

LAND REFORMS AND THE MARGINALIZED GROUPS: A CASE STUDY OF ODISHA WITH REFERENCE TO ADIVASIS AND DALITS

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ABSTRACT:

One important item of land reform programme in the country after independence was to redistribute the land wealth as a measure of social justice primarily to provide access to land to the marginalized groups especially the adivasis and dalits who were historically deficient on this count. During the last six decades the state governments as well as the governments at the national level have adopted legislative means to protect the interest of these vulnerable groups and to improve the access of the groups to land but the reality emerging at the ground level as a result of studies undertaken especially in Odisha relating to the efficacy of the measures in improving the access of the groups to land however suggest a disconsolate state, pointing to a certain extent the failure of traditional redistributive land reform policy. In view of this a more effective and pragmatic policy should be pursued that would combine selective revision of the existing laws and adoption of a holistic approach, a wider agenda beyond the stereotype of land reform and focus on bringing overall improvement in the marginalized groups. The paper intend to examine the measures adopted at the state level as well as at the national level to improve the weaker sections access to land especially the STs and SCs, the extent to which the measures have helped the communities in Odisha and the steps need to be adopted from the perspective of lessons gleaned during the past six decades.

KEY WORDS: Land Alienation, Land reforms, Marginalized groups, Odisha, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes.
