

DISPARITY IN ACCESS TO LAND: A CASE OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS

**A dissertation submitted during 2022 to the University of Hyderabad in
partial fulfillment of the award of the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

ECONOMICS

by

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CERTIFICATE

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1. Prashanth, D., & Sridevi, G. (2022). Land, caste and tenancy: understanding the origins and effects of absentee landlordism in the changing context. *Rural Society*, 1-14. (ISSN Number: 10371656). Chapter of dissertation where this publication appears : Chapter – 1, 4, 5, 6, 7.
2. Sridevi, G., & Prashanth, D. (2021). Agricultural Marketing in Telangana: Unraveling the Challenges and Possibilities in the Wake of Farm Bills 2020. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 76(3). (ISSN Number : 00195014). Chapter of dissertation where this publication appears : Chapter – 6.
3. Prashanth, D., Balaji, P., & Srinivas, M. (2020). Changing context of caste, gender and land relations in India. In *Ambedkar's Vision of Economic Development for India* (pp. 169-182). Routledge India. Chapter of dissertation where this publication appears : Chapter – 3, 2.
4. Sridevi, G., Jyotishi, A., & Prashanth, D. (2020) "Malnutrition and Inequality among the Vulnerable Social Groups: A Study of Two Villages" *Journal of Development Policy Review*, 1(4). (ISSN: 2693-1427) Chapter of dissertation where this publication appears : Chapter – 5, 6.

and

has made presentations in the following conferences:

1. 80th Annual Conference of Indian society of Agricultural Economics (National)
2. National Seminar on "Sustainable Development Goals : Building Future India" at UoH (National)

Further, the student has passed the following courses towards fulfilment of coursework requirement for Ph.D. / was exempted from doing coursework (recommended by Doctoral Committee) on the basis of the following courses passed during his M.Phil. Program and the M.Phil. Degree was awarded:

Course Code	Name	Credits	Pass/Fail
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DECLARATION

I Dontha Prashanth hereby Declare that this thesis entitled " Disparity in Access to Land : A case of Marginalized Groups " submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Professor G. Sridevi is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would definitely not have been possible without the constant guidance, support and push from my research supervisor Prof.G.Sridevi. Her support in critical times of my academic life is enormous and invaluable. She guided me into the best possible academic opportunities, be it engaging in two of her projects and introducing to the world of better publications. In instances, where I had not much of a confidence in me, it was her push which could really materialize my ideas to get published, which makes her the best guide. I am deeply indebted for her support throughout the time.

I would like to thank my Doctoral committee members Prof. G. Nancharaiah and Prof.G. Laxminarayana for giving all the required support during the process of my Ph.D programme. Dr. K. Y. Ratnam has given a considerable amount of advice in suggesting some of the required readings for my dissertation.

I am sincerely thankful to Prof. R.V. Ramana Murthy (Dean, School of Economics), Dr. Devesh Nigam (Controller of Examinations), for enabling me to complete all formalities required for submission on time.

Data for academic research is the respondent's life, time, and privacy. The primary study would not have been possible if they chose not to respond. I thank villagers of Odipilavancha Panchayat and Karumanchi Panchayat for agreeing to share information for my research and spending long hours in giving required information. I was accommodated at Kataram, the mandal headquarters for Odipilavancha by Rajender, whose contact was shared to me by Egurala Rajashekhar (who's like my own brother). Rajender and his mother Sammakka have accommodated me in their single room, and sammakka treated me like her own son. At Karumanchi, it was Brahmaiah anna, and Jala Ramaiah who helped us with accommodation and support in the village. The field data was collected with the assistance of Venkat Rao, Matta Srinivas, Mallesham and Venkateswarulu. I thank ICSSR, as the research in this study, in part, is funded by ICSSR as part of the project titled "Climate Change and Persistence of Food and Nutrition Security: A Case of Vulnerable Groups" under grant number F.No. 02/120/SC/2015-16/RPR .

In life, as there are well-wishers and adversaries, the most who stood with me in my adversities were not bonded by kinship, rather by fraternity. Ambedkar Students Association stood by my side all through my journey at University of Hyderabad. All the *annas*, *akkas*, *thammudus* and *chellendlu* have become part of an extended family of mine. To name a few from the organization, would be disrespectful for all those who were true companions in the cause of social justice. My ideas were enriched by the discussion and debates on the social revolutionaries. The advocacy of ASA to live with self-respect beyond material gains has re-envisioned my life. Few of the faculty members, many students and society stood by the side ASA in extreme times of intolerance and injustice. They remind, recognize, and stand with Rohith's ideals of a society where the *value of a person is not reduced to their immediate identity*.

Amongst friends who have directly stood by my side, Matta Srinivas is someone who remained a constant pillar of support in my emotionally distraught times. His support made me survive through the hardest of times. The instances of his support to me would by itself turn in to a small book.

Patturi Balaji and Apoorva (*appu*) had spared their time on countless occasions to read, re-read and suggest revisions of some of the academic papers. I thank Prajwal Gaikwad, Iniyavan and Naresh Subramani for closely looking in to few of my chapters and suggesting required edits. Some of the best friends I have made on this campus also happened to be on the last days of university life. Vinod was someone who was there with me in my last days of research through out the turbulences. Shiva anna, showered all his care on me. Santhosh and Ramesh (my JNV friends), Amrutha Rao, Soma Sekhar, Babasaheb Kamble have helped in the most critical times with financial help. I thank C-Hostel office staff, Mr. Krishna and Kamalakar, who were very helpful.

My father Dontha Rajaiah, who rose from the bonds of unfreedom as a *paleru*, and his perseverance in ensuring that we do not suffer the same fate of his childhood, ensured that we remain educated. My mother Dontha Amrutha endured the sufferings of the family, and ensured that we survive through all hardships. When I was home during lockdown in covid-pandemic, my parents made sure that an environment of no-disturbance exists for me to work on my academic writing. Smt. Gummadi Dhanalaxmi, has greatly encouraged me to focus on my work. My wife Daya Aruna and my Sister Dontha Roja gave their laptops for me to work on my thesis.

I would like to thank Government of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh for making digitized land records available for public, which were very useful in conducting present research.

I thank and acknowledge IGML library, archive.org, and several open publishing platforms and websites which made existing forms of knowledge available, and the present work was built on the ideas of intellectuals which were made available and accessible.

I owe my gratitude to Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, who has shown a path to all the depressed classes of this country, and emphasized the importance of higher education.

I dedicate this thesis to the struggling lives at Odipilavancha and Karumanchi.

Dontha Prashanth

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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Sustainable development goals (SDGs) framed by United Nations lay a firm thrust on reducing poverty and inequalities by ensuring equal rights to economic resources, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, with special reference to the poor and vulnerable groups. Enabling access to land has been recognized as critical to poverty reduction as landlessness is closely associated with rural poverty (United Nations 2015; Deininger 2003). The mechanism to enable such an access is proposed to be achieved either through the processes of redistribution, or through ensuring secured tenancy contracts both implying a certain nature of documented property rights (Deininger 2003).

Land redistribution is advocated as a means to ensure fairness in cases where there was a process of systematic expropriation of indigenous people, equity and efficiency which would lead to long-term economic growth (Binswanger-Mkhize, Bourguignon, & Brink, 2009). Ensuring fairness by restoring an equitable redistribution of land results in social cohesion which would be helpful for long-term development, as it would minimize the conflict and promote inclusive institutions (United Nations 2015)..

The process of redistribution in specific is proposed to be achieved either through willing seller willing buyer approach, or through expropriation with reasonable compensation in tune with due process of law. Such an approach to re-distribute has a critique from Griffin, Khan, & Ickowitz (2002)¹ who also uphold the case of a redistributive land reform, however critiques market friendly full compensation land reform while forecasting its limited scope in compelling the state to purchase land at free market prices for a large cohort of landless and tenant farmers in order to redistribute, as the same would be financially burdensome. In turn they propose for the intervention of state either in the form of depressant of land prices or outright confiscator of land for redistribution. As Deininger & Binswanger (1999) elucidate the conceptual basis of World Bank's Land Policy, they point at the need for removal of restriction of rental markets and ceilings on land holdings in order to ease the operation of land sales market and promote long-

¹The broader framework adopted by Griffin, Khan, & Ickowitz (2002), while making a case for redistributive land reform has criticism, which would be dealt in Chapter-2.

term contracts, which could also facilitate redistributive land reform. However, postulating rental restrictions and existing ceiling legislations as a hurdle for operation of sales market for land need not be truer in all cases.

Especially taking in to stock the Indian scenario of land markets, Mearns (1999) attributes a part of the reason for the stickiness in land sales market to both economic and extra-economic factors. In an economic sense, land as a durable form asset stands as a *collateral* and provide *security against natural hazards and other contingencies*, which prevents sale of Land. As an extra-economic factor, Land becomes a source of *political power*, and *identity* in Rural India. Such source of power which landowners acquire also become a means to access credit, infrastructural provisions which acts as a deterrent for reforms in Land market (Mearns 1999). It is with the presence of stickiness in sales market that led Mearns (1999) to advocate for access to land through lease-market alongside of promoting *customary use rights in commons and encroachment on public land by landless*. He makes a case for selective de-regulization of land-lease markets by relying on an observed pattern of reverse-tenancy with small holders leasing-out land, thereby arguing that tenancy legalization benefits small holders. A further proposal to remove restriction on Land leasing were advanced by T.Haque, & Nielsen, R. (2008) and Hanstad, Nielsen, & Vhugen., (2009) with a proposal to legalization of land leasing under the expert committee constituted by Niti Aayog chaired by T.Haque. Deshpande.R.S (2007) who also advocated for legalization of tenancy, remained cautious with a caveat on the possibility for rural and dominant elite social groups to exploit the tenancy market.

1.2 Changing context of the debate on Land in India

India is witnessing a transition in policy perspective from the creation of peasant proprietorship at the time of Independence to tenancy liberalization in 21st century as a part of market friendly land reforms in contrast with state led redistributive land reforms. In the proposal to legalize tenancy, the expert committee on land leasing observes that the land leasing laws framed at the time of independence have lost their relevance today, by identifies lease-farming not as a symbolism of feudalism rather as an economic necessity (Nitiayog 2016). Further, the need for legalization is accentuated with the premise of an erosion of the political powers of the absentee landowners and the rural poor becoming more powerful through the Panchayat Raj Institutions and other democratic processes. An active land lease market, as they postulate would help the rural poor to get out of the poverty trap. The perceived benefits of legalization of tenancy, as they propose would ensure long-term secured contracts which would incentivize the tenant

farmers to make investment in improvement of land for its productivity enhancement. Further, it would enable tenant farmer's access to institutional credit, insurance, and input use which in turn result in improving the productivity of leased in land. They also argue that legalization would act against fallowization of lands². The perceived outcomes of legalization of tenancy are in no way different from the objectives of a redistributive land reform envisaged in the post-independence period, which could be located from J.C.Kumarappa's committee report on agrarian reforms.

Kumarappa committee on agrarian reforms in the year 1949 argued that the tiller's incentive to invest in improvement of land would be curtailed by the fact that any improvement made by him would enhance the returns on land, such an outcome over a period of time would further enhance the value of rent, in turn becoming burdensome to the tiller himself. The committee maintained a sharp critique on non-cultivating owners owing to an already existing problem of surplus labour in agriculture, to quote :

“In our country where the main problem is to find full employment for the manpower in agriculture it would be sheer injustice to maintain a class in agriculture whose primary occupation is non-agricultural” (J.C.Kumarappa, 1949, p. 39)

For proper identification of the tenants, and preparation of Record of Rights, the committee suggested for a mechanism of Land tribunals in contrast with the existing machinery of revenue department and its officials. The committee while taking in to stock the situation of persisting illiteracy amongst the cultivating classes, dishonesty of land-owing sections and the corruption of the officials, observed that :

“The illiteracy of the cultivating class as well as the dishonesty of the land-owning peasantry and the corruption of officials together have produced a situation under which it may be extremely difficult to prove the status of a tenant on a plot of land, though he or his family may have been cultivating that plot of land even for generations. If the preparation of record of rights is left with the Revenue Department and its officials, the objective of granting occupancy right to actual cultivators can hardly be attained.” (J.C.Kumarappa, 1949, p. 49)

²Fallowization is speculated to happen on grounds of the legal restrictions wherat due to the fear of losing land rights in case of leasing the land out, the land owners would prefer to keep their lands fallow.

The identification of tenants was meant not as a prospective exercise but as a retrospective one. The committee had expressively stated to grant right in land for tenants from the year of implementation of reforms leaving no choice for landlord to eject the tenants. Such an expression of the committee may not be unjustified, as there existed several acts such as Bengal Rent Act 1859, Bihar Tenancy Act 1885, which proclaimed occupancy rights for tenants cultivating land for 12 years prior to the committee's opinion.

However, the process of implementation of the reforms was not in tune with the recommendations made by the committee on agrarian reforms. In fact, the processes of revenue administration which were deemed to obstruct the process of reform were supposed to be replaced by an alternate set of administrative mechanism. During the process of implementation, the Record of Rights were obtained from the erstwhile revenue offices of hereditary lineage, instead of newer mechanism of proposed land tribunals. The right to resume personal cultivation was given a first priority as opposed to the granting of retrospective proprietary rights to tenants who were cultivating the land from 6 years. The definition of personal cultivation as incorporated in the planning commission was vague with the incorporation of supervision and cultivation through agricultural labourers also identified as cultivators, giving a way to absentee landlords to register themselves as the cultivators (Deshpande 2007; Mearns 1999; Appu 1975).

J.C.Kumarappa (1949) had defined cultivator as one *who puts in certain amount of manual labour in cultivation*. Except for the states of Manipur and Tripura, the aspect of cultivation through personal labour identified as "Personal cultivation" were not followed in most of the states (Appu, 1975). Appu (1975) also pointed at the impossibility of implementation of the objective of land to the tiller through the definitions of personal cultivation incorporated both in agrarian reforms committee report and the second five-year plan. He argued that an effective implementation in tune with the aspect of "personal cultivation" should result in transfer of ownership rights from the landowners belonging to upper castes who were traditionally averse to manual labour, such a transfer as he argues is impossible given the objective conditions present in the country. He suggests to change the definition of personal cultivation to allow resident landowners to operate on the basis of hired labour without any involvement of manual labour as such, while further advocating for a complete abstention of absentee landlord from the scope of personal cultivation, to practically achieve at least some gain of achieving agrarian efficiency, as resident landowners would take some interest in productive improvements of land as opposed to non-resident absentee landowners who take little or no interest in cultivating their land. The

suggestion of Appu (1975) apart, the key marker of abstention from labour by landowning castes was important, and the source of control which germinates from such an ownership of land was one of the key factors for the setback of land reforms. The reconfiguration of a discussion on tenancy is initiated in the policy circles through the proposed legalization of tenancy by the expert committee constituted by Niti Aayog in 2016.

Such a proposal is not isolated, it is part of the discussion on land reforms initiated from World Bank Publications since 1997. Byres (2004a) considers the re-emergence of a policy on land reforms in the late 90's after its eclipse from policy agendas from later 1970's as a newer form of "market friendly land reform" with a greater thrust on incentivisation of landlords to sell land to landless tenants, in contrast to the state-led redistributive reforms proposed till late 1970's. Erstwhile characterization of access to land was meant to enable proprietorship in land to the tiller, while the recent thrust on land reforms placates access to land through tenurial arrangements and long-term secured contracts to the level of ensuring land to the tiller.

The discourse on tenancy legalisation postulates tenancy as an institution that moved away from its exploitative nature with the abolition of large intermediaries and the erosion of the political power of absentee landlords (Hanstad *et al.* 2008; NitiAayog 2016). Such a simplistic view of absenteeism only through the prism of large landed zamindari set-up ignores the local power-structure of the landed elite in villages and their characterisation of absenteeism aided by caste. Beneath the structures of the large intermediaries there were village elites who control the local power structures. Each region has a varied structures of local power structures, which were connoted with dominant caste characterization. The abolition of large intermediaries aiding colonial systems of revenue administration did not automatically result in the erosion of local power controlled by dominant castes of the village and it continues to exist with the creation of a local space by dominant castes which have a capacity to even circumvent official regulations (Jeffrey, 2001) . Studies on Local Power at the level of village reveal a furthermore complex configuration of power as against the expression of power through the systems of colonial revenue administrative systems. McLANE (1977) affirms that zamindars became an easier subject of inquiry owing to their *numbers, visibility, human frailties, and misadventures*, however he feels that study of *village elites and intermediaries will undoubtedly yield a richer understanding of the organization and practice of agriculture "the structure of privilege" and social development as a whole*. Jotedars in Bengal whose domination was a pre-colonial one, were next to zamindars in the agrarian order with control over land in villages displaying

exploitative and coercive power on the sharecroppers and farm servants which involved extra-economic coercion (Cooper 1983; Swamy 2010). The hereditary control over land by *mirasidars* or *kaniyatchikarars* comprising Brahmins and Vellalas ensured socio-economic and political control over village (Sivakumar, 1978), the roots for said accumulation of land were to be found in the grants issued by rulers from the times of pandyas and cholas . The colonial administration too accommodated social and ritual status of dominant castes by accommodation of *hereditary 'landed privilege' with important tax-free concessions* in Ryotwari areas. (Frykenberg ; 1977).

Infact, the entire preposition behind the abolition of tenancy arrives from the absentee nature of lessors which takes away a portion of productive investment to be made agriculture leading inefficient productive outcomes. A picturization of absenteeism through large landed estates, undermines the historical nature of absenteeism in Indian context, which operates irrespective of the size of the land one possesses rather operates on the basis of the framework of caste. Harriss (2013) while pointing at a reduction in the area of leased-in land during 2002-03, and the observations on reverse tenancy, argues that landlordism has declined over most of the country. Though Harris (2013) postulates of a decline of landlordism, he doesn't negate on the persistence of inequality in landownership, which gives considerable power in the economic-social and political realms for those in possession of large parcels of land.

The study of landlordism needs to be looked from its inter-linkage with caste as a form of endogamous and enclosed class when conjoined with rules of inheritance limiting the landed property within the enclosed class, would make a case for persistence of landlordism at the level of caste, as against individual. The sub-division of land amongst the newer generations of landed gentry would mark disappearance of the classic conception of landlordism at an Individual level, while social landlordism at the level of castes may remain. Rudra & Mukhopadhyaya (1976)'s observation on the characterization of Indian agricultural society, where certain dominant castes would tend to hire-in labour irrespective of their size of holding, as the tradition signifies touching a plough to be polluting for Caste-Hindus. Such an observation when coincided with several historical studies validating the existence of a disdain towards cultivation as a symbol of prestige and eliteness, would call for a detailed examination of who lease-out amongst social groups prior to declaration of reverse tenancy as an enabling argument for de-regulation of tenancy markets for the benefit of poor.

Owing to the historical accumulation of resources by dominant castes accrued through a long history of caste domination and exploitation, greater benefits are appropriated by dominant

castes in post-liberalisation India compared to lower castes, with a feature of widening economic inequalities between castes (Agarwal & Levien 2019). In rural settings, land which constitutes an important asset, displays a character of concentration amongst dominant castes, even in regions that experienced the green revolution. For example, Punjab is characterized by skewed distribution of land amongst social groups with SCs constituting 52.4 % of households owning 10.07% of land, while non-SC/ST/OBCs comprise 33.44 % of households and own about 81.47% of land (NSSO 2019). Widening inequalities are demonstrated by the fact that a high proportion of wealth is concentrated among higher castes which is almost twice the proportion of their population, while wealth amongst SCs is characterised by the opposite, less than half the proportion in terms of population (Tagade, Naik, & Thorat 2018).

The importance of a discussion around land is further amplified given the demand for land to develop industrial and service sector hubs, accentuating or leading to new land wars. The resistance against land dispossession was strikingly observed amongst castes at the lowest rung, but intrinsically inseparable part of Indian agriculture. Those occupying the lowest level of caste are core cultivators despite being labelled as agricultural labourers and tenants, and a situation of complicity is observed amongst dominant castes who tend to abstain from direct engagement in agrarian operations (Kennedy 2020; Nielson 2020; Roohi 2020; Agarwal & Levien 2019). As argued by Shah & Lerche (2018), the inherited inequalities of power accentuated by hegemonic possession of caste-based hierarchical land, command over labour and socio-political relations enable dominant castes to become major players in the new economy. In this process, Dalits and Adivasis are adversely included in to low-end work owing to their historical disadvantageous forms of institutionalised discrimination. As socio-economic inequalities widens on account of inherited inequalities of power, the current discourse on tenancy legalisation underscores persisting inequalities and power imbalances amongst social groups, at the same time it obviates the antecedents of tenancy characterised by absenteeism which affects the principles of equity and efficiency.

Against this background, the present study attempts to understand the effective applicability of enabling access to land through legalization of tenancy, at first by understanding the extent of landlordism at the social level of caste through the levels of concentration of land observed amongst social groups. Followed by unravelling the nature and characteristics of tenancy in present context through the prism of absenteeism which was completely understated in the proposals marking legalization of tenancy.

1.3 Need for the study:

The case of enabling access to land in Indian context has taken the shape of enabling secured long-term contracts by legalization of tenancy. The initial discussion around legalization of tenancy by Mearns (1999) and Deshpande (2007) had underscored the importance of evaluating the social constraints prior to considering its implementation, which the latter defenders such as T.Haque, & Nielsen, R. (2008) and Hanstad, Nielsen, & Vhugen (2009) had completely underscored. The similar approach got reflected in the “*Report of the expert committee on land leasing*” constituted by Niti Aayog in 2016, where the discourses on caste and its connection with land ownership, the absenteeism and its potential impact on agrarian productivity stands overlooked. Considering fragmentation of land in to small sized holdings, and the disappearance of large landed estates, an articulation of an erasure of the exploitative conditions present in Indian agriculture was arrived (Haque & Nielsen 2008 ; Nitiaayog 2016). Such an approach obfuscates proper understanding of the nature of inheritance rules regulated by the system of caste and the process of accumulation and perpetuity of land concentration amongst the dominant castes. This study aims to study the nature of land and caste in the context of fragmented holdings, and investigates on the question of concentration as an outcome of social orchestration as opposed to the approach of pointing at individual fragmented holdings which has its limits in interpretation of the erosion of the political power of absentees. In the interpretation of tenancy and absenteeism, there is a need to look it from the prism of absenteeism in historical context and its relevance, in order to evaluate whether legalization of tenancy would help the small lease-holders or would it act adversely against their interests.

1.4 Objectives:

- 1) To locate the relationship between Caste and Access to Land in present context from a historical perspective
- 2) To Assess Disparities in Ownership of Land amongst various Social Groups at All-India level
- 3) Evaluate the implications of the policy of Tenancy Legalization in Indian context.
- 4) To study comparative relationship between access to land and profitability in Agriculture considering the primary data.

1.5 Methodology

Social groups are reconfigured in statist, academic and popular parlance, Dalits are referred as scheduled castes (SCs), tribals or adivasis (indigenous people) as scheduled tribes (STs), Shudras as other backward classes (OBCs) while Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and a few upwardly mobile Shudra castes are designated as other castes (OC). In relation to the field studies and the observations from several studies, caste connotations are used wherever it was felt as appropriate. In the analysis part, apart from the available literature, certain archival material and Judicial records were also used. The secondary data was sourced from various census rounds, National Sample Survey (NSS) reports on land ownership and operational holdings amongst various social groups, and employment and unemployment situation amongst various social groups.

Further, to analyse micro-level factors characterising tenancy, a study on land ownership patterns and various aspects of tenancy was conducted in two villages in the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Primary Data was collected from one village panchayat each from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were part of undivided Andhra Pradesh till 2014, combinedly. These states were selected because, together, they had highest incidence of tenancy in the country accounting for more than a quarter of area operated under tenancy in the entire country (NSSO 2015). Amongst all states not only has Andhra Pradesh displayed highest proportion of landlessness and land under tenancy, but combined with Telangana it showed a huge increase in the area leased in.

The villages were identified based on two characteristics. 1) consisting highest proportion of scheduled caste population, 2) engaging population in Agriculture. To satisfy the first criterion, districts in both states were ranked by those consisting highest proportion of scheduled caste population as a composition of the general population of the district by using Census-2011 data. A similar exercise was followed for mandals. From the selected mandals village panchayats were ranked in terms of village panchayats that consisted of highest proportion of scheduled caste Population. After selection of the village panchayat, information on agricultural dependency is ascertained to suit to the second criterion of engaging population in agriculture.

In the state of Andhra Pradesh, Prakasam district is identified as a district with highest proportion of scheduled caste population amongst all districts of Andhra Pradesh. In Prakasam district, Tangutur mandal had highest proportion of scheduled castes with 37.8% to the total population

of Tangutur mandal. In Tangutur mandal, Velagapoodi village panchayat consisted highest proportion of scheduled caste population to total population constituting 64.71%. Velagapoodi village had dismal amount of agriculture, on the contrary most of the area was operated under aquaculture. Hence, a next village panchayat Karumanchi ranking second in terms of proportion of scheduled castes to the total population was chosen, with a majority of population engaged in cultivation of green gram and tobacco.

In the state of Telangana, Karimnagar district is identified as a district with highest SC population amongst various districts of Telangana. In Karimnagar district, Kataram mandal been ranked highest in terms of having higher proportion of scheduled caste population constituting 33.85% of total population. Odipilavancha village panchayat is selected from Kataram Mandal, as it had highest proportion of SC's constituting 53.12% of total population of the panchayat. It is predominantly agrarian with paddy and cotton being the principal crops.

Primary information from field was collected through a complete household survey, which also included oral interviews from elders of the village and group discussions. The information ascertained was mapped with the cadastral maps which were available for Odipilavancha village panchayat. The tools of Google Earth, Bhuvan were used to get a sense of geo-spatial location of the village, and the historical imagery was helpful in tracking the changes in land use. The land records which were digitized in both states, were helpful in obtaining a better picture of the situation of landownership besides our own data collected on field.

1.6 Organization of the dissertation

The dissertation is organized in to seven chapters. The first chapter gives an overview in to the discourse on access to land and the changing context of the discourses to enable access to land from redistributive reform to enabling access through secured long-term contracts. Furthermore, it sets the context of the discourse of tenancy legalization/liberalization in India, and reasons the need for present study by stating its objectives and limitations. The second chapter is a review of literature on the discourses on the re-emerged phase of land reforms which are interpreted as market-oriented land reforms, with a broader overview of the debates in Journal of Agrarian change, followed by a discourse on the interpretation of rent by Physiocrats, Adam Smith, James Anderson, David Ricardo and Karl Marx, since an interpretation of the origins of rent becomes important in distinguishing which part of the factors of production contributes to the origin of rent. As we sum up on the emergence of rent as an outcome of monopolization of land through the emergence of private property, we dwell on the nature of the process of privatization in Indian

context by postulating the contradiction that prevailed in the Mode of production debate and the works of EMS Namboodiripad on ground rent in Indian context. Further the questions on the need for enabling access to land from the perspective of caste and gender are explored. In chapter-3 an investigation is made into the basic structure of caste interpreted as an endogamous structure, with graded hierarchy of occupations. It dealt with the facilitative processes of accumulation of land amongst various castes in its inter-linkage with the rules of inheritance, to understand varied degrees of concentration of land exhibited amongst various social groups. In chapter-4 we focus on the nature of tenancy in present context, with a historical approach of absenteeism aided by caste to arrive at a broader characterization of tenancy with the help of existing discourses and NSSO data on ownership and operational holdings of land. Chapter 5 presents the results from Karumanchi a village in Andhra Pradesh in understanding the prevalence of caste, changes in demography, occupational patterns, the process of accumulation of land within social groups, further map the transitions in caste and land ownership, the extent of tenancy and its nature amongst various social groups with a final analysis of net returns from agriculture for different social groups. The same template is followed for Chapter -7, which deals with the field study in the village panchayat of Odipilavancha in Telangana. Chapter-8 presents the summary findings and policy recommendations.

Limitations of Study:

The limitations for the study included difficulty in obtaining information on land ownership from field and the names of lessors. This could be partly inferred from the available land records. Studies on land and tenancy might need much more longitudinal evidence over a period of time, an year of agrarian outcomes may not predict accurate results. This is a limitation, which we wish to take up by revisiting the study areas in the days ahead. The indicator of villages with highest extent of scheduled caste population was taken into consideration to see if the villages which have a greater proportion of the disadvantaged castes would present an improved scenario of landownership. It would have been interesting to see the scenario of land ownership and its operations in the village with highest proportion of dominant castes. In particular relation with field studies, there is a greater difficulty that a researcher finds problem with, which is the question of caste the respondents are eager to know. Any unsatisfactory response does not elicit required information. This also was a difficult scenario that I encountered in the field.

CHAPTER-2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The debate on land reforms in India began with an aim of creating peasant proprietorship and granting proprietary rights over land to the tiller of the soil. The genesis of land and tenancy reforms in the post-independence period, originated from the efficiency argument of enabling land to the tiller by way of abolition of intermediaries and enabling a direct control over land to tiller, which would in turn incentivize the direct cultivator to make improvements on land that is owned. A review of existing articles and works is carried to trace the genesis of the need for postulation of agrarian reforms aimed at enabling land to the tiller.

A review of the articles published in Land Holders Journal during 1939 reveals the movements that happened for re-distribution of land and the anti-landlord atmosphere. A letter published by Landholders journal drafted by Mr. Ramendra Kanta Dhar who attended Krisak conference at Kishoreganj on 18th March 1939, as a representative to Mr. Surendra Prasad Lahiri Chowdhuri, evidently captures the tensions between the landed and tenants. To quote:

“The atmosphere was surcharged with keen anti-landlord feelings, which manifested themselves in the rankest form in the Fiery speeches delivered by some fire-brands. The Pandal was resounded from time to time with the loud deafening shout of the slogan “down with the Zamindars down with the capitalists’.” The atmosphere was too hot for representatives of zamindars not to speak of the zamindars themselves, who would have cut a very sorry figure if they had appeared personally.” (Dhar, 1939, p. 483)

Indian Freedom movement incorporated a language against Zamindari system, to galvanize the support of a larger section of masses (politicus 1939, herring 1983). However, Landlords were keen on stressing Gandhian view of negotiations, as against a call for revolution against the system of zamindari³. The same class of zamindars who wanted a peaceful settlement on zamindari system, were advocating for continuation of the practice of untouchability in open. Mr. Dharani Mohan Roy, a Zamindar and Senior Member of Chandra Pratapa Sanatana Hindu community, openly advocated for the retaining of untouchability, and firmly states that any opposition to said practice is against Smritis and Shastras⁴.

³ Congress Leaders on Zemindari Institution, Land Holders Journal, 1939.

⁴ Touchability and Untouchability, Dharani Mohan Roy, Land Holders Journal, 1932

Joshi (2001)'s study of the Dalit reform movement in British Kumaon elaborates on a struggle and massive rally led by Dalits the town of Bageshwar in the region of British Kumaon during 1946. A statement by a Dalit by name Kamal Ram, in which the conditions of Dalits at Almora (now a district in Uttarakhand) in terms of their landholding scenario was explained in a palpable manner, where about "*ninety percent are landless labourers, who have to pay rent, as well as to perform bonded labour*" (Joshi, 2001, p. 983)'.

Omvedt (1982) broadly categorizes several movements during pre-independent India that happened in different parts of the country under a uniform anti-feudal agenda in to kisan movements, the non-brahmin anti-caste movements and the Dalit agricultural labour movements. Essentially all the movements had an urge to abolish Zamindari system, however the Kisan movements have failed to address the question of caste and the problem of untouchability which the non-brahmin and Dalit agricultural labour movements were articulating. The scope of including landless agricultural labourers as a part of the tillers of the soil was missing from the agenda of Kisan Sabhas (Omvedt 1982).

However, it was congress which realized the importance of the incorporation of the demand of larger masses against the intermediaries in pre-independence context into anti-imperialist struggle to win their support, made its commitment to the peasantry for land reform as a part of the larger struggle (Joshi, 1974). The prevalent atmosphere of contradictions between the peasantry and the intermediaries led to the formation of the Congress agrarian reforms committee under the chairmanship of J.C.Kumarappa, to examine and make recommendations about agrarian reforms arising out of zamindari abolition (Joshi 1974, Deshpande 2007) .

The committee of agrarian reforms headed by J.C.Kumarappa while advocating land to the tiller, also recommended for prevention of subletting of land and ban on agrestic serfdom with an advocacy on stimulating mobility of labour from agriculture to non-agricultural operations. It also reduced the number of years to gain occupancy rights in case of existing tenants from 12 years to 6 years. The discussion on land reforms which was initiated in 1948 could only reach it's finality by 1972, where the ceiling limit was proposed at 10-18 acres for irrigated land with two crops, 27 acres for irrigated land with one crop and 54 acres for dry land.

The active movements against the persisting inequalities of the time, as Herring (1983) argues has pre-empted government to adopt agrarian reforms to arrest the discontent, leading to land

reforms in 1970's. The land reforms which were initiated in the post-Independence period could be said to have achieved little in the backdrop of the objectives aimed at land to the tiller.

The ineffective implementation of land reforms could be traced from the comparisons between the observations made in the NSSO report 1954-55 and the implementation on ground observed in the annual report of National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes 2008-09. NSSO report 1954-55 on availability of surplus land with a ceiling fixed at 20 acres had observed:

“If the ceiling limit is fixed at 20 acres, and all households holding more than 20 acres are required to hand over the area held by them in excess of 20 acres, then the amount of land which becomes available for distribution in this way would be about 63 million acres.”

As against the estimate of about 63 million acres to be declared as surplus, the reworked surplus after the revised ceiling limits in the Chief Minister's conference of 1972, came down to 30 million hectares. The working group on Development and Welfare of Scheduled Castes during the eighth five-year plan (1990–95) in their report (August 1990) observed that

“agricultural ceiling laws have been a mere failure. As against the estimated availability of surplus land of about 30 million hectares, only a little over 7 million acres had been declared surplus so far. Against this, 4.5 million acres of land was distributed to about 4 million beneficiaries” (Pg. No 149, Fourth annual report, National Commission for SC/ST, 1996–97).

In comparison with the early estimate of NSSO report 1954-55, the implementation stands out to be meagre accounting for 7% of the land estimated as surplus, even going by the figures of the official area declared as surplus, the area distributed stands at 15% of the declared surplus area.

Tenancy reforms could be said to have achieved very little in implementation owing to the control exercised by dominant caste networks in local village administration resulting in manipulation of records, assisting landlords in concealing the prevailing tenancy to record their lands under personal cultivation (Mearns 1999). The incidence of manipulation by the local level officers was of such height that the lands were registered as Benamis in the names of servants, unborn children, cows, horses, and dogs. It even took the form of registering the lands on the names of Hindu deities (Sinha, 1978). The presence of right to personal cultivation and

resumption in the first phase of reforms thwarted the process of land to the tiller with the resumption of land by absentees (Appu, 1975).

Deshpande (1998) points to the major reasons which led to the non-implementation of ceilings act which include: 1) Under the definition of Family shares of even unborn children were recorded, the age of major girls was reduced to include them minors in the family which entitled them a share, 2) The land was partitioned on to major son to show them under distinct family units to evade the ceiling limits. 3) Land was recorded under benami transactions in the names of persons non-existent, which could evade the land from the scope of ceiling limits. 4) Lack of proper records and their manipulation. He further points to the absence of administrative support from below and political will from above owing to the political structure during the process of reform period, which emanated from the rural landowning elites for whom land was connoted with social prestige and naturally inimical to the re-distribution of land resulting in absence of political will. Joshi (2008) argues that the implementation of land reforms had benefited the intermediary classes of large sized occupancy or protected tenants and medium sized landlords, and the resident landlords could effectively retain their control over land holdings as compared with the non-resident absentee landlords, as a social composition of those who benefitted, the tenants belonging to high caste or dominant castes could benefit more than the low caste or scheduled castes/tribes.

Given the existing anomalies in the process of the implementation of the land reforms in the immediate post-independence phase, the objective of land to the tiller remains yet to be realized. However, the policy paradigm of agrarian reforms which were formulated with an aim to discourage sub-letting of land by enabling peasant proprietorship is shifting towards proposals to legalize tenancy as a means of enabling access through secured tenancy in 21st century. The proposals for tenancy liberalization/legalization are backed by arguments which claim that it would be both agrarian efficiency enhancing as well as equity promoting. Productivity enhancing role of tenancy liberalization presumes to redress problems of concealed tenancy which disentitles occupancy right for tenants thwarting long-term investment in land improvement; secondly, by improving tenant's access to institutional credit, insurance and other support services would consequently improve productivity of leased-in land, thirdly removal of legal restrictions on land leasing would bring in more lands under cultivation as against fallowization of lands (NITI Aayog, 2016).

It is presumed that tenancy liberalisation results in an increased pace of land-leasing, increasing the size of holdings and access to institutional support mechanisms, which in turn augment investment in productivity infrastructure and improvements to soil (Paroda & Joshi 2019). While it is indisputable that documented land rights would facilitate better access to institutional credit (Deininger 2017), similar access to tenant cultivators would hardly prevail if absentee landowners were unwilling to give up institutional support meant for agriculture. India's transition in policy perspective from the creation of peasant proprietorship to tenancy liberalisation is part of market friendly land reforms which stand in contrast with state led redistributive land reforms initiated till 70's.

The debate between Griffin et.al (2002,2004) and Byres (2004a, b) initiated in the Journal of Agrarian Change critically engaged with the idea of Market Friendly Land Reforms, however fraught with several contradictions.

At a broader level, the debates between Keith Griffin et.al and Terrence.J.Byres capture the effects of the Market Friendly Land Reforms (MFLR) model propagated by the World Bank think tank. However, the debate in the Indian context needs a much more detailed examination right from the conception of rent, property, absenteeism, and their relationship with social structures coupled with a look at agrarian transitions. As a part of further detailing, at first, we examine the debate on MFLR in Journal of Agrarian Change, followed by an elaboration of the theories of Rent beginning with Physiocrats, Adam Smith, James Anderson, David Ricardo and Marx, followed by the debates on application of Marxian concept of Rent in Indian context through the debate of Mode of Production and the work of EMS Namboodiri Pad. The conditions of India are explored in the later point through various debates on property, followed by the existing review of articles which problematize certain aspects of the liberalization of tenancy.

The debates Griffin, Khan, & Ickowitz (2002, 2004) and Byres (2004) on the re-emergence of market led land reforms offers a contestation on the ideas of redistributive reform, as they locate and portray each other in the framework of neo-classical and neo-populism and historical materialist thought. It all began with Griffin, Khan, & Ickowitz (2002)'s paper on Poverty and the Distribution of Land in which they propose for redistribution of land from large private landowners to small peasant farmers and landless agricultural workers, which would in turn reduce rural poverty by redistribution of wealth with a systematic erasure of labour controls as an effect of reduced concentration of land. Their justification for such redistribution comes from the inverse relationship between the size and productivity in agriculture but not against any

critique on tenancy. The inverse relationship between farm-size and yields becomes an important argument of Griffin, Khan, & Ickowitz (2002) for redistributive land reform either through confiscation, or state acting as depressor of prices for land sales. They argue that the monopolization of land which leads to land concentration in presence of a wider system of labour controls, creates monopsony power in the labour market which shifts the supply of low skilled rural labour rightwards implying an increase. In such a scenario they postulate that an implementation of redistributive land reform would rupture the system of labour controls and would end the monopoly of monopsony power of large landowners. In addition to carrying said reform, provision of necessary farm support services such as credit support, input supply and marketing services would result in a redistribution of productive wealth, increase efficiency in use of resources and thereby raise the level of output and average incomes, increase employment intensity of production, weakening of systems of labour control, etc. In addition, the existing landlord bias in the rural areas where most of the programmes and policies meant for agriculture framed in favour of large capitalist or commercial farms to the neglect small family farms the programmes could be removed with the redistribution of land. Their justification of redistributive land reforms doesn't stem from the inefficiencies and exploitative conditions present in the tenurial forms, rather the efficiency of small-scale agriculture operated by family labour forms the basis. In fact, they justify varied land tenures, in the form of lands operated with hired labour (both seasonal and permanent), land tenures operated under fixed-rent tenancy and share-cropping arrangements. However, while justifying several land tenures as specified above, they argue that the absentee ownership is associated with good resource use in contrast with the existing critique of absenteeism associated with non-maximizing behaviour and poor management. They further affirm that the absentee landlordism and insecure tenancy rights doesn't disincentivize neither the landlord nor tenant to invest in land improvements.

The advocacy of land reforms in the manner as afore described were necessitated for those countries with excessive proportion of agricultural labour, and where landed monopolies persist. However, they aren't averse for large scale cultivation in places where labour is scarce, and economies of scale persist with technologies. In terms of the implementation of the reforms, they propose two methods, one out-right confiscation, which they themselves confess might not be feasible for countries such as India, Brazil, Pakistan, and Philippines, as the political power of the landed sections might not allow the same. In such a context, they advocate for state to act as depressant of market prices.

Byres (2004) places the arguments of GKI (as Byres refers to them) in the broader framework of neo-classical neo-populism which lacks an understanding of the historical process of capitalist transformation and ignores the struggle between capital and labour in capitalist agriculture. He critiques the argument on the inverse relationship between farm size and productivity for its lack of class-based approach. He argues that the explanation for small farm efficiency lies in the fact that the heavy application of labour by small cultivators is for survival, as they are locked into surplus appropriation relationships that push themselves down to the level of bare subsistence. To this GKI responds that this argument has limited applicability as it may not hold for those areas of the world where starvation cease to exist. The argument of GKI on Starvation may not hold to define subsistence, especially in contexts where accessing ancillary services such as health and daily needs and requirements in addition to food becomes part of subsistence. On Absentee Landlordism, Byres (2004a, 2004b) poses a counter-question on the empiricity of the argument that absentee owners are just as good as owner operated farms, to which GKI (2004) does not respond. GKI have underscored the aspect of absenteeism and the impact it has on land improvements, investments, and productivity, which was the major argument for the land reforms during the period of 50's to 70's.

Petrzelka (2014) argues that the non-resident absentee owners own land either through inheritance or through purchase for the purpose of secured investment, recreation, and amenity purposes and not for production purposes. Further through the studies of Nickerson et al. 2012 and Soule et al. (2000), it is postulated that the non-operator owners are less likely to be enrolled in conservation practices, as compared with owner operators. The same persists with Tenants who as compared with owner operators are less likely to adopt conservation practices that provide long-term benefits. However, the absenteeism which Petrzeka refers to pertains to the United States, where it is postulated that the absentee owners are on rise. The case in the context of India would be even more severe owing to the scale of small-size of operational holdings and the excessive land concentration amongst the dominant castes who for the most part lease-out the land squeezing the surplus out of the small-scale tenant landless farmers. This aspect shall be discussed separately in the next chapter, in specific reference to Indian context.

Another important contradiction which was pointed out by Byres (2004) in his critique of GKI (2002) is on their thrust on the aspect that the proposition for land reforms rests not on the existence of defective tenure contracts but on the concentration of land ownership rights and the inefficiency, inequality and poverty which creates (P.283-4). Byres (2004) argues that if the

tenurial contracts are already efficient, there would be no case for reform. Probably there requires a correction to what was stated by GKI (2002), it is that the concentration and monopolization of land that results in the creation of tenancy with payment of rent from the portion of the profits/surplus value that should accrue to the cultivators. To understand the nature of rent in Agrarian operations, it also becomes important to investigate the economic validations/invalidations on the concept of Rent. For the same, an evaluation of Rent in the Economic literature was taken up by looking into the works of Physiocrats, Adam Smith, James Anderson, David Ricardo, and Karl Marx, amongst all of whom it was Marx who synthesized most of the conceptions on Rent beginning from the works of Physiocrats to Ricardo.

The early literature on the distribution of surplus in agriculture were centered on the aspects of ownership, and not much on the operational aspects of agriculture on land by cultivators. For physiocrats, the net product of the land belonged to the proprietary class alone consisting of the landowners, the sovereign, and the clergy in the form of rent, taxes, and tithes, while the productive class composed of those who engaged in agriculture were confined to retain a share of gross product to the tune of annual advances employed by them (Vaggi, 1987; Meek, 2003).

The proprietary class was expected to invest a portion of the net product/revenue in the improvement of agriculture, which was not the case so, as they spent on luxury goods whose gains accrue to the sterile class (those who engage in non-agricultural activities). The productive class was anticipated to benefit out of the improved prices in market, with the opening of free trade, leading to a *Bon Prix* (Vaggi, 1987; Meek, 2003).

In the Physiocratic set-up the gains for Proprietary class remains undeterred irrespective of the price outcomes, while a scenario of gain for cultivators exists only under a high price, which was postulated to occurs under free trade. Adam Smith slightly differs from Physiocratic set-up by including a normal share of profits for the employment of farming stock by the tenants over and above the costs incurred for furnishing of seed, labour, and purchases and maintains the animals and other instruments of husbandry (Smith 1887).

For Smith (1887), rent is the price paid for land, and is the monopoly price which the tenant pays to the landlord irrespective of whether the landlord invests in the improvement of land or not. In contrast to the assumption of Physiocrats that the accrual of the increased price of the product benefits the cultivator, Smith deems that the increased price in a scenario of the scarcity of the product in relation to its effectual demand, goes to the landlord in the form of rent.

Anderson (1777) explains more elaborately on the rise in price of grain and its effect on tenant farmer, which stands in contrast to the assumptions of Physiocrats. As he explains “A temporary artificial rise or depression of price can only affect farmers; a permanent rise can only prove beneficial to the proprietors. The interests of these two classes are diametrically opposite, that what proves beneficial to the one can only be so in consequence of its not being beneficial to the other” (Anderson 1777, pg.09).

Rents of land in Anderson’s understanding are non-arbitrary, but depend on the fertility of the soil, effective demand for the agrarian output and the market price of the product. Ricardo’s treatise on Rent stands similar to that of Anderson. For Ricardo, the price of product doesn’t get determined by the amount of rent of land on which it is cultivated, rather it is the price of the product which determines Rent. The engagement of a Tenant to forgo a part of the produce arise as no employment more profitable could be found, apart from engaging on the leased-in farm.

Ricardo’s conception of Rent arises from the scarcity of land and the presence of diminishing returns in the process of expansion into newer parcels of less fertile land leading to the creation of rent, whereat Rent is counted as the surplus between the existing land vis-à-vis new land brought in for cultivation (Ricardo,1821). For Ricardo, there exists positive relationship between Rent of land and the inequalities in output from newly engaged land as compared with existing parcel of land, where at an increased inequality in terms of produce between the successive units of land would result in an increase in rent on the former land, while a lower scale of inequalities results in a reduced rent. He postulates that Rent is the difference between the produce obtained by the employment of two equal quantities of capital and labour.

In response to Ricardo’s theory of Rent, Marx agrees on the proposition of Rent as the surplus arrived from deployment of capital and labour, which he further elaborates by considering the nature of rent in its various forms in different contexts of time. For Marx, there are three forms of rent 1) Labor Rent, 2) Rent-in Kind, 3) Money Rent. The first form of rent, as Labour Rent is extorted by landowners/feudal lords through enforced labour by extra-economic pressure. In this form of rent, the direct producers are under possession of the means of production to attain their means of subsistence, this apart they are compelled to work in the estates of feudal lords without any payment, this form of unpaid surplus labour appears as rent. This form of rent prevails in the primitive and backward conditions of the processes of production, enforced by the ruling section of the society, which on account of repetitive reproduction gets customized with its subsequent enforcement as law (Marx 2010. Pg. 793). The second form of rent, which is Rent-in Kind

evolves under the conditions of alienated land from direct producer, where the entire surplus value represents the surplus labour performed by the direct producer for free under compulsion. However, the form of compulsion in case of rent-in kind arrives from the alienation of direct producers from land, unlike the use of brutal force in the case of labour rent. Rent when developed as the final form of Money Rent, loses the earlier traditional and customary legal relationship with the landlord and a pure money relationship fixed by contract emerges. Unlike labor rent and rent-in kind, Marx contemplates that in case of money rent, the rent paid to the landowner and the surplus value appropriated by the direct producer, consists of the surplus labour extracted from agricultural labourers. For Marx, Metayage / share cropping stands distinct to the aforementioned forms of Rent, and he looks at it as a non-pure form of rent since share-cropper and landowner both lay a claim on the portion of the product as a return on their own capital comprising of a portion of working capital and labour (own/ others) in case of share-cropper, land and a portion of working capital (such as cattle/etc..) in case of and landowner. Amongst the various forms of rent as laid out by Marx, it is under the form of money-rent that the relationship between rent-paying peasant and landlord a relationship becomes fixed by contract under this form the capitalist tenant farmers emerges by breaking the old rural mode of production and it is in this mode that the value of surplus labour is appropriated by landlord and capitalist tenant farmer in the form Rents and Profits.

The conception of rent from above discourses could be said to be the creation of landed monopolies that result in enforcement of a rent on land as observed by Smith and Marx. However as propounded by Ricardo and Marx, rent emerges out of equal application of labour and capital on equal units of land as a difference between the value of output and the value of factors employed, while Marx sums up that it is the exploitative conditions for agrarian labour and direct producers prevalent in agriculture that creates a surplus for both landed monopolies and capitalist farmers.

Given the fact that, the transformative nature of the exploitative conditions associated with the forms of tenancy exist, evolve, and blend into newer modes of production, an obviation to overlook the exploitative forms has a potential to perpetuate the very process of appropriation and exploitation leading to unequal outcomes. At the same time, an over emphasis of the propositions might as well do not reflect an existing scenario. Such is the case with the debate on agrarian transitions in India. Namoboodiripad (1984) applies the theory of ground rent which was specifically developed for capitalistic mode of development by Marx to Indian context with

the assumption of landed property assuming the character of divorcing itself from the political and social embellishments. Has landed property relinquished itself from the socio-political embellishments of the pre-capitalist institution of caste in Indian context? It is in principle agreed that Rent is a creation of landed monopolies and the privatization of land, an attribution of the conception of private property to colonial interests would pose a question as to whether privatization of land was not permitted in the pre-capitalist formations, in the specific context of India. In the debate of Mode of Production, Patnaik (1972), Chattopadhyay (1972) and Alavi (1975) points at the emergence of the institution of private property on account of the land administration systems introduced by British.

Patnaik (1972) argues that the concept of private property was enforced by colonial rule by ruling out any possible impact of pre-existing production relations on framing up of land settlements and legal system.

Chattopadhyay (1972) agrees on the point of private property that colonial revenue administration had introduced private property with individual assessment replacing collective assessment, however partially disagrees to the point of non-possible impact of pre-existing production relations on British administration and affirms that the evils of parasitic landlordism, usury and other evils affecting agriculture were already in existence prior to the arrival of British, while attributing hereditary form of zamindari system as an outcome of Mughal empire.

Alavi (1975) furthers the argument of institution of private property during colonial mode of production along by stating that the creation of a system of landed property emerged with the initiation of permanent settlement in Bengal in 1873, with a subsequent demarcation of lands that were not held under private management as crown lands. This process as Alavi (1975) elucidates, resulted in a process of compelling conditions for the overexploited peasant, as he has no escape owing to the crownization of commons on which he could eke out for subsistence. Thus, the situation of non-coercive conditions prevails as the peasant is automatically compelled to work with the landlord. The template adopted by Alavi(1975) replicates the case of England as narrated by Marx in the process of primitive accumulation.

With regard to the higher proportion of rural labourers, Patnaik (1971) argues that only to a negligible extent a pre-colonial source can be traced, while attributing the process of pauperization under the imperialist rule for creation of a large force of free-wage labourers. This seems to be an erroneous interpretation to the extent of relieving the pre-capitalist institution of

caste from the creation of a large body labouring masses. Ambedkar (1979)'s interpretation of caste system in "Annihilation of Caste" explains the reason behind the unemployment that persists in the country. According to him, the system of gradation of labour under caste does not permit for mobility of labour from one occupation to another with a systematic containment of each caste into a water-tight compartments, this stratification of occupations results in a scenario of unemployment when readjustment of labour from one occupation to another becomes rigid. However, to return to the nature of land as interpreted by EMS Namboodiripad and the aforementioned scholars of Mode of Production debate could be refuted from a host of works undertaken in the study of agrarian structure and the nature of property of India.

The first set of works which capture the existence of the nature of property are drawn from the contentions of Baden.B.H.Powell (1899) on the work of Maine (1861)'s ancient law. Maine conceptualizes the Indian village community as an assemblage of joint proprietors, a body of kindred holding domain in common and the community is conceived as consisting of those who extend beyond the boundaries of brotherhood of, with the feature of management of a common fund. To such a conception of village community by Maine, Powell (1899)'s response does not summarily reject the propositions of Maine (1861), however counter poses the scenario of non-inclusive nature of Chamars into the conception of brotherhood, leaving much ground for arguments on the segmented nature of Indian village. The nature of divisibility of the joint holdings as Powell (1899) locates, invisibilizes the conception of common holding, rather it forms the core foundation of private property. A much clearer notion of private property was documented by scholars who have worked on the Economic History of South India, which has a rich corpus of inscriptional evidence.

Dharma Kumar (1985) analyses the case of private property in the pre-colonial period through the inscriptional evidence available for the period beginning from Circa 850- 1280 AD during Chola period. The Chola regime had currency exchange through gold, silver and copper coins, and the collection of taxes prevailed in both cash and kind. The major landholding castes of the time were the Temples, Brahmins and Vellalas. The Untouchable castes had no rights in land. The word *Kani* implying right over land was a common observance in the inscriptions, and that the *Kaniyatchikaran* had all the rights of private landownership which includes, the right to possess, cultivate, mortgage, sell and bequeath. Further she attests the transactional notion of private property through inscriptional evidence on disposal of waste lands by sale by village

assembly in the early 13th century, and another chola inscription where an assembly sold half a village to a merchant's son and other half to seven vellalas.

Ludden (2016) in his work on Peasant History in South India, while pointing at the inscriptional corpus which is dominated by land grants to Brahmins, observes that the Pandya civilization was built around Brahmadeya, the Brahman Settlements. He also indicates that the dominant caste assemblies were the most important institutional means for resource control. The gifts by Vellalas to Brahmins ensured a high-status for them. The non-cultivating nature of Brahmins was viewed as a model of elite behaviour, marking other dominant castes to imitate the non-cultivating nature as a mark of entitlement to elite stature. The Brahmin and Vellalas have controlled the best lands which were supplied with best drainage. The notion of ritual purity amongst the landowning communities resulted in their non-engagement of physical labour, it was Pallas, a defeated and dispossessed clan who performed all gruelling work in paddy cultivation in the region of Tirunelveli. Pallas were also responsible for building and repairs the irrigation works. Amongst the dry lands, the Kings favoured Brahmins and Vellalas to acquire first stake on dry land. The evidence presented by Yanagisawa (1996) on the nature of disposal of the unsettled lands during colonial period, inherits the traits of the pre-colonial nature of said disposal favouring the Brahmins and Vellalas first, followed by the non-Mirasi Pattadars, then sub-tenants, the last being the Paraiah.

In contrast to the conceptions framed in the Mode of Production debate, and by EMS, landed property had sufficiently acquired a character of private ownership in the pre-colonial period itself. Aloysius (1999) through a historical-sociological perspective offers a much more elaborate perspective on colonialism as an enabler of caste-varna ideology enabling its entry in to modernity, by transforming caste as "*the subconscious and subterranean foundation of all subsequent Indian modernity*". As caste remained an undercurrent in the administrative functioning of colonial regime, colonial rule did confront with the tradition of caste, instead became a facilitator to universalize norms of caste to its administrative policy spread across the country dovetailed with the notions of hierarchy, order, custom, tradition and local law (Aloysius 1999) . In contrast to the pre-suppositions of a dismantled pre-colonial social orders in the colonial regime, one could find a much more widespread penetration of the brahminical social order.

The basic characterization of caste, was given by Dr.B.R.Ambedkar in his treatise on *Castes in India : Their Genesis, Mechanism and Development*, where he identifies Caste as an enclosed

class. The enclosure of classes into distinct castes was an outcome of the endogamous structures created in caste society. Has this feature of endogamous relations of caste which were in existence since a long time disappeared? In the Hindu code Bill, he identifies the rules of inheritance being tied to the performance of a sacramental marriage, which implied endogamous marriages, if such is the case the process of accumulation and monopolization of landed property becomes important to the understand the institution of landed property in India to understand the nature of access to land amongst various social groups. The question of land is also linked to the process of exploitation from a caste perspective. Such a scenario of exploitation is often not considered in the discourse of economic thought in India. Rao (1971) argues that sharecropping as an institution would make the tenant better off as there would be access to credit from the landed to the tenant. However, such a postulation does not consider the existence of exploitative conditions. Cooper (1983) brings in the process of both economic and extra-economic exploitation of dalit woman in explaining exploitative tendencies present in share-cropping institution in India which entails extra-economic coercion and sexual exploitation of Dalit woman.

Basu (1998) offers an insight into the way in which Power in Rural Society interacts in a triadic manner leaving no scope for escaping from an imposed form of servitude *“An essential element in understanding why one agent is able to control another and exercise power is the triad. An interaction is triadic if the transaction between I and j can influence and get influenced by an uninvolved third party.”* (Basu 1998). Non-adherence to the norms of caste related practices could result in social boycott with the triadic interactions existing in the village society.

Thorat (2005) highlights the role of lack of productive assets among Rural Dalit women which induces a disadvantageous situation faced by them owing to their dependent and vulnerable status. Sarap (2016) argues that the existence of an unequal distribution of agricultural land or productive assets in general, amongst different members of a caste society leads to multiple deprivations for lower castes who are mostly affected by such a lack of ownership. Land ownership becomes critical as agriculture is the mainstay of their livelihood, the irony being most of such strata of landless dependant population belongs to the lower castes.

Agarwal (1994), while postulating equity, efficiency, and empowerment effects of land reform on women, with reference to lower-caste and poorer women while highlighting the need for land rights for women, importantly, brings in the perspective on how ownership of property amongst dominant castes not only mediates relationships between men and women but also between

women based on social status. Mies et al. (1986) while elaborately discussing the nature of sexual violence initiated on Dalit women, postulate that non-ownership of land creates a state of powerlessness amongst Dalit women. Benbabali (2018) argues that ownership of property mediated through the case of transfer of property rights to dominant caste women as dowry/Stridhan has an emancipatory effect.

The importance of granting access to land through proprietary titles are observed by Santos et al. (2014), while analyzing the effects of government allocation of land over ensuring food security through an intrahousehold analysis of West Bengal's Microplot Allocation Program, *Nijo Gruha Nijo Bhumi (NGNB)*. They identify positive effects of NGNB land allocation program to women, with which they can access agricultural credit improving investible capacity of the household in agriculture, further inducing them to use improved inputs which can ensure an increased food production. Such a series of positive spillovers can help in improving the situation of food security. Anderson (2011) on the other hand argues from the negative effects of the caste hegemony impeding on the agrarian productivity of agrarian dependant lower caste households, which can adversely affect the situation of food security. She observes a hegemonic control over water resources by dominant castes in a village of Maharashtra, dis-allowing Dalits to access water for agrarian production, which is forecasted to result in less than optimum outcomes for Dalits, which has twin effects of affecting the prospects of development for Dalits, with a simultaneous adverse impact on hampering the agrarian productivity affecting food security. Meinzen-Dick et al. (2019)'s comprehensive review of existing studies on women's land rights concurs with a high-level agreement on the positive association of women's land rights on empowerment and improved bargaining power, while observing a negative association with domestic violence.

Given the importance of enabling access to land through proprietary control, state granting titles to landless has been critiqued through arguments of privatization of commons (Jodha 2008). There is a need to distinguish between the process of enabling access to land for historically expropriated classes/castes vis-à-vis an already surplus endowed households, in such context Yanagisawa (2008) rightly distinguishes between exploitative appropriation of commons represented through 'elite-dominant' type, as against acquiring of cultivable wastes/poramboke lands by landless towards establishment of an equalized society through 'egalitarian' type. He further holds the view that acquisition of landholding by landless and their emancipation can be

seen as a positive development in terms of environmental preservation in the long run, as against exploitative authority of Dominant Castes who exercise exclusionary control on commons.

As brought out in Chapter-1, on the discourse of a change in the policy of land reforms by postulating a disappearance of the exploitative nature of land ownership, it becomes important to look at the question of the intended reforms with specific emphasis on the marginalized groups. In such process, we at first need to unravel the present state of land ownership and understand whether it has divorced itself from the characterization of land concentration aided by caste. Hence, a section of review of land, caste, and the process of accumulation of land is presented in the next chapter, followed by an emphasis on understanding the institution of tenancy through the prism of absenteeism, with an analysis of data on tenancy from secondary sources in presented in the fourth chapter.

2.1 Major issues from review:

- The genesis of land reforms in the immediate post-independence period was necessitated by the presence of movements against the landed gentry across the country. Though, a promulgation of the slogan of “Land to the tiller” was made and recommendations to impose a ban on tenancy were advocated by the reforms committee headed by J.C.Kumarappa, the implementation part was tardy, except for the part of an abolition of larger landed estates of Zamindari.
- The structure of local power played an adverse role in the process of implementation of reforms, with dominant castes manipulating records and concealing tenancy.
- The incorporation of a right to resumption and personal cultivation for landlords resulted in a non-transfer of land to the tiller, with lands possessed back from tenants.
- The absence of administrative support at local level and political will from the ruling classes had a negative effect on the process of implementation.
- The reforms, instead of helping the tillers, helped the intermediaries belonging to high/dominant castes as opposed to benefitting SC/ST’s.
- The data on implementation of land reforms aimed at redistribution of land to the landless reveals that only 7% of the area estimated as surplus was distributed, which reveals a great lag in implementation.
- Given the backdrop of non-implementation of reforms, there is a renewed debate on new phase of land reforms with more favourable emphasis on landowners as opposed to the interests of the tenants, through liberalization of tenancy discourse.

- It is argued that tenancy liberalization results in larger operational holdings through increased leasing mechanism, and further enables access to institutional support mechanisms resulting in productive investments in land.
- The emergence of the policy of tenancy liberalization in Indian context, is part of the Market friendly land reforms proposed by the world bank think tank. Griffin.et.al (2002, 2004) offer a critique against MFLR, and advocate for redistribution of land with a role for state as depressor of prices or confiscator of land. The justification for a policy of redistribution is advocated from the efficiency of small-scale family farms. Further, such a redistribution as they argue would rupture the monopsony power of large landholder in imposing labour controls. However, their advocacy does not have any critique on absenteeism, in fact they justify absentee control over land leading to efficient management of land through managers.
- Byres (2004) finds problem with the justification of small-scale farm efficiency, as it does not understand the small holder agriculture as bare subsistence farming involving in excessive application of labour. He also critiques the idea of absentee owners identified with good resource use, as it lacks empiricity.
- The lack of emphasis on the counter-effects of tenurial arrangements in GKI's approach, leads to justification of absenteeism associate with good resource use. The evolution of the concept of tenancy and the question of rent in economic thinking is identified with two major strands of argument.
- One, it is the productivity of the land that generates rent as advocated by Ricardo and Anderson, and the other, it is the ownership and monopolization of land which results in creation of rent as advocated by Adam smith, Marx. Physiocrats though believed that the returns from agriculture belong to the landowners, at the same time remained critical to the spending of returns accrued from agriculture for non-agrarian pursuits, as the same would squeeze the productive investment meant for agriculture.
- Marx expounds a detailed theory of rent by classifying various phases of rent, which emerges into the final form of ground rent in the capitalist mode of development, which divorces the pre-capitalist characteristics of rent.
- The explanation by Marx stands important in distinguishing different stages of rent, however a uniform application of the capitalist ground rent to all cases might not stand to the realities of each context. Such an error of application was observed to having been applied to Indian context by EMS Namboodiripad, and the Mode of production debate.

- The discourse on legalization of tenancy also understates the existing exploitative nature of tenancy in Rural India and does not even attempt to address the question of absenteeism.
- The assumptions of a dismantled state of pre-capitalist institutions are strangely advocated by both neo-marxist scholars and neo-classicals. The historical studies in Indian context goes against the arguments of neo-marxist scholars that the institution of private property emerged in the colonial context with which the pre-capitalist institutions were made infructuous. A simultaneous discourse on caste and the nature of accumulation of land reveals both a process of accumulation and continuity in the structure of land ownership amongst dominant castes through the practice of endogamy combined with the inheritance rules.
- A further postulation from caste and gender perspective reveals how enabling access to land becomes important for empowerment, efficiency, and equity.

Given the absence of an emphasis on the question of absenteeism, caste and land accumulation, the discourse of tenancy legalization will not adequately address the issues and challenges of tenants. Hence, the gaps in the present formulations are attempted to be addressed by taking the questions on the exploitative nature of caste in perpetuating inequalities, absenteeism and its connection with caste, and the processes of continuity and change in the land ownership patterns with a particular emphasis on marginalized groups.

CHAPTER-3

CHANGING CONTEXT OF LAND AND CASTE IN INDIA⁵

3.1 Introduction

Caste which is a well-knitted network with endogamous marriage systems enforced through social sanctions characterizes Indian society. (Ambedkar 1936). Caste exists as a lived, shared, and contested idea of domination and subordination. Castes are identified to be mutually inimical and repulsive towards each other (Narasu 1988) and the idea of resistance to the rules of castes is often met with social intolerance (Guru 2017). The rigid structure of caste is maintained through the superposition of endogamy on exogamy (Ambedkar, 1917) that prohibits inter-caste marriage.

In this chapter, we shall explore into the nature of Hindu social order historically, and analyze the connections between caste, gender, and the ownership of property in its specific form as ownership of land. At a broader level, it could be mapped that the property once acquired by households in a social group (irrespective of the means through which it is acquired), stays within the social group inter-generationally with the prohibition of marriage beyond the social group in which one is born, when endogamy is combined with the rules of inheritance and an absence of a large-scale sales of land. An attempt is made in this chapter to unravel the intricate connections between the long imposed social sanctions in the process of land accumulation and how they determine the present state of an unequal distribution in ownership of land.

In the following sections, at first, we delineate on the broader framework of caste by understanding the connections between endogamy, property accumulation and the rules of inheritance from a socio-historical perspective with a simultaneous evaluation of the legal sanctity of the social conditions. Followed by mapping the pattern of accumulation of land amongst the dominant caste elites, from existing literature, and the transitions that have occurred in the patterns of land ownership.

⁵ A Major portion of this chapter is published as a Book Chapter titled “ Changing context of caste, gender and land relations in India”.

Prashanth, D., Balaji, P., & Srinivas, M. (2020). Changing context of caste, gender and land relations in India. In *Ambedkar's Vision of Economic Development for India* (pp. 169-182). Routledge India.

3.2 Caste: Power and Authority

Castes are exclusive endogamous groups of the society in which they operate as enclosed classes. These classes are graded one above the other with specified occupational distribution determined by birth. (Ambedkar 1917, 1937). Endogamy as a custom of marriage was considered as sacramental to the faith of Hindu religion and stood as a base for the sustenance of the caste system. Inter-caste marriages which violate the principle of endogamy were quite often treated with utmost contempt leading to social ostracization and elimination of the married couple. Even with the evolution of modern institutions of jurisprudence and justice during 19th century under colonial government with establishment of high courts and supreme courts, if marriages violating the principle of endogamy were declared null and void then the reason is to be found in the doctrine of inequality nurtured by Hindu dharma shastras which had legal sanctity. The feature of endogamy conjoined with the laws of inheritance of property becomes crucial in understanding the nature of accumulation of land/property in the hands of fewer social groups.

The practices of endogamy combined with the customary rules of inheritance limits property to the caste and social group. Endogamy limits the consequences of transmission of property through women and maintains the property through marriage with families of one's own kind (Goody, 1976). Such limitation of property to social groups coupled with the exploitative tendencies of caste which left the rights to acquirement of property with Caste-Hindus while restricting women and Shudras from acquiring property have perpetuated inequality in the society.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar was a firm opponent of such iniquitous social formations and remained relentless in his struggle for annihilation of such forms of inequality. He advocated against perpetuation of iniquitous social practices, in which process while serving as Law Minister of Government of India, he introduced Hindu Code Bill aimed at granting equal rights in share of property for both men and women. By taking a comprehensive view on penetration of inequality through religious customary practices, he said "To leave inequality between class and class, between sex and sex, which is the soul of Hindu society untouched and to go on passing legislation relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our constitution and to build a palace on a dung heap. This is the significance I attached to the Hindu Code."⁶ His advocacy on

⁶Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Volume 14 (Part-2, pg. 1326)

doing away with caste in marriage and adoption through Hindu Code Bill was aimed at preventing forfeiture of one's inheritance on account of inter-caste marriages. Under the shastric law, the loss of caste through inter-caste marriage entails forfeiture of inheritance (H.S.Gour, 1919). However the reforms, which aimed at equalizing the rights in property amongst men and women were defeated by dominant caste representatives in parliament which subsequently led to the resignation of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar as Minister for Law in 1951. It took more than 55 years to make an amendment in Hindu Succession Act to guarantee equal rights in inheriting the ancestral property by women.

3.3 Intersectionality of Caste and Gender

First, Manu Smriti which served as legal doctrine⁷ of Hindu socio-economic order has prevented Shudras to acquire property, by vesting a right with the Brahmin to snatch away whatever that is hard-earned by a Shudra⁸. It has ordained a Shudra to remain a slave only to eke out existence by way of accepting abandoned food⁹, left over clothes, while granting the right to acquire of wealth and education for the Caste-Hindus. By vesting the right to earn and accumulate wealth with twice-born or Caste-Hindus and denying any scope for Shudras to earn has laid the foundation for economic inequality. Alongside the laws of inheritance of said accumulated property have mandated for sacramental marriage as a necessary condition for the inheritance of the property for the offspring of the married couple.

⁷Manu Dharma Shastra served as the Legal Document before the Constitution of India was adopted. Manu Dharma Shastra was observed to be the constitution of India on a custom mode Beteile in (Thorat and Kumar, 2008), (M.V. Nadkarni, 2007, p. 1847).

⁸Chapter 8, Verse 417: A Brahmana may confidently seize the goods of (his) Sudra (slave); for, as that (slave) can have no property, his master may take his possessions.

Chapter 10, Verse: 129 "No collection of wealth must be made by a Sudra, even though he be able (to do it); for a Sudra who has acquired wealth, gives pain to Brahmanas. The Laws of Manu (1886) Ch. X, verse 129,"

⁹Manusmriti, Chapter X : 125 reflects on how abandoned food is :The remnants of their food must be given to him, as well as their old clothes, the refuse of their grain and their old household furniture" The implementation of this rule in villages is testified by various studies by anthropologists, Wiser (1936) records in his book "The Hindu Jajmani System" details out on how the aforementioned clause is observed in practice, and noted "A Sweeper (bhangi) if he attends a marriage for the duties of sweeping he is made to collect the food which is leftover on the leaf plates"

"The Poorer of the Kam-Karnewalas when not otherwise occupied spend a share of their time during September and October in the low marshland near the village harvesting wild rice. No figures for the actual amount harvested are available but we found that the sweepers for instance, were using this wild rice almost exclusively during September and October. In their usual Sunday grain offerings to the local church they contributed mostly wild rice".

Mitakshara as a law of inheritance largely governs the inheritance rules of the country (Kumar, 1985). Under Mitakshara,

“the property of a Hindu is not his individual property. It is property which belongs to what is called which consists of father, son, grandson, and great grandson. All these people have a birth-right in that property and the property on the death of anyone member of this coparcenary passes by what is called survivorship to the members who remain behind, and does not pass to the heirs of the deceased” (Ambedkar 1953).

Here the property is inherited at the time of birth, birth being governed by the principle of begetting a child only through a marriage of the same caste results in perpetuity of the property in the hands of the same community. The transfer of the property is governed by the rule of sacramental marriage.

In *Bai Kashi vs Jamnadas Mansukh Raichand* on 5 March, 1912, High Court of Bombay delivered a verdict declaring the marriage of a Brahmin Woman and a Shudra as illegal, null and void. In another case of *Swayampakula Subbaramayya And ... vs Swayampakula Venkatasubbamma ...* on 5 February, 1941, High Court of Madras declared ‘anuloma’ marriage, a marriage between a Brahmin Man and Shudra Woman as illegal and declared that maintenance or share in wealth of an estate cannot be allowed to the children and wife since they were categorized as Shudras. Such were the rules of Hindu Dharma Shastra which continued even after the evolution of modern institutions of legal jurisprudence.

Added to the observance of such accumulation in the hands of Caste-Hindus, said accumulation was vested with Caste-Hindu men, wherein the women were denied any share in the inheritance of ancestral property. In fact, in the case of women, their relegation to household tasks¹⁰ has defined the social status in a society immersed in caste-patriarchal notions of labour. However, said notion was more applicable for woman of higher castes, while woman from lower social groups were ordained to be slaves.

¹⁰Census 1931 states “It is certainly regarded as much more socially respectable for a wife to be engaged at home on household duties than to labour in the fields, and there is a generally increasing tendency, as castes aspire to a higher social standing, to keep their wife at home” (J.H. Hutton, 1933).

3.4 Land accumulation : A graded continuity in change

Religion which denied equality in terms of economic as well social equality ensured that a perpetual continuum of power is maintained through the control of woman's sexuality in a well-knitted inter-personal relation bounded by the rules of endogamy. This, as argued in previous section, determines the access to wealth accruing in the hands of Caste-Hindus.

Several studies also corroborate the fact of accumulation of a major portion of land in the hands of Caste-Hindus, the process of accumulation happened at two levels. First one through *Inams/Gifts*, and second through the coercion and a locked state of peasantry through loans extended and the non-payment of taxes.

As compared with the evidence pertaining to the Northern provinces of India, the southern region had inscriptional evidence with regard to Land grants and the entitlements. Ludden (2016) while pointing at the inscriptional corpus which is dominated by land grants to Brahmins, points to the emergence of Brahmadeya settlements with grants to Brahmins during Pandyan civilization. He also indicates that the dominant caste assemblies were the most important institutional means for resource control. The cordoning of the best drained lands by Brahmin and Vellalas made them the powerful elite. Kumar Dharma (1962) documents that around 19th century, in the fertile regions of Malabar, Kanara and better irrigated fields of Tamil districts, a significant proportion of lands were owned by Brahmins. Apart from the grants that were endowed to the Brahmins, Raj kumar (1974) brings out a process of appropriation of property by Brahmin and Velala Landlords. This was sought through the tampering of the title deeds and destroying of the existing documents to transfer titles in their favour, which he notes happened with the means of official connivance and their hegemony in the village council (Rajkumar 1974). Frykenberg (1977)¹¹ while locating the nature of Inams that existed during the silent settlement in South India, observes that Inams for a long period of time constituted an important part of gaining socio-political support, which also made it possible for the company power to establish itself in the southern landscape. He categorized three major forms of Inams, the first being Endowment to Institutions, of which the best lands were endowed on to *three leading sectarian schools of Brahmans (Smarthas, Sri-Vaishnava and Madhava) for which branch holdings existed in nearly every district (Frykenberg 1977 Pg. 41)*. The second category Inams were those endowed on to

¹¹R.E. Frykenberg, 'The Silent Settlement in South India, 1793-1853: An Analysis of the Role of Inams in the Rise of the Indian Imperial System', in Frykenberg (ed.), *Land Tenure and Peasants in South Asia*, New Delhi, 1977.

Individuals, amongst whom most of them were held by Brahmins. The third category of Inams were Socio-Political holdings which were given to the *Polegars*, *Deshpandya* and *Deshmukhs* who were the local chiefs controlling several villages, and to the armed village warriors who engaged in performing the duties of policing and collection of revenues for the administration.

In the southern and western parts of India, the village headman¹² and the record keepers along with their families constituted the village elite (Bayly 1988). The hereditary officers were in receipt of inams in the form of waste lands from Kings and Peshwas of Marathas and the Muslim Kings of Deccan, this apart those who remained more prominent were given with entire villages as inams (Fukazawa 1982). Apart from the inams allotted by State, Deshpande (1998) observes that by the time of Independence the revenue officers holding hereditary titles of Patil, Deshmukh, Deshpande, Kulkarni, Patwaris, have usurped and grabbed large amounts of lands from cultivators under the pretext of non-payment of revenue to state. A similar observation could be found from the report of the reforms committee under the chairmanship of Dewan Bahadur Aravamudu Aiyangar in the year 1938 in the state of Hyderabad, while remarking on the role of Patels and Patwaris, it was observed that:

“The Patels and Patwaris indeed are not only the 'rulers' or 'executive heads' of the villages, but they are also their leading zamindars or land-holders. So their position as against that of the villagers is not only that of rulers or officers but also of rival land-holders. Besides, they are the money-lenders of these villages and do their business overtly or otherwise. The result is that the economic resources of the villagers are controlled entirely by them. They thus become the real instruments of ruin for the peasantry and great obstacles to their progress and prosperity. If, at any time, these dumb people are moved to seek redress, they speedily find out that they cannot contend against the Patels and Patwaris in their own waters; and this fact always holds them back from approaching the higher quarters for justice.” (Aiyangar 1938, pg. 106)

¹²Both headman and record keepers were hereditary in nature which received the nomenclatures were composed of the dominant castes of the region. In the region of Maharashtra were Kunbi/Marathas were *Patils* and Brahmins were the *Kulkarnis*, Telangana region had *Velamas* and *Reddies* in the ranks of Patel while Brahmins were the Patwaris, in Andhra region, *Reddy*, *Kamma* and *PedaKapu* who were the headman and Brahmins were the *Karanam* (Fukazawa 1982, Frykenberg 1977 ; Hiebert 1977 ; Kumar 1983)

In the northern part of the country, Metcalf (1967)'s study of the Oudh Taluqdars reveals that a predominant amongst them belonged to the Rajput caste. By the mid-19th century, as he observes, about 60% of the land in twelve districts of the Oudh state was owned by Taluqdars.

Ludden (1984) while exploring on the question of Productive Power in Agriculture: A survey of work on the local history of British India, observes that village zamindars had roots in village agriculture much prior¹³ to the British Raj. In Uttar Pradesh, the Rajput Zamindars had a disdain towards cultivation and cultivators both, for whose operation rested on the hired labourers and managers. In Bengal and Bihar, the wet localities were characterized by a predominant share of ownership amongst the high-caste, *often Brahmins who received obligatory patronage from native rulers (pg.77)*. The cultural evaluation of labour in these areas itself was low, and thus agricultural labour was treated as low-caste occupation.

Census 1901 while elucidating on the occupational engagement of population in Bengal Province, makes a specific note on the zamindars, their number and the social location of those zamindars.

“Amongst zamindars, the Brahmans, who number about 88,000, are most numerous; then follow the Kayasths with 73,000, the Babbhans with 36,000 and the Rajputs with 25,000. Brahman zamindars are found all over the province. They are especially numerous in the Orissa Presidency, Patna and Dacca Divisions, but they are outnumbered in the Presidency and Dacca Divisions by the Kayasths and in Patna by the Babbhans and Rajputs, especially by the former, who are more than twice as numerous”. (H.H.Risley, 1903, p.218).

Given the scale and nature of appropriation for dominant castes across the country, the process of accumulation of land amongst dominant castes took the form of Inams and grants, as well as land was accrued to them on account of exploitative coercive methods. The transition of the

¹³Irfan Habib also makes a similar observation with regard to the landed sections who became part of the Zamindari set-up. “

Historically, the *zamindari* right had close association with caste or clan dominance. *Zamindars* of a locality often belonged to the same caste. Moreover, a *zamindar* needed not only the support of his kinsmen, but also the possession of retainers (*ulus*) and forts (usually of mud, *garhis*, *qil'achas*) to protect and enforce his claims. The *A'in-i-Akbari* in its celebrated 'Account of the Twelve *Siibas*', not only records the *zamindar* caste or castes, but also the number of horse and foot employed by the *zamindars*, in *each pargana*. *The *zamindars* thus formed a semi-military class, who could not be ignored politically by any regime.” (Habib 1982, Pg.246)

nature of land ownership from pre-independence to post-independence period was mapped by a few studies.

Nancharaiah (1988) through the analysis of land records in a village of Kanchakoduru over the years of 1930, 1948, 1965, and 1982, reveals that for the year of 1930 the Brahmins controlled 77% of total land as they happened to be Inamdars, Non-Brahmins about 21% and Scheduled Castes only about 2% of total land. Yanagisawa (1996)'s comprehensive work in case of 14 wet villages in Lalgudi Taluk of Tamilnadu from 1865 to 1925 reveals that the share of land occupied by Brahmins out of 9640 acres accounted for 38.5%, which dipped down to 30.5% by 1925, showing a greater hold even after 60 years of comparison, the decline in their share was accompanied by an increase amongst the non-Brahmins from 41% to 45.8%. However, in case of depressed classes the ownership position got slightly better from none of them holding land in 1865 to owning a share of 1.5% by 1925. In another study of the pattern of land ownership and change from 1952 to 1975 in the case of Appadurai village, which forms part of Lalgudi Taluk, he observes a decline in land owned by Brahmins from about 50% of the village land standing at 209 acres in 1952 to 170 acres constituting about 38% to Total land. The land owned by Chetties, and Pillais did not change conspicuously. However, there was a rapid change amongst Muthurajas who erstwhile tenants from 23 acres in 1952 to 68 acres in 1979. For Scheduled castes as well, there was an observed change from 93.1 acres in 1952 to 16.63 acres by 1979. Though there is a noted change he observes that there is an element of continuity in social change.

Trivedi (2017), while comparing his recent work in 2013 with the studies carried out by Opler (1956), Singh (1956) and Cohn (1959) in Senapur, he observes that there is not much marked change. Historically, Thakurs who controlled the entire agricultural land of Senapur continue to own sizeable portions of land. The only change that could be observed is the decline in the size of landholdings owing to fragmentation. However, these fragmented parcels of owned land were concentrated amongst the erstwhile group of landowners. In the present work as well, an attempt is made to study the changing scenario of land ownership amongst social groups which is dealt in chapter 5, with a comprehensive study of land distribution through Land records. For the moment, we shall engage with understanding the transitions in occupational structure and access to Land at All-India level to understand the present context of caste, occupational structure, and land distribution. This shall be done with the help of Census records in case of analyzing

occupational structure, while relying on NSSO rounds on Land and Livestock holdings in case of analysis on access to land.

3.5 Demography and Changing Patterns of Occupational Engagement and Land Ownership:

The numbers as per the Census 2011 concerning the demographic composition of India, reveals that 51.4% of the total population are Males, while 48.5% of the population is constituted by Females. Majority of the population, that is around 69% of the total resides in rural areas. The composition of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes reveals that, the Scheduled Castes form 16.6% of the total population, while Scheduled Tribes stands at 8.6%. Within Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Gender composition reveals that about 48.6% of Scheduled Castes are Females, while amongst Scheduled Tribes 49.7% are Females.

Nearly about 72% of India's working population resides in rural areas, amongst which Males constitute 62% of rural working force, while Females constitute 38% of rural working force. In Urban pockets where 28% of total working Population of India resides, the proportion of Males constitute 79% of total urban working population while the proportion of females constitute 21%. The figures reveal an unequal distribution of workforce amongst Males and Females as against their proportion of population, whereas the proportion of workforce amongst females in rural areas stands at 38%, while their proportion of population in rural areas remains to be 49%. In Urban areas, the situation is much worse, wherein females constitute 21% of total urban working population as against their population in urban areas with a share of 48% in the Total urban population. The proportion of non-workers amongst males and females suggests that it is higher amongst females than males, with females constituting 60% of non-workers as against 40% of non-workers amongst males.

3.5.1 Occupational Diversification

The effect of caste system on Agriculture clearly depicts the patterns of relegation of Scheduled Castes to agricultural labour, while most Caste-Hindus were demarcated as self-employed cultivators. The occupational patterns amongst various social groups suggests that the dependancy of scheduled castes on agricultural labor and casual labour is higher in proportion as compared with the dependancy of Non-SC/ST/OBC's on agricultural labour.

Occupational patterns amongst males and female working population suggests that more than half i.e., 55% of them are dependent on Agriculture, while the rest 42% are engaged as other workers, leaving about 4% engaged in Household Industry. Amongst the rural agrarian working population, cultivators constitute 46% of the total agrarian working population (within which 32% Males, and 14% Females, together 46%), while agricultural labourers constitute 54% (within which 31% Males and 23% Female population).

The trends reveal that amongst the female agrarian working population, there is a higher proportion of engagement as agricultural labourers, than cultivators. However, as against their proportion of population, said engagement is lower, further analysis on the patterns exhibited by Scheduled Caste women's engagement as agricultural labour can present a better picture.

In rural areas, amongst Scheduled Castes as a proportion of rural SC agrarian working population, 25% of them operate as Cultivators (with 17% Males, and 8% Female) and rest 75% are engaged as agricultural labourers (with 44% Males and 31% Females). The trends on occupational diversification in rural areas amongst Scheduled Castes exhibit the feature of higher dependancy of both male and female population in rural areas on agricultural labour.

The proportion of SC female agricultural labourers to total female agricultural labour in rural areas suggest that SC woman constitutes 25 % of total female agricultural laboureres (Rural). When the proportion of SC woman (Rural) is accounted as a proportion of total female population (Rural), it stands at 18%, indicating that the magnitude of participation of Scheduled Caste (Female) as agricultural labour stands higher in comparison with overall female population. The analysis suggests that Scheduled Castes and women as social categories, who were denied ownership of land show a higher dependancy that is exhibited by being largely agricultural laborers than as cultivators.

An examination of the broad categories of labour as partitioned by Census of India into Cultivators, Agricultural Labourers, Household Industry workers and Other workers in accordance with the estimates available for social groups demarcated as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Non-SC/ST (computed by the author) reveals the following. The composition of Scheduled castes engaging as agricultural labour in comparision with others stands at a greater magnitude with more than half of the rural working population operating as agricultural labourers.

Table : 3.1 The Proportion of workers by social group for the years of 2001 and 2011

Category of workers	2001				2011			
	All	SC	ST	Non-SC/ST	All	SC	ST	Non-SC/ST
Cultivators	40.2	23.5	47.1	43.4	33	18.2	36.8	36.3
Agricultural Labourers	33	52.2	38.4	27	39.3	55.2	47	33.3
Household Industry	3.9	3.7	2.1	4.3	3.4	3	2	3.8
Other workers	22.8	20.6	12.5	25.3	24.3	23.6	14.2	26.5
All	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Census of India 2001, 2011

Table : 3.2 Decadal percentage increase/decrease for various social groups from 2001-2011

(All-India Rural)

Category of workers	SC	ST	Non-SC/ST	All
Cultivators	-10.7	-4.7	-7.9	-7.7
Agricultural labourers	22	49.1	35.8	33.7
HH industry workers	-6.4	17.7	-2.2	-1.6
Other workers	32.3	38.1	15.6	19.9
Total Workers	15.4	21.8	10.1	12.5

Source : Author's calculations from Census 2001 & 2011

However as compared with 2001, the proportion of agricultural labourers increased for all social groups with a simultaneous decline in cultivators. The reasons attributed by some of the existing studies point towards the introduction of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), facilitating an increase in the share of labourers with steady employment and increase in wages (Gupta, 2016). Amongst all, Scheduled Tribes have had a greater proportion of growth in Rural working population, followed by Scheduled Castes and Non-SC/ST groups had lesser magnitude of increase in rural working population. Amongst the category of cultivators, the magnitude of decline was greater amongst Scheduled Castes, the least being observed in case of Scheduled Tribes. Amongst all the working population what was clear was the growth amongst the agricultural workers and the other workers (Table 3.2).

As we observe an increased proliferation of agricultural labourers, we identify a growth in the proportion of other workers engaged in activities other than cultivators and agricultural labourers as well. Such a process of growth of other workers in rural areas was accompanied by an increase in the composition of marginal workers from 22% in 2001 to 29% by 2011. An increase in the composition of marginal workers is in line with the process of casualization of labour in the non-farm sector is observed by Himanshu et.al (2013). Studies on growth of non-farm workers in rural areas based upon NSSO rounds on Employment and Unemployment surveys had observed that a major composition of the non-farm labour force was in the service sector as opposed to the popular belief of its prevalence in construction sector (Aayog NITI 2017; Himanshu et.al 2013). While agreeing with them on the growth of non-farm sectoral allocation of labour, we attempt to unravel the complexities around the growth of labour other than those engaged in cultivation and agricultural labour from decennial rounds of census between 2001 and 2011.

Rural working population engaged in *occupations other than cultivators and agricultural labourers (OOTCAL)* accounts for 27.7%. OOTCAL is broadly sub-grouped into ten categories, 1) Legislators, Senior officials and Managers, 2) Professionals, 3) Technicians and Associate Professionals, 4) Clerks, 5) Service workers and Shop & Market sales workers, 6) Skilled Agricultural and Fishery workers, 7) Craft and related workers, 8) Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers, 9) Elementary Occupations, 10) Workers not classified by occupations.

Table: 3.3 Proportion of workers other than cultivators and agricultural labourers amongst by nature of work in 2011 at overall level and for Scheduled Castes, Average annual growth rates for each sub-group of workers other than cultivators and agricultural labourers during 2001 to 2011.

Sl.No	Sub-Group	Proportion of workers other than cultivators and agricultural labourers (All)	Average Annual Rate of Growth from 2001-2011	Proportion of workers other than cultivators and agricultural labourers (SC)
1	LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS	2.4	3.2	1.4
2	PROFESSIONALS	4.1	0.3	2.5
3	TECHNICIANS AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONALS	8.4	5.4	6.9
4	CLERKS	2.3	-1.7	1.6
5	SERVICE WORKERS AND SHOP & MARKET SALES WORKERS	16.5	-0.3	11.0
6	SKILLED AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERY WORKERS	7.8	-2.9	5.7
7	CRAFT AND RELATED TRADES WORKERS	24.5	-1.3	26.9
8	PLANT AND MACHINE OPERATORS AND ASSEMBLERS	9.6	-3.9	8.8
9	ELEMENTARY OCCUPATIONS	24.4	12.0	35.2
10	Total	100	0.3	100

Source: Author's calculations from Census of India -2011, 2001

Amongst all sub-groups of OOTCAL, *workers not classified by occupations* occupied the highest share accounting for 20.5% of OOTCAL in 2011. Workers under this category got more than doubled compared with 2001, by registering an annual average growth rate of 14.7% between 2001-2011. However, for further analysis we would exclude the category of *workers not classified by occupations*, as the nature of their engagement in occupations does not get spelt out exactly.

As observed from Table: 3.3 workers engaged in *Craft and Related Trades Workers* and *Elementary Occupations* accounts for about half of workers engaged in OOTCAL, for the same a greater magnitude of engagement is observed amongst Scheduled Caste workers with 62% engaged in aforesaid occupations. A further examination of the composition of *Elementary Occupations* reveals a greater participation of workers as *Labourers in Mining, Construction, Manufacturing and Transport* comprising 70.1% of *Elementary occupations* (Census 2011). The nature of said activities majorly related to building construction labour, and construction and maintenance labourers of roads, dams, and similar activities. Similar trends are observed amongst Scheduled Castes but with a greater degree of engagement with 75% of the workforce working as *Labourers in Mining, Construction, Manufacturing and Transport*.

Interestingly, amongst the composition of workers under *Craft and Related Trades Workers* (CRTW) which remains out to be largest category of employment in OOTCAL, a significant proportion of workforce operates under the category of *extraction and building trades workers* accounting for 31.78% of CRTW, the same in case of SC's accounts for 37.8% of CRTW. Amongst other trades under CRTW, *Textile, Garments and related Trades workers* comprise 24% of CRTW with a majority under them engaging as weavers, knitters, tailors, and dress makers, whereas for SC's, though these trades remain significant, yet as a comparison in terms of magnitude of participation they engage with 15% of CRTW operating as *Textile, Garments and related Trades workers*. Food Processing and related trade workers comprise 15% of CRTW, with most of them operating as *Tobacco prepares and Tobacco Product Makers* accounting for 80% of Total Food Processing and Related Trade workers.

In terms of comparison between composition of workers amongst general working population and scheduled caste working population under CRTW reveals a stark difference in the population engaging as Pelt, Leather, and Shoe Making Trades (PLSMT) workers, where at this category of workers account for about 9% of CRTW in case of Scheduled Castes. The same in the case of General working population is accounted for about 1%. The PLMST workers when looked at as

a separate activity, and when we compute the composition of Scheduled Castes as a proportion of a whole workers of PLMST, it reveals that Scheduled Castes are composed of 66% of total PLMST workers. Such an observation tells us about a continuity amongst Scheduled Castes in occupations that were deemed to be impure in the caste-ridden society. Service Workers and Shop & Market Sales (SWSM) Workers who compose 16.5% of OOTCAL have their highest engagement as Shop Salespersons and Demonstrators accounting for 61% of SWSM workers. While rest engage as Personal and Protective Service Workers with a greater dependence as Housekeeping and Restaurant workers. As we witness an increasing trend in Rural Non-Farm labour, such an increase is accompanied by the process of the casualization of the labour force with Scheduled castes located in their traditional roles.

Mazumder (2010) using the unit level data on NSSO surveys on Employment and Unemployment finds that there exists intergenerational stickiness for the disadvantaged/excluded castes comprising SC/ST/OBC, in contrast to mobility observed amongst the advantaged/other castes. In this finding, the mobility observed amongst the advantaged castes was from blue collar jobs to white collar jobs, whereas for the excluded castes the mobility remains to be within the same grade of occupations.

The feature of graded occupations and the restrictive mobility which appears in present context might not be an outcome of the rigid feature of caste, rather as argued by Shah & Lerche (2018), it could be an outcome of inter-generational Inherited inequalities of power accentuated by hegemonic possession of caste-based hierarchical land and command over labor. An investigation into the question of labour in Indian context is intrinsically related to the question of caste, further when the economy remains out to be predominantly agrarian, investigating the scenario of access to land in relation to caste becomes important. In the next section, we shall dwell upon the patterns of land ownership amongst various social groups.

3.5.2 Changing Patterns of ownership

The available evidence on ownership of land amongst various social groups suggests that there is a skewed distribution of land. NSSO 70th round report on household ownership and operational holdings - 2018 in India reveals that in rural areas, scheduled castes who constitute 21.6 % of total households owns 10.2% of total land which does not even constitute half to their proportion to total households. OBC's own 47.2% of land as against 44.4% of households, while Non SC/ST/OBC's who constitute 21.7% of total households own a share of 28.8% of total land.

These latest trends show a skewed distribution of land amongst various social groups. However, over the years, the proportion of land owned as well as the proportion of households for non-SC/ST/OBC has been on a decline in rural areas when compared with the figures of 2013. The proportion of non-SC/ST/OBC households which constituted 23.23% of households in 2003 has declined to 21.7%, the same when observed on the proportion of land owned, it also shows that there is a declining pattern from 32 % in 2013 to 28.8% by 2013. The trends for OBC's show a pattern of increase in terms of the proportion of land owned. OBC households which constituted 44.8% of total households in 2013, have shown a slight decline in proportion of population to 44.4% by 2018. However, at the same time the proportion of land has increased from 45.7% to 47.2% of total land owned by all social groups.

As far the social structure of both Scheduled Castes and OBC's are concerned, both were graded lower than Caste-Hindus, viz., Twice-born. However, in terms of ownership of land, OBC's have occupied a greater share of land as compared to Scheduled Castes. Their position seems to be improving over the years.

The first estimate of the extent of land ownership for OBC's is available from 2003, during which period the proportion of land owned by them stood at 43.5%, which increased to 47.2%. For Scheduled Castes the estimates on ownership of land are available from 1987 onwards during whose period, their proportion stood at 7.9% of total land owned. As compared with the increase in the proportion of population the share of SC's has increased from 19.7% in 1987 of Total households to 21.6% by 2018.

The magnitude in the pace of increase in land ownership amongst social groups in comparison with their proportionate share of total households reveals that there is a greater magnitude of increase in the proportion of land held by OBC's in comparison with scheduled castes. The decline in the proportion of land amongst other castes, for a great part, is acquired by OBC's as compared with scheduled castes. This observation, when mapped with the existing studies does not differ. However, it only indicates about the structural change that is taking place with the declined number of households amongst other castes owing to the factor of migration, and a simultaneous acquirance of a portion of rights to a larger extent by OBC's who stand next to other castes in the social ladder of caste.

Nancharaiah (1988) explains the phenomenon of transfer of ownership of land from Brahmins to non-Brahmins, which also includes a section of OBCs. As he argues, in Andhra Pradesh, in

the eve of introduction of Rent Reduction Act 1947 and Estate abolition act 1948, non-Brahmins have refused to pay the rents demanded by the Brahmin landlords and thus with low rents being collected and with the foreseeing of Estate Abolition Act being enacted, the Brahmins sold their lands to non-Brahmins even at lower prices. Non-Brahmins could acquire the land because they were in a superior position than the Scheduled Castes in the order of caste, and the prevalence of untouchability against Scheduled Castes and their dependence as Agricultural Labourers denied an equal opportunity for them to Earn and Improve. Added to which, particularly, Brahmins have also opted for migrating to urban spaces, which not only dwindled their share in rural population, but at the same time on account of their sale of lands to non-Brahmin powerful social groups, their share of land also has declined. The decline in both proportion of households and land owned amongst other castes is due to the diversification into non-farm activities channelized through their investment of income accrued from agriculture on non-farm activities and education. (Manasi Bera, 2020; Benbabaali, 2018; Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008; Basant 1993).

In the present context, caste and gender roles still have a stronger hold in the society with unequal distribution of property and unequal representation in the workforce as against their demographic proportions of populations. The caste system in today's context still has a stronger hegemonic hold in domain of customary relations over constitutional provisions. In India, about 90.1% of the marriages are of the same caste, about 5.1% of women married men lower than her caste, and 4.8% of women married men higher than her caste (Kumudin Das et.al 2010).

The stronger presence of caste is indicated by the non-transformative endogamous marriage practices, whose prevalence when combined with the historical process of appropriation of land naturally limits the land so acquired to remain within the caste owing to the rules of inheritance. Thus, how many fragments a piece of land may be divided due to the laws of inheritance, the land still gets contained within the caste. It is only in the realm of state-induced redistributive process or market transactions through purchase of land by the dispossessed castes which can ensure and enable access to land. In addition, the structural transformation which happened in the post 1990's has resulted in caste translocation from public institutions to private sphere (which was traditionally dominated by Caste-Hindus but got strengthened further). As indicated by a study conducted by D.Ajit, Han Donker and Ravi Saxena (2012) on caste-wise distribution of Indian Corporate Board members for the year 2010 which revealed that 92.6% of Corporate Board members are Forward Castes, of which Brahmins occupy a share of 44.6%, Vaishyas occupy a share of 46.0%, Kshatriyas and others with a share of 2%. The rest of 7.4% of corporate members are constituted by SC/ST/OBC.

As disproportionate distributions continue to exist both in terms of occupational structure and land ownership, it becomes important to analyze such an effect on present agrarian relations in the rural India. The obscuration of inter-generational inequalities in the policy discourse could effectively lock and paralyze an already depressed stock of population into a state of socio-economic marginalization. The aspect of ownership of land in rural India is effectively tied to livelihood. Given the existing disproportionate distribution of ownership of land between social groups, analyzing the operational holdings in terms of both ownership and tenant-operated becomes particularly important in the backdrop of a transition in policy perspective from creation of peasant proprietorship to tenancy liberalization postulated as an enabler of access to land. To look at tenancy as a non-exploitative institution is mired in an incomprehensive understanding of the nature of agrarian relations in specific context of India. The proposals of tenancy legalization ignore the effects of absent landlords on the cultivating tenants. Hence, a detailed study is mapped in the next chapter, which lays its thrust on the policy of legalization of tenancy, the present nature of tenancy in connection with the aspects of absenteeism, as the proponents of legalization advocate for its need by absolving persisting nature of socio-economic inequalities; absentee landlordism aided by caste.

Summary:

In this chapter, an attempt is made to understand the historical processes of land accumulation, and the inter-generational proliferation/continuity of property patterns through the inter-linkages between the endogamous marriage practices embedded in caste society, the validation of inheritance only under the circumstance of a sacramental marriage which limits the property accumulated within the social group. A legal review was carried over the same, in terms of implementation of the customary rules in the context of violation of customary practice of endogamy through inter-caste marriage which revealed that the property transfer was declared null and void.

Understanding the process of accumulation of land is done through a review of existing historical studies, which presents evidence on the interactions between state and dominant caste elites in obtaining property rights over lands through Inams/grants on one hand, and the process of expropriation of peasantry through networks of local power which was under the possession of caste-elites. Irrespective of the nature/means of accumulation, given the customary practices rooted in hindu scriptures avoiding inter-caste marriage and limiting transfer of land within caste group, a historical understanding of the processes of dispossession and accumulation becomes

important in analyzing the skewed distributions that are prevalent in present context. The occupational structure and land ownership patterns reveals dis-proportionate distributions between social groups, which could be interpreted as cumulative accumulation of disadvantage amongst the depressed castes, and prolonged proliferation of socio-economic dominance for caste-elites.

CHAPTER -4

UNDERSTANDING THE ORIGIN AND EFFECT OF ABSENTEE LANDLORDISM FOR PRESENT CONTEXT¹⁴

4.1 Introduction

The proposals to legalise tenancy mark a transition from agrarian reforms aimed at discouraging sub-letting of land by enabling ownership over land to the tiller during the immediate post-independence period to proposals to enable access to land through tenancy by its legalisation in the twenty-first century (NitiAayog2016;J.C.Kumarappa, 1949). The emanation of such policy comes in the backdrop of prevailing skewed distributions in ownership of land which may produce absenteeism and an already existing critique of tenancy reforms initiated in India, being the easiest of all and prone towards the interest of landlords (Herring 1984).

The discourse on tenancy legalisation postulates tenancy as an institution that moved away from its exploitative nature with the abolition of large intermediaries and the erosion of the political power of absentee landlords (Hanstad *et al.* 2008;NitiAayog 2016). Such a simplistic view of absenteeism only through the prism of large landed zamindari set-up ignores the local power-structure of the landed elite in villages and their characterisation of absenteeism aided by caste. Infact, the entire preposition behind the abolition of tenancy arrives from the absentee nature of lessors which takes away a portion of productive investment to be made in agriculture leading inefficient productive outcomes. A picturization of absenteeism through large landed estates, undermines the historical nature of absenteeism in Indian context, which operates irrespective of the size of the land one possesses rather operates on the basis of the framework of caste.

In this chapter while unravelling the existing nature of Tenancy at All-India level, we try to unravel the historical nature of absenteeism in Indian context and then analyze the trends in tenancy in relation to the social groups and their access to ownership.

¹⁴ A Major portion of this chapter is published as a Journal article titled “ Land, caste and tenancy: understanding the origins and effects of absentee landlordism in the changing context”. Reference is pasted below:

Prashanth, D., & Sridevi, G. (2022). Land, caste and tenancy: understanding the origins and effects of absentee landlordism in the changing context. *Rural Society*, 1-14.

4.2 Caste, Tenancy and Absenteeism:

The antecedents of absentee landlordism emerge with the system of caste, as historically dominant castes, designated the sole proprietors of land, considered tilling as menial and undignified and abstained from direct, productive engagement in agriculture, while those who tilled and engaged in the productive management of land were condemned to be servile labour (Kumar1962; Awaya1996; Yanagisawa1996). Thorstein Veblen in his Theory of Leisure class attributes the conspicuous abstention from labour as a conventional mark of superiority and reputability, while application to productive labour is a mark of poverty and subjection (Veblen 2007). Abstention from labour becomes a convenient evidence of wealth and social standing. As he states Brahmin India affords a fair illustration of the industrial exemption of the classes that are engaged in warfare and priesthood from the physical labour enduring occupations. The discrimination between employments by treating some as worthy and others unworthy leads to the creation of the institution of leisure class (Veblen 2007). The characterisation of wet localities in Bihar and Bengal in the eighteenth century by Ludden (1984) points at non-cultivating character of high-caste landowners who received grants from native rulers, treating agricultural labour as a low-caste, often untouchable, occupation, resulting in the low cultural evaluation of labour, with a marked overlap of landlessness and labouring status; and of caste and class in the countryside. The cultural low evaluation of labour was visible in different parts of the country¹⁵, Ludden (2016) points at the non-cultivating nature of Brahmins in Tamilnadu being as a model of elite behaviour, inducing other dominant castes to imitate the non-cultivating nature as a mark of entitlement to elite stature.

By the twentieth century, dominant castes who were resident absentees of villages, soon acquired the character of non-resident, absentee landlords, with the introduction of white-collar jobs during the colonial administration and the expansion of urban settlements facilitating a process of migration of non-cultivating landowning dominant castes (Panchanadikar 1965; Nancharaiah1988; Yanagisawa 1996; Fuller &Narasimhan 2008). The magnitude in the pace of occupying of Class-I positions in government service by Caste-Hindus between 1935 to 1989 was marked with an increase from 46% in 1935 to 82.4%, with a corresponding slight decline in

¹⁵ Brahmins across the country, as they deem touching the plow itself to be polluting (Rudra & Mukhopadhyay1976) Rajputs, who second only to Brahmins in the ritual hierarchy of caste in outh state (Metcalf, 1967), the lands held by local magnates such as Deshmukh, Deshpande, Patil, Kulkarni, Patwari in the deccan region (Fukazawa 1982), Jotedars in the regions of Bengal and Bihar (Chaudhuri 1984)

their population from 12.05% to 11.81% (Pinto 2008), indicative of a shift in their dependency on non-agrarian sources of income.

The nature of absenteeism aided by migratory patterns amongst dominant castes didn't automatically disassociate them from their property owned back in villages. It was either controlled by family members still living in the village or leased to tenants. One difference amongst Brahmin and non-Brahmin dominant caste control over land is the disposal of lands by Brahmin landlords as they moved away in contrast with non-Brahmin dominant castes' continued ownership of land despite moving away from villages (Fuller & Narasimhan 2008; Benbabaali 2018).

Vijay (2012) finds an increased importance of non-cultivating peasant households (NCPHS) owning land and routes for adoption of land reform measures or enabling corporate farming as solutions. The source of absenteeism stems, as indicated, from a disdain towards farming by dominant caste, non-cultivating landholders. Without demarcating the constituent social groups displaying this tendency as non-cultivating groups, suggesting corporate farming as a measure would remain futile, as Fuller & Narasimhan (2008) observe a rarity of modern and capitalist farmers amongst non-cultivating, land-owning dominant caste households.

In the wake of the observed transition in the nature of absentee landlords from resident to non-resident absentee landlords, owing to a transformation in the nature of dependant occupations as a source of earning incomes, the analysis on tenancy needs to engage, and not disassociate, with the question of absenteeism aided by caste. In order to further engage with the debate on legalisation of tenancy markets in agriculture, present research took up an analysis of trends in tenancy at the all-India level. This permits the mapping of the incidence of tenancy and the constituent groups engaging in land-leasing.

4.3 Understanding Trends in Tenancy

The Area under Household Operational Holdings for 2018-19 were estimated at 103.5 million Hectares. The Data from NSSO report on *Household Ownership and Operational Holdings in India 2002-19* presented in Table -3 reveals that percentage of area operated under tenancy constitutes 13.55 % of the Total Area operated with households operating wholly or partly leasing-in in at least one plot land constituting 14.26% of Total operational holdings. Tenancy in India marked an increase from 6.5% to 10.22% of the total area operated during 2002-03 to 2012-13, which further increased to 13.5% by 2018-19 marking a double increase as compared with

2002-03 estimate (Table-3). The increase in area under tenancy was incommensurate with the reduction in owner-operated holdings, resulting in a decline under total area operated.

While understanding the increase in the proportion of area under tenancy one must also be careful in observing the nature of increase. A proportional increase in area under tenancy is possible directly through an increase in the area operated under tenancy arrangements, or indirectly through a decline in the area-operated arising out of a greater degree of reduction in owner-operated area or may be both direct and indirect effects indicating a possible increase under the tenant operated area vis-à-vis a greater degree of reduction in area under owner cultivation. The nature of increase in the area under tenancy during 2018-19 at All-India level appears to be a combination of both direct and indirect effect, with an observed increase in the area under tenancy, a greater degree of reduction in the area under owner operated, with a simultaneous reduction in the area operated.

NSSO Data on operational holdings for 2012-13 and 2018-19 reveals that the area under owner-operated holdings for 2012-13 has declined by 14.74% when compared to 2002-03, while the area under tenant-operational holdings has increased by 15.7%, with a simultaneous decline in total area operated by 7.8% which can be described as an outcome of a reduced owner-operated area combined with a greater increase in the area under tenancy. The trends on operational holdings and the pattern of leasing also reveals that for the year 2002-03 the percentage of operated area leased-in was at its historic low at 6.5% of Total operated area, which ascended to the historic high by 2018-19.

Basole & Basu (2011) who looked at the the trends of area under operational holdings till 2002-03 argued that the decline in area under tenancy reveals a pattern of gradual shift from tenant cultivation to self-cultivation and lessening the severity of semi-feudal modes of exploitation of the landless and near landless through tenant cultivation. On the other hand the decline in operated area under owner and tenant cultivation were analysed by Vijay (2012) by looking at the the Land use statistics on Agricultural Land use in India where he observed that the decline in area under tenancy may be accounted for the reason that the year 2002-03 may not be a normal year, owing to the fact that there was phenomenal increase in the area under current fallows from 15.34 Million Hectares in 2001-02 to 22.46 million hectares by 2002-03. The explanation by Vijay (2012) appears to be reasonable for the year 2002-03 while Basole & Basu (2011) has made too early a remark on the declining importance of tenancy lacking a detailed probe, which

is established by the trends of an increase in the proportion of area under tenancy in 2012-13 and 2018-19.

Table -4.1: Trends in Ownership and Leased holdings, Area (All-India level) (Rural)

Sl.No	Item		1991-92	2002-03	2012-13	2019
1	Number of operational holdings(million)		93.45	101.27	105.92	103.454
1.1	percentage increase/decrease in operational holdings		31.5	8.4	4.59	-2.3
2	Total area operated(million hectares)		125.1	107.65	91.44	84.27
2.2	Percentage increase/decrease in area operated		5.51	-13.95	-15.06	-7.84
3	In Total area operated percentage share of	a. Area owned	91.48	93.5	89.78	86.49
		b. Area leased-in	8.52	6.5	10.22	13.5
4	In Total Area Operated	Area owned (ha)	113144500	99720900	85506479	72896000
		Percentage increase/decrease in operational area owned	4.77	-11.86	-14.25	-14.74
		Area Leased in (ha)	10658900	6940007	9838759	11,381000
		Percentage increase/decrease in operational area leased-in	25.21	-34.89	41.77	15.67

Source:1) NSSO-48th Round: *Operational Land Holdings in India-1992*.

2) NSSO-59th Round: *Some aspects of Operational Holdings -2003*

3) NSSO-70th Round: *Household Ownership and Operational Holdings-2013*

4) NSS 77th Round-Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households and Land and Livestock Holding and Households in Rural India, 2019

Table : 4.2 Class-wise proportion of Area Operated by Kind of possession										
Category	Class	2012-13 (70 th Round)			2018-19			Percentage Change		
		Owned and Possessed	Leased-in	Total Area Operated	Owned and Possessed	Leased-in	Total Area Operated	Owned and Possessed	Leased-in	Total Area Operated
Marginal	0.001-1.00	28.4	30.3	28.8	32.2	33.6	32.4	-2.7	22.8	-1.6
Small	1.01-2.00	23.2	22.3	23.2	25.1	19.7	24.4	-7.1	-2.1	-7.6
Semi-Medium	2.01-4.00	22.6	22.0	22.5	22.1	19.0	21.7	-16.1	-4.7	-15.5
Medium	4.01 to 10.00	19.7	18.1	19.5	16.0	17.9	16.2	-30.4	8.9	-27.0
Large	10.00 and above	6.0	7.3	6.1	4.5	9.8	5.2	-35.3	49.4	-24.9
All Sizes		100	100	100	100	100	100	-14.2	10.6	-12.5

Note : These estimates are for July to December 2018 (Kharif season)

Source : 1) NSSO-70th Round: *Household Ownership and Operational Holdings-2013*
2) NSS 77th Round-Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households and Land and Livestock Holding and Households in Rural India, 2019

Class-wise proportion of area operated by kind of possession shows a substantial increase in the proportion of area operated under the category of marginal holdings operating less than 1 hectare of land. As observed in table - 4.2 where we could see a decline in total area operated contributed predominantly by a decline in owner-operated area, the class-wise trends indicate a greater magnitude of reduction in the owner-operated area in large, medium and semi-medium holdings, simultaneously showing a predominance of the operated area under marginal and small holdings as a proportion of total area operated despite a relatively smaller magnitude of decline observed amongst them in terms hectares.

The data on the proportion of area leased-in by class of area operated reveals, a greater share of area under tenancy operated amongst marginal holdings the least being observed amongst large holdings. However, compared with the area under tenancy during 2012-13, there is an improvement in area operated under tenurial arrangements as large holdings in case of Large holdings, though the change marked an ascent.

Percentage Change in Area Operated by kind of possession between 2012-13 and 2018-19 reveals that, there is a substantial decline in area under owner cultivation particularly in large, medium, and semi-medium holdings, with quantum of decline being greater among owner operated large holdings, at the same time there is an increase in the area under marginal and small holdings operated as owned and possessed with quantum of increase being higher in small holdings. The reduction in owner-operated holdings is attributed to a decline in large and medium holdings, while an increase being observed in tenancy cultivation across all sizes.

Table-4.3 Proportion of Households, Area Owned, Area Leased-in for Social Groups- 2018-19(All-India/Rural)

Social Group	Proportion of Households (%)	Proportion of Area Owned (%)	Area Leased-in as a Proportion to area operated (%)
ST	12.3	13.9	9.8
SC	21.6	10.2	20.0
OBC	44.4	47.2	12.9
Others	21.7	28.8	14.5
All	100	100	13.7

Source:-NSS 77th Round-Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households and Land and Livestock Holding and Households in Rural India, 2019

Table : 4.4 Proportion of land leased- in by nature of land ownership amongst various social groups

Category	Size of Land	ST	SC	OBC	Others	All
Landless	0	22.1	10.6	7.6	3.3	8.2
Marginal	0.001-1.00	68.5	79.5	69.6	48.3	64.5
Small	1.01-2.00	5.06	6.5	13.4	20.2	13.6
Semi-Medium	2.01-4.00	3.95	2.6	6.2	22.2	10.5
Medium	4.01 to 10.00	0.39	0.8	3.2	5.8	3.3
Large	10.00 and above	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
All		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source:-NSS 77th Round-Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households and Land and Livestock Holding and Households in Rural India, 2019

4.4 Trends in Land ownership and leasing patterns in India

The distribution of land ownership and occupational engagement would, to an extent, reveal tenancy patterns. Amongst the social groups, differential access to ownership of land is one of the reasons for lesser proportion of SCs operating as self-employed in agriculture and allied activities, while, at the same time, displaying a greater degree of engagement as agricultural labour.

As revealed in Table-4.3 amongst all social groups (except for STs), disproportionate distribution is seen highest among SC households with 21.6% of total households owning only 10.2% of total land owned by all social groups. On the other hand, they have highest proportion of casual labour in agriculture estimated at 21.5%¹⁶ of total occupational households and in turn have the highest incidence of tenancy at 20% estimated as a proportion of area leased-in to total operated area. Non-SC/ST/OBC households, which comprise 21.7% of total households, own 28.8% of total land, with the lowest share of casual labour in agriculture at 8.3%¹⁷ of total occupational households with a comparatively lower incidence of tenancy, estimated at 14.5 %.

As far as the data on land-leasing is concerned, there exists a huge gap between the area leased-out and leased-in with the former constituting 33.2% of the latter, which is underreporting. Jayaraman and Lanjouw (1998) quoted in Mearns (1999) argues that the village studies report more land under tenancy than NSS and show a smaller excess of reported leased in over leased-out land.

The leased-out patterns of land shall be analysed while keeping the limitations concerning leasing patterns in mind. The available data, though non-reliable, reveal that SC and ST's lease-out the least proportion of land at 12% and 6% while OC's lease-out the highest proportion of land accounting for 40.5% of total land leased out followed by OBC's at 39.0%. (Table-4.5).

¹⁶(NSSO 2019)

¹⁷(NSSO 2019)

Table-4.5: Class-wise proportion of Land Leased-out for social groups-2018-19(All-India/Rural)

Category	Class interval	Social Groups				
		ST	SC	OBC	Others	All
Landless	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marginal	0.001-0.40	20.7	57.5	33.2	20.7	31.6
Small	0.41-1.00	33.7	13.1	27.2	20.9	24.8
Semi-Medium	1.01-2.00	25.5	27.5	19.2	17.6	21.2
Medium	2.01-4.00	16.4	1.9	17.3	16.9	16.4
Large	4.00 and above	3.6	0.0	3.1	23.9	5.9
All		100	100	100	100	100
Land Leased-out as a Proportion to Total Land Leased-Out (Percentage)		8.7	11.8	39.0	40.5	100

Source: NSS 77th Round-Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households and Land and Livestock Holding and Households in Rural India, 2019

Table: 4.6 Average Monthly income from land leased-out per agricultural household and Net-receipts from crop-production (All-India/ Rural)

Social group	Monthly income from Leased-out land (in Rupees)	Net receipts from crop production (excluding imputed costs)
ST	30	3055
SC	52	1465
OBC	59	2956
Others	307	4691
All	113	3144

Source: NSS 77th Round-*Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households and Land and Livestock Holding and Households in Rural India, 2019*

Further, the information on the income accrued from the leased-out lands reveals that the monthly per-capita income accrued from leased-out land stands at a greater scale for other castes as compared with SC/ST/OBC's. As could be observed from Table 4.6, the average monthly income accrued from leased-out land for other castes stands almost five times greater as compared with other backward classes and scheduled castes while ten times greater as compared with Scheduled Tribes. In terms of net receipts from crop production, as well other castes fare well in comparison with SC and OBC's. The net earnings for Scheduled castes are 3.2 times lower in comparison with other castes, the same for OBC's stands 1.6 times lower.

The reasons for lesser returns for the disadvantaged social groups was in part explained by Anderson (2011) who locates the lower access to water resources in agriculture as an effect of the caste hegemony by dominant castes over water resources, which results in less than optimum outcomes for Dalits, in turn hampering the agrarian productivity leading to lower net returns. Singh (2010) who observes a transitivity in returns from farm cultivation amongst the groups ranked as SC/ST followed by OBC and the OC households in the last, argues that the disadvantage in returns to farming may also be an outcome of the social exclusion in accessing public goods such as tube wells, electricity, markets for selling produce etc...

Griffin (2002)'s concept of Landlord bias¹⁸ which elucidates on the policies framed in favour large landowners could be applicable to the case of caste-elites of Indian villages, who access the schemes meant for agriculture, with land being the collateral and social-networks paving an easier access. More in-depth investigations through field level studies might unravel the complex reasons behind the differential returns amongst various social groups.

Given the characterization of leasing-in patterns amongst those who own less than a hectare of land with such characterization being predominant amongst the socially vulnerable sections, coupled with the characteristic feature of leasing-out observed at a greater scale amongst the dominant castes and a subsequent gradation in the patterns of leasing-out on the scale of caste-based gradation of the village set-up observed, it could be summed up to a larger extent that there exists elements of the pre-capitalist nature of the leasing patterns as the nature of absenteeism by landed elites is a connotation to social privilege.

However, one must tread with caution before making such conclusion, as granular evidence may lead us to varied conclusions and the emergence of a mix of the elements of a capitalist and pre-capitalist character in agrarian relations. On the other hand, given the nature of concentration of land that is witnessing a process of transformation from the erstwhile dominant landed elite to those who are beneath them does not make it conclusive to argue that the relations of caste are subsiding as long as the gradation persists on the lower orders who are still characterized with disadvantaged pattern of ownership and lesser returns in agriculture. Before, we rest the case of the proposed reform of legalization of tenancy, we proceed into the field level observations on the nature of the patterns of landownership amongst various social groups and its connection with caste, subsequently map the nature of transformation over the years in terms of the land ownership

¹⁸Griffin, Khan, & Ickowitz (2002) identify the following as policies favouring landlord bias

“(i) extension policies that concentrate on large farmers, often called ‘progressivefarmers’; (ii) research policies that favour export crops and ‘superior’ grains and neglect ‘inferior’ grains and poor people’s crops, such as sorghum, millet and maize; (iii) agricultural price support policies that provide greater support for, say, wheat (often grown by relatively large farmers) than for rice (which is often grown by small farmers); (iv) regional development policies that favour more fertile and more accessible regions, where for historical reasons land ownership tends to be more concentrated;(v) water distribution policies of large scale, public irrigation systems, which favour large landowners;(vi) credit policies that discriminate ‘naturally’ in favour of literate, large landowners who have a large marketable surplus, and against small farmers where lender’s risk and administrative costs are higher;(vii) institutional policies that discourage organizations of the poor, and often view them as subversive, including peasant leagues, small farmers cooperatives and rural labour unions.”

structure, with an investigation into the operational characteristics of farming in the villages. The studies on Land which deals with household survey might remain insufficient in ascertaining the extent of ownership of land amongst social groups, hence we also undertook a comprehensive study of the nature of land ownership through land records. For our purpose of field study, the villages from the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana were chosen through the methodology detailed down in Chapter-1.

4.5 Summary

This chapter deals with operational characteristics of land in Agriculture with a particular emphasis on the growing incidence of Tenancy in India. It begins with the discussion on the nature of absenteeism associated with tenancy arrangements and the inter-linkage with caste. The performance of labour in agriculture by itself was treated with contempt and considered to be impure. Most of the labour-engaging households belonged to the lower castes, while those who abstained from engaging in manual labour in agriculture belonged to the dominant castes resulting in creation of absenteeism by landowning castes. It is identified that there is a transition in the nature of absenteeism from resident-absenteeism to non-resident absenteeism owing to the factors of migration. The incidence of tenancy appears to be higher amongst the marginalized groups, whereas the lessors chiefly constitute the dominant sections. The reflections on income accrued from agriculture on land operated from a caste society perspective reveals that transitivity between social groups in terms of income distribution stands more or less similar to the vertical ladder of caste-based gradation, with Income of OC's greater than the Income of OBC, Income of OBC's greater than the Income of SC's.

Chapter 5

Access to Land: A case study of Karumanchi Village in Andhra Pradesh¹⁹

5.1 Introduction

Karumanchi village forms part of Tangutur Mandal of Prakasam district (erstwhile Ongole district) in Andhra Pradesh. In Pre-Independent India, under colonial administration Karumanchi was initially part of Nellore district under Madras Presidency, later became part of Guntur district in 1901. After India's Independence from colonial rule, the village was apportioned to Ongole district in 1970. Ongole was renamed as Prakasam in 1972 in memory of Tangutur Prakasam Pantulu, former chief minister of Madras Presidency and Andhra. The residential habitat of Karumanchi is surrounded around a tank which continues to be an important source of drinking water. The tank which looks serene and picturesque in its outward appearance, was a witness to an enormous struggle for equal rights at Karumanchi. The tank served as an oppressive symbol of caste domination which denied the basic right to access drinking water to Dalits, consequently turned into a symbol of revolt, resistance, and assertion of self-respect in a conquest for attaining equal rights of access to drinking water (Sagar 2014). Despite the village being privy to several struggles for equal right, the manner in which land ownership amongst social groups is distributed reveals highly skewed patterns with an undeterred structure of power enabled through control over land despite a reconfiguration of dominance within dominant castes with a transition from Brahmin-led control to non-Brahmin dominant castes. Access to land which constitutes an important symbol of asset holding and a source of power and dominance in rural society remains highly skewed in the backdrop of a transmission of inter-generational inequalities aided by the structure of caste. In this section, we attempt at understanding the nature of transitions in land and caste over time through an ethnographic and historical approach, analyse changing demographics of the village, unravel the complex relations that play a part in the process of either redistribution of land or maintaining

¹⁹ Part of this chapter is published in two Journal articles.

- 1) Prashanth, D., & Sridevi, G. (2022). Land, caste and tenancy: understanding the origins and effects of absentee landlordism in the changing context. *Rural Society*, 1-14.
- 2) Sridevi, G., Jyotishi, A., & Prashanth, D. (2020) "Malnutrition and Inequality among the Vulnerable Social Groups: A Study of Two Villages" *Journal of Development Policy Review*, 1(4).

a status quo. Further, we examine the agrarian situation of the village by taking into consideration changing patterns of cropping, profitability of the operational holdings by critically analysing the aspects of tenancy and the challenges of market mechanisms.

5.2 Interrogating aspects of changing demography and its relationship with Land

Historically, the demographic composition of Karumanchi reveals a multi-caste and multi-religious composition. The figures of Census-2011 reveals a demographic compositional predominance of scheduled castes in the village who make the bulk of its population with 2092 persons constituting 51.9% of Total Population. Though, at an overall level, the total population in the village is observed to increase over the years since 1961 till 2011 (with an exception to 1981 and 2001).

Table: 5.1 Demographic patterns of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and Total Population since 1961-2011

Year	Total Population	SC Population	% of SC's Total Population	ST Population	% of ST's to Total Population	SC/ST Population	Non-SC/ST Population
1961	3474	994	28.6	47	1.4	1041	2433
1971	3981	1049	26.4	52	1.3	1101	2880
1981	3732	1152	30.9	135	3.6	1287	2445
1991	4137	1597	38.6	164	4.0	1761	2376
2001	3,706	1577	42.6	222	6.0	1799	1907
2011	4031	2,092	51.9	223	5.5	2315	1716

Source: Various Census records

Table: 5.2 Decadal Percentage change in the population of SC/ST and Non SC/ST groups of Karumanchi

Decade	SC/ST	Non SC/ST
1961-71	5.8	18.4
1971-81	16.9	-15.1
1981-91	36.8	-2.8
1991-2001	2.2	-19.7
2001-2011	28.7	-10.0

Source : Author's calculations from Census records

A further decomposition of the total villagers into SC/ST and Non-SC/ST groups reveals that there is continuous pace of decline in the population of Non-SC/ST population, in contrast with an increase in observed in the case of SC/ST population (Tables 5.1& 5.2). The changing composition of the demography with an observed decline of Non-SC/ST population in the village, can be adduced to out-migration of dominant caste households. While embarking a visit to the village, it could be seen that buildings replicating an urban model of architecture with exteriors decorated by mirrored glass frames and well-built compounds with no dwellers signifies the process of migration of the dominant castes whose migration was latest, whereas old yet large and magnificent homes, which stand emptied in the village with a well decorated entrance symbolizing an architecture of the past symbolize a longer out-ward mobility in the site of the residential habitat of dominant castes.

The first phase of migration from the village was that of the Brahmins who migrated out from village after attaining education and travelled beyond the boundaries of the country. As a Brahmin priest narrates, almost 200 households migrated out with their family being the last to reside in the village, even amongst their family who are the hereditary priests at the temple in the village, one travelled to Mauritius to perform ceremonies as priest. The declining share of dominant caste

households and population could be revealed from a comparison of the caste-wise break-up of population data available in census 1871 vis-à-vis the primary census data collected during field visit. Brahmins, who were numbered at 331 persons in 1871 have declined to 3 persons by 2018. The highest number of persons in the village were Vellalans, who could be bracketed as agricultural propertied castes including Reddy, Kamma and Kapu composing a total of 1026 persons in 1871, whose headcount has reduced to 401 persons by 2018. Chetties who were numbered at 80 in 1871 declined to 36 persons by 2018. In contrast to the decline of the population of dominant castes in the village, in between 1871 to 2018 the number of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes got swelled up from 573 to 1612 and 50 to 129 persons respectively. The difference in the estimates from the census-2011 and the primary data collected in the village could be explained by both permanent and transient migration of the population for the purpose of work.

As we locate a change in the demographic composition of the village over several years, with an increase in the proportion of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the village, it would be interesting to see if the reconfiguration in demographic composition has resulted in a simultaneous reconfiguration of ownership structure of land in the village, which is an important source of livelihood and subsistence in rural areas. Upon detailed research on the village through existing studies, census records, primary field visit and a survey of land records which is presented in the next paragraph onwards, it is found that the transformation in land ownership structure has not seen a drastic change. The detailed discussion on the socio-economic characteristics of land ownership along with the changes in relations of power and its subsequent effects on the political economy of land are discussed in the subsequent section.

5.2.1: Land, caste, and ownership: Analyzing Socio-Economic and Political characteristics and transformation at Karumanchi

The villages under Ongole taluk were administratively categorized in to three divisions: 1) Government villages, 2) Shrotriyams. 3) Venkatagiri Zamindari. Government villages were governed through village officers appointed by state administration, Shrotriyams were tax-free *Inam* villages predominantly composed of Brahmins with tax-free lands, and villages under Venkatagiri Zamindari had their administration through village chiefs and karanams appointed by Zamindar/Raja of Venkatagiri Estate/Samsthanam. The available census records of Karumanchi

reveal that the village under colonial administration was designated as Government village (Census 1871). Land assessment of the village as observed in the year 1871 reveals that a significant proportion of land is under *Inam*/tax free land constituting 41.55% of the total land occupied consisting both area occupied excluding *Inams* and area under *Inam* land, which later grew in both size and proportion constituting 43.12% of the total occupied (Table:5.3). A major portion of *Inam* lands were allotted to Brahmins of about 615.54 acres apart from 161.13 acres allotted for temple activities and maintenance of priestly families, followed by 166.27 acres allotted for *Karanams* and *Munsabs* (village headman) for payment of their salaries and to cater to the needs of village administration (Sagar 2014). The historical trajectory of Ongole taluk in which Karumanchi is a part, reveals that grants to Brahmins existed by the time of Chalukyas in late 7th century A.D, Sarvalokasraya alias Mangi Yuvaraja (672-679 A.D) granting Chandarur village to Brahmins, which continued despite turnover of dynasties in the later period of the rule of *Reddies*, *Deva Rayalu*, *Nawabs* (Gazatteer of the Nellore District 1942 (Brought up to 1938)

Table: 5.3 Land Assessment at Karumanchi under various categories of *Inam*, occupied, unoccupied and uncultivable land (in acres)

Year	Total Area	Occupied (Area of Govt Land)	Unoccupied (Area of Govt Land)	Uncultivable (Unassessed land)	Area of <i>Inam</i> Land
1871	2233	1191	54	164	846
1905	2597	1357	28.77	182.25	1028.98

Source: 1) Arrayed from Census (1874)

2) Sagar, C. (2014). *Tegipaddaaa Cheyyi*

As on 1905, the dominant castes composed of Brahmin, Reddy and Kamma castes held about 97.8% of Total land in the village as against their household composition of 33.85%, while leaving

66.15% households with a share of 2.2% of land in the village (Sagar, 2014). A review of land records after a century at Karumanchi reveals that a majority of the land is still held by dominant castes with a reconfiguration in the pattern of land distribution amongst various classes of dominant castes, with a transfer of land ownership from Brahmins to Reddies and Kammas. As of 2018, in accordance with the results of Primary field survey Non-SC/ST/OBCs constituting 18.4% of households own 77.7% of land, while SCs composing 54.4% of households own only about 11.3% and OBC's with a share of 22.05% of households own 10.2% of Total Land possessed by households in the village (Table :5.4).

Table:5.4 Households and Area owned by social groups (in absolute number and percentage)

Social Group	Households (number)	Households (Percentage)	Owned area (acres)	Percentage of Land owned
SC	402	54.4	190	12.1
ST	38	5.1	0	0
OBC	163	22.1	160.6	10.2
Others	136	18.4	1221.6	77.7
All	739	100	1572.2	100

Source: Primary Survey 2018

The data on land ownership in the village from land records, as compared with data collected during field visit reveals a greater skewness in distribution amongst social groups. As per the available land records of the village, other castes composed of Reddy, Kamma, Brahmin, Chetties and Kapus own 81.7% of the total land owned as private holdings in the village, followed by other backward classes with 10.3%, scheduled castes with 7.9% and the least proportion of ownership recorded amongst scheduled tribes with 0.08%. The land ownership assessed from primary field visit varies by 22% as compared with the land records of the village. The difference is accounted

for ownership of land by non-resident and non-cultivating owners who migrated to various parts of the country and abroad.

As noted earlier, the reconfiguration in the ownership pattern as compared with 1905, has occurred from a shift in ownership from Brahmins to Reddy and Kamma castes, we shall dwell on the magnitude of the transformation of the ownership patterns by social groups in succeeding para.

Table : 5.5 Area under ownership by various Social groups and their proportion to Total Area owned

Social Group	Area Owned	Proportion of Total Area owned
SC	159.61	7.9
ST	1.78	0.08
OBC	208.64	10.3
Others	1652.735	81.7
All	2022.765	100

Source : Land Records-2018

Amongst all the social groups, a decline of land ownership in case of Brahmins is starkly visible in tandem with their decline in the composition of residential households of the village. Brahmins who comprised about 87 households of the village in 1905 got reduced to a single household by 2018, similarly the land owned by them declined from 615.5 acres in 1905 to 72.3 acres by 2018. Simultaneous with the decline there was an associated increase observed in the ownership of land held by Reddies which increased from 950 acres in 1905 to 1179 acres by 2018 despite a decline in their residential composition of both households and population, the same in case of Kamma landholders increased from 210 acres to 366 acres by 2018, in case of OBC's it improved from 87.9 acres which included about 67.9 acres allotted as *ummadi manyam (joint community holding)* for artisanal castes by 1905 to 208.64 acres by 2018, scheduled castes too witnessed an

improvement from 11 acres in 1905 to 159.61 acres by 2018, while an insignificant increase observed in the case of scheduled tribes who had no ownership holdings to 1.78 acres by 2018.

One of the contributing factors for said decline in both ownership and population of Brahmins at Karumanchi includes the process of migration influenced by the aspirational factors of elevation into high-income and power embedded positions of government in both colonial and post-colonial era. To elaborate, as Sagar (2014) notes, the migration of Brahmins was intensified between 1905 and 1930 with the establishment of a Munsif court for settlement of land disputes, setting up of education department and the presence of several government offices at Ongole which was the taluk headquarter, resulted in the first phase of migration from Karumanchi to Ongole, which resulted in a decline of families from 85 to 45-50 by 1930. As migration was intensified, the process of disposing off lands for settling in urban locations began in the case of Brahmins who were for the most part non-cultivating in nature. The process of migration was coincided by the worsening of the ties between Brahmins and Reddies on account of the non-brahmin movement supported by Kamma, Reddy and Velama castes around 1930's in Andhra articulating for their share in educational and employment opportunities. However, the non-brahmin movement of the upper Sudra castes as Reddy, Kamma and Velamas did not stand for equal rights for all castes, instead stood as a platform to attain a superior status for these dominant upper Sudra castes (Ramaswamy 1978). At Karumanchi, there was a visible feud between the dominant landed Reddies with Brahmins, as the latter could no longer remain subservient to the Brahmin power centres of the village consisting of President and Karanam of the village. As a part of the larger polity too, it was observed that there was a feud between the Reddies and Brahmins in congress where the former's alignment with congress happened with the elusion of Justice Party in the late thirties, while Kammas in the state got aligned with communist party who were in feud with both Brahmins and Reddies (Harisson 1956). The village has also witnessed an uprising from Dalits against the practice of untouchability and denial of water from the main drinking water tank in 1937, leading to a violent clash with the Reddies in which both suffered injuries, with a greater magnitude of injuries suffered by Dalits where one's hand got chopped off, leading to conviction of both parties and an intervention from colonial government declaring equal access for everyone from the tank (Sagar, 2014). It was followed up by a communist uprising influenced by Telangana armed struggle, with a few of the villagers joining the banned communist party and leaving to

Nallamala forests. Swarna Balamma²⁰, an older dalit woman of the village, while recollecting the ordeals of her life and her father's life opined that congress party was viewed as a party of the landed, hence the marginalized sections supported the communist organisations who voiced the land to the tiller slogan. Though the slogan was a popular one and attracted the masses to join the rebellion, the leadership remained in the hands of the dominant landed Shudra castes with Kammas occupying the leadership at state (Harrison 1956), and the village leadership occupied by a Reddy, who became President of the village in the post-independence period in 1956 contesting and winning against another Reddy landlord from congress. The win was phenomenal as the candidate was supported by Dalits who braved against the odds of an oppressive past by deciding against the wishes of the Munsab, a Reddy landlord who orchestrated the attack against them in 1937 and had a closer tie with the district leadership of congress party. However, the winner owing to the interests of his tobacco trade joined congress by 1959 (Sagar 2014). The reconfiguration of the leadership of congress from a Brahmin centred to Reddy centred organization has resulted in an erosion of local power of Brahmins at the villages where a parallel dominant power-seeking caste of Reddies existed. The combination of the factors of better educational and employment opportunities, a ripple in the power relations between Brahmin and Upper Sudra castes, rebellion of peasantry and the promulgation of reforms led to the disposal of lands by the landed Brahmin communities, inturn facilitating a further concentration of land amongst Reddy and Kamma castes. As Reddy and Kamma communities gained from the disposal of land by Brahmins alongside of a few OBC families. The contributing factors for a growth in the share of land held by scheduled castes, was from the occupation of uncultivable portions of land adjacent to the stream that flows through the village which was later converted into cultivable lands. The entry of Dalits into the trading of cattle in the village acted as a source of revenue which enabled a few amongst them to acquire rights of ownership over land through purchase. Of the land possessed as of 2018 about 35% of the land was obtained through purchase which were specifically recorded as Konugolu/Purchased. However, most part of the land possessed by Dalits was the government land acquired from a long struggle. Even though there was an improvement in ownership of land in case of the marginalized castes as compared with 1901, yet the improvement as compared with their proportion of population at present reveals a greater inequality of ownership. The nature of skewed distribution of land is mapped in Lorenz curve in Figure 5.1. The Lorenz curve for ST's,

²⁰ Name changed

who own nothing coincides with 100% inequality as it lies horizontally on x-axis towards the right-side of the origin, while the Lorenz curve for scheduled castes lies far away from line of equi-distribution, followed by OBC's and the Lorenz curve for OC's as compared with rest of the social groups, lies nearer to the line of equi-distribution. The Gini-Coefficients for various social groups presents the scale of inequality in a succinct manner.

Figure : 5.1 Lorenz distribution for ownership of land amongst social groups at Karumanchi

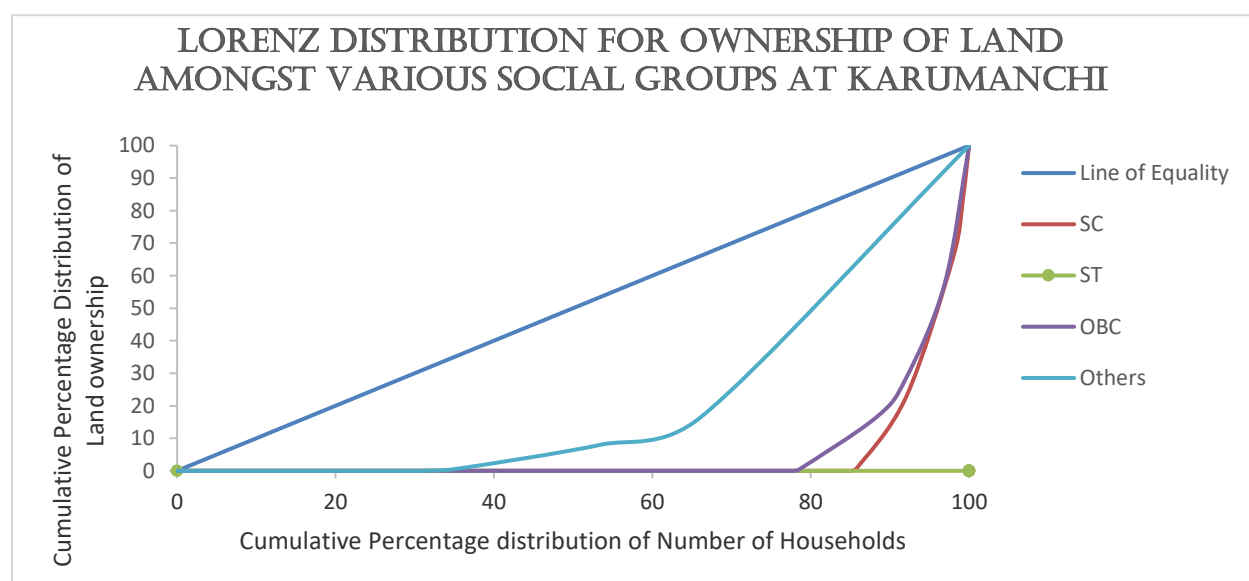


Table 5.6 : Gini Coefficients for social groups at Karumanchi

Social group	Gini Coefficient
SC	0.9
ST	1
OBC	0.87
Others	0.55
All	0.86

Source: Field survey, 2018.

* As Scheduled Tribes have absolute inequality the Gini-Coefficient for them stands at 1.

Table: 5.7 Size and class wise distribution of households by ownership amongst social groups (number)

NSSO Classification	In acres approx.	SC	ST	OBC	Others	All
Landless	0	342	38	127	42	549
Near Landless	0.002 - 0.009	0	0	0	0	0
Marginal	0.012-0.99	3	0	1	1	5
Small	1.01-2.47	25	0	16	5	46
Semi-Medium	2.5 - 4.94	24	0	6	25	55
Medium	5.00 - 9.88	5	0	8	17	30
Large	9.9 - and above	3	0	5	46	54
All sizes		402	38	163	136	739

Source : Primary data – 2018

Table : 5.8 Size and class wise distribution of ownership of land amongst social groups (acres)

NSSO Classification		In acres approx	SC	ST	OBC	Others	All
0	Landless	0	0	0	0	0	0
0.001-0.004	Near Landless	0.002 - 0.009	0	0	0	0	0
0.005-0.40	Marginal	0.012-0.99	1.5	0	0.6	0.5	2.6
0.41-1.00	Small	1.01-2.47	41.5	0	26	6.75	74.25
1.01-2.00	Semi-Medium	2.5 - 4.94	82	0	19	91.65	192.65
2.01-4.00	Medium	5.00 - 9.88	35	0	47	103.7	185.7
4.01 & Above	Large	9.9 - and above	30	0	68	1019	1117
Total			190	0	160.6	1221.6	1572.2

Source : Primary data – 2018

The Gini Coefficients reveals that there is a greater inequality amongst scheduled castes being close to 1 indicating a greater inequality pegged at 0.9, for OBC the coefficient stands at 0.87, while for other castes it stands at 0.55, apart from absolute inequality for scheduled tribes which means the Gini co-efficient would be 1.

Landlessness amongst social groups is absolute in the case of scheduled tribes, followed by a greater degree of landlessness observed in case of scheduled castes with 85.1% landless households, followed by other backward classes with 77.9%, while the least observed in the case of other castes with 30.9% of them being landless. In the pattern of the structure of landownership by size of land owned, the dominant castes bracketed as other castes own majority of their holdings as large-sized holdings above 9 acres constituting 83.4% of the total area owned, the same in case of other backward classes constitutes 42.3% of total area owned, while amongst scheduled caste households 15.8% of area is owned in large holdings. As per the information obtained from the field, there are 6 households owning more than 50 acres of land.

The “Report of the committee on State of Agrarian Relations and the Unfinished task of Land reforms” commissioned by Department of Land resources, Ministry of Rural Development, in the year 2008 had recommended for an imposition of new ceiling limits. The ceiling for irrigated land was proposed at 5-10 acres while 10-15 acres in case of non-irrigated land²¹. To go by the proposals of the committee aforementioned, there are about 26 Households from other castes own more than 15 acres of land. The perpetuated skewness in the pattern of ownership of land between social groups was an effect of an ineffective implementation of land reforms, which was agreed by most of the government appointed committees to review the implementation of land reforms. In case of Andhra Pradesh (including Telangana), Koneru Ranga Rao committee has shown that out of 16.63 lakh hectares of land declared as Surplus land, only 5.71 lakh acres constituting 34.3% of total land declared as surplus were taken in to possession. Karumanchi land records show that

²¹ Ceiling limits must be re-fixed and implemented with retrospective effect. The new limit should be 5-10 acres in the case of irrigated land and 10-15 acres for non-irrigated land, to be decided by the concerned state governments (GOI 2009, P.72)

only 8.26 acres were assigned to scheduled caste families, while no land was allotted to scheduled Tribe households who are absolutely landless. Such a trend of a lesser scale of redistribution and continued skewedness in the ownership of land amongst dominant caste groups points at a need for the intervention of state to enable access to land for agrarian dependant households from the most marginalized groups.

Posing a reliance on the dismantled larger estates with the abolition of zamindari estates in the post-colonial period, would postulate a progressive posture of the pace of land reforms, however the objective behind the abolition of intermediaries in the system of agriculture was to enable the object of land to the tiller. Landlordism and its evils were associated with the nature of absenteeism from the operation of land, squeezing the share of revenue of the original tiller in an exploitative manner. As a long time has passed since the promulgation of the exercise of land reforms, looking at the inequality in terms of the distribution of ownership by size of the land might not give a holistic view of the prevalence of inequality, as the rules of inheritance and the sub-division of land to coparceners of the family would lessen the size of land. Thus such reduction at the level of individual need not be confused with the amelioration of unequal patterns.

Access to land and the question around concentration of land needs to be looked not at singular/individual level rather the social cohort to which the individual belongs, as the customary practices and institution of caste promulgated its rules of proliferation of wealth not on the basis of an individual's capability, rather were rooted in the social location of the individual. Thus holding the decline of a large concentration land amongst a few individuals as observed in the case of the decline of Zamindari settlements and large land owners need not be generalized as a case of an equitable distribution, as the original tiller is yet to be granted with rights over land. The unequal concentration of land amongst the dominant castes of the village makes the class of cultivators and rentiers, whereas the SC, ST and OBC castes which have an extremely less composition of ownership holdings engage predominantly as labouring castes, as could be observed from Table 5.9. The aspects of migration, as observed from the field survey induce the dominant castes with their access to land and education to migrate to the cities of Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore, while a few could also migrate abroad, whereas the lower castes despite having got some mobility with access to education, yet predominantly remain the labouring class and exhibit patterns of migration for work in to construction sector as *TaapiMestri (construction workers)*, which remains

to be transitory in nature. The presence of ITC in the vicinity offers employment to female workers with the grading of tobacco.

Table: 5.9: Proportion of working population amongst various social groups by category of occupation (Percentage)

Category of occupation	SC	ST	OBC	Others	All
Cultivation/rentier	4.2	0.0	8.3	52.2	12.0
Allied agricultural activity	0.6	0.0	5.4	8.0	2.7
Agricultural labour	42.9	38.9	34.2	7.0	35.5
Other labour	35.8	55.6	28.8	4.5	30.7
HH Industry	1.1	1.4	2.5	1.5	1.5
Trade and Business	3.0	1.4	3.2	7.0	3.6
Service (Govt)	2.4	1.4	5.4	5.0	3.4
Service (Pvt)	10.0	1.4	12.2	14.9	10.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's computation from Field data 2017-18

As we observe a proliferation of labouring classes amongst the disadvantaged castes alongside of a concentration of land amongst the dominant castes, we rest our further focus on the operationalization of the land holdings of the village, their cropping pattern, nature of their distribution as owner-operated and tenant-operated holdings, with a further elaboration on the comparison of productivity and profitability of agriculture amongst social groups and the factors influencing discrepant outcomes between them.

5.3: The dynamics of caste, tenancy, productivity, and profitability.

The pattern of operationalization of land holdings at Karumanchi reveals a cropping pattern with two varieties of crops: 1) Tobacco and 2) *Sanaga* (Bengal Gram), both of which are designated to be cash crops. Amongst both crops Tobacco is more labour intensive as compared with Sanaga (Bengal Gram). Tobacco is cultivated and processed through intensive use of labour, while Sanaga is relatively less labour intensive in aspects of post-harvest processing. Tobacco requires large scale investment, with the nature of costs associated with harvest and post-harvest curing of tobacco leaves, involving labour and firewood, while Sanaga does not have much post-harvest processing.

The predominance of tobacco cultivation in the village appears to be dwindling over the years, more specific in the context of the study year. The Area under tobacco which stood at 2362.19 acres in 1983²² declined to 436.5 acres by 2018. Bengal gram which wasn't cultivated in 1983 entered the portfolio of crops cultivated in the village occupying a major share of the area cropped in 2018. Bengal Gram occupies 61.4% of the total area cropped in the village (excluding the area under plantations and orchards). Apart from these two crops, there are Mango orchards and Subhabul (River tamarind/ *Leucaena leucocephala*) plantation which occupy 11% of the total area operated which also includes area operated under Tobacco and Bengal Gram. For further discussion, our analysis shall be confined to Tobacco and Bengal gram, as orchards and Subabhul are long-run plantations.

Operational holdings in the village are characterized with a predominance of their cultivation by those who own large and medium sized holdings operating 82% of the total area operated under Tobacco and Bengal Gram. In case of other castes, those who own 5 acres and above operate about 95% of the area, the same in case of OBC's stands at 61% while for SC's it is 29%. The feature of landless households operating on land by taking lease is prevalent among SC and OBC's with none observed in the case of other castes (Table 5.12).

The operational characteristics of the predominant crops cultivated reveals that nearly about 30.1% of area operated under Bengal Gram and Tobacco is operated on the basis of tenurial arrangements. The area under operational holdings in Karumanchi as showcased in Table No.5.10 reveals that a major portion of area is operated under Bengal Gram followed by Tobacco. However, the incidence of tenancy appears out to be greater under cultivation of tobacco in both area and households operating under tenancy arrangements. The operational holdings by social groups reveal a greater share of land operated by other castes, occupying 73.5 % of total operational holdings.

²² The data is from a field study conducted in the year 1983 in Karumanchi by Nata Duvvury.

Table:-5.10 Operational Holdings, Tenancy at Karumanchi

Tobacco						
Social Group	No.of operational holdings	Area Operated- (Acres)	No. of Households leasing at least a plot	% of Tenant HHs to Total Households operated	Area under tenancy- (Acres)	Percentage of Area Operated under Tenancy
SC	7	62	7	100.0	51	82.3
OBC	5	35	3	60.0	22	62.8
Others	27	339.5	11	40.7	94	27.6
All	39	436.5	21	53.8	167	38.3
Bengal Gram						
SC	18	81	10	55.5	42	51.8
OBC	11	113.5	5	45.5	60	52.9
Others	42	499.6	8	19.0	72	14.4
All	71	694.1	28	39.4	174	25.1

Source: Field Data 2017-18

Table: 5.11 Area Operated, Tenancy in Karumanchi

Social Group	Area Operated-(Acres)	Area Leased-in-(Acres)	Percentage of Area leased-in to Total Area operated
SC	143	93	65
OBC	148.5	82	55.2
Others	839.1	166	19.8
All	1130.6	341	30.2

Source: Field Data 2017-18

Table: 5.12 Class-wise Proportion of cultivating Households by size of land ownership and Area operated among various social groups for both Tobacco and Bengal Gram

	SC		OBC		Others		All	
	HH's (%)	Area (%)	HH's (%)	Area (%)	HH's (%)	Area (%)	HH's (%)	Area (%)
Landless	28	25	18	24	0	0	9	6
Marginal	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Small	28	23	18	6	3	0	11	4
Semi-Medium	24	22	12	9	10	4	13	7
Medium	0	0	24	23	27	14	21	14
Large	20	29	29	38	59	81	46	68
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source : Author's calculations from field data 2018

The proportion of area leased-in to total area operated by each social group reveals that a greater incidence of tenancy is observed amongst scheduled castes with a share of 65% to total area operated by them, followed by OBC's with 55.2% and the least being other households with 19.8% of area leased-in to total area operated by other households. Incidence of tenancy at the village level stands 1.1% lesser than the state average. The reason could be a decreased operational holdings and a higher fallows for the year under study.

A plain reading of Table-5.10 implies a greater presence of owner-cultivation amongst OC households. However, a comparison with the total area available for cultivation and the area operated reveals that a large area owned by OCs is fallow. From Table :5.13 it could be seen that the total area operated by other castes constitutes 52.7% of the area that is owned by them as per the official land records of the village, with rest 47.3% of the area left uncultivated for the period under study.

Table-5.13 Land under Field Survey, Records and operated

Social Group	Land ownership under Field Survey	Land Records	Land Operated under Tobacco and Bengal Gram	Land operated under orchards and plantation crops	Total Area operated
SC	190	159.61	143	60.5	203.5
OBC	160.6	208.64	148.5	47	195.5
Other Castes	1221.6*	1652.73	839.1	32.5	871.6
Temple Lands		129.72			
Area available for cultivation	1572.2	2150.7	1130.6	180	1270.6

Source: Field Data 2017-18 and Land Records of Karumanchi Village

*Includes 40 acres of paddy land owned and cultivated at West Godavari

The possible reason for the higher percentage of current fallows is due to the control over land by OC households who have migrated out on account of a higher elevation into technical and professional jobs into cities and abroad, creating a class of non-resident absentees who earn a

constant source of income from occupations other than agriculture. This makes them non-dependable on agricultural income giving them the option of keeping land under fallows, unlike their predecessors, who depended on rental incomes from land. Such trend indicates a backward state of agriculture accompanied by huge inequalities in terms of land distribution amongst social groups and underutilization and wastage of resources on account of current fallows held by non-cultivating dominant caste households not being put in to use for the period of time under which the lands are kept fallow. The rationale for non-cultivating dominant caste households to retain ownership of land even in the presence of an alternative source of income lies in the fact that the land carries collateral value, given the growing pressure of population and simultaneous decline in area, there would be a stronger incentive for them to retain rather dispose through sale. Such a point of view of a non-cultivating owner households would have a depressing effect on cultivation, as the landlord would not even care if land is kept idle. As we proceed further, we shall focus on the effects of perpetuity of skewed holdings by analysing the aspects of productivity and profitability amongst those who are owner cultivators vis-à-vis tenant cultivators with a specific analytical focus on social groups.

5.3.1 Evaluating Productivity and Profitability of owner- and tenant-operated holdings

An assessment of the levels of productivity per acre amongst social groups, associated cost of cultivation and profitability in the case of tobacco reveals that scheduled castes who tend to relatively fare better in terms of average output per acre, with a lesser cost of cultivation in comparison with other social groups end up as the least profitable group when profits are calculated without discounting the rental cost, the same when rental costs are deducted from the gross profits the situation worsens, incurring in losses (Table : 5.14). The factors which affect for such an outcome are related to the problems of price distortionary mechanism at the auction platforms, tenancy and the issues related to credit institutions. Cultivation of tobacco requires an extensive scale of investment, which becomes important in the process of harvest and post-harvest curing in the Barney as the same requires labour and fuel to smoke the tobacco leaves. Owner-cultivators who have titled land can borrow loan from formal institutions of lending, in addition the Barneys that they own generate a bigger share of loans as compared with agricultural lands. In the case of Tenant cultivators, due to lack of ownership in both land and Barney, they end up in borrowings from non-formal lending channels. Despite good amount of yields and lesser cost of cultivation, owing to the large sums of money borrowed, the tenant cultivator would be compelled to sell the crop at the rate offered in the auction

platforms. The owner-cultivators who source their loans from institutional channels which are offered at a lower rate of interest would be left with an option to speculate for trading their produce at best prices. This apart the skewedness in distribution of land which entails in creating surplus of land amongst a few simultaneously resulting in scarcity for others, combined with the commercial avenues of tobacco farming had resulted in a soaring rents, which have an adverse bearing on reinvest able surplus of tenant cultivators. This could be gauged from the fact that despite a comparative lower rate of returns for scheduled castes operating on tobacco on complete tenurial basis, absence of rental costs would leave them with a surplus of 21000 rupees per acre on an average, however as they remain under lease they end up with losses with negative returns of 6466 rupees per acre. Though a generalization of these results might not be appropriate given the skewness with which the tobacco farms are operated with a predominance of dominant caste households engaged in the cultivation and the sample of both scheduled caste and other backward classes being lower for the year under study owing to an increased process of fallowization.

In comparison with Tobacco, the profitability appears to be greater in Bengal gram owing to a relatively lower levels of cost of cultivation. Though all social groups are profited with a surplus share of income after deduction of rental costs, the scale of profits are more for other castes as compared with SC and OBC's. Though the scale of profits in sanaga fair better as compared with tobacco, the relationship between profits and social groups indicates a moderate positive relationship with higher the social group receiving a higher rate of profits. From table-5.15 we can observe a Moderate positive relationship between social group and profitability per acre with spearman's correlation coefficient represented by R at 0.35 indicating an increase in profits associated with the social standing, showing a statistical significance with p-value less than 0.05. However, this relationship is established after incorporation of rental costs into the total expenditure, which shown an impact on decline in the relative gains for each social group as the tenancy occupies more than half of scheduled castes and OBC's while the same is composed below a quarter in case of other castes.

Table 5.14: Productivity, Cost of Cultivation and Profitability per acre by both inclusive and non-inclusive of rent for various social groups

Tobacco						
Social Group	Average Output Per acre (quintals)	Average Cost of Cultivation Per acre excluding Rent	Cost of cultivation per acre including rent	Profitability per acre(with no rents)	Profitability per acre (with rents)	Average Marketing Price
SC	8.6	54845	81700	20389	-6466	8857
OBC	7.8	62295	82009	22877	3163	10800
Others	8.3	62846	71362	24444	15928	10919
Bengal Gram						
SC	8.01	21147	37135	53334	37347	9251.8
OBC	7.67	23248	41222	49042	31069	9470
Others	8.08	21518	25413	58559	54664	9881

Source : Field Data 2017-18

Table : 5.15 Spearman's Rank correlation for various indicators

Tobacco		
	R-value	P-VALUE
Spearman's Rank correlation coefficient for social group and productivity per acre	-0.10	0.5
Spearman Rank Correlation coefficient for social group and profitability per acre exclusive of Rent.	-0.004	0.9
Spearman Rank Correlation coefficient for social group and profitability per acre inclusive of rent per acre	0.29	0.07
Bengal Gram		
	R-value	P-VALUE
Spearman's Rank correlation coefficient for social group and productivity per acre	0.13	0.2
Spearman Rank Correlation coefficient for social group and profitability per acre exclusive of Rent.	0.20	0.1
Spearman Rank Correlation coefficient for social group and profitability per acre inclusive of rent per acre	0.35	0.003

In table 5.15, we demonstrate the results of the spearman's rank correlation coefficient computed by ordering ranks for each social group in an ascending manner with scheduled castes ranked the lowest and other castes ranked highest with OBC's occupying the middle rank vis-à-vis the indicators as specified in table which are productivity per acre of each cultivator, profitability per acre of each cultivator without excluding rent from total revenue termed as profitability per acre exclusive of rent and another indicator which included was profitability of each cultivator after deduction of rent along with other costs from total revenue. All the results shows us that the relationship between the social location of the cultivator and the given indicators are weak (with an exception to Bengal gram), however show a certain level of correlation for an intuitive understanding.

Table : 5.16 Per capita earning from agriculture and average area operated by Social group at Karumanchi

Social group	Per-capita earnings from agriculture per household (Rupees)	Average Area Operated Per Household (Acres)
SC	124961.3	6.8
OBC	327058.6	2.3
Others	696122.7	17.9
All	486838.7	12.4

Source : Field Data 2017-18

An evaluation of returns from agriculture as an income generating activity for the households at Karumanchi reveals that a greater share of returns are accrued to the dominant caste households in comparison with the scheduled caste and OBC's. Per-capita returns for other castes stands quintupled in comparison with the per-capita returns for scheduled castes and more than double in case of OBC's. A greater share of returns are accounted for Bengal gram in which both in terms of productivity and cost of cultivation excluding rent, there doesn't exist a much difference amongst social groups, however after inclusion of rent the per-capita cost of cultivation of scheduled castes and OBC's increases on a large scale as compared with other castes, also owing to a greater incidence of tenancy amongst SC and OBC's in case of Bengal Gram. However, the cost of cultivation of Bengal Gram as compared with Tobacco stands much lesser, as the latter is much labour intensive and costly involving barney operations, while Bengal gram is for most part mechanized in it's harvest operations. At overall level, it could be observed from Table-5.15 that the OBC's despite having a lesser average area operated in comparision with the scheduled castes, they fare better when evaluated as per acre return, which is due to a greater share of area operated by OBC's on Bengal Gram which yielded good returns, in comparison with scheduled castes, who had their hands on both Tobacco and Bengal gram, in which almost 82% of land was leased-in for tobacco operations, and the size of the loan obtained from informal sources compelled them to sell the output at much lesser price in auction markets, subsequently leading to a lesser per-capita return for scheduled castes despite a greater per-capita land operated in comparison with OBC's. However, the greater gains in organizing of agriculture could be observed for other castes, who operate on a large chunk of lands of the village, with about 80% of land operated by them as owner-operated (for SC's the same is accounted for 35% for OBC's 44.8%).

The prevailing skewed distribution in terms of ownership in land which is explained more in terms of the reference with past as against present affects equity and generates asymmetrical outcomes in present for individuals from varied social groups with higher being the social group higher the scale of positive outcomes.

5.4 Summary

Land distribution in the village of Karumanchi is mapped from the pre-independence period to 2018. Pre-independence records of land were made available by an already existing study by Sagar (2014). The transition in the ownership patterns though indicates a transition in ownership from brahmins to non-brahmin dominant castes, yet the transition does not percolate to the castes in the bottom of the village hierarchy. Land distribution remain significantly skewed between social groups. The implementation of ceiling legislations appears to be tardy, as there exists large landholders beyond the specified limits by government. There is an observed pattern of a changing nature of landlordism in the village from resident-absenteeism to non-resident absenteeism owing to the migration of landowning dominant castes for the purpose of employment, which coincides with the existing studies at primary level. For the period under study, a case of fallowization is observed owing to concentration of land amongst a large group of non-resident land owners. As the village has a predominant base in commercial cropping patterns, the rents also stand higher. Such a higher rental values for land adversely affect both tenant farmers as well as the operational nature of the land itself. The profitability of the farmers by social group reveals that the returns for OC's stand quintupled as compared with SC's and more than doubled in comparison with OBC's. Such a case exists despite a higher application of labour by the SC and OBC's. The problems of securing formal sources of credit and the compulsion of repayment of the informally borrowed loans doesn't leave much scope for the tenant cultivators to look out for best prices. On the other hand, the existence of formal access to credit lands the owner-cultivators in a better situation in waiting for the best prices to market their harvested produce. Ownership of land is very crucial in both securing an access to formal sources of lending, which can ease the farmer with marketing their produce at lower prices, instead allows them to wait and market at better prices instead. In the given context of an observed excessive concentration of land amongst non-resident absentee owners, it becomes extremely important to redress such a phenomenon, as it would hamper both agrarian operations as well as keeps a large cohort of agrarian dependent population as unemployed.

CHAPTER 6

ACCESS TO LAND: A CASE STUDY OF ODIPILAVANCHA VILLAGE PANCHAYAT IN TELANGANA STATE²³

6.1 Introduction:

The village of Odipilavancha as it exists as a singular village in the census records, is spatially segregated in to three distinct locations, or hamlets. These three locations of the village go by the names of Muskula-Palle, where dominant castes and other backward classes reside, Odipilavancha is composed predominantly of *Madiga* households, while Alipur has *Mala* Households. Both Mala and Madiga castes come under scheduled caste category. Muskulapalle and Alipur go by the names of those who contributed in setting up of the villages, whereas Odipilavancha derives its name from a small millet called *odipillu*, which were consumed by the villagers. Amongst the three locations, the first habitation in the village was situated at Odipilavancha, following which Muskula-Palle emerged, with Alipur being the latest.

The spatial demarcation of Odipilavancha exists as a singular unit village, however as an administrative domain it becomes a village panchayat which includes Veerapoor, a hamlet village standing 2 kms away from Odipilavancha. These villages are located adjacent to Mahadevpur reserve forest, with Veerapoor lying in a more proximate position with forest as compared with Odipilavancha. As we chose Odipilavancha village panchayat for present study, the details from primary survey were collected from both the villages.

The discussion on the study on Odipilavancha village panchayat is organized in three broad sections: 1) Demography, occupational distribution of the population. 2) The Dynamics of Land ownership and dispossession: Analyzing present by unravelling its past and 3) Analyzing the operational characteristics of agriculture at the Panchayat. The data used for analysis includes census records of the villages of Odipilavancha and Veerapoor as both villages

²³ Part of this chapter is published in three Journal articles.

- 1) Prashanth, D., & Sridevi, G. (2022). Land, caste and tenancy: understanding the origins and effects of absentee landlordism in the changing context. *Rural Society*, 1-14.
- 2) Sridevi, G., & Prashanth, D. (2021). Agricultural Marketing in Telangana: Unraveling the Challenges and Possibilities in the Wake of Farm Bills 2020. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 76(3).
- 3) Sridevi, G., Jyotishi, A., & Prashanth, D (2020) "Malnutrition and Inequality among the Vulnerable Social Groups: A Study of Two Villages" *Journal of Development Policy Review*, 1(4).

together constitute Odipilavancha Panchayat and the data collected from field would be dealt together for the panchayat as a single unit.

6.2 Demography, occupational distribution of the population in Odipilavancha

In terms of the demographic composition Odipilavancha and Veerapoor has a sizeable share of scheduled caste and tribe population since more than seven decades from the period under study.

The village-wise list of Karimnagar district for 1941 census records the villages under each taluq and demarcates the population by community in to 1) Hindus, 2) Harijans, 3) Muslims, 4) Christians and 5) others. In Odipilavancha, for the year of 1941, Hindus comprised 60.3% of Total Population with 381 persons, Harijans comprised of 39.2% with 248 persons and Muslims accounted for 0.5% with 3 persons, the same for Veerapoor shows that there were none except Hindus and Harijans with population proportion of 52.3% and 47.7% respectively numbered at 67 and 61 persons.

Table : 6.1 : Demography of Odipilavancha and Veerapoor from 1961 to 2011

	Odipilavancha				Veerapoor			
Year	Total Population	SC	ST	SC/ST	Total Population	SC	ST	SC/ST
1961	718	320	17	337	219	28	93	121
1971	823	383	37	420	236	29	97	126
1981	863	425	19	444	290	52	115	167
1991	910	470	14	484	311	79	115	194
2001	944	542	0	542	342	82	155	237
2011	1088	679	0	679	384	103	104	207

Source : District Census Handbooks of Karimnagar District

Table : 6.2 Percentage of SC and ST population to Total Population at Odipilavancha and Veerapoor (Percentage)

	Odipilavancha			Veerapoor		
Year	SC	ST	SC/ST	SC	ST	SC/ST
1961	44.6	2.4	46.9	12.8	42.5	55.3
1971	46.5	4.5	51.0	12.3	41.1	53.4
1981	49.2	2.2	51.4	17.9	39.7	57.6
1991	51.6	1.5	53.2	25.4	37.0	62.4
2001	57.4	0.0	57.4	24.0	45.3	69.3
2011	62.4	0.0	62.4	26.8	27.1	53.9

Source : District Census Handbooks of Karimnagar District

The data for 1941 appears to club both scheduled caste and tribes under Harijans in case of Veerapoor, as a comparative account of later figures in 1961 shows the magnitude of scheduled castes much lesser and that of scheduled tribes far higher. As revealed from Table. 6.2 the proportion of SC and ST population put together has occupied more than 50% of total Population since 1971.

6.3 Occupational characteristics of the working population of Odipilavancha Panchayat

The Percentage distribution of working population at Odipilavancha panchayat reveals that most of the scheduled caste and tribes operate as agrarian labour, with a simultaneous observance of a greater dependency of OBC and other castes operating as cultivators. As the Veerapoor hamlet of the panchayat lies at a proximate distance to the forest, which inhabits the scheduled tribes, they also engage in sericulture which is shown in the allied agricultural activity.

Table :6.3 Proportion of working population amongst various social groups by category of occupation at Odipilavancha Panchayat

Category	SC	ST	OBC	Others	All
Cultivators	40.3	35.0	64.9	67.2	49.0
Agricultural Labour	47.9	48.3	17.9	1.6	37.5
Allied Agricultural Activity	0.8	11.7	5.2	0.0	2.7
Other Labour	1.0	1.7	3.7	0.0	1.6
Trade & Self Employed	2.0	0.0	3.7	3.3	2.4
Government Service	1.5	1.7	0.7	8.2	1.4
Private Service	6.5	1.7	3.7	19.7	5.4
Total wokers	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source : Field Survey 2017

Given, a greater extent of SC's in the village displaying a pattern of dependency on agricultural labour as elicited from the field, it strikes a chord with the conditions that were brought forth in the Census records of 1951 on Manthani Taluk, of which both the villages were part of till 1971. To quote:

“A heavy proportion of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other very backward classes, acquisition of lands formerly owned by them as well as of fallow or forest lands by comparatively recent immigrants belonging to relatively advanced cultivating and non-cultivating castes or classes, and the existence of some very big landlords, are perhaps the chief factors leading to the comparatively heavy proportion of the livelihood class of agricultural labour in Manthani, Sultanabad, Parkal and Mulug.”(Census 1951, Page 147).

The observations from census records exactly strikes a chord with the process of political economy of dispossession which was experienced by the scheduled castes of the village, which shall be mapped in detail in the following sections, where at first we shall deal with the scenario of land ownership in the village from the field survey, followed by an analysis of land records of the village, post-which we shall take up an elaboration on the process of dispossession that happened to the scheduled castes of the village.

6.4) The Dynamics of Land ownership and dispossession: Analyzing present by unravelling its past

The nature of land ownership and distribution at Odipilavancha panchayat amongst existing social groups reveals a skewed distribution of land with land concentration amongst fewer social groups, while dispossession attributed to a vast majority. A comparison of incidence of landlessness with the proportion of population of each social group reveals greater degree of landlessness observed amongst SC's, followed by ST's, then OBC's, and the last being other caste households. Scheduled caste households which constitute a proportion of 58.1% of the total households exhibited a greater incidence of landlessness with 68.1% scheduled caste landless households amongst total landless households, scheduled tribes who constitute 8.6% of total households have a share of 8.9% of landless households amongst total landless households, then the OBC's who constitute 22.16% of total households have a proportion of 20.74% of landless households while other castes who constitute 11.08% of total households have 2.22% of landless households amongst all social groups at Odipilavancha.

An elaborative account of the distribution of land ownership amongst social groups is observed by comparing the proportion of population of each social group vis-à-vis their proportion of land ownership to total households, followed by plotting Lorenz curve by taking cumulative proportion of land holdings and population by class of land possessed and proportion of population.

Table 6.4: Size and Class wise distribution of household ownership amongst Various Social Groups at Odipilavancha Panchayat

NSSO Classification		In acres approx	SC	ST	OBC	Others
0	Landless	0	92	12	28	3
0.001-0.004	Near Landless	0.002 - 0.009	0	0	0	0
0.005-0.40	Marginal	0.012-0.99	21	6	9	0
0.41-1.00	Small	1.01-2.47	60	8	18	4
1.01-2.00	Semi-Medium	2.5 - 4.94	25	3	16	10
2.01-4.00	Medium	5.00 - 9.88	14	3	8	13
4.01 & Above	Large	9.9 - and above	3	0	3	11
Total	All	All Sizes	215	32	82	41

Source : Field Survey 2017

The unequal distribution of land amongst various social groups is best analyzed through a comparative assessment of scheduled castes vis-à-vis other castes in Table 6.6, whereat it has been observed that scheduled castes who constitute 58.1% of total households at Odipilavancha own 36.8% of Land. The Other Castes which constitute dominant castes of the village constitute 11.08% of Total Households, and their share of ownership constitutes 34.8% of Land in Odipilavancha.

Table 6.5 :Size and Class Wise Distribution of Land Ownership amongst Various Social Groups at Odipilavancha Panchayat

NSSO Classification		In acres approx	SC	ST	OBC	Others
0	Landless	0	0	0	0	0
0.001-0.004	Near Landless	0.002 - 0.009	0	0	0	0
0.005-0.40	Marginal	0.012-0.99	8.03	1.68	4.6	0
0.41-1.00	Small	1.01-2.47	84	11.6	29.5	5.5
1.01-2.00	Semi-Medium	2.5 - 4.94	81.3	9.5	59	32.5
2.01-4.00	Medium	5.00 - 9.88	87.05	19.25	49.5	96
4.01 & Above	Large	9.9 - and above	31	0	40	141
Total			291.38	42.03	182.6	275

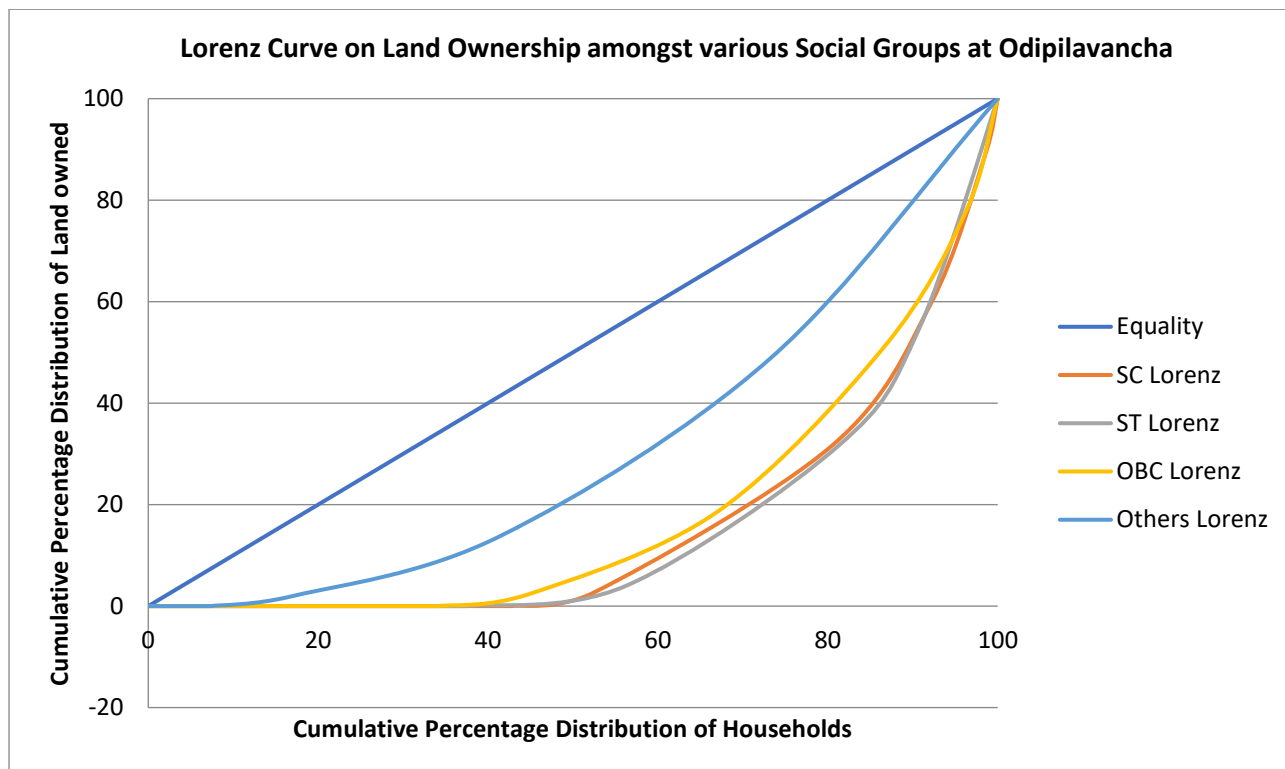
Source : Field Survey 2017

Table 6.6 : Land and Household Proportion of various households amongst various social groups at Odipilavancha Panchayat

	SC	ST	OBC	Others
Proportion of Households	58.1	8.6	22.2	11.1
Proportion of ownership of Land	36.8	5.3	23.1	34.8

Source : Field Survey 2017

Figure :6.1 Lorenz Distribution of Land ownership amongst various social groups at Odipilavancha Panchayat



Source : Author's calculations

Table 6.7 : Gini-Coefficients for Various Social Groups at Odipilavancha Panchayat

Gini Coefficients for Odipilavancha	
Social Group	Gini Coefficient
SC	0.67
ST	0.68
OBC	0.62
Others	0.36
All	0.66

Source : Author's calculations

The persisting inequality of land ownership amongst various social groups at Odipilavancha is analyzed through Lorenz distribution in Figure 6.1. It is observed that SC and ST's are the groups that are stand far away from the line of equality/lie of equi-distribution, followed by OBC's and OC's.

Gini Coefficients which estimates the quantum of inequality, reveals that there is greater amount of inequality in the case of SC's, ST's and OBC's when compared with OC's. Gini Coefficient for OC's stood at 0.36, while the same for scheduled castes stood at 0.67, scheduled tribes at 0.68 and other backward classes at 0.62, indicating a greater inequality in distribution of ownership of land for SC/ST/OBC as against other castes. The presence of a greater inequality amongst the SC/ST/OBC's is indicative of a greater number of landless households amongst them.

As we locate skewed patterns of distribution in land ownership amongst social groups, it becomes pertinent to look at a comprehensive picture of the village, as the household survey may not be revealing an overall picture of the patterns of distribution of land with an absence of information of land from the absentee owners. Hence it would become important to study and analyze the information from land records of the village panchayat to understand the nature of land distribution that exists in the study village.

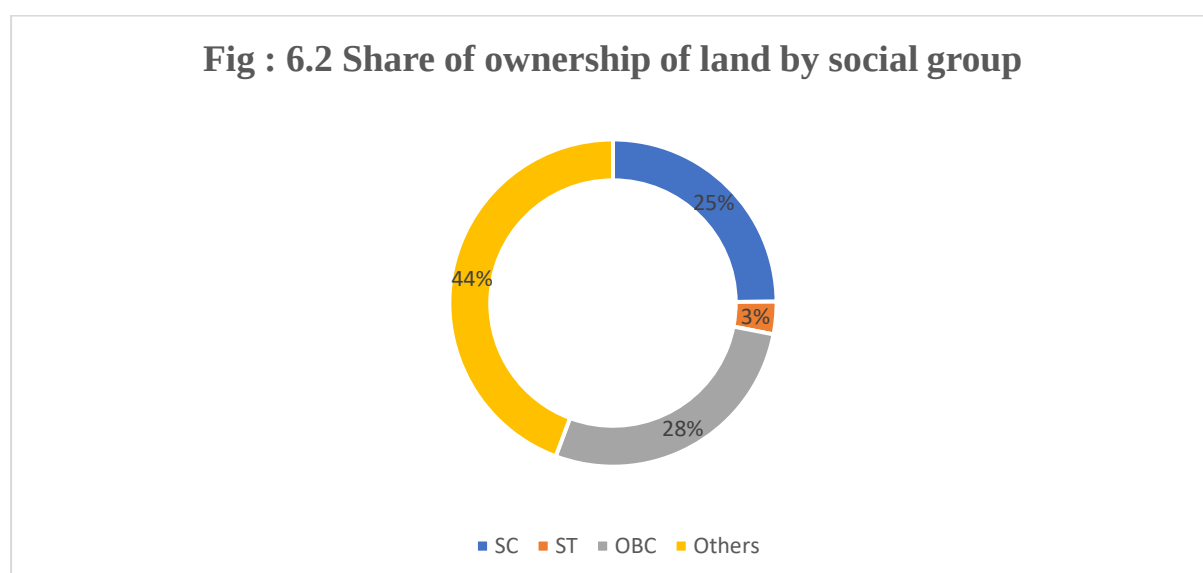
The next section evaluates on the patterns of land ownership at Odipilavancha village panchayat through a granular analysis from land records, distribution of land ownership by their proximity to sources of irrigation and a visual imagination and interpretation of the formation of the structures of irrigation through cadastral maps, Google Earth tools and Bhuvan satellite imagery. As the borders of the village does not remain isolated the land records of the adjacent village were also ascertained in order to determine the size of land held by the villagers at Odipilavancha panchayat.

6.5 PATTERNS OF LAND OWNERSHIP AT ODIPILAVANCHA VILLAGE PANCHAYAT : A GRANULAR ANALYSIS FROM LAND RECORDS AND CADASTRAL MAPS

The village panchayat of Odipilavancha, as noted earlier comprises of two villages. The Total land in the hands of private individuals belonging to the panchayat is accounted for 1240.6 acres as per official land records. This figure is arrived by looking at the land records of both Odipilavancha and Veerapoor, as well as records of individuals located at the study panchayat in the adjacent villages of Jadarao pet and Gummallapalle.

Table : 6.8 Land ownership amongst social groups at Odipilavancha Village Panchayat (acres)			
	Odipilavancha	Veerapoor	Total
SC	262.6	45.8	308.4
ST	2.7	37.1	39.8
OBC	276.8	65.9	342.7
Others	322.7	227.0	549.7
Total	864.8	375.8	1240.6

Source : Land records of Odipilavancha, Veerapoor, Jadarao pet and Gummallapalle 2018.



The social composition of those who own land reveals that a major share of ownership is held by other Castes who are mostly Reddys occupying 43% of Total land, followed by other backward classes and scheduled castes at 28% and 25% respectively, with the least share of

ownership accounted for scheduled tribes at 4%. The information available through official land records, when juxtaposed with the information collected through household survey reveals that the household level data is deflated by 36% in comparison with official land records. Such a deflation might be aggravated if a comprehensive exercise of registering un-registered plots occupied for cultivation. A similar evaluation by social group reveals that the deflation is 50% for other castes, followed by OBC's at 46.7% and SC's at 5.5%, while a case of higher share of ownership from primary data as compared with land records, observed in case of scheduled tribes at 5.6%.

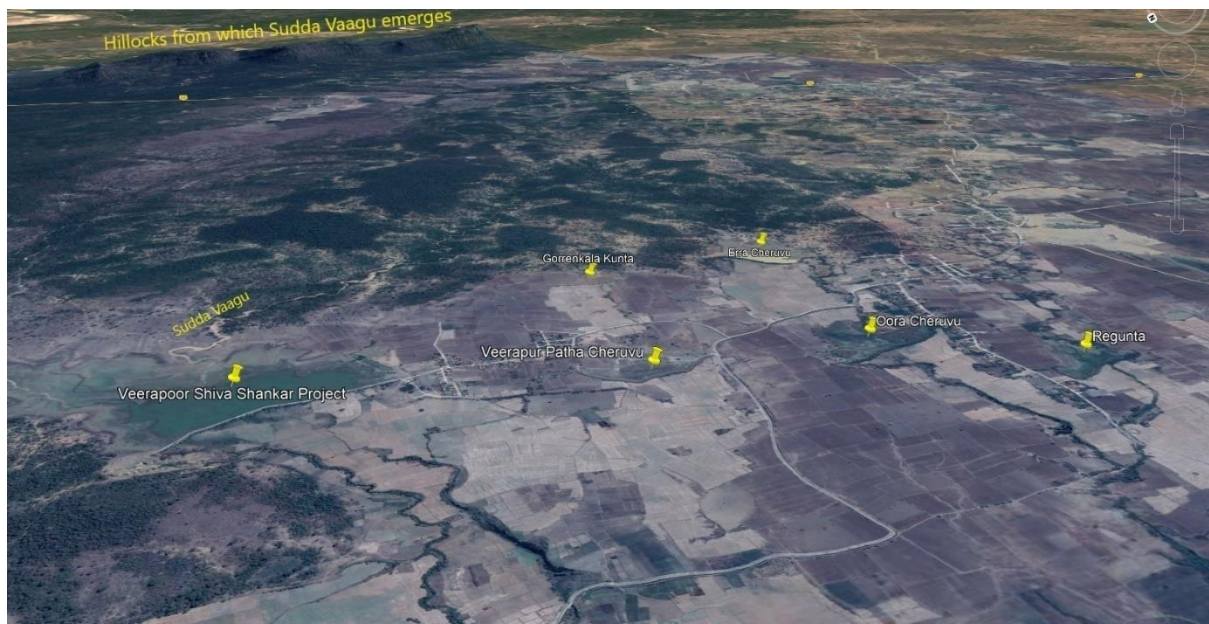
The presence of non-resident absentee landowners in the village deflates the information on land collected during the field visit, as the information of land ownership amongst absentee owners cease to exist on household-level visit. Such gaps in the information on land ownership at the village level could be bridged through records that are available for the villages. In the present case, the greater presence of absentee landed households is starkly visible in case of other castes and OBC's through deflated information available during household visit, while a lesser magnitude of visibility in the case of scheduled castes and none amongst scheduled tribes. Such a trend of a minimal presence of deflated information on field amongst scheduled castes further narrows, when we take up the state of ownership holdings that exist on record vis-à-vis physical possession of land. In the total land allotted under Survey number 32, land to the tune of 44.9 acres were allotted to landless Dalits on paper. Of which only 12.25 acres was available and reported to be under physical possession as the original extent of land under survey-32 remains to be more or less occupied. The case of an increased land possession in the household visit as compared with official land records with reference to scheduled tribes is on account of the untitled nature of few lands, which are in a zone of conflict with the forest areas.

The exercise of digitization of land records along with their mapping on the satellite imagery in the State of Telangana through the digital portal *dharani*, offers a further scope to investigate in to the patterns of ownership of land and access to sources of irrigation. The field level information collected through transect walk in the village panchayat has revealed that the major sources of irrigation were Tanks which were public and private. The village has a downward sloping terrain which does not leave much scope to tap ground water, as water storage in to aquifers would run downwards, as is the case with the streams above ground which gushes downwards towards river Godavari. Tanks would remain the sole source of irrigation for cultivation of irrigation intensive crops such as paddy. In the succeeding paragraphs, by decoding the terrain of the village and the tanks that exist in the village panchayat, an analysis

would be carried into understanding the nature of distribution of land ownership by their proximity to the sources of irrigation.

The hydrological terrain of the village panchayat is such that the water collected through rains from the hilly forest tracts of Kataram-Mahadevapur reserve forest, descends downwards forming into a set of natural streams. The major stream that enters Odipilavancha Village Panchayat is called Suddavaagu (fig.6.4) The hilly terrain in the Kataram-Mahadevapur reserve forest led to a formation several smaller streams, which in their course flow would join each other as they gush further downwards and finally merges in to River Godavari at Gundrathpally village (fig. 65).

Fig :6.3 : A Bird's eye view of the streams aiding formation of tanks at Odipilavancha



Source : Google Earth

Fig :6.4 A closer view from the Shivshankar Project



Source : Google Earth

Fig :6.5 Base hydrology imagery of the terrain of Odipilavancha Panchayat



Source : Bhuvan Imagery

Note: The names were incorporated by author

The streams form a crucial source of irrigation for agriculture, as bunding of these streams enables the storage of water for agrarian operations in the village panchayat. Fig. 63 offers a bird's eye view of several streams emerging from hillocks and adjacent forest tracts aiding in the bunding and formation of tanks. The panchayat has about seven minor and major tanks that were constructed through funds from the state making them acquire the character of "Public". The larger tanks are described as *cheruvulu*, the smaller ones are called as *kuntalu*. The tanks have two types of canals, the first canal distributes water for irrigated through regulated sluice called as *alugu*, the other canal carries the overflow water which is in excess of the storage capacity of the tank called as *Mathadi*.

There are about four *cheruvulu* by the names of Veerapoor PathaCheruvu, Veerapur-PeddaCheruvu/Shiv Shankar project, ErraCheruvu and Ooracheruvu, alongside there are three *Kuntalu* by name *Gorrenakala-Kunta*, *NallaKunta* and *Regunta*. Paddy which is the major water intensive crop is grown in the area under tanks of both minor and major size. Apart from the tanks that gets constituted public tanks, there are several private *kuntas* to support paddy cultivation. At first we shall look into the composition of lands held in irrigated areas by social group, followed by a segregated analysis of the nature of ownership land under *gramacheruvulu*, *kuntalu* and private *kuntalu*.

Table :6.9 Land ownership by access to irrigation amongst social groups		
	Number of acres	Percentage of acres
SC	85	20.1
ST	23.1	5.5
OBC	99.4	23.5
Others	215.3	50.9
All	422.8	100.0

Source : Official Land records 2018

Of the total land with access to irrigation, it could be observed that there is a greater share of irrigated land amongst the other castes, followed by SC's, OBC and the least being accounted for scheduled tribes. However, a further dissection into the location of land by their proximity to public tanks and private tanks reveals that the scheduled castes lag behind in ownership near public tanks, and have a greater share of ownership of private tanks.

Table : 6.10 Distribution of Area under Larger tanks in the Panchayat

	Number of acres under each Tank						Proportion of acreage under each tank			
Social Group	Shiv Shankar Project	VeerpaurPathacheruvu	ErraCheruvu	Ooracheruvu	Regunta	All	Shiv Shankar Project	Veerpaur Path cheruvu	Ooracheruvu	Regunta
SC	1.9	8.6	4.1	0.9	5.5	20.9	2.0	15.9	2.2	10.0
ST	12.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.4	13.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
OBC	17.8	17.7	18.5	18.6	14.8	87.3	19.0	32.8	45.0	27.0
Others	61.8	27.7	34.6	21.9	34.6	180.4	65.8	51.3	53.0	63.1
All	93.9	53.9	57.2	41.3	54.8	301.1	100.0	100.0	100	100

Source : Official Land Records 2018

Table :6.11 Distribution of Area under minor tanks in the Panchayat

Social Group	Number of acres under each Tank			Proportion of acreage under each tank		
	GorrenkalaKunta	NallaKunta	All	GorrenkalaKunta	NallaKunta	All
SC	12.9	14.3	27.2	48.8	100	66.8
ST	2.8	0	2.8	10.7	0	6.9
OBC	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others	10.7	0	10.7	10.68	0	26.3
All	26.4	14.3	40.7	100	100	100

Source : Official Land Records 2018

Elaborately, when we take a look at the large tanks such as Shiva Shankar Project, Veerapur Pathacheruvu, Erracheruvu, Ooracheruvu and Regunta, the proportion of land owned by other castes composed predominantly of Reddy caste individuals accounts for 59.9 occupying a major chunk of land under tanks, followed by OBC's with 29%, scheduled castes and tribes account for the least portion of land owned under tanks with 7% and 4.1% respectively. A Greater share of lands held under smaller *kuntas* such as GorrenkalaKunta and Nallakunta are held by scheduled castes, followed by others and the least held by scheduled tribes. A more or less similar picture prevails in the case of lands held under private *kuntas*, with a greater concentration of lands held by scheduled castes followed by others and the least being held by other backward classes.

The non-proximate location of farms to the public tanks results in construction of private tanks. Such a construction of private tanks takes away a portion of owned land for the space of tank. On contrary public tanks which remain in state jurisdiction, were constructed through state-allotted funds by displacing the existing agrarian communities. Such a skewness in distribution amongst social classes whose livelihood is dependant upon agriculture calls for an explanation in to the reasons that led to the spatial exclusion of a few social groups under the structures of irrigation vis-à-vis the excessive concentration of dominant castes with rights of ownership. For such an analysis it becomes important to look at the historical processes of land administration, socio-economic systems of governance and polity.

Table :6.12 Distribution of lands under private tanks for each social group		
Social Group	No.of Acres	Percentage of acres
SC	36.9	57.0
OBC	12.1	18.8
Others	15.6	24.1
All	64.6	100.0
Source : Official Land Records 2018		

6.6 : Political Economy of Land, Caste, accumulation and dispossession

The villages of Odipilavancha and Veerapoor were part of different administrative domains in different points of time. These villages were originally part of Mahadevpuram Taluq in the erstwhile Elgandal district till 1905. Post-1905, when the district of Elgandal was re-organized into Karimnagar with the transfer of Lakshettipet, Chennur to Adilabad district, and Siddipettaluq to Medak, the villages under study came under the domain of Manthani taluk, which could be observed from the village wise list of Karimnagar for 1941.

The administrative classification of villages by the nature of their land revenue administration in pre-independence period, were categorized into 8 ilaqas/areas. As recorded in Census 1941, the eight *ilaqas* were: 1) DiwaniIlaqa, 2) Sarf.e.khasilaqa, 3) Paegahilaqa, 4) Exempted Jagir Ilaqa, 5) Non-Exempted Jagir Ilaqa, 6) SamasthanIlaqa, 7) Maqta and 8) Agrahar²⁴.

Both the villages of Odipilavancha and Veerapoor came under *DiwaniIlaqa* to be monitored by the officials appointed by state. The village was appointed with a *Patwari* belonging to Reddy caste, who erstwhile served as a Gumastha to a Jagirdar to oversee the administration of revenue from these villages. Prior to his appointment, the lands of the village were organized and cultivated by Scheduled Castes who were the first inhabitants of the village.

The village was initially settled adjacent to a stream that flowed from the forest, and the crops were organized around/aside/adjacent to the stream. The natural formations of flow and storage were used as vantage points for organizing agriculture. Basic food crops such as jowar were cultivated around the stream and the naturally located storage point. *Odipillu* (a small millet), which grows naturally was also used as subsistence feed, which later came to be seen as a weed in the rice fields, with the expansion of rice cultivation.

²⁴ 1) DiwaniIlaqa: Revenues accrued from these ilaqas are credited to government, 2) Sarf.e.khasilaqa : These are crown lands, which are Grants to nizams meant towards personal maintenance, 3) Paegahilaqa : MilitaryIlaqas, the revenues from these ilaqas are used for maintenance of military. 4) Exempted Jagir Ilaqa : These are lands which are accorded with together with necessary and full powers to collect the revenue accruing therefrom by State servant, for his own and personal use, and to govern the country thus given to him. 5) Non Exempted Jagir Ilaqa : Taxes under this category of lands in non-exempted and needs to be remitted to state 6) SamasthanIlaqa : These are lands under *Samsthans/ feudatories*, 7) Maqta lands are those which are granted to a Makhtedaar to bring them under cultivation. 8) Agrahar lands are those distributed to Brahmins (CENSUS OF INDIA, 1891 : HIS HIGHNESS THE NIZAM'S DOMINIONS. REPORT ON THE CENSUS OPERATIONS. PART I' I. MIRZA MEHDY KHAN, A Provincial Superintendent Of Census Operations.

The composition of the village and the operationalization of land resources, witnessed drastic changes with the arrival of the *Patwari* and *Serdars* (Supervisors of agricultural operations) working under Makthedars of the region. Makthedars, Ijardars and Banjardars who were the landlords were tasked to bring new lands under cultivation, which enabled them to gain more Patta lands (Thirumali 1992). As aforesaid, Moola Subba Reddy a resident of Kannala Village of Manthani Taluk, who was a Gumastha serving *Jagirdar* Gone Venkata Muthyam Rao Deshmukh of Naspur and, came down to the village as administrator of the land revenue of the village.

The state looked out for Jagirdars who had their loyalty to the state and were tasked with the responsibilities of the administration of domains of state wherever necessary (Aiyangar 1938). Venkata Mutyam Rao, was bestowed with *Barakhoonmaaf*²⁵ (Padma, 2012). As narrated by a respondent of the village, Mutyam Rao as he was referred as *Dora* had armed militants who were responsible for creating a situation of terror in areas where there was non-compliance of the terms set by him or his employees/stooges.

The entry of the patwari appointed to the village was assisted with the forces of the state as per requirement through Police Patel who have at their disposal the guns and cavalry and Mali patel who would stay within the village, as he would assist the patwari in collection of revenue. Mali patel belonged to Kapu caste who would rank below Reddy. Apart from Patels and Patwari, there were *Serdars/Sherdars* who were tasked to supervise the cultivation of the lands of the Makthedars/Banjardars by managing the Palarus/permanently attached laborers. The Serdars of the village who supervised over the lands of a Brahmin *Makthedar* of Manthani were from Kapu caste. Thus the in-migration of the dominant castes in to the village wasn't ordinary, it was aided by the state with embodied structures of power.

The Patwari appointed for the village was the servant to state, backed with a support of a jagirdar and the force of the state helmed the role of administration of revenue collection in the village assigned. As odipilavancha and veerapoor were categorized as Diwan villages, the cultivators of the village were mandated to pay tehsils/taxes to the state, which were collected by the patwari with the support of police and malipatels.

In the event of non-payment of tehsils, coercive steps of *Banda lethadam* (*Lifting heavy stones on the backbone*) were initiated against the defaulters. An elder woman aged about 90 years,

²⁵ (a power kill 12 people per day and still remain relieved from the crime)

who still lives by her own labor had narrated about the turmoil faced by her *PeddaBava*(elder brother-in-law) for non-payment of *tehsil* for a small patch of land. While returning from work she witnessed a person with a large stone on his back bending down with hands rested on his knees. When she came closer, she realized that it was her *peddabava*, and immediately looking at the distressing scenario, she rushed to the Patel, and worked for him in his cattle yard by collecting the cattle manure for which she received a sum of Rs 5/- which was eventually paid as *tehsil* to relieve her *peddabava* from the ordeal of coercion.

The Patwari who had a vast control of land resources in the neighboring villages, was in a food surplus state, enabling him the position of lender of food in times of food shortage. This position of him as a possessor of large sums of food in the form of *Jowar* grains, and the coerced scenario of *tehsil* payments from the original tillers of the soil as well coupled with the scenario of food shortages has led to a further process of dispossession of land for those who borrowed food grains from the landlord with the grab over of the land under the pretext of non-repayment of borrowed food grains. As the village officer, the patwari got new bunds of tank laid down in the village, post-which the prime portion of lands under the tanks were usurped by him and towards his family members. In such process the erstwhile lands cultivated adjacent to the streams got submerged in the new tanks. The power to settle disputes were vested with patwari²⁶, when patwari himself was the dispute maker cordoned with the cover of the state force the scheduled castes got further marginalized.

In the Telangana area, the revolt against oppression and exploitation took several forms of protest, the first recorded revolt was in the form of Bandits waging war against local lords and zamindars as happened in the case of Papa Rai , a low caste toddy tapper during 17th century prompting the intervention of imperial forces with the nexus of local dominant caste zamindars to kill Papa Rai (Richards 1967).

The oral narratives from the village also point at masked bandits who would only target the local lords. However a more prominent rebellion that took place in Telangana happened through Telangana Armed Struggle, which was an armed rebellion against the exploitative landed gentry. The village panchayat under study, which was a part of Manthani Taluk was located in the proximate zone of armed rebellion, dalams and police conflict. Chintakani village, which is about 15kms away from the village panchayat under study, suffered an attack

²⁶(Khan, 1935 : Pg.119)

on a 20 strong police-group was carried on by five-member guerilla squad leaving four casualties for police personnel during 1950's (Sundarayya 1972).

As India attained Independence from British, Telangana region waged a war against the dominance of landed sections who indulged in slavery of the worst kind. The Telangana armed rebellion which waged a war against *Vettia* form of labour extortion ended in 1950's. The Hyderabad government with the shifts in power from Nizam to M.K.Vellodi, the first chief minister of Hyderabad, a policy of removing Muslim officers was proclaimed, thus Muslims lost their power positions in the civil administration, which got further accentuated in later stages (Sherman, 2007).

Owing to the exploitative conditions suffered by the depressed classes there was an active resurgence of Peoples war movement in the region during 70's (Balagopal 1982). Odipilavancha was part of an active Maoist rebellion, from where two educated Dalits were killed by Police for being part of Maoist Dalams. The active movements against the persisting inequalities of the time, as Herring (1983) argues has Pre-empted the government to adopt agrarian reforms in order to arrest the discontent, leading to land reforms in 1970's. The agenda of the first phase of land reforms in Post-Independent India were to accord the principle of Land to the tiller by way abolishing forms of absentee landlordism, with an exception to the case of aged and widow persons.

The evidence on ground suggests that the implementation was tardy with the power imbalance at the village level between the landless tenants and labourers vis-à-vis landed gentry composed of dominant castes. Despite the resistance observed in the form of active dalams, the dominant landed castes adopted counter-tactics of appeasing the landless labourers to save them by picturizing them of harmless landlords, as well as coercive inducement of police on the sympathisers.

In the village, the Malas were working as Tenants under Muslim Banjardars, while Madigas were working as Permanently attached labourers under the Reddy landlords. As the political power of Muslim Banjardars got dwindled since 1950's they got confined to urban areas, with the effective presence of Dalams in the village they stopped coming to villages.

In contrast the Reddy landlords who had a say in the power structure, had mobilized the force of state by filing complaints and victimizing those who opposed them. Several of their lands

were kept barren, as the dalams hoisted flags on those lands. However, the records remained untampered.

The case of Turkabhoomulu (Lands under Muslims), at Odipilavancha unearths the contradictions in the transfer of land to the original tiller, whereat Dalits working as tenants under Muslim Landlords could get title hood on account of the disappearance of Muslim landlords from ground owing to the rebellion at work and disruption of their power relations in post-Independence period.

The same could not be achieved in case of tenant and landless laborers working with Reddy landlords, as their disappearance during rebellion was temporary and their return to ground was aided by state force as their power relations remained intact. Infact, rebellions could mark a change on the ground, but the non-effecting of those changes in official records led to the disappearance of those changes after a period of time. Much of the land ownership amongst scheduled castes could be attributed to their access to Turkabhoomulu.

As we trace the process of dispossession, the same process has led to the creation of landed monopoly amongst the dominant castes. As the concentration of ownership of land amongst the dominant castes continues to exist, in the next section, we attempt to investigate the effects of such process in the structure of earnings from agriculture, by evaluating the operational characteristics of the agrarian lands in the village panchayat of Odipilavancha.

6.7 Land, Tenancy and Operational Characteristics in the Village Panchayat.

The major crops cultivated in the village include cotton and paddy. The total area operated under both crops stands at 720.9 acres, of which 62% of the area is operated under cotton, while rest 38% of the area is operated under paddy. The distribution of area operated by owner cultivators vis-à-vis tenant cultivators shows that paddy has predominant share of owner-operated area as compared with cotton.

Tenancy in Odipilavancha Panchayat stands at 36.6% of total area operated for principal crops of cotton and paddy characterized with a greater incidence of tenancy observed in case of area under cotton occupying about 42.8% as compared with 26.4% in case of paddy. Looking at intra-social group composition of area under tenancy reveals that SCs and STs who

have a lesser proportion of land ownership tend to lease-in land at a higher rate than the village average in comparison with other castes.

For SC's and ST's, of the total area operated under paddy and cotton, about 41.5 % and 52.9 % of area is accounted under tenurial arrangements as against the village average of 36.6, whereas the other castes tend to lease-in a lesser share of land than the village average, with a composition of an area constituting 27% of total area operated (Table-6.13).

A closer look at the characterization of tenancy amongst social groups by operational households leasing-in at least a plot of land reveals that the landless households operating as pure tenants stands greater for paddy at 31.8% compared with those engaged in cotton accounting 25.7% of tenant households. An intra-social groups composition of households that lease-in at least a plot of land reveals that there exists the category of landless tenant households for SC, ST and OBCs while none observed in case of other castes for both the crops of paddy and cotton.

The operational holdings operated by the Other castes are characterized by their cultivation through hiring *Paleru*(attached labourers), whereat about half of the OCs engaged in cultivation operate with *Palerlu* who are hired for 7-10 months. The palerus are hired from scheduled caste and tribe communities, whose task would be that of a full fledged cultivator involving in the tasks of managing the farm, engaging in labour on the farm and arranging labour for carrying out agrarian activities with an exception to the task of financial investment for the farm, which would be the responsibility of the owner of the land.

Table-6.13 : Operational Area, Tenancy in for Paddy and Cotton by Social Group at Odipilavancha Panchayat

Paddy				Cotton			All Crops		
Social Group	Total Area operated-(acres)	Area under Tenancy-(acres)	Area under Tenancy(%)	Total Area operated-(acres)	Area under Tenancy-(acres)	Area under Tenancy(%)	Total Area operated-(acres)	Area under Tenancy-(acres)	Area under Tenancy(%)
SC	94.6	34.8	36.8	124.5	56.3	45.2	219.1	91.0	41.5
ST	26.0	11.3	43.3	29.3	18.0	61.5	55.3	29.3	52.9
OBC	64.5	10.3	15.9	158.0	72.5	45.9	222.5	82.8	37.2
Others	90.5	18.0	19.9	133.5	42.5	31.8	224.0	60.5	27.0
All	275.7	74.4	27.0	445.3	189.3	42.5	720.9	263.5	36.6

Source: Field Data 2017

Table :6.14 Class-wise percentage distribution of Cultivating households leasing-in atleast a plot of land by social group for Paddy and Cotton (In Percentage)

In Hectares	Class	In Acres	Paddy					Cotton				
			SC	ST	OBC	Others	All	SC	ST	OBC	Others	All
0	Landless	0	39.1	22.2	37.5	0	31.1	30.8	33.3	30.4	0.0	26.1
0.001-0.40	Marginal	0.01-0.99	4.3	33.3	25.0	20	11.1	15.4	22.2	4.3	9.1	11.6
0.41-1.00	Small	1.01-2.47	39.1	44.4	25.0	20	35.6	34.6	22.2	26.1	45.5	31.9
1.01-2.00	Semi-Medium	2.5 - 4.94	17.4	0.0	12.5	40	17.8	11.5	0.0	13.0	18.2	11.6
2.01-4.00	Medium	5.00 - 9.88	0.0	0.0	25.0	0	2.2	7.7	22.2	17.4	9.1	13.0
4.01 & Above	Large	9.9 - and above	0.0	0.0	0.0	20	2.2	0.0	0.0	8.7	18.2	5.8
All sizes			100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source : Field Survey 2017

In the organizing of Agriculture at the study village, the processes involved in cultivation could be broadly categorized in to six tasks. 1) Ploughing, 2) Sowing/Transplanting, 3) Fertilizer Layering, 4) Insecticide spraying, 5) Weeding, and 6) Harvesting. These tasks are either performed by human labour or machine. While ploughing is done by machine in both the cases of Cotton and Paddy, rest of the tasks are performed by human labour with an exception to Harvesting in case of Paddy which deploy machine harvesters.

Performing agrarian labour as an activity is denigrated as an inferior economic activity, hence a tendency of disengagement from manual labour is seen in the case of dominant castes of the village. The engagement of family labour which includes both men and women of the family can be observed amongst the lower rungs of society, while the same is seen to be absent amongst the landowning dominant castes of the village society. Cotton which uses a greater scale of labour in the tasks of organizing and cultivating the crop, also displays a greater difference in cost of cultivation amongst social groups. Scheduled Castes have a lower cost of cultivation per acre in comparison with Other Castes under both categories of owner as well as tenant cultivators. The comparatively lesser cost of cultivation for scheduled castes arrives from their engagement in the agrarian labour, which reduces the costs for hired labour. The average cost of cultivation for agrarian labour accounts for Rs. 9,753.3/- for Scheduled castes as against Rs. 14,151.1/- incurred in case of other castes which is 31.1% higher in comparison with the average cost on hired labour incurred by Scheduled castes.

Both crops in-fact share different characteristics in relation to structures of irrigation and rainfall, as a higher rainfall would stand beneficial for paddy with paddy being irrigation intensive crop, while on the other hand both a greater proportion of rainfall, as well as a lower proportion of rainfall would not be conducive for cotton cultivation. In times of greater rainfall, the weeds would grow on a continuous basis, which escalates the cost on labour for weeding, while lower rainfall in the infant stages of cotton plant would deplete the stages of growth of the plant.

As paddy cultivation is organized with the help of stored water in the tanks, a safe turnover of the crop is predicted, and the scale of risk from animals in the forest stands out lower for paddy as against cotton, whereat wild boars eat away cotton bolls leading to a lesser productivity. This impact is felt more in the areas of Veerapoor in the lands organized by *Nayakpods* and *Boyas*.

The lower yields generated for Scheduled Castes in case of owner-operated holdings for Paddy, which stands nearly about 2 quintals lesser than the village, and a greater yield quotient for rest of the social groups are to be found in the explanation for the location of the farms in proximity to better structures of irrigation.

In the village panchayat, the average yield per acre for owner-operated plots in paddy works out to be 18.5 quintals. The fields which are operated under Shiv Shankar Project, *Oora Cheruvu*, *Veerapur Patha Cheruvu* and *Erra Cheruvu* have a higher average yield to that of the overall yield for Owner operated holdings in the village. The spatial distribution of land owned and operated by Scheduled castes reveals that about 90% of the land owned and operated by Scheduled Castes falls under Public tanks such as *Nallakunta*, *Regunta* and *Gorrenkala Kunta* which have lower yield per acre in comparison with the village average, and in private tanks which have lowest yield per acre. For other castes about 90% of the area owned and operated falls in the areas under Shiv Shankar Project, *Ooracheruvu*, *Veerapur Pathacheruvu* and *Erracheruvu*. *Ooracheruvu* has two checkdams constructed on the *Mathadikaluva*, which allows water storage for fields adjacent to the *Mathadikaluva*.

Table :6.15 Average Yield Per acre in the owner operated holdings (Quintals)

Tank	Yield per acre (Quintals)
Shiv Shankar Project	20.3
Ooracheruvu	20.1
VeerapurPathacheruvu	19.8
Erracheruvu	18.5
Nallakunta	17.9
Regunta	17.5
Gorrenkalakunta	16.3
Private Tanks	14.8
Total Yield per acre	18.5
Source : Field Survey 2017	

Table : 6.16 Average Yield and Cost of Cultivation per acre for Cotton among various Social Groups for owner cultivators at Odipilavancha

Social Group	Output of Cotton Per Acre (Quintals)	Average Cost of Cultivation of Cotton per Acre (Rupees)	Average Profit per acre (Rupees)	Average Area Operated (Acres)
SC	10.1	25193.4	25670.8	2.3
ST	9.1	22401.7	22109.8	1.0
OBC	10.3	26427.4	25696.9	3.0
Others	10.8	28851.3	26781.2	4.0
All	10.4	26805.5	25946.2	2.8

Source : Field data 2017

Table : 6.17 Average Yield and Cost of Cultivation per acre for Cotton among various Social Groups for tenant cultivators at Odipilavancha

Social Group	Output of Cotton Per Acre (Quintals)	Average Cost of Cultivation of Cotton per Acre (Rupees)	Cost of cultivation per acre inclusive of rent (Rupees)	Average Profit per acre (Rupees)	Average Area operated (Acres)
SC	10.5	24786.8	33487.2	19569.6	2.5
ST	9.6	26130.7	34226.0	12350.2	2.6
OBC	10.0	25344.0	32508.3	17942.0	4.6
Others	9.0	27175.7	33887.0	13778.2	6.2
All	9.9	25706.5	33237.6	16900.3	3.8

Source : Field Data 2017

Table : 6.18 Average Yield and Cost of Cultivation per acre for Paddy among various Social Groups for Owner cultivators at Odipilavancha

Social Group	Output of Paddy Per Acre (Quintals)	Cost of Cultivation of Paddy Per Acre (Rupees)	Average Profit Per acre (Rupees)	Average area operated (Acres)
SC	16.3	17220.7	4242.4	1.6
ST	19.0	17827.2	8469.2	2.2
OBC	18.5	17525.1	9212.1	2.1
Others	18.7	17817.4	9412.4	2.9
All	18.1	17596.1	3305.4	2.1

Source : Field Data 2017

Table : 6.19 Average Yield and Cost of Cultivation per acre for Paddy among various Social Groups for tenant cultivators at Odipilavancha

Social Group	Output of Paddy Per Acre (Quintals)	Average Cost of Cultivation of Paddy per Acre(excl. rent) (Rupees)	Cost of cultivation per acre inclusive of rent (Rupees)	Average Profit/loss per acre (Rupees)	Average Area operated (Acres)
SC	17.9	18141.3	25342.2	-559.0	1.8
ST	16.9	17003.0	24416.1	-1470.1	1.3
OBC	16.4	18031.4	25250.9	-1570.8	1.4
Others	14.1	18794.3	25339.7	-638.1	4.4
All	16.4	18143.3	25185.2	-863.7	1.9

Source : Field Data 2017

The costs of harvesting for paddy is done through machine harvesters, while the harvest in case of cotton is performed by human labour. For cotton, the initial cost for harvest would start at Rs 6/- per kg, and it escalates to Rs 11-12/- by the end of the season. The escalation is due to a dwindled cotton boll on farm making it more difficult for collection as compared with the initial phase where it would be much easier. The involvement of family labour in the collection would make it possible to yield a better output in the last stages of collection, as hired labour would become expensive.

Post-harvest market transactions in case of Paddy happen through two predominant channels, 1) de-centralized procurement through Indira Kranthi Patham(IKP) centres which is part of formal marketing mode, 2) procurement by local moneylender and trader which becomes an informal marketing mode. In case of cotton, the marketing is initiated through mills which are recognized by Cotton Corporation of India, and the second mode would be sale to trader.

Amongst both the crops the informal mode of marketing prevails in predominantly in the case of paddy as compared with cotton. In the village panchayat under study about 34.1% of households had marketed their paddy produce to local money cum fertilizer lender, whereas a major share of the sale of cotton was marketed in the mills. The average price difference for selling the harvested paddy to moneylender and fertilizer lender was 11% lesser than the stipulated minimum support price per quintal of paddy for kharif 2016. As against the informal channels of marketing, Government agencies strictly procure the product at the minimum support price prescribed from time to time by the Government of India. With the issuance of Minimum Support Price (MSP) by Government, it fixes a benchmark minimum price for market, under such circumstance, if farmers receive a remunerative price, say a price which is higher than minimum support price from private agencies they can auction their produce in the open market. Thus, rational producers would market their product at a minimum support price to government agencies, when the open market prices are lower than prescribed MSP, and to private agencies when open market prices are higher than MSP. Yet, a situation of sale and procurement of agricultural output at a lesser price as compared with minimum support price prevails in case of 34% of households, predominantly owing to the inescapable and asymmetrical dyadic interaction that exists between the trader and farmer with an assurance of credit for agricultural investment for the next cycle of production entailing in foregone fair price. In such dyadic relationship between the farmer and trader/money lender, the trader gains more than the farmer with dual advantages of charging interest on advance lent for future production, and a committed sale of the output at a lesser price than the minimum support price offered in the interest of farmers. Both traders who procure the harvested paddy in the village of Odipilavancha are the fertilizer and insecticide vendors of the village, who lend fertilizers and

insecticides on loan by charging 8% of interest (or more depending on span of crop cycle and harvest) for the span of crop cycle, which they deduct from paddy procured from farmers. Thus, the farmers who market their produce with traders suffer twin losses, one being the higher rate of interest as compared with formal lending institutions, and the other being the reduced price for procurement. The component of recurring costs in agriculture plays a crucial role in tightening the link between traders and farmers. The traders advance credit for farmers to cover their recurring expenses, which mostly gets invested in Fertilizers and Insecticides and in return farmers sell their marketable surplus to commission agents.

The marginal and small cultivators, who lag in procuring sufficient machinery to store their agricultural produce, are destined to sell their produce at either government market yards or to private traders in the immediate post-production period. Apart from the asymmetrical dyadic interaction between trader and farmer which is a predominant reason entailing in transactions below minimum support price, fluctuations in weather often results in the sale of marketable surplus at a very lower price devoid of dyadic interaction as aforementioned, and it gives a helping hand to private commission agents to exploit the situation. A further disaggregation of the cultivators of the village by location reveals that the residents of Veerapoor, a hamlet village of Odipilavancha predominantly sell their output to local moneylenders, which is induced by both dyadic relationship between the trader and farmer, as well as the locational disadvantage of the hamlet villagers, with the distance to IKP centre ranging 4kms away from the village. The interplay of locational disadvantage coupled with hassles of institutional credit would have a greater disadvantageous situation for farmers. This apart, any delay from government in procurement of paddy from farmers, would give scope to traders to procure most of the initial harvest, at prevailing minimum support prices of previous cycle without applying the renewed/enhanced MSP.

As both crops of Paddy and cotton are marketed through varied channels of marketing, the returns from cotton stands out to be greater in comparison with paddy. Despite a lesser returns from organizing of paddy, it is cultivated as paddy remains out to be the subsistence crop with rice being the staple food. In terms of cost of cultivation, cotton has a greater share of costs associated with its organizing as compared with paddy, which promotes the risk averse farmers would choose to organize cultivation of paddy given the lesser scale in terms of cost of cultivation aside it's given character of subsistence crop.

Table :6.20 Per capita earning from agriculture and average area operated by Social group

Social group	Per-capita earnings from agriculture per household	Average Area Operated Per Household
SC	48431.7	3.04
ST	28520.7	2.86
OBC	91053.2	5.38
Others	115996.5	7.84
All	75964.7	4.54

Source : Field Survey 2017

An evaluation of returns from agriculture as an income generating activity for the households of the village panchayat reveals that a greater share of returns are accrued to the dominant caste households in comparison with the Scheduled Caste and Tribes. Per-capita returns for Other castes stand more than double to that of per-capita returns for Scheduled Castes and more than quadrupled in case of Scheduled Tribes. A greater share of returns are accounted for cotton, in which both in terms of productivity and cost of cultivation, the scheduled castes fare better when evaluated as per acre return, however the same does not stand to be true when returns are evaluated in whole to the total area operated, in whose case those who hold a greater share of land were to fare better which becomes true in case of other castes.

The historical factors of dispossession and concentration of land amongst the dominant castes with the feature of absenteeism have an effect on the differences in the net-returns accrued on agriculture, which would have a greater impact in times of an absolute devastating scenario of lower productivity gains from agriculture on account of attack by pests, natural disasters with excessive or deficient rainfall scenarios in an untimely manner. Land ownership has an effect not only on the returns accrued from agriculture, but also has an effect on mitigating the adverse scenarios caused by nature.

6.8 Summary

The village panchayat of Odipilavancha, differs from the village of Karumanchi both in terms of land use and cropping pattern. The village had a sizeable proportion of Scheduled caste population constituting more than 50% of the panchayat since 1970's. A majority of scheduled caste and tribes operate as agrarian labour, with a simultaneous observance of a greater dependency of OBC and other castes operating as cultivators. Such an occupational diversification has its link with the state of land ownership in the village. Scheduled castes who constitute 58.1 % of total households own 36.8% of the land in the village, ST's who comprise 8.6% of HH's own 5.3 % of land, OBC's who constitute 22.2% of HH's own 23.1 % of land whereas OC's who constitute 11.1% of HH's own 34.8% of land. The skewness in distribution becomes much starker in case of official records, with 44% of land is owned by OC's followed by 28% of OBC, 25% in case of SC and 3% in case of ST. The difference between field-based data and official land records is accounted by the existence of non-resident absentees, which becomes a predominant reason in case of OC's while the case of assigned land under survey number 32-b given to multiple individuals at 1 acre each with no demarcation shown, making an excessive representation of land for SC's in the records.

The skewness becomes much more sharper when the lands are further disaggregated in to those which have access to irrigation under common village tanks, whereat the OC's comprise a lion's share of land with 50.9% of land, followed by OBC's with 23%, SC's with 20.1% and ST's with 5.5%. However, the share of land differs according to the nature of tank, where the lands of SC's are excessively represented under small and medium sized tanks, as compared with OC's and OBC's whose lands are located under big tanks. Such demarcation of lands is not natural rather, it was a process of the socio-political processes whereat the lands under tanks were retained by the dominant castes of the village. Such a retention happened through the process of expropriation of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes from their lands under pretext of expansion of tanks, and with the official nexus between the dominant caste officers of the village with the revenue authorities of the past. The significant presence of active rebellions in the area could only alter the status of lands governed by *Muslim Banjardars*, who fled from the village, however, the same could alter the state of lands under the control of the dominant castes, whose movement away from the village remained temporary with their firm grip on the politico-administrative affairs with support from state.

The operational characteristics of the lands operated reveals that about tenancy accounts for 36.6% of total area operated for principal crops of cotton and paddy. A greater incidence of tenancy is

observed in case of area under cotton occupying about 42.8% as compared with 26.4% in case of paddy. The incidence of tenancy by social group reveals that ST's have a greater proportion of area under tenancy with 52.9% followed by SC's with 41.5, OBC's with 37.2% and Others with 27.0%. The operational characteristics of the lands operated by social groups reveals that about half of OC's tend to operate on the basis of hiring permanently attached labourers (*palerus*), who are from SC and ST communities. Agrarian labour in the village is observed to be relegated predominantly to the castes on the lower stratum for both men and women, whereas the dominant castes abstain from engaging in the performance of agrarian labour. The returns from agriculture reveals that the Per-capita returns for OC's are twice higher as compared with SC's and are quadrupled as compared with ST's. The presence of dyadic interactions between the cultivators and the fertilizer vendors have an impact on the returns, as the selling prices are 11% lesser as compared with MSP, in addition to the burden of interest which accounts for 8% over a period of four months per cycle of crop over the fertilizers lent. The asymmetric dyadic interactions occur both on account of a lack of access to formal institutions of credit and locational disadvantage of non-proximity to formal marketing institutions.

The incidence of tenancy observed in case of the village panchayat in Telangana stands much higher at 36.6% as compared with the state level estimates of 11.1% (NSSO 2019). Whereas in Andhra, the incidence of tenancy in Karumanchi village stands 1.1% lesser as compared with state average. In both villages the process of fallowization is observed to be greater in Karumanchi, which also coincides with a greater skewness in distribution of land amongst social groups. The significant presence of tenancy in both villages under study, and the nature of non-resident absenteeism observed in both villages results in leakages to the farm support schemes, whereat the object of supporting original cultivator of the land gets defeated, and an undue, unjust siphoning of the institutional support intended for farmers goes to the non-farming sections. Such a possibility needs aversion, and reappraisal of farm support schemes should be undertaken in order to target the needy.

CHAPTER -7

MAJOR FINDINGS AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS²⁷

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we shall at first sum up the observations made from the primary villages, followed by concluding observations from both secondary and primary sources of data, existing studies and a critical evaluation of the policy of tenancy liberalization as a means to enable access to Land.

Historically, both the villages under the study shared a common characteristic of being governed by the officers appointed by the State; with an exception to a change in the nomenclatures of the officers appointed. The villages under direct nizam rule were called Diwan villages with the village officers designated as Patel and Patwari, while the villages under British presidency rule were called as Government villages with the village officers designated as Karanam and Mansab.

Both villages in Andhra and Telangana were sites of struggle against forms of caste practices, though the methods varied. The armed struggle in Telangana had a structure of coordinated *Dalams (units)*, whereas the struggle at Karumanchi was isolated and erupted against the inhuman forms of caste discrimination. The anti-brahmin movement and the changed composition of the ruling regime headed by Congress in Andhra with a mixed presence of Reddy and Kammas had its implications in the village of Karumanchi which strengthened the power position of Reddies in the immediate phase of the post-Independence period. However, later emergence of Kammas as ruling regime, had strengthened the hands of Kammas of the village. The conflict of powerholder which existed amongst Reddy and Brahmin has taken a newer shape of a struggle for political power between Reddy and Kamma after the migration of Brahmins.

In Telangana, the power dynamics during the regime of Nizams relied on the Jagirdars composed of both Reddy and Velama castes, the diwan villages also were appointed by dominant caste officers. There was an understanding and nexus between the local dominant caste elite and the ruling Muslim elites. In the aftermath of the police action on Hyderabad state, the power held by Muslim elites got transferred to the local dominant caste elites, which was an effect of both police action and the resistance from the Telangana armed rebellion. At Odipilavancha too one could witness the transformation, and the transformation benefitted a section of marginalized

²⁷ A Part of this chapter is published in the following journal article

1) Prashanth, D., & Sridevi, G. (2022). Land, caste and tenancy: understanding the origins and effects of absentee landlordism in the changing context. *Rural Society*, 1-14.

communities. As an elder remarked, those who worked under Reddies remained landless labourers, whereas those who worked under Muslim Banjardar became *Raithulu*(Farmers). A summary of observations from both villages are arrayed in a tabular format in Table 7.1. The next sections presents conclusive observations from both village studies and analyze their dynamics with the help of the existing literature and secondary data.

7.2 An analysis of the Summary of observations from Field Study attuned with Secondary level analysis

Both villages have a preponderance of residential composition of scheduled castes. This is marked by a characterization of a greater presence of landlessness and unequal distribution exerted for the disadvantaged castes when compared with an excessive concentration of land amongst dominant castes who do not perform much of labour. The historical understanding of the process of accumulation of land amongst dominant castes reveals a proximity that was shared by them with the power structures of state, and the state in turn becoming an enabler of land monopolization with grants of inams for the non-cultivating castes in the detriment of the cultivating laboring castes .

In the villages under study, the form of Rent does not arise as a Ricardian form of differential rent which is characterized by a greater portion of rent accrued for better yielding land. Instead, it is the monopolized form of rent, which levy similar levels of rent for lands of varying fertility. Ricardian explanation of price of the agrarian product playing out a role in determination of rent does exist when looked at both inter as well intra-comparison of the villages.

As an inter-comparison of villages, difference in terms of the rent on land in between both the villages arise on account of a greater price fetched for tobacco and Bengal gram at Karumanchi in comparison with paddy and cotton at Odipilavancha. Land rent at Karumanchi is more than double in comparison with rents at Odipilavancha. As an intra-village observation, the price of cotton which is cultivated on dry land is greater, hence yields a greater rent, whereas paddy which is cultivated on wetlands yield a lesser rent owing to a lesser price which it yields in the market.

Table : 7.1 - A summary of observations from the villages of Karumanchi and Odipilavancha Panchayat.

	Karumanchi	Odipilavancha
Segregation of residences by Caste	Residential segregation by caste continues to exist	Residential segregation by caste exists
Demographic composition among Social Groups	The demographic composition of the village shows an increasing proportion and number of residents from the disadvantaged castes as compared with the dominant castes who opt out for migration. Scheduled Caste households make the bulk of households with 54.4% of total households followed by OBC's and Others with 22.1%, 18.4% respectively and the least accounted by Scheduled Tribes with 5.1%	The demographic composition shows an increasing proportion of Scheduled Caste population, with a simultaneous decline in the dominant caste households. The rate of decline of the dominant caste population in comparison with Karumanchi is lesser.
Occupational Distribution	A majority of Other Castes are engaged as cultivators and rentier class, while the SC, ST and OBC's perform the laboring tasks of agricultural and casual labour. The presence of casual labour performing the tasks as construction labour and grading operations in the tobacco	A majority of Other castes and OBC's are engaged as cultivators, while a predominant share of SC and ST's are engaged as agricultural labour. The village continues to be predominantly agrarian, with little presence of transitions into non-agrarian tasks with an exception to

	industry is higher occupying 30.7% of total working population.	other castes who could migrate to cities for the reasons of more durable employment earning a higher income.
The Nature of historical accumulation and monopolization of Land	Land accumulation by dominant castes through Inam Grants	Land accumulation through forceful acquisition with the power sourced from the state.
The Transition of Land ownership and factors	The combination of the factors of better educational and employment opportunities, a ripple in the power relations between Brahmin and Upper Shudra castes, rebellion of peasantry and the promulgation of reforms led to the disposal of lands by the landed Brahmin communities, inturn facilitating a further concentration of land amongst Reddy and Kamma castes, who stood next to Brahmins in the rank of social order in the village. Apart from the Kamma and Brahmins, OBC's have gained access through purchase. The improvement in land for Scheduled Castes, from erstwhile negligible share in ownership of land was affected with the encroachment of common lands and a part of lands purchased. However,	The major land-owning castes in the village are Reddy, Kapu and Mala. The Reddy and Kapus were in the positions of power during the Patel-Patwari systems, and they continue to hold a major portion of land. The Mala caste which comes under Scheduled Caste category, have gained lands on account of the change in power relations of Muslim banjardars in the post-merger of Hyderabad in to Union of India. The Malas were tenants under Muslim Banjardars, as the armed struggle had an impact on Banjardars, they fled away from villages, in specific case of the declined power relations of Muslims, they couldn't return, hence those who were tenants acquired rights in land. On the contrary the Reddy and Kapu communities

	the concentration of land continues to exist with a great scale of unequal distribution amongst castes.	who could maintain the power relations in the new regime have settled back in the village retaining their position of control of lands.
Present state of ownership of Land by resident owners by Social group	The land held by resident owners reveals that about 12.1% of land is held by Scheduled castes who constitute 54.4% of Total households, on contrary other castes who constitute 18.4% of households own about 77.7% of total land. The inequalities in ownership of land continues to persist at a much greater scale from the land records with 81.7% of land possessed by dominant castes as compared with 7.9 % of land held by Dalits as per land records.	Scheduled Castes who constitute 58.1% of Total Households at Odipilavancha own 36.8% of Land. The Other Castes which constitute dominant castes of the village constitute 11.08% of Total Households, and their share of ownership constitutes 34.8% of Land in Odipilavancha, OBC's who constitute 22.2% of total households own 23.1% of Land, whereas Scheduled Tribes who comprise 8.6% of households own 5.3% of land.

Land ownership by Social group as per Land records	Land ownership by Land records reveals that about 81.8% of land is owned by Other Castes, followed by 10.3% of land owned by OBC's and the least accounted for SC's with 7.9%, while none in case of Scheduled Tribes.	Land ownership by records reveal that 44% of the Land is owned by other castes, followed by OBC's and SC's with 28% and 25% respectively, while the least observed amongst Scheduled Tribes with 3% of total land.
Incidence of Tenancy by social group	The incidence of tenancy is higher for Scheduled castes covering 65% of Total area operated by them, followed by OBC's with 55.2% and the least accounted for by Other Castes at 19.8%.	The incidence of tenancy is higher for Scheduled Tribes with 52.9% of area operated under the arrangements of tenancy, followed by SC's with 41.5% of total area operated by them under tenancy, next OBC's with 37.2% and the least accounted by Other castes with 27% of area.
Net returns from Agriculture by Social group	Per-capita returns for Other castes stands quintupled in comparison with the per-capita returns for Scheduled Castes and more than double in case of OBC's.	Per-capita returns for Other castes stand more than double to that of per-capita returns for Scheduled Castes and more than quadruple in case of Scheduled Tribes, while 1.2 times greater than the returns accrued from OBC's.

However, when looked at the overall net returns on agriculture, it reveals an ascendancy in returns with higher the social group, with a characterization of descendancy in incidence of tenancy. The excessive concentration of land is characterized by a greater accrual of returns to the dominant castes in both the villages, which follows with a caveat of a greater amount of returns at Karumanchi owing to the complete cultivation of commercial crops, as against that of Odipilavancha which has a mixed pattern of cultivation with both subsistence and commercial crops.

The presence of caste in the village has not yet divorced itself from its earliest mode of endogamous formations and spatial segregation of residential spaces. Infact from the village panchayat of Odipilavancha, thanks to the presence of cadastral maps, we could observe a feature of caste based concentration of lands. Both concentration of land and the returns from agriculture show a greater rate of income generation for higher social groups, and the persistence of labour performing occupations amongst lowest ranks in the vertical ladder of caste continues to be preserved.

The change of labour performing occupation for the lowest rung of the society from agrarian to non-agrarian forms of labour has not marked a vertical ascent; rather it is a sort of parallel mobility from agrarian labour to casual labour. However, while making such observations, we do not completely sum up that the nature of caste has not transformed. If one has to argue on that premise, it would be a complete injustice to the movements that were led on ground for the transformation of the exploitative nature of the socio-economic relations at the level of the village.

There is a marked shift for self-reliance from below. However such a shift has not led to a change in the perspective from above, which has led to a constant contestation between the castes from below and above. The prevalence of a strong customized structure of caste, the institutions controlled by the Caste-Hindus prevented the scope of fruitful reforms. As caste has monopolized structures of governance and political leadership to Caste-Hindus alone, anti-caste movements continue to work towards democratization of the institutions and political leadership. The contestation between caste and anti-caste was in existence for a long time, which continues to prevail till date. Caste can be seen operating through the aid and support of the state and its propagandist machinery which works in favour of caste forces by subduing the anti-caste forces.

The village level study at Karumanchi and Odipilavancha also testifies on the necessity of a comprehensive study of land records which has the potential to unravel the degree of concentration of land at the level of village. A Household level survey might not fetch a comprehensive situation of land ownership at the village as it may omit the extent of land owned by the absentee owners. Infact from both the villages, we could observe a great degree of variation from the land reported on ground vis-à-vis information on land from records.

The position of Marx in understanding the monopolization of land through the regime of private property leading to the creation of rent, which also had its initial testament in Smith's theory of rent, is important in the understanding of the institution of rent itself. The understanding of the processes of such a monopolization becomes important in identifying the appropriators, whether big or small. In pre-capitalist formation, the rent gets constituted as a whole part of the cultivator's labour leaving not much for the cultivator himself except the subsistence in the form of kind or cash. The transformation as envisaged in the capitalistic ground rent would constitute the forms of profits and rent as a product of the exploitative exploitation of labour with underpayment of wages. In the discourses on the emergence of private property, it becomes important to trace the period of its emergence. To be specific, in the Indian context it becomes important to see if the emergence of private property is a colonial institution or pre-colonial institution. The evidence marshaled by the existing historical studies in Indian context points to the emergence of private property in the pre-colonial period, and intricately relates with the system of caste.

Irrespective of the nature of payment of rent, whether it be kind or cash, as long as the surplus appropriated through rents involves the labour of the cultivators, they represent pre-capitalist extraction of rent. A transformation of the rent from cash to kind doesn't reflect a complete transition. Caste in the Indian context has not receded from the most primitive forms of its formation associated with the feature of endogamy. Endogamy is enforced through social sanctions, any violation of endogamy is treated with extremity leading to ex-communication and mutilation. It isn't a rare phenomenon to see the news portals reporting caste-killings and social boycotts on account of inter-caste marriages. The data itself is indicative of the stronger presence of endogamous formations with 90.1% of marriages happening within the same caste group. As long as endogamy sustains, the property accumulated remains within the group, leaving less scale of transfusion of property amongst social groups.

Thus the monopolization of land amongst historically advantaged castes may divide and subdivide in smaller parcels of land, yet continue to remain within the group. The earlier form of landlordism signaled by a large control of land may not be visible with the growth of the family size and fragmentation, however such a decline in holdings per household does not take away the characterization of the landed privilege that the social group accumulates because the landed property accumulated over the time remains within. However, landlessness warranted amongst the dispossessed castes continues.

In light of the evidence from both secondary as well as primary level study, of whom the primary level study confirms more on the yet to be transformed nature of absenteeism which still carries the reminiscence of caste, it becomes important to critically evaluate the proposals to legalize tenancy. In the concluding section, we discuss the policy of legalization of tenancy with a critical evaluation of the objectives with which the reform is proposed.

7.3 Critical evaluation of the case for Legalization of Tenancy

The proposals for Liberalization of tenancy are backed by arguments that it would be both agrarian efficiency enhancing as well as equity promoting. Productivity enhancing role of liberalization of tenancy presumes that it would address the problems of concealed tenancy which disentitles an occupancy right for tenants resulting in disincentivization for long-term investment in land improvement. Secondly, by improving tenant's access to institutional credit, insurance and other support services, it would consequently improve productivity of leased land. Thirdly, removal of legal restrictions on land leasing would bring in more land under cultivation as against fallowization of land (NITIAayog, 2016). The arguments advanced by NITIAayog, (2016) have much of a similarity for arguments advanced in favour of granting proprietary right over land to the tiller. However, when these arguments get extended for liberalization of tenancy, several questions get cropped up given the nature of absenteeism in agricultural operations that can be observed.

First of all, the trade-off whether to grant quasi-ownership rights over a piece of land for tenants in the form of long-term contracts or whether to opt for short-term contracts depends upon the incentives available for the owner of land. Unlike lands under commercial tenure which yield a greater amount of rents, agricultural lands in India do not yield a similar share of rent. Therefore, the options that may exist for long-term tenures in urban commercial lands would not be the same in the case of agrarian lands. On the contrary, the benefits that are available for agrarian lands come from their collateral value in institutional structures. Loans are available

at a much cheaper manner on agrarian lands as compared with commercial ventures, the probability to write-off loans by ruling regimes, constant revenue generated in the form of rents apportioned from the land without any investment becomes the incentive for landlord to not to entertain nor to allow the tenant from obtaining a secured tenure, as upon allowance of a secured tenure, the benefits that are being appropriated by an absentee landlord would be transferred to the tenant cultivator. Moreover, given the characteristic feature of absenteeism that exists in India that originates from the set-up delegitimization of tenant cultivators from obtaining their legitimate share in agrarian surplus, it would become even more difficult to pursue landlords to enter into the form of contract which benefits the tenants.

Secondly, Crop loans are generally issued to the farming class with a view to support agriculture that has a lower scale of returns as compared with the manufacturing and service sector. The loans are aimed at assisting the direct producer, however with the prevalence of tenancy, instead of reaching the target section of direct producers, the loans are quite often diverted by resource-rich absentee landowners. The local power that exists at the village level ensures a smooth process of obtaining larger amounts of loans by landed gentry who comprise the dominant castes. At the same time would also exercise the local power to postpone their payments in anticipation of receiving loan waivers. The same case with tenants would become impossible as the access to the formal credit has asset linkage which the tenants lack, and hence intensifies their dependence on non-formal sources.

One study by Revathi (2014) on Andhra Pradesh Land Licensed cultivators Act issuing Loan Eligibility Cards to Tenant Cultivators observes that out of total number of tenants 29% of them were issued Loan Eligibility Cards, amongst those who were issued with Loan Eligibility Cards only 15% of them were sanctioned loan, i.e., out of the total existing tenants during 2011-12, only about 4% of the tenants could obtain loan with LEC's while about 53% of LEC tenants received loans from private money lenders . Major reasons for non-receipt of loans from bank by LEC holders appears out to be loans already availed by the land owner against the leased out land. The study also reveals that the landowners who leased out land were also in receipt of crop insurance and input subsidies. Another study by Kumar S. M., (2013) at All-India level reveals that, there exists caste based discrimination in accessing formal agricultural credit, with disparities in lending being higher amongst Regional, Rural, Cooperative Banks.

Herring (1984) argues that this appropriation, diversion, distortion and leakages of public resources entails an opportunity cost as the same resources could be employed elsewhere which could have better productivity implications. The case of absentee landowners siphoning off crop loans with their disproportionate control over resources remains a problem to which the proponents of liberalization of tenancy are least concerned. As the opportunity foregone for supplying crop loans at lower interest rates are for the best use of the same in the agrarian sector, the diversification of the crop loans to non-agrarian purposes would entail severe opportunity cost. Sreenivasulu's (2020) study of eight villages in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana has examined the adverse impact of absentee landowner households predominantly composed of dominant castes on agriculture, landlords who appropriated institutional support meant to support the original farmer without any investment in land improvement. The perception of lessors in Uttar Pradesh as documented by Mandal et.al (2019) reveals an apprehension of lessors towards the formalisation of the lease market, as it might disentitle them from obtaining crop-related benefits such as crop loans, insurance and other institutional support meant for agriculture.

Niti Aayog (2016) claims existing tenancy laws are the main reason affecting fallowisation of land by large wherein the landed groups tend to fallow land with the fear of losing their land. This is quite a misinterpretation, because the cause for fallowisation is seen not in tenancy rules per se but in concentration of the land in the hands of non-cultivating households for whom agriculture isn't the mainstay. The evils of concentration of land in the hands of few are inadequately addressed with respect to the probing into the aspects of liberalization of tenancy. The size of the land is an important factor associated with fallowization of land. A high proportion of land is left fallow by large farmers. In addition, alongside several other factors such as caste and education seem to be associated with the proportion of land left to permanent fallow by the farmer (Ranganathan & Pandey, 2018).

The villages under study also exhibited the patterns of absentee landlordism. In the village of Karumanchi a vast majority of lands were kept idle instead of being put for productive use. An Absentee Landlord has no incentive to invest in the improvement of land as long as it serves as collateral and provides rental income. The lessee does not have any incentive to invest in land improvement either as the rationale lies in extracting as much as possible for the period of tenure rather than planning for long-term agricultural growth as contracts are non-permanent in nature.

The incentive for tenant households to lease-in the land would exist when there is super-normal profit. The incentive for tenants to lease-in land declines as profits tend to decline, thus the lease market would be constrained from the demand side making land idle and creating current fallows. Whereas for an owner-cultivator in the absence of the rent to be paid, a normal rate of profit would do no harm nor would result in land being kept in idle mode. The surplus extracted from the produce of the land would become part of the reinvest-able surplus for greater improvement of land and irrigation facilities. Thus, a combination of absentee landlordism with higher rents extracted from land creates a situation of a larger share of current fallows.

In sum, Tenancy sans local exploitative power relations can entail bargaining decisions between owners and tenants entering into contract, where the tenant as an independent cultivator can set conditions of contract. Caste, as long as it permeates a situation of a web of dependency by depressed classes upon dominant sections, as long as the dominant castes use their position of power and authority through their well-knitted social networks, the legislation of tenancy liberalization would not serve the purpose of assisting tenants on equity grounds, rather it may even push tenants to a state of vulnerable position with the process of a re-emerging pattern of sub-infeudation given the situation of a scarcity of land and a greater dependence of its populace on agriculture. The available evidence documents the nature of absentee owners in cornering off a greater proportion of institutional support meant for agriculture. Such support extended for the cultivation cannot be an entitlement to the absentee owner but rather an entitlement of the original cultivator. The incentives available for absentee land owners in land control would hinder the possibility of tenants in obtaining credit and institutional support mechanisms which forms to be the basic thrust of the legislation of tenancy legalization. Ownership over land becomes imperative for enabling tenants to access credit and other institutional support such as crop insurance and financial farm support schemes. Enabling access to land by means of a transfer of ownership rights to cultivators with no ownership of land would be meaningful and useful for the three purposes of efficiency, equity and sustainability of both agriculturalists as well as agriculture, helping move towards the mandate of the SDGs.

The historical nature of accumulation of land amongst dominant castes with a simultaneous denial and dispossession of land for Dalits which has been aided by policies and power structures of state be it in the pre or post-colonial period. This left the task of reform to Market

forces that resulted in making a case for fair compensation for land which was accumulated in an unfair manner, that would in turn justify the historic unjust methods of appropriation.

Proposing Market induced transactions for the dispossessed castes to acquire land is tantamount to maintaining status quo, as the dispossessed castes have hassles in accessing credit markets which require collateral to process credit. Given the continued process of exploitation of their wages and labour through rents owing to the structure of monopolization of land by the dominant sections, the possibilities of savings might become impossible. As the predominant characterization of agrarian economy is still subsistence induced, where a majority of their earning would be spent on consumption, the case of savings enabling purchase of land may not arise. On the contrary, State-induced redistributive process becomes inevitable owing to the role of the state and the policies which were responsible for dispossession. It was not an individual, rather a collective group of castes with their proximity to state and the support from state, that they could monopolize the resources that were otherwise meant for those whose livelihood is derived from them. Since the state is a party to the process of mis-appropriation, it has the mandate to adopt corrective mechanisms of redistribution to historically underprivileged communities.

7.4 Policy Recommendations

- 1) Thrust of agrarian reforms needs to have a re-look at the prevalence of absentee landlordism in Rural India and design policy support for agrarian dependent population accordingly.
- 2) The policy of Land reforms need not deviate from the original object of enabling secured access to land to the landless owing to the prevalent skewedness in distribution of land ownership.
- 3) There is an urgent need to devise policies targeting the reach of state-intended beneficiary programmes for tenant cultivators, as opposed to devising policies only for landowners.
- 4) Decentralized procurement of agrarian produce, and decentralized credit markets needs to expand with a focus on tenant cultivators.
- 5) Assigned lands should be considered as collateral for issuing credit and extending the farm support schemes for assignees.
- 6) The emphasis of institutional support for agriculture should encompass targeting the social groups in the bottom of the caste society.

7.5 Future scope of research

In future scope of research there would be a case to cross-compare the observations of villages with contrast features. A village with greater proportion of lower castes vis-à-vis a village with higher proportion of dominant castes, in order to understand the dynamics of agrarian change, operations and the relations of production in those villages. Future scope of research in the study villages could engage with nature of changes in tenancy over a period of time from present study, and cost of cultivation surveys and profitability of farming communities in the study villages could be extended for future to see the robustness of the findings in the present study.

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Appendices



Land, caste and tenancy: understanding the origins and effects of absentee landlordism in the changing context

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To cite this article: Dontha Prashanth & Gummadi Sridevi (2022): Land, caste and tenancy: understanding the origins and effects of absentee landlordism in the changing context, Rural Society, DOI: [10.1080/10371656.2022.2151138](https://doi.org/10.1080/10371656.2022.2151138)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10371656.2022.2151138>



Published online: 29 Nov 2022.



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Land, caste and tenancy: understanding the origins and effects of absentee landlordism in the changing context

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ABSTRACT

India is witnessing a transition in policy perspective from the creation of peasant proprietorship to tenancy liberalisation as a part of market friendly land reforms in contrast with state-led redistributive land reforms. The proposed market friendly reforms are more oriented towards landlord interests compared with landless tenants and agricultural labourers. This justifies the historical unjust and unfair forms of the process of accumulation. The present article, by explicitly considering the case of tenancy liberalisation, argues that the policy absolves the problem of widening socio-economic inequalities and abstains from addressing the issues of absentee landlordism. The research maps evidence of the concentration of land with the feature of absenteeism amongst dominant castes and fallowisation. Hence, a case is made for enabling land ownership by the cultivator in order to achieve equity, efficiency and sustainability in agriculture.

KEYWORDS

Tenancy liberalisation;
absentee landlord; caste;
power; fallowisation

Introduction

Sustainable development goals (SDGs) framed by the United Nations seek to reduce poverty and inequalities by ensuring equal rights to economic resources and ownership and control over land and other forms of property, with special reference to the poor and vulnerable groups. Enabling access to land has been recognised as critical to poverty reduction because landlessness is closely associated with rural poverty (Deininger, 2003; United Nations, 2015). Byres (2004a) considers the re-emergence of a policy on land reforms in the late 1990s after its eclipse from policy agendas from later 1970s as a newer form of “market friendly land reform” with a greater focus on incentivisation of landlords to sell land to landless tenants. This exists in contrast to the state-led redistributive reforms proposed until the late 1970s. Griffin, Khan, and Ickowitz (2002), while defending the case of a redistributive land reform, argue against market friendly full compensation land reform while forecasting its limited scope in compelling the State to purchase land at free market prices for a large cohort of landless and tenant farmers. This would be financially burdensome. In turn, Griffin et al. (2002) propose the intervention of the State, either in the form of lower land prices or an outright confiscation of land for redistribution. The discourse of enabling access to land in an Indian context has laid out an emphasis on legalisation of tenancy (Hanstad, Nielsen, Vhugen, & Haque, 2009),

despite evidence of the superior positionality of owner-operated holdings, compared with tenant-operated holdings in terms of productivity and profitability (Deininger, Jin, & Yadav, 2008).

Proposals to legalise tenancy mark a transition from agrarian reforms aimed at discouraging the sub-letting of land, by enabling ownership over land to the tiller during the immediate post-independence period, to proposals that enable access to land through tenancy by its legalisation in the twenty-first century (Aayog, 2016; Kumarappa, 1949). The emanation of such policy comes in the backdrop of the prevailing skewed distributions in land ownership which may produce absenteeism, and an already existing critique of tenancy reforms initiated in India. Tenancy reforms have long been described as the easiest to implement and prone towards the interest of landlords against the interests of landless tenants (Herring, 1984).

The present article, in locating the complexities of tenancy arrangements and the state of landlessness augmented by caste in India, argues that tenancy legalisation, in the wake of an increased incidence of tenancy owing to absentee landlordism, would hamper the tripartite objects of efficiency, equity and sustainability of agriculture and agriculturalists. In this article, social groups are reconfigured in statist, academic and popular parlance. Dalits are referred to as “scheduled castes” (SCs), tribals or adivasis (indigenous people) as “scheduled tribes” (STs), Shudras as “other lower classes” (OLCs). Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and a few upwardly mobile shudra castes are designated as “other castes” (OC). The article is broadly organised into three sections. The first deciphers the challenges posed to the objects of tenancy liberalisation through the prism of absentee landlordism. This is aided by caste, while mapping the nature of transformation of absenteeism in the direct participation of agrarian operations from resident absentee to non-resident absentee. The second section analyses tenancy against the backdrop of an observed increase in the incidence of tenancy, using secondary and primary data. The third critically discusses the policy of tenancy legalisation, taking stock of the results of both secondary and primary data analyses and a review of existing studies.

Literature review and theory

Liberalisation of tenancy: deciphering contras of caste and absenteeism

The discourse on tenancy legalisation postulates tenancy as an institution that moved away from its exploitative nature by abolishing large intermediaries and eroding the political power of absentee landlords (Aayog, 2016; Hanstad, Haque, & Nielsen, 2008). To construe the political power of absentee landlords only at the level of large intermediaries undermines the exploitative role of caste which is enmeshed within the structure of local power that prevails in villages, particularly through the creation of a local space by dominant castes capacitated to circumvent official regulations (Jeffrey, 2001). Furthermore, at the local level, it is important to understand who appropriates the economic surplus in the social organisation of production and how this is achieved (Herring, 1984). Dominant castes controlling local governments impinge upon welfare programmes meant for lower castes, while exercising control over votes of lower castes through their access to key economic opportunities and networks of credit and insurance (Anderson, Francois, & Kotwal, 2015). The intertwined networks of caste, power and authority at the

local level leave little scope for reform in the redistribution of surplus land under land reform programmes (Prashanth, Balaji, & Srinivas, 2020).

Owing to the historical accumulation of resources by dominant castes accrued through a long history of caste domination and exploitation, greater benefits are appropriated by dominant castes in post-liberalisation India compared to lower castes, resulting in the widening of economic inequalities among castes (Agarwal & Levien, 2019). In rural settings, land which constitutes an important asset displays a character of concentration amongst dominant castes, even in regions that experienced the Green Revolution. For example, Punjab is characterised by a skewed distribution of land amongst social groups, with SCs constituting 52.4% of households owning 10.07% of land, while non-SC/ST/OLCs comprise 33.44% of households and own about 81.47% of land (NSSO, 2019). Widening inequalities are demonstrated by a high proportion of wealth concentrated among higher castes, which is almost twice the proportion of their population, while wealth amongst SCs is characterised by the opposite, less than half the proportion in terms of population (Tagade, Naik, & Thorat, 2018).

The importance of land ownership is further amplified given the demand for land to develop industrial and service sector hubs accentuating, or leading to, new land wars. The resistance against land dispossession is observed amongst castes at the lowest rung, but intrinsically inseparable part of Indian agriculture. Those occupying the lowest caste level are core cultivators, despite being labelled as agricultural labourers and tenants, and a situation of complicity is observed amongst dominant castes who tend to abstain from direct engagement in agrarian operations (Agarwal & Levien, 2019; Kennedy, 2020; Nielsen, Sareen, & Oskarsson, 2020; Roohi, 2020). As argued by Shah and Lerche (2018), the inherited inequalities of power accentuated by hegemonic possession of caste-based hierarchical land, command over labour and socio-political relations enable dominant castes to become major players in the new economy. In this process, Dalits and adivasis are adversely included into low-end work owing to their historical disadvantageous forms of institutionalised discrimination. As socio-economic inequalities widens on account of inherited inequalities of power, the current discourse on tenancy legalisation underscores persisting inequalities and power imbalances amongst social groups, at the same time it obviates the antecedents of tenancy characterised by absenteeism which affects the principles of equity and efficiency.

The antecedents of absentee landlordism emerge with the system of caste. Historically, dominant castes are designated the sole proprietors of land and considered tilling land to be menial and undignified, thereby abstaining from direct, productive engagement in agriculture while those who tilled and engaged in the productive management of land were condemned to be servile labour (Awaya, 1996; Kumar, 1962; Yanagisawa, 1996). Ludden's (1984) characterisation of wet localities in Bihar and Bengal in the eighteenth century points at the non-cultivating character of high-caste landowners who received grants from native rulers and treated agricultural labour as a low-caste, often untouchable, occupation, resulting in the low cultural evaluation of labour with a marked overlap of landlessness and labouring status with caste and class in the countryside. Yanagisawa's (1996) exhaustive review of land records and reports of the colonial government in Tamil Nadu reveals an agrarian order which consisted of *mirasidars*, comprised by Brahmins and Vellalas who owned the best lands on top, followed by non-*mirasipattadars*, sub-tenants and at the lowest end the Pariahs, who comprised the

bulk of agricultural labourers. The majority of landlords were Brahmins who never used a plough, making them a rentier leisure class with no concern to cultivate lands personally.

By the twentieth century, dominant castes, who were resident absentees of villages, soon acquired the character of non-resident, absentee landlords. The introduction of white-collar jobs during the colonial administration and the expansion of urban settlements facilitated a process of the migration of non-cultivating land-owning dominant castes (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008; Nancharaiah, 1988; Panchanadikar, 1965; Yanagisawa, 1996). The magnitude in the pace of occupying of “Class I” positions in government service by caste-Hindus between 1935 and 1989 was marked with an increase from 46% in 1935 to 82.4%, with a corresponding slight decline in their population from 12.05% to 11.81% (Pinto, 2008). This is indicative of a shift in their dependency on non-agrarian sources of income.

The nature of absenteeism, aided by migratory patterns amongst dominant castes, did not automatically disassociate them from their property owned back in villages. Such property was either controlled by family members still living in the village or leased to tenants. One difference amongst Brahmin and non-Brahmin dominant caste control over land was the disposal of lands by Brahmin landlords as they moved away, in contrast with non-Brahmin dominant castes’ continued ownership of land despite moving away from villages (Benbabaali, 2018; Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008). Vijay (2012) reported an increased importance of “non-cultivating peasant households” owning land and routes for adoption of land reform measures enabling corporate farming as solutions to these problems. The source of absenteeism stems, as indicated, from a disdain towards farming by dominant caste, non-cultivating landholders. Without demarcating the constituent social groups displaying this tendency as non-cultivating groups, suggesting corporate farming as a measure to solve India’s agricultural problems remains futile. As Fuller and Narasimhan (2008) observe, there remains a rarity of modern and capitalist farmers amongst non-cultivating, land-owning dominant caste households.

In the wake of the observed transition in the nature of absentee landlords from resident to non-resident absentee landlords, owing to a transformation in the nature of dependant occupations as a source of earning incomes, the analysis of tenancy needs to engage, and not disassociate, with the question of absenteeism aided by caste. In order to further engage with the debate about the legalisation of tenancy markets in agriculture, the present research conducted an analysis of trends in tenancy at a national, “all-India” level. This permits the mapping of tenancy incidences and the constituent groups engaging in land-leasing. Additionally, a village-level analysis was undertaken to understand the complexities and intricacies around the institution of tenancy in the present conjuncture. The materials for secondary data analysis, and method behind the selection of villages, are detailed in the following Methods section of this article.

Methods

Secondary data analysis was sourced from existing studies as well as our independent analysis from various rounds of national sample survey organization (NSSO) reports on ownership and operational holdings from 1982 to the latest available report in 2019. Furthermore, to analyse micro-level factors characterising tenancy, a study on land ownership patterns and various aspects of tenancy was conducted in two villages in the states of

Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were part of undivided Andhra Pradesh until 2014. Combined, they had highest incidence of tenancy accounting for more than a quarter of area operated under tenancy in the entire country (NSSO, 2015).

Primary data were collected from one village each from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh using the census method. Specifically, sampling included all households of the villages. The villages were identified on the basis of two characteristics: (1) having the highest proportion of SC population and (2) the population largely engaging in agriculture. The village of Odipilavancha Panchayat in Telangana and Karumanchi in Andhra Pradesh satisfied both selection criteria. Through the census method, a total of 370 households (HH's) were surveyed in Odipilavancha and 742 households were surveyed in Karumanchi. The list of questions asked and analysed for present article included information on caste, land ownership and operational characteristics, access to credit and institutional support policies of the government. The research in this study, in part, is funded by ICSSR as part of the project titled "Climate Change and Persistence of Food and Nutrition Security: A Case of Vulnerable Groups". The survey questionnaire included more than 100 questions. Ethics was sought with regard to obtaining the consent of respondents. In total, the research surveyed 1112 households in both villages during 2017–2018 by authors with support from Venkat Rao, Srinivas, Malleshm and Venkateswarulu. Both primary and secondary data were compiled and analysed using MS Excel. In the Analysis and Discussion sections of this article, focus is laid on village communities because caste forms an integral part of the village society. In contrast, the ascriptive identities of STs are distinct from the village-caste formation. Apart from household level survey, detailed interviews were collected from village elders about the socio-historic conditions of the villages.

Findings

Characterising tenancy at the national level through NSSO data

Tenancy in India is marked by an increase from 6.5% to 10.22% in the total area operated from 2002–2003 to 2012–2013. This further increased to 13.5% by 2018–2019, marking a double increase compared with 2002–2003 (Table 1).

Table 1. India's national trends in rural ownership and leased holdings by area.

Sl.	Item	1991–1992	2002–2003	2012–2013	2019
1	Number of operational holdings (million)	93.45	101.27	105.92	103.454
1.1	% increase in operational holdings	31.5	8.4	4.59	–
2	Total area operated (million hectares)	125.1	107.65	91.44	84.27
2.2	% increase/decrease in area operated	5.51	–13.95	–15.06	
3	% total area				
	(a) Area owned	91.48	93.5	89.78	86.49
	(b) Area leased-in	8.52	6.5	10.22	13.5
4	Total area				
	operated				
	Area owned (ha)	113,144,500	99,720,900	85,506,479	72,896,000
	% increase/decrease in operational area owned	4.77	–11.86	–14.25	–14.74
	Area leased-in (ha)	10,658,900	6,940,007	9,838,759	11,381,000
	% increase/decrease in operational area leased-in	25.21	–34.89	41.77	15.67

Source: Author's compilation and calculation from NSSO reports (1995, 2006, 2015, 2019).

Table 2. India's rural households, area owned and area leased by social group, 2018–2019.

Social group	% households	% area owned	% area leased-in to operated
ST	12.3	13.9	9.8
SC	21.6	10.2	20.0
OLC	44.4	47.2	12.9
Others	21.7	28.8	14.5
All	100	100	13.7

Source: NSSO (2019).

The increase in area under tenancy was incommensurate with the reduction in owner-operated holdings, resulting in a decline under total area operated.

The distribution of land ownership and occupational engagement partially reveals tenancy patterns. Amongst the social groups, differential access to ownership of land is one of the reasons for a lesser proportion of SCs operating as self-employed in agriculture and allied activities, while, at the same time, displaying a greater degree of engagement in agricultural labour. As revealed in Table 2, amongst all social groups (except for STs), a disproportionate distribution is the highest among SC households, with 21.6% of total households owning only 10.2% of total land owned by all social groups.

On the other hand, they have the highest proportion of casual labour in agriculture, estimated at 21.5% of total occupational households (NSSO, 2019) and, in turn, have the highest incidence of tenancy at 20%, estimated as a proportion of area leased in the total operated area.

Non-SC/ST/OLC households, which comprise 21.7% of total households, own 28.8% of the total land. The lowest share of casual labour is in agriculture, 8.3% of the total occupational households, and a comparatively lower incidence of tenancy, estimated at 14.5% (NSSO, 2019). Land-leasing data show a large gap between the area leased-out and leased-in, with the former constituting 33.2% of the latter, which arguably is underreported. Although available data may not be reliable, statistics reveal that SC and STs lease-out the least proportion of land (12% and 6% correspondingly), while OLCs lease-out the highest proportion of land, accounting for 40.5% of total land leased-out, followed by OLC's at 39.0% (Table 3).

Normally, an agrarian crisis should indicate a decline in patterns of tenant cultivation, compared with owner cultivation, as tenants would be more affected due to owner cultivators lacking access to formal lending mechanisms and state support schemes. The current data, however, reveal trends showing an increase in tenant-operated holdings,

Table 3. National class-wise proportion of rural land leased-out for social groups, 2018–2019.

Category	Class interval	Social groups				
		ST	SC	OLC	Others	All
Landless	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marginal	0.001–0.40	11.4	23.1	13.6	9.6	13.6
Small	0.41–1.00	9.4	34.4	19.6	11.1	18.0
Semi-medium	1.01–2.00	33.7	13.1	27.2	20.9	24.8
Medium	2.01–4.00	25.5	27.5	19.2	17.6	21.2
Large	≥4.00	20.0	1.9	20.4	40.8	22.3
All		100	100	100	100	100
% leased-out to total land		8.7	11.8	39.0	40.5	100

Source: NSSO (2019).

with an observed decline in area under owner cultivation. At the same time, patterns of leasing-out reveal that large landholders amongst OC households comprise the largest percentage of lessors. This data, however, remains compromised by the under-reporting of ownership and leasing patterns and thus cannot verify whether inequitable scenarios contribute to a rise in tenancy markets.

Changing patterns of land ownership and tenancy in selected villages

The case-study villages were historically distinct in terms of their regimes of rule. The village in Telangana was under Nizam rule, while the village in Andhra was under the direct colonial rule by the Madras Presidency. Yet, both villages shared a unique feature in their administration, which was directly held under their respective regimes. Odipilavancha, of Telangana, was designated as a Diwani village, while Karumanchi, of Andhra, was designated as Government village (Census, 1874, 1949), compared with the Zamindari and Jagirdari estates which were indirectly held. Both villages had village officers responsible for the maintenance of land records and collection of taxes from dominant caste backgrounds. As on 1905, the dominant castes, composed of Brahmin, Reddy and Kamma, held about 97.8% of the total land in the village, compared with their household composition of 33.85%. The remaining 2.2% of land was held by a majority, 66.15%, of households in Karumanchi. Brahmins, who were the record keepers, were under the possession of *inam* lands (approximately 1028 acres), which constituted about half of the total area possessed at Karumanchi (Sagar, 2014). A similar trait of ownership persisted in Odipilavancha, with a majority of land owned by a record keeper from the Reddy community whose ownership was effected through the expropriation of peasants from their lands under the pretext of collecting tehsils/taxes and the appropriation of prime cultivable lands beneath state-sponsored irrigation tanks.

Despite varying scenarios in the historical and administrative set up of both villages, the inequality in land ownership was amplified by the position of power and authority held by the appropriators. Both villages struggled against the iniquitous forms of caste marked by an exploitative accumulation of wealth and imposed inferior-hood. Dalits in Karumanchi rebelled against caste indignities and fought for equal access to common resources, such as water, during the 1930s. Odipilavancha was part of an active Maoist rebellion where two educated Dalits were killed by police for being part of Maoist Dalams. The active movements against the persisting inequalities of the time, as Herring (1983) argued, preempted government to adopt agrarian reforms to arrest the discontent, leading to land reforms in the 1970s. The agenda of the first phase of land reforms in post-independent India were to accord the principle of land to the tiller by way of abolishing forms of absentee landlordism, with an exception to aged and widowed persons.

Evidence suggests implementation was tardy, with the power imbalance at the village level between the landless tenants and labourers vis-à-vis landed gentry composed of dominant castes. However, the case of *Turka bhoomulu* (lands under Muslims), in Odipilavancha, unearthed contradictions in the transfer of land to the original tiller. Dalits worked as tenants under Muslim landlords and could get title-hood on account of the disappearance of Muslim landlords, owing to the rebellion and disruption of their power relations in the post-independence period. The same could not be achieved in

the case of tenant and landless labourers working with Reddy landlords, as their disappearance during the rebellion was temporary and their return to land was aided by State force given power relations remained intact. Although rebellions could mark changes on-the-ground, official records led to the disappearance of those changes after a period of time. Thus, in Odipilavancha, non-SC/ST/OLCs comprised 11.08% of households and owned 34.8% of land, while SCs constituted 58.1% of households and owned 36.8% of land (Table 4).

Much land ownership amongst SCs is attributable to their access to *Turka bhoomulu*.

At Karumanchi, too, a change was observed in the nature of land distribution amongst various classes of dominant castes, with a transfer of land ownership from Brahmins to Reddies owing to the upward mobility of Brahmins, accentuated by their access to education. The same scale of transfer, however, could not be seen in case of marginalised sections. In Karumanchi, non-SC/ST/OLCs constituted 18.73% of households and owned 78.4% of land, while SCs composed 54.2% of households and owned only about 11.3% of land. Tenancy in Odipilavancha stood at 36.6% of the total area operated for the principal crops of cotton and paddy, with a greater incidence of tenancy observed in areas cultivating cotton. SCs and STs, who have less of the land, tended to lease-in land at a higher rate than the village average, with 41.5% and 52.9% of leased-in land, respectively. OCs tended to lease-in land at a lesser proportion, with 27% of total area leased-in by others (Table 5).

The migration of dominant castes in the village for jobs in Hyderabad, neighbouring collieries at Bhupalapally and Godavarikhani areas, and to become government servants increased the supply of land for tenancy. Half of the OCs engaged in cultivation operated with *paleru* (attached labourers) who are hired for 7–10 months.

In Karumanchi, the area under tenancy accounted for 32.1% of the total area operated for gram and tobacco production, with a greater incidence of tenancy for tobacco (Table 6).

SCs had the greatest incidence of tenancy (73.5%), followed by OLCs (54.5%) and OC households (20%), for area leased-in to total area operated (Table 7).

Although Table 6 implies a greater owner cultivation amongst OC households, comparison with the total area available for cultivation and the area operated revealed a large area owned by OCs is fallow (Table 8).

The reason for the higher percentage of current fallows is OC's control over land by households having more technical and professional jobs that led them to migrate to cities and abroad. This created a class of non-resident absentees who earn a constant source of income from occupations other than agriculture. This makes OCs non-dependable on

Table 4. Field data land ownership in two villages, Odipilavancha and Karumanchi, 2017–2018.

Social group	Odipilavancha			Karumanchi		
	No. households	% households	% area owned	No. households	% households	% area owned
SC	215	58.1	36.8	402	54.2	11.3
ST	32	8.6	5.3	38	5.1	0.0
OLC	82	22.2	23.1	163	22.0	10.3
Others	41	11.1	34.8	139	18.7	78.4
All	370	100	100	742	100.0	100.0
Total HHs/area	370	791.01	–	742	1558.2	

Table 5. Field data of operational area and tenancy in Odipilavancha, 2017–2018.

Social group	Paddy			Cotton			All crops		
	Acres operated	Acres under tenancy	% area under tenancy	Acres operated	Acres under tenancy	% area under tenancy	Acres operated	Acres under tenancy	% area under tenancy
SC	94.6	33.3	35.1	124.5	57.8	46.4	219.1	91.0	41.5
ST	26.0	11.3	43.3	29.3	18.0	61.5	55.3	29.3	52.9
OLC	64.5	10.3	15.9	158.0	72.5	45.9	222.5	82.8	37.2
Others	90.5	18.0	19.9	133.5	42.5	31.8	224.0	60.5	27.0
All	275.7	72.8	26.4	445.3	190.8	42.8	720.9	263.5	36.6

Table 6. Field data of operational holdings and tenancy in Karumanchi, 2017–2018.

Social group	No. operational holdings	Acres operated	No. households leasing ≥ 1 plot	% tenant to households operated	Acres under tenancy	% area under tenancy
<i>Tobacco</i>						
SC	7	62	7	100.0	51	82.3
OLC	5	37	3	60.0	22	59.5
Others	27	344	9	33.3	71	20.6
All	39	443	19	48.7	144	32.5
<i>Bengal gram</i>						
SC	18	89	12	66.7	60	67.4
OLC	11	113.5	5	45.5	60	52.9
Others	42	491.6	11	26.2	101	20.5
All	71	694.1	28	39.4	221	31.8

Table 7. Field data reporting area operated and tenancy in Karumanchi, 2017–2018.

Social group	Acres operated	Acres leased-in	% area leased-in to total operated
SC	151	111	73.5
OC	150.5	82	54.5
Others	835.6	172	20.6
All	1137.1	365	32.1

agricultural income, giving them the option of keeping land under fallows, unlike their predecessors, who depended on rental income from land. In both villages, skewness in land distribution plays a vital factor in the demand for land leased-in, while migration increases land supply for lease, marking the presence of absentee landholders.

Table 8. Land use in Karumanchi Village, 2017–2018.

Social group	Land recorded under field survey	Land records	Land farming tobacco and bengal gram
SC	176	164	151
OC	161	194	150.5
OCs	1222 ^a	1602	835.6 ^a
Temple lands		104.9	
Area available for cultivation	1559	2064.9	1137.1

Source: Land records of Karumanchi Village.

^aInformation on the operation of temple lands was unavailable.

Discussion and conclusions

The current research furthers existing literature evidencing the concentration of land amongst non-cultivating/non-resident dominant castes results in land being kept fallow. Observed practices of cultivation, with their attached labour forms, indicate the presence of regressive and under-performing practices in agriculture which are aided by caste in India. Basole and Basu (2011), analysing trends of tenancy from 2002 to 2003, argue that the decline in area under tenancy reveals a gradual shift from tenant cultivation to self-cultivation. This indicates shrinking forms of semi-feudal modes of exploitation. On the other hand, Vijay (2012) argues that the decline in area under tenancy during 2002–2003 may be explained by the period being an atypical year due to exceptional increase in the area under current fallows. This explanation, alongside trends of an increased incidence of tenancy during 2012–2013, implies that Basole and Basu (2011) may have been premature in asserting the declining importance of tenancy.

The proposals for tenancy liberalisation are backed by arguments that it would enhance both agrarian efficiency and equity. First, the productivity-enhancing role of tenancy liberalisation redresses problems of concealed tenancy, which disentitle occupancy rights for tenants thwarting long-term investment in land improvement. Second, by improving tenant access to institutional credit, insurance and other support services, the productivity of leased-in land may improve. Third, removal of legal restrictions on land-leasing could lead to higher land cultivation, reducing fallowisation (Aayog, 2016). The arguments advanced by Aayog (2016) are similar to arguments advanced in favour of granting proprietary rights over land to the tiller. However, when these arguments are extended to the liberalisation of tenancy, several questions emerge given the nature of absenteeism in agricultural operations observed in this research.

First, the trade-off between granting quasi-ownership rights over a piece of land for tenants, in the form of long-term contracts, or opting for short-term contracts depends upon the incentives available for the owner of the land. Unlike lands under commercial tenure, which yield higher rents, agricultural lands in India do not yield a similar share of rent. Thus, options which may exist for long-term tenures in urban, commercial lands might not be the same in case of agrarian lands. On the contrary, benefits of agrarian lands come from their collateral value in institutional structures. Loans are available at a much cheaper rate for agrarian land, compared with commercial ventures. Thus, the probability of loans being written off by ruling regimes is greater, and the constant revenue generated in the form of rents apportioned from land without any investment is an additional incentive for landlords to not to allow tenants to obtain a secured tenure. Absentee landlords do not want to lose the benefits that would be transferred to the tenant cultivator if secure tenure was granted.

Second, crop loans are generally issued to the farming class to support agriculture that has lower returns compared to manufacture and service sectors. Loans are aimed at assisting the direct producer. However, with the prevalence of tenancy, instead of reaching the target section of direct producers, loans are quite often diverted to resource-rich absentee landowners. The local power networks that exist at the village level ensure a smooth process of loans being garnered by the landed gentry, comprising of the dominant castes, who also have the power to postpone their payments in anticipation of loan waivers. This is not possible for tenants because access to formal credit is linked

to assets which tenants lack and, therefore, continues their dependence on non-formal sources.

Revathi's (2014) study of the *Andhra Pradesh Land Licensed Cultivators Act* issuing loan eligibility cards (LECs) to tenant cultivators observes that out of the total number of tenants, 29% were issued LECs. Of those, only 15% were sanctioned loans; out of the total existing tenants during 2011–2012, about 4% could obtain loans with LECs, while about 53% of LEC tenants received loans from private money lenders. Main reasons for not receiving bank loans which LEC holders experience are due to the loans already availed by the land owner against leased-out land. The current research also reveals that landowners who leased-out land were also in receipt of crop insurance and input subsidies. Another national study in India by Kumar (2013) reveals caste-based discrimination in accessing formal agricultural credit, with disparities in lending being higher amongst regional, rural and cooperative banks. As Herring (1984) argues, this appropriation, distortion and leakage of public resources entails an opportunity cost because the same resources could be employed elsewhere with better productivity implications.

Sreenivasulu's (2020) study of eight villages in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana further examines the adverse impact of absentee landowner households, predominantly composed of dominant castes in agriculture, and find landlords who appropriate institutional support meant to support the original farmer without any investment in land improvement. Lastly, the perception of lessors in Uttar Pradesh, as documented by Mandal, Misra, Naqvi, and Kumar (2019), reveals an apprehension of lessors towards the formalisation of the lease market because it might disentitle them from obtaining crop-related benefits, such as crop loans, insurance and other institutional support meant for agriculture. The case of absentee landowners siphoning off crop loans with their disproportionate control over resources remains a problem with which the proponents of the liberalisation of tenancy in Indian context, such as Hanstad et al. (2009) and Aayog (2016), are least concerned. Crop loans at lower interest rates are best used in the agrarian sector and diversification of the crop loans for non-agrarian purposes entails severe opportunity costs.

Aayog (2016) claims existing tenancy laws are the main reason affecting fallowisation of land by large, landed groups who fallow land with the fear of losing their land. This is quite a misinterpretation, however, as the cause for fallowisation is not tenancy rules per se, but, rather, the concentration of land in the hands of non-cultivating households for whom agriculture is not the mainstay. The evils of the concentration of land in the hands of few are inadequately addressed while probing into the aspects of liberalisation of tenancy.

Ranganathan and Pandey (2018) identify that the larger the size of the land, the higher is the extent of land being left fallow. In addition, they also find caste and education associated with the proportion of land left permanently fallow by farmers. The villages studied in this article also exhibited patterns of absentee landlordism and the process of fallowisation. In Karumanchi, most lands were kept idle instead of being put to productive use. Byres (2004a, 2004b) rightly distinguishes between an absentee landlord and a capitalist farmer, in which the latter is likely to secure a good resource use by working on land through a capitalist manager, whereas there stands hardly any evidence to identify the former with good resource use. An absentee landlord has no incentive to invest in

the improvement of land as long as it serves as collateral and provides rental income. The lessee does not have any incentive to invest in land improvement either. The rationale lies in extracting as much as possible for the period of tenure rather than planning for long-term agricultural growth as contracts are non-permanent in nature. The incentive for tenant households to lease-in the land would exist when there is super-normal profit. The incentive for tenants to lease-in land declines as profits tend to decline. Thus the lease market would be constrained from the demand side making land idle and creating current fallows. For an owner-cultivator, in the absence of rent to be paid, a normal rate of profit would do no harm nor would it result in land being kept idle. The surplus extracted from the produce of the land would become part of the re-investable surplus for greater improvement of land and irrigation facilities.

Tenancy sans local exploitative power relations can entail bargaining decisions between owners and tenants entering into contract where the tenant, as an independent cultivator, can set the conditions of the contract. Deshpande (2007), who also advocated for legalisation of tenancy, remains cautious, with a caveat on the possibility for rural and dominant elite social groups to exploit the tenancy market. Caste, as long as it involves a web of dependency by depressed classes upon dominant sections, and where the dominant castes use their position of authority through their powerful social networks, remains an impediment in the legislation of tenancy liberalisation. It does not serve the purpose of assisting tenants in terms of equity, but, rather, it may even push tenants into a vulnerable position with the process of a re-emerging pattern of sub-infeudation, given the situation of a scarcity of land and a greater dependence of its populace on agriculture.

The available evidence from Revathi (2014), Mandal et al. (2019) and Sreenivasulu (2020), sufficiently demonstrates the nature of absentee owners in cornering a greater proportion of institutional support for agriculture to which they are not entitled but, rather, belongs to the original cultivator. The incentives available for absentee landowners in land control hinders the possibility of tenants obtaining credit and institutional support mechanisms which forms the basic thrust of the legislation of tenancy legalisation.

Ownership of land is imperative to enable tenants to access credit and other institutional support such as crop insurance and financial farm support schemes. Enabling access to land by means of a transfer of ownership rights to cultivators would be meaningful and useful for the three purposes of efficiency, equity and sustainability of both agriculturalists and agriculture, helping move toward the mandate of the SDGs. Given the historical nature of accumulation of land amongst dominant castes, with a simultaneous denial and dispossession of land for Dalits aided by policies and power structures of state be it pre or post-colonial, leaves the task of reform to market forces by making a case for fair compensation for land which is accumulated in an unfair manner. This would, in turn, justify the historic unjust methods of appropriation. Since the State is a party to the process of misappropriation, it has the mandate to adopt corrective mechanisms of redistribution to historically underprivileged communities.

Acknowledgements

We thank ICSSR, New Delhi, for funding the research project titled “Climate Change and Persistence of Food and Nutrition Security: A Case of Vulnerable Groups” under grant number F.No. 02/120/SC/2015-16/RPR. Primary data used in this research article are partly from this project.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by Indian Council of Social Science Research [grant number F.No. 02/120/SC/2015-16/RPR].

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Agricultural Marketing in Telangana: Unraveling the Challenges and Possibilities in the Wake of Farm Bills 2020

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ABSTRACT

Farm Bills-2020, as they proclaim to set up competitive alternative channels to create an eco system with freedom of choice for farmer and trader in sale and procurement of agricultural produce by facilitating remunerative prices as its preamble, would run contrary to its preamble with the law leaning more towards the interest of traders as against farmers. By juxtaposing the provisions in Farm Bills with the agrarian markets which were considerably liberalised in the state of Telangana, we argue that there is a need for more sustained intervention from state in agricultural marketing by acting as facilitators of regulated decentralised procurement of agrarian produce, as against withdrawal of state necessitated by reforms. We critically engage with the idea of *freedom* of choice by placing the existing asymmetrical dyadic interaction between farmer and trader enmeshed in debt trap which robs the very idea of *freedom* of choice of farmers to sell their produce.

Keywords: Agricultural marketing, Farm Bills 2020

JEL.: Q13, Q15

I

INTRODUCTION

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) (FPTC) Act, 2020 is envisaged to create an ecosystem where the farmers and traders enjoy the *freedom* of choice in regard to sale and purchase of farmer's produce by facilitating remunerative prices through competitive alternative trading channels. Such a conceptualisation of *freedom* of choice trivialises an existing asymmetrical dyadic interaction between the trader and farmer characterised by a deprived state of the farmer to access channels of formal credit institutions compelling to rely upon informal credit channels through trader, entrapped in an *unfree* bond of transacting produce at a rate decided by trader. In India, more than half of the cultivators operate on less than 2 hectares of land (NSSO, 2015). The trends on loan patterns in terms of the share of institutional and non-institutional sources of lending reveal that the share of institutional sources of lending increases with an increase in size land, on the contrary the share of lending from non-institutional source increases with a decline in the size of land possessed (NSSO, 2014). As FPTC-2020 advocates for a greater participation of private players and deregulates the process of intra-state licensed traders administered by Agricultural Marketing Committees, Chand (2020) identifies the

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process as a set back to the excessive and unjustified commission charges in those markets. While Chand (2020) acknowledges the state of interlocked transactions that robbed the farmers, no explanation was offered as to the effect of these new farm bills on the system of interlocked transactions that are of dyadic in nature linked with offering credit as a tool to control the price and marketing of the produce. Conversely, the amendment to the bill on Essential Commodities Act (Amendment) Act 2020 facilitates the trader who is part of the value chain, processors and exporters to stock pile all agrarian products, which has the potential to create artificial shortage problem accelerating the prices of essential commodities, which would accrue no benefit to the farmer, as the price acceleration would be applicable on the processed/milled agricultural produce, which may indirectly impinge upon the disposable incomes of the farming sections, who form a predominant consumer base of rural areas. Such a policy could have serious impediments to the problem of food security, as India ranks 94th amongst 107 countries in hunger index for the year 2020 (Singh and Bhogal, 2021).

Given the persistence of greater number of small and marginal farmers in agriculture, coupled with their dependence on credit from non-institutional sources, the paper tries to analyse the possible impact of the farm bills introduced in parliament in the year 2020 by providing an overview of the state of agricultural marketing with special reference to paddy procurement in the state of Telangana which incorporated amendments to The Telangana (Agricultural Produce and Livestock) Markets Rules 1969, in the year 2016, in tune with the reforms legislated. The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 discusses the materials and methods used for the analysis, Section 3 delves into the analysis on the changing contours of Agricultural Marketing in Telangana, while the final section summing up by highlighting the possibilities and challenges in the process of the transition of the policy of agricultural marketing.

II

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study has relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. The secondary sources of data and reports include various NSSO Reports, Government documents, viz., legislations and orders. For the purpose of conducting field survey, the village was selected on the basis of two characteristics: (1) consisting the highest proportion of scheduled caste population, (2) engaging population in agriculture. The first characteristic of a village with highest scheduled caste population was chosen as the patterns of a reliance on non-institutional sources of credit and the area operated under tenurial arrangement by those who own less than one hectare display a greater magnitude amongst scheduled caste households. Amongst scheduled castes households, about 74.8 per cent of the cash loan outstanding is sourced from non-institutional agencies, in comparison with 71.8, 58.1, 56.14 per cent in case of other backward classes (OBC's), scheduled tribes (ST's) and others respectively (NSSO, 2016). The incidence of tenancy in the intra-social group of households which own

less than a hectare of land indicate a greater magnitude of area leased-in amongst scheduled castes with 76.4 per cent followed by OBC's with 71.1 per cent and ST's, less than 50 per cent observed amongst ST's and Others (NSSO, 2015). The village was selected following a systematic ranking of districts, followed by mandals, then village panchayats by order of highest proportion of scheduled caste population. The selected village panchayat was tested whether it has population working in Agriculture. In this process, the village of Odipilavancha Panchayat in the State of Telangana fulfilled both the criteria. According to Census-2011, the village panchayat which hosts Odipilavancha with 298 households and its hamlet village of Veerapur with 110 households, with a total of 408 households for the entire village panchayat, consisted 53.12 per cent of Scheduled Caste population.

III

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING IN TELANGANA: CHANGING CONTOURS, CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

Agricultural marketing facilitates the process of organising and processing of agricultural produce from farm gate to the consumer base, through varied channels of intermediation. The channel of intermediation intervenes through the steps of (i) procurement of agricultural produce from cultivators, (ii) Transporting to processing units viz., mills, agro processing industries, manufacturing units and (iii) sale of final product to the consumer base through wholesale and retail units.

In Telangana, the marketing of agricultural produce is governed by Telangana (Agricultural Produce and Livestock) Markets Rules 1969, which was amended in the year of 2016. Prior to the formation of the new state of Telangana, the erstwhile Government of Andhra Pradesh (AP) had adopted decentralised mode of procurement aimed at helping the small and marginal farmers to market their produce at village level, to reduce the problems of transportation and congestion at market yards.¹ Under the said decentralised procurement the A.P state civil supplies corporation would procure paddy through Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) centers at village level. Such procurement at village ensured farmers to obtain minimum support price during the time of price deflation and efficient liquidation of transactions. However, by then the statutory levy procurement policy was in vogue where 75 per cent of procured paddy pertaining to all varieties other than superfine preferred varieties was supposed to be milled and transacted to FCI and AP State Civil Supplies Corporation by millers and traders while retaining 25 per cent of the procured paddy for open market sale. Post-formation of the new state of Telangana, in compliance with the central government instructions, the statutory levy procurement was relaxed by bringing down the procurement and sale to 25 per cent for FCI and Civil supplies, while leaving rest 75 per cent for open market sale in 2014-15, which later was completely scrapped by 2015-16, enabling millers and traders to transact in an open market for the entire paddy procured. With the scrapping of levy procurement, there was an enhancement in the role of state in the procurement of paddy through IKP's under the direction of

Telangana State Civil Supplies Corporation to meet the requirements of public distribution system in parallel to the pre-existing mode of procurement at market yards operated through licensed traders. Post-scrapping of levy policy, Telangana Government made amendment to the APMR Act, by extending the jurisdiction of traders to the entire state by converting their license confined to notified market area to state wide single license. These traders/commission agents act as a moderator between the purchaser and seller of agricultural produce, in a way they occupy the position of both the purchaser as well as the seller. The role of commission agents is to assist the functioning of market by intermediating in the transactions between the processor and the farmer by accepting commission from the farmer. However, commission agents in the market yard operate as cartels, deciding the price as under oligopoly, and set the price not in accordance with the Minimum Support Price. In the market yard, a system of open auction prevails, in which the groups of commission agents go for rounds around heap of farm harvest and auction it by quoting a price well below minimum support price, by testing the quality of the product not on the basis of the government supplied matching machines, but manually. The intermediation through commission agents proves to be costly for the farmer and is exploitative. The figures on sales of paddy marketed at Minimum Support Price at All-India level reveals that only about 23 per cent of sales are marketed at MSP (NSSO, 2014). As estimated by NSSO in its report on key indicators of situation of agricultural households in India -2013, amongst the agricultural households that cultivate paddy, about 32.2 per cent of households across the country are aware of Minimum Support Price, 25.1 per cent of the households are aware of procurement agency, but only 13.5 per cent of household have sold their produce to the procurement agency. The farmer, despite being aware of the prevailing support price, sells the produce at a lower price, should such situation categorise the farmer being self-exploitative or there exists other reasons which compel the process of exploitation. Having realised the nature of exploitation that prevail in the market yards, would opening up of agrarian markets to the forces of demand and supply as envisaged through farm bills create competitive alternative trading channels to fetch remunerative prices? We shall rely on our observations from field survey conducted during the year of 2017 to understand the reasons that may compel the farmer in to a state of exploitation, and then analyse the possibilities or challenges that the new farm bills might pose for the state of agricultural marketing in Telangana.

The village under study is Odipilavancha, which is situated in Jayashankar Bhupalapally district of Telangana State. Paddy and cotton constitute the important crops grown in the village. The distance between the market yard situated at Mandal headquarters in Kataram and the village of Odipilavancha is 9 kms away from market yard. As Government of Telangana had initiated decentralised mode of procurement of paddy through IKP centres, the villagers could market their harvested paddy at a common place of the village. Due to the expansion of the network of IKP to the village, about 66 per cent of the households had marketed their harvested paddy at IKP centres, while the rest 34.1 per cent of households had sold their produce to local moneylender

and fertiliser lender. The average price difference for selling the harvested paddy to moneylender and fertiliser lender was 11 per cent lesser than the stipulated minimum support price per quintal of paddy for *kharif* 2016. As against the informal channels of marketing, Government agencies strictly procure the product at the minimum support price prescribed from time to time by Government of India. With the issuance of Minimum Support Price by Government, it fixes a benchmark minimum price for the market, under such circumstance, if farmers receive a remunerative price, say a price which is higher than minimum support price from private agencies they can auction their produce in open market. Thus the rational producers would market their product at a minimum support price to government agencies, when the open market prices are lower than prescribed MSP, and to private agencies when open market prices are higher than MSP. Yet, a situation of sale and procurement of agricultural output at a lesser price as compared with minimum support price prevails in case of 34 per cent of households, predominantly owing to the inescapable and asymmetrical dyadic interaction that exists between the trader and farmer with assurance of credit for agricultural investment for the next cycle of production entailing in the foregone fair price. In such dyadic relationship between the farmer and trader/money lender, the trader gains more than the farmer with dual advantages of charging interest on advance lent for future production, and a committed sale of the output at a lesser price than minimum support price offered in the interest of farmers. Both traders who procure the harvested paddy in the village of Odipilavancha are the fertiliser and insecticide vendors of the village, who lend fertilisers and insecticides on loan by charging 8 per cent of interest (or more depending on span of crop cycle and harvest) for the span of crop cycle, which they deduct from paddy procured from farmers. Thus the farmers who market their produce with traders suffer twin losses, one being the higher rate of interest as compared with formal lending institutions, and the other being the reduced price for procurement. The component of recurring costs in agriculture plays a crucial role in tightening the link between traders and farmers. The traders advance credit to the farmers to cover their recurring expenses, which mostly gets invested in fertilisers and insecticides and in return farmers sell their marketable surplus to commission agents.

The marginal and small cultivators, who lag behind in procuring sufficient machinery to store their agricultural produce, are destined to sell their produce at either government market yards or to the private traders in the immediate post-production period. Apart from the asymmetrical dyadic interaction between trader and farmer which is a predominant reason entailing in transactions below minimum support price, fluctuations in weather often results in the sale of marketable surplus at a very lower price devoid of dyadic interaction as aforementioned, and it gives a helping hand to private commission agents to exploit the situation. A further disaggregation of the cultivators of the village by location reveals that the residents of Veerapoor, a hamlet village of Odipilavancha predominantly sell their output to local moneylenders, which is induced by both dyadic relationship between the trader and farmer, as well as the

locational disadvantage of the hamlet villagers, with the distance to IKP centre ranging 4kms away from the village. The interplay of locational disadvantage coupled with hassles of institutional credit lead to a greater disadvantaged situation for these farmers. This apart, any delay from government in procurement of paddy from farmers, would give scope to traders to procure most of the initial harvest, at prevailing minimum support prices of previous cycle without applying the renewed/enhanced MSP.

IV

TOWARDS A SUM UP

Against the challenges that the farmers face in receiving remunerative prices, though farm bills 2020 state that their aim is to ensure remunerative prices for farmers, the procedure laid out has been found more suitable for traders as against farmers. The mode of decentralised procurement by state that exists in Telangana, seems to offer more pronounced benefits to the farmers, than the withdrawal of state from agricultural marketing as proposed by new farm bills 2020. The proactive role of state in decentralised procurement of paddy enabled farmers to market their produce even amidst a raging pandemic of Covid-19 (Revathi and Dayakar, 2020). New Farm Bills which envisage to create competitive alternative channels to fetch remunerative prices for farmers and traders, attempts to present a vision of a digitised market economy dissecting barriers of regulated trade. Such visualisation might become a treat for large farmers who adequately possess capital and storage mechanisms, but unfortunately it becomes a bane for the small and marginal farmers who are constrained to access to localised markets due to the pre-existing trade arrangements entangled in lending of credit, and locational disadvantage. India is predominantly dominated by the presence of small and marginal farmers who are entangled in a problem of price trap accelerated by debt trap. An eco-system of competitive trading channels and remunerative prices could be possible when the farmer is freed from the hassles of informal credit structures and enabled with post-harvest infrastructure of storage which could empower the farmer to make decisions of the operative price. As against withdrawal of state from agricultural marketing, there is a greater need for state intervention to build more decentralised agricultural markets with the facilities of storage for non-perishable crops such as paddy, and to ensure delivery of agricultural loans through self-help groups on a continued basis to the landless tenant farmers, and those who could not access the formal institutions of credit.

NOTE

1) G.O.Ms.No.31 Dated: 21.10.2013, CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (CS.I) DEPARTMENT, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

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10 Changing context of caste, gender and land relations in India

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Introduction

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process involving civil, political, social, economic and cultural participation and rights. It is a process which enables people to make strategic choices in areas that affect their lives. The key factors for empowerment are access to resources and agency, which provides impetus to make choices using these resources: helps challenge the regressive structures and the patriarchal power relations (here) by women. Ambedkar quotes “Religion, social status and property are all sources of power and authority” (Rodrigues, 2017). In order to maintain control over the society, Hindu social order had confined the ownership and access to property to twice-born men (Brahmin, Vaishya and Kshatriya) while forcing a majority of women and Shudras to live in destitution. Women and Shudras were denied from their rightful share in the property, education and employment. Under the system of caste, there would be no room for the empowerment of women and Shudras. As a matter of fact caste structure in India is responsible for subordination of women and one of the routes through which it controls women is the ‘*superposition of endogamy on exogamy*’* (Indian Antiquary, 1917) that prohibits inter-caste marriage.

The practices of endogamy combined with the customary rules of inheritance limits property to the caste and social group. Endogamy limits the consequences of transmission of property through women, and maintains the property through marriage with families of one’s own kind (Goody and Goody, 1976). Such limitation of property to social groups coupled with the exploitative tendencies of caste which left the rights to acquisition of property with Caste-Hindus while restricting women and Shudras from acquiring property had perpetuated inequality in the society. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was a firm opponent of such iniquitous social formations and remained relentless in his struggle for annihilation of such forms of inequality. He advocated against perpetuation of iniquitous social practices, in which process while serving as Law Minister of Government of India, he introduced Hindu Code Bill aimed at granting equal rights in share of property for both men and women. By taking a comprehensive view on penetration of inequality

through religious customary practices, he said “To leave inequality between class and class, between sex and sex, which is the soul of Hindu Society untouched and to go on passing legislation relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our Constitution and to build a palace on a dung heap. This is the significance I attached to the Hindu Code.”¹ His advocacy on doing away with caste in marriage and adoption through Hindu Code Bill was aimed at preventing forfeiture of one’s inheritance on account of inter-caste marriages. Under the Shastric law, the loss of caste through inter-caste marriage entails forfeiture of inheritance (Gour, 1919). However the reforms in equalizing the rights in property amongst men and women were defeated by dominant caste representatives in parliament which subsequently led to the resignation of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as Minister for Law in 1951. It took more than 55 years to make an amendment in Hindu Succession Act to guarantee equal rights in inheriting the ancestral property by women.

In present context, caste and gender roles still have a stronger hold in the society with unequal distribution of property and unequal representation in workforce as against their demographic proportions of populations. Caste System in today’s context still has a stronger hold in the hegemony of customary relations over constitutional provisions. In India, about 90.1% of the marriages are of same caste, about 5.1% of women married men lower than her caste, and 4.8% of woman married men higher than her caste (Kumudin Das et al., 2011). The demographic composition from 68th NSSO Round for Employment and Unemployment amongst various social groups for 2011–12 reveal that Scheduled Castes who constitute 18.85% of total population of India reside predominantly in rural areas, accounting for 78.1% of the total SC population, while amongst non SC/ST/OBC’s a considerably higher proportion resides in urban areas who constitute 41.42% of their total population, which is greater in comparison with Scheduled Castes whose proportion of urban population constitutes for 21.95% of total SC population.

In terms of occupational engagement in rural areas, Scheduled Caste households operate predominantly as casual labour in agriculture and non-agricultural tasks accounting for 52.6% of their total working households, as against 21% in the case of non SC/ST/OBC’s. To sum up a majority of non SC/ST/OBC’s in rural areas are engaged as self-employed in agriculture and a majority of Scheduled Castes are engaged as casual labour in agrarian and non-agrarian tasks. The heavy engagement of Scheduled Castes in performing casual labour is not natural but is a result of denial of access to land ordained by the system of caste.

The available evidence on ownership of land amongst various social groups suggests that there is a skewed distribution of land. NSSO 70th Round Report on Household ownership and operational holdings – 2013 in India reveals that in rural areas, Scheduled Castes who constitute 20.06% of total households, own 9.2% of total land, which does not even constitute half of their proportion to total households, while Non SC/ST/OBC’s who

constitute 23.23% of total households owns a share of 32.03% of total land. These latest trends reflect skewed distribution of land amongst various social groups.

In addition, the structural transformation which happened in the post-1990's has resulted in caste translocation from public institutions to private sphere (which was traditionally dominated by Caste-Hindus but got strengthened further) as indicated by a study conducted by D. Ajit, Han Donker and Ravi Saxena (2012) on Caste-Wise distribution of Indian Corporate Board Members for the year 2010 which revealed that 92.6% of Corporate Board members are Forward Castes, of which Brahmins occupy a share of 44.6%, Vaishyas occupy a share of 46.0%, Kshatriyas and others with a share of 2%, rest 7.4% of corporate members are constituted by SC/ST/OBC.

Given the picture of the persisting inequalities amongst various social groups, the present paper would explore the role of customary practices of caste determining occupational stratification and accumulation of wealth amongst few social groups in today's context. The following paper attempts to analyze at present through a comparative analysis of the inter-connectivity of caste, gender and asset holding over the years.

Demography and changing patterns of occupational engagement and land ownership

The numbers as per the Census 2011 concerning the demographic composition of India, reveals that 51.4% of the total population are males, while 48.5% of the population is constituted by females. The majority of the population, around 69%, of the total resides in rural areas. The composition of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes reveals that Scheduled Castes form 16.6% of the total population, while Scheduled Tribes stands at 8.6%. Within Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, gender composition reveals that about 48.6% of Scheduled Castes are females, while amongst Scheduled Tribes 49.7% are females.

Nearly about 72% of India's working population resides in rural areas, amongst which males constitute 62% of rural working force, while females constitute 38% of rural working force. In urban pockets, where 28% of total working population of India resides, the proportion of males constitute 79% of the total urban working population while the proportion of females constitute 21%. The figures reveal an unequal distribution of workforce amongst males and females as against their proportion of population, whereas in the proportion of workforce amongst females in rural areas stands at 38%, while their proportion of population in rural remains to be 49%. In urban areas the situation is much worse, wherein females constitute 21% of total urban working population, as against their population in urban area with a share of 48% in the total urban population. The proportion of non-workers amongst males and females suggests that it is higher

amongst females than males, with females constituting 60% of non-workers as against 40% of non-workers amongst males.

Occupational diversification

The effect of the caste system on agriculture clearly depicts the patterns of relegation of Scheduled Castes to agricultural labour, while a majority of Caste-Hindus were demarcated as self-employed cultivators. The occupational patterns amongst various social groups suggests that the dependency of Scheduled Castes as agricultural labor and casual labour is higher in proportion as compared with the dependency of non SC/ST/OBC's as agricultural labour.

Occupational patterns amongst males and female working population suggests that more than half, i.e. 55%, of them are dependant on agriculture, while the rest (42%) are engaged as other workers, leaving about 4% engaged in household industry. Amongst the rural agrarian working population, cultivators constitute 46% of the total agrarian working population (within which are 32% males and 14% females, together 46%), while agricultural labourers constitute 54% (within which 31% are males and 23% is the female population). The trends reveal that amongst the female agrarian working population, there is a higher proportion of engagement as agricultural labourers than cultivators. However, as against their proportion of population, said engagement is lower, further analysis on the patterns exhibited by Scheduled Caste women's engagement as agricultural labour can present a better picture.

In rural areas, amongst Scheduled Castes as a proportion of rural SC agrarian working population, 25% of them operate as cultivators (with 17% male, and 8% female) and the rest (75%) are engaged as agricultural labourers (with 44% males and 31% females). The trends on occupational diversification in rural areas amongst Scheduled Castes exhibit the feature of higher dependency of both male and female population in rural areas on agricultural labour. The proportion of SC female agricultural labourers to total female agricultural labour in rural areas suggest that SC women constitutes 25% of total female agricultural labourers (rural), whereas when the proportion of SC woman (rural) is accounted for as a proportion of total female population (rural), it stands at 18%, indicating that the magnitude of participation of Schedule Caste (female) as agricultural labour stands higher in comparison with overall female population. The analysis suggests that Scheduled Castes and woman as social categories who were denied ownership of land shows a higher dependency as is exhibited by being largely agricultural laborers than as cultivators.

Census 1991 suggests that the proportion of cultivators (including tenant cultivators) accounted for 25.44% of the total working population, while the proportion of agricultural laborers stood at 49.06%, with total agrarian working population accounting for 74.50%. The figures for 2011 shows

that there is a further decline in the proportion of cultivators to 14.75%, and a slight decline in the proportion of agricultural labour to 45.92% with proportion of agrarian working population also witnessing a decline to 50.67%, however still largely significant. Over the years, it has been observed that the proportion of Scheduled Castes performing agricultural labour has been highly significant.

Land ownership: changing patterns of ownership

The available evidence on ownership of land amongst various social groups suggests that there is a skewed distribution of land. NSSO 70th Round Report on Household ownership and Operational Holdings – 2013 in India reveals that in rural areas, Scheduled Castes who constitute 20.06% of total households own 9.2% of total land which doesnot even constitute half to their proportion to total households; OBC's own 45.68% of land as against 44.82% of households, while non SC/ST/OBC's, who constitute 23.23% of total households, own a share of 32.03% of total land. These latest trends shows skewed distribution of land amongst various social groups. However over the years, the proportion of land owned as well as the proportion of households for non SC/ST/OBC has been on a decline in rural areas when compared with the figures of 2003. The proportion of non SC/ST/OBC households which constituted 26.26% of households in 2003 has declined to 23.23%; the same when observed on the proportion of land owned, it also shows that there is declining pattern, though not drastic it declined from 36.3% in 2003 to 32.03% by 2013. The trends for OBC's show a pattern of increase, OBC households which constituted 41.61% of total households in 2003, constitute 44.82% by 2013, at the same time the proportion of land also has increased from 43.51% to 45.68% of total land owned by all social groups.

As far the social structure of both Scheduled Castes and OBC's are concerned, both were graded lower than Caste-Hindus, viz., twice-born. However in terms of ownership of land, OBC's have occupied a greater share of land as compared to Scheduled Castes, ownership of land amongst OBC's is at least proportionate to their households share. But ownership of land amongst Scheduled castes presents an overview that the ownership is less than their proportion of households.

As a comparative analysis what could be observed is that there is not much drastic change in the proportion of ownership of land by Scheduled Castes. However there is a significant amount of ownership of land observed in the hands of OBC's. Nancharaiah (1988) explains the phenomenon of transfer of ownership of land from Brahmins to non-Brahmins, which also includes a section of OBCs. As he argues, in Andhra Pradesh, in the eve of introduction of Rent Reduction Act 1947 and Estate abolition act 1948, non-Brahmins have refused to pay the rents demanded by the Brahmin landlords and thus with low rents being collected and with the foreseeing of Estate Abolition

Act being enacted, the Brahmins sold their lands to non-Brahmins even at lower prices. Non-Brahmins could acquire the land because they were in a superior position than the Scheduled Castes in the order of caste, and the prevalence of untouchability against Scheduled Castes and their dependence as agricultural labourers denied an equal opportunity for them to earn and improve. Added to which, particularly, Brahmins have also opted for migrating to urban spaces, which not only dwindled their share in rural population, but at the same time on account of their sale of lands to non-Brahmin powerful social groups, their share of land also has declined.

As an overall picture the access to land amongst various social groups presents a pattern of unequal distribution amongst various social groups, and asset holding being observed with the characteristic of graded distribution, with Caste-Hindus placed at top, OBC's in middle and Scheduled Castes in the last would only strengthen the argument of the accumulation of land being determined by the inter-connectivity of caste-endogamy rules of inheritance leading to concentration of land in the hands of few, while leaving a majority in destitution.

Caste: power and authority

Castes are exclusive endogamous groups of the society in which they operate as enclosed classes with specified occupational distribution graded as one above the other with graded inequalities and perpetuity of profession being determined by birth (Ambedkar, 1917, 1937).

Endogamy as a custom of marriage was considered as sacramental to the faith of Hindu religion, and stood as a base for the sustenance of caste system. Inter-caste marriages which violates the principle of endogamy were quite often treated with utmost contempt leading to social ostracization and elimination of the married couple. Even with the evolution of modern institutions of jurisprudence and justice during 19th century under colonial government with establishment of high courts and supreme courts, if marriages violating the principle of endogamy were declared null and void then the reason is to be found in the doctrine of inequality nurtured by Hindu Dharma Shastras which had legal sanctity. The feature of endogamy conjoined with the laws of inheritance of property becomes crucial in understanding the nature of accumulation of land/property in the hands of fewer social groups.

Intersectionality of caste and gender

First, Manusmriti which served as legal doctrine² of Hindu socio-economic order has prevented Shudras to acquire property, by vesting a right with the Brahmin to snatch away whatever that is hard-earned by a Shudra.³ It has ordained a Shudra to remain a slave only to eke out existence by way of accepting abandoned food,⁴ left over clothes, while granting the right to acquire of wealth and education for the Caste-Hindus. By vesting the

right to earn and accumulate wealth with twice-born or Caste-Hindus and denying any scope for Shudras to earn has laid the foundation for economic inequality. Alongside the laws of inheritance of said accumulated property have mandated for sacramental marriage as a necessary condition for the inheritance of the property for the off-spring of the married couple.

Mitakshara as a law of inheritance largely governs the inheritance rules of the country (Kumar, 1985). Under Mitakshara,

the property of a Hindu is not his individual property. It is property which belongs to what is called which consists of father, son, grandson and great grandson. All these people have a birth-right in that property and the property on the death of anyone member of this coparcenary passes by what is called survivorship to the members who remain behind, and does not pass to the heirs of the deceased.

(Ambedkar, 1951)

Here the property is inherited at the time of birth, birth being governed by the principle of begetting a child only through a marriage of the same caste results in perpetuity of the property in the hands of the same community. The transfer of the property is governed by rule of sacramental marriage.

In *Bai Kashi vs Jamnadas Mansukh Raichand on 5 March, 1912*, High Court of Bombay delivered a verdict declaring the marriage of a Brahmin Woman and a Shudra as illegal, null and void. In another case of *Swayampakula Subbaramayya And . . . vs Swayampakula Venkatasubbamma . . . on 5 February, 1941*, High Court of Madras declared 'anuloma' marriage, a marriage between a Brahmin man and Shudra woman, as illegal and declared that maintenance or share in wealth of an estate cannot be allowed to the children and wife since they were categorized as Shudras. Such were the rules of Hindu Dharma Shastra which continued even after the evolution of modern institutions of legal jurisprudence.

Added to the observance of such accumulation in the hands of Caste-Hindus, said accumulation was vested with Caste-Hindu men, while women were denied any share in the inheritance of ancestral property. In fact in the case of woman their relegation to household tasks⁵ has defined the social status in a society immersed in caste-patriarchal notions of labour. However said notion was more applicable for woman of higher castes, while woman from lower social groups were ordained to be slaves.

Land accumulation by Caste-Hindus: a case for reforms

Religion which denied equality in terms of economic as well social equality ensured that a perpetual continuum of power is maintained through the control of woman's sexuality in a well-knitted inter-personal relations bounded by the rules of endogamy, which, as argued in previous section, determine the access to wealth accruing in the hands of Caste-Hindus.

Several studies also corroborate the fact of accumulation of a major portion of land in the hands of Caste-Hindus. Kumar Dharma (1962) asserts that around 1800, in the fertile regions of Malabar, Kanara and better irrigated fields of Tamil districts, significant proportion of lands were owned by Brahmins.

Census 1901 while elucidating the occupational engagement records that in Bengal Province, said

Amongst Zamindars, the Brahmins, who number about 88,000, are most numerous; then follow the Kayasths with 73,000, the Babbhans with 36,000 and the Rajputs with 25,000. Brahman zamindars are found all over the Province. They are especially numerous in the Orissa Presidency, Patna and Dacca Divisions, but they are outnumbered in the Presidency and Dacca Divisions by the Kayasths and in Patna by the Babbhans and Rajputs, especially by the former, who are more than twice as numerous.⁶

Nancharaiah (1988) through the analysis of land records in a village of Kanchakoduru over the years of 1930, 1948, 1965, and 1982, reveals that for the year of 1930 the Brahmins controlled 77% of total land as they happened to be Inamdars, non-Brahmins about 21% and Scheduled Castes only about 2% of total land.

During the course of struggle for independence, several movements were initiated across the country against concentration of land in fewer hands under Zamindari system, and with a slogan of 'Land to the Tiller'. In the region of West Bengal, the alliance between Namasudras and Muslims against the Bhadraklok Brahmins was launched on a programme for abolition of Zamindari System.⁷ Several intermediary social groups who were predominantly non-Brahmin have had come together to resist forceful eviction from land by Zamindars. Since with the introduction of granting Occupancy Rights to the tenants who occupy the land for 12 years under the Bengal Rent Act 1859, the landlords kept on changing in order to ensure that occupancy rights were not granted to tenants who were cultivators of the land. In this moment, the intermediaries and agricultural labourers together fought against the landlord by forming ghettos and groups and avoiding payment of rents.⁸ A letter communicated between *Mr. Surendra Prasad Lahiri Cltowlituri, Zemindar to the President, Krisak Conference of Kishoreganj*⁹ evidently captures the simmering tensions between the landed and tenants. Indian Freedom movement also incorporated a language against Zamindari system, in order to galvanize the support of a larger section of masses. However, landlords were keen on stressing Gandhian view of negotiations, as against a call for revolution against the system of Zamindari.¹⁰ The same class of Zamindars who wanted a peaceful settlement on Zamindari system, were advocating for continuation of the practice of untouchability in open. Mr. Dharani Mohan Roy, a Zamindar and Senior Member

of Chandra Pratapa Sanatana Hindu community, openly advocated for the retaining of untouchability, and firmly states that any opposition to said practice is against Smritis and Shastras.¹¹

Against the backdrop of several movements across the country Zamindari Abolition legislations were introduced. Indian National Congress realizing the importance of the demand of larger masses, incorporated Land to Tiller as one of its objective in its election manifesto and under the unanimous suggestion of the revenue ministers conference in December 1947, formed a committee under the chairmanship of J. C. Kumarappa, to examine and make recommendations about agrarian reforms arising out of Zamindari abolition.¹²

The committee recommended for agrarian reforms by way of abolition of intermediaries and proposed for Land to the Tiller. It also recommended prohibiting subletting of land except in the case of widows, minors and other disable persons. The committee while observing a large scale dependency of labour on agriculture phased out a need for driving out agricultural labour from agricultural to non-agricultural occupations. However with the prevalence of strong customized structure of caste, the institutions having got controlled by Caste-Hindus prevented the scope of reforms. The next section deals with the numbers related to occupational structure and access to land amongst various social groups, with an analysis on how caste leaves no space for reforms towards attainment of equality in economic sense.

Institutionalized caste: interrogating failed reform process through institutions

Census 1951 records that amongst Scheduled Castes, 67.1% of working population was dependant on agriculture, in which 10.4% of them were cultivators of land, wholly or mainly owned, 17.6% of them were cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned, and 33.0% of them were cultivating labourers, while rest 6.1% were non-cultivating owners of land. An implementation of Land Reforms should result in the granting of ownership of land to unowned land cultivated by Scheduled Castes and distribution of lands to landless agricultural labourers and should subsequently result in a change in the occupational dependency in agriculture. Land should belong to the tiller gets more applicable in the case of agricultural labourers and more particularly in the case of Scheduled Castes given the scale of operations in which they are involved beginning with tilling of land to harvest, and the supervision of the farms by permanently attached labourers.

Land reforms and the positioning of scheduled castes

In the light of said context about the precarious situation of untouchables in the socio-economic sphere, several committees, such as Committee on Untouchability 1969 recommended for reserving 50% of the total surplus

land to be reserved for Scheduled Caste landless agricultural labourers because they constitute 50% of the total landless population. Added to which it was also recommended that the state governments should reclaim the inferior lands and allot them (Murdia, 1975). In light of the recommendations on several committees on land to the tiller approach, the following paragraph explains on how systematically caste-structures avoided for transfer of land.

NSSO Report 1954–55, while placing its observations on availability of surplus land with a ceiling fixed at 20 acres had observed “If the ceiling limit is fixed at 20 acres, and all households holding more than 20 acres are required to hand over the area held by them in excess of 20 acres, then the amount of land which becomes available for distribution in this way would be about 63 million acres.” The discussion on land reforms which was initiated in 1948 could only reach its finality by 1972, where the ceiling limit was proposed at 10–18 acres for irrigated land with two crops, 27 acres for irrigated land with one crop and 54 acres for dry land.

However in terms of implementation the process of distribution was a failure. The working group on Development and Welfare of Scheduled Castes during the eighth five-year plan (1990–95) in their report (August 1990) observed that “agricultural ceiling laws have been a mere failure. As against the estimated availability of surplus land of about 30 million hectares, only a little over 7 million acres had been declared surplus so far. Against this, 4.5 million acres of land was distributed to about 4 million beneficiaries” (Pg. No 149, Fourth Annual Report, National Commission for SC/ST, 1996–97).

Caste obstructs socio-economic reform

One of the reasons for the failure of the reform process was the institutionalization of caste system in occupational structure, where at the revenue departments which were supposed to collect and furnish the information on land records were dominated by Caste-Hindus, particularly Brahmins. On one hand, the legal systems of Land Tribunals were established; on the other hand, the revenue departments were depending upon the information passed on by the local bodies of Patwaris, Kulkarnis and Karanams. Mearns (1999) cited in Deshpande (2003) writes “Various exemptions and loopholes left by individual states allowed landlords to retain control over land holdings, most infamously through benami (nameless entity) transactions, whereby village record keepers (patwaris) could be bribed to register holdings in the names of deceased or fictitious persons”. The incidence of manipulation by the local level officers was of such height that the lands were registered as Benamis in the names of servants, unborn children, cows, horses and dogs. It even took the form of registering the lands on the names of Hindu deities (Sinha, 1978).

NSSO 37th Round report –1982 on ownership holdings, had brought down the figures on the ownership of land by Scheduled Castes, where it

observed that Scheduled Castes who constitute 19.71% of total households (rural) owned 7.89% of total land (rural), as against non SC/ST households with a proportion of 70.55% households (rural) owning 82.01% of land (rural). The figures by 1982 stand self-explanatory on the skewed distribution of land in comparison with the proportion of households. Scheduled Castes who are positioned at the bottom of caste hierarchy were the ones who depended heavily on agriculture by performing all tasks within agriculture. However caste which leaves no scope for reform has even prevented for transfer of land despite the presence of several legislations.

Conclusion

Caste obstructs economic progress by not allowing efficient allocation of resources. Land to the tiller as an objective was aimed at attaining a higher productivity in agriculture, but caste defeated the objective through the access of Caste-Hindus to various state institutions. Such non-implementation of a reform in place has become the source of perpetuation of an inequality based on a foundation of caste. It has a large bearing on economic outcomes, as non-access to land eventually entails higher dependence as agricultural labour particularly in rural economy. Ambedkar conceived emancipation of women is imperative for equal and just society and favoured positive discrimination for their upliftment. His concept of ideal society was based on social justice that saw unity and equality of all human beings, between man and man and between man and woman. Therefore, he emphasized on ideal society based on the principle of justice that values liberty, equality and fraternity. He, however, calls for the change in the state of mind that brings forth the social equality and provides dignity to women. This is possible when social relations that form our conscience changes us as humans and emancipates us through self-realization.

Notes

* B. R. Ambedkar said this quote in a paper written by him on "Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development" which got published in 1917 by Indian Antiquary.

1 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: *Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 14 (Part-2, p. 1326).

2 Manu Dharma Shastra served as the Legal Document before the Constitution of India was adopted. Manu Dharma Shastra was observed to be the constitution of India on a custom mode Beteile in (Thorat and Kumar, 2008), (M.V. Nadkarni, 2007, p. 1847).

3 Chapter 8, Verse 417: *A Brahmana may confidently seize the goods of (his) Sudra (slave); for, as that (slave) can have no property, his master may take his possessions.*

Chapter 10, Verse: 129 *"No collection of wealth must be made by a Sudra, even though he be able (to do it); for a Sudra who has acquired wealth, gives pain to Brahmanas.* The Laws of Manu (1886) Ch. X, verse 129,"

4 "Manusmriti, Chapter X: 125 reflects on how abandoned food is: The remnants of their food must be given to him, as well as their old clothes, the

refuse of their grain and their old household furniture” The implementation of this rule in villages is testified by various studies by anthropologists, Wisner (1936) records in his book “The Hindu Jajmani System” on how the aforementioned clause is observed in practice, and noted “A *Sweeper (bhangi)* if he attends a marriage for the duties of sweeping he is made to collect the food which is leftover on the leaf plates”

“The Poorer of the Kam-Karnevalas when not otherwise occupied spend a share of their time during September and October in the low marshland near the village harvesting wild rice. No figures for the actual amount harvested are available but we found that the sweepers for instance, were using this wild rice almost exclusively during September and October. In their usual Sunday grain offerings to the local church they contributed mostly wild rice”.

- 5 Census 1931 states “It is certainly regarded as much more socially respectable for a wife to be engaged at home on household duties than to labour in the fields, and there is a generally increasing tendency, as castes aspire to a higher social standing, to keep their wife at home” (J.H. Hutton, 1933).
- 6 (H.H. Risley, 1903, p. 218).
- 7 (Omvedt, 1979).
- 8 (Anand V. Swamy, 2010, p. 9).
- 9 “The atmosphere was surcharged with keen anti-landlord feelings, which manifested themselves in the rankest form in the Fiery speeches delivered by some fire-brands. The Pandal was resounded from time to time with the loud deafening shout of the slogan “down with the Zamindars down with the capitalists.” The atmosphere was too hot for representatives of zamindars not to speak of the zamindars themselves, who would have cut a very sorry figure if they had appeared personally.” Zamindars Vs Kishan Agitators, 1939 Published by Land Holders Journal.
- 10 Congress Leaders on Zemindari Institution, Land Holders Journal, 1939.
- 11 Touchability and Untouchability, Dharani Mohan Roy, Land Holders Journal, 1932.
- 12 Report of the Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee, 1949.

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**Malnutrition and Inequality among the Vulnerable Social Groups:
A Study of Two Villages**

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Abstract

This paper examines malnutrition issues among the socially vulnerable group through the study of two villages in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. By juxtaposing incidences of malnutrition along with other important parameters of inequality, namely, income, access to land and credit, we identify the genesis of malnutrition is strongly visible in economic inequality and reflects prominently among the Scheduled Castes who are among the most vulnerable social groups. By conducting a census like survey in these two villages, we find that malnutrition issues are strongly intertwined in economic and social classes. Therefore, delineating issues of economic access and social marginalization would not result in effectively addressing malnutrition issues.

Keywords: Malnutrition, Social Vulnerability, Economic Inequality, Poverty

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Introduction

In India, high incidence of poverty and disparity in access to nutritious food are found among particular socio-religious and gender groups. Both in rural and urban areas, poverty and malnutrition rates are high and urban areas are among the new epicenters of poverty and hunger. While food production and the market are critical dimensions generally well discussed in literature, there is little knowledge on how food reaches the plate. The knowledge base is further inadequate in terms of various pathways, negotiations, choices and cultures influencing who eats what and why.

What are the constraints in availing and accessing nutritious food? What role do the state and other institutions play in addressing undernutrition? Economic access to food depends on the purchasing power of the household, which in turn depends on the regular employment, access to land, prices of food grains and food distribution. Mere availability of food grains will have little relevance if people do not possess purchasing power to procure them for their consumption. Though there are several studies available at global, macro and meso levels, literature is scanty at household level in-depth analysis on marginalized groups.

Several questions emerge including, what characterizes the social vulnerability of various social groups and its impact on nutritional security of the households. Similarly, although studies have documented various adaptation options of households, very few studies have looked into the factors at household levels that drive the decision to undertake a particular adaptation strategy during the food insecurity situation. This study is an attempt to fill the gaps by examining the social vulnerability, nutritional security, and adaptation among the marginalized households in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Context

India produced 291.95 MT (metric tonnes) of food grains in 2019-20 yet 69% of deaths of children under the age of five have been attributed to malnutrition by UNICEF in state of the world's children report (UNICEF study has found that 8.8 lakh children in India below the age of five died prematurely in 2018. Of those, 69% died of malnutrition). Nearly 690 million people are undernourished, 144 million children suffer from stunting- which is a sign of chronic undernutrition. 47 million children suffer from wasting, a sign of acute undernutrition in 2018, 5.3 million children died before their fifth birthdays, in many cases as a result of undernutrition (GHI, 2020).

India, one of the bottommost countries, is ranked 102nd among 117 countries according to the Global Hunger Index, 2019. In 2020 Global Hunger Index, India ranks 94th out of the 107 countries with a score of 27.2, India has a level of hunger that is serious. NITI Aayog released report during June 2021 highlighting the fact that 11 states, including the most populous ones, scored less than 50 out of 100 in reaching zero hunger. Andhra Pradesh and Telangana scored less than 50 out of 100 in reaching Zero Hunger, but interestingly in overall performance of the state Andhra Pradesh is in third position. The pandemic has threatened India's food security landscape across all four indicators: availability, access, stability, and utilization. It could in turn further intensify the existing problem of malnutrition among women and children.

According to NFHS-4 more than 35% of Indian children under five are underweight, over 38% are stunted, and more than half of all children are anaemic. Given the magnitude of the problem, there is a need to understand the food value chain, especially at the point of consumption and assess its availability, accessibility, utilization and stability [the four critical dimensions of food and nutrition security (FNS)].

The main emphasis of the SDG is to reduce malnutrition and provide food security to all (Goal 2 by 2030, Zero Hunger and all forms of malnutrition). 40% of children in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are malnourished majority belongs to vulnerable groups. Among these groups, the prevalence of stunting is highest amongst children from STs (41%), followed by SCs (35.2%) and OBCs (31.6%). Women whose Body Mass Index (BMI) is below normal ($<18.5 \text{ kg/m}^2$) is highest among ST (21.1) followed by OBC (16.1) and SC (15.0) anaemia among children in the age group of 6-59 months across social groups is very high based on NFHS-5 for Andhra Pradesh. For Telangana state these percentages are high though NFHS-5 data is not yet available for the state.

Apart from indirect interventions, there is a need to directly focus on nutritional deficiencies and address them in timely manner. A paradigm shift from caloric consumption to consumption of micronutrient and protein-rich food as well as the four pillars namely availability, accessibility, utilization and stability through direct and indirect modes of targeting are crucial. While indirect means would include understanding bottlenecks and improving the production and value chain processes of nutrition-rich food products, the direct method would involve provisioning of adequate nutritious food to malnourished groups.

Undernourishment and related health issues have been one of the dreaded realities of India. Across the states the picture varies according to the intensity of poverty, literacy, low density of health infrastructure and state support policies. Table: 1 shows the rank correlation coefficient of nutritional indicators among states between NFHS- 3 and NFHS-4. All values of rank correlation coefficients are high and positive, implying that there is not much change in the relative status of states on child nutritional outcome over the period.

As compared to wasting, the rank correlation coefficient of stunting and underweight are very high and positive. The states

that witnessed a high percentage of stunting and underweight children during NFHS-3 period could not make any dent even during the NFHS-4. Despite overall progress in stunting, wasting and underweight in the country, the relative status of states remains the same.

Table: 1 Rank Correlation Coefficient of Nutritional Indicators

Nutritional indicators	Rank correlation coefficient between NFHS-3 and NFHS-4
Stunting	0.888**
Wasting	0.616**
Underweight	0.911**
Notes:	
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)	
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)	

Source: Calculated from NFHS 3 and 4

Figure 1: Nutritional Status of Children under age 5 (NFHS 4 & 5):
Stunted

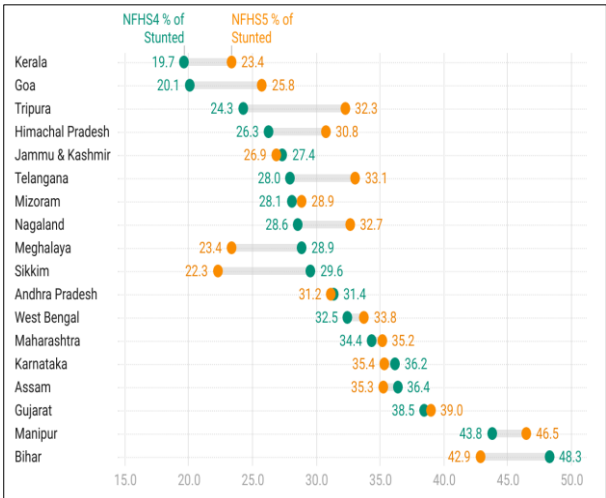


Chart: Gummadi Sridevi; Source: NFHS; Created with data wrapper

Figure 2: Nutritional Status of Children under 5 (NFHS 4 & 5):
Underweight

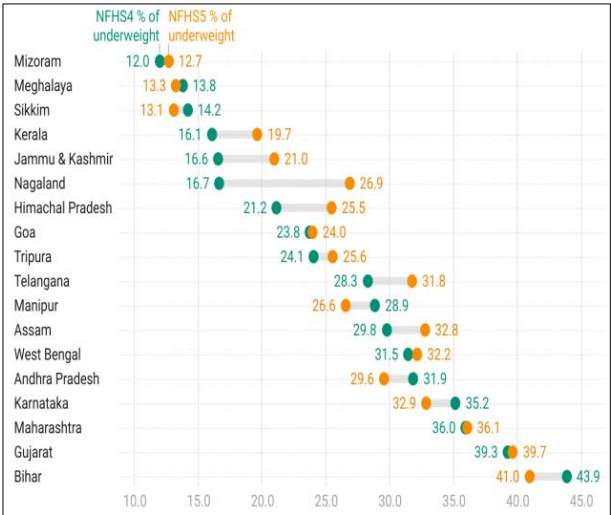


Chart: Gummadi Sridevi; Source: NFHS; Created with data wrapper

Figure 3: Nutritional Status of Children under 5 (NFHS 4 & 5): Wasted

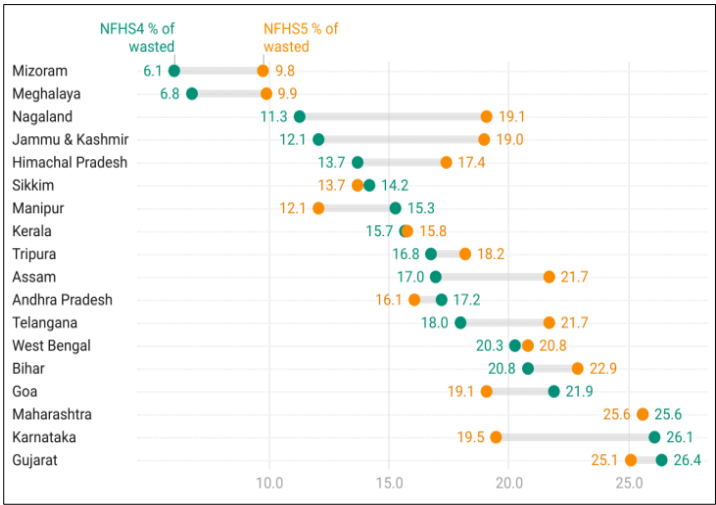


Chart: Gummadi Sridevi; Source: NFHS; Created with data wrapper

NFHS 5 fact sheets for 22 states/Union Territories (UT) shows, chronic undernutrition has increased in 13 states/UTs, whereas, underweight has increased in 16 states/UTs despite ambitious state support programs like *Poshan Abhiyaan*, malnutrition is still high.

Table: 2 Grouping of States Based on Stunting

	NFHS-5 (2019-20)	CNNS (2019)	NFHS-4 (2015-16)	NFHS-3 (2005-06)	NFHS-2 (1998-99)
Low nutritional insecurity	Mizoram, Kerala, J&K, Himachal Pradesh	Mizoram, Kerala, J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana	Mizoram, Kerala, J&K Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana	Kerala, Tamil Nadu	Kerala, Tamil Nadu
Medium nutritional insecurity	Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat	Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Rajasthan	Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Odisha, Maharashtra Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Rajasthan	J&K, Punjab, HP, Mizoram	Mizoram, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, J&K, Punjab, Maharashtra
High nutritional insecurity	Bihar	Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar	Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar	Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, UP	HP, West Bengal, Gujarat, Odisha, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh

Source: Calculated from NFHS Reports (Various rounds), CNNS 2019.

Acute malnutrition is a complex socio-cultural problem that lies at the interplay of inequitable access to nutritious foods and health services, sub-optimal ‘infant and young child-feeding practices’ (IYCF) including breastfeeding, low maternal education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, poor hygiene practices, food insecurity and unpreparedness for emergencies.

The various rounds of NFHS provide the major source of macro-level statistics on nutritional status of children under five in India. Often, aggregate results may be misleading as the severity of malnutrition at the disaggregated level may be masked by the average and may fail to capture the real cause of the problem at the micro-level. Within a state, there are inter-district disparities in nutritional outcomes and the health and nutritional status of vulnerable communities are precarious. Most of the studies at micro-level focused on the high burden malnutrition states in India. Hence, it has not attracted much interest of researchers to analyze the nutritional status of children in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana at Anganwadi and household level. In this context, studying the incidents of malnutrition among vulnerable social groups in a micro context becomes more relevant.

Methods

Primary data was collected from one village each from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The villages were identified on the basis of two characteristics: 1) Consisting highest proportion of Scheduled Caste (SC) population, 2) Population engaged in agriculture. In the state of Telangana, district of Karimnagar is identified as a district with highest SC population. Within Karimnagar, Kataram Mandal has been ranked highest in terms of having higher proportion of SC population constituting 33.85% of the total population.

Within Kataram Mandal, Odipilavancha village panchayat is ranked highest with SC constituting 53.12% of the

total population. The village has a majority of its population dependent on agriculture, with paddy and cotton being the principal crops.

In the state of Andhra Pradesh, district of Prakasam is identified as a district with highest proportion of SC population. In Prakasam District, Tangutur Mandal has the highest proportion of SC with 37.8% to the total population. In Tangutur Mandal, Velagapoodi village panchayat consisted highest proportion of SC population of 64.71% of total population constituting Velagapoodi Village had dismal amount of agriculture dependence, on the contrary most of the area was operated under sericulture. Hence, a next village Karumanchi ranking second in terms of proportion of SC to the total population was chosen, with a majority of population engaged in cultivation of paddy, Bengalgram and tobacco.

Table 3: Characteristics of the case study villages

Village	No. of HHs	Population	SC (HHs)	ST (HHs)	OBC (HHs)	Other (HHs)	Agricultural activity
Karumanchi (Andhra Pradesh)	746*	1048	402 (53.89)	38 (5.09)	163 (21.85)	143 (19.17)	Bengal Gram, Tobacco, Paddy
Odipilavancha (Telangana)	370*	1472	215 (58.11)	32 (8.61)	82 (22.2)	41 (11.1)	Paddy and cotton

Notes:
 *Total Number of Households according to Census 2011 is 1048. But at the time of our survey 746 households were present and the remaining households migrated to nearby towns. ** Similarly, total Households according to Census 2011 is 408. However, at the time of the survey 370 households were present in the village.

To assess the nutritional and health outcome of women and children, direct methods of nutritional assessment, namely anthropometric and dietary evaluation methods, were used. Inputs

on weight, height and age of children are used to compute anthropometric failures among children in the study area, using WHO child growth standards. The nutritional status of women is gauged, based on BMI.

Access to Food and Incidents of Malnutrition at Household Level in the two villages

Although households are often the primary income recipients and are always the units for which we observe consumption, there exists indifference in the allocation to individual members in the household. To examine the question whether and to what extent allocation within the household differ according to the gender and social groups, we investigated the access to food and nutrition at household level.

Two types of measures have been used to quantify the food distribution within a household:

- Food intake by individuals converted into nutrients.
- Height, weight and age measures for anthropometric indices.

The consumption of rice and other cereals by the households during the reference period (7 days preceding the date of the survey) is considered for the analysis. All the households consume rice, vegetables edible oil in all the seasons. Both quality and quantity of rice consumed differed across levels of living of the households.

In order to obtain a variation across different classes we have taken consumption of cereals across different land holding groups for the analysis. The poor households not possessing white card/food security card are the worst affected during the slack seasons. By the land ownership holding, consumption of cereals is lowest among the less than one-acre class and highest among the households having more than 10 acres of land (Table4). This

clearly shows that any change in income across the board will not change the relative consumption of food by the poor households.

Table 4: Per capita monthly consumption of cereals by different types of land holding households in both the villages (in kilogram (kg))

Land size (acres)	Odipilavancha			Karumanchi		
	APL	BPL	NPC	APL	BPL	NPC
Up to 1	18.1	15.1	12.9	19.1	14.4	14.7
1 to 2.5	19.1	15.6	16.3	18.2	1.6	11.8
2.5 to 5	20.3	18.6	16.9	21.0	17.8	16.9
5 to 10	21.8	NA	NA	22.3	NA	NA
> 10	22.5	NA	NA	24.7	NA	NA
Total	20.2	16.7	15.8	21.8	17.1	15.6

Note:
APL – Above Poverty Line, BPL – Below Poverty Line, NPC – Not Possessing Card,
NA – Not Applicable

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 5: Percent of households getting enough food every day in Karumanchi and Odipilavancha (in %)

Social group	Throughout the year	Only some months of the year	Infrequently
<i>Karumanchi</i>			
SCs	60	22	18
ST	45	40	15
OBC	80	15	5
Others	92	6	2
Total	65	25	10
<i>Odipilavancha</i>			
SC	55	30	15
ST	48	42	10
OBC	84	14	2
Others	90	8	2
Total	60	27	13

Source: Field survey, 2018

Frequency of meals per day is taken as an indicator of food insecurity at household level. Table 18 shows the food availability

status for each social group. Only 60% of SC and 45% of ST groups said that they are getting enough food throughout the year in Karumanchi.

During our fieldwork a common response from the respondents from poor group was that “when we have, we eat, when we don’t have, we don’t eat”. This reveals a very simple adjustment process indeed. It substantiates our hypothesis that female-headed households have more food insecurity problem compared to male-headed households. Within the households, female members generally go hungry when the available quantity of food is inadequate. This adequately underscores the fact that food insecurity is sharper in the context of gender.

The calorie intake for a sample household was derived by converting the quantities of food items consumed by the individuals into equivalent amounts of calories by using standard conversion factors (NSSO, 26th round). We have used the 2,000 calories per consumer unit per day, as a standard against which actual observed calorie intakes are compared and that of fat and protein is 27.61 grams (gm) and 48.17 gm. Calorie intake is different across the social groups and between the two villages, due to their food habits, income and access to Public Distribution System (PDS).

Most of the poverty studies in India are based on nutritional adequacy, but what does an average ‘nutritional adequacy’ really mean has been a debatable issue. Sukhatme (1980) argued that there is a range of dietary intake that may be considered adequate among adults depending on activity levels, climate, etc. Calorie intake is low among the SC and ST households in both the villages that reflect the food insecurity at household level.

While per-capita calorie intake reflects current consumption, the question of quantity does not address many other elements of the complicated notion of “food security,” such as quality and micronutrient sufficiency, vulnerability, and trends

in consumption over time. Generally, female members of household do not have control on food budget and therefore, they come at the end of the queue to receive low calorie diets. By control, here we mean decisions about food budget in food distribution. Control can be exercised over material stocks, and over their preparation of food within the household from the raw material stage to that of ready for consumption product.

Table 6: Calorie Protein and Fat intake at household level per day in Karumanchi and Odipilavancha

Social group	Karumanchi			Odipilavancha		
	Calories (Kcal)	Protein (gm)	Fat (gm)	Calories (Kcal)	Protein (gm)	Fat (gm)
SC	1890.1	42.2	23.8	1730	40.2	22.8
ST	1710.6	32.8	20.4	1700.6	34.8	21.4
OBC	2103.4	48.0	28.3	2150.4	49.0	29.3
Others	2175.1	57.8	29.8	2260.1	49.8	29.8

Source: Field survey, 2018

In the selected villages, the male heads of household enjoyed sole control of market decisions relating to domestic food in nearly 78%of the cases, and jointly with the wife in another 22%. There was no significant association between female participation in labour market, their earnings, and the control over food expenditure and purchase decisions. At the same time there was an association between the gender of food controller and their social group. When we looked into the order in which the family avails food consumption, male member or head of the household is given the first priority. In all the social groups adult male is given the first priority (85%), women eat last, by choice, so that male members of the households get sufficient food, and nearly 50% of the female members among all the social groups eat the leftover food.

It is also argued that food energy intake is a poor measure of nutritional status for the reason that it not only depends on

nutrient intake but on non-nutrition food attributes, privately and publicly provided inputs and health status also influence malnutrition (Radhakrishna et al., 2004). Another way of looking at the intra-household differences in consumption of food and across social groups is to analyze food security with the help of anthropometric measures.

Nutritional status of individuals is assessed by means of the BMI. It is computed by using the weight and height of the individual ($BMI = \text{weight}/\text{height}^2$). A BMI value less than 16 is an indication of severe malnutrition and a BMI less than 18.5 and more than 16 reflects moderate malnutrition. For the children below 5 years we have used two measures i.e., low weight-for-height which reflects wasting and low height-for-age reflects the stunting (chronic undernutrition). From Table 7 it is clear that majority of the SC and ST households suffer with malnutrition in both the villages.

Table 7: Nutritional status in Karumanchi and Odipilavancha (in percent %)

Karumanchi Nutritional statuses in terms of BMI	SC		ST		OBC		Others	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Undernourishment (<16)	60.0	33.3	64.0	56.0	37.1	20.4	26.0	15.9
Normal (18.5- 22.9)	40.0	66.7	36.0	44.0	62.9	80.8	74.0	84.1
Odipilavancha								
Undernourishment (<16)	62.1	39.2	68.8	57.8	28.0	21.5	22.2	20.0
Normal (18.5- 22.9)	37.9	60.8	31.2	42.2	72	78.5	77.8	80.0

Source: Field survey, 2018.

Table 8: Nutritional status of children below 5years in Karumanchi and Odipilavancha (in percent %)

	Stunting	Wasting
Karumanchi	22.8	16.9
Odipilavancha	24.3	19.3

Source: Field survey, 2018.

Inequality as an underlying factor for food insecurity

Access to Land and Inequality across Social Groups

Land is often recognized as a tool of socio-economic empowerment. Access to land is one of the important indicators of better living standards in rural areas and an important indicator of food security.

Land Distribution and Ownership in Odipilavancha:

Table 9: Size and Class-wise Distribution of Household Ownership among Various Social Groups at Odipilavancha

NSSO Classification		In acres (approx.)	SC	ST	OBC	Others
0	Landless	0	92	12	28	3
0.001-0.004	Near Landless	0.002 - 0.009	0	0	0	0
0.005-0.40	Marginal	0.012-0.99	21	6	9	0
0.41-1.00	Small	1.01-2.47	60	8	18	4
1.01-2.00	Semi-Medium	2.5 - 4.94	25	3	16	10
2.01-4.00	Medium	5.00 - 9.88	14	3	8	13
4.01 & Above	Large	9.9 - and above	3	0	3	11
Total	All	All sizes	215	32	82	41

Source: Field survey, 2018.

Land ownership and distribution amongst various social groups at Odipilavancha reveals a skewed distribution of land with land concentration amongst fewer social groups, and dispossession

being attributed to a vast majority. The feature of landlessness is exhibited more amongst SC, followed by Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and then followed by Scheduled Tribes (ST), the last being Others which includes dominant caste households. Tables 9 and 10 provide the details of access to land and ownership by social groups in Odipilavancha village.

Table 10: Size and Class Wise Distribution of Land Ownership among Various Social Groups at Odipilavancha

NSSO Classification		In acres (approx.)	SC	ST	OBC	Other
0	Landless	0	0	0	0	0
0.001-0.004	Near Landless	0.002 - 0.009	0	0	0	0
0.005-0.40	Marginal	0.012-0.99	8.03	1.68	4.6	0
0.41-1.00	Small	1.01-2.47	84	11.6	29.5	5.5
1.01-2.00	Semi-Medium	2.5 - 4.94	81.3	9.5	59	32.5
2.01-4.00	Medium	5.00 - 9.88	87.05	19.25	49.5	96
4.01 & Above	Large	9.9 - and above	31	0	40	141
Total			291.38	42.03	182.6	275

Source: Field survey, 2018.

An elaborate account of skewed distribution can be observed by comparing the ownership of land by various social groups with their proportion of households amongst total households. The unequal distribution of land amongst various social groups is best analyzed through a comparative assessment of SC vis-à-vis other castes in Table 11. The striking gap in ownership of land amongst social groups explains the persisting inequality and skewed distribution of land amongst various social groups at Odipilavancha.

Inequality in distribution of ownership of land amongst various social groups at Odipilavancha has been mapped in the figure through Lorenz distribution. It is observed that SC and ST are the groups which are far distanced from the Line of Equality/

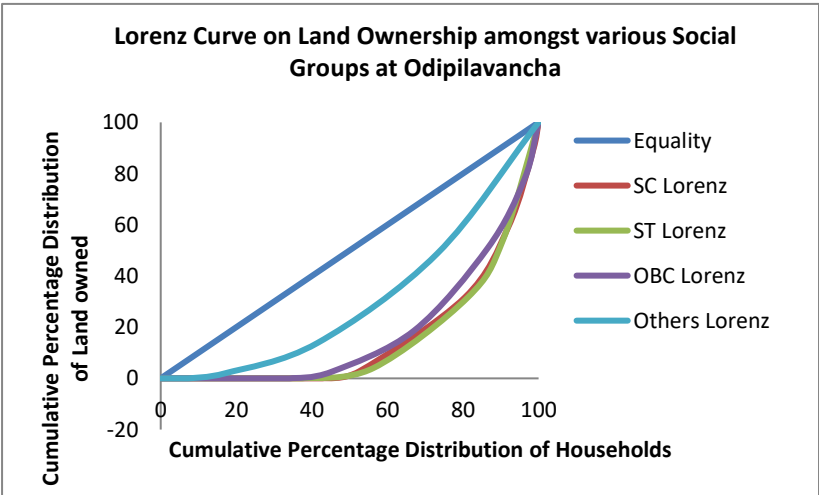
Line of Equal distribution, followed by OBCs and Other castes. Gini Coefficients were calculated to estimate quantum of inequality, the figures reveal that there is a greater amount of inequality in the case of SC, ST and OBCs as compared with other castes as shown in Figure 2.

Table 11: Land and Household Proportion of various households among various social groups at Odipilavancha

	SC	ST	OBC	Others	All
Proportion of Households	58.1	8.6	22.1	11.0	100.0
Proportion of ownership of Land	36.8	5.3	23.0	34.7	100.0
Average Size of Land Owned	1.36	1.31	2.23	6.71	2.14

Source: Field survey, 2018.

Figure 2: Lorenz Distribution of Land ownership amongst various social groups at Odipilavancha



Gini-Coefficient values for SC-0.672234, ST-0.678526, OBC-0.623701, others-0.362129 and ALL-0.66493.

Land Distribution and Ownership in Karumanchi:

In the village of Karumanchi, ownership of land presents a large-scale inequality in distribution of ownership of land among various social groups. There is absolute inequality in terms of land ownership for ST, while relative inequality is observed in the case of SC and OBCs as compared with other castes. The unequal distribution of ownership of land can be understood by looking at comparative analysis of proportion of households and ownership of land as given in Tables 12 and 13.

Table 12: Size and Class wise distribution of household ownership among Various Social Groups at Karumanchi

NSSO Classification		In acres (approx.)	SC	ST	OBC	Others
0	Landless	0	343	38	127	45
0.001-0.004	Near Landless	0.002 - 0.009	0	0	0	0
0.005-0.40	Marginal	0.012-0.99	3	0	1	1
0.41-1.00	Small	1.01-2.47	24	0	16	5
1.01-2.00	Semi-Medium	2.5 - 4.94	23	0	6	25
2.01-4.00	Medium	5.00 - 9.88	4	0	8	17
4.01 & Above	Large	9.9- and above	5	0	5	46
Total			402	38	163	139
N.R. (not responded)						4

Source: Field survey, 2018.

Table 13: Size and Class Wise Distribution of Land Ownership among Various Social Groups at Karumanchi

NSSO Classification		In acres (approx.)	SC	ST	OBC	Other
0	Landless	0	0	0	0	0
0.001-0.004	Near Landless	0.002 - 0.009	0	0	0	0
0.005-0.40	Marginal	0.012-0.99	1.5	0	0.6	0.5
0.41-1.00	Small	1.01-2.47	40	0	26	6.75
1.01-2.00	Semi-Medium	2.5 - 4.94	79	0	19	91.65
2.01-4.00	Medium	5.00 - 9.88	30	0	47	103.7
4.01 & Above	Large	9.9 - and above	75	0	68	1019
Total			225.5	0	160.6	1221.6

Source: Field survey, 2018.

The unequal distribution in terms of ownership of land is mapped in Lorenz curve in Table 14 and Figure 3, the Lorenz curve for ST reveals 100% inequality, while the Lorenz distribution for SC is far away from line of equi-distribution. OBCs and Other castes is comparatively nearer to the line of equi-distribution. The Gini-Coefficient presents the scale of inequality clearly in table 14.

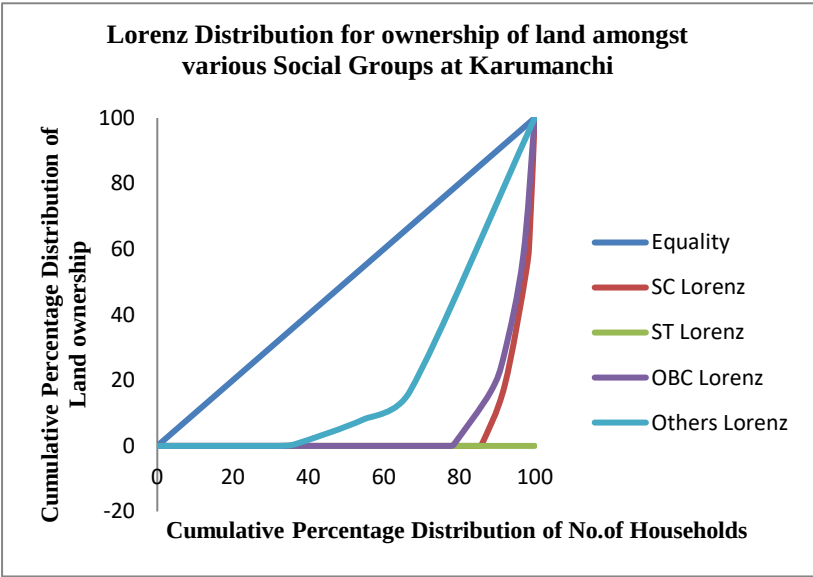
Table 14: Household and Land Ownership among various Social Groups at Karumanchi

Social Category	No.of Households	Proportion of Households	Area Owned (in acres)	Proportion of Area Owned	Average Area Owned Per Household
SC	402	54.1	225.5	14.0	0.56
ST	38	5.1	0	0	0
OBC	163	21.9	160.6	9.9	0.98
Others	139	18.7	1221.6	75.9	8.79
All	742	100.0	1607.7	100.0	2.17

Source: Field survey, 2018.

From the above analysis it is very clear that most of the marginalized farmers hold less than two acres of land in Odipilavancha and less than one acre in Karumanchi. There exists high inequality among the various social group farmers in terms of access to land in Karumanchi compared to Odipilavancha. Basic crops cultivated at Karumanchi are Bengal gram, and tobacco, while paddy and cotton are cultivated in Odipilavancha.

Figure 3: Lorenz Distribution of Land ownership among various social groups at Karumanchi



Gini coefficients of respective social groups are SC-0.914767, ST-1 (Owing to absolute inequality the Gini-Coefficient for ST stands at 1) OBC-0.876208, others-0.568135 and All-0.86797 (Field survey, 2018).

Till the 1980's paddy was the most dominant crop in both villages, but now Tobacco, Bengal gram dominate the cropping patterns at Karumanchi, a shifting pattern to cotton observed at Odipilavancha. The farmers refer to the fact that the returns on paddy were not so attractive, whereas Tobacco, Bengal gram and cotton has more demand in the nearby markets. In addition to this,

the water sources are also not sufficient for paddy cultivation. The change in the cropping system and climate affected the agricultural labour households by reducing the employment and the number of working days. The major source of income in both the villages is from agriculture cultivation 60.71% in Odipilavancha and 71.76% in Karumanchi.

Expenditure pattern across Social Groups

SC and ST households spend around 39% and 46% respectively on food in the total income, while non-food expenditure (including health and education expenditure) is around 60.73% of total expenditure in Odipilavancha. More non-food expenditure implies that OBC and Others are spending more on education. This result tallies with our macro data (NSSO -MPCE) at State level, which implies that the gap in terms of mean consumption expenditure between the SC and ST social groups and the others are increasing over a period of time, which indicates increasing economic inequalities across social groups and differences in access to education.

It is very clear from the data and field observation that most of the SC and ST social group children go to government schools or they work as child labour, whereas other social group children mostly go to private schools, and hence their expenditure on education is high. There exists a large income gap between various social groups in both the villages. In this context, it is interesting to see the access to credit by various social groups. Access to credit at affordable cost positively affects the productivity, asset formation, income and food security of the rural poor. The major concern of the government is to bring all the rural households within the banking fold and promote complete financial inclusion.

Table 15: Consumption Expenditure among various Social Groups at
Odiplavancha (in percent %)

Social Group	SC	ST	OBC	Others	Total
Food Expenditure	39.28	46.23	40.92	34.97	39.50
Education Expenditure	6.52	6.08	13.09	16.36	10.19
Health Expenditure	17.24	14.77	12.72	14.04	15.16
Non-Food Expenditure*	36.97	32.92	33.27	34.63	35.15
Total Expenditure	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total number of households	198 (56.41)	32 (9.12)	81 (23.08)	40 (11.39)	351 (100)
Note: *Tobacco, intoxicants fuel, light, clothing, bedding, footwear, and rent to the house					

Source: Field survey, 2017, and 2018.

Table 16: Consumption Expenditure among various Social Groups at
Karumanchi (in percent %)

Social Group	SC	ST	OBC	Others	Total
Total Food Expenditure	50.57	54.42	48.49	33.28	45.66
Education Expenditure	8.48	1.00	8.69	26.02	12.93
Health Expenditure	10.34	17.22	12.38	13.15	11.78
Non-Food Expenditure	30.61	27.36	30.44	27.55	29.63
Total Expenditure	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total No.of Households	402 (54)	38 (5.11)	163 (21.94)	139 (18.71)	742 (100)

Source: Field survey, 2017 and 2018.

It is clear from the above Table 17 even now in rural areas marginalized groups depend more on non-institutional credit. Lack of access to land and credit makes the marginalized groups to remain in poverty and food insecurity. In this context, state support policies play an important role in reducing the poverty and food insecurity at household level. Majority of the poor in rural Andhra Pradesh and Telangana depend on PDS for their food security at household level. Possessing a ration card/Aadhar is an important step towards accessing the PDS and buying from it.

During 2013-14 in Andhra Pradesh, 215.5 lakh white cards were there between 2004 and 2014; all government benefits were linked with ration cards. They were eligible for free treatment in private and corporate hospitals under Aarogyasri, free education in colleges, free houses, claims of up to Rs. 3 lakh under CMRF for medical treatment etc. After the bifurcation of the state to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, Telangana state has issued the food security cards in the place of ration cards.

In both the villages, majority of the SC and ST households depend on PDS for their rice consumption. In case of SC households, 48.2% of total consumption of rice is from PDS and that of ST households is 89.1% in Karumanchi. In Odipilavancha village also, similar trend is observed. Interestingly, others and OBC households depend more on home production and open market in both the villages, because of their access to land. In the village more than 50% of the households spend around one to two hours to fetch their PDS allocations. The quantities of rice supplied to poor households is 5 kg of rice per person per month subject to a ceiling of 25 kg. In Telangana state it is 6 kg per person per month subject to a ceiling of 30 kg. Many times, this is inadequate compared to their consumption requirements.

Table 17: Sources of consumption of rice per household (in percent %)

Social Groups	Karumanchi				Odipilavancha			
	SC	ST	OBC	Others	SC	ST	OBC	Others
Home Production	11.7	-	42.8	62.8	11	5.6	73.8	75.3
PDS	48.2	89.1	33.8	24.7	40.8	74.9	14.5	10.3
Open market	40.0	10.9	23.2	12.3	48.0	19.5	11.6	14.2

Source: Field survey, 2018.

It was observed from the focus group discussions that PDS rice consumption is influenced by the factors such as, family size, occupation, landholding and wage rate. The extent of PDS support declines with expenditure levels of the households and land size.

For the low-income households, agricultural labour households, landless and for marginal farmer households, PDS rice and other items such as oil and sugar consumption are an important source of calorie intake.

In both the villages, majority of the households hold the ration cards. Targeting errors that includes exclusion and inclusion errors exist in both the villages. We found more exclusion errors than inclusion errors. About 28.4% (Karumanchi) and 36.1% (Odipilavancha) of the poor households are excluded from the PDS/food security safety nets. With high exclusion errors, it comes out clearly that PDS is not benefiting all the poor households.

The basic purpose of the food security act is to transfer income to the poor by supplying essential commodities at subsidized prices, but this seems to bypass a large section due to social engineering process. Inefficient targeting will have impact on income gains through the PDS at household level and which in turn would influence the consumption at individual level. In order to understand the magnitude of the income transfer in rice distribution by the PDS, we have calculated the income transfers to the household.

The income gain of villagers from the rice scheme depends upon the coverage of the PDS, quantities supplied through the PDS and the difference between the open market price and the ration price. Monthly per capita income gain, which is calculated using the difference between open market price and ration shop price is Rs.19.00 per person per month in Odipilavancha and in Karumanchi Rs.22.70 per person per month. From 2004-05 to 2011-12, there has been a substantial increase in the implicit income transfer to households which has a significant impact on reducing the poverty (Dreze and Khera, 2015).

Most of the households depend on PDS for the rice consumption. The percentage of households reporting consumption of rice from PDS during a 30-day period rose sharply

from 24.4% to 39% in rural India and from 13% to 20.5% in urban India between 2004-05 and 2009-10. The major states with relatively high incidence of PDS purchase of rice in the rural sector were Tamil Nadu (89.65%), Andhra Pradesh (86.36%), Karnataka (75.02%), and Chhattisgarh (60.84%), followed by Kerala and Odisha (55.26%), and Maharashtra (44.22%).

Social vulnerability

All the indicators of demographic, economic and social indices are measured in different scales. It was necessary to normalize each indicator for an index. Here, the study has used the procedures of normalization as followed in lyengar and Sudarshan (1982). If the “overall social vulnerability” increases with the increase in the value(s) of indicator(s), the following normalization procedure is used.

$$IndexK_f = (K_f - K_{min}) / (K_{max} - K_{min}) \quad (1)$$

If the “overall social vulnerability” decreases with the increase in value(s) of indicator(s), the following procedure is used.

$$\begin{aligned} IndexK_f \\ = (K_{max} - K_f) / (K_{max} - K_{min}) \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

Where K_f is the original value of sub-component for each farm group and K_{max} and K_{min} are the minimum and maximum values of each sub-component determined using data from all farm and caste groups of respective villages. For variables that show frequencies, for example, the percentage of farmers who have changed their crops, the minimum value was set at 0 and maximum value at 100. After each indicator was normalized, the indicators are averaged to find out the value of each major component following the equation (3).

$$K_h = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^n \sqrt[n]{IndexK_f^i})}{n} \tag{3}$$

Where K_h is one of the three components of farm and caste groups, that is, demographic, economic and social components. $IndexK_f^i$ represents “the sub-components indexed by i , which make up for each major component, and n is the number of sub-components in each major component.” Once the index values of demographic, economic and social factors are calculated, the social vulnerability (SV) of all farm groups and caste groups in their respective village will be found out as follows:

$$SV = f. [1/n(K_{DF} + K_{EF} + K_{SF})] \tag{4}$$

where, K_{DF} , K_{EF} and K_{SF} are the index values of the demographic, economic and social factors, and n = the number of factors (major components) of social vulnerability.

Table 18: Farm size –wise and Social group-wise Vulnerability in the two selected villages

Components	Marginal	Small	Medium	Large	All	SC	ST	OBC	OC	All
Karumanchi Village (AP)										
Demographic	0.658	0.559	0.422	0.335	0.455	0.665	0.712	0.499	0.501	0.599
Economic	0.794	0.774	0.399	0.301	0.599	0.887	0.704	0.521	0.288	0.501
Social	0.801	0.799	0.562	0.499	0.642	0.888	0.882	0.234	0.087	0.508
Odpilavancha Village (Telangana State)										
Demographic	0.665	0.588	0.421	0.323	0.467	0.721	0.702	0.442	0.444	0.543
Economic	0.772	0.702	0.376	0.299	0.576	0.899	0.871	0.499	0.301	0.523
Social	0.799	0.789	0.501	0.487	0.589	0.889	0.877	0.201	0.079	0.501

The marginal and small farmers’ groups are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change and variability than the medium and large farmers’ groups in both the villages. The study reveals that the higher relative social vulnerability of marginal and small farm

groups over other groups is attributed to the greater vulnerabilities of demographic, economic and social factors.

Social vulnerability among different social groups, highlights two important aspects – (i) overall social vulnerability is high in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana villages (ii) the SC and ST households are more vulnerable to climate change effects than OBC and Other caste households in both the selected villages due to high vulnerabilities for demographic, economic and social factors.

Conclusion

Food-security at micro-level has quite a few important dimensions including social group, gender, non-food expenditure and nutritional security. We have attempted an investigation of these issues by utilizing the household level data of the selected villages.

Social factors do play an important role in food and nutritional security, lower the caste higher the deprivation which in turn influences their bargaining power in the labour market leading to lower access to income. Total income of the household is an important variable in explaining the changes in access to food at household level. Access to land is essential to ensure the right to food. Majority of the SC and ST households are small and marginal farmers.

Despite fulfilling the eligibility criteria, some households were not issued ration cards. For example, some families were struck off the PDS list during the rollout of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) in the states. An important reason could be the cap on the total number of beneficiaries allowed under this scheme. Distribution of food grains play an important role in providing the food security at household level. Poor households with no ration card/food security card are at a higher risk of food insecurity compared to households with white cards. Calorie consumption levels of SC and ST households are very low among

all the social groups. This is reflected in terms of BMI for adults and stunting for children.

In essence, the food and nutrition insecurity are strongly intertwined in the caste and class characteristics of the households. Therefore, overlooking these dimensions food and nutrition security aspects cannot be adequately addressed. There also prevails intra-household food and nutrition insecurity where the women of the households are at the receiving end. Food and nutrition insecurity research and policy need clear articulation of intersectionality of gender with caste and class dimensions in agrarian context.

(Funding: This paper is a part of ICSSR Major Research project titled "Climate Change and Persistence of Food and Nutrition Security: A Case of Vulnerable Groups" and IOE Grant of University of Hyderabad for project titled "Understanding and Addressing Food and Nutrition Security issues among Vulnerable Groups: An Inter-disciplinary study in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana").

The initial version of this paper was presented in INSEE-CESS International Conference on "Climate Change and Disasters: Challenges, opportunities and responses, the Tenth INSEE Biennial Conference, 6-8 November, 2019.

The authors thank all the respondents of Karumanchi and Odipilanvacha villages).

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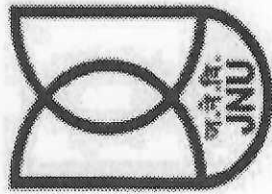
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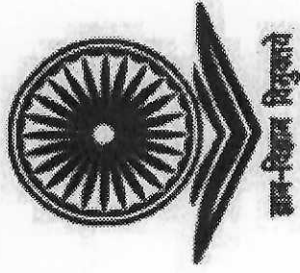
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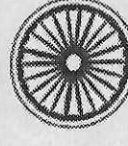
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ज्ञान - विज्ञानं विमुक्तये

**FIELD WORK FOR THE PURPOSE OF RESEARCH WORK
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD**

Supervisor: Dr. G.Sridevi

Research Scholar: Dontha Prashanth

Identification

1) District : _____

2) Mandal : _____

3) Panchayat Village:_____

4) Name of the head of the Household with surname: _____

5) Name of the Respondent: _____

6) Social category: (1=SC, 2=ST, 3=BC, 4=OC)

7) Type of Ration Card: 1=White; 2=Pink; 3=Antyodaya; 4 = No card

8) Major Occupation of the household: _____

9) Secondary Occupation of the Household: _____

1. Demographic Particulars of Household Members (Start with head of the household)

Sl. No.	Household Members	Age (completed years)	Education Level (Code-1)	Primary occupation (Code-2)	Secondary occupation (Code-3)
1					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

Code-1: 1=Not literate, 2=Literate without formal schooling, 3=Literate but below primary, 4=Primary, 5= Middle (upper primary), 6=Secondary, 7=Higher secondary, 8=Diploma/certificate course, 9=Graduate, 10= Post graduate and above. 11= NA (below 6 years)

Code-2: 1=Agriculture, 2=Agri. Casual labour, 3=Salaried agri. Worker, 4=Own business, 5=Self-employed in household industry, 6=self-employed in services (other than business), 7=Non-agri. Casual labor, 8=MGNREGS worker; 9=Salaried work, 10=Family chore, 11=Common property resources (CPR), 12=Livestock management, 13=Pensioner/rentiers, 14=Not working adults, 15=Not working children, 16=student, 17=Dependent, 18=Apprentice, 19=Others (specify _____), 20=NA

2. Consumption Expenditure:

Details of average monthly expenditure incurred by the family during the month/year preceding the date of survey

Item	Annual(in Rs)	Monthly (in Rs)
Food items		
Pan, tobacco, intoxicants etc.		
Fuel and light		
Housing		
Clothing, bedding, footwear etc.		
Education		
Medical & communication		
Transport & communication		
Recreation & amusements		
Religious & other ceremonies		
Miscellaneous items		
Total		

3. Land Particulars (Area in Acres and Cents):

Sl. No.	Land Holding Status				Source of Irrigation	Total Land
			Area (acres & cents)	Type of Soil		
1	2		3	4		6
1	Land owned					
2	Fallow land					
3	Leased out land	Sh. Crop				
		Fixed Rent				
4	Leased in land	Sh. Crop				
		Fixed Rent				
5	Total operated land(1-2-3+4)	Kharif				
		Rabi				

Code1: 1=Bore well; 2= Dug well; 3 = In well bore; 4=Canal; 5= Stream; 6=Tank; 7=Lift irrigation; 9=Others

4. Source of Loan advanced for Cultivation on different types of Cultivators

Sr.No	Type of Cultivator	Primary Source of Loan	Secondary Source for Loan
1	Independent Cultivator		

2	Share Cropper		
3	Fixed Rent Tenant		

5. Information Regarding Cropping Pattern (Area in Acres)

Year	Paddy		Cotton		Maize		Pulses		Others	
	Kharif	Rabi	Kharif	Rabi	Kharif	Rabi	Kharif	Rabi	Kharif	rabi

6. Production among different Crops (Quantity)

Year	Paddy		Cotton		Maize		Pulses		Others	
	Kharif	Rabi	Kharif	Rabi	Kharif	Rabi	Kharif	Rabi	Kharif	rabi

7. Agricultural Inventory (Apart from Land)

	Fixed Cost (Cost of the asset at the time of purchase/Construction)	Variable Cost (Repairs over an year)	Average Life Period
Plough			
Cattle			
Bullock Cart			
Power Sprayer/Hand Sprayer			
Tractor			
Harvester			
Cultivator			
Machine Plough			
Well			
Tank/Pond			

1) Yes 2) No

If yes, explain the nature of investment (For ex: Soil recuperation, tank desiltation, well repair, etc...)

If No,
reason_____

2) Kind Amount/Grain per season_____

labour?_____

[illegible]

Insecticides	Choro										
	Ullala										
	Vin-chi-vin										
	Palpid										
	Apple										
	D.Gold										
	Phantac										
	Akare (Growth)										
	Lansar Gold										
	Elixor										
	Attara										
Other											
Irrigation cost (Electricity)											
Purchase of water											

10.2 Labour/Hired Machine Cost										
				No.of Units		Price/Wage		Paddy	Cotton	Others
				P	C	P	C			
Removal of sticks, wild grass) ...	Hired	M								
		F								
	Family	M								
		F								
	Machine									
	Odlu Checkadam									
Ploughing and Achu	Machine Plough									
	Cultivator									
	Hired Ploughman									
	Family Plough									
Sowing	Hired	M								
		F								
	Family	M								
		F								
	Exchange Labour	M								
		F								
Transplanting	Hired	M								
		F								
	Family	M								

		F							
	Exchange Labour	M							
		F							
Weeding	Hired	M							
		F							
	Family	M							
		F							
	Exchange Labour	M							
		F							
	Hired Machine/Plough								
	Own Machine/Plough								
Fertilizer Layering	Hired	M							
		F							
	Family	M							
		F							
	Exchange Labour	M							
		F							
Insecticide Spraying	Hired	M							
		F							
	Family	M							
		F							
	Exchange Labour	M							
		F							
	Hired								
	Own								
Harvesting	Hired	M							
		F							
	Family	M							
		F							
	Exchange	M							
		F							
	Harvestor								
	Chain Harvestor								
Threshing	Hired	M							
		F							
Transport from field to home									
Others									
CHILD LABOUR	Hired								
	Family								

	Price per Unit				Total
Transport					
Hamali					
Commission					

11. Information on marketing the output

Place	Total output produced			Selling Price					
				MSP			Price sold		
	Paddy	Cotton	Other	Paddy	Cotton	Other	Paddy	Cotton	Other
1. Village(IKP/PACS)									
2. Mill									
3. Market Yard									
4. Money/Fertilizer lender									
5. Commission Agents									
Total									

12 Loans for Agricultural Purpose

Sl. No	Agency	Outstanding loan (Rs.)	Rate of Interest (%)	COLLATERAL			
	Institutional sources			Land	House	Gold	Out
1	Cooperative (PACS)						
2	RRB						
3	State Banks						
4	Commercial banks						
	Non - Institutional sources						
5	SHGs						
6	Micro finance						
7	Money lenders						
8	Trader						
9	Land lord						
	Other (specify)_____						

13. Total outstanding Debts (Non-Agricultural Purposes) (As on date of survey)

Sl. No	Agency	Outstanding loan (Rs.)	Rate of Interest (%)	COLLATERAL			
	Institutional sources			Land	House	Gold	Out
1	Cooperative						
2	RRB						
3	Commercial banks						
	Non - Institutional sources						
5	SHGs						

6	Micro finance						
7	Money lenders						
8	Trader						
9	Land lord						
	Other						

14 Have you received any kind of insurance for the loss of crops?

15 Did you avail subsidized seed/ fertilizers? 1) Yes 2) No

16 Is there any differential treatment in terms of the distribution of subsidized seed and fertilizers at village level?

17 Are you aware of subsidized procurement of agricultural machinery viz., Tractor, Harvester, etc...

Yes No.

18 Have you procured any machinery under subsidy? Yes/No If Yes (Specify)

How were you aware of such schemes of procurement of subsidized machinery?

- 1) Official Govt. Advertisement 2) Village/Mandal office 3) Relatives & Friends
4) Meeseva

Elaborate _____

19 Social location of informant: 1) Same Caste 2) Other Caste (specify)

20 Do you perceive any impediments in accessing subsidized machinery? Explain

Disparity in Access to Land : A case of Marginalized groups

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