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## ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PESA ACT IN ANDHRA PRADESH – A CASE STUDY OF MANTURU VILLAGE IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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### Abstract

India has a long history and strong tradition of ‘democratic’ institutions from ancient times. Grounded in the social and political organisation of the local habitations, over time, these institutions have transformed but nevertheless socially and politically recognised as central to governance despite their shortcomings in terms of a variety of discriminations such as caste and gender. Villages functioned as self-governing village republics. This continued till major changes and restructuring of the administrative hierarchy began with British colonialism. The National Development Council, on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1958, agreed to this suggestion to extend democracy to the masses and people’s participation in all governmental processes and development. Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh took the lead in creating a new three-tier system in 1959. Most of the other States passed laws in the late 1950s and early 1960s. However, the formal Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) went on to get ignored or disrupted except in Gujarat and Maharashtra. The West Bengal Panchayat Raj Act of 1973 gave a renewed lease of life to this self-governance.

**Key Words:** Panchayat Raj, self-governance, colonialism and village republics.

### Introduction

India has a long history and strong tradition of ‘democratic’ institutions from ancient times. Grounded in the social and political organisation of the local habitations, over time, these institutions have transformed but nevertheless socially and politically recognised as central to governance despite their shortcomings in terms of a variety of discriminations such as caste and gender. Villages functioned as self-governing village republics. This continued till major changes and restructuring of the administrative hierarchy began with British colonialism.

There is no definition of Scheduled Areas in the Constitution. The Scheduled Areas are referred to as those areas which the President may, by order, declare to be Scheduled Areas. There are no concrete criteria laid out for an area to be declared as a Scheduled Area. However, a few criteria are taken up while deciding on Scheduled Areas, like the preponderance of tribal population, compactness and reasonable size of the area, underdeveloped nature of the area, and marked disparity in economic standards of the people. They embody, broadly, the principles followed in declaring ‘Excluded’ and Partially Excluded Areas’ under the Government of India Act, 1935.

Though no criteria were stipulated under the law for declaring any area as a ‘Scheduled Area’ under the Fifth Schedule, scheduling an area was on the basis of (a) preponderance of tribal population, (b) compactness and reasonable size of the area, (c) a viable administrative entity such as a district, block or taluk/tehsil, and (d) economic backwardness of the area as compared to the neighbouring areas. The fundamental unit of a Scheduled Area is the ‘village’ interpreted in the Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 as “a habitation or a group of habitations or a hamlet or a group of hamlets comprising a community and managing its affairs in accordance with traditions and customs” [Sec.4(b)].

The President of India issued the Scheduled Areas (Part ‘A’ States) Order, 1950, declaring specified areas to be Scheduled Areas within the States specified in Part ‘A’ of the First Schedule (The States and Union Territories) to the Constitution of India. Subsequently, the President issued the Scheduled Areas (Part B States) Order, 1950, the Scheduled Areas (Himachal Pradesh) Order, 1975 and the Scheduled Areas (States of Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa) Order, 1977, the Scheduled Areas (State of Rajasthan) Order, 1981, The Scheduled Areas (Maharashtra) Maharashtra Order,



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1985 and the Scheduled Areas (States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh) Order, 2003 and The Scheduled Areas (State of Jharkhand Jharkhand) Order, 2007.

## Methodology

This study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. A thorough review on literature based on secondary sources and people's perception was captured through Focused Group Discussions.

## Objective of the Study

- Discuss the awareness of the tribal people about PESA act and how far it is implemented in rural tribal areas.
- To suggest policy measures in the light of findings of the study

The Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Area (PESA) Act 1996 was enacted to provide self-autonomy to tribals in Vth Scheduled Areas of the country. The paper examines whether the well intentioned PESA Act has created any impact on self-autonomy to tribal communities. The paper highlights the constitutional framework of Scheduled V Areas and the evolution of PESA Act 1996 and its background. An attempt is made to identify the gaps in compliance of other statutory State Laws with the PESA Act 1996. This chapter assesses the status of implementation of PESA Act based on a field study in a Scheduled Village- Manturu of Devipatnam Mandal in East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. This study examines the possibility of organising a Gram Sabha within the existing rules frame work.

The Scheduled Tribe population in the State of Andhra Pradesh is 26.31 lakhs as per 2011 census. They constitute 5.53% of the total population of the State. There are (19) Scheduled Tribes, out of which (6) tribal groups are categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) like Kondh, Kondareddi, Savara, Gadaba, Chenchu and Porja etc. The Scheduled Areas in Andhra Pradesh is covered under the provisions of V Schedule of Constitution of India. In the State the scheduled areas extend over 14132.56 Sq. Kms in (5) districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, covering (4,444) villages. The total mandals covered by Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Area Act is 35 of total 660. The PESA Act is applicable to 588 Gram Panchayats of the total 12919.

## Context

Under Article 40 of the Indian Constitution, the Indian state made a commitment to establish Panchayat Raj system as the basis of self-governance. The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution were not extended to the Scheduled Areas, significantly the first time ever that the Parliament did not extend a law in a routine manner to cover the Scheduled Areas. They had the clear injunctions to exclude the Fifth and Sixth Schedule areas from its purview under Article 243 M of the Constitution. The Parliament was to make separate enactments. The exceptions and modifications in Part IX of the Constitution were made its application to the Scheduled Areas.

The Central Government Enacted Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Area (PESA) Act 1996 following the recommendations of the Bhuria Committee Report in 1995. The Bhuria Committee favoured democratic decentralization in scheduled areas. All states with Scheduled Areas were to enact a suitable legislation within a year that are consistent and not in contradiction to PESA, the central Act. AP State brought PESA Act in the year 1998. Further the Government of Andhra Pradesh also brought PESA Rules 2011 giving an effect to the State PESA Act. The Government of Andhra Pradesh also notified the Gram Sabhas under the Rules in 2013.

Gram Sabha is the nucleus for all development activities in the Scheduled Areas under PESA Act. PESA declares that every Gram Sahba is competent to safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity. As per the PESA Act, Gram Sabhas or Panchayats at the appropriate level shall be consulted before making the acquisition of land in the scheduled areas for development projects and before settling or rehabilitating persons affected by such projects.

The state is acquiring land for projects in the scheduled areas. PESA stipulates that Gram Sabha is the approval



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authority for the socio-economic plans, programs and projects. It is also expected that the Rules will help the Gram Sabhas to function in effective manner. These rules provide an opportunity to the members of Gram Sabha and elected representatives to play different roles in various fields including various development programmes, decision making in respect of resource management, record keeping, motivation and communication etc. On the other hand, there are reports which say that the role of Gram Sabha is undermined and sometimes marginalised by bureaucratic institutions. The reason for tardy implementation of PESA Act is also attributed to legal wrangles in the provisions of law. Thus, the role of Gram Sabha is very important.

The tribal communities are traditionally self-governed. These communities have unique social, cultural, economic and political systems which they have sustained over centuries. They also have their own customary laws and mechanisms of local dispute resolution.

### A case study-A scheduled village “Manturu”

The tribal area of the East Godavari District in Andhra Pradesh is the habitat for 2.36 lakh scheduled tribe population spread over in 15 mandals including 4 sub plan mandals which out of the boundaries of Scheduled Areas in the East Godavari District. The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) with its head quarter located at Rampachodavaram covering total 741 villages. Konda Reddis are the categorised as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) whose population was 40 percent of the total Scheduled Tribe population as per 2011 census. The Scheduled Area of the study district spreads over in 11 mandals in Two Revenue Divisions (Rampachodavaram and Yetapaka) and ST Population is 220245 (66.68%) of the total population 330281.

The study was conducted in Rampachodavaram Division consists of 7 mandals spread over in 120 GPs. The Government notified 247 Gram Sabhas covering 588 habitations for the purpose of the implementation of PESA Act. The study mandal Devipatnam is having 14 GP covering 27 Gram Sabhas. Infact the GSs 27 were notified to cover the 78 habitations. The PESA Act says that the Gram Sabha may be constituted at habitation or group of habitation level for effective local governance. Of the total 78 habitations 41 habitations are situated within the distance of 2 km to the notified GSs, 33 GSs within the range of 2 to 5 Km while 4 habitations are spread over in above 5km to 30 km. Thus, the constitution of GSs are not according to the spirit of the PESA Act.

### Profile of the Study Village Manturu

The total households are 8,711 in Devipatnam Mandal, covering 28,178 Population as per 2011 census (Male: 13,669; Female: 14,509; Children 2,998 (Boys: 1, 485; Girls: 1,513). Of the total Population ST Population is 16,394 and remaining covered under Other Population. Thus, the non-tribals constitute 42 percent while ST is 58 percent. Manturu is one of the Schedule Villages in Devipatnam Mandal. Manturu Gram Panchayat comprises of Madipalli and Penikalapadu hamlets. The total house holds are 489 with 1290 population.

### Sources of Livelihood

Agriculture is the major source of livelihood for tribals. All the ST households depend on podu cultivation as well as settled cultivation plots. There is a check dam in the village which was expected to provide irrigation facility to 100 acres of land. But the check dam has remained a nonfunctional structure due to damage to the structure. No steps were taken to get it repaired by ITDA. In 2001 the ITDA, Rampachodavaram took up a Lift Irrigation Scheme to facilitate irrigation for 200 acres of land. This scheme was washed away due to heavy Godavari floods. Therefore, there is no single irrigation scheme to mitigate the problem of tribal farmers.

### Employment and Migration

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREA) ensures wage employment for the tribals without any restriction on the maximum number of days. However, tribals are hardly getting 100 days wage



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employment in a calendar year. The wage seekers are able to get Rs.100 an average wage per day. Due to lack of employment, tribals are compelled to go for migration crossing the boundaries of district and state. The phenomenon of migration started 5 years back. The migrants are mostly youth. At the time of survey, it was reported that there are 50 youth in distress migration, of whom 10 are women while 40 are men. Some of the youth migrated to work in textile industries in Chennai and other places in Tamilnadu. While some youth went for fishing activity in Tungabhadra dam in Karnataka State, Mahbubnagar in Telangana State, Narmada Dam in Madhya Pradesh etc., They usually return to village during Sankranthi (Pongal-during January) festival and stay back for one or two months.

On an enquiry into the number of government job holders among the tribals in the village, an interesting fact had emerged. After the Independence till today very few people could secure the government jobs. So far four tribal members could secure government jobs like teacher post, extra department postal worker, Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) and forest staff. The earliest posting for a tribal was reported as forest guard way back in the year 1968. There are about 50 youth in the village who have completed or discontinued their degree (15), Intermediate (15), Tenth Standard (10) and below tenth standards (10). Thus, a greater number of youths is unemployed in the village.

Tribals used to borrow money for agriculture purposes on payment of Rs.3 interest per hundred rupees. The lenders lend money only for commercial crops to tribal farmers. Tribal farmers have to depend on private money lenders since most of the tribals do not have land deeds/pattas over their cultivated plots in the village. The following paragraph further presents what was the reason for this situation?

### Land holdings and Issues

Non-tribals started entering the village during the post-independence era. Two or three non-tribals came to the village as forest contractors and grabbed the tribal lands in the year 1949. Subsequently some of the non-tribal families started coming to the village in the name of arrack business. There was a huge land struggle triggered in the year 1968-69 under the leadership of CPI ML party opposing the non-tribals' cultivations. The land struggle helped tribals to regain the lands lost to non-tribals. The left wing party distributed lands of 1 to 1 and half acres to 50 Kondareddi tribal households covering an extent of 165 acres. Now the number of original 50 tribal households swelled into 85. The lands are still under the possession and enjoyment of tribal families. However, the tribal families are not having any Ryotwari Settlement Patta or land deeds over the lands held by them to show their ownership. The ownership of the lands is still with the non-tribals. But tribals have been in continuous possession and enjoyment of land for last 46 years. The Land Acquisition Officers under Polavaram Project are paying land compensation for acquisition of lands in this village to non-tribals although the lands have been in physical possession of tribals. The actions of Land Acquisition Officers are depriving tribals to get either land to land or monetary compensation for the lands slipping from their hands. Only 4 tribal families have settlement pattas in this village. Tribals also have podu lands to an extent of 35 acres in the village. Cashew and few mango species are found in the podu fields. The average size of land holding among the tribals is 2 to 4 acres.

Tribal farmers are lifting the water from Godavari River using plastic tubes for cultivation of their crops. They are hardly getting water for 80 acres through this privately arranged lift irrigation tool. They grow paddy, commercial crops like maize, chilies and pulses etc. The podu lands are completely rain-fed. The shift over to commercial crops had started 30 years back and it replaced the growing of food crops -small millets.

The village is surrounded by unreserved forests. The reserved forest also exists within the customary boundary of Manturu village. Tribals used to collect beedi (tendu), Nelavemu (*Andrographispaniculata*), Gum karaya, Adda leaves, bamboo etc., for their sustenance. For last few years the village has been neglected by the Government due to construction of Polavaram Project since the village is expected to be submerged.



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## Forest Lands

Due to lack of awareness tribals failed adequately to file claims seeking both individual and community forest land rights under the Forest Rights Recognition Act 2006. Some of the tribals filed claims but were rejected saying that the claimed land is out of the reserved forest.

As per the report by March 2015, about 15 individual claims were rejected covering an extent of 30.07 acres of forest land. However, the government granted 27 title deeds in favor of VSS over the land an extent of 758.29 acres instead of community/Gram Sabha. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs already considered granting pattas to VSS as illegal and directed the authorities to withdraw the titles granted to them. Thus the ensured Act has not provided any benefit to tribals in the village.

## Livestock

Most of the households have livestock like fowls etc. But about 10-15 families have goats and cows. There are 300 goats, cows around more than 1, 000 and chicks around 2, 000. Besides, 15 to 20 tribal households have fishing nets to survive on fishing in river Godavari. Tribals used to face Godavari floods during July to October months. The village will be marooned during the floods. The flood affected tribals will move to hills and come back after normal situation of the furious Godavari inundation. Tribals usually stock the food grains in advance to this flood season. Government also supplies the additional subsidized rice, kerosene, dal etc., during floods. The village will be cut off from the rest of the world during flood season.

## Health

Manturu is within the limits of Kondamodalu PHC which is at 15 km distance. One has to travel by boat on river Godavari to reach Kondamodalu. There is a health sub-center in the study village which is being operated by medical staff without any pucca building. A building was sanctioned few years ago but not yet constructed. The villagers usually go to Devipatnam mandal head quarter at 9 km distance for medical treatment. Due to lack of adequate medical facility three infant deaths were reported during last year (2 female and one male). There are 50 widows in the village. This is as a result of deaths reported due to consumption of arrack by their counter spouses. They prefer to take herbal medicines and then later try with allopathic medicine for health disorders. They prefer to meet private Registered Medical Practitioners (RMP) and if problem is not resolved then they will go to government doctors. The cost of treatment at RMP is cheaper than at Government Hospital.

## Education

There is a primary school up to the 4<sup>th</sup> standard. The total strength of students is 40. Boys are 25 while Girls 15. Two teachers were posted for teaching in the school. But at present only one teacher is working on deputation. Even he is not attending the school regularly. One can guess the status of education in the village.

## Status of Implementation of PESA Act

With regard to the implementation of PESA Act a Gram Sabha was notified for Manturu GP. Vice President-Chedala Veerapureddy and Secretary- M. Prasad were elected for conducting the official business of Gram Sabha. But no single meeting was conducted by them due to lack of awareness and facilitation to run the business.

## Customary Mode Dispute Resolutions

The PESA Act empowers Gram Sabha to resolve traditional disputes through customary mode of dispute resolution. However, in the village there is a local forum to resolve disputes traditionally in the village but not Gram Sabha. This is nothing to do with the Gram Sabha notified under PESA Act which is empowered to resolve the disputes through customary mode of dispute resolution. Both men and women participate in the dispute resolution process. Presently the Vice President of Gram Sabha who is an elder in the village is leading this forum. This forum usually resolves matrimonial, property, traditional festival and simple quarrels etc. Villagers prefer to go to this forum for resolution of problems instead of seeking the assistance from Government Institutions. The tribal leader Chadala Veerapu Reddy who is leading the forum says that due to infiltration of non tribals and their influence over the functioning of traditional forum is often facing difficulty to end the problem. Polygamy still exists among the



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Kondareddi families. But the tribal man has to ensure the livelihood of his spouses.

### **Socio, Economic Entitlements**

An approval from the Gram Sabha is required for identification of beneficiaries as well as selection of them for the implementation of poverty alleviation programs. Government departments should also seek an approval from the Gram Sabha for the implementation of socio, economic programs under the PESA. On contrary the field staffs of government institutions or groups formed by the departments are involved in deciding the identification of beneficiaries under the schemes. Except social security schemes, MNERGS, ICDS Schemes and supply of ration to the households, no other major government schemes are implemented in the village benefitting tribals or extending economic support. Due to lack of awareness among the tribals, they had reported the age particulars to the enrollment staff at the time of enumeration. Tribals are presently deprived to access the benefits of socio, economic entitlements in view of wrong entries in the revenue records in relation to the age.

### **Land Acquisition Matters**

Before taking up of land acquisition the authorities concerned should consult the Mandal Praja Parishad as per the provisions of PESA State law, and Gram Sabha in the case of Central Law. However, the land acquisition authorities who are acquiring the land for the purpose of Polavaram Project in the village are not consulting either the Gram Sabha or Mandal Praja Parishad. Thus, the land acquisition authorities are violating the provision of PESA Law.

The operation of Gram Sabha has virtually remained as non-functional in the village. There is no difference in the situation before or after the commencement of the PESA Act. The provisions in relation to the role of Gram Sabha in relation to the implementation of Forest Rights Recognition Act are not in operational.

The results of the Study shows that the AP State PESA Act 1998 and Rules 2011 made there under are not in conformity with the Central PESA 1996 which mandates the States having Schedule V Areas should bring legislation not in contradiction and within the frame work of Central PESA Act. Thus, the State has failed to bring legislation in consonance with the provisions of Central PESA. The field study in Scheduled Village-Manturu further shows that even the implementation of State PESA has remained as non starter even after nearly two decades have passed.

### **Recommendations**

1. Legal awareness among all the primary stakeholders must be provided for effective functioning of the Gram Sabha. The role of women must be ensured in the decision making process at Gram Sabha.
2. Notification issued for Gram Sabha should be revisited for re notification of Gram Sabhas as per the definition of 'Village' under PESA Act and letter and spirit of the law.
3. Amendments to be made to the existing AP PESA Act 1998 in conformity with the provisions of Central Law. Similarly, Rules are also to be amended in consonance with the provisions of Central PESA Law.
4. The role of Gram Sabha should be ensured in the local governance as per the provisions of the PESA Law without any executive interference and existing functional bodies of the State departments should be made accountable to the Gram Sabha. All these bodies should function by providing an additional value to the decision making process of Gram Sabha and its role and without any action detrimental to the powers and functions assigned to the Gram Sabha. Executive decisions at Mandal or ITDA level in relation to the subjects mentioned in the PESA provisions shall be in concurrence with the decision of Gram Sabha.
5. There must be a written circular from the Government that all the departments should scrupulously follow the provisions of PESA Act without any deviations. The budget for any program shall be released based on an express statement of the head of the institution that in compliance of the provisions of PESA Act was attended.



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The PESA Act has remained virtually a non- starter and the tribals do not have any awareness about the provisions of the Act. This is evident from the factual situation in the study village Manturu. No training was facilitated to the elected Vice President and Secretary of the PESA –Gram Sabha so far. There is no impact of the PESA Act on any activity of the Government. The State Government is continuing its activities without taking in to consideration of the PESA Act. Several committees or forums are in operation in parallel to the constitutionally created Gram Sabha and disempowering the Adivasis.

No steps are taken by the concerned departments to facilitate the functioning of Gram Sabha and play a constitutional role in the local governance. Some of the development as well as revenue/land acquisition authorities are bypassing the provisions of PESA Act and undermining the role of Gram Sabha and other Panchayat raj Institutions. For instance land acquisition under Polavaram Project and implementation of socio, economic programs and implementation of Forest Rights Recognition Act has been carried out without consulting the Gram Sabha and other local governance institutions. The Government departments are functioning as usual in designing the programs without consulting the concerned Gram Sabhas as envisaged under the law. This sharp contradiction is weakening the role of constitutional bodies and affecting the empowerment of Adivasis. The traditional forums that are led by few leaders are not yet replaced by the broad, democratic, vibrant unit of local governance i.e. Gram Sabha in the village in relation to dispute resolution process. The field study findings are also supported by the observations of the Mungerkar Committee (Planning Commission, 2009) which asserts that ‘the irony is that enactment of PESA Act in 1996 that aimed at erasing that contradiction through creating space for the community and its tradition in the legal frame and acknowledging its competence to manage its tradition has remained virtually a nonstarter’.

- Further efforts should be initiated to bring transparency related to the use of funds often handled by the elected members and other administrative committees functioning at the Panchayat level/Gram Sabha.

like Dantewada, the Left-wing extremists control the local self-government institutions indirectly. This kind of situation creates a crucial threat to PESA and the empowerment of Gram Sabha/ Panchayats.

- The study emphasises that effective implementation of Gram Panchayat shall lead to reduced extremism, so the study recommends that the personal profile of all candidates contesting in the local body elections should be checked thoroughly.
- Efforts should be initiated to bring transparency related to the use of funds often handled by the elected members and other administrative committees functioning at the Panchayat level

Development in the tribal areas should not be solely in the hands of the State and the district administration. As our field study indicates, areas which have a functional and efficient Gram Sabha also see comparatively lower Naxal impact and influence. The government, with its wide network of road construction, has been successful in reaching the farthest of villages in terms of the PDS scheme to ensure food security and provision of clean drinking water but health facilities, education, and employment need to be taken up on a priority basis. These services could be best provided through Gram Panchayats.

- The socially backward tribals form the major support base for Naxalites because of inequality, illiteracy and lack of opportunities. It is important to prevent these people from falling into the Naxal trap. Panchayats and Gram Sabhas should have mandatory monitoring power for providing basic services.
- Education should be imparted in tribal language at the primary level. Teachers recruited for primary and higher education should preferably be local, and this should be compulsory for primary education. These teachers should be trained in tribal values and ethos. Teachers are an easy target by the Naxal forces to get essential items like medicines; so they should be accorded special security provisions.
- Health services in the tribal areas have to be given top priority, and it is to be monitored monthly at the



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Panchayat, district, State and Central levels. Paramedical staff from the local youth, i.e. both male and female, should be imparted training under the skill development programme at Tehsil and district headquarters.

At present, the Chhattisgarh government is working with a three-pronged approach of trust, development and security in the Naxal-affected districts under study. The fourth dimension of self-governance by the tribal villagers should be added to instil faith in themselves and reduce their dependence on extremists. Self-governance is possible through empowering Gram Sabha as per the provisions of PESA.

- One must note that while the approach of the State is integrated, the emphasis is strong on the construction of roads and setting up of security camps which are creating more distrust and insecurity in the tribal communities.
- One also has to note that as a long-term solution, the effective functioning of the Gram Sabha is crucial to tackling Naxalism, but it can function only when there is a minimal level of peace. Therefore, the requirement of State security cannot be done away with completely. The following steps can be followed in this regard:
- The functioning of Gram Sabha and peacekeeping activities of the State police department should be linked in such a way that Gram Sabha can approach the police whenever required.
- While doing so, the Gram Sabha can monitor and assess the activities of community police in tribal areas, and in case the Gram Sabha finds something counter-productive regarding the community policing system, it can call for an immediate meeting with the DC and report the same.
- The existing political vacuum in tribal societies is the result of the inactive civil society sphere. Thus, active involvement of civil society can gradually usher non-violent political culture through the process of political socialisation and political communication. One way is to promote self-help groups (SHG) and use it as a community platform to sell tribal products properly linked with Gram Sabha.
- Adequate training is required for the Vice President and Secretary elected for the notified Gram Sabhas. Legal awareness among all the primary stakeholders must be provided for effective functioning of the Gram Sabha. The role of women must be ensured in the decision making process at Gram Sabha.
- Notification issued for Gram Sabha should be revisited for re notification of Gram Sabhas as per the definition of 'Village' under PESA Act and letter and spirit of the law.
- Amendments to be made to the existing AP PESA Act 1998 in conformity with the provisions of Central Law. Similarly Rules are also to be amended in consonance with the provisions of Central PESA Act.
- The role of Gram Sabha should be ensured in the local governance as per the provisions of the PESA Act without any executive interference and existing functional bodies of the State departments should be made accountable to the Gram Sabha. All these bodies should function by providing an additional value to the decision making process of Gram Sabha and its role and without any action detrimental to the powers and functions assigned to the Gram Sabha. Executive decisions at mandal or ITDA level in relation to the subjects mentioned in the PESA provisions shall be in concurrence with the decision of Gram Sabha.
- There must be a written circular from the Government that all the departments should scrupulously follow the provisions of PESA Act without any deviations. The budget for any program shall be released based on an express statement of the head of the institution that in compliance of the provisions of PESA Act was attended.

To conclude, henceforth, it is important to make the concept of self-governance an equally significant part of the integrated approach apart from security and development.



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