to the crops. Youth leader Shri Suresh said that despite registering their objections and protest during the public hearing proceedings the people of Kenduri village have not succeeded in saving 3000 acres of their farming land that is being acquired by the government. He further added that the administration is registering false criminal cases against all those tribals who are protesting against the setting up of industries in the region. 'Jungle Suraksha Manch' is formed to raise this issue.

(7)

M Rampur, Kalahandi, Sahid Ringo Manjhi in 1885 struggle against British, Dhansingh Manjhi, 27.1.2012 (Orissa)

Common Property rights not granted as per the Act. 700 types of herbs and medicinal plants were found in the rich environs of the surrounding forests and mountains and the people who depended on them for their livelihood had filed a common property claim for the same but it was not accepted by the administration. The organization has taken the matter to court and awaits its decision. In areas of Kalahandi where joint forest management exists, 126 common property claims were filed by the communities and rights have been given on mere 40-50 acres of land. People said that the land for which they have been given rights is far less than what the claims were filed for and if they cultivate the grasslands that exist near the cultivated lands of big landlords then they are prevented from undertaking such cultivation. People also informed that the program "Mo Jami More Dih" that was designed through the efforts of Ekta Parishad is also not being implemented comprehensively by the government. Many people have received rights on residential land under this program but the demarcation of land is yet to be done. Activist Prashant Sehti of 'Dalit Adhikar Manch' added that 16.53 and 17.76 percent population is dalit in Orissa and Kalahandi district respectively but since they have not been able to gather proof of having cultivated forestland for the past 75 years they are being denied their rights under the forest rights act. Besides, dalits are denied entry into temples in the coastal parts of Orissa. 'Seba Jagat Sansthan' is working in this direction to establish land rights to the tribals and dalits.

(8)

Struggle against land acquisition by Vedanta Company (Orissa)

Jagatnathpur, Lanchigad, Kalahandi, Struggle against Vedanta Company, Niyamagiri Surkasha Samiti, 29/01/2012

The fight for protecting the hills which is habitat for a number of primitive tribes and rich in natural wealth of Niyamgiri hills has drawn the attention around the world. Shri Kumti Majhi of the Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti said that almost 60 villages of the region, where largely



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people belonging to the Dogaria, Khutia and Majhi tribes live, fall in the industrial and mining zone. At the same time more than 10,000 people belonging to the primitive tribe Dongaria Kandh live in 112 villages spread across the Niyamgiri mountain ranges but their settlement has not been done in the land occupied and cultivated by them. Instead a large segment of their land has been marked for Vedanta Mining Company. He said that claims made by the communities for residential and cultivated land in the region have not been accepted by the administration. Shri Sapi Manjhi of village Bid said that 14 tribal families had applied for residential land under the 'Mo Jami More Dih' scheme but their applications have not been accepted till date. Bir Singh Manjhi of village Tudiguda added that claims of 8 tribal families were pending at the sambhag level. Similarly no action has been taken on the claims of families living in Kanugoda, Dhamaguda, Kolballi and Kendurdih villages. Vimal Manjhi of Kendurdih village said that in spite of the Forest Rights Act, tribals who have been cultivating land for generations are not being given ownership rights while mining companies are not only being given thousands of hectares of land without any hindrance while the people who live in those lands are being evicted unceremoniously.

(9)

Struggle for saving 1898 hectares agricultural land destroyed due to coal mining (Jharkhand)

Dhanbad, Jharkhand, Arpan 27.2.2012

Coal mining in the region began almost 100 years ago. In 1971 with nationalization of coal mines many public sector units such as Bharat Cooking Coal Limited began mining operations in new areas. As a result the labour working in these mines had many immediate benefits but in 2000 after reductions in the number of labour working the mines they faced major hardships. In the Mohda region alone mining is being done by BCCL in 38,898 hectares of land. Prior to mining this land was used for agriculture and was so prosperous that in 1967-68 when there was a nationwide famine not a single person in the area died of starvation. Today even after 40 years, more than 60% population of the region does not have access to basic facilities. According to the detailed project report released in 1971 the government promised re-settlement, rehabilitation and employment but it has failed to fulfill its promises. The Government of India has begun the process of part privatization and is promoting contract labour instead of regular employment. A labour receives merely Rs120 after back breaking toil of 10-12 hours and this in itself is a violation of the minimum wages act. This region was much safer prior to the nationalization in 1971 as against this, now uncontrolled mining is turning into a nightmare for the habitants of the region. Cracks are appearing in agriculture and residential land and not a single company is filling up the mined pits with sand and gravel. This is leading to increased number of accidents and is a major safety hazard for the people living in the region. This region of Dhanbad is surrounded by coal mines on all sides and open cast mining is being undertaken at more than 100 sites. Identity cards and safety equipments were not being given to the workers before entry into the mines. Not only this, there was no registration of the workers before they enter the mines and so in case of accidents they cannot claim compensation from the companies. According to some scientific report the region has enough coal for the next hundred years but the speed at which mining is being done currently this coal reserve will come to an end within 30 years.



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(10)

Anger against land grabbing and record forgery (Jharkhand)

Deodhar, Jharkhand Theresa Ekta Mahila Manch, FDF 01.03.2012- Madrensari village

In this region including village Madrensari where the dalit are in majority, more than 60% of the families are landless. In 1968 Bhoodan land was distributed to 26 families in the village but till date the final settlement of the land has not been done. Only 12% of the land in the region is irrigated therefore the marginal farmers and agriculture labour are forced to migrate to neighboring states. In village Lakhangadhia 1000 acres of land has been marked for an industrial unit by Dalmia Power Plant Limited. The Gram Sabha passed a resolution against the setting up of the plant and submitted the same to the administration but no action was taken. Innumerable cases of land record grabbing by the land mafia in Kokajari, Lakhangadhia, Badhki Tant, Sadhujor, Taparia and Motidih have been reported and during the movement criminal cases were registered against more than 100 villagers.

People said that the state government should be sensitive and responsive enough to stop all land distribution till all the claims of the tribal communities have been settled under the Forest Rights Act. Member of the Zilla Parishad Smt Sunita Singh said that in the state of Jharkhand the tribal population is slowly reducing and in Devdhar district it is a mere 13% of the population. It is shameful that the government has not been able to settle the claims of such a small proportion of the population. In the past the government has announced many schemes for the benefit of the Pahadia Scheduled Tribe but in the absence of basic services their population is rapidly dwindling.

(11)

Movement for distribution of tea garden land to workers (West Bengal)

Jaipalguri Jaipalgudi, West Bengal TISHA SHG 10.3.2012

The problems of the Tea garden laborers in this region are worrisome. Ghuppa tribes from the adjoining areas of Bhutan who are settled in the area are deprived of their land rights even today. Very limited work has been done for development of the education, health and other basic services for these tea garden laborers. Despite more than 100 year, the tea garden laborers are unsure about their local identity. The organization Centre for Development Human Initiative is working with women farmers and has formed West Bengal Tarai Mahila Association (Samti) which is in constant dialogue with the government on issues of women rights. Mr. Subrato Majumdar informed that Bacxa Region of tarai area is predominantly tribal. However, no serious efforts have been made by the administration to implement the Forest Rights Act. He said that there about 5000 Nepali & Rabha Tribal families who are landless. He said that there are 14 tea gardens whose lease term has expired and where local laborer are fighting for their land and homestead land rights. Mostly it is Uaoran and Santhal Teagarden laborer, who are denied their land rights. With the closure of tea gardens, these laborers are migrating to the neighboring states. The tea garden laborers are being exploited in regards to payment of wages too. They are given Rs 60-67/day while in Darjeeling area, the daily wage rate is Rs 90. The tea Garden laborers are raising collective voice for their land rights and are raising their voice for seeking Rs 120 as wages. He shared that tribals who have come from Jharkhand and



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other neighboring states are not recognized as tribal in Bengal. As a result, civil and land rights have not been implemented properly. He shared that in this region, small farmers have taken the initiative to established tea garden and the government needs to give them more protection. In addition, laborer cooperatives should be formed in those tea garden whose lease has expired which will provide them sustainable livelihood option. The second stop of the yatra in the district was Rangamali village, where a meeting was organised by Uttarbanga Terai Mahila Samiti. The members shared that there is an acute problem of flood and drinking water in this village which is located on the Banks of Tista river. Up until now, about 100 acres of agriculture land has been destroyed by flood and about 20 families have lost their land. Government has not taken any initiative to compensate and rehabilitate them. They said that the women group has setup a water filtration unit from the point of view of self employment. 22 members of the group contributed Rs. 2 lack and borrowed Rs 50 thousand from bank for this unit two years back. Today, the women group is self dependent.

(12)

Nirman Ashram - A helping hand for socio cultural and economic revival of flood affected villages. (Assam)

*Dubri, Assam Jinkata, Mahamayahat Land water forest Right Jinkata Nirman Ashram
12.3.2012*

This area was declared as disturbed area in 1971-72. After that, a number of workers motivated with non violence ideology started working in the area with many of them directly related with Nirman Ashram. The founder of Nirman Ashram, Shri Hem Bhai told that the Ashram was established in 1982 with the objective of establishing peace and to promote rural artisanship. He said that the Ashram is also working on the important issue of revival of northeastern culture. Chhatrasaal Ramrai Kuti village which was setup about 550 years ago has done significant work on cultural and social aspects to bring the communities together on India- Bangladesh border.

The villagers told that this is a flood affected area where most of the people are dependent on Agriculture. However, no compensation is given for crops that are affected by floods and majority of marginal farmers have to migrate. Senior journalist, Mr. Shiv Das Bhattacharya said that the north eastern states are attached to the Siliguri corridor of West Bengal. This area comprises of river valley and dense forests but there is uncontrolled exploitation of forest resources in the last few years. As a result, communities dependent on forests are gradually becoming landless. On the one hand, the water level of river Brahmaputra (which is called life line of north eastern states) is declining while on the other, most of the areas in Maisa, Barobararachaar, barudanga, Kanori and Golak Ganj have been affected by Gangadhar River (Dhubri District). Land erosion is the biggest danger to agriculture in these areas. Every year, about 1000 acres of land in this area is affected by floods but there has not been any clear compensation plan by state government. Beside this, large number of people migrating from neighboring countries in search of jobs has changed the demographics of the region and have created demographic imbalance. This is creating a situation of caste based violence in the region. He further said that one of the main problems of the North Eastern states is the absence of lack of realistic and people centered water policy. Besides this, Brahmaputra and other



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supporting rivers like Raidak, Duba suba, Goalnani, Karkuldanga and Now danga have dried up which has adversely affected agriculture and irrigation projects. If the government wants, it can develop agriculture through conservation of natural resource in the region. Irrigation facilities could be provided to additional 60% land area but no concrete efforts have been made by the government in this direction. Due to construction activities, there has been an increase in landslides in the hilly areas of Bodoland and Assam, where forest dwellers are facing difficulties due to destruction of forest resources.

(13)

Teagarden workers living a life of slaves, denying land and other civil rights (Assam)

Tejpur, Assam Samagudi Tea Garden- Labour issue Muaj Bagla 16.3.2012

In Assam, there are more than 1000 tea gardens in which, about 70 lakh people are dependent for their livelihood. 80% of tea garden workers were brought from neighboring states about 100 years ago by the British. Unfortunately, no basic infrastructure has been developed for them even after 150 years. The average age of tea garden workers is only 50 years. In the last few days, many workers have died due to bad health. Mr. Nubaan Barlaa of All Adivasi Students Association of Assam shared that there are about 60 Tea Gardens in Tejpur that engaged primarily laborers belonging to the Santhal and Uoraon tribes of Jharkhand. Unfortunately, they are treated like slaves even in independent India and are denied land and other civil rights. They have not been given tribal status in the state of Assam. He said that since February 2nd, workers in Samaguri tea garden (spread in 600 bhiga) are sitting on protest. All the laborers are demanding that they be given ownership rights on this land, both for agriculture and for constructing home. When these families were brought from Gumla district to Samagudi about 120 years ago, there was a written agreement between the Tea garden owners and the laborers and about 100 acres land was kept aside for cultivation and construction of home. They were also told that they would be given livelihood and social security provisions as permanent labour. The lease of ITPL Company Samaguri has expired where about 80 families are living permanently. Despite dialogue with the company and government at various levels, their demands have not been accepted. In the opinion of Mr. Nelkhas Toppo, Secretary Dekichuli Anchalik Committee, most of the areas where cultivation is being done by tea garden laborers is now being shown in the name of Assam Tea limited and laborers who are settled here for the last 5 generations are in the process displacement. On April 2, 2012, all tea garden laborers are collectively having a dialogue with central government.

(14)

Bilala tribals from Dhar get forest land entitlement in Pancheer Village, Pipariya Goli Panchayat, Goharganj, Raisen District, (Madhya Pradesh)

Migrated to Pancheer about 50 years back due to poverty and unemployment, the Bilalala tribal families from Dhar worked as laborers with forest Department. With the support of forest guards they started cultivating maize in small pieces of land for their food. Later on, slowly they occupied about 250 acres of land in the fertile valley of the hills belonging to Ratapani Sanctuary area. Now there are 65 tribal households in the village.



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The Forest guards often threatened them and destroyed their crops. Ekta Parishad entered in this village in 2006 and formed a Mahila mandal and a village unit in which all 55 households were members. They conducted youth camp and Padyatra (march) and submitted memorandum for their demands of land, electricity and road to the Collector at Raisen in 2006. Villagers were made aware of Forest Rights and as a result they had participated in Janadesh 2007. In 2008 again Ekta Parishad organized Padyatra focusing on forest rights.

In 2008, a 15 member Forest Rights Committee was formed and villagers submitted claims for individual land, temple, cemetery, school and for grazing land. Out of 56 claims made 48 families got entitlement, area ranging from 0.50 biga to 5 acres in 2009- 2010. But most of them got land to the extent of half of what they occupied. Therefore, again they submitted memorandum in 2010 on Sept 11 and Dec 10 to Tehsildar to verify claims. With the help of agriculture department 14 farmers got diesel pump sets for irrigating their land.

(15)

Got Land Deed in 2002, but no Possession: Bhaatni, Ganjbasoda Tehsil, Vidisha District, (Madhya Pradesh)

In 2002, the Tehsildar of Basoda issued land titles to 4 families, 3 SCs and 1 ST in Bhaatni village, 2.307 hectares of land. But it was not demarcated till 2009. On 8 June 2009, the Asst. Tehsildar issued notice to the village officer to make a sketch of the land. But at the time of measurement one more person was added as title holder for the same land. On 14th June the land belonging to 4 title holders was demarcated. They built huts and started living there and cultivated soybean and black gram. With this development, the earlier occupants destroyed their crops, burned huts and beaten them up. The titled holders filed case against those who attacked them and the police admitted them into hospital for treatment. The case is still going on in the court; the title holders lost their land which is still under the possession of those powerful people. Ekta Parishad is taking up the matter with the court and helping these poor people to get possession.

(16)

Transfer of Bhoodan Land, Hazaribag (Jharkhand)

There is no limit to the injustice done to the poor by people who controlled them as well as by the administration who are supposed to protect the poor and the marginalized. In Tutpaa village in Hazaribag district of Jharkhand, 12 acre land was given to 17 dalit families in 1976 as part of Bhoodan land movement. These families were cultivating the land. In 1991, few Zamindars with the support of land mafia of the area occupied the land and sold it to a Catholic Ashram. The villagers were beaten up and boundary was made overnight. The families approached the Police authorities and the administration but all turned down their petition. The police did not even file their petition. Ekta Parishad had taken up the matter and in March 2011, people submitted a community petition to Ekta Parishad asking for their help. Land mafia had even threatened the District Coordinator of Ekta Parishad. But the struggle is continuing.



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(17)

Entitlement on forest land to tribals of Karkwani, Pipariya Goli Panchayat, Goharganj, Raisen District, (Madhya Pradesh)

Karkwani is a forest village coming under Ratapani sanctuary. There were 52 families living in the village for two generations, of which 50 were Gond tribals and 2 backward castes. They lived mainly on agriculture. Some families had own agricultural land but others occupied surrounding forest land for cultivation. The forest official used to harass them to leave forest land. Ekta Parishad entered the village in 2006, and since then 44 families who occupied forest land had given applications, organized padyatra, dharna and had participated in Janadesh 2007. When the FRA came into force in 2008, the villagers formed Forest Rights Committee and submitted application for entitlement under FRA. Ekta Parishad helped them to fill up the forms and get caste certificate. Even though titles were made in 2009, the authorities did not distribute those till 2010. At the time of a 3 day Padyatra through the villages of Abdullaganj in Feb 2010, just before the Yatra reached each village the authorities were busy distributing titles to villagers. But these families again put forward petitions on June 5th and on Dec 10th demanding reconsideration of their applications because they all received much less land than what they actually occupied.

(18)

Entitlement on agricultural land of Sahariya Tribal rejected by the Revenue Department, Satakhedi Jajoun village, Ganjbasoda, Vidisha (Madhya Pradesh)

Jagdish Adivasi's grandfather Gubra Adivasi was landless when he started cultivating Revenue land since 1960s. He occupied 2 hectares of land. In 1985, the Tahsildar issued entitlement for 1.5 hectares of this agricultural land to Doulat Adivasi, son of Gubra Adivasi. But in 1993, the Collector of Vidisha cancelled their title. Doulat Adivasi had developed the land with dug well and bundling; for which he had taken Rs 26700 loan from bank. He send letter to court stating his case but the court did not take decision in his favor. He appealed to the District court and the court dismissed the lower court's decision and recognized Adivasi's ownership. In July 2011, Doulat Adivasi reported that the case is still not resolved because the Revenue has gone to Gwalior High Court. Now the High Court has issued notice for encroachment on revenue land. Ekta Parishad activists tried to track the case but it is not known. They are still cultivating the land.

(19)

30 tribal families received forest land entitlement in Village Bandari, Sagar District, (Madhya Pradesh)

In Village Bandari, 70 tribal families occupied 200 acres of forest land since last 25 years. Ekta Parishad started working in this village in 2006 and conducted a survey and started working on getting their land entitlement. In 2008, 70 tribal families and 5 Dalit families submitted application for forest land to Forest Rights Committee. The Gram Sabha approved the claims and forwarded to SLDC. Ekta Parishad organized a dharna in front of the Collectorate, in which 600 villagers participated and submitted memorandum to the



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Collector. During this Dharna, the Collector assured them that they would be given entitlements after enquiry and verification of occupied land as per the Forest Rights Act 2006. Accordingly, 30 families got titles in 2009. Again in 2010, 105 households including tribals who did not get entitlement in earlier application, Dalits and OBCs submitted claims; of which Forest Rights Committee and Gram Panchayat forwarded 35 claims of occupied tribals to SDLC. Now these families are expecting entitlement.

(20)

Harassment of Tribals by Non Tribals in Ratangawa, Tikamgarh, (Madhya Pradesh)

Land grabbing of the poor tribals is a serious matter towards which the administration at lower levels seldom does justice. 130 families lived in Ratangawa village, of which 50 were tribals. Among them, 22 tribal families were cultivating 200 acres of land since last 20 years. This was their only source of livelihood. As per the Forest Rights Act 2006, these families submitted claims for land. But once the authorities verified the land and found that these families do not have entitlement, the non tribals attacked the tribal families on 6-8-2010, destroyed their crops, burned their houses and destroyed all their belongings. Even their drinking water well was contaminated with kerosene. FIR was filed in the Police Station but police later on twisted it and no action was taken. On August 13th to 22nd, Ekta Parishad organized a sit-in in front of Collectorate to take action against the culprits. Each day 250-300 people sat in the Dharna in support of the bereaved families. On 16th they submitted memorandum to take action and to give land entitlement to the 22 households. As a result, the five women who were attacked seriously were given Rs 6000/- each for their treatment. But land entitlement is yet to be given.



For more information, please check the Ekta Parishad website, www.ektaparishad.com