



**WHOSE  
LAND?**

**WHOSE  
FOREST?**

**WHOSE  
WATER?**

**People's Struggle  
for Land, Forest  
and Water**

# Whose Land? Whose Forests? Whose Water?

People's Struggle for Land  
Forest and Water



Ekta Parishad

**PRAXIS**

Praxis-Institute for Participatory Practices

**'Whose Land? Whose Forests? Whose Water?'**

People's Struggle for Land, Forest and Water

*Struggle stories consolidated by*

Praxis team

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**Meghalaya:** CASA, RRC

**Bihar:** Kasturba Seva Kendra, Bhoomiheen Kisan Mazdoor Seva Sanstha, Parivartan Jan Andolan, Gyan Sarovar, Kumar Patima Pratishtan, Holiness Compassion Society, Natka Bihan Jhaso Baksar, Dalit Adhikar Manch, Matadin Mahila Manch Ramnagar, Dalit Seva Samiti, Paramount Global Welfare Society, Humanity and Social Foundation, Mahila Sashaktikaran Kendra, Saint Marry Middle School, Dalit Mukti Mission Guhajora, Simultala, Jamui Phatepur, Via Chandan, Samrat Health & Welfare Society, Radha Silpkala Kendra, Kranti Manaseva Kendra, Gram Ganaraj Jagriti Kendra Bakarot, Bodhgaya, Vikas Jyoti, Anuradha Mahila Kalyan Kendra, Sampurna Dalit Gramin Vikas Samiti, Chintan Grameen Vikas Samiti, Prabha Grameen Vikas Samiti, Muzaffarpur Vikas Mandal, Dr, Bhimrao Ambedkar Kalyan Evam Vikas Sansthan, Ravidas Chetna Manch, Lok Vikas Sansthan, Jan Jagriti Sansthan, Jan Vikas Samiti, Lok Vikas Kendra, Nagarik Seva Morcha, Eradha Sangatan Mahila Jan Abhyan, Prabodh Samiti, Magat Jyoti Grameen Vikas Samithi, Sevarth, Muskan, Navchetna Vikas Kendra

Sahdalit Adhokar Manch, Jan Adhikar Kendra, Dalit Seva Niketan Bhukhiya, Gyan Vigyan Samiti, Sabari Foundation Jamsodh, Atmadah, Kamkaji Mahila Association, Sarvo Prayas Sansthan, Arpan Grameen Vikas Samithi, Samyojak Krishi Vikas Manch, Mahadalit Aabhoga, Mahila Chetana Vikas Mandal, Kosi Vikalang Sahayata Samity, Musahar Vikas Manch, Bal mazdoori Virodhi Abhyan, Panchayati Rajya Suchana Kendra, Nagariya Sansadhan Kendra, Mahila Help Line, Bachhppan Bachao Andholan, Netharu Bhuva Kishori Sangh, Nehru Yuva Vikas Mandal, Jilla Saksharata Samiti, Kosi Lok Manch, Yuva Morcha, Samaj Kalyan Vibhag, Mahila Vikas Samiti, Sabari Ashram Seva Samiti, Goonj, Sonanchal Vikas Samity, Lok Chetana Vikas Kendra, Act Now for Harmony and Democracy, Jan Jagaran Shakti Sangathan, Vikas, Gurnani Sena, Bhoo Raksha Sangarsh Samity, Harijan Adivasi Sikshan Prasikshan Kalyan Sansthan, Zilla Bhoodan Yagna, Sarvodaya Ashram, Adivasi Vikas Kalyan Samity, Lok Swaraj, Samagra Vikas Foundation, Rashtriya Swabhiman Aandolan, Sanskriti Samrakshan Parishad, Tejpratap Divraj Samaj Seva Sansthan, Youth Power, Jilla Sarvodaya Mandal, Om Koshi Kalyan Samity, Maha Dalit Sangathan, Bihar Sarvodaya Mandal, Koshi Mahasetu Peetit Sangarsh Samity, Gyanoday, Jyoti Bihar, Parivarthan Pariharpur Sansthan, Samajik Saha Arthik Vikasa Sanstha, Manav Vikas Sansthan, Samajik Vikas Sansthan, Society for Awareness and Development, Sarvodaya Mandal Evam Lok Samity, Musahar Vikas Manch, Nadi Vapasi Abhiyan Samity, Gyan Vigyan Samity, Bihar Nagar Gram Kalyan Parishad, Sampoorna Kranti Manch, Goan Gareeb Chetana Manch, UPVAN, Kisan Vikas Trust, Saurya Shakti Seva Samity, Ashok Ghosh Seva Sansthan, Gandhi Shanti Pratishtan, Bhagalpur Jilla Nagarik Sangh, Diyara Ganga Mukti Aandolan, Mandar Nature Club, Akhil Bharatiya Angika Vikas Mahasamity, Safali Sansthan, Bihar Nav Nirman Manch, Bihar Lok Adhikar Manch, Sarvodaya Samajik Sanstha, Gram Sathi, Kasturba Seva Kendra, Akhil Bharatiya Panchayatiraj Sasakthikaran Manch, Swaraj Parivarthan Jan Vikas Sanstha, Gram Jagat, Jal Jameen Jungle Jhajaba, Prakhand Swarajya Sabha, Bharatiya Manav Vikas Sewa Sansthan, Gram Bharati, Sri Bhuvaneswari sewa Sansthan, Nava Muskan, Bihar Madhyamik Shiksha Sangh, Gram Sewa Samity, Kisan Sangathan (Jhajaba), Jan Paragati Sansthan, Jal Jameen Bhachavo Agrah (Jhajaba), Dalit Mukhti Mission, Nav Chetana Vikas Kendra/Dalit Adhikar Manch, Umang Vikas Kendra, Reinforce Society, Dalit Sewa Samity/Dalit Adhikar manch, Sewa Mandal Organisation, Gram Nirman Mandal, Jilla Sarvodaya Mandal, Bihar Pradesh Lok Samity, Lok Chetana Vikas Kendra, Bharatiya Jan Uthan Parishad, Koaltuva Paimaar Vikas Samity, Lok Swaraj Sangh, Musahar Vikas Manch, Kalyan Nyas, Samaj Kalyan Mandal, Gram Vikas Samity, Badlav Foundation, Mazdoor Kisan Samiti/Janmukti Sangarsh Samiti, Vinoba Arogya evam Lok siksha Kendra, Praksh Samaj Kalyan Sanstha, Lok Vikas Kendra, Jayaprabha Seva Samity, Magadjyoti Grameen Vikas Samity/

Dalit Adhikar Manch, Lok Sikshan Sansthan, Bihar Lok Adhikar Manch, Bhoomi Bachao Kissan Bachao Sangharsh Samity, Muzafarpur Vikas Mandal, Bihar University Teachers Association/G P F, DARD NGO, Bihar Sarvodaya Mandal, ADITHI, Mahila Help line, Musahar Vikas Manch, Star welfare Society, Bihar Pradesh Krishi Andolan Vichar Manch, NREGA Parishad, Van Vikas Bharati, Bharatiya Dharan Kalyan Maha Sangh, Swaraj Samagra Jan Vikas Sanstha Prakritik Samrakshan Samvardhan Samity, Samagra Sikshan evam Vikas Sansthan, Deep Evam Vanadhikar Manch, Mazdoor Vikas Manch, Hathua Sangharsha Samity, Mahila Sishu Kalyan Sansthan, Bahan Raksha Dal, Rashtriya Swabhiman Aandolan, Sarvodaya Mandal, Sant. Jaymangoswami Samajik Seva Sansthan, Grameen Samskarik Jan Vikas Sanstha, Anumandaleey Adivakta Sangh, Pensioner Samaj/ Gandhi Sewa Ashram, Nirman Sansthan, Hathua Gandhi Sewa Ashram, Janvadi Lekhak Sangh, Sampoorna Kranti Manch, Panchaseel Sansthan, Pahchan, Mazdoor Kisan Samity/Jan Mukti Sangarsh vahini, Shahid Bhagat Singh Club, Jilla Adhivaktha Sangh, Grameen Media Service, Lok Bhagidhari Mission, Pragatisheel Kissan Manch, Pasmada Muslim Mahaj, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, Aawo Behina, Prapati degree College, Dantavth, Gandhi Shanti Pratishtan Kendra, Nari Jagat Matha Kordhar, Social Services Trust, Adivasi Vikas Kendra,

**Uttar Pradesh:** Lokodhyam Sanstha, Sarva Seva Sangh, UP, Global Gandhi Forum, Lok Sangarsh Morcha, Voice of People, Chhotupur, Vinobha Seva Ashram, Jan Kalyan Sewa Samiti,, Jagriti Jan Seva Samity, Mahila Uthan Samiti, Brij Bal Vikas Kendra, Sarvodaya Ashram, Aim & Rizi Roti Sangatan, Janhit Seva Samiti, Upkar Mother Teresa Jan Kalyan Samiti, Gramodaya Seva Ashram, Samudaik Kalyan Evam Vikas Sansthan, Akhil Bharatiya Brij Samaj Kalyan Sanstha, Asarfilal Gramodhyog Sanstha, Disha Social Organization, Pahal Sewa samiti, Sustainable Development Society, Gram Swarajya Mission Ashram, Mantri Rameshwari Manav Kalyan Samiti, Janjeevika Seva Sansthan, Jan Kalyan Maha Samithy, Aarohin Welfare Society, Vision Society of Interactive Operational Needs, Sarva Seva Sangh, Chirag Seva Sansthan, Vikas Chetana, Nav Jan Chetana Samithi, Mushar Vikas Pahal Samiti, Bharatiya Govansh Rakshan Samvardhan Parishad, Rashtriya Yuva Vikas Shodh Sansthan, Sramjeevi Seva Samithi, People for Peace Service, Society, Grameen Vikas Evam Siksha Sansthan, Bharatiya Adivasi Vanvasi Kalyan Samiti, Sai Yog Evum Prakritik Chikitsa, Shivum Educational Foundation Seva Sansthan, Vikalp Social Organization, Praytna Foundation, Integrated Institute of Rehabilitation for the Disabled, Sakhi Kendra, Bharatiya Lok Vikas Sansodh Sansthan, Mahila Prabhodhini Foundation, Yadharth Parivar Nideshak, CREDA Sanstha, Vindya Environmental Society, Jan Adhikar Manch, Gramya Sansthan, Abhilasha Trust, Prateet Society, Vision Samajik Sanstha, Rashtriya Gharelu

Kamgar Sangatan, Pragatisheel Jan Sangatan, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidhyapeet, Jan Seva Educational Foundation, Asian Bridge India, MITWA Foundation, Bharatiya Kisan Union, Society for Social Action and Research, Sanskriti Samity, Sanitha Kaithi, Asha Trust, Ganga Janma Biradiri, Bhutapurv Sainik Seva Samity, Lok Samithy Varanasi, Pravas Prasikshan Samity

**Madhya Pradesh:** Gandhi Smarakh Bhavan, Madhyapradesh Sarvodaya Mandal, Prasun, Anupama Education Society Satna, Maharaj Dalpath Shah Adivasi Seva Sansthan, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Kol Samaj Seva Sangh, Gandhi Bhavan, Rahi Welfare and Research Society, Patrakarita, Bhavani Shankar Prasar Parishad, Navsujan Samta Samaj Kalyan Samiti, React Sansta, Sujan Lokhit Samiti, Shahdol Zilla Patrakar Sangh, Grameen Vikas Mandal Balaghat, Rastriya Yuva Sangathan, Morena Khadi and Village Industries Sangh, Singaroli Grameen Vikas Sansthan, Kukkada Gram Udhan Samithi Chindwada, Sayopress (Sakha Yog Prkrithik Shodh Sansthan), Kissan Sangarsh Samithi, Lokhit Grameen Swasthya Seva Samithi, Kissan Khadi Gramodhyog Sansthan, Jai Yuvak Kranti Dal, Uddasith Kissan Mazdoor Parishad, Kopal Rashtriya Janvikas Sansthan, Krishana Seva Kendra, Madhya Pradesh Khadi Sanstha Sang, Jaihind Siksha Samithi Betul, Rakshams Seva samithi, MADHYAVAN, Prakriti Environment Research and Development Organization of Earth, Rihayi Samaj Sevi Sanstha, Begumganj Lokrang Navayug Mandal, Navsrijan Samatha Kendra, Grameen Yuva Mandal, Mahila Vikas Parishad, Roshani Mahila Vikas Samithi, Bal Pragati Evam Mahila Sikshan Sansthan, Chetana Welfare Society, Panchasila Seva Sansthan, Adarsh Yuvak Kalyan Siksha Samithi, Chambal Mitra, Roopnarayan Dubey Samaj Kalyan Samithi, Gound Mahapanchayat, Bundhelkhand Vikas Samithi, Sadhana Sangeeth Mandal, Sahara Kala Vikas Mahila Samithi, Saheli Social Welfare Society, Yesodabhai Jagriti Mahila Samithi, Kesari Sanstha, Hasthakshep Social Welfare Society, Grameen Janjagriti Mahila Mandal, Damoh, Chhattarpur Mahila Jagriti Manch, Krishana Grameen Samithi, Jayati Jan Seva Samithi, Khaira, Viswas Samaj Sevi Sangatan, Bharath Gyan Vigyan Samithy, Urja Mahila Mandal- Dhiya Reewa, Bajrang Yuva Mandal, Viswa Chetana Shiksha Evam Janakalyan Samiti, MP Khadhi Sanstha Sangh, Satyakam Janakalyan Samiti, Panchayati Raj Samvedana, New Vindya Education Samiti, Aryans Group, Utprerak Siksha Evam Samaj Kalyan Samiti, Amrita Seva Sansthan Samiti, Chunmun Parivar, Upbhokta Jagriti Mission, Sakar Sanstha, Shivpuri Mazdoor Sangh, Samaj Kalyan Chikitsa Seva Sanstha, Jal Upbhokta Samiti, New Radhika Siksha Prasar Samiti, Sanskriti Sanstha, Dharti Gramodhan Evam Sahabhagi Grameen Vikas Samiti, Morena Youth Academy, Society for Protection of Environment and Wild Life (SPNWL), Chandan Vasundara Samaj Sevi Sanstha, Sribhadri Yuva Mandal Samiti, Adaar Samajik Vikas Samiti, Lohiya Sramik Kalyan Seva Samiti, MP Bharat Gyan Kisan Samiti, Jai Devi

Sanstha, Roshan Samaj Sevi Sanstha, Avtarsmriti Siksha Evam Kalyan Samiti, Kisan Uchtar Madhyamic Vidhyalaya Samiti, Jilla Abhibashak Sangh, Lok Kala Sansthan, Ekta Paryavaran Van Sudhar Samiti, Vikalp Samaj Sevi Sanstha, Naveenbharati Seva Samiti, Rajeev Smriti Gas Pidot Punarwas Kendra, Lakshmi Swasahayata Samooh, Sayana Swasahayata Samooh, Bandhuva Mukti Morcha, Gurukul- the School of Elegant Education, Shelter Public School, Matadin Punarwas and Lakhwa Kendra, Ekta Samaj Sevi Sansthan, Gramin Vikas Samity/ Bundhelkhand Mazdoor Kisan Sangatan, International Naturopathi Organization Prakritik Chikitsa Evaum Yogkendra, Chetana Manch, Misrus Education and Welfare Society, Sambhav Social Service Organization, Kshetriya Vikas Samity, Naiduniya, Rashtriya Hindi Mail, Ankur Farm, Yuva Kranti Media Abhikram, Dainik Samachar Shahdol, Dalit Adivasi Sangarsh Morcha, Manav Foundation, Suman Sanskriti Sahayog Sansthan, Sri Gunraj Seva Samiti

**Gujarat:** Lokh Vikas Sansta, Sarva Seva Sangh/ABHIKRAM, Viswamangalam, Anera, Himatnagar, INTUC, Grameen Vikas Trust, Member Mazdoor Adhikar Manch, Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal People, Uthaan Sanstha, WGWLO, Mandvi Taluka Gram Vikas Trust, Gujarat Khet Vikas Parishad, South Gujarat Mulnivasi Jagaran Manch, Adivasi Ekta Parishad, Gram Seva Samaj, Halputi Seva Sangh, Gandhi Vidyapith, Sarvoday Mitra Mandal, Samasta Adivasi Samaj, Shri Samast Dhodia Samaj, Gujarat Adivasi Sangarsh Parishad, Adivasi Vikas Sangathan, Kim Education Society, Mahiti Sanstha, Meghwal Samaj, District Yuva Sangathan, Vishwa Manav Kalyan Sansta, Gujarat Khedut Samaj, Khedut Leader, Gir Natural Yata Club, Mahila Vikas Sangathan, Uthan Mahila Sangathan, Samarathan Mahila Maha Sangathan, Akhil Gujarat Adivasi Vikas Saman, Coastal Environment Protection Committee, Machhimar Adhikar Sangarsh Sanstha, Gramy Vikas Trust, Siddi Adivasi Ektamanch, Samridh Sramik Suraksha, Purthi Purna Adivasi Sangathan, Eklavya Adivasi Yuva Vikas Mandal, Vanvasi Vikas Manch, Manav Kalyan Trust, Gujarat Adivasi Vikas Parishad, Uttan PLC Watsan, Sramjivi Samaj, Mines Mineral and People, Adivasi Ekta Manch, Adivasi Kheti Yojana, ANANDI- Area Networking & Development Initiatives, Bhil Seva Mandal, Devgad Mahila Sangathan, Ekal Naari Shakti Manch, Daxinapath Vividhalaxi Vidhyalaya, Bhilistan Vikash Morcha, Ratanmahal Mahila Adivasi Sajeer Khet Utpadak Mandal, Saurashtra, Sarvekshan Samity, Dangisake Sandhikar Samiti, Shramjivi Samaj, SNEH Samuday, Ekal Nari Shakti Manch & Sneh Samuday, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, Ekta Manch, Okhamandal Shakti Sangathan, Bhilisthan Vikas Morcha, Samvedana Trust, Eklavya Sangathan

**Rajasthan:** Sevagyajan Samiti/Rastriya Yuva Yojna, Gayatri Pariwar Trust, Saint Conards Higher Secondary School, Prayatna Sanstha, Akhil Bharatiya Kanderi Karna Samaj Mahasabha Bharat, CECODECON, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti

Sangatan (MKSS), Hatouti Adim Janjati Vikas Samity, Ekal Naari Shakti Sangathan, Vanadhikar Samiti, Jagar Sansthan, Archan Sansthan, Bagad Mazdoor Kisan Sangathan, Bagad Mazdoor Kissan Sangathan, Godwad Adivasi Sangathan, Adivasi Mazdoor Kissan Sangathan, Adivasi Vikas Manch, Jan Chetna Sansthan, Prayas Pratirodh Sansthan, Jan Kalyan Swasth Siksha Evam Paryavaran Vikas Samity, Sarvodayamandal Sarvodaya Mitra, Komi Ekta Committee, Hadouti Kisan Ranipan-Kota, Youth Community, Action for Social Development, Nahari, Kisan Sangharsh Samity, Dalit Adhikar Kendra, Jagrat Mahila Sangathan/Sambhavya Sanstha Evam Yuva Shakti Sangathan, Dalit Vikas Sahayatha Samiti va Dalit Adhikar Network, Ekta Bodgram, Swadeshi, Jagaran Manch, MKSS Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, Mazdoor Kissan Sakthi Sangathan, People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), Gandhi Study Centre, Rajasthan University, Varisht Nagarik Manch, Prayas, Paryavaran Parishad, Sarvodaya mandal, Adivasi Janjati Manch, Hatoli Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti, Nehru Yuva Mandal, Ashoka Takniki evam Vyavasayik Prashikshan Sansthan, Dalit Vikas Sahayata Samiti, Adarsh Jan Jagriti Sewa Samiti, Ratampur Art and Wild Life Conservation Society, Lok Vikas Samiti, Rajya Bhil Vikas Samiti, Sikar Jilla Sarvodaya Mandal, Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Mahasabha, Adivasi Ekta Parishad, Centre for Dalit Rights, Kisan Sewa Samiti Maha Sangh, Jal Biradari, Sijar Jilla Sarvodaya Mandal, Swaraj University

**Haryana:** Sarvodaya Mandal Hariyana, Kisan Vikas Manch, Paryavaran Raksha Samiti, Rashtravadi Vichar Manch, Sarva Samaj Sangathan, Arya Samaj, Bharat Swabhimani,

Haryana Mewar Viakas Sthala, Haryana Govt. Teachers Sangh, Bharatiya Kisan Union, Sakriya, IAS Shimla, Punjab University

**Punjab:** Dalit Dasta Virodhi Abhiyan

**Himachal Pradesh:** Lok Kalyan Mandal, Bharkhada Visthapit Sudhar Samiti, Himalaya Bachavo Samiti, Education Society Vidyanketan, Kisan Sudhar Sabha, Maharana Pratap Jan Kalyan Sanstha, Himalaya Niti Abhiyan, Mines Mineral & People, PAPAN, Sri Renuka Bandh Jan Sangarsh Samiti, Mik Sedratim Bounal, Khartharwadi Cement Plant Sangarsh Samiti, Paryavaran Bachavo Sangarsh Samiti, Mathrubhumi Raksha Sangarsh Samiti, Swapan Jyoti Jan Kalyan Evum Seva Samiti, Jan Kalyan Seva Sanstha, Hamalay Bachavo Samiti, Jan Kalyan Mandal, National Forum for Forest People & Forest Workers, Jai Shri Deo Bedeyogiji Samyukt Sangarsh Avum Paryavaran Samrakshan Samiti, Nav Yuvak Mandal, Samajik Evum Gramin Sansthan, Him Parivesh Sanstha, Envinces Trust

**Uttarakhand:** Rashtriya Van Jan Shram Jeevi Manch, An Association for Development, Harmony & Action Research (AADHAR), Opinion

**Jammu and Kashmir:** Human Welfare Voluntary Organisation

**Delhi:** Rashtriya Yuva Yagna, Gandhi Santhi Pratishtan, Sarvaseva Sangh, Indo Global Social Service Society, City Makers CARAVAN, CAVVAS FOUNDATION, Rashtriya Noniya Mahasangh, Khudai Khidmatgar.

# GLOSSARY

Ahar-Pyne system	Traditional unique indigenous irrigation system which has been used in South Bihar
Baiga	A primitive tribe
Bargadar	Sharecropper; a person who cultivates the land of another person on condition of delivering a fixed share of the produce of such land to that person
Basti	A habitation
Bataidaar	Sharecrop holder
Bataidari	Share cropping
Benami Zameen	Land registered under a false name
Bhoodan	Name of movement launched by Acharya Vinoba Bhave calling for land donation by affluent landlords to distribute among the landless people
Bidi	A small hand rolled cigarette
Bigha	Land measurement unit
Biswa	Land measurement unit in Uttar Pradesh
Dharna	Protest
Dismil	A unit of measuring land in north India. In Odisha and Bihar 1 dismil of land is approximately 435 sq. ft. and 100 dismils make an acre.
Gaz	Land measurement unit which varies in size
Gram Panchayat	Village council
Gram Sabha	According to Article 243 (B) of the Constitution of India, Gram Sabha is a body of consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of the Panchayat at the village level
Haat:	An open market of the village
Hathbandhi Act	Land Ceiling Act
Inaam Bhumi	Assigned land
Inami zameen	Assigned land

Jan adalat	Public court
Janadesh	Ekta Parishad's march for land rights which was held in 2007
Jan sunwai	Public hearing
Jhoom farming	Slash and burn cultivation
Kashtakari	Tenancy
Kharif crop	The summer or monsoon crop
Mahadalit	The most underprivileged castes. In 2007 the Bihar government announced 21 backward castes that come in the category of Mahadalits
Mukhiya	A village leader
Nistar	Usufruct rights
Nizam Bhoomi	Land which was assigned by the Nizam dynasty
Panchami land	Land assigned to the landless Dalits in Tamil Nadu
Patta	Title deed
Patwari	Village accountant
Riyasat	An estate
Santhal	A tribal community from Jharkhand and Eastern Region
Shamlat land	Village common land
Taluka	An administrative subdivision
Tehsil	An operational revenue unit of the district
Zamindar	Landlord

# ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Associated Cement Companies
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BTAD	Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts
DDVA	Dalit Dastan Virodhi Andolan
GMDC	Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation
ITPL	International Technology Park Limited
JP cement	Jaypee Cement
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NALCO	National Aluminium Company
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NMDC	National Mineral Development Corporation
NTPC	National Thermal Power Corporation
PDS	Public Distribution System
PESA	Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Area Act (1996)
PIL	Public Interest Litigation
RTI	Right to Information
SC	Scheduled Caste
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
ST	Scheduled Tribe
UT	Union Territory

# 1. JAN SATYAGRAH SAMWAD YATRA

**Ekta Parishad** is a non-violent social movement in India working on issues of land, water & forest rights for adivasis, dalits and other marginalized communities, over the last 25 years. The movement has been devoted to raising these issues in more than 10,000 villages in India.

Ekta Parishad along with support organisations launched a decisive movement called **Jan Satyagrah** whose focus was to bring together people's voices for a 'National Land Reforms Act & Policy' as a broad framework and means of land re-distribution to the landless and homeless poor.

To lend a sharp spurt to the movement, a **Jan Satyagraha Samwad Yatra** was carried out. In a trail of vehicles, it covered more than 80,000 km beginning at the southern coast of Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu on October 2, 2011 and ending in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh on September 17, 2012. This Yatra received tremendous response from the people across the country and more than 2,000 people's organisations united in support of the rights demanded by the people. More than 1100 people's gatherings and meetings were held during the course of this Yatra.

As the Yatra progressed, handfuls of soil was collected from various sites, as a symbol of people's suffering and sense of loss resulting from having been uprooted from their homes, lands and lives. This soil is indeed entwined with the lives of the people who have been, for generations, fighting a battle for survival in the hope that as citizens of free India they will one day have the right to a life with dignity. The Jan Satyagraha in that sense is people's hopes realised.

This report based on some selected stories of 'States' Soil Struggles' collected during Jan Satyagraha Samwad Yatra, is also an abundant expression of solidarity and broad-based engagement for the land & livelihood rights of the people.



The historical march for justice **Jan Satyagraha**, begun on 2nd October 2012 from Gwalior, was supported by more than 2000 organizations from across the world. This march engaged a critical number of organizations and individuals for a collective action on 2nd October 2012, which saw 50,000 people marching from Gwalior to Delhi (350 kms).

After 10 days of march, the Government of India signed an agreement with Jan Satyagraha in Agra on 11th October, 2012 in front of 50,000 people (reproduced at the end of this report). This agreement is a commitment of the Government to establish land reforms as a tool for poverty eradication and ensures livelihood, dignity and identity to millions of landless poor and deprived communities in India.



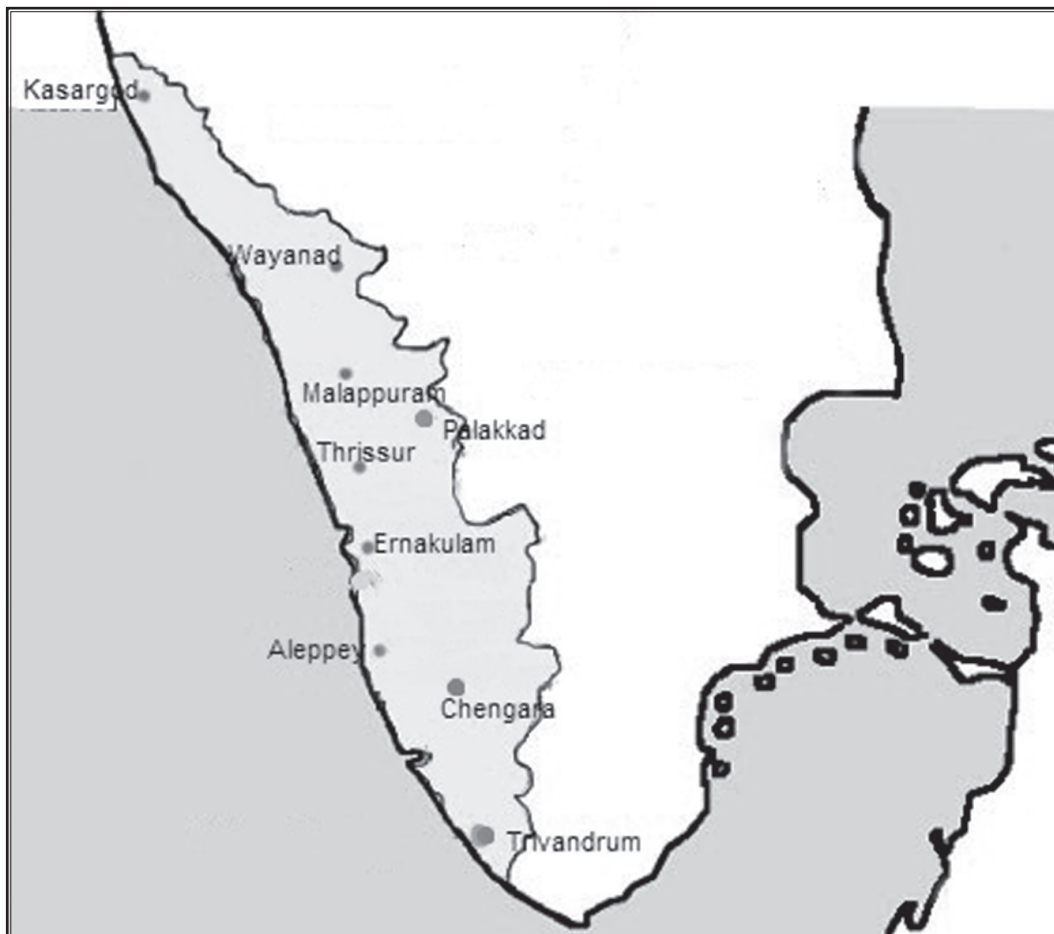
A decorative border composed of a grid of spiral patterns. The top and bottom edges are solid lines of 10 spirals each. The left and right edges are vertical lines of 10 spirals each. The corners are filled with spirals, creating a rectangular frame around the central text.

2.  
STATES'  
SOIL STRUGGLES

## 2.1 KERALA

The need for land reforms was stressed in course of the journey through Kerala. Landlessness and homelessness are major issues in the state. There is immense resentment in the state against grabbing of land and snatching away of traditional rights over natural resources for the sake of development. Land belonging to Dalits has been grabbed by affluent and influential villagers. Huge tracts of land have been alienated in favour of

plantation companies. The non-inclination to return such land to Dalits and tribals after expiry of leases of plantation companies is another issue that was brought up before the Yatra. Lives and livelihoods have been affected by land acquisition either for development or by corporate companies, loss of traditional rights over resources and landlessness. People are struggling for rights over land that they have been cultivating.



### 2.1.1 The Yatra at Kanyakumari

1 October, 2011: A meeting was organised at Kanyakumari. Representatives from Rashtriya Dalit Bhoomi Adhikaar Aandolan, Vanshramjivi Manch, Jameen Adhikaar Aandolan and many others participated.

2 October, 2011: The Jan Satyagraha Samwad Yatra started from Kanyakumari on the evening of Gandhi Jayanti. Representatives from 400 organisations attended the prayer at Gandhi Mandap in Kanyakumari.

#### Views Expressed at the Meeting

- Land reforms are a must for the country's development.
- It is unfortunate that land reforms, which should have been at the top of the government's agenda after independence, have not been given importance.
- Despite so many years of struggle in Kerala, only the middlemen have managed to get land. Majority of the population is landless and homeless.

### The Struggle

The need for organisations from diverse backgrounds and with diverse ideologies fighting for rights of deprived communities to come together and put up a joint front was stressed. The fact that land reforms are indispensable for the nation's development was emphasized.

### 2.1.2 The Yatra at Kudankulam

2 October, 2011: The Jan Satyagraha reached Kudankulam. A public meeting was organised in which thousands of villagers participated.

#### Issues

Nuclear Power Plant

#### The Struggle

In this region of Kerala the struggle is primarily against a nuclear power plant. People have been opposing the establishment of the nuclear power plant for several years. Despite the recent disaster at Japan, work at the power plant has continued,

endangering the lives of people living in adjoining areas. Due to protests led by villagers, work at the power plant was stopped for many years. In 1989, two youths died while protesting against this plant.

The government's apathy for the poor and marginalised sections of society was stated to be evident in the manner in which it was snatching away natural resources and livelihoods of the poor in the name of development.

### 2.1.3 The Yatra at Trivandrum

3 October, 2011: A meeting was organised at Gandhi Memorial Gramin Sewa Kendra.

4 October, 2011: A meeting of local organisations was organised at Shantigram.

#### Issues

Land grabbing in Dalit localities.

#### The Struggle

In the Dalit *basti* at Shantigram, land has been captured by the advantaged castes and the influential people. Despite 25 years of filing applications, no remedial action has been taken.

### 2.1.4 The Yatra at Adikal (Kollam)

5 October, 2011: The Yatra reached Adikal (Kollam), a tsunami rehabilitated area.

#### Issues

Incomplete rehabilitation after tsunami.

#### The Struggle

Rehabilitation of the tsunami affected people in Adikal village remains incomplete. Women who attended the public hearing complained of politics in the allocation of residential land to affected families. The process of rehabilitation has been manipulated by politicians. Wheat cultivation and fish production have been adversely affected.

### 2.1.5 The Yatra at Alleppey

6 October, 2011: A conference was organised at Gandhi Memorial Sewa Kendra in which representatives from different sects and classes voiced their opinions.

### Opinions Voiced at Conference

- Land uncertainty among 25 thousand Dalits and 5 thousand tribal habitations is a cause for concern.
- Land reforms will be a big step forward in bringing equality in society.
- Despite of expiry of lease terms of the plantation companies, land has not been vacated by them. This is a common scenario in many places and is one of the biggest hurdles in the land reformation process.

#### 2.1.6 The Yatra at Pathanamthitta

7 October, 2011: A public meeting was organised at Chengara village by Sadhujan Vimochan Sanyukta Vedi.

##### Issues

Land acquisition; landlessness.

##### The Struggle

For several years now people of Chengara village have been fighting for their land. The struggle here is over 6 thousand acres of land which was acquired by the government when the lease of Harrison Plantation Company expired. The livelihood of 7 thousand landless Dalit families depends on this land.

#### 2.1.7 The Yatra at Iririki

8 October, 2011: A public hearing was organised.

##### Issues

Fear due to increase in height of Mullaperiyar dam; capture of land by plantation companies.

##### The Struggle

The Mullaperiyar dam was constructed by the Travancore King and the British rulers. This dam provides water and irrigational facilities to Iririki, Ernakulam, Alappuzha, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta. The proposal to increase the height of the dam has created fear among the people. The Tamil Nadu Government, which stands to gain from the proposed increase in the height of the dam, registered an appeal in opposition to Kerala's

Dam Control Committee and in February 2006, the decision was taken in favour of the Tamil Nadu Government and the height of the dam was set at 152 feet. 40 lakh people living in the vicinity of the dam are living in mortal fear of collapse of the dam and the destruction that will ensue.

Another issue of concern in the Iririki area is the large scale capture of land by plantation companies. Land taken on lease from local tribals and Dalits for 99 years has not been returned.

#### 2.1.8 The Yatra at Ernakulam

9 October, 2011: The Yatra stopped at Vajatope of Ernakulam.

10 October, 2011: A *jan adalat* was organized.

##### Issues

Creation of *Sarfaesi Kanoon* (Security Interest Act) due to the farmers' suicide.

##### The Struggle

Local farmers have been protesting against the high rates of interest charged on loans. The loan amount of Rs. 1.5 lakh taken from a local bank has become more than two lakh within a period of two years. Some farmers have liabilities of about ten lakh and they have been charged interest at the rate of 12-18 percent.

Approximately 50 thousand people in Ernakulam are homeless. The weaker sections of society and the low income groups are compelled to live in extremely miserable conditions. The need for a conversation between these people and the government was stressed at the *jan adalat*. Issues that merit a consideration were listed as follows:

- A dialogue process should begin with low income families for basic housing provision.
- Regulation of 'Problem Solution Cell' which could assist weaker sections and homeless people to complain and get help from the administration and the police.
- Discussion with the government and landlords to decide over land lease and framing of appropriate guidelines.

### 2.1.9 The Yatra at Thrissur

11 October, 2011: The Yatra stopped at Thamna village of Thrissur district. In the afternoon a meeting was organised by about 500 students and teachers of S.T College of Thrissur. Another meeting was organised in Viyekayan School.

#### Issues

Destruction of livelihoods of farmers due to canal.

#### The Struggle

In the highly fertile Thrissur region of Kerala people have been traditionally engaged in low land paddy cultivation. The Kolli lands with their Muriyar pattern of plotting had an excellent system of draining out excess water into the sea. In 1980, an 8 km canal was constructed, which destroyed the natural drainage system. Today there is 10-12 feet of water logging in the fields. 14000 farmers in 11 villages and around 7000 acres of lowland paddy fields have been affected by this canal. Livelihoods have been destroyed, as farmers are unable to cultivate their lands.

### 2.1.10 The Yatra at Calicut

12 October, 2011: The Yatra reached Ramnathpura of Calicut. In Calicut a rally was organised by fisher folks and women's Self Help Groups. In a public meeting people expressed their hope for land reforms in Kerala.

### 2.1.11 The Yatra at Thrissur

14 October, 2011: A conversation session was organised by senior social workers in support of the Jan Satyahgraha Samwad Yatra. The Yatra then reached Atlam village of Coonoor district. The last destination was Tilanger Panchayat where a public meeting was organised by political leaders.

#### Issues

Incomplete rehabilitation and resettlement of tribal people; ownership rights over land.

#### The Struggle

In Atlam village of Coonoor district, around 2000 tribal families have been rehabilitated on 3, 500 acres of land. The struggle in this region of the state

revolves around ownership rights over the land and inadequate public facilities.

At the public meeting organised at Tilanger Panchayat concern was expressed over the fact that despite the effort of several organisations to further the cause of the marginalised sections, tribals and Dalits have not been given rights over land.

### 2.1.12 The Yatra at Wayanad

15 October, 2011: A rally was organised by the Adivasi Parishad in Wayanad district.

#### Issues

Landlessness; claims filed under Forest Rights Act not settled; land acquisition.

#### The Struggle

Though only 1.5 percent of the total population of Kerala comprises tribals, 80 percent of the tribal families are landless. The rights of these tribal people have not been secured, despite the Forest Rights Act. In Wayanad district of Kerala, more than 4,000 tribal families filed their claims. None of these claims have been settled so far.

Land acquisition for corporate giants is happening on a large scale. In Wayanad district, 7000 acres of land has been acquired by tea and coffee plantation companies.

### 2.1.13 The Yatra at Malappuram

16 October, 2011: The first stop of the Yatra was at Malappuram where Sanskritik Mandal welcomed the group. The second stop was at Manjeri where a public meeting was organised.

#### Issues

Lack of rights over land; transfer of land to plantation companies at subsidised rates.

#### The Struggle

The Kerala Land Reform Act, 1957 was changed completely in 1974. Section 82 of the 1974 Act provides for 15 decimals of land for each landless and homeless family. Dalits and tribals however still continue to struggle for rights over land. Residents of 25 thousand slum colonies in Kerala do not have

rights over land. At the same time however, around 2 lakh hectares of land has been transferred to plantation companies at subsidised rates.

#### **2.1.14 The Yatra at Palakkad**

17 October, 2011: The first stop of the Yatra was at village Plachimada.

18 October, 2011: The Yatra reached Attapadi valley.

19 October, 2011: A review meeting was organised at Attapadi, Palakkad.

#### **Issues**

Land acquisition; no financial compensation; threat of eviction.

#### **The Struggle**

People of Plachimada village have been protesting since five years against land acquisition by the Coca Cola Company. The protests began when the government started forcefully transferring land.

Several scientific studies have established the adverse impact of the factory on the water table as well as the environment. Though production by the Company stopped after intervention of the Court, affected people have neither been given compensation, nor has their land been returned.

In Attapadi valley, around 200 tribal families of four villages (Bangdeva, Chitoor, Kittigiri and Kororbodi) were displaced around forty years back by an irrigation project. Despite having rights over land, these tribal families were not given any financial compensation. The Government gave them lease over 5 acres of land and settled them in Cooperative Krishi Colony. Unfortunately however, this project never started due to political controversies. In 2007 the villagers decided to go back to their land and their demand was granted by the collector and the revenue department. However, no formal decision has been taken till date. In 2011, under the leadership of Adivasi leader, Tangrajan, 26 families made temporary thatched houses over the land and started agriculture. The local administration has threatened eviction.

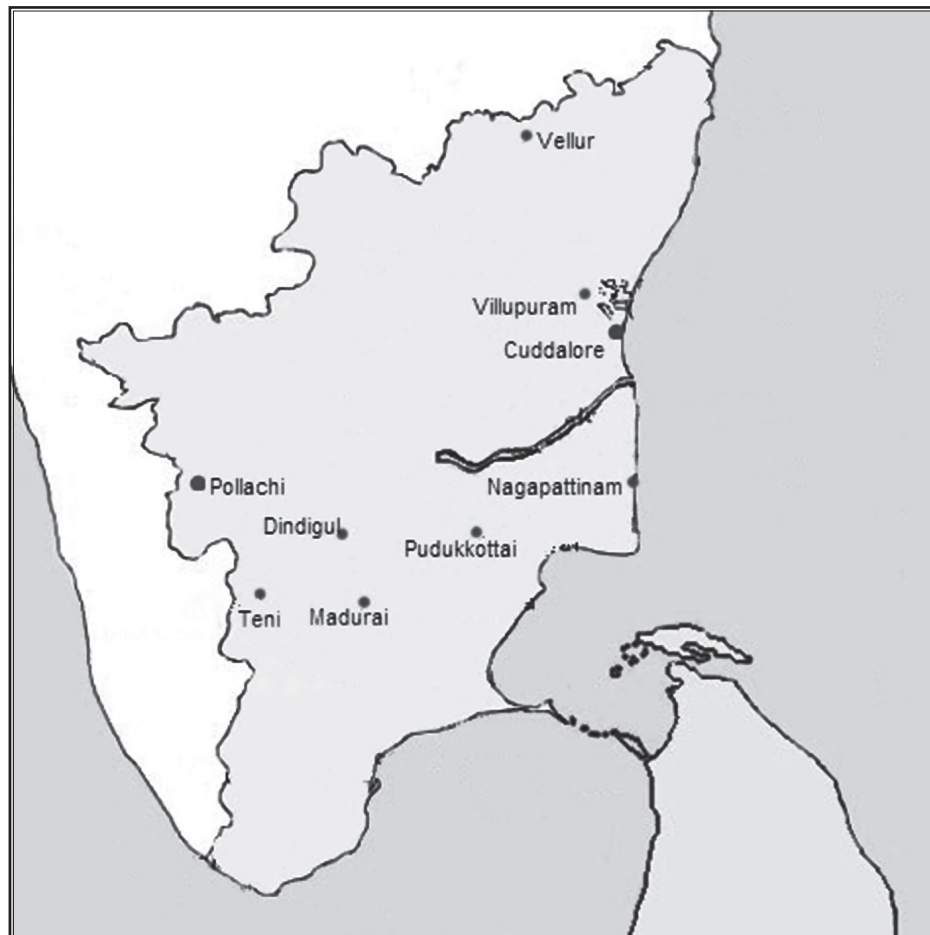
## 2.2 TAMIL NADU

A lot of the ongoing struggles in the state revolve around issues of land- tenants and tribals continue to cultivate land without ownership rights, tribals have been evicted from the land that they have cultivated for hundreds of years, claims filed under the Forest Rights Act have not been settled, land has been acquired for industry without consent of the local population. Tribals and Dalits in several pockets of the state are fighting for ownership rights over land that has been allotted to them. The Indira

Gandhi Tiger Sanctuary and restrictions imposed by the Forest Department on collection of forest produce pose a threat to the livelihoods of tribal communities of the region. Dalits in the state have been waging a struggle to retrieve *Panchami* land which has been occupied by non Dalits and allotted to plantations.

### 2.2.1 The Yatra at Coimbatore

22 October, 2012: Local groups and social workers organized a rally in Coimbatore. In the evening a



public hearing was organized in the Dalit dominated village of Udumalaipettai.

### Issues

Land acquisition; allotment of *Panchami* land to plantations; eviction of tribals; status of *Paliyar* tribe; shrinking employment opportunities.

### The Struggle

One of the core issues around which people are struggling is landlessness and homelessness. In the region of Coimbatore the process of forceful acquisition of land of marginalised farmers has generated a lot of tension. *Panchami* land in the state was primarily kept for the distribution among the landless Dalits. This land however has been allotted to plantation companies on a large scale. In Pollachi district, plantation companies have wire fenced the land due to which farmers are unable to cultivate. About 65 plantation companies are active in this area, and for the past few years the plantation mafia has been using violent means to acquire land from the locals. Besides, local laborers do not have any kind of employment options.

Though in Kerala the *Paliyar* tribe has been granted tribal status, in Tamil Nadu they are still unidentified due to which they are facing problems in receiving land under the Forest Rights Act. In the year 1974 a ban was imposed on *Jhoom* farming and people were chased away to the foothills, where they had been farming on about 1800 acres of land. The government has not made any kind of settlement due to which about 32 families are farming on only 250 acres of land for their survival. About 160 families were pressurized to leave and the livelihoods of these families are at risk. In Thirpur district, tribals belonging to the Vella Pahad Panchayat do not even possess voter identity cards. On the other hand, majority of the families who are cultivating on forestland have been booked under encroachment charges. During the British rule this area was to be developed into a tea estate which was the reason behind the displacement of tribals. After a few years however this area was turned into Indira Gandhi Tiger Sanctuary and tribals were prohibited entry. Today these tribals are victims of eviction and state oppression.

## 2.2.2 The Yatra at Dindigul

23 October, 2012: Representatives from 20 groups were present at the Dalit Resource Centre of Dindigul to welcome the Yatra. In the afternoon, a meeting was organised by the Gandhi Gram University.

### Issues

Tribals of Dindigulin distress; restrictions on access to forest; allotment of tribal lands to non tribals; claims under Forest Rights Act not settled.

### The Struggle

Local tribals and Dalits of Sirmaliranges who had been allotted land in 1998 are still struggling for ownership rights. Though around 14,860 acres of land has been marked as *Panchami* land in Dindigul district, this land has been allotted to non-tribals and non-Dalits. About 750 families have been cultivating *Panchami* land for the past 27 years but land has not been allotted to them yet. *Panchami* land has been used for development of the Ring Road, Cotton Mills and Collector's Office, which constitutes a violation of the spirit behind the Act.

Restrictions of various kinds have been imposed under the Forest Rights Act on around 2000 families of the Kodai Hills. In the last two years the local Forest Department has banned the collection of forest produce. Among the Paliya Tribe, 232 families have registered their request for allotment of land under the Forest Rights Act. However no steps have been taken till now.

## 2.2.3 The Yatra at Theni

24 October, 2011: A public meeting was organised at Theni and Bodi.

### Issues

Landlessness; non implementation of Forest Rights Act.

### The Struggle

In Kurumbare village, 18 landless families have been living as bonded labourers. In 18 surrounding villages, 250 families have not been allotted any land. The Forest Department has placed restrictions on collection of forest produce.



In Chokanallai village, *Palai* tribal families have occupied 250 acres of barren land since 18 years and they have appealed to the government for allotment under the Forest Rights Act. The government has not responded to their appeal.

In Chellankedam village, 23 landless families are living on 20 acres of occupied land, which has still not been allotted to these families.

In Theni district, 380 Dalit families are living in slums in Nehru Nagar colony. Their struggle for allotment of land tenure continues. Similarly, 200 families of Saint Xavier Street, 120 families of Pariyakulam, 40 families of Ahamali, and 29 families of Chinnaur have been struggling for rights over land.

In Kodaikanal area, 500 tribal and Dalit families have been cultivating land in the forest area. These families have not been allotted land despite the Forest Rights Act. Most of these families are dependent on wage labour and they get a mere Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 per day as wages.

## 2.2.4 The Yatra at Madurai

25 October, 2011: Several social service organizations like Gandhi Sanghralaya welcomed the Yatra.

### Issues

Rights of tenants; denial of rights to landless.

### The Struggle

Despite strong tenancy laws in Tamil Nadu, the tenants in Tanjore, Nagapattinam and Madurai have been denied their rights. Despite their requests, the local administration has not taken any remedial steps.

In the Paniya dominated village Algama, around 17 tribal families have been cultivating land since 1980. Before 1980, these hill tribes were lured to the plains on the promise of allotment of land rights. However, even after three decades, these families have not been allotted any land. About 69 families living in Kurujangar of Madurai district have been earning their livelihoods by cultivating about 200 acres of land for the last fifty years. The Forest Department is planning to acquire their land due to which 18 people have been booked under false charges of trespassing and have been jailed.

## 2.2.5 The Yatra at Sivagangai

26 October, 2011: The Janstyagraha Committee gathered at the Royal Centre in Madurai. In the evening the Yatra interacted with Vellichaam, an organisation in Kottapatti which works with Dalit women.

27 October, 2011: The Yatra reached village Pudukkottai of Sivagangai.

### Issues

Problems faced by nomadic tribes, Dalits and widows; lack of basic amenities for refugee families.

### The Struggle

In village Pudukkottai, 'Bright Atma' is struggling for basic amenities of refugees. People of this village have been deprived of the benefits of various schemes of the Tamil Nadu government. Around 86 nomadic tribal families in this district live by the road side in makeshift shelters. Their livelihoods are sustained by collecting plastic waste. In one of the villages of the district, Dalits have been cultivating the land of rich landlords for the past three generations. The Dalits are now likely to be displaced.

The Kottapatti region is drought prone and people are dependent on rainfed agriculture. For ten months of the year people are dependent on wage labor for livelihood. Members of the Dalit community and widows are the most deprived and poorest.

In Sivagangai village, 56 refugee families have been struggling to avail basic amenities. They have submitted applications to the Tamil Nadu government but their appeal has not been heard. 86 tribal families in the district live by the roadside in temporary shelters. Adjacent to Sivagangai village, there are Dalit families who have been cultivating land belonging to landlords since three generations. These families are facing the prospects of displacement since the land has been sold off.

## 2.2.6 The Yatra at Cuddalore

29 October, 2011: A public meeting was organised on behalf of people affected by Seep Cot Industrial Area in Cuddalore district.

## Issues

Land acquisition

### The Struggle

Unrest is brewing in the region over the issue of land acquisition. The process of acquisition has started approximately 56 kilometres off the coastal region under the Seep Cot industrial area. In one of the areas, a chemical industry has been proposed due to which there is increasing dissatisfaction among the local village residents. The proposed project will affect close to 4 lakh people. 80 percent of the people have formally objected to the project. However, acquisition procedure was started without considering any of the requests.

#### 2.2.7 The Yatra at Villupuram

30 October, 2011: A public meeting was organised at Villupuram.

## Issues

Demand for homestead and cultivable land

### The Struggle

The *Panchami* land issue remains unresolved in this area of the state. Non-Dalits have occupied this land. 880 women farmers submitted applications in 2009 for *Panchami* land but no action has been taken. 200 Dalit families have occupied 260 acres of land

in Kangi village and the government has not taken appropriate measures yet. In another village, 350 acres of forest land are likely to be affected through mining activities by the Jindal Company.

#### 2.2.8 The Yatra at Vellore

31 October, 2011: The Yatra reached Vellore district where a meeting was held by Dalit Land Rights Federation. In the evening, Aadi Dravid Sanghrash Samiti welcomed the Yatra at Kanchipuram.

1 November, 2011: The Yatra reached the historic martyr's monument where Gandhiji had announced Satyagraha for the nation's independence. After the prayer meeting, the Yatra participants reached Mani Bhavan, an art museum set up in the memory of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

## Issues

Acquisition of *Panchami* land.

### The Struggle

In Vellore approximately 100 villages are together fighting for their rights on *Panchami* land. In north Tamil Nadu alone, approximately 26000 acres of *Panchami* land is available. However, till now land rights for only 26 families have been achieved. In Seep Cot, 2000 acres of *Panchami* land has been acquired by Lignite Corporation which is a violation of the *Panchami* land laws.

## 2.3 ANDHRA PRADESH

People's struggles in Andhra Pradesh intricately revolve around the land issue. Though the forms of struggle vary, the issues though different are all tied to land. The struggles include protests against acquisition of land for Special Economic Zones, the fight for fair compensation, the struggle for ownership rights over land that has been cultivated for decades, the struggles around displacement due to dams and mines, the fight for claims under the

Forest Rights Act; land related exploitation of tribals and Dalits, controversies around *Inaam Bhoomi* and appropriation of land by mafias.

### 2.3.1 The Yatra at Lepakshi

16 November, 2011: Around 50 representatives from 24 groups attended a meeting where the land struggles going on in different districts of Andhra Pradesh were discussed.



## Land Struggles in Various Districts of Andhra Pradesh

**Kurnool:** About 1.5 lakh acres of land which can be distributed between the landless and homeless is available; 8000 acres of land is being taken away from marginalised farmers and is being allotted to the land sharks for establishment of housing societies.

**Mahboobnagar:** Close to 2 lakh families are cultivating government land, but have not received ownership rights; one of the poorest and drought prone areas of the state is being turned into a Special Economic Zone; one third of the population every year migrates to big cities in search of livelihood opportunities.

**Medak:** Affected by violence in the past; the Prime Minister distributed land tenures; land ownership rights have still not been given.

**Khammam:** Majority of tribal population is facing violation of land rights on a large scale due to industrial, mining and dam projects.

**West Godavari:** Exploitation of Dalit tenants and tribals who have been working on the farms of landlords; a survey says that about 55 percent of the Dalits do not even possess housing land.

**Karimnagar:** Thousands of acres of land is being acquired by land sharks for various housing projects while there has been no settlement of the land which has been allotted to the Dalits and tribals.

**Warangal:** Swayat Bhumi Prakosht has been trying to resolve issues through transparent means; government records do not show Dalits having acquired the allotted land.

**Guntur:** No ground for cremation in around 300 villages.

**Krishna:** Large-scale migration to Vijayawada in search of livelihood; no state settlement has taken place till date.

**Prakasam:** Displacement of nomadic groups from their occupied land and allotted government land.

**Nellore:** Home to 32 power plants and 4 Special Economic Zones; acquisition of thousands of acres of coastal, community and agricultural land.

**Chittoor:** Affected by industrialisation; people not resettled despite acquisition of thousands of acres of land; the local population and the fishing community adversely affected.

### 2.3.2 The Yatra at Chittoor

2 November, 2011: The Yatra entered Andhra Pradesh through Tada village of Chittoor district. The Andhra Pradesh Jan Satyagraha Samiti and Head of Andhra

Pradesh Bhumi Ghatbandhan welcomed the group. The first halt of the Yatra was at Wardhayapalam village also known as Sriharikota Colony.

#### Issues

Land acquisition for Special Economic Zones.

#### The Struggle

The process of land acquisition in the Sri City Special Economic Zone started in 2007. Approximately 8000 acres of land has been tagged so far. During the time of land acquisition, the compensation promised in lump sum per acre was 2-2.5 lakh, whereas the same land was leased out for rates which were 20 times higher. Villagers have organised themselves over the issue but no action has been taken to stop the process of land acquisition. To smoothen the process of acquisition the Agriculture Department is promoting a misconception among the villagers that their land is barren and that the government will provide employment for local residents.

### 2.3.3 The Yatra at Nellore

3 November, 2011: The first stop of the Yatra was at village Manakaru. The second stop was at village Pentapadu.

#### Issues

Land acquisition and pollution.

#### The Struggle

At Manakaruthe, Andhra Pradesh Industrial Corporation has declared 6100 acres of land as Special Economic Zone. Villagers were told that post acquisition each family will get 20 dismils of land and one employment per family. But none of the affected families have received the promised compensation. Around 350 families in this village have lost all hopes. Industrial pollution has increased the prevalence of diseases among people. In the absence of land for grazing, the village has also seen a drop in the number of milk giving animals from 2000 to a mere 200. At Pentapadu, land has been acquired for Krishnapatnam Port Area.

### 2.3.4 The Yatra at Prakashan

4 November, 2011: A public meeting was organised by Chetna Jyoti and APVVU at Ullupaadu village. The

next halt was in Kankatapalem village. The last stop of the Yatra was Prakasam Pantullu village.

### Issues

Denial of land rights; land acquisition.

### The Struggle

Land allotted to 16 families in 1987 has been swiped by local landlords. Even after 5 years of a case being filed in the District Court, there has been no hearing. The disputed land remains ceiled and the families are struggling to earn a livelihood. 120 families of Saalichera village were relocated after a sea storm 5 years ago. After enforcement of the Forest Rights Act in 2006 the authorities took action against the inhabitants. In Tilamapur village, 70 families who have been cultivating 220 acres of land for the past 17 years are still waiting to get rights over the land they have been cultivating. Around 51 Dalit families have been cultivating around 210 acres of community land for the last 60 years in Malikudu village. After 2006 they were informed by the local administration that they will be given land tenures. However, because of vested interests the land still remains un-allocated. In Kankatapalem village, the struggle is over a Power Plant Project proposed by the Andhra Pradesh Urja Vikaas Nigam on 2500 acres of agricultural land. Despite the fact that people voiced their apprehensions about the project at a public meeting, the government allotted 22 thousand crores for the establishment of the power plant. The villagers together filed a petition at the Andhra Pradesh High Court, as a result of which the court issued a notice to the state government.

At Prakasam Pantullu village about 400 farmers cultivate 1200 acres of land round the year. The land is multi-crop which provides livelihood to 600 farmers for about 6 months. They have received the award for the best output. Besides, about 700 litres of milk is produced in the village per day. The villagers here are fighting against the acquisition of 700 acres of their land.

### 2.3.5 The Yatra at Guntur

5 November, 2011: The first halt of the Yatra was at village Chinnaganjam, where a rally followed by a public meeting were jointly organised by Dalit

Bahujan Front, Rajya Rayat Sangh, Bhumi Upadhi Hakula Vedika and other groups.

### Issues

Land ownership; land acquisition; land development.

### The Struggle

In Chinnaganjam around 100 nomadic families who have been cultivating 60 acres of land for the past 3 decades are still awaiting notice of ownership. Instead a notice has been issued which takes away 25000 acres of land from tribals and Dalits in the name of development. According to the records of the government 11000 Dalit and tribal families have been allotted land on paper but out of this only 50 percent have been covered. Another reason for discontentment in the region is the discrepancy in entitlements for land development. Under the Indira Prabha Scheme, landless persons get an amount of 4-10 thousand per acre for land development, whereas according to the Irrigation Projects, the Irrigation Department receives one lakh rupees per acre.

### 2.3.6 The Yatra at Vijayawada

6 November, 2011: A public meeting was organised.

#### State Scenario

At the public meeting at Vijayawada the situation in the state as a whole was discussed. It is increasingly being felt that though under the land improvisation programme the case of Andhra Pradesh is being cited as a successful example, this is far from the truth. To do away with landlessness deserving families are being allotted the housing tenure. On the one hand the Forest Rights Law is being violated in a big way, while on the other land reserved for Dalit communities is being tagged and acquired in the name of Special Economic Zones. The state government has not planned out any clear strategy on the issue of land rights leading to thousands of hectares of land being taken away from villagers.

#### Women: The Worst Sufferers

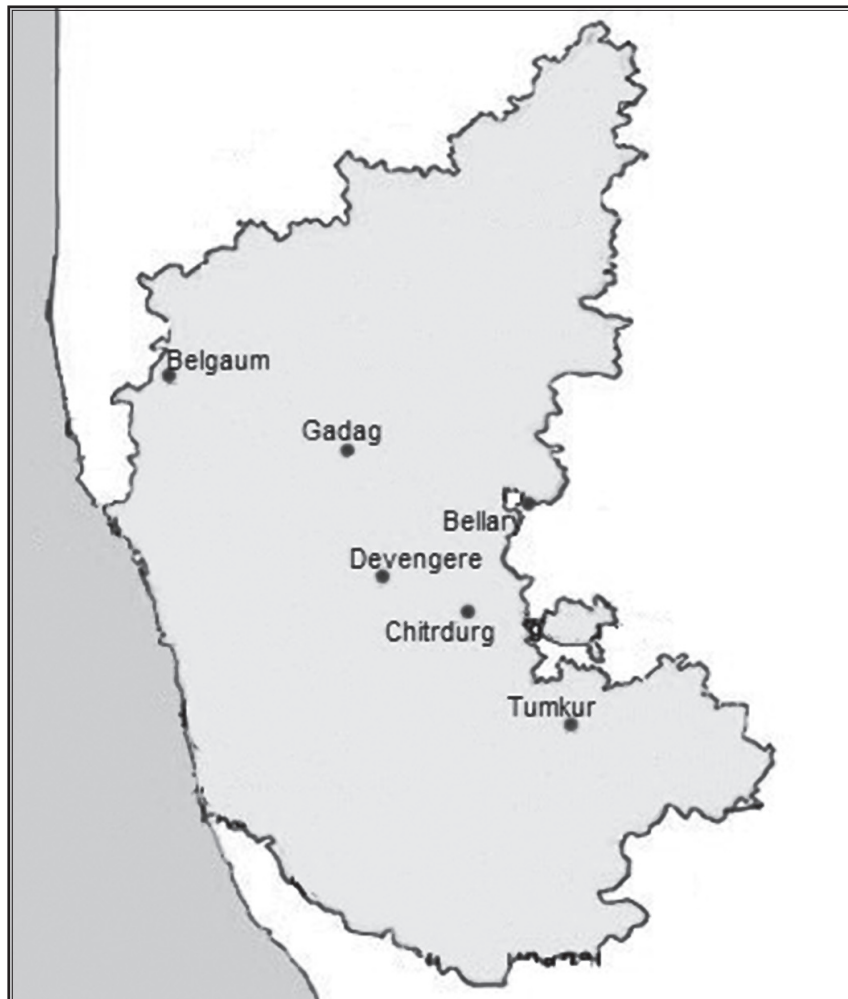
During the public meeting at Vijayawada, it clearly came out that women are the worst sufferers in land acquisition processes.

## 2.4 KARNATAKA

**L**andlessness, homelessness, prospects of eviction, transfer of land meant for Dalits to temple trusts, shrinking employment opportunities, land acquisition by mining companies and the environmental degradation induced by mining were the issues thrown up in course of the Yatra.

### 2.4.1 The Yatra at Tumkur

20 November, 2011: Bhu-Shakti Kendra organised a meeting.



### **A Signature Campaign by Bhu-Shakti Kendra**

In the last 25 years, around ten thousand acres of land has been acquired and distributed among the landless Dalits of Karnataka. More land has been identified which can be distributed among the landless. A signature campaign has been started which till now has around four lakh signatures.

Efforts are on to make the Dalits aware of their political rights. Bhu-Shakti Kendra has reached out to about 6 lakh Dalits. In the last Panchayat elections, they put up 900 candidates out of which 686 won. They are also working for the release of bonded labourers.

### **2.4.2 The Yatra at Chitradurga**

21 November, 2011: Dalit Mahila Vedike and other local organisations organised a public meeting.

#### **Issues**

Eviction of slum dwellers; eviction of villagers for urban development.

#### **The Struggle**

There are around seventeen thousand homeless people at Chitradurga who stay in temporary houses in slums. In the name of urbanisation these people are being evicted from their homes.

In many other villages of this region, people are facing eviction in the name of urban development. People living in these areas are mostly wage labourers and stay in rented accommodation without any proper sanitation and minimum housing amenities. Most of their meager income gets spent in paying rent and purchasing daily ration.

#### **Promises Made**

The District Collector promised that the housing issues of the people will be addressed and necessary steps will be taken.

### **2.4.3 The Yatra at Davangere**

22 November, 2011: Dalit Mahila Vedike and other local organisations organised a public meeting.

#### **Issues**

Landlessness; limited employment opportunities; migration; transfer of land meant for Dalits to temple trusts.

#### **The Struggle**

In this drought prone area, 70 percent of the Dalit families are landless. Employment opportunities for wage labourers are seasonal because of which the region has seen large-scale migration to adjoining cities. Besides, there is resentment over the transfer of huge chunks of government land meant for Dalits to temple trusts.

### **2.4.4 The Yatra at Vellari**

23 November, 2011: The Collector of Vellari welcomed the Jan Satyagraha Samwad Yatra

#### **Issues**

Land acquisition and environmental pollution due to mining.

#### **District Collector's View**

The mining companies are wrecking havoc in these areas by acquiring huge areas and completely destroying the environment. The displaced and the homeless continue to struggle for basic entitlements.

### **2.4.5 The Yatra at Gadag**

24 November, 2011: A meeting was organised by Karnataka Ryotwari Sangh.

#### **Issues**

Pollution related problems due to mining; land acquisition.

#### **The Struggle**

This region of Karnataka is in throes of severe pollution related problems. There are 10 sponge iron factories in the area and another 23 factories are coming up. Essar and POSCO have been allotted around 400 acres of land. On one hand Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board is rapidly acquiring land

and on the other hand industrial pollution is taking a toll on the crops and the human beings residing in the adjoining areas. Instances of people suffering from breathing related problems and cancer is rising.

#### **2.4.6 The Yatra at Belgaon**

29 November, 2011: A rally and a public meeting were organised by Dalit Mahila Vedike and some other local women's organisations.

#### **Issues**

22 thousand acres of land under dispute.

#### **The Struggle**

The major issue in this region of Karnataka is the settlement of claims filed under the Forest Rights Act. While nothing has been done to settle around 700 claims filed from this region, the builder mafia has been forcefully buying huge chunks of land. In Bidar district, 22 thousand acres of land which has been claimed by different tribal communities is stuck in a dispute between the forest and revenue department.



## 2.5 GOA

One of the major issues that were discussed in course of the Yatra in the state is the repercussion of unchecked mining. Land acquisition for mining, drop in water level resulting in a shortage of irrigation water, unabated pollution, adverse effects on cashew nut production and milk production, harassment of the local population by the mafia of the big mining companies and sidetracking of the resolutions passed by Gram Sabhas against renewal of mining leases has created resentment among the local population of the state. Land acquisition by construction companies

and the struggle of the *Siddhi* community for land rights are some other issues of concern.

### 2.5.1 The Yatra at Karwar

26 November, 2011: Regional Alliance of People's Association and Siddhi Samuday Andolan organised a rally and a public meeting

#### Issues

Harassment and deprivation of land rights of the *Siddhi* Community.



## The Struggle

The *Siddhi* community is originally an African tribe who were brought into Goa around 400 years ago by the Portuguese. Presently there are around 25,000 *Siddhi* families residing in this region, whose livelihoods are dependent on land and forests. The *Siddhis* have been facing harassment from officials of the Forest Department in the name of forest conservation. There have been allegations of bias in the conduct of forest officials towards the community. Cases have been reported where land allotted to *Siddhis* is much smaller than what was claimed under the Forest Rights Act.

### 2.5.2 The Yatra at Panaji

26 November, 2011: A meeting was arranged by Milk Production Cooperative Society.

#### Issues

Milk production affected because of decline in rice production due to mining.

#### The Struggle

500 agricultural families in this region of the state who were associated with a milk cooperative have been hit hard by the continuous acquisition of agricultural land. The acquisition has resulted in a decline in rice production due to which the availability of fodder for cattle has been adversely affected. These farmers now find themselves in a situation where they are finding it difficult even to recover the cost of milk production.

### 2.5.3 The Yatra at Madgaon

27 November, 2011: A public meeting was organised by the local social activists. The next halt of the journey was at Panchwadi Panchayat where the community organised a large gathering on the issue of land acquisition.

#### Issues

Transfer of land acquired for industrial purposes to real estate and tourism ventures; drop in water level due to unchecked mining; appropriation of land by construction company; local residents threatened

by mafia of mining companies; land acquisition for mining; cashew production adversely affected; resolutions passed by Gram Sabhas against mining ignored.

## The Struggle

The struggle here revolves around the transfer of land acquired for industrial purposes to real estate and tourism ventures. Adding to the resentment is the fact that the price that the landowners were paid was negligible compared to the price at which land is now being transferred.

Unchecked mining of iron ore has brought down the water level significantly. Due to excessive mining in Goa, 70 percent of the area has recorded a drop in water level and 80 percent of the natural streams/falls have completely dried up. Availability of ground water has also affected irrigation. Most mining projects operational in the area had mentioned that the revenue generated from the mining leases would be used for local development. In reality however mining companies and their mafia have been regularly threatening and attacking the local communities. Despite complaints by local groups there has been no legal recourse.

There has been agitation against Raheja Construction Company which has illegally appropriated 99 thousand square meters of land at the rate of Rs. 8000 per square meter. In 2008 this land was sold off at the rate of Rs. 500 per square meter. Water scarcity in the Selavali dam due to unchecked mining in the vicinity of the dam by 18 companies has adversely affected irrigation of agricultural land.

In Panchwadi, over 700 acres of cultivable land has been acquired for construction of a dumping yard for the mining companies. Land in the adjoining areas has also been affected. Cashew nut cultivation, which was a thriving crop in the region, has stopped yielding even nominal returns due to high levels of toxicity.

In July 2011 when the communities protested against the issue they were brutally assaulted and cases were lodged against 45 villagers. Mining continues unabated in the region despite resolutions passed by many Gram Sabhas for discontinuation of mining leases.

## 2.5.4 The Yatra at Goa

28 November, 2011: A convention was organised by the Goa International Center.

### Issues Affecting the State

Goa produces almost half of the iron ore of our country, most of which is exported to China. The iron ore extracted from Goa is generally used to make sponge iron. Extracting iron by this method is extremely polluting. Powerful people and mafia are involved in the mining industry. Due to the

high demand for land in the Goa city area, the price differential between rural land and urban land is huge, which is one of the major reasons behind the increase in landlessness and homelessness. Immigration is also increasing the pressure on land.

In the name of industrialisation and urbanisation, the government has been engaging in large-scale land acquisition. Hundreds of industrial projects are waiting for approval in the court. If these proposals are cleared and factories set up, the environmental damage will be enormous.

## 2.6 MAHARASHTRA

The state of Maharashtra is witness to the same struggles to establish rights over land and forests that have been gaining momentum in other parts of the country. People have raised their voices against land acquisition for industrial units. Demolitions have rendered thousands homeless. People displaced by dams and mines are waging struggles in different corners of the state to get rehabilitation. In the

case of those displaced by the Indira Sagar Bandh Pariyojna, the struggle has been kept alive for the last twenty years. Communities are struggling for rights over grazing lands. Claims filed under the Forest Rights Act have not been settled. The vicious cycle of displacement, landlessness, migration, the movement of rural populations towards the slums within cities and eviction there from continues.



## 2.6.1 The Yatra at Aurangabad and Jalna

15 and 16 December, 2011: On December 15, the Jan Satyagraha Samwad Yatra reached Aurangabad, where Gharkul and Zameen Parishad organised a gathering of women. On December 16, 2011, the Yatra reached Ekta Nagar and Jalaal Nagar Colony. In the afternoon, the Yatra from Aurangabad reached Jalna district, where the Jalna Education Society and Gandhi Research Centre organized a meeting.

### Issues

Demand for formulation and implementation of social security laws for home based workers; village society's rights over community land; migration; demolitions; rights over seeds; land acquisition for steel rolling mills; pollution.

### The Struggle

People are protesting against acquisition of about two lakhs and 30 thousand hectares of land in the process of urbanisation. Around 500 women have submitted a memorandum to the state government voicing their rights for land. Home-based workers of Maharashtra are fighting for homestead state land and social security.

### Demands

Gharkul and Zameen Parishad have put forward the following demands: execution of laws for land reforms; rejection of policies which support SEZs; ensuring the implementation of laws which uphold the rights of village society on community land; and formulation of social security laws for home-based workers.

A memorandum has been put forward by Marathwara Socio Economic Research and National Integration Centre in protest against the commercialisation of agriculture. The organisation has demanded that those who plough the agricultural lands should have ownership rights.

In Ekta Nagar and Jalaal Nagar Colony the homes of 119 families were demolished in May 2011 in the name of city beautification without giving prior notification to the families. All residents are protesting against the demolition. In Jalna district, a struggle is being waged for securing rights on traditional seeds. Beej Bachao Abhiyan has been protesting against

transgenic seeds. Encroachment is another huge problem in the district.

There are more than 50 steel rolling mills in Jalna district. Land acquisition for these mills and the extensive pollution that the mills have caused is an issue of enormous concern. Despite the existence of local industries in the district, about two lakh people migrate in search of work every year. The widespread use of machines for harvesting sugarcane is also fuelling migration from this region. The Bidi factory of this district employs a large number of labourers from Andhra Pradesh. Farmers are being compelled to sell their land. Extensive industrialisation has lowered the water table of the district.

## 2.6.2 The Yatra at Parbhani

17 December, 2011: A meeting was organised by Samajwadi Jan Parishad and Manvi Haq Abhiyan in Parbhani.

### Issues

Privatisation of water; inaction on claims filed under Forest Rights Act; landlessness.

### The Struggle

Farmers are protesting against privatisation of water. The state government wants to secure water for the Mumbai area at the cost of irrigation requirements of cotton farmers of the region.

Despite enactment of the Forests Rights Act, the process of providing land rights has not started. With the help of Shet Union Majdoor, 500 applications have been handed over to the district administration but no action has been taken. In Brahmpuri village, people who have been cultivating land for 25 years are waiting to get ownership right over the land, as promised by the State Government.

## 2.6.3 The Yatra at Ghaghurala

18 December, 2011: A public hearing was organised by Hind Majdoor Sabha and Shetkari Shet Majdoor Panchayat.

### Issues

Lack of compensation for farmers; acquisition of land for urban projects; crop destruction and drop in water table due to industrialisation.

## The Struggle

About 1600 acres of land was acquired in the villages of Kushnur, Ghunghrala, Sawarkher and Melghat by the Maharashtra Industrial Development Board in 1997. Around 10 percent of the farmers were paid compensation at the rate of Rs.15000 per hectare. Farmers were also promised government jobs. No compensation has been given to over 90 percent of the population whose land was acquired and nobody has been offered a job. Farmers are demanding the return of one thousand acres of grazing and agricultural land which has been not been used yet. The region has also seen crop destruction and drop in water table due to industrialisation.

### Issue of Grazing Land Raised in Umrageaon

Gram Vikas Sansthan of Umrageaon in Hingoli district has been struggling to provide Dalits and other landless people ownership rights over grazing land. The Forest Department has unauthorized control over 15 percent of this land. No efforts have been made to enact land reforms since the formation of Hingoli district in 1999. Through the Ugam Gram Vikas Sansthan, Savitri Bai Phule Mutual Benefit Trust has been brought into operation and in more than 100 villages facilities for agriculture and self employment are being provided to women's groups in more than 100 villages.

## 2.6.4 The Yatra at Wasim and Akola

20-21 December, 2011: A public meeting was organised by Manvi Hak Parishad. On December 21, the Yatra stopped at Mahaan *taluka* of Akola district. A public meeting was organised.

### Issues

Ownership rights over grazing land; acquisition of grazing lands.

### The Struggle

Manvi Hak Abhiyan is struggling for ownership rights over 6420 acres of grazing land in Wasim district. Detailed documents have been handed over to the district administration.

At the public meeting in Mahaan *taluka* of Akola district, the issue of land distribution amongst

Dalits and other landless people by the Nizam was discussed. The state government was accused of violating the government order of 1990, which had placed restrictions on the acquisition of grazing land. The process of claiming rights over 5 thousand hectares of grazing land in Akola, 3 thousand hectares in Wasim, 2 thousand in Amravati and 6 thousand hectares in Buldhana has been initiated.

## 2.6.5 The Yatra at Amravati

22 December, 2011: A public meeting was organised at Mahuli in Amravati district by Samajwadi Janparishad and Manvi Haq Abhiyan.

### Issues

Land distribution among the landless; distribution of grazing land; management of waste land.

### The Struggle

The policy declaration for land distribution among the landless has remained confined to papers. The management of wasteland has also created resentment among the people. Despite endorsements by the Panchayats there are 55 villages where the distribution of grazing land has not been done.

## 2.6.6 The Yatra at Arvi and Wardha

23 December, 2011: A meeting was organised in Arvi *taluka* of Wardha district by Akhil Bhartiya Aadiwasi Parishad and Samajwadi Jan Aandolan. In the afternoon, a public meeting was organised by Samajwadi Jan Andolan and Janwadi Mahila Sangathan at Madan Sanghralaya.

24 December, 2011: A review meeting was organized at Wardha.

25 December, 2011: A meeting was organised in a school courtyard of Pandarkauvra Karanji of Yavatmaal district in which 250 deprived men and women participated.

### Issues

Violation of Forests Rights Act; industrialisation; displacement; pollution; destruction of agricultural crops by animals; non tribals and the Forest Rights Act.

## The Struggle

In Wardha district, Forests Rights Committees have not been formed in many villages due to which most of the occupants have not presented their claims. This is one of the main reasons for the escalating conflict between the Forest Department and the people. In 1984-1985, the Forest Department distributed land to the landless, which is now being acquired forcibly by local landlords. In Vera and Solava, the Forest Rights Act has not been executed causing immense hardships for the Kolaam tribes.

The region of Yavatmaal and Chandrapur is witness to escalating tension and conflict between tribals and non-tribals. There is a belief amongst the non-tribal community that the Forest Rights Act has been enacted in favour of the tribals. Other issues of concern in the area include industrialisation, displacement, pollution, and destruction of agricultural crops by animals. The districts have seen large scale land acquisition for coal mines, paper mills and thermal electricity projects.

### 2.6.7 The Yatra at Gadchirauli

26 December, 2011: A meeting was organised at Gadchirauli by Congress Sewa Dal and Akhil Bhartiya Banjara Sewa Sangh.

#### Issues

Land rights; availability and accessibility of social security for indigenous people; lack of educational facilities.

#### The Struggle

More than 1500 castes are included in the category of indigenous communities. Despite special constitutional safeguards, there have been no efforts for securing land rights and providing social security to these people. The indigenous people of this region of the state do not have any land for cremation. There is also a lack of educational facilities.

### 2.6.8 The Yatra at Nagpur

27 December, 2011: Review Meeting of Maharashtra's Yatra

### Review Meeting Highlights Problem of Slums

At the review meeting, the problems faced by slum dwellers of the state were discussed. More than eight lakh people in Nagpur live in slums. Within these settlements about 70 percent of the houses are secure, while the government plans to evict the remaining 30 percent of the settlements. There is a proposal of Rs. 325 crores for this. For the expansion of Nagpur city, agricultural land of adjoining areas has been registered as urban land. This is one of the reasons why people living in the villages have started living in slum pockets of cities.

### 2.6.9 The Yatra at Bhandara

28 December, 2011: A public hearing was organised to address the problem of displacement of people due to the dam. The Yatra's next destination was Dongarsadak village of Gondia district where women of Raj Satta Aandolan organised a meeting.

#### Issues

No compensation and rehabilitation for more than 80 percent of the people displaced by dam.

#### The Struggle

Established in 1982, one of the main objectives of the Indira Sagar Bandh Pariyojna was to provide irrigational facilities to about 2.5 lakh hectares of agricultural land. Under the main project, around 200 villages fall under the submergence area and during the initial process of land acquisition in 1990, Rs. 10-20 thousand per acre was given as compensation for agricultural land. Though 32 villages of the Bhandara district and 52 villages of Nagpur district have been included in the submerged area more than 80 percent of the population has not been given the promised compensation and rehabilitation. The villages that have been listed as submerged areas have been forcefully evicted and promises of compensation have been broken. The struggle for compensation and rehabilitation has continued for the last twenty years. Adding to the anger of the people is the fact that the process of handing over the control of this project in the hands of private companies has been initiated.

### 2.6.10 The Yatra at Kolhapur

30 December, 2011: Bhumi Haq Parishad and local organisations welcomed the Yatra in Kolhapur where a press conference was organised.

The next stop of the Yatra was at Khadule in Gaganwada block of Kolhapur district, where a public meeting was organised by Bhumi Haq Parishad.

#### Issues

Claims filed under Forest Rights Act pending; land transfer for urban projects; no policy initiatives for nomadic communities; land not distributed among the landless; irregularities in functioning of fair price shops.

#### The Struggle

In Kolhapur district several claims filed under the Forest Rights Act are pending with the Forest Department. Forestlands are being transferred in the name of urbanisation and 3800 acres of agricultural land has been transferred for urban projects in spite of the declaration that these are environmentally sensitive. No policy initiatives have been taken for nomadic communities and for people's rights over grazing land. *Bhumidan Bhoomihās* not been distributed to the landless. While the government is trying to secure business institutions by providing subsidy irregularities in the operation and functioning of fair price shops and low prices are demoralising farmers.

### 2.6.11 The Yatra at Satara

1 December, 2011: The Yatra was welcomed by the Dalit Foundation.

#### Issues

Migration by landless Dalits; no effort to rehabilitate landless Dalits; claims filed by tribals and Dalits not considered; farmers adversely affected by diversion of dam water.

#### The Struggle

Dalit families have been migrating from this drought prone area of the state. Most Dalit families are landless and work as daily wage labourers. Little has

been done by the government to rehabilitate landless people on Inami zameen. Around 5000 cases are pending in the District Court.

Around 9000 hectares of demarcated land is still with the government but due to lack of political will no decision has been taken so far.

Forest and Revenue Department of the district are not considering demands of the tribal and Dalit families over forestland on which they have been living for several decades. Farmers of the district are unhappy with the government's decision to divert the dam water towards the city as this has resulted in a scarcity of irrigation water.

### 2.6.12 Yatra at Sangli and Ratnagiri

1 December, 2011: College students and professors of Ganpatrao Arware College welcomed the Yatra at Sangli. In the evening a meeting with local worker's association was organised by Hind Mazdoor Sabha.

2 December, 2011: The Yatra reached Jaitapur Nadergaon of Ratnagiri district.

#### Issues

Protest against nuclear power plant.

#### The Struggle

People and several national organisations have been protesting against the Nuclear Energy Project in the coastal area of Ratnagiri. 95 percent of the farmers and fisher folks have refused to take compensation and have been protesting against the acquisition of 934 hectares of land. Those dependent on fishing fear that their livelihood will be adversely affected by the nuclear power plant project, as the temperature of the sea water will be affected and restrictions will be imposed on entrance. The government has not come up with any policy to provide security to the fishermen. The Tarapur experience is fresh in memory. Affected people have still not been rehabilitated. Protesters have been harassed and threatened by the local administration. There have been several instances of violation of human rights of protestors. In Naate, more than 200 people were charged with criminal cases for having protested against the nuclear power plant.



### 2.6.13 The Yatra at Raigad

4 December, 2011: In Raigad, the first stop of the Yatra was at Tokavade village where a public meeting was organised by Shramik Mukti Sangathan and Zameen Jungle Pani Haq Parishad.

#### Issues

Multi cropland acquisition for dam construction; displacement; non implementation of Forest Rights Act.

#### The Struggle

Parvi Bandh Virodhi Manch has been protesting against the Parvi dam for the last three decades. 36 villages were displaced and 35 thousand farmers lost their land. During the process of land acquisition, promises for irrigation facilities were made to farmers. Instead of keeping its promise, the government has directed the dam water to Mumbai.

The government is avoiding implementation of the Forest Rights Act in Moradabad because this will come in way of land acquisition for industrial projects. Several Muslim families have been waiting for rights over land which has been under their possession. 35 acres of multiple crop land has been acquired by the government for a dam on Balu river. Approximately 50 thousand families of 42 villages are likely to be displaced by this dam project.

### 2.6.14 The Yatra at Mumbai

5 December, 2011: Ekta Shanti Manch welcomed the Yatra in Mumbai. A press conference and students' meeting was organised in Khalsa college premises. Another event was organised in Dadar by Nivara Haq Parishad and local organisations.

#### Issues

Eviction; Land grabbing by land mafia for corporate giants; increase in number of homeless people.

#### The Struggle

During the shutting down of the Cotton Mill in Mumbai an agreement was reached according to which 16 thousand affected people were promised homestead land and the rest of the affected people

were promised employment. The agreement has not been implemented till date.

More than 50 percent of Mumbai's population lives in temporary shelters and unauthorised slums. In 1995, a plan to rehabilitate these slum dwellers was chalked out. No action has been taken till date to implement the plan. Corporatisation has resulted in large scale eviction of slum dwellers. Many slum areas have been declared illegal. Water connections to these have been severed. The land mafia has been forcefully acquiring land, resulting in an increase in homelessness in the city. Corporate giants have captured thousands of acres of land with the support of the government.

### 2.6.15 The Yatra at Pune

7 December, 2011: The first stop of the Yatra was at Maul village of Pune district and the second was at Pune city.

#### Issues

Land grabbing for Special Economic Zone; migration.

#### The Struggle

In Maul village, three local farmers were killed in police firing during the protest against land acquisition. Huge tracts of land have been grabbed by the government for Special Economic Zones. Due to absence of land reforms, people from rural areas have been migrating to cities in large numbers.

### 2.6.16 The Yatra at Dhule

8 December, 2011: Lok Sangharsh Morcha welcomed the Yatra at Dhule.

#### Issues

No rehabilitation for dam affected people; migration; non-acceptance of claims filed under Forest Rights Act.

#### The Struggle

This district comes last in the category of Human Development Index. 90 percent of the tribal families are landless and Below Poverty Line.

In the Narmada valley people were displaced due to the Upai dam on Tapti river. While government records show that 7500 families have been rehabilitated, the truth is that many families have still not been given land. 48000 families from this area have filed claims under the Forest Rights Act. Out of these, 43000 applications have not been accepted.

Approximately, 75 percent of the tribal families are migrating towards metropolitan cities for livelihood. MNREGA scheme has failed to check migration. Forest Department and Tribal Welfare Department do not support tribals. Around 60 percent of the tribal families have been charged under false cases by the Forest Department and Tribal Welfare Department.

### 2.6.17 The Yatra at Nandurbar

9 December, 2011: A rally was organised by Lok Sangharsh Morcha at Yaval *taluka*, in which 1000 people participated.

#### Issues

Rights violation of *Bhils*; rejection of claims filed under Forest Rights Act.

#### The Struggle

Violation of rights of the *Bhil* community is a major concern in this region. Claims filed by *Bhils* under the Forest Rights Act for homestead land and cultivable land have been rejected by the Forest Department.

### 2.6.18 The Yatra at Nashik

10 December, 2011: A public meeting was organised to discuss the situation in Jhogre village.

#### Issues

Government acquisition of multi crop cultivable land for industrial project; disregard for Gram Panchayat's decision.

#### The Struggle

In Jhogre village, acquisition of multi crop cultivable land is in progress. Despite protests by the Gram Panchayat in 2009, acquisition of 2036 hectares of land has been ordered. On November 30, 2009, the Gram Panchayat again appealed to the government to

stop the acquisition process but the district and state administration overlooked the appeal. The entire area is getting transformed into an industrial hub and the government's attitude towards farmers remains unhelpful.

### 2.6.19 The Yatra at Ahmednagar

10 December, 2011: Manaviya Haq Abhiyan organised a meeting with local workers' union where the situation in the state as a whole was discussed.

#### A Larger Picture of Maharashtra

Manaviya Haq Abhiyan for Dalits and tribals has been highlighting issues related to land rights for the last 14 years.

The 1998 government order to give grazing land to the landless has not been implemented. There have been several instances of atrocities against Dalits on the land issue. In 1960, 65000 acres of land was secured for share cropping, out of which 25000 acres were distributed to marginal farmers and the rest was kept for Special Economic Zones and distributed to powerful agencies.

Powerful landlords in Kharki village are acquiring *Pardhi* land. 150 *Pardhi* families have appealed for rehabilitation on 85 acres of land. The government has not accepted their demand.

### 2.6.20 The Yatra at Solapur

11 December, 2011: At Solapur, a rally was organised by Bhatkya Vimuktanchya Nyay Haq Santhi Jan Jagriti Adhikar.

#### Issues

Housing rights for nomadic community.

#### The Struggle

Housing rights for the nomadic community was discussed at Solapur. An appeal has been made to the state and national government, which is under review by the Planning Commission.

### 2.6.21 The Yatra at Osmanabad and Latur

12 December, 2011: Hallo Medical Foundation welcomed the Yatra at Osmanabad.

At Latur, Manaviya Haq Abhiyan and Zameen Adhikar Andolan organised a public meeting.

## Issues

Right over grazing land.

## The Struggle

Landless families are still waiting for possession over grazing land which was promised by the government. The 1966 decision to give grazing land to the landless has not been implemented due to faulty land records.

### 2.6.22 The Yatra at Osmanabad

13 December, 2011: The Yatra was welcomed by Manavi Haq Abhiyan and Zameen Adhikar Andolan in Osmanabad. A public meeting was organised. The next stop of the Yatra was at Beed district.

## Issues

People are struggling to get possession over the Nizam land; demanding land rights over the grazing land.

## The Struggle

Dalits and tribals in this part of the state are still waiting for possession over the land that had been distributed among them by the Nizam dynasty in 1854. In Gozewada village, Vasi *taluka*, approximately 65 landless families have occupied 140 acres of grazing land since 8 years and they have appealed for possession. There have been many instances of land related atrocities on Dalits and tribals. The demand for housing rights has gained momentum. Though Gram Sabhas have the power to sanction grazing land proposals, government records show that 25 percent of the sugar and cotton mills in this region are established in grazing land. In Marathwada region, around 50 thousand appeals have been submitted to the government for possession over the grazing land.

## 2.7 CHHATTISGARH

Large tracts of agricultural and forestland in the state of Chhattisgarh have been and are still being acquired for development projects. People of the state are struggling against forcible acquisition of land, sale of land by the land mafia and fraudulent Gram Sabhas organised to acquire land for industry. Tribal lands are being alienated in favour of corporates on a large scale. Communities have been displaced due to power plants. Claims made under the Forest Rights Act have been unfairly rejected and claimants have not been given any information. Incidents of false cases being registered against claimants have been reported from the state. In many cases claimants have been given

less land as compared to what they had claimed. Communities like the *Baigas* have been unable to file claims. Common property tiles have not been issued and in some regions the government has not invited proceedings for common property resources. The Forest Department has been forcibly planting trees on the land of the tribals. Village Forest Committees are under the influence of the Forest Department. Land donated during the *Bhoodan* movement remains undistributed at various places in the state. The struggle for land and livelihoods, resettlement, employment opportunities, waiving of agricultural loans in the face of crop failure continues.



### 2.7.1 The Yatra at Rajnandgaon

29 December, 2011: A public meeting was organised at Mohala supported by Adivasi Manch, Traders Union and the Lions Club. Political workers from various parties participated along with non-governmental organisations. Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) of Mohala constituency pledged support for the cause of the Adivasis. An informal meeting with the police department was also arranged.

#### Issues

Common property titles; rejection of claims made under Forest Rights Act; no response on claims filed.

#### The Struggle

The struggle here revolves around common property titles. Not a single common property title has been granted to the village community under the Forest Rights Act. Till date only 5,791 land claims of the tribal community have been settled, while 10,994 claims have been rejected. 54 claims made by tribals at Mukadah village have yet to receive a response.

### 2.7.2 The Yatra at Durg and Kanker

30 December, 2011: A public meeting was organised with the support of Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha at Bhanupratappur and Antagarh. The last stop of the Yatra was at the office of Disha, a non-governmental organisation in Aamabeda.

#### Issues

Prospect of loss of livelihood for labourers working in mines; acquisition of personal and forestlands; rejection of claims filed under Forest Rights Act.

#### The Struggle

2500 labourers working at the Rajhara mines face prospects of losing their livelihoods. Bhanupratappur tehsil in Kanker district has seen large-scale acquisition of personal and forestlands for the Raoghat Iron Ore Project.

At Antagarh, in Kanker district, out of 27,646 claims filed by people under the Forest Rights Act, only 17,831 claims have been settled and 21,897.99 hectares of

land has been distributed while 9,815 claims have been found objectionable and subsequently cancelled. Claims filed by the people in the Koyelibeda and Raoghat regions have been rejected. Out of 800 claims that were filed from the organisation's work area, only 220 have received notifications till date.

### 2.7.3 The Yatra at Bastar

31 December, 2011: A farmers' gathering was organised at Charbhatta. Leaders from farmers' representative groups participated. A public hearing was organised with the help of Sehbhagi Sanstha at Kosmi village.

#### Issues

Waiving of agricultural loans; rejection of claims under Forest Rights Act; hostile attitude of Forest Department and Police.

#### The Struggle

In Charbhatta and the neighbouring villages (Chitawan, Jamgaon, Khetarpal, Arandi, Bedma and Singhanpur) farmers are struggling to get the government to write off loans they took from the local Cooperative Bank. Farmers have been hit hard due to drought related failure of kharif crops.

At Kosmi village in Bastar over one hundred tribal families were resettled at Charnabharri in Gram Panchayat Kosmi. Despite the fact that they have been tilling the land for the last twenty years, not a single claim filed under the Forest Rights Act from this village has been acted upon by the administration. Out of the 300 claims filed, only 65 claims have been acted upon. The struggle here is against the Forest Department and the Police.

### 2.7.4 The Yatra at Kanker

1 January, 2012: A public meeting and rally was organised with the help of Disha and Parivartan. Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha also participated in the events.

#### Issues

Fair price for forest produce; rejection of claims; plight of unorganised workers.

## The Struggle

In the absence of a processing centre in the region, forest produce worth lakhs of rupees is being sold at very low rates. Villagers have been struggling to get a fair price for their produce and job opportunities at processing centers. While on the one hand the government has rejected individual claims on forestland, on the other hand it has not accepted a single claim for common property resources. Unorganised workers of the region are also struggling against the new industrial policy. Their failure to get jobs at local industrial units is forcing them to migrate in large numbers.

### 2.7.5 The Yatra at Charama

2 January, 2012: A farmers' gathering was organised by Sehbhagi Samaj Sewi Sansthan at village Kahadgondi in Charama tehsil. Member of the Zilla Panchayat spoke at the event. The Yatra stopped at village Sasaholi, Tilda in Raipur district, where it was welcomed by women's groups.

## Issues

Rejection of claims filed under Forest Rights Act; less land given to claimants.

## The Struggle

Thousands of forest dwellers are struggling for their rights over forestland at Charama tehsil. They have not been provided rights over forestland under the Forest Rights Act. Farm production has been adversely affected in the region due to lack of land development. In Kahadgondi Gram Panchayat, concern was raised over the fact that under the Forest Rights Act people are getting less land than what they file claims for and this was an impediment to self sufficiency.

### 2.7.6 The Yatra at Raipur

3 January, 2012: A 'People's Parliament' on land rights was organised at Tilda by Ekta Parishad. More than 50 associated organisations participated. More than 300 people's representatives along with the

## Promises Made at Raipur

Minister for Rural Development made the following announcements:

1. Residential land rights would be ensured to enable homestead land for rural poor and homeless people.
2. Survey of the current status of *Bhoodan* lands.
3. Matching of revenue and forestland records for corrections.
4. Establishment of fast track courts and land judicial authority for speedy disposal of cases pertaining to land that is currently under appeal.
5. Survey of Common Property Resources in the villages.
6. Survey and rehabilitation process in the Tribal Sub-Plan areas.
7. Amendment to the Prohibition of *Benami* transactions and return of Property Rights Act 1989 so that matters pertaining to *benami* land transactions and violations of land ceiling laws can be monitored.
8. Amendment to the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005 so that diversion of land in tribal areas can be prohibited.

Minister of State for Agriculture or made the following suggestions at Raipur:

- 1 The 1997 Samta Judgment by the Supreme Court of India should be made binding on all private companies involved in the acquisition of land in tribal areas.
- 2 In matters of sale and lease of tribal lands, the land should be restored to the tribals and the Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas should be recognised as able institutions for the upkeep of land records.
- 3 The responsibility for barren lands within their jurisdiction should be given to the Gram Panchayats and within two years a survey of forest land and common property resources should be completed.
- 4 All matters of encroachment and forest crimes against the tribal people should be withdrawn with immediate effect.

Minister for Rural Development and the Minister of State for Agriculture attended the event. The Collector of Warangal district spoke of the process initiated in the district for correction of land records and resolution of disputes.

### 2.7.7 The Yatra at Raipur

4 January, 2012: Kisan Sangharsh Samiti and Chhattisgarh Yuvak Samaj Sewi Sanstha were involved in the event at Raipur. The last halt in Raipur district was at Rajim, where a meeting was organised by Prerak.

#### Issues

Forcible acquisition of land.

#### The Struggle

At Baihar village in Raipur district the struggle revolves around forcible acquisition of agriculture land for the New Raipur Project. Aarang tehsil is witness to acquisition and buying of approximately 20,000 acres of land. Despite the fact that sale of land in the New Raipur Area was banned in 2002, agriculture land belonging to farmers that was acquired at compensation of Rs 20,000 per acre (40 percent of the acquired land belongs to Dalit families) is being sold by the land mafias at Rs 5000 per square foot. The Kisan Sangharsh Morcha has filed many appeals, against the acquisition of agriculture land, before the state government but till date the government has not taken any steps for providing relief to the farmers.

#### Promises Made

The Chief Minister of the state agreed that records that have been given to people under the Forest Rights Act would have to be converted into ownership records/titles through an organised campaign. He requested the associates and supporters of Ekta Parishad to become partners in the process for peace and development in the state of Chhattisgarh.

### 2.7.8 The Yatra at Gariaband

5 January, 2012: A meeting with students was organised at the Higher Secondary School. A general meeting was also organised by the Lok Astha

Sanghatan and Kamar Bhunjiya. More than 500 village leaders participated in a Maha Panchayat. Kaaj Samaaj Sewi Santhan also participated.

#### Issues

Incomplete implementation of Forest Rights Act; registration of criminal cases against the tribals; forced plantations by Forest Department; rejection of claims and seizure of cattle and agricultural equipments.

#### The Struggle

Incomplete implementation of Forest Rights Act lies at the core of people's struggle in the region. In the Chura region, approximately 700 claim applications were filed through the sangathan but so far only 47 have received a response. Criminal cases registered against tribals have not been withdrawn by the administration. The Forest Department is undertaking forced plantations on the land that has been claimed by the people. In village Hardi, 22 families that have been tilling 80 acres of forestland since 1998 filed claims under the Forest Rights Act. However, only 10 families have received the rights record book. In Paragaon village, 57 people have received the rights record book but the land mentioned in it is only 25-30 percent of the actual land cultivated by them. In Jidar village, the Forest Rights Committee is totally non-functional and the 80 families, which have filed claims, have not received any information on the status of their applications. In Bhurku village, 22 claim applications have not been accepted and the Forest Department personnel have seized the axe and oxen of the applicants.

### 2.7.9 The Yatra at Mahasamund

6 January, 2012: A Young Men's Parliament was organised at Khairat Kalan village in Mahasamund. More than 800 representatives participated in the event. The second halt of the Yatra in Mahasamund was at Malidih where Kairwar Adivasi Maha Panchayat was organised.

#### Issues

Non-serious attitude of government towards claims filed under Forest Rights Act.

## The Struggle

In Malidih, claims filed by the tribals and other communities under the Forest Rights Act have not been taken seriously by the government. Out of the 90 claims filed in the village, only 39 were accepted. In village Rupekel, out of 20 claims that were filed, only 13 were accepted and while the claims were for 5 acres of land each, claimants have been given only 50 decimal land. In the district as a whole, out of 640 people who filed claims only 63 claimants from 4 villages have received rights booklet. Claims of 8 villages across 3 Gram Panchayats have not been acted upon by the administration in spite of the fact that the Panchayat Secretary ratified all claims.

### 2.7.10 The Yatra at Kabirdham

7 January, 2012: A meeting was organised at Baigachauk of Bodla tehsil. The second halt of the Yatra was at village Kui-Kukdur of Pandaria tehsil. A meeting was jointly organised by Ekta Parishad and Adivasi Samta Manch.

#### Issues

Non-settlement of claims made under Forest Rights Act; alienation of land of *Baigas* (indigenous tribes of Kawardha region) in favour of corporates; filing of court cases against claimants.

## The Struggle

In Bodla tehsil the Forest Department is planting trees on the land cultivated by the *Baigas*. In the village Daldali, land belonging to the *Baigas* is being alienated in favour of corporates like Vendanta for bauxite mining. While on the one hand claims filed by the people in the bauxite mining belt were not being considered, land cultivated by the tribals and other forestlands were being given to mining companies. In village Nawatola, 40 *Baiga* families had been cultivating 100 acres of forestland for the last 22 years and had filed claims for the same, but so far no action has been taken on their applications. In village Bijapani, 10 *Baiga* families had been cultivating 35 acres of forestland for the last eight years and had filed claims for the same but instead of settlement they face a court case that has been filed against them by the Forest Department. In the district as

a whole, 1445 *Baigas* have filed claims through the organization, of which only 502 have been accepted while no action has been taken on the remaining claims. In claims that have been settled, less land has been granted. At village Kui-Kukdur of Pandaria tehsil, 3000 *Baiga* families have not been able to file their claims for cultivated forestland despite government schemes purported for their assistance. In village Pathratola, 22 *Baiga* families had filed their claims over 50 acres of cultivated forestland but they have been given rights over a lesser area of land. In Bhira Gram Panchayat, 14 *Baiga* families have not received land despite filing claims for the same. Instead a court case has been filed against them by the Forest Department.

### Unfulfilled Promises

In 2003 after the Ekta Parishad Pandaria Movement, the state government had promised settlement of the land occupied by 6100 *Baiga* families. However even after eight years the promise remains to be fulfilled.

### 2.7.11 The Yatra at Mungeli

8 January, 2012: The first halt was at the Vinoba Ashram in the newly formed Mungeli district. Another meeting was organised at Belgehna village. Tribal leaders from Raniatari, Kendai, Amjhar, Binjhara and Lainga villages participated at a public hearing organised at village Lainga.

#### Issues

Land received during the *Bhoodan* movement remains undistributed; forcible plantation on land of tribals by Forest Department; criminal cases registered against claimants; less land given to claimants.

## The Struggle

Till date 1000 acres of land received during the *Bhoodan* movement remains undistributed. This land is registered in the records as government land instead of belonging to those who have rights over it. The government has not invited proceedings for common property resources. In village Deharipara, 20 tribal families have been cultivating forestland for the past 15 years. Instead of settling their



claims, the Forest Department is forcibly planting Jatropa on their land and criminal cases have been registered against villagers who protested. In almost all the claims that have been settled so far, the land that has been given is far less than the area that had been claimed. In the Raniatari region, claims made by people have been ignored since the region has been marked as a new coal block for mining.

### 2.7.12 The Yatra at Bilaspur

9 January, 2012: The first halt of the Janstyagrah Yatra was at village Kotmi of Bilaspur district where a public meeting was organised by Ekta Parishad and the Mitani Sangh.

#### Issues

Inability to file claims under Forest Rights Act; inaction on claims.

#### The Struggle

People from the *Pando* tribe have not been able to submit their claims because of lack of education. In the Kotmi region, so far 56 claims of homestead land have been settled while no action has been taken on the 446 claims that have been filed for cultivated forestland.

#### A Failed Struggle

After the *Janadesh* movement of 2007 the Adivasis were hopeful that atrocities and oppression against them would cease and that their claims on cultivated land and forest resources would be settled through the new Act. Four years later however the situation has not changed much and the Adivasis have to once again prepare for a decisive and final movement for their rights.

### 2.7.13 The Yatra at Korla

10 January, 2012: At the first halt of the Yatra in Korla, at Janakpur tehsil, a rally of more than one thousand people was organised by Ekta Parishad, Anjuman Committee, Navachar Samaj Sewi Sanstha and many elected representatives. Members of the Zilla Panchayat and political workers participated.

#### Issues

Inability to file claims under Forest Rights Act; rejection of claims; filing of criminal cases against tribals; less land given to claimants.

#### The Struggle

Large numbers of people belonging to the *Baiga*, *Kanwar* and *Basod* tribes have been unable to submit their claims over forestland because of the manner in which caste certificates have been issued by the state administration. In Korla, claims made by other communities dependent on the forests were not being accepted even though they have been living in the region for three generations and more. In 2009 the Forest Department had a nasty skirmish with the people in Ghaghra and tribals were beaten up. Subsequently the Forest Department filed criminal cases against many families. Many similar incidents have taken place in tribal villages and the attitude of the Forest Department towards the tribal community continues to be very negative. According to official data 26,824 claims were filed by people in Korla of which only 6643 were accepted and only 6045 acres of land was distributed which is way below the claims that were made. On an average each family has received only 80 decimal of land and in several cases even lesser.

### 2.7.14 The Yatra at Srinagar

11 January, 2012: A large rally was organised by local elected representatives in which leaders of the Sarguja Development Authority and many political workers participated. A public meeting was organised by the IFFCO Power Plant Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti wherein village leaders spoke of their problems related to displacement proceedings.

#### Issues

Claims of tribals pending; displacement; eligibility criteria under the Forest Rights Act.

#### The Struggle

Claims made by non-tribals are pending because of lack of caste certificates. Land settlement proceedings have been halted in the region in view

of the large-scale industrial projects that are planned for the area. Displacement proceedings affecting 31 villages have been started because of the power plant. In the first phase 5000 acres of land at the rate of Rs. 80,000 per acre has been acquired in Narayanpur, Kathmuda, Madgaon, Salka, Raghunathpur and Namna villages. In the remaining villages notification under section 4 of the Land Acquisition Act has been made. Criminal cases have been filed against 144 people in Madgaon and other villages. The local administration is apathetic towards the tribal people and especially towards tribal farmers. The primitive tribes are fighting for ownership rights over the land cultivated by them by seeking concessions in the eligibility criteria that have been stipulated under the Forest Rights Act. 11 villages around Srinagar have been included in the city limit and the people are being denied their forest rights.

### **2.7.15 The Yatra at Sarguja**

12 January, 2012: An Adivasi Parliament was organised at Mrigadand village of Sarguja in which 25 village leaders and MLA of Ambikapur participated.

13 January, 2012: A meeting of 22 non-governmental organisations was held at Ambikapur. The second halt of the Yatra was at Shivnathpur village of Sitapur block where a public meeting of more than 500 people was organised by Ekta Parishad and the local Gram Panchayat.

#### **Issues**

Inability to submit claims under Forest Rights Act; no information on rejection of claims; land acquisition for industry; denial of claims.

#### **The Struggle**

Information about the Forest Rights Act was not given in a transparent and clear manner in the Gram Sabhas because of which more than 50 percent of the tribal families have not been able to submit their claims. Out of 90,882 claims that were filed in the district, only 14,298.50 hectares of land pertaining to 26,584 claims have been distributed and information about the rejection of the remaining claims has not been given to the claimants. Coal from Parsa and Ghanrara region is being given at minimal prices

to the industries that will generate electricity for neighbouring states and not the local area. The proposed 4000 Mega Watt power unit in Khamriha will not benefit the local people. In Parsa, forestland has been acquired for industry on a very large scale and claims filed by people under Forest Rights Act have not been accepted.

In the Premnagar region fraudulent Gram Sabhas have been organised in villages such as Salka and Chandanpur to acquire agricultural land for industry. Shortage of application forms for filing claims had prevented families for filing their papers. Claims over common property resources have been denied completely.

### **2.7.16 The Yatra at Jashpur**

14-15 January, 2012: A public meeting was organised in village Chiknipani of Jashpur district. Various tribal leaders spoke at the event. On 15 January, 2012 a public hearing was held at Bhelwa village of Jashpur in which more than 200 representatives from 15 villages came together. The next stop of the Yatra was at village Lailunga in Raigad where the elected representatives of the Panchayats attended a meeting. The last stop of the Jan Satyagraha Samwad Yatra was at village Durgapur of Raigad district.

#### **Issues**

Rejection of claims; lack of basic facilities and infrastructure; forcible plantation by Forest Department on land of claimants; no information about rejection of claims.

#### **The Struggle**

In the Pathalgaon, Jhimki and Khuntapani regions, claims filed by the Pahadi Korba tribe have not been accepted even though the village Forest Rights Committee has been formed as per the guidelines issued by the Forest Department. The tribal people have not been given priority in the formation of these committees. The benefits of the schemes administered by the Pahadi Korba Development Authority have not reached the people and most villages till date are without any basic facilities and infrastructures. In village Tarekela, tribals had filed claims for 80 acres of cultivated forestland.

The Forest Department has been planting trees on that land. According to the available official data 13,319 claims were filed in Jashpur district. Of these only 3554 were accepted leading to the settlement of 1769.67 hectares of land. Written information about the rejected claims has not reached the applicants.

At Bhelwa village of Jashpur district 74 people had filed claims for forestland but instead of the administration taking action on these, the Forest Department has begun planting trees on the land. Due to the influence of the Forest Department over the Village Forest Committee of Pataibahar, 60 claims were rejected at the Gram Sabha level itself.

In Kotli village the Forest Department has planted trees on 90 acres of forestland for which claims have been filed and the people have received threats that their crops would be destroyed if they dared to complain.

At Jamtoli, 105 claims had been filed. Only 17 were accepted and the Forest Department started plantation work on the forestland cultivated by the other claimants.

### **In Action**

In 2003, with the support of Ekta Parishad 20 families started cultivation on 60 acres of land at village Durgapur of Raigad district. Subsequently all families filed claims under the Forest Rights Act but till date no action has been taken on their claims.

## **2.7.17 The Yatra at Raigarh**

16 January, 2012: A rally and a public meeting were organised in the Bharamjaigarh region of Raigad.

### **Issues**

Forcible acquisition of land; rejection of claims under the Forest Rights Act.

### **The Struggle**

Agricultural land and forestland are being rapidly acquired for industrial and mining projects. 50 villages will be directly affected by the proposed power projects and coal-mining project for which land is being forcibly acquired. 220 families of nomadic Pardhi tribe have been residing in Tezpur, Baggudenga, Pathrapara, Hirapur, Beldagi and Lipti villages for more than three generations. Claims filed by them under the Forest Rights Act have been rejected by the administration.

### **Review of Chhattisgarh Yatra at Dharamjaigarh**

On January 17, 2012, a review meeting was organised at Dharamjaigarh. 32 percent of the population of Chhattisgarh comprises scheduled tribes. A very small percentage of the claims filed under the Forest Rights Act have been settled. Action has been taken on 4,86,101 claims, whereby 2,14,633 *pattas* for 2,17,126 hectares of land has been given. The issue of settlement of rights of tribals and landless people should be taken up by the government on a priority basis.

## 2.8 ODISHA

The state has seen large-scale acquisition of land for industrialisation. The displaced populations are struggling for livelihoods in complete absence of or inadequate resettlement. Permissions have been granted for land acquisition despite objections raised by Gram Sabhas. The question of tribal self rule continues to ignite emotions in the state. People of the state have seen large scale rejection of claims filed under the Forest Rights Act. The very motive behind the Forest Rights Act stands defeated. There are communities in the state, which are not entitled to government welfare schemes because they do not possess caste certificates. Dalits and tribals in pockets

of the state are awaiting *pattas* for land that has been distributed to them. Rights over land are being fought for. The traditional rights of fishing communities have been eroded and the Chilka lake has passed under the control of the mafia. In the struggles of the homeless, the landless, Dalits and tribals over land, forests and water bodies for land tenures, rights and access to natural resources the basic question is whether land and natural resources should be treated as commodities for sale and purchase and profit generation and whether communities whose very identity revolves around land and forests and lakes should be forbidden from using them.



## 2.8.1 The Yatra at Sundergarh

19 January, 2012: Students of Alakh Mahima Pathshala at Purgaon welcomed the team. The Jan Satyagraha Samwad Yatra team then moved to village Tapadia in Himgiri block where a public hearing was organised. The second halt of the journey was at Ratanpur village where the Himgiri Adivasi Sewa Sangh had organised a public hearing. The next halt of the Yatra was the Sewak Samaj Sewi Sanstha where a dialogue session was organised.

20 January, 2012: A public meeting of more than 500 village leaders from 26 villages was organised by Jungle Manch, Jasi Sanghatan and Kshetriya Yuva Sangh. The next halt was made at village Birmitrapur of Sundergarh district where the villagers organised a public hearing.

21 January, 2012: Jungle Shuraksha Manch and Rengalibhandh Sangharsh Samiti organised public hearings.

### Issues

Acquisition of entire grazing land; less land given under Forest Rights Act; earmarking of land for coal mining; pollution caused by iron plant; permissions granted despite objections by Gram Sabha; public hearings a mere formality; rejection and no action on claims filed under the Forest Rights Act; displacement; false charges filed against protesters; land acquisition for mining; mining after expiry of lease; no rehabilitation of displaced people; fraudulent no objection certificates obtained from Gram Sabhas.

### The Struggle

In village Tapadia in Himgiri block of Sundargarh district, the entire 145 acres of village grazing land has been acquired for Bhushan Steel Limited despite repeated written appeals of objection by the Gram Sabha. The entire *nistar* system of the village has come to a standstill as a result of this acquisition.

In 220 out of the 225 claims filed and settled under the Forest Rights Act in Ratanpur Panchayat, families have received far less land than what had been claimed. No action has been taken on the remaining 908 claims that were filed by people. 15 villages of the area have been surveyed for the possibility of coal deposits. Land belonging to 14 villages has been

ear marked for coal mining by Mahanadi Coal Field Limited, Gopalpur and since 1997 there has been a ban on the sale and purchase of land in this area. This has resulted in problems for the farmers of the area. Intense pollution caused by sponge iron plants managed by Bhushan Steel and Vasundhra Metallic Company has had an adverse affect on the health of the people and has reduced the availability of forest produce.

Though the PESA law governs the entire region, objections made by the Gram Sabhas have not been considered while giving permissions. In Sundergarh and Jharasguda region, 10 power plants are scheduled to open and the public hearing proceedings that are organised for the purpose are mere formalities. Villagers have been prevented from attending these meetings and objections raised by them have not been considered.

In the Sundergarh region, while on one hand the government has given 10,000 acres of land to various industrial and mining concerns, on the other it has accepted only 10,549 out of the 37,435 claims that were filed by the local people for rights over land. Of the claims filed, 18,948 are pending and 7938 have been rejected. Thousands of people in these villages are displaced, their livelihood and land snatched away. Protests in the region have often resulted in protesters being implicated on false charges.

### Promises Made

In 2008 the state government constituted a high level committee for review of the rehabilitation process that recommended increase in the compensation amount paid to the people and completion of the rehabilitation process within a specified time frame but the government failed to deliver. About 4000 families of the region filed claims for cultivated forestland through the Jungle Suraksha Manch but have received no response from the government till date.

Families displaced by the Raurkela Steel Plant have been denied their claims of ownership over the land they have been cultivating. In Malidih village, 400 families have not been given ownership rights over cultivated forestland even after repeated claim applications and those who have received the record of rights are still awaiting demarcation of their land.

In the Rajgangpur region, many industries have been set up through fraudulent 'No Objection' certificates from Gram Sabhas even though people from the villages have filed court cases against the industries.

In Virmitrapur, 1800 acres of the village land has been lost to mining activity while the people have received no compensation. Mining has been done to a depth of 400 feet and the entire landscape of the area has been destroyed. Though the mining lease given to BSL Company expired in 2008, mining continues unabated in the region. Claims on cultivated forestland filed by 150 families of this village have been made redundant by the state on the ground that the village has been included in the city limit.

Residents of Shilpunji have filed their claims under the Forest Rights Act but till date no action has been taken on their claims.

17 sponge iron plants exist in this region and the government's decision to acquire another 6000 acres of land for mining has caused resentment. The proposed iron ore mining is likely to displace 100,000 people of 62 villages.

The primitive *Pahadi Bhuia* tribe is likely to get decimated due to thirty years of iron ore extraction. Pollution and damage to crops due to SEM Steel, acquisition of 3000 acres of land in Kenduri village despite objections and protests by the villagers and false cases against tribals protesting against the setting up of industries in the region are other issues of concern.

Kandhol village has been affected by the Rengali Dam project. Though 10616 families belonging to 263 villages have been partially and/or completely displaced since the inception of the project and 99,479 acres of land has been acquired, the state's failure at proper rehabilitation of the displaced people has fuelled a lot of resentment. About 4000 families of the region have filed claims for cultivated forestland but have received no response from the government till date.

## 2.8.2 The Yatra at Sambalpur and Jharsuguda

22 January, 2012: Astha Samaj Sewi Sanstha, Rural Development and Conservation Committee, Lok Mukti Sanghatan, Sambalpur Visthapit Manch and Varisht Nagrik Manch organised public hearings in the villages of the districts. A joint meeting was later

organised by Lok Mukti Sanghatan, Utkal Jyoti, Saheda and CASA to discuss the situation in the region.

23 January, 2012: The first halt was made at the Sambalpur district headquarter where a conference was organised by Lok Mukti Sanghatan, Sambalpur Visthapit Manch, Varisht Nagrik Manch other intellectuals. The second halt was at village Panimarra. Towards the end of the meeting a street play on land acquisition and displacement was conducted.

### Issues

Claims of tribals rejected or pending; acquisition of forestland.

### The Struggle

The story of these villages bespeaks of the apathy of the government towards the rights of tribals over land and livelihood. Thousands of claims have either been rejected or are pending. At the same time the government is acquiring more and more forest land for industrialisation and mining, endangering the very existence of many primitive indigenous tribes.

In Patharmuda village which fall in the buffer zone of the Badarma Wildlife Sanctuary, villagers have submitted 120 claims on cultivated forestland but even after two years they have received no word of either acceptance or rejection of their claims. In Sambalpur district as a whole, 26,497 claims for forestland have been filed but only 10,584 people have received rights over 13,839 acres of land while 4,111 claims are pending and 11,802 claims have been rejected. Tribals have not been able to get fair representation in Forest Committees. According to official data, in Jharsuguda district a total of 9,204 claims have been filed and of these only 2,328 families have received 2,093 acres of land while 6,821 claims have been rejected.

### Voices from Sambalpur

- At a time when governments have converted land into a commodity for sale and purchase it is important to redefine the revolt that was led by Surendra Saye for the rights of the tribal communities.
- The time has come for the urban people to think about their role in the struggle for rights that is

being waged by a large segment of the rural population.

- Even though a large region of Sambalpur is visibly affected by industrialization and mining, the urban people and media have not openly stood up in support of the various movements that are being waged in the rural areas.
- Unless breaks are applied on the speed of industrialization and priority given to agriculture and village based economy it would become impossible to stem the tide of rural discontent and violence.
- The non-violent Jansatyagrah movement would certainly ensure the land rights of millions of landless in the country.

### 2.8.3 The Yatra at Bargarh and Naupada

24 January, 2012: Gandhmardan Sangharsh Samiti and Sukha Pratikar Manch organised a rally and public meeting.

25 January, 2012: Gandhmardan Sangharsh Samiti organised a dialogue session in Bargadh and Sarvodaya Parishad and Aadarsh Samaj Sewi Sansthan organised a public meeting in Naupada.

#### Issues

Administrative formalities to establish ownership rights pending; claims rejected; land marked for mining and industries despite problem of landlessness; claims under Forest Rights Act ignored.

#### The Struggle

Under the campaign *Mo Jami More Dih* in the Padampur region, the government gave residential entitlements to more than 500 families but till date the administrative formalities of demarcation and ownership rights have not been completed. In Bargadh district 3, 294 claims have been filed of which only 926 have been accepted and given 1,645 acres of land, while 1,645 claims have been rejected.

Around 60 percent of the farmers in the Naupada region are marginal farmers, while more than 25 percent of the population is landless. Migration for livelihood is a common occurrence. Despite this, on the one hand land is being marked for mining and industries and on the other hand implementation of the Forest Rights Act remains incomplete.

In village Tipajhal, 100 tribal families had filed claims over 200 acres of land but so far no action has been taken by the administration.

#### A Success Story

In 1993 Balco was given a lease for bauxite mining in the Gandhmaran mountain ranges. The same year Gandhmaran Suraksha Samiti began its decisive struggle to save the invaluable natural property spread across an area spanning 97kms. More than 50,000 families depend on the Gandhmaran mountain ranges and the villagers together put up a tremendous opposition. Subsequent to many movements in the area, the lease of Balco was cancelled in 1998 but even now the position of the state government and the government of India is not clear and it is believed that they are once again in the process of leasing this area to private companies.

### 2.8.4 The Yatra at Naupada and Bolangir

26 January, 2012: Ma Patneshwari Khadya Suraksha Samiti, Ma Dasmati Aanchalik Mahasangh, Kandul Khadya Suraksha Manch and Jal Bandhu Samiti organised a public meeting. At village Patnagadh of Bolangir district a public meeting was attended by 150 women from various self help groups through the efforts of Ma Patneshwari Khadya Suraksha Samiti, Ma Dasmati Aanchalik Mahasangh, Kandul Khadya Suraksha Manch and Jal Bandhu Samiti.

#### Issues

Bauxite mining.

#### The Struggle

The major issue of concern here is the keenness of corporates like Balco and Sterlite to acquire land of the Gandhmaran mountain ranges for Bauxite deposits. The mountains are home to thousands of tribals who depend on the forest produce of their livelihoods. Mining will cause displacement of the tribals and will destroy the rich flora and fauna of the region. People are struggling to protect the mountain ranges on which depend their lives and livelihoods.

### 2.8.5 The Yatra at Kalahandi

27 January, 2012: Sewa Jagat Sansthan organised a public meeting.

28 January, 2012: A public meeting was organised at Bhawanipatnam by Kalahandi Bhumi Suraksha Samiti and Niyamgiri Bhumi Suraksha Samiti. Representatives from Dalit Sangh, Jungle Manch, Jansahajay, Jan Kalyan, Kartavya, Bharat Vanachal Vikas Parishad and Citizens Forum were present in the meeting.

### Issues

Claims for common property resources not granted; less land given to claimants; partial implementation of *Mo Jami More Dih*; claims under Forest Rights Act not implemented; inability of Dalits to file claims; non implementation of the PESA.

### The Struggle

People who depended on surrounding forests and mountains for their livelihoods filed a common property claim, which was rejected. The matter was taken to court and the court's verdict is awaited. In areas of the district where joint forest management exists, 126 common property claims were filed by communities and rights have been given on a mere 40-50 acres of land. In many cases less land has been given.

The programme *Mo Jami More Dih* that was designed through the efforts of Ekta Parishad has also not been implemented comprehensively by the government. Many people have received rights on residential land under this programme but the demarcation of land is yet to be done.

The government has given open access to industries and completely ignored the rights of the tribal community. In Kalahandi, 10,963 claims were filed. Of these, 9,193 claims have been accepted and claimants have been given 12,496 acres of land, while 657 claims have been rejected. Claims have not been accepted in view of industrial projects. In many villages of the Lanjigarh region, claims filed under the Forest Rights Act have not been accepted in view of the scheduled expansion of Vedanta Aluminium Company.

16.53 percent of the population in the state and 17.76 percent in Kalahandi district comprise Dalits. Inability to furnish proof of having cultivated forestland for the past 75 years has resulted in the denial of their rights under the Forest Rights Act.

### A Clash between Two Cultures

Two cultures stand opposite each other. One culture worships land, forests, rivers, mountains and animals while the other perceives all these as mere means of earning profits and wants to drive away the tribals so that they can exploit the land, forests and water sources for maximum profits. If we wish to fight these powerful robbers we have to become powerful because the weak cannot fight them.

In Palsapadam village, 20 tribal families had filed claims with all requisite proof. Two years since they filed claims, they have not received any information from the administration about their acceptance or rejection. Instead the claimants have been physically abused by the Forest Department. In village Harraguda in the Karlapat Sanctuary, 29 tribal families had applied for 120 acres of cultivated forest land. They did not receive more than 2 acres of land. Non implementation of the PESA is another reason for discontentment.

### 2.8.6 The Yatra at Lanjigarh

29 January, 2012: A public hearing was organised by Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti and attended by a large number of people from the Lanjigarh region.

### Issues

Tribals awaiting settlement of rights; land earmarked for mining; applications filed under *Mo Jami More Dih* not accepted.

### The Struggle

Almost 60 villages of the region, inhabited largely by people belonging to the Dogaria, Khutia and Majhi tribes, fall in the industrial and mining zone. At the same time more than 10,000 people belonging to the primitive tribe of Dongaria Kandh live in 112 villages spread across the Niyamgiri mountain ranges. All these communities are awaiting settlement over the land occupied and cultivated by them. Claims made by the communities for residential and cultivated land in the region have not been accepted by the administration. In Bid, 14 tribal families had applied for residential land under the *Mo Jami More Dih* scheme but



their applications have not been accepted till date. In Tudiguda, claims of 8 tribal families were pending at the sambhag level. Similarly no action has been taken on claims filed by families living in Kanugoda, Dhamaguda, Kolbali and Kendurdih villages. Instead a large segment of their land has been marked for Vedanta Mining Company.

### 2.8.7 The Yatra at Kandhamal

30-31 January, 2012: A rally and public meeting was organised by Antodaya Chetna Mandal, Jan Sahajay and Jan Vikas Sanstha at Kotagarh.

#### Issues

Displacement for wildlife protection; implementation problems in 'Operation Vasundhara'

#### The Struggle

More than 100 villages in this district have been displaced for protection of wildlife. 56,137 claims were filed under the Forest Rights Act in the district and of these 51,928 have been granted rights over 85,599 acres of land.

Claims for common property lands are not being entertained in the district. 'Operation Vasundhara' has not been implemented properly. 20 tribal families of village Mandelma which had applied under this scheme have received no response from the administration.

#### A Question

The country has been independent for only 65 years but the Dalits and other non-tribal forest dependent communities are being asked to furnish proof of 75 years of residence and cultivation. Is this not a violation of their constitutional rights?

### 2.8.8 The Yatra at Ganjam and Khurda

1 February, 2012: Ekta Parishad and Sabar Panchayat arranged a public meeting in which more than 200 tribals from 21 villages participated.

2 February, 2012: A discussion on land rights and status of Forest Rights Act was organised at Ekta Vidha Niketan, village Banpur with people's representatives. The second stop of the day was

Rambha of Ganjam district, where a public hearing was organized with Maha Mataysa Jivi Sangh.

#### Issues

No entitlement over land; displacement due to dam; claims over land not settled; problems faced by fishing communities.

#### The Struggle

25 tribal families of Guncchawari who have been cultivating a piece of land for many years and have submitted several applications have not received entitlements over land.

In Lubiyapada, 110 families were displaced by Dhanai Dam in 1962. These families had applied for land entitlements under Forest Rights Act but the authorities have not taken any action. In Bhaliyamal, out of around 50-55 families who had applied for land entitlement only a few have got land.

Fishing communities of the region are struggling with their own set of issues. While a thousand lakh rupees is collected by the government as annual revenue, no serious efforts have been made by the Chilka Lake Development Authority for development of the area. 30 years ago, the area of the lake was 1,180 square km which has now reduced to 709 square km. Lakhs of rupees is annually spent by the Lake Development Authority on tourism, while 60 percent of the marginal fishermen are homeless. Besides the communities are facing violence from the mafia. People are struggling for permanent rights for fishing and prawn culture and abolition of the annual lease system.

### 2.8.9 The Yatra at Puri

3 February, 2012: A public hearing was organised with the help of villagers and the Panchayat.

4 February, 2012: A meeting was organised by the Yard Organisation.

#### Issues

No entitlement to homes; control of mafia over Chilka Lake; traditional rights of fishermen undermined; landlessness; homelessness.

## The Struggle

60 families of the fishing community, living in Bhoisai for the last 50 years, have not received land entitlement for their homes. The land belongs to the Mahiprakash Math, which is now indirectly controlled by the land mafia and landlords. 5 years ago the fishermen earned their livelihood from Chilka lake. For the last 3 years, the lake has passed under the control of the mafia and residents of Bhoisai are unable to access the lake. The fishing community of the village have been left with no option but to migrate.

Gola village is inhabited by 150 Dalit fishermen families. Traditional rights of local fishermen of the area have been undermined by the government decision of 1994 to open another sea route. The mafia have captured the rights of the local fishermen. In 1997, 3 local fishermen were murdered which resulted in riots and locals were charged with false cases. In 2000, this mafia had cut the nets of traditional fisher me and damaged their crop. Today, the main issue in the region are the policies of Chilka Development Authority, which have increased the rights of non fishermen over traditional rights of fishermen community. In addition, the authorities are overlooking the rights of fishermen community in the name of tourism development.

There are 75 landless and homeless families living in Shakshi Gopal village since the last 30 years. None of the families have enough to eat. Villagers do not have work to earn livelihood.

### 2.8.10 The Yatra at Khurda

5 February, 2012: A public hearing was organised.

#### Issues

Inaction on applications filed under *Mo Jami More Dih*; ineligibility to file applications under Forest Rights Act; no entitlement to compensation for loss due to floods

#### The Struggle

Around 60 families of a village of Khurda district, who have been living in cashew nut plantations, have applied for land under the campaign *Mo*

*Jami More Dih*. No action has been taken on their applications. Another 50 families of the village are tilling 70 acres of land for the last 50 years but despite repeated applications, no action has been taken by the authorities. In Daman Bhumi village, around 65 families of Saura tribe have been cultivating government land for the last 22 years. But they cannot apply for entitlements under Forest Rights Act because the government has not issued Scheduled Tribe Certificates to them. The area is flood affected but cultivators do not get any compensation or help because the land is not in their names. In Warasingh, around 15 villages and 400 families are affected by floods. They have occupied government land, which they are cultivating, but their entitlements under Forest Rights Act have not been entertained due to non availability of caste certificates. They have not even received any compensation for the losses suffered due to floods.

### 2.8.11 The Yatra at Balgarh

6 February, 2012: A rally was organised by Ekta Parishad and its allies.

#### Issues

Ineligibility to avail schemes and file claims due to problems in obtaining caste certificates; restrictions imposed on collection of forest produce.

#### The Struggle

One of the biggest problems facing the Sabar community is obtaining caste certificates. Non availability of caste certificate renders the community members ineligible to file claims under the Forest Rights Act and avail other government schemes. Restrictions imposed by the Forest Department on collection of forest produce are another problem of concern in the region.

### 2.8.12 The Yatra at Bhubaneswar

6 February, 2012: At the first stop of the Yatra at Bhubaneswar around 50 organisations jointly organised a meeting at the Lohiya Academy to discuss the issue of land rights.

7 February, 2012: A meeting was organised by Prerna Samaj Sevi Sanstha.

### Opinions Voiced at Bhubaneswar

- Odisha civil society does not have able leadership due to which it is not able to come together to take peoples' issues forward.
- Civil society organisations will not be enough to bring about this change and there is a need to contact and dialogue with sensitive officials, media personnel, and students.
- All should join the movement for the rights of landless and marginalized by sidelining their ideological differences.
- Land reform is the only workable solution for this problem and it is necessary that the government accepts this logic.
- Government policies since the last 30 years are clearly against the tribals and the poor.
- 50 poorest districts of our country are tribal dominated and are full of natural resources. This shows that local resources have not been utilized for developing such regions.
- No effective measures have been taken to ameliorate the poverty of Kalahandi and Keonjhar districts.

#### 2.8.13 The Yatra at Cuttack

8 February, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was Manav Vikas Foundation. Thereafter, a hearing was organised at Centre for Legal Aid to Power (C.L.AP), Gandhipalli.

##### Issues

Inaction on applications filed under *Mo Jami More Dih*; the question of illegality of slums.

##### The Struggle

No action has been taken by the government on applications filed under *Mo Jami More Dih*. Only 258 habitations in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar have been accepted as residential slums. Out of these, 84 slums are in the process of settlement while others are in the category of illegal slums. In Gandhipalli, about 800 Dalit families have been living on a piece of land for the last 35 years. No action has been taken on their applications.

#### 2.8.14 The Yatra at Jagatsinghpur

9 February, 2012: A public meeting was organised by Navnirman Krishak Sangathan.

10 February, 2012: A public meeting was arranged by POSCO Struggle Committee at Dinkiya village, Jagatsinghpur.

##### Issues

Land acquisition; inaction on applications filed under *Mo Jami More Dih*; failure to get *patta*.

##### The Struggle

Resentment and struggle at Jagatsinghpur revolves around the issue of land acquisition. The very process of land acquisition has resulted in violation of human rights. There is no scope within the process for farmers to protest. Land acquisition for setting up industries in the coastal areas of Jagatsinghpur is also against Environmental Rights. Around 60 percent of the land in this region is conducive to two crops of paddy in a year. Besides there is large scale cultivation of *Betel* leaves in the region. Livelihoods of thousands are at stake. A major proportion of the land that has been given to the Korean Company, POSCO, was under cultivation for decades. Most families have been living on this land for the last six generations and had applied for land entitlement under Forest Rights Act. However, their applications have not been considered yet. Harassment of farmers by muscle men has been reported. A farmers' group has been formed to protest against land acquisition by POSCO and other multi-national companies.

In village Bahujan, twelve Dalits families have been living in huts made on government land for the last 40 years. They have filed applications under *Mo Jami More Dih* but till today, nothing has been done. In village Neelpur about two hundred landless Dalit families have been living for the last three generation out of which, about fifty families are living on zamindar's land while the rest are on government land. Despite filing applications to different government departments, they have not got the *patta* for homestead or agricultural land.

#### 2.8.15 The Yatra at Rajpur

11 February, 2012: A meeting was organised by Visthapan Virodhi Manch to pay tribute to the 14 tribals who were killed on 2 January, 2006 while opposing Tata Company. Later a Public meeting was organised by Kalinganagar Kisan Sangharsh Samiti.

## Issues

Acquisition of fertile agricultural land for industries.

### The Struggle

About 10,000 acres of land has been acquired by 9 iron companies in the belt between Kalinganagar and Dhangoji. The government had acquired 7,042 acres land for an industrial belt in 1992 and farmers were given Rs 37 thousand / acre by way of compensation by the Orissa Land Development Corporation. But now, this land is being sold at the rate of Rs. 15 to 25 lakh per acre. Though government records show that only 7,042 acres of land has been acquired, in reality more than 10 thousand acres has been acquired for industrialisation, and most of this land was a two crop agricultural land.

#### 2.8.16 The Yatra at Keonjhar

12 February, 2012: A discussion was organised by Keonjhar Suraksha Parishad and the Law College. The next stop of the Yatra was Jashipur of Mayurbhanj district. A public hearing was organized by CREPTA.

## Issues

Land acquisition for mining.

### The Struggle

*Juaam* and *Santhal* tribes live in the hill areas of the district and their livelihood is dependent on agriculture and forests. After independence, mining

work was started by the NMDC and NALCO. But in the last 10 years, about 1 lakh acres of land has been given for mining to BPLRT, POSCO, Vedanta, Arcelor Mittal, Essar, Jindal and many other companies. Lakhs of tones of iron ore, bauxite, cleome and manganese are exported to foreign countries from this district, every year. Due to excessive mining, local tribes, mostly Juang are struggling for their livelihood. There were originally about 56 villages of Juang tribes but now the number has reduced to 19.

### Voices

To what extent it is lawful to make the kings of the land, landless?

#### 2.8.17 The Yatra at Mayurbhanj

13 February, 2012: A meeting was organised for the students and the lecturers of the University.

It was said at the meeting that the objective of the education should be to reduce poverty and bring equality in society so that the energy of the youth can be utilized for the socio-economic upliftment of the poor. Hope was expressed that students will join the voluntary efforts under the guidance of learned professors. It was said that there was a need for youth to come forward in the social sector. The choice between an exploitative system produced by globalisation and the efforts made by the voluntary sectors for the socioeconomic upliftment of the poor will have to be made by the youth, it was said.

## 2.9 JHARKHAND

At the core of the myriad people's struggles in the state are various kinds of issues affecting the tribal population. Large tracts of land and forests have, over the years, passed out of their control. This has resulted not only in reduced opportunities for agriculture and employment, but also threatens to obliterate the very identity of tribal communities. Communities affected by development projects have received little or no compensation and rehabilitation packages have been woefully inadequate. Land acquisition by private companies has been done in complete disregard of objections raised by Gram Sabhas, turning a

blind eye to opposition by villagers. Claims filed under the Forest Rights Act have been turned down in large numbers. People of Jharkhand have been struggling against the proposed amendments to the *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act* and *Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act*. Landlessness, decrease in agricultural yield, displacement and drought have resulted in huge numbers migrating out of the state. Illegal mining is rampant in the state. The insensitivity of the government towards the rights and entitlements of tribals has been matched by the repression unleashed to crush people's movements.



## 2.9.1 The Yatra at Jamshedpur

14 February, 2012: A public meeting was organised at Jamshedpur by 'Gram Ganrajya Sanghatan'.

### Situation in the State

At the first public meeting organised to welcome the Jan Satyagraha Samwad Yatra in the state of Jharkhand, several issues affecting the state as a whole were highlighted. Tribal communities in the state have been struggling for long against the centralised system of land ownership. The existing system has ignored rights of tribal communities over common property resources. 15 districts of the state fall in the purview of tribal self-rule while the *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act* is operational in 11 districts and the *Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act* is operational in 6 districts. The objective of all these Acts is to give the tribal communities control over land, water and forests while establishing their self-rule.

People are struggling to re-establish the traditional and cultural rights of the tribal communities. Permissions for industry and mining have been given despite continuous opposition from Gram Sabhas. The Uranium Corporation of India Limited is doing extensive mining in the region of Eastern Singhbhum. For this no permission was sought from the Gram Sabhas and many villages were displaced without any rehabilitation plan.

The state government is working hand in hand with the corporations to put down all the movements for land rights while at the same time they have no inclination to implement the Samta Judgment given by the Supreme Court favouring the rights and claims of the tribal communities. In the industrial zones the displaced tribal people have not been given any jobs or livelihood options. On the other hand false cases have been filed against those who oppose the companies. In Eastern Singhbhum alone, more than 25,000 tribal families have been displaced till date to make way for industries and mines.

## 2.9.2 The Yatra at Singhbhum

15 February, 2012: The first halt of the Yatra was at village Samutola in the Jamshedpur region of Singhbhum district. A public hearing was organised by Jharkhand Mukti Vahini at the second halt. The next halt was at village Turambi followed by another halt at Chaibasa village of Eastern Singhbhum district where a public meeting was organised by Ichat Bandh

Virodhi Sangharsh Morcha, Johar Gram Ganrajya Sanghatan and Birsa Sanghatan.

### Issues

Proposed amendments to the *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act* and *Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act*; displacement from dams; mining and lakes.

### The Struggle

A Solid Waste Management Plant proposed on 40 acres of government land in village Samutola has aroused anger among the people. Activists allege that the entire decision making process regarding the plant was characterised by secrecy and a violation of democratic norms. The decision was taken despite written objections by the Gram Sabha. Villagers had registered their opposition against the Company during the preliminary survey carried out in 2011. Organised opposition by the villagers against the plant by Tetrattech India Limited resulted in false cases being registered against activists. In November 2011, the Gram Sabha again passed a resolution opposing the setting up of the plant and submitted the same to the district administration, but till date no action has been taken.

The treatment meted out to tribal villages for construction of the Dimna Jheel to provide drinking water to Jamshedpur town is symptomatic of the callous attitude of the administration towards tribals. 12 tribal villages displaced during the construction of the lake have not been resettled till date. The displaced communities have occupied 102 acres of land and are in constant dialogue with government for their settlement on this land. Many applications have been given to the Tata Company in this context, but till date no action had been taken. The villagers have begun an indefinite *dharna* on 13 February, 2012.

At village Turambi, 304 acres of land has been acquired for open cast mining by Uranium Corporation of India. This includes 28 acres of common property land belonging to village Turambi. Not only has the entire common property land of the village been acquired, the explosions have caused great damage and discomfort to the people living in the village. Houses in the village have developed cracks resulting from the constant blasting for mining. Submissions

made to the company have not elicited any response. False cases have been registered against protesters. A mockery has been made of the very concept of public hearing- one of them in 2011 was held in the campus of the company. All villages that were likely to be displaced as a result of the Ichat Dam rose in protest in 1991.

### 2.9.3 The Yatra at Chaibasa

16 February, 2012: The first halt of the Yatra was at the KRTC Center at Chaibasa village. Organisations which supported were Khudkati Bhumi Rayat Sangh, Yuvak Sangh and Johar Sanghatan. Many social activists participated.

#### Issues

Violation of High Court judgment directing government to implement *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act*; repression of people's movements.

#### The Struggle

Land related problems in this region have resulted from non-recognition of the traditional land laws and systems. The High Court in a judgment explicitly directed the government to implement the provisions of *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act*. The government has not taken any concrete action. Many mining projects have been given permission in violation of the *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act*.

In the Kolhan region, companies such as the Tatas, Essar and ACC cement were prevented from setting up their industries through empowered people's movements. However, since 2005 the state government and Government of India have colluded to deploy large battalions of armed forces in many areas including Sarang. This amounts to repression of people's movements. The government has initiated investigations against many people's organisations and functionaries have been implicated in false cases.

In village Abru, the government has given permission for mining on agricultural land, despite a resolution passed by the Gram Sabha. When the villagers filed a case against the government, many people were arrested and implicated in false cases.

### 2.9.4 The Yatra at Khunti

17 February, 2012: The Yatra reached Takbara region of Khunti district where a public hearing was organised by the Koyal Karo Jansanghatan. The second halt of the Yatra was at Tapkara village of Gumla district where Rehnuma Samajsewi Sanghatan organised a public hearing.

#### Issues

Power project; claims under Forest Rights Act not entertained by the state; land acquisition for dam; distributed *Bhoodan* land not registered in the name of new owners.

#### The Struggle

People have been struggling for very long against the Koyal Karo Hydel Power Project, which was commissioned in 1955-56. In 1984 Koyal Karo Jansangathan filed a PIL in the Supreme Court and in 1985 the Supreme Court in its judgment said that the construction of the dam would commence only after all displaced people were resettled. In 1986 the state government started deploying armed security forces in the region as a measure against the rising number of people's movements against the project. Women meanwhile took charge of the movement and in 2001 the villagers announced their intention to begin a non-cooperation movement. The administration deployed police force and without any prior notice started firing on the gathered crowd. 8 people died in the firing and 35 were seriously injured, while criminal cases were registered against 4000 people. The non-violent movement powered by the support of the local people continues to wage its struggle under the combined leadership of traditional Panchayats of the region.

The region of Tapkara falls in the Palkot Sanctuary area because of which the administration has not taken any action on the 1,700 claims that have been filed by the people under the Forest Rights Act. Proposals for claims on common property resources such as land and forests have also been submitted to the administration but so far no action has been forthcoming. Land belonging to 300 tribal families has been acquired for the Tapkara Dam but till date

all those whose land is going to be submerged have not been paid adequate compensation. At the same time the local people stand to gain nothing from the construction of the dam.

In 1986, 118 acres of *Bhoodan* land was distributed to the landless Dalit families but till date this land has not been transferred in their name leading to a growing sense of discontent among them.

### 2.9.5 The Yatra at Gumla

18 February, 2012: A public meeting was organised in Palkot region of Gumla district by Ekta Parishad.

#### Issues

Families displaced by the Palkot Sanctuary not resettled; claims under Forest Rights Act not settled.

#### The Struggle

The Palkot region is known for its dense forests and wild life sanctuaries. 3,000 tribal families were displaced for creation of the Palkot Sanctuary and till date not a single person has been re-settled. More than 400 families had filed claims from 140 villages but not more than 10 percent received any land. Approximately 40,000 families in the region are without shelter/homestead. They have applied for land for residence and agriculture but the administration has not taken any cognisance of their applications.

### 2.9.6 The Yatra at Gumla

19 February, 2012: The first halt of the Yatra was at Shaktiman Ashram established by Vikas Bharti in village Chingri of Gumla district. The second halt was at Vikas Bharti, Vishnupur and the third was at village Chormuda of Latehar district where a public meeting was organised by the Jansangharsh Samiti.

#### Issues

Construction of a field firing range.

#### The Struggle

The struggle in this region of the state is over a field firing range, which was proposed in 1962. In 1986 the government of Bihar began work on the proposal and notified the villages. In 1994 the Jansangharsh

Samiti organised people of more than 200 villages to start a movement against the firing range project. The project intended to displace about 2,50,000 tribal people from an area of 1,471 square kilometers largely inhabited by Uraon, Munda, Khairwar, Asur, Virhor and Korva tribes. In 1994 People's Union for Democratic Rights' also lent its support to the people to intensify their struggle. The Sangathan and the administration continued to be at loggerheads till 2006 when it was announced in the parliament that the project is being postponed. However the government of Jharkhand has not started the de-notification process till date. In the absence of such proceedings, the non-violent struggle for the people's rights continues.

### 2.9.7 The Yatra at Latehar and Palamu

20 February, 2012: A public hearing was organised by the Auranga Jalashay Doob Pariyojna Virodhi Manch, Gram Swaraj Abhiyan and Sajha Manch at village Khed of Barvadih region in Latehar district. A meeting of non-governmental organisations was organised by Sajha Manch at Daltonganj.

#### Issues

Construction of Auranga and Batane dams; illegal mining; no response to claims made under Forest Rights Act; migration; landlessness; and acquisition of land.

#### The Struggle

People have been unitedly opposing the construction of the Auranga dam. People of the villages that were going to be affected by the dam, were not given any information on the submergence area. The dam project will displace 50 villages. On 28 February, 1989, thousands of people joined the protest opposing the construction of the dam and the government of Bihar had to stop the project. This project was going to affect a large part of the Betala region that is a National Park. Even though work on the dam had been stopped the government has not given any official statement on the postponement of the project.

Extensive illegal mining of black stone and granite stone in the Betala National Park is another cause of concern. More than 50 crusher units are operational in the area. Illegal felling of trees by the forest mafia



in collusion with the Forest Department is common. Villagers who have dared to report these incidents have faced threats and aggressive assaults from the mafia.

While on the one hand claims filed under Forest Rights Act have not received any response from the administration, Forest Protection Committees have been involved in destruction of crops cultivated on occupied forestland. Claims from most villages in the buffer zone of Betala National Park have not been accepted by the administration. In the Hariganj and Chattarpur region, the Forest Rights Act has not been implemented effectively. Only 5 percent of the people were given claim forms in the Naudiha and Chattarpur region and even these received less land than they had claimed. In the Barvadih region, crops cultivated by the tribal families on occupied lands were destroyed by the Forest Protection Committees. Cultivators were sent to prison and the Forest Department forcefully planted trees on their land while at the same time their claims filed under Forest Rights Act received no response from the administration.

Large areas of the region have been affected by various government projects- 200 villages by the Betala National Park Project, 60 villages by the Netrahat Firing Range Project, 30 villages by the Kutku dam and 30 villages by the proposed Bhediya Sanctuary in the Mahua Dod Axi area. In a Scheduled Area of tribal self-rule, the implementation of any of these projects without the consent of the Gram Sabhas are an insult and an injustice.

Approximately 400,000 people migrate annually from the Palamu region. To a great extent this is because till date the government has not settled the rights of the tribal communities and the landless Dalit communities over occupied forest and government lands. The government has never made any serious attempts at land reforms. Land donated during the *Bhoodan* movement remains under the control of the landlords and a large number of land cases languish in the local courts without any resolution leading to wastage of money and lack of benefits to the people.

Construction of the Batane dam in 1980 led to the displacement of over 25,000 people who have not been re-settled till date.

The state government has signed MoUs with companies for land that belongs to the people. Gram Sabhas have not given their consent for such agreements. Land is being acquired in village Kajari for such companies as Jindal, Essar, Usha Machines and Abhijit. Similarly land is being acquired for various companies in more than 50 villages of Bataua of Harganj, Telipadih of Chattarpur and Jagdishpur region, Aabun of Haraiya Paki region and Telhar and Achleva of Sulvadiya and Chainpur region.

### 2.9.8 The Yatra at Palamu

21 February, 2012: A public hearing was organised by the Nilambar Pitambar Health and Education Research Center at village Sarja in Palamu district. The second halt of the Yatra was at Padwa Mod in Palamu district, where a dialogue was scheduled between the Jan Satyagraha team and the local MLA through the efforts of Sajha Manch. The last halt was at village Meral, where Sajha Manch organised a meeting with the villagers.

#### Issues

Acquisition of land by companies; frequent droughts; migration; illegal mining; corruption in MNREGA; non settlement of claims filed under Forest Rights Act; lack of educational facilities.

#### The Struggle

The struggles in this region are around various issues-acquisition of land for companies, frequent droughts, migration, illegal mining, corruption in MNREGA, claims filed under Forest Rights Act, and lack of educational facilities. Despite the Chotanagpur Agriculture Code the region has seen large-scale illegal mining for graphite and coal, while at the same time people who have been cultivating occupied lands for generations have been denied their rights. Droughts are a recurrent problem in the region and many farmers receive no compensation from the government. Huge subsidies have been given by the government to coal and power companies, whereas little has been done to provide relief to farmers in the face of drought. There is rampant corruption in MNREGA. More than 100,000 people migrate from this region. Local people have little to gain from the industrial and mining companies operating in the

region. Organisations like Nilambar Pitambar Health and Education Research Center working with tribals are being harassed by the state. At Padwa Mod, the Forest Department has planted trees on 600 acres of land that had been given in 1925 to the landless by the rulers of the Medni Kingdom. Touts and middlemen of a power company proposed in the area have been pressurising people into giving up their land.

The condition of women of landless families is deteriorating. They spend long hours collecting firewood from the dwindling forests and earn a mere Rs. 40-50 by selling it every day. Since there are no other job opportunities the women are forced to collect wood from the forests despite constant exploitation and threats from the Forest Department.

In Miral village, the struggle is against the acquisition of land by the Abhijit Industrial Group. Usha Martin is engaged in coal mining in Kajari. People of both villages are struggling to retain their land.

### 2.9.9 The Yatra at Hazaribagh

22 February, 2012: A public hearing was organised at village Keredari of Hazaribagh district by the Keredari Sangharsh Morcha. The second halt was at village Barkagaon where a meeting was organised by the Visthapan Virodhi Morcha. Another meeting organised at Janvikas Kendra in Hazaribagh was attended by the representatives of several organisations including Lok Samiti, Akhil Bhartiya Mahasangh and Ekal Nari Shakti Sanghatan.

26 February, 2012: The first halt of the journey was at Bishnugarh in Hazaribagh district where Sajha Manch organised a meeting of local leaders. The second halt of the journey was the Bermon region of Bokaro district where a meeting was organised by the Damodar Bachao Abhiyan. Senior social workers and members of Jal Biradari participated in the meeting.

#### Issues

Industrialisation and resultant land acquisition and displacement; ban on sale of land; claims under Forest Rights Act not accepted; destruction of livelihoods because of proposed development schemes; pollution; rejection of claims under Forest Rights Act.

## The Struggle

The main bone of contention in the Tandava region of Chatra district and Keredari region of the Hazaribagh district are the ongoing and proposed schemes of industrialisation. Proposed schemes in the region will result in complete loss of land for 76 Gram Panchayats leaving 20,000 farmers completely landless. Further, 5,000 acres of forestland and Gairmajruha land, where more than 3,000 landless/ homeless families live, has been earmarked for acquisition. Proposed schemes and projects will mean destruction of all livelihood opportunities for more than 80 percent of the people living in the region. More than 55 percent people in the belt are agricultural labourers and they are not entitled to compensation. Some of the displaced are going to be re-settled in village Gangura which is 32km away. The ban on the sale and purchase of land in the region has inconvenienced people and prevented them from being able to raise money through sale of land to meet requirements. Claims under Forest Rights Act have not been accepted. Applications for new ration cards, birth and caste certificates are also not being accepted. Small companies acting as fronts for larger companies are acquiring land and selling them to the larger companies. The mandatory public hearings for companies are used as pretexts to harass people. During the public hearing for village Keredari, criminal cases were registered against 23 people.

In the Karanpura pargana of Hazaribagh district, 35 companies have signed MoUs with the government for setting up industries for coal mining and power plants. Acquisition of fertile land for industrial units is a cause of immense concern in the region. At a public hearing for permission to an industrial unit organised at Hazaribagh Nagar Bhawan, people who raised objections were criminally charged and imprisoned.

### Women and Land

Ekal Nari Shakti Sanghatan has been trying to raise awareness on the issue of women's right to land. Sale and purchase of land without women's knowledge and consent results in their exploitation and makes them vulnerable. The organisation has been trying to ensure that women are given joint land ownership rights in the process of renewal of land records.

Pollution is a major problem in this region. The Bermon region of Bokaro district is one of the most polluted regions of the country. There are more than 1000 industrial units in the Damodar valley and all these units discharge their industrial waste and water into the Damodar river. As a result, the entire region faces acute shortage of fresh drinking water and an increase in skin and health problems has been observed. Despite several applications to the state government and to the Central Pollution Board no action has been forthcoming. Industrial units that were set in the Damodar valley in the 1960s and 70s have led to the destruction of more than 1000 villages and death of not only the Damodar river but also of many of its tributaries. Uncontrolled mining has depleted the forest resources and many villages have seen the water table recede beyond 500 feet. Another problem in the region is the rejection of claims filed under the Forest Rights Act.

### 2.9.10 The Yatra at Chatra

23 February, 2012: A public hearing was organised by the Sarvangin Vikas Kendra and Sajha Manch at village Karma in Itkhori tehsil of Chatra district. A meeting was organised at Hazaribagh in cooperation with Sajha Manch. Representatives from Gram Adhikar Abhiyan, Bhartiya Yuva Sanghathan, Udghosh, Gramin India, Adivasi Navkiran, Jago Foundation, Nidan Foundation, Navbharat Jagriti Kendra, Lok Samiti, and Adivasi Sewa Sansthan attended the meeting.

#### Issues

Lack of ownership rights for Dalits; no response to claims filed under Forest Rights Act; water scarcity; caste discrimination; lack of government support to small and cottage industries; land acquisition for coal mining and other projects.

#### The Struggle

A mere 25 percent of the Dalits in the region have ownership rights over land, whereas 75 percent of the Dalits are agricultural labourers who migrate in large numbers in search of livelihood. There is no response from the administration to 317 claims filed under the Forest Rights Act from the Karma and Itkhori Gram Panchayat. Water scarcity is a huge problem in the

region. According to official records only 16 percent of the land is irrigated. Nonetheless the government is not considering any schemes for increasing the area under irrigation. Caste based discrimination is rampant. The administration has not taken any action on the applications filed by the landless and homeless Dalits for land under the Forest Rights Act. In Mayapur, 82 families which have been cultivating land for twenty years have witnessed their claims under the Forest Rights Act being rejected.

104 cottage industries in Hazaribagh are on the verge of closure while the government is going ahead with its support to big industries in violation of the *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act* and *Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act*. In the Karanpura pargana, process of acquisition of about 8000 acres of agriculture land for coal mining is underway. Hundreds of acres of agriculture land is being acquired for Kodarma-Giridih Road Project, while in the very same areas settlement proceedings for land cultivated by more than 6000 Dalit families are still pending.

### 2.9.11 The Yatra at Giridih

24 February, 2012: A meeting was organised by the Sajha Manch at Bagodar in Giridih district. Next halt of the journey was at village Markacho in Kodarma district where a public meeting was organised by Sajha Manch.

25 February, 2012: The first halt of the journey was at village Dwarpehri of Giridih district where a meeting was organised by Janghosh Manch. The Yatra then stopped at village Paniadih of Giridih district where a public meeting was organised with the help of Dalit Manch, Pragati Kendra and Sajha Manch.

#### Issues

Land of the *Bhoodan* movement remains undistributed; people who have got land have not received land tenures; discrepancies in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme; claims under Forest Rights Act not settled; conditions laid down under Forest Rights Act are problematic; functioning of the Revenue Department in cases of encroachment; legal and illegal mining; land acquisition for railway station; poor compensation and subsequent decision to shift the site of construction; land acquisition for coal company; mining.

## The Struggle

Out of 21,00,000 acres of land donated in the undivided state of Bihar during the *Bhoodan* movement only about 2,00,000 acres of land has been distributed. Those who have received land, have not yet received ownership rights. 20,000 families in the district who were declared eligible for the *Bhoodan* land are yet to receive *pattas*. Conditions laid down in the Forest Rights Act for non-tribal communities are another problem. In the state as a whole, less than 1 percent non-tribals have been given land under the Forest Rights Act. For such occupiers the condition of producing proof of cultivation for three generations is unconstitutional since 75 years ago the British rulers did not give these occupiers any paper proof of cultivation of the occupied land. Of all the claims filed under Forest Rights Act, only about 11-12 percent have received a response from the government.

There are discrepancies in the implementation of the Employment Guarantee Scheme. In village Gharghuli, the leader of village keeps the job cards of all Dalit and tribal families under his control, while hired machines are carrying out all the construction work.

The manner of working of the Revenue Department in cases of encroachment over government land is disadvantageous for the landless. In cases of encroachment the Revenue Department goes by the judicial proceedings as a result of which the numbers of such cases are rapidly increasing in the courts. The Revenue Department is never likely to take any action against those who have encroached on government land and so it is never going to settle the rights of the landless people who actually have a claim on these lands.

Though only 1 percent of the population is tribal in Meghatarai village and other parts of the region more than 80 percent of the claims made by the tribal people have not been granted. Over the last 20 years more than 200 check dams have been built in the Kodarma region, but only 1000 hectares of land has been irrigated. There has been large-scale legal and illegal mining of mica in the region. Though most mines are located on tribal lands, the tribals have not gained from mines in anyway due to the apathy of the government.

In village Jaurasako, 13 acres of land was acquired by the Indian Railways for construction of a railway station. After construction work had begun people of the village were informed that due to political pressure the site for the station has been changed to a place 5 kms away from the village. The villagers have been sitting in *dharna* against this order. Those who lost their land in the acquisition received a pittance by way of compensation and now they are likely to lose the benefits of having a railways station in the village. The government has also banned the sale-purchase of all land in the region and people believe that this is an indication that this is a government ploy to give land to the companies.

In the region of Paniadif, land cultivated by tribal and Dalit families for over 200 years was acquired for Central Coal Field. After coal mining by the company commenced the villages were asked to shift to another site but a local movement opposing this move was started with the support of Jharkand Mukti Morcha and other people's organisations. People have raised their voice against displacement and asked for ownership rights in the mines. In a recent judgment the Supreme Court of India ordered the government to remove the encroachment by the company on the tribal and Dalit lands and the government has violated the court order. The government has also not informed people of their rights under the rehabilitation policy. Central Coal Field Ltd continues to mine even after the lapse of its lease. Mining by the company has destroyed more than 5000 acres of land belonging to the people across 15 villages without any provision for compensation and on the other hand the company has been able to provide employment to only 10 percent of the people who are eligible to get jobs.

### 2.9.12 The Yatra at Dhanbad

27 February, 2012: A meeting was organised by the Damodar Bachao Abhiyan and Arpan at village Murlidih in Dhanbad district. The next halt of the journey was at village Chinpur in Dhanbad district.

### Issues

Various problems of labourers working in mines; claims under Forest Rights Act not settled.

## The Struggle

Labourers working in the coalmines have been facing hardships since 2000. In the Mohda region of the district BCCL has been mining on 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 more than 60 percent population of the region does not have access to basic facilities. The Government's policies of privatisation and promotion of contract labour instead of regular employment lie at the heart of the struggle in the region. A labourer receives merely Rs120 after backbreaking toil of 10-12 hours and this in itself is a violation of the Minimum Wages Act. Cracks have appeared on agriculture and residential land and not a single company has filled up the mined pits with sand and gravel. This has led to increased number of accidents and is a major safety hazard for the people living in the region. Identity cards and safety equipment are not given to the workers before entry into the mines. There is no registration of the workers before they enter the mines because of which in case of accidents they cannot claim compensation from the companies.

At village Chinpur, 26 families had filed claims under the Forest Rights Act but only 4 families received 50 decimal land each. Besides, not a single person from the 20 tribal villages has received benefits of irrigation facilities from the Jharia Dam.

### 2.9.13 The Yatra at Jamtara

28 February, 2012: At village Nihijam of Jamtara district a meeting was organised by the Badlao Foundation and Sajha Manch. Ekta Mahila Manch and Sajha Manch held another meeting at village Dumaria.

#### Issues

Displacement for dam; coal mining; land acquisition for coal and power companies; no registration of land distributed during *Bhoodan* movement.

#### The Struggle

People displaced for the Maithan Dam in 1954 were not given compensation. The dam meant for irrigation and Hydel Power Generation is now being

seen as a resource for industrial units. In the Goda region the government of Jharkhand has signed MoUs with more than 25 coal mining and power plant corporations. Road construction work is on at full throttle to enable transport of coal from Gobindpur. Illegal coal mining is also on in the Nala region of Jamtara. None of the Gram Sabhas were asked their opinion on the setting up of these mining and power units and the industrial units have been given land in violation of the *Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act*. The project for road construction linking Dumka, Pakod and Sahabganj has been sanctioned. More than 20 coal and power companies are involved in purchase of land for their projects through middlemen and touts. Gram Sabhas have passed written resolutions against acquisition of agricultural land for projects. These objections have been put aside and the government has acquired more than 100 acres of agriculture land in village Dumaria alone. In 1967 *Bhoodan* land was distributed to 56 families in the village but till date there has been no registration or demarcation of the land leading to feelings of immense anger among the people.

### 2.9.14 The Yatra at Dumka

29 February, 2012: The first halt of the journey was at village Majdiha in Dumka district where a meeting with villagers was organised by Sajha Manch. The last halt of the journey was at Ramraj Ashram in Devgarh district. A conference was organised by the Gandhi Vichar Manch.

#### Issues

Attitudes towards traditional systems of governance of the tribals; transfer of land; repression and violence against social workers.

#### The Struggle

One of the core issues of struggle here is the contemptuous attitude of the administration towards traditional systems of governance, despite the fact that this is a Scheduled Area. Over the years, large tracts of tribal land have been transferred.

Harassment of social workers and violence against them is another problem. Social workers face repression both from dissatisfied Gram Sabhas and the corruption ridden administrative system.

## 2.9.15 The Yatra at Deoghar

1 March, 2012: The first halt of the journey was at village Madrensari, where a public hearing was organised by the Ekta Mahila Manch and Sajha Manch. Members of Zilla Parishad participated in the meeting. The next halt was at Budai Gaon in the Madhupur region where a meeting was organised by the Sajha Manch and other local organisations. Senior social workers participated in the meeting.

### Issues

Landlessness; final settlement of *Bhoodan* land pending; objection against land marked for the Dalmia Power Plant Limited; land grabbing by the land mafia; claims of tribals under Forest Rights Act not settled; proposed amendment to the *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act*; security of people's organisations and social workers.

### The Struggle

More than 60 percent of the families in this region are landless. Final settlement of the *Bhoodan* land distributed to 26 families in 1968 is still pending. Only 12 percent of the land in the region is irrigated because of which marginal farmers and agricultural labourers are forced to migrate to neighbouring states. Dalmia Power Plant Limited has marked 1000 acres of land for an industrial unit. The Gram Sabha passed a resolution against the setting up of the plant 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.

In Deoghar district only 13 percent of the population is tribal and even the claims of this small group have not been settled. Despite several government schemes that have been announced, the population of the Pahadia tribe is dwindling in the absence of basic services. People are apprehensive about the fact that the proposed amendment to the *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act* is intended to enable uncontrolled transfer of lands to the mining and industrial corporations.

People are struggling to raise the issue of security of people's organisations and social workers. Large numbers of activists in the region have become victims

of state repression. Attempts are also being made to silence the voices of people's movements through such draconian laws as the Special Securities Act.

## 2.9.16 The Yatra at Ranchi

2 March, 2012: A 'People's Parliament' was jointly organised at Ranchi by many social groups. The local MLA of the region participated.

3 March, 2012: On 3 March a joint dialogue session for the people's organisations of three states (Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh) was organised by Sajha Manch and Ekta Parishad at Ranchi.

### Issues

Various issues affecting tribal populations.

### The Struggle

Several issues were raised at the 'People's Parliament'. One of the major issues that was highlighted was the non-implementation of pro-poor laws such as the *Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act*, *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act*, Tribal Self-Rule and Forest Rights Act. Tribal people's organisations are opposing the proposed amendment to the *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act*. Tribal population in the region has been most affected by industrialisation and mining. 'Operation Green Hunt' has created an environment of fear and terrorism in Saranda and other regions of Jharkhand and tribals are being forced to move out of these resource rich areas. In the Karnpura pargana, thousands of farmers are collectively fighting against National Thermal Power Corporation (N.T.P.C.) and other coal mining projects of the government. Touts and middlemen hired by the corporations are using violent means to grab land from the poor and the administration has failed to take any action. Gram Sabhas in the entire state have vehemently opposed the setting up of industries and mines both on ethical and legal grounds. People are struggling against the Land Acquisition Act.

### Voices from three States: Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh

In the Indian Parliament 140 MPs from tribal and Dalit dominated regions have been unable to unite against the anti poor policies of the government and on the other hand MLAs from established

industrial houses are visibly supporting the creation of an exploitative system. People's organisations in the states of Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh should unite against the anti-poor policies of the state governments.

In Odisha the land settlement system has given rise to many disputes. In the tribal dominated western regions of the state, the process has been ridden with lapses and unlawful practices. People's organisations should unite to create pressure for the establishment of small-scale industries run by the local people.

In Jharkhand, companies such as the Tatas and others are in possession of more than 25,000 acres of acquired land that has never been used by them. These lands should be ceased from these companies and distributed among the landless. The forest area in Jharkhand is rapidly shrinking because of industrialisation and mining and this has negatively impacted on the lives of those who are dependent on the forests for their survival and livelihood. Jharkhand has had a tradition of powerful people's movements because of which even though the government has signed 114 MoUs with Companies, none has been able to start a project. The government needs to rethink its policies and actions otherwise the dream of a tribal state would remain incomplete.

Since 1995 amendments have been made to the in the *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act* to promote industries and urbanization and this is a violation of the treaty that was made with the tribal society almost 100 years ago.

The state governments in the newly formed states of India are promoting and protecting land mafias.

In Chhattisgarh almost 100,000 acres of agriculture land belonging to 120 villages has been acquired by the government and the land mafia in the name of creation of a new state capital called Naya Raipur.

The Human Rights Commissions in all the three states are non-functional and there is no respite for activists from state repression. The state governments are rapidly losing their moral right to govern. The state's aggressive stance against social activists is the biggest challenge to the democratic values of the country.

### 2.9.17 The Yatra at Pakund

5 March, 2012: The first halt of the journey was at village Fatehpur Aamkhori in Pakund district where a public meeting had been organised by Sajha Manch and Jharkhand Vichar Parishad. The last halt of the

journey was at village Pakudia where a public meeting had been organised by the Gram Jyoti Sansthan. Supporting organisations included Jharkhand Vikas Parishad.

## Issues

### Mining

### The Struggle

32 villages have been marked for coal mining in the region. In Anjari, Siprihari and Kadaldih mining has been going on for the last 10 years. Large-scale coal mining in the region in violation of the *Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act* has resulted in pollution and decreased yields per acre. For the last six years mining has been done on almost 2000 acres of land by the N.N. Company. Unabated coal mining and its transportation are responsible for immense pollution in the region and this has also affected agriculture, leading to decreased yields per acre. In 1997 land acquisition started in violation of the resolutions passed by the traditional Panchayats and in 2002 mining was started by N.N. Company. For many of these projects public hearings were not held and criminal charges were filed against protesters. Mining has also resulted in pollution and 80 percent of the people in the region suffer from pollution related illnesses. Middlemen harass organisations that raise their voice against pollution and the fact that environmental assessments have not been done for hundreds of industrial units operating in the region. More than 50 percent of the forests have been destroyed for mining, industry and road projects. In 1933 Pakud district had 68 percent forest cover but now this has reduced to a mere 8 percent. The mining industry has adversely affected the health and security of the women in the region. Road accidents in the entire mining region are a common cause for loss of life and property.

The region has seen violation of the *Santhal Pargana Kastkari Law*. People are fighting against the amendments proposed by the government to the *Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act*. Claims under Forest Rights Act have not been accepted. In village Phuljhingri, 57 percent families are landless, but not a single claim filed under the Forest Rights Act has been accepted.

## 2.10 WEST BENGAL

The ground-breaking land reforms initiated in the state of West Bengal to provide legal protection to *Bargadars* (sharecroppers) from eviction has failed to ameliorate the condition of *Bargadars* in several corners of the state. *Operation Barga* has lost its lustre. Landlessness has increased

in pockets of the state and the situation is made worse by the non-availability of adequate labour work in villages. Claims filed by *Santhal* families under the Forest Rights Act have not been settled. Labourers working at tea gardens have been fighting for their rights over land.





### 2.10.1 The Yatra at Birbhum

6 March, 2012: A public meeting was organised.

#### Issues

Land entitlement; problems in Bataidari; non availability of labour work; migration.

#### The Struggle

Around 30 families settled by the then king of the princely estate (*Riyasat*), who have been living in the village for the last hundred years, continue to struggle without any entitlements to the land they have been cultivating, more than sixty years after independence. The lands on which their houses are built also do not belong to them. Only about 50 percent of the families in the village get labour work for 6 months while others are forced to migrate for work. Most families in the village engage in contract agriculture. As *Bataidaars* (partners/shareholders), they get 1/3rd of the produce, but at the time of loss and crop failure, no share is given to *Bataidars*. The Bargadar Law does not cover them as they get contracts only for one crop.

### 2.10.2 The Yatra at Murshidabad

7 March, 2012: A meeting was organised by Bengal Sarvodya Mandal and Bengal Silk and Khadi.

#### Issues

Failure to give permanent rights to tillers under *Bargadari*; increase in landlessness.

#### The Struggle

The struggle in this part of the state is against the weak implementation and non-implementation of *Operation Barga*. The objective of giving permanent rights on land to the tiller has been diluted and political parties have taken undue advantage of the process of land reforms. The entire process has been reduced to a politically motivated campaign. Besides, in places like Bolpur, land belonging to temples and religious trusts has escaped *Operation Barga*. *Bargadars* have mostly not received permanent rights on land. The number of landless has increased steadily in the state. There are around 10,000 landless in Birbhum and Murshidabad district alone. Adding

to the problem of landlessness is the fact that over the last ten years the security fabric built for the protection of the landless has been completely disrupted. As a result there is large-scale migration from the district.

### 2.10.3 The Yatra at Malda

8 March, 2012: A joint meeting was organised by Vishnupur Palli Mangal Samiti and the villagers.

#### Issues

Inaction on claims filed by *Santhal* families under Forest Rights Act.

#### The Struggle

No action has been taken on the claims filed by around 2000 *Santhal* families under the Forest Rights Act. Neither has any action been taken on their applications for traditional Manjhi than (a place of worship for the *Santhal* tribes). The struggle here is for rights over lands, which these families have been cultivating for the last four decades. These *Santhal* families were given land by the local *Riyasats* before independence but their rights still await settlement.

### 2.10.4 The Yatra at Jalpaiguri

9-10 March, 2012: Centre for Development Human Initiative organised a dialogue.

#### Issues

Land rights of Ghuppa tribes; exploitation and land rights of tea garden labourers.

#### The Struggle

Ghuppa tribes from adjoining areas of Bhutan who settled in the region have been deprived of their land rights. Tea garden labourers are struggling for their identity. About 5000 Nepali and Rabha tribal families in the region are landless. In 14 tea gardens whose lease term has expired, local labourers are fighting for their land and homestead land rights. Oraon and *Santhal* tea garden labourers have been mostly denied their land rights. With the closure of tea gardens, these labourers are migrating to the neighbouring states. They are being exploited in the payment of

wages. They are given Rs 60-67 per day, while in the Darjeeling area the daily wage rate is Rs. 90.

### **2.10.5 The Yatra at Cooch Behar**

11 March, 2012: A meeting was organised by Gitaldha Gram Vikas Samiti and Simant Krishak Sangh.

#### **Issues**

Floods; struggle for a dam.

### **The Struggle**

About 200 families that lost their land have relocated to this village. Due to floods, these families can grow crops only in winters. The main crops of the area are rice, maize and tobacco. Applications have been submitted to the district and state administration for building a dam on the river so that the farmers can use excess water to grow two crops.

## 2.11 ASSAM

One of the major problems confronting marginal farmers in the state of Assam is the absence of relief and compensation in face of flood related crop destruction. Indiscriminate felling of trees and destruction of forests poses a serious threat to the livelihood of communities dependent on forest produce for their livelihood. The Forest Rights Act has not been implemented seriously, as a result

of which large numbers of cultivators do not have rights over land. Labourers working at tea gardens have borne the brunt of exploitation for hundreds of years. Little has been done to provide them with basic infrastructure. Those protesting against a dam in a highly active seismic zone have been crushed by the use of force. Many others displaced by dams are awaiting proper resettlement.



“There is a huge difference between the eight north-eastern states and the other states of India. This is not only due to geographical differences and cultural diversities but also due to political reasons. Since 1962, the northeastern states have found themselves separated from mainstream politics. Natural resources of Assam and other states have been extensively exploited. Oil from Assam is being taken to oil refineries outside of state like Barauni in Bihar. Despite 65percent of total tea production in the state, Tea Board and auction wholesale markets are set-up in Kolkota. 168 dams are being constructed in the state to supply power to industrial units established in other states of the country. On the one hand, autonomous councils have been given constitutional rights, while on the other armed forces have been given special powers. These are the reasons for regional imbalance. Local people are increasingly becoming aware and are demanding their rights. In reality, natives of northeast are followers of tribal cultures as well as of Shankar Dev, Madhav Dev and Azaan Fakir who were always against violence. In the last 50 years, all violent struggles in the region have failed. None of these groups has done any constructive work. As a result, people do not have faith in these organisations.

In order to understand the voice of the northeast in real, it is necessary to go back to history. The first farmers’ struggle in India took place in Pathru in 1894. Unfortunately, the common man of the country does not know this fact. The common man is still unaware of the cultural and political history of Manipur. Northeastern states have always considered themselves to be part of undivided India. It is therefore the responsibility of Indians to understand the feelings of the people of these states and give recognition to their rights so that new ways of peace and development can be chartered collectively for these states.”

### 2.11.1 The Yatra at Dhubri

12 March, 2012: The Yatra reached Halakura of Dhubri district, where it was welcomed by Shanti Sandha Ashram.

13 March, 2012: A meeting was organised by Shrimant Shankar Dev Sewa Sangh in village Gouriganj of Dhubri district.

#### Issues

Deforestation; livelihoods threatened due to destruction of forests; flood; lack of government policy on floods; land erosion.

## The Struggle

This is a flood-affected area where most 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. The state lacks a clear compensation plan for floods. Uncontrolled exploitation of forest resources in the last few years has resulted in untold hardships for communities dependent on forest produce. Landlessness has increased over the years. Land erosion is the biggest danger to agriculture in these areas. Besides, immigration from neighbouring countries has created an imbalance of sorts and caste based violence is on the rise. Another major problem of the Northeastern states is the absence of a people- centered water policy. Drying up of rivers has adversely affected agriculture and irrigation projects.

In bordering Bodo land areas, large scale illegal felling of trees has resulted in loss of livelihood for the forest dwellers of the neighbouring Kokrajhar district. Due to illegal felling of trees, there has been a decline in collection of forest produce. The involvement of the forest mafia in deforestation is an issue of concern.

### 2.11.2 The Yatra at Barpeta, Nalbari and Darang

14-15 March, 2012: Satra and Krishak Unnayan Sangh called a meeting at Barpeta. The next stop of the Yatra was Nalbaadi on March 15. The Yatra then stopped at village Cepajahhar of Darang district.

#### Issues

Land acquisition; landlessness; non-implementation of the Forest Rights Act; no clear compensation policy for crops destroyed by recurrent floods.

## The Struggle

The agitation in the Barpeta region of the state is over the purchase of 4000 *bighas* of land by an Australian company. None of the villagers were informed about this transfer of land. Though land has been given for construction of homes through the Bodo Autonomous Council, 30 percent of the tribals in the region are still landless. Approximately 15,000 *Bodo* families would have rights over their land if

the Forest Rights Act were seriously implemented. Nalbari is famous for rice cultivation but due to floods, about 35 percent of the crops get destroyed every year and the state government has declared no clear compensation policy.

In Cepajahhar of Darang district, the government has not shown any interest in the development of agriculture.

### 2.11.3 The Yatra at Tezpur (Sonitpur)

16 March, 2012: A public meeting was organised by organisations which work in tea gardens.

#### Issues

Living and working conditions of labourers at tea gardens.

#### The Struggle

The struggle here is over the living and working conditions of labourers in tea gardens. Infrastructure, especially health services, is woefully inadequate. The average age of a tea garden worker is only 50 years. Death of workers due to poor health services is common. There are about 60 tea gardens in Tezpur, where primarily labourers belonging to the Santhal and Oraon tribes of Jharkhand work. 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.

There are more than 1000 tea gardens in the region, on which around 70 lakh people are dependent for their livelihood. About 120 years ago the British brought 80 percent of the tea garden workers from neighbouring states. There was a written agreement between the tea garden owners and the labourers and about 100 acres of land was kept aside for cultivation and construction of homes. Labourers were told that they would be given livelihood and social security provisions as permanent labourers. Though the lease of ITPL Company, Samaguri, has expired, about 80 families are living on the land owned by the Company. Despite dialogue with the Company and the government at various levels, the demands of these families have not been accepted.

### 2.11.4 The Yatra at Sonitpur

17 March, 2012: A public meeting was organised by Kokila Vikas Asharam.

The Kokila Vikas Asharam is working on issues of women's empowerment in about 50 villages in the area. They are giving training on cottage industries for economic empowerment in addition to awareness building.

### 2.11.5 The Yatra at Narayanpur and Lakhimpur

19 March, 2012: A meeting was organised by Kasturba Gandhi National Trust in village Padampur.

20 March, 2012: A public meeting was organised in Lalibahar village by the villagers.

The Yatra reached Ghaghar where Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti organised a meeting. The next meeting was organised by People's Movement for Swarnasiri Brahmaputra nadi Ghatiin Shetra. The next halt was at Dhemaji district where Marwari Samaj organised a public meeting.

#### Issues

Flood; Use of armed forces to suppress protest against dam.

#### The Struggle

The release of water from the dam in Arunachal Pradesh creates flood in the villages of these area and causes widespread destruction of crop and livestock. Thirty-five persons have reportedly lost their lives.

Construction of the proposed dam in this highly active seismic zone has resulted in a lot of opposition by the people. Despite concerns raised by protesters over the possibility of death and destruction in the event of an earthquake, the government is pushing ahead with its plan of constructing the mega dam by using armed forces to suppress the protest.

In Tatibahar village, seasonal vegetables and fruits are no longer produced due to construction of the dam. Livelihoods have been adversely affected due to excessive level of water in this area for the last 5-7 years.

In Ghaghardam, construction has been underway

for the last 8 years. The breach in Swarsiri river dam in 1992 caused thousands of deaths and created fear among the villagers. Despite people's protest, the government has not stopped construction of the dam.

95 percent of the area is going to be affected by the construction of dam in Debang, Siang and Swarnasiri of Arunachal Pradesh. The government has decided to pay compensation only to 70 families of Arunachal Pradesh while it has no compensation plan for the 70,000 families in Assam that are likely to be indirectly affected. Despite a report by scientists in 2006-07, another one by a group of MLAs in 2010, and an order by the Wild Life Board in 2011, the government started construction in 2012. The Indian Army has put up its camp at the site of dam construction and the police are getting trained to stop protesters.

### 2.11.6 The Yatra at Dibrugarh

21 March, 2012: A meeting was organised by Sarvoday Mandal and Shanti Sadhana Ashram.

#### Issues

Land acquisition; industrialization; landlessness and homelessness.

#### The Struggle

At Dibrugarh the struggle is against industrialisation and land acquisition both of which have increased landlessness and homelessness. In Guwahati and Barpeta, large scale land acquisition has taken place over the last 10 years in the name of industrialisation. Lower Assam is likely to be affected by the construction of several dams.

### 2.11.7 The Yatra at Tinsukia

22 March, 2012: A public meeting was organised at Kakapathar by Sarvodaya Mandal and Ekta Parishad.

#### Issues

No compensation to displaced villagers; exploitation of small tea growers; land acquisition; violence by the police.

### The Struggle

People displaced from a few villages due to the construction of a dam have not received any compensation. People of Dirak Chumani area were displaced due to construction of a dam in 1992. Nirak, Mukh and Majhuli villages were displaced around the same time. These three villages have still not received any compensation.

Exploitation of small tea growers by tea planters owning large tea estates and tea processing factories is another issue of concern in the region. They are being forced to sell their leaves to the factories at prices, which are far lower than the market rate.

In 2007, land was acquired from 5000 families for construction of the national highway. They were never given any compensation and are now living both without homes and livelihoods. Their situation is made worse by heavy police patrolling. Killing of social workers by police forces has been reported. Students and farmers have been unfairly arrested.

### 2.11.8 The Yatra at Sivasagar

23-24 March, 2012: A public meeting was organised at Nitan Pukri village by Srimanta Shankardev Seva Sangh.

Srimanta Shankardev Seva Sangh commended the efforts of Ekta Parishad for fighting for the land rights of the landless. It blamed globalisation for the increased rate of urbanisation and industrialization, thereby causing land acquisition.

### 2.11.9 The Yatra at Sivasagar

24 March, 2012: A meeting was called by villagers in Saalmada village of Sivasagar.

#### Issues

Non-entitlement to compensation due to absence of land rights.

#### The Struggle

Some 2,500 people of Falmoria, Kamarporia, Jobania and Sentoaoare affected every year by floods of the Dikhow river. In 1947 the Assam government made a canal for water release. Now, due to changing course of the river, these canals are expanding and siltation

has begun which has disrupted the lives of around 500 families living on the sides of the canal. They are not entitled to compensation for the loss of crops and livestock since they do not have permanent land rights. They are collectively demanding reconstruction of this canal and houses for the homeless.

### 2.11.10 The Yatra at Jorhat

25 March, 2012: A public meeting was called by Senior Citizens Forum.

At the meeting at Jorhat, non-violence was stressed as the key to success. The example of Mahatma Gandhi led freedom struggle was cited and confidence was expressed in the Jan Satyagraha led non-violent movement.

### 2.11.11 The Yatra at Silchar

30-31, March 2012: Rajiv Gandhi Sansthan organised a meeting which was supported by Barak Human Rights Protection Committee.

#### Issues

Displacement and loss of livelihood; dam construction in seismic zone; rights of labourers at tea gardens.

#### The Struggle

This region is affected by construction of dam on Barak river. A large number of people have been displaced and left without any livelihood options. Moreover, in the name of Jatropha and rubber plantation, huge tracts of land are being acquired, resulting in further displacement and loss of livelihoods. Construction of a dam in this seismic zone is a threat to the lives of the people.

5000 hectares of land was transferred in the name of tea gardens and the government has not shown any interest in addressing the rights violations of the labourers at the gardens.

### 2.11.12 The Yatra at Guwahati

1, 2 and 3 April, 2012, Guwahati: A conference of local NGOs was organised by Shanti Sadhana Ashram.

North Eastern states have a long history of being meted out with discrimination in matters

of development activities. But at the same time extraction of natural resources is going on at a tremendous speed, leading to large-scale land acquisition causing massive displacement and loss of livelihood.

### 2.11.13 The Yatra at Barpeta

4 April, 2012: Barxetri Unnayan Samiti organised a public meeting.

#### Issues

Immigration and deforestation.

#### The Struggle

The major issue in this region is immigration of labourers from the Indo-Bangladesh border, which is putting immense pressure on the limited land available for cultivation. Indifference of the government towards addressing this issue has made the situation worse. Moreover, destruction of forest-by-forest mafia is depleting the forest cover of the region.

### 2.11.14 The Yatra at Chirang

5 April, 2012: A.N.T.S organised a meeting and a rally.

#### Issues

No rehabilitation for Bodos; denial of claims under Forest Rights Act; industrialisation; pollution; land acquisition.

#### The Struggle

In the year 2003, Bodo land Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD) was formed consisting of the 4 districts of Chirang, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Udalguri. The Bodos who were displaced during the Bodo-Santhal conflict during the nineties, have not been rehabilitated. They have been denied land rights under Forest Rights Act. Bodos have been fighting to get caste certificates. Due to industrialisation and pollution, medicinal plants and agriculture have been affected. The government recently acquired 10 acres of land in the name of a new airport and a Knowledge City. Student units have submitted several applications to the government but these have not been heard.

## 2.12 MANIPUR

In course of the three day visit of the Yatra to the state of Manipur, the problem of insurgency related migration to the valley areas and the increase in competition over resources due to this movement of populations was stated to be a major concern. Generation of employment opportunities for the youth is commonly held as a solution to many of

the problems faced by the state. The other issue that was broached was homelessness of the Manipuri Muslims.

### 2.12.1 The Yatra at Thoubal

27 March, 2012: IRDPD and Gandhi Institute of Rural Development organised a meeting.





The state of Manipur has been crippled because of prolonged insurgency. Providing employment opportunities to the youth is one possible way out of the present situation in the state. The government has never seriously considered this. Migration of people from insurgency affected hill areas to relatively safer, but very small, high population density valley areas has resulted in tension between the migrant and the original population.

### **2.12.2 The Yatra at Imphal**

28-29 March, 2012: A meeting was organised by Ekta Parishad and some local associations.

## **Issues**

Homelessness.

### **The Struggle**

Apart from the problems discussed in Thoubal, the issue of homelessness was stated to be a major problem affecting the region. A large section of the population in Imphal is homeless. The homeless population comprises primarily of Manipuri Muslims who work as wage labourers. Repeated attempts by social service organisation to get the government to address the issue of homelessness of these marginalised sections of society has not yielded any result.

## 2.13 ARUNANCHAL PRADESH

People of the state are waging a struggle against construction of mega dams. Anger has been brewing over the displacement of people because of dams, the risk to their lives and the undemocratic, non-consultative manner in which the decisions regarding the dams have been taken.

### 2.13.1 The Yatra at Itanagar

18 March, 2012: A meeting was organised by Rashtriya Yuva Yojana and some other local organisations.

#### Issues

Protest against mega dams.

### The Struggle

Besides large scale deforestation and environmental degradation, people here are struggling against construction of mega dams which will not only cause large scale displacement but also poses a major threat to the lives of people, as this zone is highly earthquake prone. Resentment in the state against mega dams is also over the fact that the decision to construct these dams has been taken without consulting people.



## 2.14 BIHAR

One of the biggest land related problems afflicting the state of Bihar is the failure at the distribution of *Bhoodan* land. Thousands of acres of *Bhoodan* land meant for distribution among the landless remain undistributed till date due to lack of a political will and administrative dilly-dallying. Where land has been allocated to needy landless families, possession is still with powerful landlords. The landless and the poor in several pockets within the state have been migrating out in search of livelihood. Communities for which flood related destruction and death has become a way

of life have failed to find a place on the state road map for compensation and rehabilitation. In the struggle over land in the state of Bihar, powerful landlords get away with gruesome revengeful actions as for instance the burning of homes of Dalits.

### 2.14.1 The Yatra at Kishanganj

6 April, 2012: The Yatra reached village Farimbola in Kishanganj where Rashtriya Nonia Mahasangh, Vanbhumi Adhikar Morcha, Musahar Vikas Manch, Majdoor Kisan Samiti, Vanvasi Kalian Ashram,



Janjagaran Shakti Sangathan, Lok Parishad, Anushuchit Jati/Janjati Suraksha Sangharsh Samiti pledged their support.

7 April, 2012: Rampur Derakaj, Kishanganj; Bhajanpur Parpitgunj, Araria; Asokapur. Izad Sangathan, Janjagaran Shakti Sangathan, Anhad pledged support to the Yatra.

### Issues

Landlessness; forceful acquisition of land of SCs/STs; *Bhoodan* land and personal land of the *Santhals* appropriated by tea estates; land transfer to Aligarh Muslim University; human trafficking; migration and displacement; land acquisition for industry; death due to police firing.

### The Struggle

The Nonia community constitutes about 8 percent of the population of Bihar and 80 percent among them have been disadvantaged socially and economically and are landless. They have been denied reservations, which is their constitutional right. A memorandum was given to the government but it went unheard. Before independence tribal families were living in Kishanganj along with tea garden workers. More than 100 families were allocated land during *Bhoodan* movement. According to Purnia commissionaire records, 30,000 acres of *Bhoodan* land has been given to the landless. Till date however, 40 percent of the tea gardens are located partially on *Bhoodan* land. Tea garden estates have captured personal lands of the *Santhals*.

There has been little progress in implementation of the Forest Rights Act. Majority of the 700 Santhal families living in the region are landless. On 27 March, 2010, the Bihar government leased out 243 acres of land of Mojla Chakla – Govindpur to the Aligarh Muslim University for three years on atokenistic amount of Rs. 10/- and Rs. 1/- of annual tax. Due to this land transfer, approximately 200 SC and ST families have become landless and unemployed. 51 people were arrested when villagers collectively protested against the district and state administration.

Human trafficking is a major concern in the region. 65 percent of the families are either marginal farmers or landless. Because of inadequate irrigation facilities,

70 percent of the people migrate for employment. More than 15 percent of the population comprises Dalits (*Musahars* and *Chaupals*) who live on *Bhoodan* land and on the riverbanks. People are never given compensation for crop failure.

### 2.14.2 The Yatra at Araria

8 April, 2012: The Yatra reached Baijnathpur Binoba Bhave Nagar and Dabrawa of Araria. Janjagaran Shakti Sangathan, Harijan Adiwasi Kalyan Sangh, *Bhoodan* Samiti, Sarvodyay Ashram and *Bhoodan* Yagya Committee extended their support and organised a public meeting.

### Issues

Forgery by *Pradhan*; *Bhoodan* land under control of land mafia; inability of the eligible to occupy *Bhoodan* land; land acquisition; landlessness.

### The Struggle

34 Dalit *Musahar* families of Binova Bhave Nagar had captured 6 acres of land and built their homes on this land. After a long struggle in 2011 each family was allocated 10 to 15 decimal lands. 173 acres of land has been allotted to *Musahars* to build their houses in the neighbouring village Jay Prakash Nagar. This land has been given to the mafia by forgery of the village *Pradhan*.

During *Bhoodan* land distribution, Purnia district had received 27,639 acres of land. Till now 13,004 acres remain unused. During the hand over of *Bhoodan* land, names of the entitled persons were not checked and corrected by the government because of which several eligible persons could not occupy their land. The government is now misusing this land for different projects and giving it to the mafia. In Jagheli village, people have been evicted from their land.

In Bhajanpur and Parpitganj village, the land of around 3000 people has been forcibly acquired for a starch factory. In the protests which followed a child died and 1000 were injured during police firing. People of Bhajanpur are still fighting for compensation. Ashokapur is one of the most backward villages of the entire district. It has no roads, electricity, drinking water and health facilities. 60 percent of the village population comprises landless people and marginal

farmers. In Telsada village, 62 landless and homeless *Musahar* families are living on the side of a water canal. On the southern fringes of Ashokapur village there are 30 landless families. Ward No. 3 of Belsada village has 27 and ward 9 has 21 landless *Musahar* families. All these landless communities are fighting for land for the last five years.

### 2.14.3 The Yatra at Katihar and Saharsa

9 April, 2012: The Yatra stopped at Manihari Panchayat of Katihar city where Samagra Vikas Foundation, Sanskriti Sanrakshan Parishad, Lok Swaraj and Gurunani Sena extended their support.

10 April, 2012: The Yatra first stopped at Sonbarsa village where *Bhoodan* Yagna Committee organised a public meeting. The second halt was at Saurbazar of Saharsa district where public meeting was jointly organised by Koshi Sangharsh Samiti and Ekta Parishad.

#### Issues

Floods; no rehabilitation for people displaced by dam; landless not given possession on 80 percent *Bhoodan* land; cases pending in court.

#### The Struggle

Katihar is situated on the banks of the Ganges, Koshi and Mahananda. Floods affect the region every year. Around 5000 families of this area have moved towards cities and live in slums along canals or railway tracks without even the most basic of amenities. Around 200 landless and homeless families have settled in the middle of the city canal. Despite submitting several applications to the government, these families have not been allotted any land for construction of houses. These families are living in fear of eviction for a road-widening project.

In 1952, the Government promised rehabilitation to the dam affected people who had been displaced by the dam built on Koshi river by the Nepal Government. Even after 60 years of this promise, people have not been rehabilitated. In 1971, about 30 villages were submerged due to floods and thousands of people were displaced. Villagers of Manihar, Medhipuri, Amirabad and Gowakachi have shifted to Baghar Panchayat because of the constant threat of floods. Around 258 Dalit *Musahar* families live on the

government agricultural farmland. In 2000, the government declared this habitation illegal and included this land under Nagar Panchayat. These *Musahar* families have been living only on 5 acres of land despite the fact that they have lost 500 acres due to floods.

### Issues Raised at Sonbarsa and Sour Bazar

**Sonbarsa:** After the *Bhoodan* movement in Bihar, out of 22 lakh acres of allotment, 80 percent of the land had not been allotted to the landless. Land distribution was initiated due to the efforts of the *Bhoodan* Yagna Committee during 80's, but the process soon stopped due to interference of political parties and the administration. There is a complete lack of political will to implement suggestions of D. Bandyopadhyay Commission Report.

**Sour Bazar:** The Koshi flood affected people have not yet been rehabilitated properly. Around 60 percent of the flood affected poor have not been able to use their sand silted agricultural land. In Supaul district, 5000 acres of land is not under cultivation. Similarly, in Madhepur and Saharsa due to siltation, large numbers of marginal farmers have been dispossessed from their land. In Saurbazar, the King of Darbhanga had given approximately one-lakh acres of land during the *Bhoodan* movement, which was distributed among landless families. Due to non-completion of the land demarcation process cases are pending in the court and no decision has been taken so far.

### 2.14.4 The Yatra at Madhepura

11 April, 2012: The Yatra reached Murliganj of Madhepura district where a public meeting was organised by Maha Dalit Sangh. The Yatra's second halt was at Banghania village, where Maha Dalit Sangh and Sarvodyay Mandal jointly organised a public meeting.

#### Issues

No possession of land; government promises broken; destruction by floods; no compensation for *Mahadalits*; livelihood crisis; landlessness and homelessness.

#### The Struggle

80 villages of Murliganj belong to the Dalit communities and among them, 35,000 families

comprise *Mahadalits*. 95 percent of *Mahadalits* are landless and do not have homes. The Maha Dalit Sangh has submitted applications to the administration on several occasions, but no progress has been made so far.

In Banghania, 16,000 *Mahadalits* and 3000 Santhal tribes live in 19 villages. Majority of them are agricultural labourers. This area is prone to floods and work is difficult to find during the rainy season. The government has sanctioned Rs. 2 crores for developmental projects for *Mahadalits* over the last ten years, but hardly 10 percent of this amount has been put to use. Around 5 thousand flood affected families live in this region and despite announcements of housing and land provision by the administration, nothing had been allotted to these families.

#### 2.14.5 The Yatra at Supaul

12 April, 2012: Yatra first stopped at Chatarpur of Supaul district, where a public meeting was organised by Sarvodyay Mandal and Ektra Parishad. *Bhoodan* Yagna Committee lent its support in community mobilisation. The second halt of the Yatra was at Ramrahimpur Sadanadpur where a public meeting was organised by Gram Swaraj Sabha.

13 April, 2012: the Yatra stopped at Tikni village where a public hearing was organised by Koshi Mahasetu Pedit Samiti. The Yatra later stopped at Ghogarditha Jagatpur village where Swaraj Vikas Sangha organised a meeting.

#### Issues

*Bhoodan* land controlled by landlords; landlessness and homelessness; floods and no compensation for crops damaged due to floods.

#### The Struggle

In Chatarpur region, approximately 1700 acres of *Bhoodan* land was allotted to the landless. However, the landless never got possession over this land and landlords have since occupied it. Despite submission of several applications to the Revenue Department by the *Bhoodan* Yagna Committee, the matter has not been resolved. Around 14,000 homeless people to whom *Bhoodan* land should be allotted, have

been identified in this region. Silence of the local administration over the issue has fuelled resentment among the people.

In village Lalganj and Tiladi out of 152 families, 147 are landless *Mahadalits*. Due to floods in the Koshi river and its tributary Mirchaiya, almost 20 villages have completely been destroyed. In Lalganj, 20 acres of agricultural land has been destroyed. 90 percent people dependent on local livelihoods have migrated to cities.

In Lalganj, landlords have forcibly grabbed ancestral land of 25 families. 20 years back the landlords made an attempt to burn the village but fortunately the attempt was unsuccessful.

In village Surjapur Rokna, Parsa and Birbal, respectively 372, 300 and 200 families are homeless. Despite the submission of several applications no action has been taken. A case of land grabbing of 200 and 300 *bighas* by landlords in these villages has been reported. No action has been taken on the complaint.

In village Ramrahimpur Sadanandpur, 222 acres of *Bhoodan* land which was distributed is under dispute and none of the villagers have got ownership rights over the land. Due to lack of political interest, these cases remain unresolved. Similarly, people displaced from Koshi have not been rehabilitated. In another case, 273 acres of land was allotted to the landless under *Bhoodan*, whereas the government records mention only 19 acres. The government has occupied the rest of the land. Many farmers are paying taxes on these lands but in reality they do not have possession.

The *Bhoodan* land issue has become a class oriented tussle between the powerful and the powerless people and the government remains silent on the issue.

In 1983 a poor family received tenure over 3 acres of *Bhoodan* land which was forcibly captured by a powerful family. In 2007 the poor family filed a case in the court but the matter is still pending in the court. In 1976 two *bighas* each were allotted to 15 people and in 2009 the landlords captured these lands. The landlords are now threatening to kill the claimants if they raise their voice against them.

In 2010, construction of Koshi Mega Bridge (known as Koshi Mahasetu) had started over the Koshi river in village Sanpatha and Bananiya. During the construction work, 15,000 hectares of land of 62 villages were submerged in the water and 80,000 people were directly affected out of which 90 percent were farmers and 10 percent were landless labourers. The villagers have filed a petition in the Supreme Court against this land alienation. Because of the intervention of the Supreme Court, the district administration declared compensation for the losses suffered. The government fixed up a shockingly meager amount of compensation for losses at the rate of Rs. 500/- per acre while the losses suffered by the people were to the tune of Rs. 15,000 to 20,000 per acre.

Due to construction of the closure dam in Chikni a large portion of the land is submerged under 5 to 6 feet of water. At present, displaced people from 62 villages are living on the roadside. The government has not made any plan for their rehabilitation. Education and health services have become totally defunct in this region. 80 percent of the families that were dependent on agriculture have lost their livelihood. The government refuses to respond to applications.

In Jagatpur region a big portion of the land is submerged because of Koshi Mahasetu construction. Approximately 1000 *bighas* of land is affected due to flood and water logging. In Sugapati village, 107 landless families were allotted *Bhoodan* land but have still not got possession.

#### 2.14.6 The Yatra at Madhubani

14 April, 2012: The Yatra stopped at village Jhinhapur of Madhubani district, where a meeting was organised by the Gyanodyay Sanstha. The second halt was at Gajmkaranda of Darbhanga district, where Nadi Bachao Abhiyan, Lok Samiti and Sarvodyay Mandal organised a public meeting. The last halt was at Biraul. A public meeting was organised by *Musahar* Vikas Manch, Nadi Wapsi Andolan and Khadi Gramudyog Sangh.

#### Issues

Bribe demanded for allotment under Indira Awas Yojna; government promises not fulfilled; drinking water crisis; no compensation and rehabilitation plan for flood affected people; no demarcation of land; no survey of landless/homeless people.

#### The Struggle

In Jhinhapur village, 34 landless and homeless families live on 2 *bighas* of government land and their livelihood depends on agricultural labour work. In 2008, each of these families was nominated under Indira Awas Yojna. The Pachayat functionary however asked for a bribe of Rs. 25,000 to sanction their houses. Among them one rickshaw puller filed an application under the RTI Act, which was registered after a lot of struggle. Action was taken after a complaint was filed with the district administration. Thereafter, 4 families were informed that they have been allotted houses under Indira Awas Yojna. In Adalpur area, land is still under the control of landlords.

#### Plight of the *Musahars*

Biraul area is located between three rivers – Karer, Kamla and Koshi. 6 blocks within this area are flood prone. The government has never conceived of a plan for compensation and rehabilitation of the people of this region despite the fact that every year floods render thousands of people landless and homeless. Around 73 homeless *Mahadalits* live in a *basti* in this region. Male members of the family migrate to cities in search of livelihood and women are left behind to provide for the family. The period between June to October is critical for the families. In Malpur and Shahpur, approximately 430 *Mahadalit* families are displaced every year due to floods. The government announcement to distribute 3 decimal land to the landless has not been implemented yet.

Landless *Musahar* families in this region receive only 2 kilograms of raw paddy as wages for the entire day's work. Majority of these families receive grain once in four months at the PDS shop. There is rampant corruption in the distribution of grain at the fair price shop.

152 *Mahadalit* families of this village occupied 23 *bighas* of government land and made thatched houses. Local landlords have been threatening them for the last four years and the houses of the *Mahadalits* have been burnt down five times.

In Jayprakash Nagar, 25 years back 235 *Mahadalit* families received an order of land allotment, which has still not been handed over to them. This area is prone to floods as well as droughts and drinking water is a huge problem. More than 80 percent of the families do not get pure drinking water.

The government made an announcement to give 3 decimal lands to the Mahadalit families, which has not been implemented yet.

### 2.14.7. The Yatra at Samastipur

15 April, 2012: The Yatra reached Eriagachi Warishnagar village, where a meeting was organised by Sarvodyay Mandal.

#### Issues

Landless and homeless people not given land as promised; bribe demanded by officials.

#### The Struggle

Approximately 450 landless and homeless families living on the banks of rivers and canals in the Eriagachi region are facing the threat of eviction. Despite submitting several complaints at the district and state administration, no action has been taken so far. Though the government has promised 3 decimal land to the landless, nothing has been done so far.

### 2.14.8 The Yatra at Begusarai

16 April, 2012: The Yatra stopped at Khedavandpur village of Begusarai district where a meeting was organised by Jansangharsha Morcha.

#### Issues

Migration

#### The Struggle

This is another flood prone area of the state from where about 40 percent people migrate to Punjab, Haryana and other western states in search of livelihood. 40 villages of Khedavandpur area are affected by the concurrent floods of Koshi and Budigandak rivers. 5000 families are landless and homeless due to soil erosion. Due to the changing course of the river, land demarcations get obliterated and taking advantage of this the powerful landlords occupy most of the land.

200 nomadic *Kanjar* families from Gorakhpur, who were settled in village Matkora Nagapokhar, have moved into the area of Samastipur and Begusarai. A few families were settled in Parvataghat by

the government, but 10 families are still living in temporary houses in Variyarpur since the last 8 years. Over the last seven years these families have been displaced 16 times due to soil erosion, water logging and oppression by landlords. They neither have BPL (Below Poverty Line) cards nor identity cards to access any government schemes. They do not even have election cards. Many promises have been made from time to time to provide relief to these *Kanjar* families but none have been kept.

### 2.14.9 The Yatra at Khagaria

17 April, 2012: The Yatra entered Khagaria district where a public meeting was organised by Sampoorana Kranti Manch and Bihar Sarvodyay Mandal. The second stop of the Yatra was at Ichrua Alauli.

#### Issues

Massacre of Dalits in Alauli; Dalits live in fear.

People of Bihar have been pleading with the government for time bound distribution of *Bhoodan* land. There seems no political on the issue. In Bihar, 6.5 lakh acres of *Bhoodan* land is under dispute and has not been legally allocated to the people. D. Bandyopadhyay Commission Report is still pending with the government.

#### The Struggle

Alauli is well known for violence perpetrated by the landlords. The purchase of 250 *bighas* of land by the disadvantaged section of society gave rise to protests by the powerful in collusion with the land mafia. On 1 October, 2009, on their way back from work, the disadvantaged were surrounded by the landlords and killed. 28 persons were arrested but due to political pressure 16 were bailed out. These landless families now cultivate land on the banks of river Koshi and live in mortal fear of the landlords.

### 2.14.10 The Yatra at Bhagalpur

18 April, 2012: The Yatra stopped at Jagritola Jhandarpur village where a meeting was conducted by Rashtriya Sewa Dal and Shourya Shakti. The next halt was at Bhagalpur where a public debate was organised by Gandhi Shanti Pratisthan and other local non-governmental organisation.



## Issues

Harassment by landlords; encroachment of *Bhoodan* land by landlords; migration; land alienation for industries; drop in water table.

## The Struggle

This region of the state is infamous for harassment by the economically and socially privileged landlords. *Bhoodan* land allotted to 120 landless families has been encroached by the landlords. 300 acres of agricultural land on the banks of the Ganges have thus been affected and the affected families are still waiting for justice from the government. Most male members of the family migrate for livelihood and the women who are left behind face the worst brunt of harassment.

The coal rich area of Bhagalpur has also seen land alienation in favour of industrial companies. People have been struggling against exploitation of the landlords. The *Bhoodan* land remains undistributed. Water of river Chandali, which has since long been used for irrigation purposes, is now being diverted for industrial use. The water table in the region has dropped due to industrialisation.

### 2.14.11 The Yatra at Banka

19 April, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was at Domuhan where Dalit Mukti Mission organised a public meeting. The second stop was in the Chaandan region of Banka district. The Yatra then reached the Daunsi area where a public meeting was organised.

## Issues

Land of *Mahadalits* sold off by landlord; problems with schools; land purchase by Abhijeet Group; inadequate compensation for displaced persons.

## The Struggle

In the Domuhan region of the state, the problems that came up for discussion related largely to schools. The poor quality of education, maintenance of schools, and the pre-occupation with the Mid Day Meal Scheme at the expense of teaching were mentioned. In village Paiwa in the Chaandan area, a powerful landlord sold off 37 acres of cultivable land on which 35 Mahadalit families had been growing crops since

1961. Despite complaints to officials no action was taken.

In 2009, the Abhijeet Group bought thousands of hectares of land at a very low price in the name of Infrastructure Thermal Power Project at Daunsi. The land was registered by forgery. In 2011 they acquired Lakshmipur dam project which was made in 1968. Displaced people were not compensated properly. Now this company is planning to heighten up this dam region, which will cause many surrounding villages submerged. Villagers have filed a petition in the court, which is still under consideration.

### 2.14.12 The Yatra at Jamui

20 April, 2012: The Yatra stopped at Paura village of Khaira block, where a meeting was organised by Ekta Parishad.

The government has never addressed the needs and problems of the poor in Bihar. The landless have not been provided land tenures. People of the state have been demanding implementation of the D. Bandyopadhyay Commission Report.

### 2.14.13 The Yatra at Nawada

21 April, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was at the district headquarter of Nawada, where a public meeting was organised by Dalit Adhikar Manch.

## Issues

No action on applications for homestead land; promises not kept; inadequate monetary support to landless families.

## The Struggle

64 landless Manjhi families have been living on government land since 1995. These landless families had submitted an application for homestead land, which is still lying with the government and no action been taken so far.

Initially, the Bihar government had promised to give 10 decimal land to each landless family. Now this has been reduced to 3 decimal. Since 2011 the government has been distributing a measly amount of Rs. 20,000 to the landless families.

#### 2.14.14 The Yatra at Nalanda

22 April, 2012: The Yatra reached Bihar Sharif where a meeting was organised by Bharatiya Janathan Parishad.

##### Issues

Water logging; *Bhoodan* land under dispute.

##### The Struggle

The Nalanda region, which is famous for its traditional and unique indigenous Ahar-Pyne irrigation system, is suffering from a huge water-logging problem. This is largely due to irregularities in maintenance for the last 20 years.

12,000 acres of *Bhoodan* land meant for distribution among landless Dalit families, is under dispute.

#### Women Demand Rights Over Land

Women of the district have been intimately involved in agricultural operations. They are demanding rights over agricultural land. Around 400 women have collectively raised their voice for land rights.

#### 2.14.15 The Yatra at Gaya

23 April, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was at Kharaya village of Antari block.

##### Issues

Starvation death; water crisis; no irrigation facility; corruption in Indira Awas Yojana.

##### The Struggle

The starvation death of a woman in Kharaya village in 2009 showcases the intensity of poverty and food related problems in this village. There is a huge water crisis in this area. Rampant corruption in the Indira Awas Yojna has been reported because of which the disadvantaged sections of the population have been unable to avail of the scheme.

#### 2.14.16 The Yatra at Jehanabad

24 April, 2012: The Yatra reached Pipuli village of Belaganj block where a public hearing was organised

by Ekta Parishad. At the second stop at Umda village, a public meeting was organised by Muskan. The third stop was at Nawabganj, where a public hearing was organised by Gharaut Sangharsh Morcha and Dalit Adhikar Manch.

##### Issues

Homelessness among Dalits and Muslims; neglect of irrigation system; displacement of farmers due to dam.

##### The Struggle

A survey of homeless families done by Ekta Parishad has revealed that there are around 3,800 homeless Dalit families here. Two years since an application was submitted to the government, no action has been taken. In Umda village, the traditional irrigation system of Ahar-Pyne has become dysfunctional due to poor maintenance and farmers have been adversely affected. In another case, around 1000 farmers have been displaced in the name of construction of Moar dam. In Nawabganj, due to error in construction of water canal, the irrigation system has failed and production has been adversely affected. Around 5000 homeless Muslim families have submitted applications to the administration for homestead land, which is still pending.

#### 2.14.17 The Yatra at Arwal and Patna

25 April, 2012: In Kurpa village a meeting was organised by Dalit Adhikar Manch. The second stop of the Yatra was at Chandaus village of Paliganj block.

##### Issues

Landlessness; promises by the government not kept; no action on applications for land allotment.

##### The Struggle

In Kurpa village, the commitment made by the government to give 4 decimal land to 90 homeless families, has not been honoured. The homeless have lodged a complaint with the district administration. In the Patna region, Ekta Parishad has submitted 5000 applications of homeless people for land allotment. No action has been taken till date.

### 2.14.18 The Yatra at Patna

26 April, 2012: The Yatra reached Vikram Shetra where a public meeting was organised by Ekta Parishad. The second stop was in the Naubatpur area of Patna district.

#### Issues

Demand for homestead land; acquisition and transfer of land.

#### The Struggle

The homeless in Vikram Chetra have been demanding homestead land. They have been living in a temporary shelter, which does not provide them protection from rains. In Naubatpur area, a sugar factory has acquired 100 acres of land. The acquisition has been disputed and people have been struggling for the last eight years. In 2011, 46 acres of this land was transferred for construction of an alcohol brewery. Local farmers have been demanding the release of their land.

### 2.14.19 The Yatra at Vaishali

27 April, 2012: The Yatra reached Mahua village of Vaishali district where a public meeting was organised by Parivartan Janandolan.

#### Issues

Demand of homestead land for the landless families; bribe demanded for land allotment.

#### The Struggle

In Chakpathemathal village, 18 landless families have been collectively cultivating 25 *bighas* of land since the last 21 years. 5 years back the government promised land allotment to these families but this has not been done till now. The landless are routinely harassed by the local landlords during planting and harvesting seasons. Two years back their crops were snatched by these landlords. Many cases have been lodged at the police station, but instead of taking action against the landlords, government officials have been demanding bribes from the landless to settle the case.

In village Narangi, 34 landless families had submitted applications for 3 decimal land. Government officials

have been accused of demanding bribes for allotment of land.

### 2.14.20 The Yatra at Muzaffarpur

28 April, 2012: The Yatra reached Kudni Turki village of Muzaffarpur district, where a meeting was organised by Ekta Parishad. The second stop was at Muzaffarpur, where a public meeting was organised by *Musahar* Vikas Manch and Muzaffarpur Vikas Mandal.

#### Issues

Promise of land allotment not kept; flood management; problems due to embankment.

#### The Struggle

650 landless families were promised land in Turki Panchayat. Only 130 have been given 3 decimal land per family. The rest are still waiting for allotment.

During 1950, in undivided Muzaffarpur, the total flood affected area was 25 lakh hectares. A 165 km. embankment was constructed for protection against flood and utilisation of water. By 2010 the length of the embankment was increased to 263 kms. Now the flood affected area has become 79 lakh hectare. The embankment has caused water logging, siltation on cultivable land, destruction of wild life. The original plan was to establish drinking water facilities for the entire state from this project. The plan has not been implemented.

#### Flood Management in Bihar

Proper flood management in the state of Bihar can solve the irrigation problems of the entire state. Mismanagement by the government, especially as seen in the wrong choices made in terms of embankments, have had serious repercussions. Besides, the state government has a track record of not compensating and not resettling people displaced by embankments. Breaches in embankments have become a common occurrence in Bihar resulting in loss of life and submergence of agricultural land.

### 2.14.21 The Yatra at Sitamarhi

29 April, 2012: The Yatra reached Sukhi village where a public hearing was organised by Ekta Parishad.

## Issues

Landlessness; water pollution affecting production; functioning of MNREGS; dispossession of Dalits by landlords; government promise of land to the poorest not kept.

## The Struggle

In Sukhi village, 170 Dalit landless families are collectively cultivating as sharecroppers. Water pollution caused by the sugar factory has affected crop production in the village. Problems in the functioning of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) have been reported. Powerful landlords have dispossessed Dalits from their land. Around 65 *bighas* of land was taken away from the Dalits in this village. The government has not kept its promise of providing 3 decimal of homestead land to the poorest families.

### 2.14.22 The Yatra at Sheohar

30 April, 2012: The Yatra reached Sheohar district headquarters. A meeting was organised by Valmiki Uthan Sewa Sansthan. The second stop was at Mahoba village, where a meeting was organised by Musahar Vikas Mancha and Samajik Shodh Avam Vikas Kendra.

## Issues

Land dispute; low wages; migration.

## The Struggle

This region is prone to land disputes and domestic violence for which a special counselling cell has been opened. Around 65 percent of the cases are related to land dispute.

The district is prone to migration. Around 35 to 40 percent of the agricultural labourers in this region do not get minimum wages. According to MNREGS records, people have got work only for seven days in a year. Around 2 lakh labourers migrated from this area during 2010-2011. Labourers in large numbers have migrated to Jammu and Kashmir where they receive wages at the rate of Rs. 242 per day while the rate at which they got wages in Bihar was Rs. 50-70 per day.

### 2.14.23 The Yatra at East Champaran

1 May, 2012: The Yatra reached Ramgarwa of East Champaran district. A public meeting was organised by Ekta Parishad.

3 May, 2012: The Yatra reached Jhakhra Piparpothi village, where *Musahar* Vikas Mancha and Champaran Satyagraha Samiti organised a meeting.

## Issues

Poor implementation of Forest Rights Act; tribals lack possession over land; migration; government policy of giving monetary assistance instead of land to the poor.

## The Struggle

*Tharu* and *Oraon* tribes live in this region of the state. Due to poor implementation of the Forest Rights Act, around 2,500 scheduled tribe families have not been able to get possession over their land. 60 percent of the people migrate in search of livelihood.

The government promise of giving 4 decimal of land to each landless family has been toned down to 3 decimals per family. Now, instead of giving 3 decimal land, the government has initiated a scheme to provide Rs. 20,000 per family which amounts to gross injustice as the monetary compensation is totally inadequate to purchase land. Bribes are being demanded from the poor for this allocation.

### 2.14.24 The Yatra at West Champaran

2 May, 2012: The Yatra stopped at Betia village of West Champaran district where a meeting was organised by Parchadhari Sangharshvahini.

## Issues

Dispute over land received under the *Hathbandhi* Act; displacement due to tiger preservation project; no plan for rehabilitation; struggle for claims under Forest Rights Act; landlessness.

## The Struggle

In West Champaran, traditionally dominated by power full and lords, land of the Dumariya dynasty was distributed among the landless families

of Narkatiyaganj, Gauna and 15 other villages under the *Hathbandhi* Act. Descendants of the Dumariya clan are now reclaiming this land. A case has been filed in the court. The landless recipients of this land have been prevented from cultivating their land.

People in this region are struggling against displacement for a tiger preservation project. 56 villages inhabited by *Tharu* and *Oraon* tribes are likely to be affected. Though the government has demarcated land for acquisition, it is yet to come up with a plan for rehabilitation of displaced people. Around a thousand tribal families have been demanding their rights under provisions of the Forest Rights Act. Approximately 15,000 families have become landless because of changing course of the river and 1,700 families have not yet got possession over land allotted to them under the *Hathbandhi* Act.

#### 2.14.25 The Yatra at Siwan

4 May, 2012: The Yatra reached Vijaypur village of Siwan district where local representatives organised

a meeting. The second stop of the journey was at Anjwar village of Siwan district where students and teachers organised a debate on land related issues.

Low government purchase rate of grain in comparison to the open market and inflation have resulted in several poor families migrating to the cities.

#### 2.14.26 The Yatra at Patna

5 May, 2012: A meeting was organised in N. Sinha Social Research Centre where land issues were debated by several organisations and prominent personalities.

#### 2.14.27 The Yatra at Bhojpur and Buxar

6 and 7 May, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was at Sahar village of Buxar where a public meeting was organised by Ekta Parishad. This region is inhabited by around 2000 landless families, out of which only 150 families have received land tenures.

## 2.15 UTTAR PRADESH

People of the state are struggling against land acquisition. The state has seen large scale acquisition of land for projects as diverse as expressways, city beautification, sewage treatment plants and tourism. The journey through the state brought up the issue of inadequate monetary compensation offered as part of government

compensation packages in lieu of land that is acquired. Small and marginal farmers have been adversely affected by the promotion of corporate farming. The landless are migrating to cities in search of livelihood. They have borne the worst brunt of exploitation by landlords and failure of the state to keep its promise of allotment of land.



### 2.15.1 The Yatra at Ghazipur

8 May, 2012: The Yatra reached Gamhar of Uttar Pradesh where a meeting was organised by Ganga Jal Viradari, Gopalram Gahmari Seva Sansthan and other non governmental organisations. At the second stop of the Yatra at Sadat village of Ghazipur district, a meeting was organised by Prayas Prasikshan Samiti and Janadhikar Manch.

#### Issues

Land acquisition for expressway; plan to grab more land for city development; promotion of corporate farming at the cost of livelihoods of marginal farmers; landlessness and exploitation by landlords.

#### The Struggle

Farmers of Ghazipur and Purvanchal had protested 5 years back when the state government acquired 64,000 acres of land for the Ganga expressway. The proposed expressway has created resentment among the population because of the projected adverse impact on agricultural production. There is also a plan to develop cities on both sides of the road and experts have calculated that around 5 lakh acres of land will be transferred directly or indirectly under the control of the government. People of this belt have been agitating against the eviction of small and marginal farmers. They have protested against the government policy of promoting corporate farming and supporting giant multinational companies and handing over thousands of acres of land to these private interests.

Landless *Musahars* have been migrating to cities in search of livelihood in the face of homelessness, landlessness and exploitation by the local landlords. The Government has failed to keep its promise of allotment of homestead land. Many of these landless *Musahar* families work as bonded labourers and also in brick kilns.

### 2.15.2 The Yatra at Varanasi

9 May, 2012: The Yatra reached Kaithi village of Varanasi district where a public hearing was organised by Bharatiya Kisan Union and local farmers. The second stop was at Chirai village where a meeting was organised by Lok Samiti. The last stop of the journey

was at Nakighat where a meeting was organised by Vision organisation.

10 May, 2012: A meeting was organised at Varanasi by Sajha Sanskriti Manch and Sangharsheel Jansangathan.

#### Issues

Land acquisition, poor compensation package, eviction of people.

#### The Struggle

The absence of a consultative process in the decision to construct a sewage treatment plant at Saarnath and the beginning of construction for the plant has resulted in collective agitation and protest by local farmers.

In Karsara Badarpur village, land was acquired at a minimal cost of Rs. 4000 per *biswa* from 150 Harijan Dalit farmers for a solid waste management factory. In Tengramod and Kaithi, villages are being used for dumping waste and the government has acquired land forcibly from the villagers. Of late the government has started acquiring even cultivable land for waste dumping. Around 2000 acres of land has been acquired for Bandha Waste Canal.

In Varanasi, the government is acquiring 5000 acres of land to improvise the city sanitation. Many farmers will be adversely affected by this acquisition. In the name of city beautification and promotion of tourism, around 50 villages are going to be converted into a waste culture plant. Thousands of acres of land has been acquired for dumping solid waste. The dirty water discharged into the river affects vegetable and crop cultivation. In this region the market price of land is 1.5 lakh per *biswa* but the government's compensation package has been fixed at a mere Rs. 500 per *biswa*.

In the name of beautification and renovation of Nakighat, people living in the vicinity of the Varuna river have been evicted. Around 1500 weavers and marginal farmers were evicted from this region. No compensation or rehabilitation has been planned for these displaced people.

In Varanasi on the name of High-tech city of Karauta transport nagar, government is acquiring land from

Baraipur, Domri, Kateshwar and Nakighat for the agent company named Mohan Saray Paryatan. Government policies have ruined farmers. Cost of agricultural inputs has gone up. Farmers do not get fair prices for their products. The government is supporting mega companies and grabbing land and displacing people.

### **2.15.3 The Yatra at Mirzapur**

11 May, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was at Tilki village of Mirzapur district, where farmers have been agitating against Ganga Expressway and protesting in front of J.P. Udyog Samooh.

### **Issues**

Large scale land acquisition for Ganga Expressway.

### **The Struggle**

54 villages of Mirzapur district are going to be destroyed due to the Ganga Expressway. Villagers have been protesting.

In Kon block, land has been acquired by the government in 13 villages, while 25 villages have been transferred in the hands of the land mafia in the name of urbanisation and city development. A petition has been filed by the people. Work on the project continues despite a court order to stop construction.



## 2.16 MADHYA PRADESH

The state has seen large scale land acquisition for industrial companies. Large numbers of Dalits and tribals are landless and little has been done for their development. The sidetracking of land reforms has given rise to a lot of resentment in the state. Harassment of tribals by the Forest Department has been reported. Rightful claimants of land, with requisite documents have been turned down. Non-implementation and poor implementation of the

Forest Rights Act has been a recurrent complaint in the state. The spirit behind the Forest Rights Act seems defeated. Traditional rights of tribals are being threatened in the name of wildlife protection and forest conservation. Large numbers of families displaced by tiger projects and national parks have not been resettled. Environmental degradation and destruction resulting from mining, industries and urbanisation is another issue of immense concern.



### 2.16.1 The Yatra at Rewa

12 May, 2012: A meeting was organised by non-governmental organisations.

#### Issues

Destruction of water bodies; illegal sale of land.

#### The Struggle

Rewa district has been witness to large-scale destruction of its water bodies, especially ponds, in the process of urbanisation. Out of nearly 8000 ponds in Rewa, 1000 have been affected in course of construction activities. The Panchayat Building of Mehgawan has been constructed after covering a pond. Water of most ponds near towns is being indiscriminately used for industrial and construction purposes. This poses serious problems of water availability, both for drinking purposes as well as for irrigation. Small and marginal farmers have been more severely affected by the water crisis. Illegal sale of the land adjoining ponds has also been reported from the district.

### 2.16.2 The Yatra at Sidhi

13 May, 2012: A meeting was organised at a school meant for the deaf and dumb. The second stop of the Yatra was at Jamua village of Sidhi district.

#### Issues

Landlessness; land acquisition for development projects; developmental neglect of villages; no rehabilitation after displacement; assault on tribals; rejection of claims filed under the Forest Rights Act.

#### The Struggle

Most of the Dalits and tribals in Sidhi are landless. Despite the fact that landlessness is a huge problem, land acquisition in the name of development continues unabated in the region. A lot of disaffection in the district has emanated from the government's preoccupation with development of cities and the continued neglect of villages. Little has been done for landless communities. In Jamua village of Sidhi district, tribals are being harassed by the Forest Department under the guise of Bandhavgarh

National Park. Thousands of hectares of land has been transferred in the name of the Buffer Zone. No concrete plan for rehabilitation of displaced families has been implemented. About 300 *Gond* and *Baiga* tribal families in the region have got cases filed against them for violation of the Wildlife Protection Act while no action has been taken against the rich and powerful in cases of poaching. Cases of assault on tribals by employees of the Forest Department have been reported. Claims of forest dwellers in the Majhoul area of Sidhi district, which possess land records of the pre 1927 period, have been rejected by the government.

### 2.16.3 The Yatra at Shahdol

14 May, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was at Papredi village of Byvhari block of Shahdol district where a meeting was held. The second stop was at Gohparu village.

#### Issues

Harassment of tribals by the Forest Department; rejection of claims under Forest Rights Act; oppression of non-governmental organisations and activists.

#### The Struggle

The struggle at Shahdol is very pointedly against the Forest Department which has been harassing tribals and extorting money in the name of protection of forests. In Papredi village, claims of all tribal families under the Forest Rights Act have been rejected. More than 70 percent of the claimants could not file their claims due to lack of proper information. In Vasnagari, 67 tribal families filed claims, which were forwarded by the Forest Rights Committee. These applications were however rejected by the District Level Committee. In the region of Gohparu, organisations and social activists working for the rights of tribals are being oppressed.

### 2.16.4 The Yatra at Umaria

15 May, 2012: A meeting was jointly organised by National Youth Organisation, Ekta Parisad and affiliates. The second halt of the journey was in Vijaygarh area of Katni district where a discussion was held with the villagers.

## Issues

Non implementation of Forest Rights Act; harassment by the Forest Department; threat to livelihoods of tribals; threat to *Nistar* rights of tribals; less land given to claimants; no rehabilitation after displacement

## The Struggle

The district has a predominantly tribal population (*Baiga* and *Gond* tribes) and a lot of the disaffection with the government here revolves around the non-implementation of the Forest Rights Act. Eligible occupants of land are being harassed by the Forest Department. The livelihood of the Basod community is threatened. Their survival depends on traditional rights to use bamboo from forests and other forest produce. Large numbers of the community have been forced to start begging. Similarly communities using soil from the forest regions to make pots have been prevented from doing so by the Forest Department. The *Nistar* rights of tribals are threatened by the Forest Conservation Act and Wildlife Protection Act. Another cause of discontentment among the tribals is the fact that claimants have been given less land than what they had claimed. About 30 villages are being displaced in the name of the Tiger Project and no arrangement has been made for their rehabilitation.

### A Desperate form of Protest

In Bajkacha and Dukaria, in face of the mounting pressure from the government to vacate 1200 acres of agricultural land, villagers have placed their “funeral pyres” along the boundary of the village land.

## 2.16.5 The Yatra at Satna

16 May, 2012: Ekta Parishad arranged a public meeting at the first halt of the Yatra at Maihar. Members of Jan Abhiyan Parishad, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh and other organisations participated in the meeting.

## Issues

Land grabbing; transfer of water resources for industrialisation; non-implementation of Forest Rights Act; landlessness; migration.

## The Struggle

Land grabbing by large industrial companies has resulted in unrest in the Maihar area of Satna district. While water resources are being transferred for industrialisation on a large scale, farmers are struggling for irrigation water. The Forest Rights Act remains unimplemented due to pressure from companies. More than 2000 acres of land is likely to be transferred for the industrialisation plan. Many families, which had settled in this region, especially those from Bansagar are still landless. There is immense anger against brokers of companies who have got approximately 247 acres of land registered in their name using threats and other coercive methods. Large numbers of people from the district are migrating.

## 2.16.6 The Yatra at Katni

17 May, 2012: A public meeting was organised by Manav Jeevan Vikas Samiti at Majhgawan.

18 May, 2012: A meeting was organised by Ekta Parishad.

## Issues

Landlessness; failure of land reforms; land grabbing.

## The Struggle

Majority of the population here is directly dependent on agriculture but do not have land of their own. Failure of the government to initiate a process of land reforms lies at the root of the struggle in this region of the state. In the Rampur area of the district, land is being forcefully grabbed by the land-mafia. This has had serious repercussions since livelihoods of the majority of the population are agriculture based. Corruption and demand of bribery by the government staff for providing land lease papers have been reported.

### A Suggestion

At the meeting organised at the office of Manav Jeevan Vikas Samiti, Majhgawan, it was suggested that the land issue should be linked with the election of people’s representatives.

### 2.16.7 The Yatra at Jabalpur

19 May, 2012: Jay Bharatiya Sikshan Sansthan held a meeting. The second stop of the Yatra was at the city of Jabalpur, where Kadam organised an interaction session with representatives of urban areas. The third stop was at Gajinagar, a slum in Jabalpur city, where a large meeting of nearly 200 women was organised by Kshitij.

#### Issues

Prospect of displacement by dam; environmental degradation due to mining and marble manufacturing companies; pressure on slum dwellers to vacate land.

#### The Struggle

13 villages in the region of Jabalpur fall in the submergence area of proposed Ataria dam. Issues of concern raised by villagers have elicited no response from the government. Mining and marble companies have caused large-scale destruction of the environment. No action has been taken against polluting industrial units, despite complaints by affected populations. A public hearing organised to discuss the issue of expansion of a local marble company completely ignored issues of concern raised by the villagers.

At Gajinagar, a slum within Jabalpur city, about 350 households of Muslim wage labourers have been living for the last 35 years and the Municipality is now pressurising the slum dwellers to vacate the land.

### 2.16.8 The Yatra at Dindori

20 May, 2012: A public meeting was organised by Ekta Parishad in Mahakaushal area.

#### Issues

Discontentment against manner of implementation of Forest Rights Act; inaction on claims filed under the Act; discontentment with *Baiga* Development Authority; prospect of displacement by dam.

#### The Struggle

Implementation of the Forest Rights Act, which has been left entirely in the hands of irresponsible government employees, has resulted in a lot of

discontentment at Dindori. According to official records, only 6,814 people have been given papers in the district, while over 50,000 eligible occupants are still waiting to be heard. The aggressive approach of the Forest Department towards tribals has defeated the very purpose of the Forest Rights Act. There is also discontentment against the role of the *Baiga* Development Authority. In December 2011, the common rights for village Dhaba were settled under which approximately 3830 acres of land were demarcated for *Nistar* and development of the villagers. Another issue of concern in this region of the state is the prospect of displacement by the dam area of Baragi.

### 2.16.9 The Yatra at Mandla

21 May, 2012: A public hearing was organised by Ekta Parishad in Ghughari area of the district. The next stop was at Sijhaura village, where the Yatra was welcomed by Prayas Shiksha Samiti.

22 May, 2012: Nai Disha organised a Mukhiya meet at Sijhaura village of Mandla district, in which representatives of *Baiga* tribe from Mawai and Bichhia Block participated. The Yatra also stopped at Gadhi village in Balaghat district where a public hearing was organised. The third stop was at Bamhani village of Mandla district, where a public hearing was organised by Save The Tribes Campaign.

#### Issues

Denial of rights of tribals; rejection of claims; crop destruction by forest officials; lack of information on rejection of claims; inaction on claims; forced plantation on land of tribals by Forest Department; threat to tribal livelihoods; prospect of displacement by dam; displacement by tiger project and national park; extortion by Forest Department.

#### The Struggle

Many cases of tribals having been denied their rights under the Forest Rights Act have been reported from this region. In Nevsatola, 26 tribal families submitted their claims in February 2009, but so far none of the claims have been settled. In Sajpani, 108 families filed claims out of which only 64 families got their claims settled. In Kunti village an attempt by forest officials to remove 38 families

from their land in the year 2009 by destroying crops was met with resistance. People of Mandla are fighting against the policy of not giving a clear letter of rejection to those whose claims are rejected under the Forest Rights Act. Forced plantation by forest officials on lands of the tribals is common in the area. In areas where there is a boundary dispute between the Revenue and the Forest Department, claims made by tribals have been rejected.

In areas near Sijhaura village, despite the concern over the protection of the *Baigas*, the livelihoods of the tribals are being snatched away in the name of wildlife preservation.

In Amvar, out of 48 families who filed claims for forest rights, 27 families got their rights settled, while the rest have no information about the reason for rejection of their claims. In Dhuri Jamgaon, 45 *Baiga* families had submitted their claim forms and two years after filing their claims they were still awaiting information about their claims. In Awara Ghanghara, 57 families had filed claims out of which 33 families have received letters of acceptance while the claims of the remaining 24 families have been rejected.

There is fear about a proposed dam project in the area of Sobhapur. Though villagers have not yet received any information about the project, newspapers have reported that 484 surrounding villages would need to be rehabilitated. There is also resentment against tiger projects and their implications for tribal villages. 62 villages displaced in the name of Tiger Project are still awaiting rehabilitation. Affected tribal families launched a campaign in 2000 to get back to their traditional villages. Despite this campaign, 60 other villages have been earmarked for displacement under the buffer zone of the forest. Though thousands of crores have been spent on the Kanha Project, not even one percent of the amount has been spent on rehabilitation and development of tribal families. Tribal families displaced by the Kanha National Park in 1976 have not been rehabilitated yet.

In village Navalpur, 35 tribal households have been cultivating a piece of land vacated by a dairy farm since 1992. These households were displaced by the

Kanha National Park. Despite repeated claims, the authorities have turned a blind eye to their plea for rights over this land.

### 2.16.10 The Yatra at Seoni

23 May, 2012: Panchayat Council members held a meeting at Bahrai village of Seoni district. The second stop of the Yatra was at the district headquarters, where a meeting was organised with elected representatives.

#### Issues

Non-settlement of community rights over forests; lack of basic amenities; non-implementation of regional development plans; payment of low prices to tribals for forest produce.

#### The Struggle

Community rights over forests have not been settled in the region and forest based livelihoods are threatened. In the region of Seoni, between Kanha and Pench National Parks, tribals are struggling against lack of basic amenities like drinking water, education and health. While millions of rupees is being spent in the name of wildlife conservation in the form of Tiger Project, regional development plans have not been implemented so far, despite the fact that this area comes under Tribal Development Sub-Plan. Though forest-product marketing centers have been opened in tribal areas to strengthen forest-based livelihoods, the purchasing power of these centers remains very low. As a result, tribals do not get fair prices for their forest produce.

In the region of Lakhnadaun, though most claims filed under the Forest Rights Act have been accepted, land that has been given to the tribals is barren. Those displaced by the Pench National Park and the Bargi Dam are awaiting resettlement.

### 2.16.11 The Yatra at Chhindwara

24 May, 2012: Kisan Sangharsh Samiti held a public meeting and another meeting was organised by villagers.

#### Issues

Prospect of displacement.

## The Struggle

Farmers in this region are vehemently opposing the PENCH Project. According to available information, 7,575 families of 31 villages are going to be affected and 5,607 hectares of land is likely to get submerged. The consent of farmers was not sought before implementation of the project. Farmers of the area have refused to accept the conditions declared by the government. Violence has erupted due to the mounting pressure of the mafia.

### 2.16.12 The Yatra at Betul

25 May, 2012: A meeting was held at the Shaheed Sthal by Kisan Samgharsh Samiti. A public hearing was organised.

#### Issues

Police brutality against farmers; no response on claims filed under Forest Rights Act; communities rendered ineligible to file claims.

## The Struggle

Police firing in 1998 on a movement to raise issues like compensation for crop damage, crop insurance and others resulted in the death of 24 farmers. Instead of registering murder cases against the police, the government registered 250 cases against farmers, which were still ongoing in the District Court.

At a public hearing in Sitapur village, it came to light that 37 families have filed applications on 400 acres under Forest Rights Act. The Forest Rights Committee has forwarded claim letters to the district level but even after 2 years no response has been received. Claims for community rights filed by villagers of Bhainsdehi area have not received any response. The entire Gayaki community (whose traditional occupation was singing), with a

population of about 15,000 in Baitul district, has been rendered ineligible to file claims under the Forest Rights Act, since they have not been issued caste certificates.

### 2.16.13 The Yatra at Sehore

26 May, 2012: Adivasi Sanrachna Sewa Sansthan held a meeting. The second halt of the Yatra was Kamton Panchayat of Raisen district, where a public meeting was organised by the Panchayat Representatives.

27 May, 2012: Ekta Parishad organised a press meet in which anti-poor government policies were highlighted. The second stop of the Yatra was at Jatgadh where a public meeting was organized.

#### Issues

Non-recognition of rights of tribals; inaction on claims filed under Forest Rights Act; forcible plantation by Forest Department on land of tribals; anti-poor policies of the government.

## The Struggle

In the Budhni tehsil of Sehore, 14 families, which have been occupants of forestland for the last 40 years, are struggling for recognition of their rights. Government employees have illegally collected money from them on the pretext of issuing land lease. All families have filed claims under the Forest Rights Act, but no action has been taken yet. The Forest Department has forcibly sown babul seeds on the lands of 25 tribal families.

Anti-poor government policies lie at the core of the struggle in this region of the state. The issues include claims under Forest Rights Act not being settled, inadequate infrastructure in schools, rampant corruption, non-availability of oil and grains at government stores and land disputes between the Forest and Revenue Departments.

## 2.17 GUJARAT

Displacement due to development projects is one of the main issues in the state of Gujarat. Families displaced by development projects have either not been resettled at all, or the compensation package has been extremely inadequate. Land under cultivation has been acquired for projects of various kinds. Land reserved for distribution among Dalits has not been allotted to deserving families. An irrigation crisis is imminent in some pockets of the state due to the drop in the water

table because of large-scale industrialisation. Tribal communities in the state are struggling to defend their rights over land that they have been cultivating for decades. Fishing communities have seen their traditional rights being eroded and their livelihoods destroyed. Grazing rights of communities have also been threatened in several pockets of the state. Large-scale acquisition of agricultural and grazing land across the state has created resentment among people.



### 2.17.1 The Yatra at Dahod

15 June, 2012: The first halt of the Yatra in Gujarat was at Khangelakatla village of Dahod district.

#### Issues

Tribal rights over land; non-implementation of the Adivasi Swashasan Kanoon; no compensation for displaced tribals; transfer of land.

#### The Struggle

Khangelakatla, which shares its border with Baanswada (Rajasthan), Jhabua and Alirajpur (Madhya Pradesh) is also known as *Bhilasthan*. In the pre-Independence era this area belonged to the kings of the *Bhil* tribe but in the 16th century the British started the practice of rewarding agricultural workers and land workers were given land. At that time, this land could not be transferred for any other purpose. Post Independence, the Forest Department and the State Department have transferred the entire land.

In Bhavnagar and Amreli where lignite mining is done, families which have been affected due to the development projects have still not been compensated. Instead of reaching out to the tribal areas of south Gujarat with irrigation projects, water from majority of the rivers is being used for industries in Saurashtra.

Non-implementation the Adivasi Swashasan Kanoon shows that the government does not want to give land rights to tribals. In the state as a whole the government has failed to provide land and livelihood to 18 of tribals, 6 percent Dalits, 1 percent fisherman, and 1 percent salt workers. This has resulted in an increase in public anger. According to the proceedings of the Vidhan Sabha, in the last 5 years only 35 minutes have been dedicated for discussing tribal issues.

### 2.17.2 The Yatra at Vadodara, Narmada and Tapi

16 June, 2012: The Yatra stopped at Tejgad village of Vadodara district and then moved to Kwant village where a meeting was organised by Gujarat Adivashi Vikas Manch and Bhilasthan Vikas Morcha.

The next stop of the Yatra was in the Rajppeepla area of Narmada district where a meeting was organised

by Adivashi Ekta Parishad. The last stop of the Yatra was at Porcha village of Tapi district where a meeting was organised by Lok Sangharsh Morcha.

#### Issues

Large scale displacement of tribals and lack of rehabilitation; caste certificates not issued to tribals; inadequate water for villages; cases lodged against activists.

#### The Struggle

About 16 percent of the population in this region comprises tribals. Out of the total tribal population, half belong to the *Bhil* tribe. Approximately 70 percent of the population is below the poverty line. Approximately two thirds of the community land has been transferred to the State and Forest Department, which has resulted in continuous decline in the gross income that people obtained from agriculture and forest products. Small farmers are under a lot of pressure after deregulation of the forest laws. Apart from non-tribal land, tribal land is also being purchased on a large scale. Water from Narmada is being used for the industries, whereas 65 percent of the villages do not have appropriate water facilities. In some tribal pockets, caste certificates are not being issued which has resulted in a large number of tribal students being deprived of educational and employment services.

In Rajppeepla, approximately 30 years ago at the time of the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam, it was promised that water and irrigation facilities would be provided for the Kutch borders, but the promise is yet to be fulfilled. About 10,000 families have been affected due to these dam projects. Most of these families had demanded 'land for land' in compensation but that demand has still not been fulfilled.

Around 10 thousand people have been affected by the reservoir project. The demand of 'land for land' as part of the rehabilitation package was not met. As a result, most affected families have permanently migrated to Surat and Ahmedabad. Local groups have emphasized the need for an appropriate rehabilitation package for the displaced population.

Due to the Ukai dam in 1972, 178 villages were displaced, and a population of over 1 lakh was



affected. No rehabilitation package has been provided for these displaced groups till date. Over the years, legal cases have been lodged against twenty or more activists advocating for rehabilitation. A portion of this area falls under the Fifth Schedule Area. Over six districts have been affected by the Narmada Valley Project in the three states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. In spite of a High Court order in Madhya Pradesh, work on rehabilitation package is yet to begin. Over 2000 people have been agitating on this issue.

### 2.17.3 The Yatra at Tapi, Dang and Navsari

17 June, 2012: The Yatra first reached the Tapi district and then moved to Dang district. A meeting was organized at Kalibel (Dang district) by Swaraj Ashram and Adivashi Prakriti Bachao Morcha. The last stop of the Yatra was at Chorabani village of Navsari district, which culminated in a large community meeting.

#### Issues

Displacement of tribal groups due to dam project; illegal felling of trees; rejection of claims filed for forestland; migration.

#### The Struggle

The *Bhils* and other tribal groups have been tilling land in this region. People have been protesting against illegal felling of trees in the forest. Dam projects in the adjoining village have resulted in large scale land alienation, especially among tribal groups. At present less than 1 percent tribals have legal land ownership. Over 6.5 crore people have been displaced due to the construction of large and small irrigation/dam projects, out of which 45 percent comprise tribals.

Dang district has been declared violence prone by the state government. Allocations made for the *Bhil* community by the government are hardly ever utilised. 7,600 petitions were filed in the district regarding denial of access to forestland. The government has rejected 4,400 of these cases without hearing. In the rest, land is yet to be allocated.

Over 10,000 families have been affected by the reserved sanctuary and the Chikkar dam. As in other parts of the state, these families have permanently migrated to Surat and Valsad to work

in the sugarcane industry. Many local groups and communities protesting against displacement have been designated as naxalite by the government and legal action has been taken in a couple of cases.

Under the Chasmandwa Dam Project over the Auranga river in Chorabani village, an agreement has been signed by the National Water Development Agency and Gujarat government and construction work has been initiated. Over 400 hundred tribal families have been affected by the project. Till date only 63 families have received compensation/land reallocation. Under this project, a total of 15,000 people in Gujarat and 3,000 in Maharashtra are being affected.

Seven projects are under progress in this area due to which a total of 8,930 acres of forestland and 7,125 acres of cultivable land are likely to be submerged. 14,832 families of 75 villages will be directly affected.

### 2.17.4 The Yatra at Valsad and Silvassa

18 June, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was at Autha village where a public meeting was organised by Ektha Parishad and local Adivasi organisations. The second stop was at Khidki village where a meeting was organised by Sarvodyay Swadhyay Trust. The last stop of the journey was in the Union Territory (UT) of Dadar and Nagar Haveli. At Silvassa, a community meeting was organised by Adivasi Vikas Sangathana.

19 June, 2012: The first halt of the Yatra was at Bilad village of Valsad and the next was at Padao village.

#### Issues

Inadequate compensation for those displaced by dam; industrialisation; land acquisition for industries; urbanisation; control of private holders over wholesale vegetable market.

#### The Struggle

In the area of Valsad, people have been protesting against the Audha dam project for the last 30 years. The project report mentions that around 2000 families have been affected. Local groups have demanded the dis-continuation of this project. Around 525 families have submitted petitions, out of which the

government has accepted 230 petitions. But the allocations have been far less than the lands, which have been taken away from them for the project. The communities have also lodged a petition in the Gujarat High Court. The court is yet to initiate a hearing on the petition.

The Narapar Nadi Joro Abhiyan is an important part of the agitation. The Tapi and Narmada rivers are linked. The proposed height of the dam is 91 meters, due to which 15 to 20 villages will be fully submerged. 792 acres of forestland and 1,742 acres of cultivable land will also be affected. Many local groups have collectively formed the Marvi Purna Sangharsh Morcha to fight against the displacement. Some adjoining areas of Maharashtra are also affected by the project. Protests have been sent to the central and state government. Through special Gram Sabhas have endorsed a complete halt to the project, the bureaucracy is yet to take in to account these endorsements.

Silvassa became independent in 1954 from Portuguese rule. During that period 50 percent of the land was under forest cover. There were 7 different Scheduled Tribes residing in the area. The Land Reforms Regulation Act was announced in 1971 and the Land Revenue Act was announced in 1972. This resulted in large-scale development work in the area, primarily initiated by corporate groups. Today the population of STs has drastically reduced. Over 491 sq. kms. of land has been allocated to around 3000 small industries. This has resulted in large-scale displacement. In the UT, out of 74 villages 22 have been identified to promote wild life preservation along with promotion of tourism. The Fifth Scheduled Area Act is yet to be put in place in most UTs. The police and the local authorities continue to harass and physically assault communities and groups raising issues around development and land acquisition. In one such case, 200 acres of land has been taken over by a local industrial group, displacing 80 farmers. To develop Silvassa, 300 families have been displaced with no land compensation. The industrial groups, often in collusion with the local authorities, take no cognisance of the mandatory pollution control norms.

Large-scale urbanisation is affecting land holdings as peripheries of the city are being expanded. In the

last 5 years, 3000 acres of land has been allocated for residential and urban development. The thriving vegetable production of Navsari district has been affected due to control on private holders over the wholesale market.

### 2.17.5 The Yatra at Surat

20 June, 2012: The Yatra reached Mandvi of Surat district.

21 June, 2012: The Yatra reached Eim of Surat district, where students and Eim Educational Society organised a meeting.

### Issues

Land acquisition for urban development; irrigation shortfall in adjoining villages; land acquisition for mining and highway project; drop in water table; arrest of protesters; little or no compensation to affected families.

### The Struggle

Over the last 10 years, around 2000 acres of land in Mandvi has been taken over for urban development. One of the fallouts of this development is the irrigation shortfall in adjoining villages, as most of the water resources are being used for drinking water supplies.

In Tarakeshwar, 8000 acres of land has been acquired for lignite mining. The water levels in a peripheral area of 10 sq. kms. has dropped from 40 to 50 feet. The Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation had promised employment to the affected population. However, till date no one has been provided any employment under the project. In the adjoining village in Mangroad, the Gujarat Industrial Power Corporation has established an 800 Mega Watt power plant. 15 villages are likely to be acquired for the project. 82 people have been arrested for protesting against the project. Land has also been acquired for development of the national highway. In Bharuch, little or no compensation or employment has been provided to affected families.

### 2.17.6 The Yatra at Bhavnagar

22 June, 2012: The Yatra reached Gholera village of Bhavnagar district where Mahiti organised a meeting.

## Issues

Notice for vacation of land.

## The Struggle

Under Special Investment Region Act, 22 villages have been given a unilateral notice for vacating land.

### 2.17.7 The Yatra at Ahmedabad

22 June, 2012: The Yatra reached Baoliyari village of Ahmedabad district, where villagers organised a meeting. The last stop of the Yatra was at Bhavnagar.

## Issues

Land acquisition; inadequate compensation; violation of Supreme Court order in Narmada command area.

## The Struggle

Village Baoliyari is situated in the Bay of Khambat. Farmers of the village have had assured means of irrigation from the Narmada dam for the last 20 years. However in 2006, since the Gujarat Special Investment Region Act was announced, 22 villages have been issued notices for land acquisition. A total area of 900 square km. has been identified for development of this project. Landholders have been provided compensation at Rs. 40,000 per acre whereas the market rates are at Rs. 500,000. This area falls under the Narmada Command area, where according to the Supreme Court order no industrial development projects can be initiated.

Villagers in Belaodhar mentioned that 50 villages and over 80,000 acres of land will be affected by the proposed Petro Chemical Investment Region project and the Mumbai-Delhi Industrial Corridor.

### 2.17.8 The Yatra at Bhavnagar

23 June, 2012: The first stop of the journey was at Thauli village. The next stop was at Mithi Girdi village. A community meeting was organised at village Dugeri Mahua. The last stop of the Yatra was at Rajula village, where Uthan Samaj Sevi Sansthan organised a community meeting.

## Issues

Land acquisition due to industrialization; mining and nuclear power project; inadequate compensation; families rendered landless due to mining project.

## The Struggle

Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC) has been mining lignite in this region of the state. 12 villages have been affected. 4,200 hectares of cultivable land and 250 hectares of grazing land has been acquisitioned for the project. In 2007, the villagers collectively lodged a petition against GMDC. The project had also promised employment but none of these promises have been fulfilled. Gujarat Power Limited Corporation has also acquired land in adjoining villages. But the compensation paid is lower than the market price.

In village Khurdi, 372 villagers have been rendered landless due to land acquisition for mining projects.

The community of Mithi Girdi village has been protesting against the proposed project by Nuclear Power Corporation of India. This project is expected to require 700 hectares of land but already 1000 hectares have been projected for meeting the requirements for additional facilities. This would affect around 45 villages and a population of about 1 lakh 71 thousand. The local community has sent a petition to the government seeking a closure of the project.

The community of Dugeri Mahua village has blocked the land acquisition by the Nirma group of companies. After a long drawn legal process, the Supreme Court nullified the land acquisition proposal and stalled all work of the project.

In Rajula village, the community has been protesting against several lime stone mining leases.

### 2.17.9 The Yatra at Amreli

24 June, 2012: The Yatra reached Nadshri Jatravad of Amreli where Vishwa Manav Kalyan Parishad organised a community meeting. The next stop was at village Kodinar of Junagadh district.

## Issues

Land reserved for scheduled castes not distributed; depletion of water table due to industrialisation;

inadequate monetary support to BPL families to purchase land; fishing community likely to be affected by industrialisation and land acquisition.

## The Struggle

In the coastal region 40 percent of the community is landless and among them, two thirds are from Dalit groups. Though 15,300 hectares of land has been reserved for scheduled castes in the district, no land has been distributed so far.

The coastal districts of Gujarat have seen large-scale depletion of the water table due to industrialization. 33 lakh hectares of land was reserved by the government for distribution to Dalit families in the Saurashtra region. This is yet to be done. Though the average cost of land in Gujarat is around 4 lakh per hectare, the Gujarat government provides a monetary support of Rs. 2 lakh for each BPL family to buy land.

### 2.17.10 The Yatra at Junagadh

25 June, 2012: The Yatra reached Somnath region of Junagadh.

#### Issues

Restrictions on grazing rights.

## The Struggle

In the region of Junagadh, over 50,000 people are engaged in the fishing industry. Ambuja Cement has acquired 4000 acres of land in Junagadh. Large-scale industrialisation in this region will have detrimental effects on the fishing community. Grazing rights of communities have been restricted due to the Gir Lion Sanctuary Project. A local tax of Rs. 5/- is collected for providing grazing access for cattle.

### 2.17.11 The Yatra at Jamnagar

26 June, 2012: The Yatra reached Rupen Bandar, where a meeting was held by local groups.

#### Issues

Fishing rights and water pollution; inadequate support from government; need for development of a fishing port.

## The Struggle

The fishing community in this region comprises around 15,000 people out of which 90 percent are Muslim. The average income of these groups is falling drastically due to large-scale water contamination by the Tata Chemical Factory. While previously each family was provided 450 litres of kerosene for fishing activities, now only 80 litres are provided at Rs. 14/- per litre. Rest of the procurement is made from the open market at Rs. 60/-. The government has also imposed restrictions on deep-sea fishing. 50,000 fisher folk have collectively petitioned for development of a local port for fishing. The fishermen have also been protesting against the illegal charges/bribes demanded by the local authorities especially for fishing rights.

### Success Stories

- Okhamandal has formed over 200 local collectives of women and linked over 10,000 women with livelihood opportunities. Through collective action in Amarda village, a population of 20,000 has been provided access to safe portable water.
- Artisans have been provided appropriate prices for their products through local haats.
- Local groups in Badokariya village have managed to stop illegal mining. Mining operations are being undertaken through local cooperatives.

### 2.17.12 The Yatra at Kutch

26 June, 2012: A public meeting was organised by Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan. The last stop of the Yatra was at Bhadreswar village.

#### Issues

Industrialisation and lack of access to traditional grazing land; inadequate land allocation to marginalized groups; protesters charged on false cases.

## The Struggle

The Kutch region has seen widespread violation of grazing rights of over 4000 villages. 48,568 acres of barren land has been identified by local groups

which could be allocated to landless groups and for common grazing. Over the last many years, less than 10 percent of land has been allocated to marginalised groups. In Mundra taluka, 30,000 families have lost access to their grazing land. In the same region, the Adani Group has been provided a corridor spreading over 57 sq. kms. Between 1982-94, eight Dalit cooperative groups were formed and 5000 acres of land has been provided for redistribution through these cooperative groups.

12 villages have been displaced under the Wild Ass Sanctuary.

In Bhadreshwar, a 300 Mega Watt power plant is being constructed since 2006. The local community has strongly protested against initiation of the work. The Government of India has recommended reworking the project strategy. This however has not been implemented. 30 people have been booked under various cases for agitating against the project.

### 2.17.13 The Yatra at Kutch and Surendra Nagar

28 June, 2012: The Yatra reached Rakhbandar village. The next stop was at Surendra Nagar.

#### Issues

Pollution of sea and inland water; transfer of grazing land for industrial purposes; land provided to landless Dalit families not demarcated.

#### The Struggle

There has been large-scale pollution of sea-water due to the cement factory operational in the region. Inland water sources have also been affected and water has become highly contaminated.

In Bachau region, 10,000 acres of grazing land has been transferred for industrial purposes. The government has provided 3,500 acres of land to landless Dalit families. However, this is yet to be distributed. Even demarcation of this land is yet to be initiated. In spite of petitions, there has been no progress on this issue over the last three years.

### 2.17.14 The Yatra at Ahmedabad

29 June, 2012: A regional level meeting was organized.

A regional level meeting was organised to discuss various issues and develop a plan of action. Senior members from the Bhoodan board suggested submission of a joint petition to the Government of India calling for land redistribution.

### 2.17.15 The Yatra at Mehsana and Banaskantha

1 July, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was at Valmiki Nagar followed by Palanpur village. The last stop was at Disa village.

#### Issues

Residential and cultivation rights of *Bhils*; no Scheduled Tribe identity card for *Bhils* in urban areas; land alienation; district level land court not operational; eviction of Dalit families.

#### The Struggle

Around 3000 *Bhils* who reside in this district, have no residential and cultivation rights. In urban areas they have not been provided with any Scheduled Tribe identity cards, due to which they are unable to access government services.

At the stop in Palanpur village, issues of tribal land alienation were discussed. Complex processes and lack of access to government authorities were some of the key reasons for inability of tribal groups to access services. The Gujarat government has constituted a district level land court to settle local issues. However, this is yet to be operationalised in most places.

In Disa, 26 Dalit families have been forcibly evicted by the local landlord. They are yet to get any legal recourse.

### 2.17.16 The Yatra at Banaskantha

2 July, 2012: The Yatra reached village Bodhi Bhakhri Virampur. The next stop was at Khedbrahma.

#### Issues

Displacement, lack of social protection; Adivasis with out tribal certificates.

#### The Struggle

Thousands of tribal families in this region of the state have been displaced by the 1980 National Wild

Life Protection Act. The tribals lack social protection. Implementation of central and state government schemes has been extremely weak. In Khedbrahma, 5000 Adivasi families have been deprived of social benefits since they are yet to receive their scheduled tribe certificates. Only 26 percent of the ST population is under the BPL category.

### **2.17.17 the Yatra at Sabarkantha**

3 July, 2012: The Yatra reached Bhiloda village.

#### **Issues**

Drop in Adivasis engaging in agriculture; land acquisition; non acceptance of claims filed by tribals; inadequate compensation.

#### **The Struggle**

According to government records, 59.2 percent of tribals were engaged in agriculture in 1961, whereas

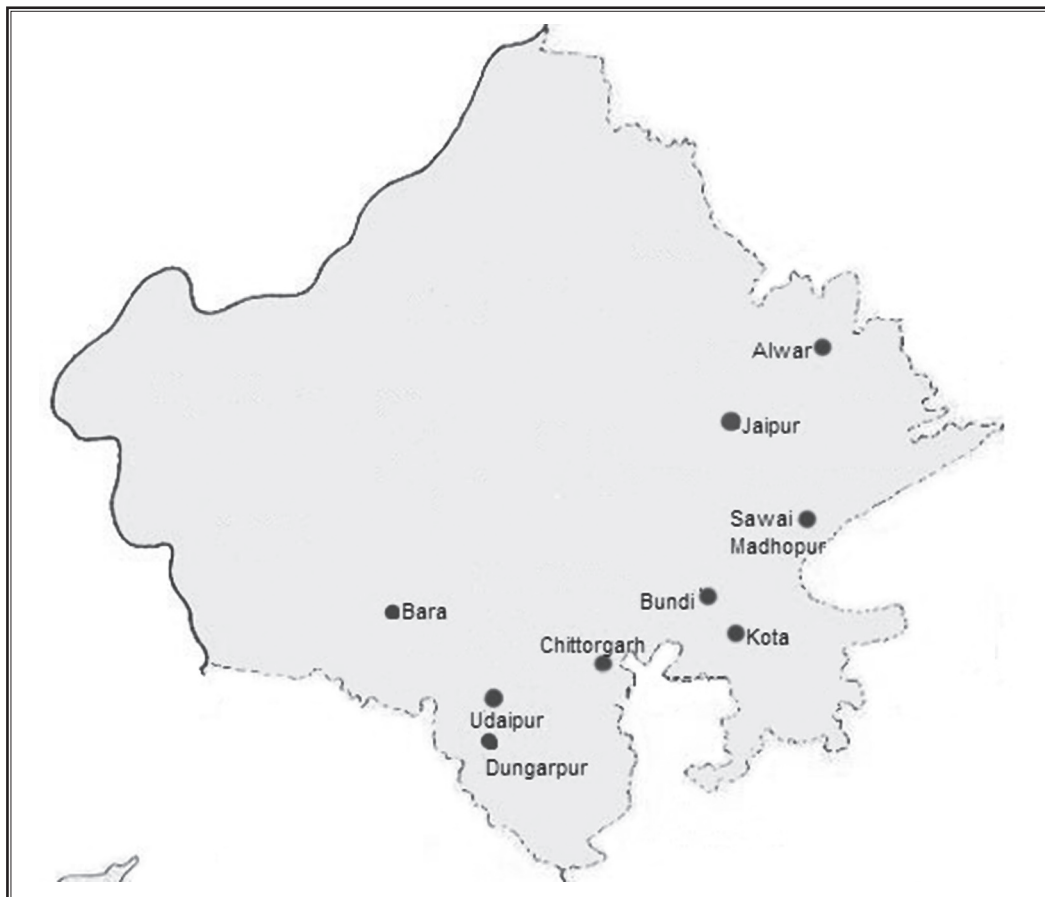
in 1991 only 45.79 percent Adivasis are engaged in agriculture. Statistics collected by local groups show only 26 percent of the Adivasi families have land for cultivation. Till 1960, Gujarat was under the unified Gujarat-Bombay state and governed by the Bombay Revenue Act, 1879, resulting in large-scale land acquisition. It was only in 1981 that land acquisition in tribal areas was prohibited. Till 2001, 45,926 petitions were identified under which 1,40,324 acres of land were transferred from the tribal families to general groups. Out of these, in 1,18,259 cases, land rights have been restored.

In Sabarkantha, only 4 percent of the cases filed by tribal families/groups have been accepted by the government. The compensation for tribal land has been fixed at a dismally low amount, ranging from Rs.2 to 5 thousand per acre. Only 10 percent of tribals have been provided rehabilitation.

## 2.18 RAJASTHAN

Several kinds of struggles related to land, forests and other natural resources are being waged in the state of Rajasthan. Many tribal communities are struggling to establish rights over land they have been cultivating since decades. Thousands of families displaced by nuclear plant projects, dams and industrial projects have been denied fair compensation and resettlement. One of the most concerted struggles revolves around the attempt to snatch away rights over common village land. Afforestation programmes conceived by the

Forest Department on common village land have restricted traditional rights of communities. There has been very slow progress in terms of the much acclaimed government plan to distribute land among the landless. Forest Protection Committees have not taken off and claims under the Forest Rights Act have not been settled. Land, by and large, remains under the control of powerful landlords or has been acquired for development projects with little or no compensation to those who have been cultivating it.



### 2.18.1 The Yatra at Dungarpur

4 July, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was at Bichwada village in Dungarpur district. A community meeting was organised by Bagad Majddor Kisan Sangathan. The next stop of the journey was at the district headquarter in Dungarpur.

#### Issues

Alienation of tribal land; Mumbai-Udaipur Railway Corridor; marble mining; nuclear plant; irrigation projects; industrial development; dams.

#### The Struggle

This region falls under the Fifth Schedule Area and is inhabited by *Bhil* tribes. There has been very little development over the last few decades, particularly in terms of initiation of the PESA and access to Forests Rights Acts. Due to the initiation of the Mumbai-Udaipur Railway Corridor, around 5,000 hectares of land has been acquired, while only 1,700 hectares of land has been reallocated. Tribals in this belt have been facing several problems in getting compensation, due to lack of an understanding of legal procedures. *Patwaris* have demanded bribes to process claims. A Joint Parliamentary Commission has been instituted to look into the transfers.

The Gram Panchayats have not received their share of revenue as mandated under the PESA Act. Around 2000 acres of tribal land has been illegally transferred in favour of other social groups through dubious methods.

In Danapur Panchayat, 15 villages were evacuated for a proposed nuclear plant project. The villagers have filed a petition against this project. 5000 families displaced in 1995 under the Mewada Irrigation Project are yet to be appropriately rehabilitated. A total of 12,000 families have been displaced under different projects over the last 2 decades.

In adjoining Banswara district, 187 villages displaced under the Mahi project and 57 villages displaced under the Sadana project are yet to be fully relocated and compensated. 82 families of Kodiya village lost their agricultural land in 1996 due to a dam project.

In 1990, the Rajasthan Industrial Development Board acquired 800 *bighas* of land. Work has not been

initiated yet. This land is now being auctioned to private groups at the rate of Rs 20 lakh per acre, whereas the compensation amount was in the range of Rs 20,000- 30,0000 per acre.

The Maharaja of Dungarpur had provided 10,500 hectares of land in 21 villages to rehabilitate landless tribals. However, in the last two decades, the Rajasthan Government has taken over this land. Since the petition filed by the community is under consideration, these families have been denied access to their land. In the district as a whole, around 4000 acres of tribal land are under legal processes.

In Rampur, many tribal land petitions have been rejected in contravention of the provisions in the Fifth Schedule Area Act. Claims over 45 acres of collective land under the provisions of the Gram Daan Act have been rejected. As land under this Act is not legally registered, tribals are facing problems in claiming their rights, resulting in conflicts with the Tribal and Revenue Departments. 200 acres of land is also being taken over for a proposed railway track extension project.

### 2.18.2 The Yatra at Udaipur

5 July, 2012: A *jan sunwai* was organised at Udaipur.

#### Issues

Land alienation; manganese mining.

#### The Struggle

In Mamer Panchayat, 116 petitions were filed till 2006, out of which 30 cases were processed. 160 petitions were filed in Mahan Panchayat. Subsequently, the Forest Department conducted a survey, but land is yet to be allocated. Cases from 8 adjoining Panchayats have similarly been stalled.

In Banswara district, in Kushalgarh and Sajjangadh blocks, 1,130 applications were filed, out of which allocations have been completed only in 60 percent of the cases. Over 1000 families have been directly affected by manganese mines.

### 2.18.3 The Yatra at Chittorgarh

6 July, 2012: The Yatra reached Biloda village. A meeting was organised in Indira Sagar Dam Project



area by Prayas. The next stop of the Yatra was at the district headquarter.

### Issues

Land alienation; lime stone mining; industrial development.

### The Struggle

The Indira Sagar Dam Project was constructed for providing irrigation. Lime stone mines along with 26 industrial units have come up in the region. In Nimad, 14 villages have been vacated to make way for these development projects. Land compensation is being provided at the rate of Rs. 1.5–2.0 lakh per acre, whereas this is being sold to the private companies at 25-40 lakh per acre.

In the Biloda village area, Aditya Birla Group is establishing an industrial unit and has requested the government for 1000 acres of land for the project. There has been strong opposition by the local community to the proposed industrial unit. Land is being sold at 10-15 lakh / acre in the region, and a fraction of the cost is being paid as compensation. Cement units in the region have adversely affected agricultural production. Health problems are on the rise.

### 2.18.4 The Yatra at Bundi and Kota

8 July, 2012: The Yatra stopped at Dabi village, where a community meeting was organised by Van Adhikar Samiti. The next meeting was organised at the Kota district headquarter by youth representatives.

### Issues

Land alienation; limited opportunities for self-employment.

### The Struggle

*Bhils* have been cultivating community land in the Barad area. The Forest Department has been claiming the village commons due to mining interests. Petitions by 12 Gram Panchayats on the issue have not been accepted.

In the meeting at Kota the limited self employment opportunities for the youth was discussed. The slow

progress in land distribution since independence was mentioned as a cause for concern.

### 2.18.5 The Yatra at Baran

9 July, 2012: The next stop of the Yatra was at Kishangunj followed by Bhawargadh.

### Issues

Land alienation by Forest Department; policy for small / marginal farmers; urbanisation.

### The Struggle

In struggle in Kharda is against the attempt of the Forest Department to gain control over village commons, where 38 families have been cultivating since the last 17 years. The department has initiated an afforestation project over 400 acres of the acquired land. Cases have been filed against tribals trying to re-claim control over their land. Similar cases have occurred in adjoining villages of Chatrapur and Kehwada, where 32 *Saharia* families have lost control over their land. Land is also being forcibly taken away by the dominant Dhakhads. Their efforts to coordinate through the District Collector have failed to yield any positive results. Over 5000 cases are pending in the district. The Chief Minister in 201, had issued a statement mentioning that all tribal land alienation cases would be resolved in a time bound manner. Nothing much has happened on this front.

In the meeting at Bhawargadh, the need for the Rajasthan Government to formulate a clear policy to protect rights of small/ marginal farmers was reiterated. The state has witnessed large scale acquisition of land by the government as well as by local landlords and dominant caste groups. The control of tribals over the village commons has been greatly restricted. The Forest Protection Committees formed at the village level largely toe the government line of action. Around 100 acres of land has been taken over for development of the Bara township, largely under threat from the land mafia. Similar cases have occurred in Khalala and Durjpur villages. Out of the 2000 applications filed, action has been initiated only in 412 cases.

## 2.18.6 The Yatra at Sheopur (Madhya Pradesh)

11 July, 2012: A *Saharia* Panchayat meeting was organised at village Karahal. The next stop of the Yatra was organised at Sheopur Kala district head quarter.

Between 2009 and 2011, 3900 *Saharias* had filed petitions through the Van Adhikar Samitis, out of which, only 938 applications have been accepted. Afforestation projects have been initiated on most disputed lands. In Karahal alone, 200 acres are under the afforestation project. The practice of bonded labour is rampant which is locally known as the Hadi system.

The increasing control of upper castes over land in the Fifth Schedule Areas is worrisome. The government claimed that all land issues/ claims in these areas would be settled in a stipulated period of 90 days. But this has not been done. Ekta Parishad has provided a list of 900 corrupt/ erring officials, but no action has been initiated against these officials till now. The *Saharia* Development Authority has done little for their progress. However, the local Panchayats are becoming more aware and have been asserting their rights.

### Claiming Rights

In 2005, land of 81 *Saharia* families was grabbed by dominant groups, in collusion with the Revenue Department and the Judiciary. With intervention of Ekta Parishad, the *pattas* that had been issued were rejected and claims of the *Sahariyas* were reinstated in 2011-12. After a struggle of over a decade, the government provided seeds, implements, and tractors to initiate cultivation.

Over 100 petitions have been filed against corruption by revenue officials, mostly on issues of transfer of tribal land to non-tribal groups. Over 500 cases of physical violence against tribals have also been filed. No action has been initiated against them.

In 2000-02, a District Task Force was created, under which 3000 families were provided *pattas*. This body is no longer functional.

## 2.18.7 The Yatra at Sheopur (Madhya Pradesh) and Sawai Madhopur (Rajasthan)

13 July, 2012: A meeting was organised at Soi Ektara. The next meeting was organised in Sukar Panchayat of Swai Madhopur district of Rajasthan.

## Issues

Land acquisition; displacement.

## The Struggle

In 5 Gram Panchayats adjoining Sukar, tribals do not have traditional/ legal land rights. Health, education, electricity and roads are non-existent. 21 villages have been vacated to make way for extension of the Tiger Sanctuary Zone, resulting in conflicts between locals and the Forest Department. No compensation is provided for the loss of crops caused by the wild animals. More than 40 percent of the farmers have been rendered landless due to the relentless acquisition of land and these families are now solely dependent on wage labour. Many have migrated.

## 2.18.8 The Yatra at Tonk

14 July, 2012: The Yatra reached Newai, Chaksu, where a meeting was organised by Kisan Sewa Samiti and CECODECON. The next stop of the Yatra was organised at Chaksu by Kisan Sewa Samiti.

## Issues

Rights over common/ grazing land; encroachment.

## The Struggle

Over 80 percent (around 3000 acres) of common grazing land in this region of the state is controlled by the upper/ influential caste groups. Under the Rajasthan Land Act, these commons are to be allocated to the landless families. This has not however been done.

The local Bairwas no longer have control over their Gramdani land in Chaksu and Santoshpur village. As they are not the legal title holders, they are unable to access benefits like Kisan Credit Cards. Nor are these areas included in the local development budgets.

## 2.18.9 The Yatra at Jaipur

15 July, 2012: Jan Satyagraha and Ekta Mahila Manch organised a national consultation on Women and Land Rights.

16 July, 2012: A *jan sunwai* was organised by Dalit Rights Center, MKSS and Ekta Parishad in Jaipur.

The Yatra then stopped at Hamirpur, followed by Bhandi Tilhad. The last meeting was at Bhikampura village.

#### **Issues Raised at the *Jan Sunwai*, Jaipur**

- a) Large scale displacement due to the National Tiger Sanctuary
- b) Criminal proceedings against tribals (Bajara, Kanjar, Ghasi) demanding land rights.
- c) Land acquisition by the Rajasthan Industrial Board for establishing industrial units at rock bottom prices.
- d) Allocation of land to landless families.
- e) Violence/intimidation against tribals and organization espousing their cause.

#### **2.16.10 The Yatra at Alwar**

17 July: Yatra held in Kaled, Hamirpur, Bhandi Tilhad, Bhikampura. The meeting in Kaled was organised by Tarun Bharat Sangh and Awri Sansad members

#### **Issues**

Restoration of river and other water bodies.

#### **The Struggle**

In 1996, after restoration of the Wari river, fishing rights were given to contractors from Jaipur at a paltry rate. After a lot of agitation by the community with support from Tarun Bharat Sangh, the authorities revoked the contract. Over the years, Awri Sansad has taken path breaking initiatives in preserving the local ecology, including restoration of around 400 water bodies.

#### **Issues raised in Meetings at Bhandi Tilhad and Bhikampura**

- In Losal village, 125 families have reinitiated agriculture due to restoration of the local water bodies. Efforts are being taken to initiate collective agriculture on barren land.
- There is a need to strengthen people's movement against contractors and mining companies. This is essential to preserve the environment and protect rights of tribals. Funds provided by European nations and Japan are being used in an inappropriate manner.

On 16th July, the State culmination meeting was organised at Alwar.

## 2.19 HARYANA

In the short course of the Yatra through the state of Haryana a host of issues revolving around land were thrown up. People of the state are fighting against the transfer of prime agricultural land for non-farm activities and illegal acquisition of agricultural land. Pockets of the state are reeling under the impact of inadequate irrigation facilities. Agriculture has become unremunerative in parts of the state. Increasing incidents of indebtedness and landlessness are matters of enormous concern.

### 2.19.1 The Yatra at Mewat and Palwal

20 July, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra in Haryana was at village Rupadaka in Mewat. Local NGOs welcomed the Yatra. Haryana Mewat Vikas Sabha participated in the event. The second stop was at Hatin village where a meeting was organised by Sarva Samaj Sangathan and Bharat Swabhiman Manch. The next stop was at Palwal, where a meeting was organised by Arya Samaj and Bharat Swabhiman Manch.



## Issues

Struggle for reorganisation; lack of irrigation facilities; transfer of agricultural land for non-farming activities; increasing landlessness.

## The Struggle

Rupadaka village has been fighting for reorganisation. The highly productive agricultural land of Mewat, which supplies food grain, milk and vegetables to Delhi, lacks irrigation facilities. About 5000 acres of agricultural land in Palwal has been transferred for non-farm activities. Landlessness is on the rise.

### 2.19.2 The Yatra at Jhanjar and Mahendragarh

21 July, 2012: First stop of the Yatra was at the district headquarter, Jhanjar. A meeting was organised by Kisan Sangharsh Samiti and Kisan Vikas Manch. Last stop was at Khori at Rewari. The Yatra was welcomed by the Centre for Rural Initiative and Advancement.

## Issues

Land grabbing; industrialisation; government unwillingness to discuss the issue of land.

## The Struggle

25,000 acres of land in Jhanjar and Gud village has been grabbed by the Reliance Company. Royalty and welfare works have not been undertaken. 80 percent of the farmers have filed complaints against land grabbing but no action has so far been taken on the complaints. People are being threatened by the land mafia. 1,200 acres of land was grabbed under various housing projects and further land grabbing is feared on another 2,200 acres. Around 5,000 villagers have lost their livelihoods. Around 10,000 acres of land has been demarcated for various industries. The government is not ready to discuss the issue. Parallel violent movements are on the rise.

### 2.19.3 The Yatra at Rewari

22 July, 2012: The Yatra stopped at Rewari, where a meeting was organized by Kisan organizations. The Yatra later stopped at Riwasa Mazara of Mahendragarh district.

## Issues

Grabbing of agricultural land.

## The Struggle

At Riwasa Mazara village, Kisan Sangharsh Samiti has organized a movement against illegal land acquisition. 78 acres of land was transferred in May 2011 and another 8,000 acres is proposed for acquisition. 95 percent of this is agricultural land. Land was bought at the rate of Rs. 8000 per gazand is being sold at the rate of Rs. 66 lakhs per acre. Around 600 farmers have been served notice for land acquisition. Local residents of this village have expressed their anger through a memorandum but have received no response either from elected leaders or from government officials.

### 2.19.4 The Yatra at Rohtak

23 July, 2012: First stop of the Yatra was at the district headquarter, Rohtak. A meeting was organised by Akhil Bhartiya Kisan Sabha. The last stop was at Patikalyan Ashram, Panipat. The Yatra was welcomed by people of the Ashram and local farmers.

## Issues

Lack of clear agriculture policy; lack of electricity and water.

## The Struggle

70 percent of the population in this region of Haryana is dependent on agriculture. About 95 percent of the farmers are trapped in debts due to the high cost of agriculture and low returns. Industries have been given land at subsidised rates while farmers have been fired upon.

## 2.20 PUNJAB

Beneficiaries of land distributed under the *Hathbandhi kanoon* are fighting for entitlements. Affluent upper castes and powerful people wield control over large tracts of *Shamlat* land which is meant for distribution among Dalits. Cases have been reported where beneficiaries of *Shamlat* land have been left with no choice but to work as bonded labourers on their own land, on terms and conditions dictated by affluent villagers. The non-transparent leasing process of Panchayat land at several places in the state works to the advantage of the rich and influential while the landless Dalits are left out of

the process. Small and marginal farmers in large numbers have failed to benefit from the much-acclaimed Green Revolution. Landlessness among Dalits is on the rise.

### 2.20.1 The Yatra at Patiala

24 July, 2012: The Yatra moved from Panipat, Haryana and entered Punjab. It first stopped at a frontier village, Shambhu Gate. Dalit Dasata Virodhi Abhiyan and its associates welcomed the Yatra and arranged a meeting. The second stop was at Patiala headquarter where a public meeting was organised



by Dalit Dasata Virodhi Abhiyan. The third stop was at Dakla village where a *jan sunwai* was organised by Dalit Dasata Virodhi Abhiyan. The Yatra then stopped at Bithoi. At the next halt of the Yatra in Karahli village, a meeting was organised. The sixth stop was Dulladh village, the seventh at Mavikala and the last at Hamjedi. Village meetings were organised at all these places.

25 July, 2012: The Yatra reached Bedra village where a meeting was organised by DDVA and the villagers. The next stops were at Katrala, Kolara, Nagra Gaon and the last stop was Sanam Gaon of Sangrur district.

## Issues

*Shamlat* land usurped by village affluents; no land entitlements to Dalits; beneficiaries of land under *Hathbandhi Kanoon* yet to receive entitlements; lengthy legal procedures for land right claims and conflict resolutions; bonded labour; increase in indebtedness among farmers; demand for separate agriculture policy for small and marginal farmers; irregular and limited work opportunities and low wages for landless; delayed and pending payments under MGNREGA, informal existence of *Thhappa pratha*; inhuman treatment of bonded labourers. Repercussions of Green Revolution on small and marginal farmers; land grabbing by large farmers; contracting process for *Shamlat* land works in favour of large and well-off farmers; grazing lands grabbed by the affluents; bonded labour; migration; indebtedness.

## The Struggle

Punjab is primarily an agricultural state. 29 percent of the state population comprises Dalits who own only 1.5 percent of the agricultural land. 4 lakh acres of land is *Shamlat* land, meant for distribution among Dalits. This land is illegally controlled by the affluent privileged caste villagers. The government has failed to give land entitlements to Dalits. There are 6 lakh landless and homeless families in the state. 1 lakh acre out of 1.2 lakh acre of land has been distributed under the *Hathbandhi Kanoon* but in reality more than 80 percent of the beneficiaries have not received their entitlements. More than 35,000 disputed cases of land rights are pending in various courts.

In Dakla village, around 65 families have been cultivating 16 acres of *Shamlat* land for the last 40 years. Their land has been usurped by influential villagers and the families have been forced to work as bonded labourers in their own fields. The issue was brought to the notice of the district administration, but no action was taken. In Bithoi village, 11 acres of *Shamlat* land has been usurped by powerful landlords of the village.

In Karahli village, out of 72 acres of *Shamlat* land, 23 acres is kept for Dalits and this land is being cultivated for the last 8 years with the help of Dalit Dasata Virodhi Abhiyan. Due to high investment cost in agriculture about 90 percent of the farmers of the village have become indebted.

About 70 families in Dulladh village got entitlements over 18 acres of *Shamlat* land with the help of Dalit Dasata Virodhi Abhiyan. Despite receiving entitlements, the land remains under the influence of affluent villagers.

In Mavikala, 50 landless families have been doing wage labour in farms under MGNREGA. On an average these families get just 150 days of work in a year. Daily wages for men is Rs. 150-200 while women receive only Rs.100. Payments under MGNREGA are often pending.

In Hamjedi village, Panchayat land has been usurped by non tribal landlords. Six acres of *Shamlat* land, which was kept for 75 landless families, has been grabbed by the powerful. The landless families are being forced by the powerful to work under inhuman terms and conditions.

### Punjab at a Glance

As per census 2001, about 15 lakh families are homeless, 13 lacs have no toilet facility, 6 lakh have no bedrooms, and 10 lakh families live in single rooms. 60 percent of the population in 3000 villages is Dalit. This population possesses only 1.5 percent of the land. Only five lakh families are included in BPL.

In Bedra village, the Green Revolution has left 90 percent of the small and marginal farmers in debt due to high investment costs in agriculture and increase in incidents of land grabbing by large farmers.

123 families in village Bedra are landless. Only 20 acres out of the 60 acres of *Shamlat* land is meant for Dalits but this land has been usurped by big farmers. Panchayat contracts are tendered at the rate of Rs. 40000 per acre. Only large farmers can take part in this auction process. The situation is not different in Katrala and Nagra, while in Kolara village affluent people have captured land meant for distribution among Dalits. The government has not fulfilled its promise of distribution of land among Dalits for housing purposes. Dalit families do not receive grain at the promised rate under the PDS. 900 families in the village are landless and homeless and most of them belong to castes such as Raidasi and Bairagi. They work as bonded labourers or migrate to villages of Haryana.

Families have lost their livestock as there is no fodder land in the village. Fodder lands have been grabbed by influential people. There are restrictions on the collection of cow dung, fodder and hay from the lands of the landlords. The landless often have to work at the houses of landlords without wages. Facilities for education, health and drinking water are lacking in the village.

### 2.20.2 The Yatra at Sangrur and Mansa

26 July, 2012: The Yatra reached village Bakhora Khurd where a meeting was held. The next stop was at village Pashuana of Manasa where DDVA and MANREGA Workers' Association organised a public meeting. Other stops were at Dariyapur, Ahamedpura, Bade Marini and Johar ke Gaon of Mansa district. Public meetings were organised in these villages.

#### Issues

Land not distributed among landless Dalits; land grabbed by affluents; resourcelessness of small farmers.

#### The Struggle

Out of 3.1 lakhs acres of land that was meant for distribution among landless Dalits, only 1.10 lakh acres has been distributed. In 1961 this land was handed over to the state government but government

officials and affluent people connived to get the land leased out at a higher cost and the land was subsequently grabbed by affluents. Besides, the constraint of resources in this region has forced many small farmers to lease out their lands to bigger farmers.

### 2.20.3 The Yatra at Bhatinda

27 July, 2012: The Yatra moved through villages Talwandi and Jaisinghwala Gaon.

#### Issues

Adverse impact of Green Revolution- pollution; health problems.

#### The Struggle

Excessive use of chemical fertilisers in Talwandi has polluted soil and water in the area. The high level of mercury in ground water is a known cause for the high incidence of cancer in the region. 12 people have died of cancer during the last five years. The train to Jaipur is commonly referred to as the 'Cancer Express'.

### 2.20.4 The Yatra at Muktsar

28 July, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was at village Sotha where a meeting was conducted. The next stop was at village Khandewala. A meeting was organised by MGNREGA Workers' Association. The Yatra then proceeded to Kilyawani, Mahabadar and the last stop was at Khudiya Gaon.

#### Issues

Non participation of Dalits in bidding process of *Shamlat* land; use of dummy candidates to grab land.

#### The Struggle

Dalit representatives do not take part in the bidding process because of which land is leased out to the powerful people. In Ludhiana, around 700 acres of *Shamlat* land has been transferred to Reliance and Bharti Airtel. Due to lack of transparency, most Dalits and landless are excluded from the Panchayat lease process. Sometimes the influential people grab



land in the lease process by using dummy Dalit candidates.

### 2.20.5 The Yatra at Fazilka

29 July, 2012: The Yatra reached Khadiyana Gaon where DDVA organised a meeting. It then moved to Varanwala Gaon where villagers organised a meeting. The next stop was at Mumukheda Khadwa, Salemsah, Lukeriya and the last stop was at Aminganj Rodawali in Fazilka district. Meetings were organised at all these places.

#### Issues

Implicating Dalits in false cases; non participation of Dalits in land bidding process; land grabbing.

#### The Struggle

In Khaadiyana village, 13 false robbery cases have been filed against landless Dalits who dared to demand decent wages and land rights. In Varanwala Gaon, Dalits have not taken part in land bidding for the last 10 years as the process is not open. Information about the process of lease of *Shamlat* land is not properly circulated. In Salemsah village, land has been grabbed by the higher ups and Raisikh Dalit families were not provided any information about the 100 acres of land which was to be distributed among them.

### 2.20.6 The Yatra at Tarn Taran

31 July, 2012: The Yatra first stopped at Kirtobar village. A meeting was organised by the Gram Pradhan. The next stop was at Subra Gaon, where DDVA organised a public meeting. The Yatra then moved to village Turkaband, Manochahal.

#### Issues

Struggle of Dalits for rights on *Shamlat* land; land grabbing; low wages; migration.

#### The Struggle

Landless Dalits of Kirtobar have been struggling for their rights on *Shamlat* land for the last 40 years. Ten years back, they brought the issue of land grabbing to the notice of the government. Government response is still awaited. In Subra village, 1,200 acres is under control of influential villagers. In all villages

the process of leasing out of *Shamlat* land favours influential villagers. Dalits are left with no option but to migrate to neighbouring states.

### 2.20.7 The Yatra at Kapurthala

1 August, 2012: The Yatra stopped at Madesa Gaon, Pirewal, Sukharain, Husainabad and Mothawala. Meetings were conducted in all villages.

2 August, 2012: The first stop of the Yatra was at Machewal village, where the NREGA Workers' Union organised a public meeting.

#### Issues

Faulty lease procedures; landlessness; low wages.

#### The Struggle

People of all villages are struggling for their entitlements. In Madesa people have proposed a collective lease on *Shamlat* land where they can do community farming. The government has not responded to the proposal yet. Due to faulty lease procedures in all these villages, the Dalits and landless are left with no option but work as labourers on the lands of landlords.

Villagers are struggling for cancellation of the Panchayat lease practice. They are demanding transparency in the land distribution system. One of the major problems faced by villagers of Machewal, are pending wages under NREGA scheme. After complaints were made at the block and district level, work under the scheme has been stopped.

### 2.20.8 The Yatra at Kapurthala and Jalandhar

2 August, 2012: The Yatra stopped at Rasulpur Kalam, Jalandhar.

#### Issues

Rights over Panchayat land; non transparent lease process.

#### The Struggle

In Rasulpur Kalam, 122 landless families are fighting for rights on 28 acres of Panchayat land. The non transparent lease process works to the disadvantage of poor landless families. After the issue was raised

with the help of DDVA, the government promised in 2007, that all lease processes will be conducted in Dalit hamlets in a transparent manner, but action is still awaited. Incidents of violence against those who dare to fight for their rights have been reported from the area.

### **2.20.9 The Yatra at Ludhiana**

3 August, 2012: The first stop was in Filloar township, where 800 people from 17 districts of Punjab participated in a public meeting.

### **Issues Raised at the Public Meeting**

Struggles for land rights across the state of Punjab and across the entire country were spoken about. Concerns were raised about the implications of the Green Revolution. It was strongly recommended that before replicating this model in other states, it is essential to share experiences of Green Revolution, especially its adverse impacts on public health and create an awareness about the repercussions of the excessive use of chemical fertilisers for high crop yields. Another matter of concern that was raised was the transfer of land to industries and for other non-agricultural purposes.

## 2.21 HIMACHAL PRADESH

People in several regions of Himachal Pradesh are reeling under the impact of loss of land and destruction of livelihoods in wake of power projects, dams and tourism development projects. Promises of rehabilitation and compensation have been seldom kept. In some cases, a fifty year time span has proved to be too little for the state to implement the promises it made to affected groups. Though there are instances of powerful people's movements having successfully resulted in cancellation of permission given for various projects,

the entire manner in which permissions are hurriedly given to private companies and then cancelled is suspect. Environmental fallouts of developmental schemes are invariably sidelined during the process of permission seeking and granting. Non implementation of the Forest Rights Act is a matter of enormous concern.

### 2.21.1 The Yatra at Chamba

5 August, 2012: Himalaya Niti Abhiyan and Saal Ghati Bachao Morcha welcomed the Yatra.



## Issues

Transfer of village common land to Forest Department; impact of dam projects;

## The Struggle

In Himachal Pradesh only 9.5 percent of the total land is cultivable, while around 67 percent of land is under forests. On an average, farmers do not have more than 5 *bighas* for cultivation. Common land has been transferred to the Forest Department on a large scale, thus resulting in a livelihood crisis. The transfer of common land is one of the main reasons behind the large scale migration from the state. At the same time, the government has acquired large stretches of land for various dam projects. 10 dam projects are planned in Chenab river valley, 13 in Ravi river valley, 3 in Vyas river valley, and 5 in Kuna river valley. These projects have created resentment among people of the state. While the state requires only 1,500 Mega Watt, the plan is to produce 6,000 Mega Watts and sell power to Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and other states. People are struggling against the dam projects. Chamba district has already sanctioned 47 projects. People of Himachal Pradesh are demanding a public policy on community resources to save their common property and natural resources. There have been protests against the Saal Valley Project. Around 60 people have been charged with false criminal cases.

### 2.21.2 The Yatra at Kangra

6 August, 2012: The Yatra reached Patola Baijnath of Kangra district where a meeting was organised with farmers.

## Issues

Crisis of common community land

## The Struggle

More than two-thirds of the land in Himachal Pradesh comes under common community property. The Community Land Use Act of 1974 facilitated encroachment over common land by the Forest Department. This resulted in several disputes over village commons. In the Chaurasidhar area, a wild life sanctuary has been proposed over 400 square miles of grazing land. This will affect the livelihood

of approximately 10,000 people. For environmental concerns, the government has restricted people from using forests. At the same time however, it has failed to generate alternative livelihoods. People of the state have been compelled to buy fodder from Punjab for their livestock.

According to government records, approximately 5000 acres of land is supposed to be distributed to the landless families. Section 118 of Revenue Act does not allow selling of land to non-Himachal residents. For the last 20 years however, there has been large scale sale of land to affluent businessmen.

### 2.21.3 The Yatra at Mandi

7 August, 2012: The Yatra reached Pandoh village in Mandi district where Vyaas-Satlaj Link Pariyojana Kalayan Samiti organised a meeting.

## Issues

Promises made a decade ago still not been fulfilled.

## The Struggle

The Pandoh region of Himachal Pradesh is still reeling under the impact of the Pandoh dam and the Vyas-Satlaj Link Pariyojana. Thousands of farmers of Pandoh, Banggi, Sundarnagar and Salapad lost their land to this project in the early 1960s. Many verbal assurances had been made to farmers at the time of acquisition. Among the promises made were land in exchange of land, surplus land to migrants, free education, water, electricity, employment and other facilities. Fifty years since the project, these promises have not been fulfilled. Thousands of displaced families have become landless. Many among the displaced have not been able to avail government schemes in the absence of caste identification cards. Out of the land acquired for the project in Pandoh, about 476 *bighas* have been declared surplus. Instead of returning this land to the displaced migrants, the government has given it to Tibetan residents, military officials, Navodaya Vidyalaya, Police as well as the Public Works Department staff. Some land has also been given on lease. The Vyaas-Satlaj Link Pariyojana Kalayan Samiti has been demanding that all surplus land be returned to the original owners. The struggle for rehabilitation of those affected and displaced by the dam continues.

### 2.21.4 The Yatra at Manali

8 August, 2012: The Yatra reached Manali, where Skii Village Virodhi Abhiyaan, Janjaagran Aevam Vikaas Sanstha and Himalaya Niti Abhiyaan organised a public meeting.

#### Issues

Multinational Companies versus the natives of Himachal Pradesh

#### The Struggle

Ford, an American company has proposed the establishment of a large Ski Village Project near Manali at an investment of Rs. 1,582 crores. The proposal includes construction of hotels with over 700 rooms as well as houses over a 100-hectare area to promote tourism. It also mentions that the project will generate employment opportunities for more than 3000 people. After an initial approval by the Himachal Pradesh Infrastructure Development Board, the Himachal Pradesh Government cancelled the project in face of public opposition in 2010. People are fighting against the orchestrated manner in which permission was first granted for the project and also over the fact that there has been no public announcement of the cancellation of the project.

### 2.21.5 The Yatra at Kullu

10 August, 2012: The Yatra reached Bali Chowki of Kullu district, where village residents organised a gathering.

#### Issues

Resentment against hijack of forest and water policy; resentment against Forest Department.

#### The Struggle

People raised their concern over the manner in which forest and water policies of the state are being hijacked by private commercial companies. Environmental destruction and non-implementation of forest and environmental laws is bound to have serious repercussions on the lives and livelihoods of people, especially since the state has a sizeable forest cover and people's livelihoods are dependent on forests. People are struggling for implementation

of the Forest Rights Act. There is resentment against the Forest Department.

### 2.21.6 The Yatra at Bilaspur

11 August, 2012: The Yatra reached Jhundta in Bilaspur, where a meeting was organised by the Bhakhra Visthapit Sangharsh Morcha.

#### Issues

Agonies of the displaced.

#### The Struggle

Bilaspur was an autonomous area when the Bhakhra project started. The area was known for its agricultural productivity. It is today one of the economically backward areas of the state. Agriculture has been undermined because agriculturists do not have access to water and much of the fertile land has been immersed. The subsequent rebuilding of the city of Bilaspur has adversely affected livelihoods of the residents. Irrigated land was acquired from farmers at the rate of Rs.100 per bigha at the time of land acquisition. Each displaced family was promised 2biswa land. Today, more than 70 percent of the displaced families are living below the poverty line. The project was supposed to rehabilitate approximately 40,000 displaced families. This has not been done till date. More than 370 villages affected by the project are still waiting for justice.

### 2.21.7 The Yatra at Solan

12 August, 2012: The Yatra reached Nalagarh district in Solan. Him Pradesh Paryavaran organised a meeting.

#### Issues

People affected by mining and industrialisation.

#### The Struggle

Over the last three decades, the river valley has seen widespread destruction due to excessive mining. Around 50 industries, mostly chemical and cement, have been given permission to set up their plants in the last ten years. Land of several villages has been acquired for the city project. In 2005, a J.P. Cement factory was proposed at Nalagarh. A public gathering

organised on 27 June, 2007, witnessed opposition to the project resulting in the proposal being rejected. On 17 July, 2007, the project was withdrawn. But in 2008, the project was allowed again. 336 *bighas* of land was transferred illegally for the project. People came together and continued to oppose the move. In 2010, a petition was filed in the Himachal Pradesh High Court. On 3 July, 2012, the High Court ordered cancellation of the cement project and compensation for the affected families. People are now demanding punitive action against those who granted permission for the project.

Another issue of concern in the region is the steady increase in the non- Himachali population. The Land Revenue Act of the state prohibits non-Himachal residents and non-agriculturalists from purchasing land in this region. In Solan district however, nearly 4000 acres of land has been illegally transferred. People have demanded a thorough investigation of the issue.

#### **2.21.8 The Yatra at Sirmaur**

13 August, 2012: The Yatra reached the region of Renuka in Sirmaur district. A gathering was organised against construction of Renuka Dam.

## **Issues**

Land acquisition.

## **The Struggle**

The Renuka Power Project was proposed by HPCCL in 2008. Though the power project document stated that 552 hectares of forestland would be acquired, the Sirmaur administration has declared that approximately 775 hectares of land will be acquired for the dam project. Members of 22 Panchayats are opposing land acquisition for this project. Despite the fact that the Ministry of Environment had dismissed the project in 2010 and the Ministry of Forests and Environment had turned down the project in 2011, fraudulent means have been employed to obtain consent on paper, and people likely to be affected by the project are outraged.

The project will result in the destruction of 15 lakh trees and it has been projected that irrigated agricultural lands will dry up, causing not only environmental destruction but also the destruction of livelihoods.

## 2.22 UTTARAKHAND

The state of Uttarakhand has seen extensive destruction of traditional forms of livelihood. Reckless exploitation of natural resources for the sake of development projects has aroused anger among the people. People are struggling against displacement resulting from land acquisition and the damage and destruction that has befallen the state as a result of construction of dams and industrialisation.

### 2.22.1 The Yatra at Sirmour

14 August, 2012: The first stop of the journey was at Dehradun. A public meeting was organised by civil society organisations of the state.

#### Issues

Lack of cultivable land; migration; land acquisition; industrialisation.



## The Struggle

Forests and hill regions of Uttarakhand have been exploited in the name of development. The Tehri Dam Project, completed at a cost of 40 million rupees, had destroyed 23 percent of the agricultural land and damaged forest resources and wild life.

Immigration of people into the state has adversely affected the environment and culture of the hill regions. Over the last 12 years, four lakh people have settled in Uddhamsinghpur, 3.5 lakh in Dehradun and about 3 lakh in Haridwar. A new genre of business has started in the state- the business of land and resources.

Illegal sand exhumation in Chamoli region and the Nelco Power Project in Mandakini hills have adversely affected the environment. The fast pace of industrialisation has reduced the scope of farming and horticulture. Land and livelihood in 36 villages have been destroyed by the Srinagar Electrical Project.

There is only 4 percent cultivable land in Uttarkashi and Bageshwar, whereas 80 percent of the people are dependent on forest resources for livelihood. According to government records, the present average size of land holding is only 0.2 hectare and this is one of the major reasons behind migration. Migration has affected the lives and livelihoods of people, especially women. The in migration from the plains has affected the culture of the state and is widely perceived as one of the reasons for the increase in violence. Food security has been undermined due to the increasing pressure to shift from traditional crop varieties to new crops.

According to statistics of the Agricultural Department, over 5000 acres of land has been marked for industrialisation and construction of residential premises for dam affected and displaced people. Deforestation due to construction of dams and other projects has increased the vulnerability of villagers to the threat of wild animals foraging for food. Despite public protests, permissions have been given to many industrial and dam projects.

Pasture-based agriculture was the major form of livelihood in the state. Around five lakh people were dependent on 2.85 lakh hectares of pasture. Between 1911 and 1918 these lands were included in forest area, which compelled thousands to migrate to the plains. The process of eviction and destruction of traditional sources of livelihood continues unabated.

Smuggling of forest products has increased over the years. Forest Rights Committees have not been formed in 38 villages that come under forest areas. In Uddhampur, the Forest Department has nullified 826 cases registered by Adivasis.

### 2.22.2 The Yatra at Haridwar

16 August, 2012: The Yatra stopped at Shantikunj, Haridwar, where Ekta Parishad organized a National Consultation Camp. 200 representatives from partner civil society organisations participated in the Camp.

The entire country is struggling with land issues. Among good experiences is the story of Krishnamal Jagannath of Nagapattanam in South India, who bought 3000 acres of land for 3000 families. This resulted in the families becoming economically vibrant.



# AGREEMENT ON LAND REFORMS BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (GOI) AND JAN SATYAGRAHA

- 1. National Land Reforms Policy:** While land reforms is clearly a state subject under the Constitution, the MoRD acknowledges that a National Land Reforms Policy announced by the Central Government could have its own importance. The MoRD will initiate a dialogue with States immediately and put out a draft of this policy for public debate and discussion in the next 4-6 months and to be finalised soon thereafter. The draft Land Reforms Policy prepared by the *Jan Satyagraha* organized by Ekta Parishad will be an important input into the preparation of this draft. Civil Society Organisations will also be actively involved in this exercise.
- 2. Statutory backing to the-provision of agricultural land and Homestead Land:** MoRD will proactively initiate the dialogue process with States to take up steps on the issue of giving statutory backing (like MGNREGA and FRA) to (a) provision of agricultural land to the landless poor in the backward districts; and (b) provision of Homestead Rights to the landless and shelter-less poor of rural areas, all over the country, so as to guarantee 10 cents of homestead to every landless and shelter-less rural poor household.
- 3. Homestead Land:** MoRD will propose doubling the unit cost to enable provision of 10 cents of land as homestead for every landless and shelter-less poor family as a component of the Indira Awas Yojana (IAY).
- 4. Enhanced Land Access and Land rights for the poor, marginalized and deprived landless:** The MoRD agrees to issue detailed advisories in the next two months exhorting the States to focus on the effective implementation of various laws enacted by legislatures aimed at protecting the land rights of dalits, adivasis and all other weaker and marginalized sections of society. Details of these advisories will be worked out in consultation with civil society organisations active on this issue. MoRD will also, through a set of advisories exhort and support the State Governments to take up a time-bound programme, for securing access to land to specific categories of marginalized and deprived landless families.
- 5. Fast Track Land Tribunals:** The MoRD agrees to initiate a dialogue with States to establish Fast Track Land Tribunals/Courts for speedy disposal of the cases pending in revenue and judicial courts. In addition to the Central Scheme for legal aid, States too, will be exhorted to extend legal aid to all the persons belonging to socially deprived sections, whose lands are involved in litigation, particularly dalits and tribal communities.
- 6. Effective Implementation of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA):** MoRD will work with the Ministries of Tribal Affairs and Panchayati Raj to complete stakeholder consultations over the

next four months so that detailed circulars to States could be issued for ensuring effective implementation of PESA by empowering the Gram Sabhas to exercise the powers given to them under the Act.

7. **Effective implementation of Rights Act:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs have issued a comprehensive set of revised rules on 13th September, 2012 under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. States will be actively exhorted and supported for effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the light of the revised rules and directives issued by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and in light of suggestions received from civil society organisations.
8. **Forest and Revenue Boundary Disputes:** MoRD agrees to issue an advisory to States to set up joint teams of Forest and Revenue Departments to undertake a thorough survey of the forest and revenue boundaries to resolve disputes. The Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas will be fully involved in the survey and settlement process.
9. **Survey, updating of records and governing Common Property Resources:** The MoRD will exhort and support the States to carry out **survey of Common Property Resources (CPRs) with the direct involvement of the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayats concerned.** The States will also be advised to ensure full implementation of recent Supreme Courts' directions on this matter.
10. **Task Force on Land Reforms:** The MoRD will immediately set up a Task Force on Land Reforms headed by the Union Minister for Rural Development to implement the above agenda. Members of the Task Force will include representatives of MoRD, state governments, civil society organisations working on land reform issues and all stakeholders concerned.

*In light of this Agreement Jan Satyagraha agrees to discontinue its present march and work with the MoRD to carry forward this agenda.*



**Jairam Ramesh,**  
*Minister for Rural Development,  
Drinking Water and Sanitation,  
Government of India*



**PV Rajagopal**  
*Jan Satyagraha*

**Dated: October 11th 2012,  
Agra**

## ANNEXURE 1:

# SUGGESTED AGENDA FOR ACTION TO SECURE ACCESS OF LAND TO THE POOR

- 1. Protection and development of lands belonging to Dalits and Adivasis:** Measures to prevent alienation Government lands assigned to Dalits; Identification of Govt./assigned lands encroached by ineligible persons for restoring back to the original assignees; Identification of tribal lands alienated to the non-tribals in contravention to the existing land transfer regulations for restoring the land back to the tribals and thorough inventory of land belonging to SCs/STs for taking up development of the lands and provision of irrigation facilities under MGNREGS and other programmes;
- 2. Assignment of land to the landless poor:** Regularization of unobjectionable occupations on the Government lands in favor of landless poor and issuance of title deeds (in scheduled areas, in favor of tribals only); Resumption of land acquired, purchased and/or leased out to industries etc. or acquired for development projects but remaining unutilized, for distribution to the landless poor and State Governments to identify all categories of lands available for assignment to the poor and taken up assignment of the land to the poor, giving priority to the poorest of the poor; To secure access to land to the specific categories of marginalized and deprived landless people such as, Nomads, Particularly vulnerable Tribal Groups, Single Women, HIV Affected People, Siddhis (Gujarat & Karnatka), Fisherfolks, Slum inhabitants, Hawkers, Leprosy affected people, Physically & Mentally Challenged People, Tea Tribes, Salt Workers, Pastoral communities, Bonded Labourers, Mine Workers, Bidi Workers, Internally Displaced People; Re-survey and physical verification of Bhoodaan lands to recover the Bhoodaan lands from encroachers, for allotment to the poor and to revisit the ceiling limit and implement ceiling laws, undertake reclassification of the lands and assign the surplus lands to the poor.
- 3. Land related issues of the poor:** Identify land related problems being faced by the poor and take up a programme for their resolution in a time bound manner; recording of tenancy to enable the tenants secure loans from the Banks; Protect/provide burial grounds and pathway to burial grounds, especially to the most vulnerable communities in the villages; and management of land records at the village in a transparent manner.
- 4. Land to the Nomads:** To issue appropriate directives to the State governments to take up a campaign to settle the nomadic communities, by providing minimum homestead and agricultural land for sustaining their livelihoods.
- 5. Womens Land Rights:** To ensure that land owned by a family is recorded either in the name of a woman or jointly in the name of the man and the woman.

## ANNEXURE 2:

# SUGGESTED AGENDA FOR ACTION FOR ENSURING EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PESA, 1996 AND FRA, 2006

### 1. PESA

Align all State revenue laws and land related relevant laws -with PESA 1996 to recognize powers of Gram Sabha over land matters; provide mandatory intimation to Gram Sabha in writing through the Gram Panchayat of any proposed sale of transfer including mortgage of any land/transaction in the village; authorize Gram Sabha to call for relevant revenue records, conduct a hearing and direct SDM for restoration of alienated land in necessary cases; inform any changes in the land record including mutations to the Gram Sabhas; expand the list of Schedule V villages by including all the eligible but left out habitations; enforce in letter and spirit, the 'Samata Judgment' in all acquisition of tribal land for private companies and implementation of PESA to be strengthened by notification of appropriate rules and directives under it; given overriding effect in the State, over all others laws, with appropriate amendments being carried out in all the State laws that are in conflict with PESA within a period of one year.

### 2. Forest Rights Act

Securing to the Tribals, Bank credit facilities in respect of the land granted under Forest Rights Act and other land laws; ensuring vesting of all forest rights as defined under the Act, to the tribal communities, who were earlier displaced because of notification of National Parks and Wild life Sanctuaries, and are rehabilitated under the provisions of Forest Rights Act; settlement of Forest Rights, both individual and community rights, in respect of lands proposed for acquisition, before land acquisition proceedings are commenced.

All forest land where the Forest Rights Act applies and where the process of settlement of rights under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 has not been completed, it will be made clear that the process of recognition of forest rights under the Forest Rights Act will be completed first and then the Settlement process will be taken to its logical end facilitating absolute rights to the tribals. All Particularly vulnerable/ primitive tribal groups without their date of occupancy on a particular piece of land will be exempted from furnishing of evidence of residence as required under Forest Rights Act. This will be done through appropriate amendment to the Forest Rights Act.

'Orange Areas' in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, where large extent of land is under dispute between Revenue Department and the Forest Department shall be settled expeditiously.





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