

Report of
**STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION
ON
LAND RIGHTS**

Organised by
Land Rights Campaign-Orissa



In Collaboration with
**Ekta Parishad &
Vinoba Seva Pratisthan**

Held at : **Redcross Bhawan, Bhubaneswar**
On 27th - 28th May, 2007

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Held at : **Redcross Bhawan, Bhubaneswar**
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Reported by : Pratyush Mishra
Edited by : Gouranga Mohapatra

Convenor : **Manoj Jena**

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD THROUGH LAND RIGHTS CAMPAIGN IN ORISSA

Livelihood of landless & Marginalised people in Orissa are in a vulnerable condition due to growing land grabbing and reducing employment generation scopes by the Govt. as well as the companies involved in anti-people industrialisation and marginalising the people inspite of uplifting the economic condition.

Agriculture sector in the State is completely ignored and agricultural lands are used in establishing multi-stored housing complex by the builders and the agricultural labourers, small/marginal farmers are forced to left the agriculture and handing over the land to the builders, which is a multi discipline project of land grabbers, beurocrates and political leader as this project is more beneficial than the agriculture or any cash crops.

This selfish attempt is creating a gap between the persons involved in agriculture and for their family too migrate themselves to the urban areas even outside the state for searching food, which is demolishing their Socio-economic conditions and suffering in torture, trafficking & AIDS. etc., Basically, the Dalit and other caste marginalised communities are the victims of the said problems.

Further, despite all above cross roads, the poverty is not yet properly understood by the Govt. as well as the Social Organisations engaged in Social Welfare and development activities. In the name of so called industrialisation, the sponz iron factory and other factories are polluting the environment, where the women, children and aged people are suffering in various diseases. No Government, pollution control Board or the company it self do not care as they have their alternative to live. But the

poor, who have nothing than own a piece of land will die without fault or enjoying any wealth from the polluting sources.

On the other hand, in the globalisation process, the MNCs have used orissa as a labortary in privatising electricity, water, contact farming, health, education, sanitation and very recent the vegetable marketing to the company houses. The facilities available for the company industrial houses are not cheaper to the general people to avail the oppertunity for livelihood. The welfare state is purchased by huge kick back and neo-zamindars have been located through massive exploitation.

Under the above circumstances, the livelihood of the landless people, agriculture labour and persons living without agricultural land are endangered.

It is a fact that, Some organisations also working for forest land right of the people, where the landless non-tribal and agricultural labourers are deprived from this initiative. Tribal are not landless as they have plenty land for possession but the question of only entitlement over the land is the issue. But non-tribal vuluerables have no scopes excluding some agency areas to occupy a piece of land as all such lands are under control of Government. These people have been facing immediate eviction from tehasildars, where it is noticed rather the powerful persons with manipulating the system owning the same land from the same Govt. Sources, where a landless people facing death for food insecurity due to want of a piece of productive land.

Considering all above situations and taking accounts of the Government launched schemes of **Vasundhara Yojana** to provide home-stead land to the landless by the Govt., it was felt necessary to unite all forums and organisations working on land issue in the state to mobilize

the civil society for a people's movement with a slogan - "Land to Landless than to company".

A two days state level consultation was convened by the associating peoples forum & organisations on 27th & 28th May' 2007 at Redcross Bhawan, Bhubaneswar.

The subjects discussed and the report of the consultation is enclosed herewith for ready reference.

However, the following objectives will be taken to reduce marginalisation and poverty of the poor people in the state.

Objectives

- (1) Distribution of surplus land with Govt. both for homestead and agriculture purpose.
- (2) Providing of linkage building available processes for reclamation of allotted land and other assistance for production.
- (3) To create an awareness among the landless people to make this effort as peoples movement for the interest of the 47% population of below poverty line.
- (4) A peoples commission will be established to hear all the land related problems and to recommend the judgement for implement both in Govt. and Civil Society. Where the peoples movement will be the pressurized action to get it done in a proper and priority manner.
- (5) Legal supports for the BPL & Landless people, marginalised farmers will be provided in every Tahasil segments to get the natural justice in favour of poor landless people.

LAND RIGHTS CAMPAIGN-ORISSA.

A means to provide justice to landless people of the state

Why this forum is:-

Land Rights Campaign is a forum of like mind organization and individuals, who are working for betterment of the downtrodden tribal, Dalit and landless poor as well as landless laborers depending on wages.

Everybody knows that various forums are working on this subject either in red or white banner. If you are experienced one, you must have known that, from any of these initiatives have not properly compensated the objectives of landless families to ensure their food security as well as to live with dignity in the Society.

Resource from various sources has flown like flood to resolve the issues of hunger and poverty. Nevertheless, after 60 years of Independence, it could not be possible on our part to say that we are now self-reliant on our basic needs. On the other hand, not only our State but also our Country has recognized as the developing poor country of the Earth. Who is actual responsible for this condition of the people as well as Society? It may generate one answer "WE. The composition of the we do not allow some class of people, who do not want to waste their time for the others survival and saying that "if one has power and policy can survive", others have to die. But in India, where 47% of the people are living below povertyline. Education, communication, health and other basic facilities are not yet available in 50% above rural areas. In such state of affairs, the power and policy may not so cheap for the downtrodden people. Therefore, as stated earlier, they have no rights to live. Is it a humanitarian view?. We have to think.

There are forum, Manch, Sabha and units to fight for the right according to the their own agenda. But here is a clear question that, if any body asked "are

you really requested by any poor people to resolve their problems”. Certainly the answer will be” no.”Orissan are peace mongers, do not put their noose in the problems, it may be their weakness, but it is creating more opportunity for our leadership and projects. So, more such forums, Mancha , Sabha and groups have been formed. If we will go through the achievement, we may not be satisfied with the efforts and resources used in the said initiatives. Another aspect is distance among the existing forums, Morcha and groups. Also different ideology is a factor, but the crisis of separate identity is the prime problem ,which is creating obstacle to be united under single Platform. If this is the problematic areas, how this campaign will address and what will be the strategy to unite all the groups under one banner – is a question of every hearts.

“It may be mentioned here that the single effort may generate something but the united effort may change every thing”. The leaders and the advisors of the existing forums are aware about this. So, we are inviting to all the forum leaders, individuals involved in the land right issue and organization dedicating for the purposes for holding a discussion on **27-28 th May 2007 at Red cross Bhawan at 10.00 AM** with following discussion points.

Discussion Points:

- ❖ **Land History of Orissa**
- ❖ **Movements on Land rights**
- ❖ **Land reform and legislations**
- ❖ **Bhoodan concept & Land Movements**
- ❖ **Forestland and Traditional Rights**
- ❖ **Land right Laws and its implications**
- ❖ **Unequal possession of Land**
- ❖ **Urban Land ceiling and Encroachment**
- ❖ **Dalit Land rights-present conditions and probable**
- ❖ **Constitutional Land Rights of Citizen and role of Government**
- ❖ **SEZ : The Financial threat to state exchequer**
- ❖ **Developments Projects & Displacement**

If some friends like to contribute one or more than one topic, we will welcome them to present the paper before participants in the discussion. We have vices, we have differences, we have present basic views but when we are attending a ceremony of relatives, friends, we are trying to maintain with every body. But here is the ceremony of poverty stricken masses, displaced masses, landless masses, where we could not maintain the brotherhood to be a tool for them with a concept "To live for others" as we all stating every where that we are activists.

CAN WE JOIN HANDS- IF OUR SOUL FORCE COMMAND US FOR THEM – WHO DO NOT ABLE TO FIGHT FOR RIGHTS ON LAND.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR CONSULTATION ON LAND RIGHTS

Date: 27-28 th May 2007.

Venue: Redcross Bhawan, Bhubaneswar

Date	Time/ Duration	Subject	Guest/Resource Person
27-05-07	9.30am- 10.00am	Registration	
(Sunday)	10.00am- 11.00am	Inauguration- Lightening Candle Garlanding Photographs of GANDHI & VINOBA Inaugural Song by Ekta Kala Manch	Mr Rajgopal PV, National Chairman EKTA PARISHAD Acharya Bhabananda, Educationist Dr Ratan Das, Veteran freedom fighter & Bhoodan Activist. Mr Bipin Dash, Chairman Puri-Konark Development Association Mr Gouranga Mohapatra Secretary, Bhoodan Workers Union
	11.00am- 11.30am	<i>Tea/Cofee Break</i>	
	11.30am- 12.30pm	Land History of Orissa	Dr. Basudev Sahoo Retd professor of Economics Utkal University, Vani Vihar
	12.30pm- 1.30pm	Movements on Land Rights	Mr. Prasant Paikray, Social Activist
	1.30pm- 2.30pm	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
	2.30pm- 3.30pm	Land Reforms & Legislations	Mr.Sadan Nayak, MLA
	3.30pm- 4.30pm	Bhoodan Concept & Land Movement	Dr. Ratan Das, Veteran freedom fighter
	4.30pm- 5.00pm	Forest Land & Traditional Rights	Dr Sricharan Behera Programme Officer, Basundhara
	5.00pm- 5.30pm	<i>Tea /Cofee Break</i>	
	5.30pm- 6.30pm	Land Rights Laws & Its implications	Mr. Gangadhar Panigrahi Sr. Advocate, Orissa High Court
	6.30pm- 7.00pm	SEZ :The financial threat to state exchequer	Mr. Anil Mohanty Trade Union Leader
	7.00pm- 7.30pm	Summing –Up of the day long Discussion	Mr. Anil Mohanty Trade Union Leader
	7.30pm- 8.00pm	Bhoo-Adhikar Satyagraha – Cultural Presentation	EKTA KALA MANCH
	8.00pm	<i>Dinner</i>	

Date	Time/ Duration	Subject	Guest/Resource Person
28-05-07	9.30am-10.00am	Recapitulation	Mr Manoj Jena Convenor, LRC-Orissa
(Monday)	10.00am-11.00am	Unequal Possession of Land	Mr.Sarat Mansingh, Social Activist Mr Hemant Nayak, ODAAN
	11.00am-11.30am	<i>Tea/Coffee Break</i>	
	11.30am-12.30pm	Urban Land ceiling & Encroachment	Mr Ajay Jena, Ex Chip Whip Govt of Orissa Mr.Biswamohan Mohanty Secretary, ORRISSA
	12.30pm-1.30pm	Dalit Land Rights-Present conditions & Probable	Mr.Manas Jena State Convenor, NCDHR
	1.30pm-2.30pm	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
	2.30pm-3.30pm	Development Projects & Displacement	Mr Ramahari Mishra Senior Journalist
	3.30pm-4.30pm	Constitutional Land Rights of citizen & Role of Government	Mr.Gangadhar Panigrahi Senior Advocate
	4.30pm-5.00pm	<i>Tea/Coffee Break</i>	
	5.00pm-5.30pm	Resolution of two days discussion	Mr Anil Mohanty Mr Gouranga Rout
	5.30pm-6.30pm	Valedictory Ceremony	Prof Kailash Acharya Spokes Person,PCC Mr. Anirudha Rout Director, Public Grievance & Pension Affairs, Govt. of Orissa Dr Dillip Srichandan, Ex MLA Namrata Chadha State Director, People's Watch, Orissa

First Day, 1st Session

Date - 27th May, 2007

A Seminar on Land Rights of people has been convened on the 27th and 28th of May 2007. The Seminar was attended by several eminent personalities like Social activists, freedom fighters, political leaders, Research Scholars and N.G.O. Personell. The inaugural meeting was presided over by veteran Sarvodaya-Bhoodan Activist Dr.Ratan Das. The welcome address of the meeting was delivered by the Convenor of the Seminar Mr. Manoj Jena. He introduced the speakers and the resource persons.

Mr. Anil Mohapatra, the state Convenor of Ekta Parishad spoke about the action of the Ekta Parishad in various states of India and its determination to win rights for People. The Ekta Parishad has kept land rights as one of its priorities in its agenda. He emphasised that the speedy disposal of justice should begin from the Gram Sabha level and they should be empowered for it.



Eminent educationist **Acharya Bhabananda** criticised the Human Development Report of the Govt. of Orissa severely and complained that it has failed to include the land rights issue in its report. He also said that the UNDP norms are not being followed in cases of displacement and that the present process of globalization is not the solution for the hungry millions. He emphasised the concept of trusteeship of **Gandhiji** for collective welfare of people, which is the most effective solution to our socio-economic problems.

Inaugurator of this occasion **Mr. RajGopal P.V.**, who is the national President of Ekta Parishad told that even today there are around 40% of people who are below the poverty line. The Govt. has only capacity to provide employment to 2% people. All others are self-employed. In this context, the issue of land rights assumes greater importance. Because land is the basic means of livelihood for people and agriculture is the prime source of sustenance for people, so this sector should be given utmost



Mr. Rajgopal P. V.



importance. He attributed the increasing violence and social unrest to the poverty of people. Mr. Rajgopal also pointed to the fact that the Govt. has been expressing its inability to provide minimum land to the needy poor people whereas it is ready to sign MOUs with big multinationals to provide them as much land as they need. The basic elements of people's survival are water, Land and forest. But people are deprived of their rights over them and instead of that companies like Vedanta, Posco, Jindal, Tata and Reliance are having the Lion's share of the land. It is only due to the anti-village, anti-farmer policy of the Govt. that the people are suffering. Mr. Rajgopal told that there has been a letter campaign to the P.M. of India on the issue of land rights. There should be debates on the rights of people over the land, water and forest resources and necessary legislation to this effect should be passed in the parliament. He further



pointed about the Historical Foot March - **Janadesh-07** for land rights from ensuring 2nd October 2007 and appealed to all participants & groups to join hands in the said initiative.

The Former MLA of Orissa Assembly **Mr. Dilip Srichandan** told that though there have been many acts on Land rights, still the common masses do not have the benefits of the act, and there should be involvement of the common people on this issue. He told that until the common people are aware of their rights they cannot be given their rightful share on a platter, basically depressed community should be given their share by the Govt. as well as conscious intellectual masses to be the tool for them in this action.

Mr. Bipin Dash, Ex Chief Whip, Govt of Orissa told that the Dalits and Harijans are the most affected section of our society and the Indian judicial system is most ineffective to provide justice to the poor. He said that the process of globalisation has destroyed the real concept of development. He told that the die-hard attitude of the political parties is a tremendous



Mr. Dilip Srichandan



Mr. Bipin Das



obstacle in the process of simplification of the land rights issue. He narrated a case study how he escaped depressed families during his tenure to be the land owner for sustenance.

Prof. Basudev Sahu is an eminent author. He has written a book as “**Land History of Orissa**”. He complained that the makers of Land Reforms Act are themselves the obstacles of the implementation of the program. He said that only making acts are not enough. However, the real goodwill of the political parties is necessary. He also told that laws should be made to the effect that it should be seen that whether all the existing lands are cultivated or not. He told that only protests or rallies are not solutions. But real implementation is the solution. He expressed serious concern over the development-induced displacement due to the industrialization and mining etc. He told that the **Orissa Tennants Act** should be rightly implemented only distribution of land is not enough but the priority should be given on



Prof. Basudev Sahu



agriculture and agro-based industry.

After the speakers had delivered their speeches, there was a question - answer session. Some persons from the audience put questions to get the answers.

Mr. Hemant Nayak Convenor, Orissa Dalit Adivasi Action Net (ODAAN) from Kandhamal District asked what should be done to provide justice to the tribal. Mr. Bipin Dash answered that the lower level political leaders are misappropriating the available lands instead of distributing it to the poor and needy.

Another questioner asked Mr. Rajgopal what should be done by the Govt. to ensure maximum employment under the various schemes? Mr. Rajgopalji answered that the Govt. should facilitate in the generation of employment and should not destroy employment. The Govt. should recognize the land rights of people and a National Land Authority should be formed to make provisions for every type of issue dealing with land rights of people. He also suggested a fast track court for speedy



Mr. Hemant Nayak



disposal of justice and establishment of Single window system for the common man to resolve and restore the existing blockade at land related action of the administration.

Second Session

Dr. Ratan Das, the eminent Bhoodan - Sarvodaya Leader described about the background of the Bhoodan movement in 1954 which was started by Vinoba. He told that Vinobaji had faith in the good qualities of human beings and he appealed to these good qualities to achieve tremendous result in the efforts for Bhoodan. He told that it is an element of satyagraha that we should keep faith upon the good qualities of every human being. So the non-violent and peaceful appeal is necessary to achieve the end. He told that Vinobaji advocated collective ownership of property, which was the concept of Gramdan. He told that the land distribution initiative achieved a good height during the rule of Nandini Satpathy in Orissa but it suffered a set back after a nexus was built up among the dishonest politicians and bureaucrats. He



Dr. Ratan Das



accused that the Govt. is not sincere to distribute the Bhoodan lands among the beneficiaries and learned that as long as the land rights issue is not addressed properly, we cannot solve the basic needs of the poor masses. Mr. Ratan Das also referred to the aim and spirit of the Naxulite movement and how it has lost direction to achieve its aim. He warned that if during the coming 10 years or 20 years, the land rights of the tribals are not recognized in Orissa, there will be situations the Somalia.

Mr. Sadan Nayak, MLA, Kodiaga, Nawrangapur told that we have to immediately follow the Land Reform Act and implement it. **Unauthorized land acquisition Act should be implemented.** He told that the state exchequer is being looted in the name of Nauxulite problem. He presented the fact that the Bhoodan lands have been taken back by the landlords because these could not be distributed to the Landless properly. He gave examples of torture upon people in the name of development by pointing to the fact that in Indravati Project in



Mr. Sadan Nayak



Orissa, about 157 villages have been displaced and till now they have not been rightly settled. He said that U/S-36 of the Civil Law, the Land rights goes to the tenants if they cultivate the land for more than 20 years. **He told that laws should be passed to forcibly bring the land from big land lords.**



Mr. Jagannath Sethi

Question-answer Session:-

One questioner asked whether the land record Act. has been practically implemented ? Mr. Sadan Nayak told that education of the tribals is very necessary to make them aware of their own necessities.



Sri Charan Behera

Another deprived person namely **Jagannath Sethi** of Jagatsinghpur district complained that his plot has been forcibly taken away from him by an influential person Pramod Prasad Dash. Even if the complaint has been lodged with the police, no action has been taken yet.

Sri Charan Behera, Research Fellow, Basundhara told about the basic rights of people of Land, Water



and Jungle. He emphasised that land is the source of our economic and social security and hence land rights is the most important of our rights. The Govt. is spending crores of money in the name of watershed projects and other land development projects. However, in reality, the bureaucratic machinery is only looting the money invested on it. Because without the land rights for all. The Govt. expenditure is only providing benefits to the big landlords. The mining companies are violating all the rules for their benefit. He pointed to the fact that after independence, the Jamindari system was abolished and the forestland under their ownership was transferred to the Govt. But with this also, the inhabitants of those forests were deprived of their livelihood. Those who are entitled to make laws for us are destroying us Survey and settlement of the encroached land should be done periodically by the Govt. in a faster way.

Mr. Anil Mohanty, Trade Union leader told that all the historical background of the various Land Reforms Acts should be carefully



Mr. Anil Mohanty



Panel Members



studied by the volunteers and they should find out ways and means to sort out the problems and pressurize the Govt. to take practical steps to address the issue. He told that the creation of 'SEZ' is a threat to the economic sovereignty of the people. He emphasized on the need of Satyagraha and Land rights Satyagraha. He told that India should follow the way of Gandhi-Vinoba for all round upliftment.



Panel List

Second Day (1st Session)

Date - 28th May, 2007

The Second day of the Land rights seminar started with the welcome address by Manoj Jena. He briefed the previous day's discussions of the seminar and introduced the Panel members of the second day. The 1st session of the second day was presided over by Mr. Ratan Das, who had presided over the previous day also.



Mr. Sarat Mansingh

The other panel members invited for the seminar were Mr. Gourang Mohapatra who is a Bhoodan activist. Mr. Nabakishore Routray, veteran freedom fighter, Mr. Manoj Mohapatra, Social Activist and Hansraj Mishra, Sarvoday Worker.



Mr. Sarat Mansingh pointed to our disparities of Land distribution. He told that due to the unequal possession of land there has been huge gap in the economic condition of the tribals and Dalits and the rich landlords.

He criticized the discriminative legal implementation which is creating obstacles in the equality of land rights of all Sections of people.

Mr. Hemant Nayak told about the scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribe land rights and criticized the social discrimination, which is preventing them to gain their rights over land. He emphasized that the 5th and 9th Schedule of the constitution has given priority to the welfare of the Vulnerable sections of the society like the SC and ST. But the political

turmoil of our nation is the obstacle for the practical implementation of the directives of the constitution. He said the SC & ST riot is a proof of violation of their basic rights. He also told that land record system and the survey and settlement of lands should go on speedily to provide land rights to all.



Mr. Biswamohan Mohanty

The set backs in this direction are various political, religious and cultural impositions on the vulnerable sections of Society, especially the tribals and Dalits and Harijans etc. The migration of the vulnerable section, women trafficking and their exploitation is the outcome of this.

Mr. Biswamohan Mohanty Director of **ORISSA** told that the Govt. is lazy to pay attention to the immediate and urgent issue of the land rights of people. He told that there should be Seed-Sufficiency or Seed-Swaraj for all the farmers. He put emphasis upon the Govt.'s duty to give prime importance to the bio-diversity, food habits of the poor sections of Society, their nutrition and agricultural practice etc. so that development would come through the grass-root level. He told that the law related issues should be presented before the Govt. by taking common initiative of the people.

Mr. Ajay Jena - Ex Chief Whip, Govt of Orissa pointed to the fact that there have been 103 urban areas in the state and there are different types of land encroachments by the influential persons. The number of landless people is increasing day by day. He told that the present concept of SEZ is a new threat to the Security of the people. He told that the four pillars of our democracy are not oriented towards solution of the problems of the masses. The legislative and administrative system is not geared towards the solution of the problems of the common man. He suggested that the encroachment of Land by the influential persons in the urban areas should be enlisted and they should be booked under law. Strict

rules and regulations should be made to prevent land encroachments.

Mr. Manas Jena, the state convenor of National Campaign for Dalits Human Rights (NCDHR) told that there should be special sessions in the parliament for the discussion of land rights of people. He told that there should be an assessment of the revenue, forest and sea land and the use of these types of lands. Mr. Jena pointed to the fact that even now 70% of people are landless and among the landless people, more people belong to the Dalit and tribal community. He gave an example by saying that there are more landless people in the Jajpur district. He told that due to the mindless allotment of land resources to the big MNCS, there is less and less land to be given to any landless people.



Mr. Ajaya Jena



Mr. Manas Jena

He said that there has been yet no effort for the Survey and settlement of the lands. The common man is only entangled in the mesh of complicated legal network instead of getting a piece of land. He emphasized that the participation of the Political parties in addressing the land rights issue is a must. There should be a strong movement of people to this effect.

After his speech one member of the audience asked a question that, why there has been discrimination on the basis of caste & religion?

To this question, Mr. Manas Jena told that it is a tactic played by the political parties. He complained that people's attention is being

diverted to insignificant issues like caste and religion instead of focusing them on the real issues of development and livelihood sustenance.

Mr. Prasant Paikray described about the history of the Land rights movement at different periods of past. He told that in 1940, the anti-mustadar or the “Rayatdari Movement” started under the leadership of Mr. Biswanath Dash.



Mr. Prasant Paikray

There was Utkal Kissan Sabha movement.

There was a people’s movement in Puri district, in 1940, which advocated that people have the rights on forest resources and fisheries. There was another movement in 1965 in the Bolangir district to assets the land rights of people. In 1970 there was a land rights movement in the Balasore district. In 1957 there was a movement in the Jharsuguda district. In 1986 there was a land rights movement in Bhatli of Sambalpur district. In 1984, there was the movement Slum area protection in Bhubaneswar.

GROUP DISCUSSION/ACTION PLAN :

Then an Action Plan was discussed on the issue of Land rights, which included the following:-

- * To assess the fact that why there have been so many landless people.
- * The rigid attitude of bureaucrats should change and they should come forward for effective action.
- * There should be correct networking among the like-minded individuals, organisations and groups to resolve the Land rights issue.
- * Proper training should be provided to the activists in dealing with the legal aspects of the problems.

- * There should be Lobby and advocacy on the Land rights issue at the top political level.
- * A people's commission on land should be formed which will deal with the various problems of land rights.
- * The Bhoodan land distribution program should be taken up on as urgent basis.
- * There should be cadre-building programs, which will take care of various aspects of the land rights issue.
- * There should be an Advisory Committee for keeping eye on law identification and implementation process.

POST - LUNCH SESSION

Mr. Ram Hari Mishra, a senior journalist clarified the concept of land which provides sustenance for the basic needs of our life. He told that we should not lose land at any cost. He said that there should be awareness for people on the issue of land rights through the publication of small articles on land rights etc. He put emphasis upon the ethics of media. He told that the media must be well sensitized about the issue of land rights and it must be pro-poor in its orientation towards public. He pointed to the fact that words of mouth are the most potent weapon of public awareness and we



should therefore take up the responsibility **Mr. Ram Hari Mishra** to speak to as many people as possible on their rights upon land as a result of which more and more people can extend their hands to the land

rights movement. He pointed to the danger of the creation of SEZs, which is in fact the decolonization of free India. He urged people to oppose this from all quarters.

**Mr. Gangadhar Panigrahi,
Senior Advocate of Orissa High
Court**

He told that people should be aware of their rights upon land and they should contribute their efforts to achieve their end. Even if one cannot expect immediate results from the movement still then one should continue on the principle of “Ekla



Mr. Gangadhar Panigrahi

Chalore”(alone go) This song by Rabindranath Thakur had given impetus to Gandhiji to carry on the freedom movement even if nobody is available. Mr. Panigrahi told strongly against SEZ. He explained that this is another form of creation of the old “Gadajat Region” where small kings were ruling during the pre-independence times. It is a state of new colonization. He quoted Sri Auribindo’s words, “One man’s efforts can still save the world”. It means that if a single man is very strong in spirit and soul then he can achieve voluminous result in any direction. He also said that people at the grass root level should be made conscious to achieve their rights and there should be right empowerment of them for implementation of plans.

Then a questionnaire from the audience asked, whether we are still equal before law even after the decision of the creation SEZ ?

To this question, Mr. Panigrahi answered that efforts should be made to revise our constitution in the modern context. There were briefing from the panel members that the priority should be given to the farmers and the landless in the process of development. The violation of the constitutional provision are first done by the central govt. and then by the state govt.

Acharya Bhabananda :

Acharya Bhabananda, who is an eminent educationist criticised our constitutional machinery and told that our constitution is socialistic in body and soul but in practical implementation of the rules, the govt. is adopting capitalistic methods, which is increasing the disparities. He said that “Satyagraha” is the only weapon to protest against all types of evil forces in our society.

Prof. Kailash Acharya –the spokesman of Pradesh Congress Committee, Orissa

Mr. Acharya told that the Supreme Court sent the central empowerment committee to Lanjigarh to study the viability of the Alumina project there. The plight of the people displaced there due to the project of Vedanta Company was immense. He referred

to the Niyamagiri hill at that place which is worshipped by the tribals. This hill was destroyed by Vedanta which demolished the religious faith of the tribal people. This is a serious violation of the human rights but no provision of the constitution seems to punish the Vedanta Company. He also criticised the plan of the govt. for creation of SEZ. Which is in fact creation of countries within a country which is going to threaten the Sovereignty?

Mr. Aniruddha Rout, Director of Public Grievances & Pension Govt of Orissa



Prof. Kailash Acharya



Mr. Aniruddha Rout

He said that there has been complicity in the revenue department to be understood by the common man. He criticised our globalisation process and told that globalisation does not mean to sacrifice the basic rights of people. He urged that the ceiling surplus and Bhoodan lands should be distributed to the landless with immediate steps towards this effect. He suggested that the survey and settlement of lands should be a single window system, which will simplify the procedure and facilitate the common man.

Decisions Taken:

1. The “Satyagraha”, non-violent means of movement be continued till get the land rights by the deprived community.
2. All sections of the Society will be moved by Land Rights Campaign, Orissa to extend solidarity and co-operation to create pressure on Govt. with a “Slogan Land to Landless then to company”.
3. Legal analysis will be made by a group of Lawyer and constitution experts for making recommendations to central & state Government to ammend the existing laws towards pro-people and to make it simple for better use by deprived community.
4. To strengthen the existing demands and movements on land rights in the state by uniting all such initiatives under common banner.
5. A people’s commission will set-up to address the land and livelihood problems of the deprived communities of the state of Orissa.
6. A research team will be formed.
7. Cadre / volunteers will be nominated from the civil society to be tool to disseminate message to grass root level.
8. Legal intervention is to be made in respect of poor/ depressed Landless people through the Land Rights Campaign.