

TUMKUR UNIVERSITY, TUMKUR - 572 103
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
and
Centre for Disaster Mitigation and Natural Calamities (CDMNC)
in association with
Karnataka Regional Organization for Social Service (KROSS), Bengaluru

Report of the Two Day National Conference on
“LAND AND WATER RIGHTS: ISSUES AND RESPONSES”

25th and 26th Nov 2011

The National Conference on “Land and Water Rights: Issues and Responses”, organized by the Department of Social Work in collaboration with Karnataka Regional Organization for Social Service (KROSS), Bengaluru was a total success with the active participation of close to 250 delegates and 32 paper presentations, other than the Key Note Address and two plenary session where six experts from the field shared their perspectives on the Conference theme.

The Inaugural Function



**Mr. Ronald Benson, Dr. L S Gandhi Doss , Dr. Jayaramu and Dr. Parashurama K G
inaugurating the Conference**

The Conference was inaugurated by Dr. L.S. Gandhi Doss, Professor (Retd.), Bangalore University, Bengaluru. In his inaugural address, Dr. L.S. Gandhi Doss, said that rapid industrial progress in India, like Dams, Power Projects, Roads, Industries New Cities and Townships are achieved only by having very adverse impact on the vulnerable sections like Dalits and women. It is ironic that land acquisition in India has been conducted under the aegis of the outdated, colonial Land Acquisition Act of 1894 for whatever was deemed “public purpose”, using the principle of “eminent domain”. This has proved to be anti-democratic and draconic. He further opined that the recent THE LAND ACQUISITION, REHABILITATION AND RESETTLEMENT BILL, 2011 although promises to solve many problems related to this legislation, actually favours private interest and big companies over the poor and marginalized. Speaking on the water rights, he stated that India's new National Water Policy of 2002 emphasis’s continued government control over water, ignoring pleas by environmental groups to involve local communities in order to overcome looming shortages. As the water dependency has been increasing all the time, the ecological impacts and the social inequalities have deprived the marginal and small farmers’ water for agriculture, as big farmers have captured water for their water thirsty cash crops, Dr. Gandhi Doss opined.

Mr. Ronald Benson, Manager, Karnataka Regional Organization for Social Service (KROSS), was the Chief Guest for the function. Sri B.K. Suresh, Finance Officer, Tumkur University presided over the function.

Plenary and Technical Sessions

The Inaugural Session was followed by a Plenary Session chaired by Dr. Rajendra Kumar, Associate Professor of Social Work, Bangalore University, Bangalore. Three eminent scholars from the field - Mr. Janardhana G.L., Director, Environmental Study Centre, Shimoga, Mr. Prabhakar Rajendran, BAMCEF, Bangalore, and Ms. Nagarathna. A., Assistant Professor, National Law School of India University, Bangalore – presented their perspectives on very relevant topics such as “Tackling Water Right Issues through Human Rights’ Lens”, “Present Scenario of Land and Water Resources in India”, and “Policy and Legal Issues Pertaining to Land and Water”.

The first technical session of the Conference was chaired by Dr. L.S. Gandhi Doss, where six papers were presented by the teachers and research scholars on the subtheme “Land Rights: Concerns and Future Directions”. The second technical session was chaired by

Dr. Hemalatha Jayaraj, Professor of Political Science, Tumkur University, Tumkur where ten student teams presented their papers.

There was a Documentary Film, Narmada Diary, was screened in the evening to provide evidential and experiential support to the delegates theme of the Conference.

The second day of the Conference began with the third technical session of the day, chaired by Dr. S. A. Kazi, Professor of Social Work, Karnataka State Women's University, Bijapur. Six papers were presented on the theme "Water Rights: Policies and Practices". The fourth technical session of the Conference was chaired by Dr. Y.S. Siddegowda Professor, Dept of Social work, University of Mysore. Nine papers were presented in this particular session.

The penultimate session of the Conference was a Plenary Session chaired by Dr. B.S. Gunjal, Associate Professor of Social Work, Kuvempu University, Shimoga. . Dr T V Ramachandra, Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc, Bengaluru, made a scholarly presentation on the topic "Water, Ecology and Biodiversity Linkages with Landscape Dynamics. Ms. Vidya Dinker, Joint Coordinator, Citizen's Forum for Mangalore Development, Mangalore made a wonderful presentation on the topic "SEZs and Land Rights Issues in India".

The Valediction

The Valedictory Session was presided over by Sri N. Lakshmikantha, Registrar (Eval.), Tumkur University, Tumkur. Dr. Y.S. Siddegowda, Professor of Social Work, University of Mysore, Mr. Roland Benson, Manager, Karnataka Regional Organization for Social Service (KROSS), Bengaluru and Dr. S. A. Kazi, Professor of Social Work, Karnataka State Women's University, Bijapur were the guest of honour. Dr. Ramesh, Associate Professor of Social Work, Tumkur University presented the Conference Report. Dr. Ashok Antony D'Souza, Organizing Secretary of the Conference, proposed the vote of thanks.

The Conference was well-attended by academics, research scholars, students and NGO functionaries. It was successful in achieving its goal of documenting and disseminating relevant information and perspectives on important issues like land and water crisis in India, tensions between national legal frameworks and local practice concerning governance of land and water resources, and evaluation of Governmental and Non-governmental programmes and schemes related to land and water issues.