

SR SANKARAN CHAIR

Research on Rural Labour Matters • Through the Prism Equity Matters

GOVERNANCE, RESOURCES AND LIVELIHOODS OF ADIVASIS IN INDIA: IMPLEMENTATION OF PESA AND FRA

POLICY BRIEF



S. R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour)

National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj

(Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India)

Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030

www.nird.org.in

NIRD&PR's VISION

- To focus on the policies and programme that benefit the rural poor, strive to energise the democratic decentralisation processes, improve the operation and efficiency of rural development personnel, promote transfer of technology through its social laboratories, technology park and create environmental awareness.
- As a 'think-tank' for the Ministry of Rural Development, NIRD&PR while acting as a repository of knowledge on rural development would assist the Ministry in policy formulation and choice of options in rural development to usher in the change.

NIRD&PR's MISSION

- To examine and analyse the factors contributing to the improvement of economic and social well-being of people in rural areas on a sustainable basis with focus on the rural poor and the other disadvantaged groups through research, action research and consultancy efforts.
- To facilitate the rural development efforts with particular emphasis and focus on the rural poor by improving the knowledge, skills and attitudes of rural development officials and non-officials through organising training, workshops and seminars.

About NIRD&PR

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj continuously strives to serve the nation through training, research, action research and consultancy activities for development of the rural poor and enhance their quality of life. It aims to:

- Organise training programmes, conferences, seminars and workshops for senior level development managers, elected representatives, bankers, NGOs and other stakeholders.
- Undertake, aid, promote and coordinate research.
- Study functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and Rural Development programmes across the States.
- Analyse and propose solutions to problems in planning and implementation of the programmes for rural development; and
- Develop content and disseminate information through periodicals, reports, e-modules and other publications.

Considering the challenges faced by the Government in the development of a large section of rural poor across the country through its various policies and programmes, NIRD&PR as apex training Institute in the field of rural development has to cater to the training and capacity development needs of a large clientele. To achieve these objectives, a nation-wide network of training infrastructure has to play its rightful role. The clientele include a large number of elected PRI representatives at different levels, rural development functionaries, NGOs, Bankers and other stakeholders. Capacity building of rural development personnel and elected representatives is an intrinsic part of the entire rural development process. It helps to improve their managerial skills while keeping them abreast with the latest changes in strategies, government policies and programmes to augment their knowledge and working efficiency resulting in strengthening of the delivery mechanism for the benefit of all the stakeholders. The challenge is huge and NIRD&PR has been able to play its role in the country's rural development initiatives by facilitating qualitative changes in programmes implementation through a process of training, research, action research, consultancy, information dissemination and information building on a continual basis. This has enabled the Institute to emerge as the National Apex Institute for capacity development in the area of rural development.

In its continuous effort to develop managerial skills of functionaries in rural development process, the Institute started one-year fully residential Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management (PGDRDM) and two one-year PG Diploma programmes in Distance Mode namely, Sustainable Rural Development (PGD-SRD) and Tribal Development Management (PGD-TDM).

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FOREWORD

Improving the system of governance in tribal India and enhancing the livelihood of Adivasis dependent on natural resources has been an important focus for policy planners. In this context, proper implementation of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 and Forest Rights Act, 2006 are paradigm shifts that can impact the tribal communities favourably. These Acts empower them on matters relating to decision-making and development of their community by ensuring access to resources and rights which facilitate self-governance.

The National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) under the auspices of S. R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour), organised a two-day national seminar on 'Governance, Resources and Livelihoods of Adivasis in India: Implementation of PESA and FRA' during 18-19 November, 2016 to discuss the progress, identify bottlenecks and explore the ways of improving efficacy of these Acts and related programmes which are in operation in India.

The seminar brought together the academia (across disciplines), policy makers, NGOs and development practitioners to discuss in detail the functioning of these interventions and find a way forward for their effective implementation. We are grateful to the chief guest of the seminar, Shri Ch. Vidyasagar Rao, Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu for his august presence, encouragement and valuable advice. I thank and richly complement my colleagues at NIRD&PR, both faculty and staff for the success of the seminar.

I have no doubt that the deliberations of the seminar offer wide ranging recommendations in a number of areas to strengthen the implementation of PESA, FRA and other programmes relating to governance and livelihood issues of tribals in India.

This publication is placed in the public domain for wider dissemination and discussion. I hope it will prove to be a valuable document in guiding policy makers, academicians, researchers, social partners and activists to work towards improvement of system of governance in tribal areas and livelihood conditions of tribals in India.



Dr. W. R. Reddy,
Director General, NIRD&PR
February, 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is a concern among policy planners and social thinkers as to how to protect the current source of livelihood of tribal communities and promote their well-being through vibrant and pro-poor institutions and through the provision of tenure security of resources. In this context the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) and Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, (FRA) are progressive laws that can impact the tribal communities favourably by ensuring access to resources and rights which facilitate self-governance.

In order to assess the progress, identify bottlenecks and explore ways of improving efficacy of the above Acts as well as other programmes functioning in the tribal areas, a two-day national seminar was organised by S.R. Sankaran Chair, NIRD&PR at Hyderabad during 18-19 November, 2016.

We are grateful to Shri Ch. Vidyasagar Rao, Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, who was the chief guest for the inaugural session of the seminar and for his valuable suggestions for improving the well-being of tribal communities. We are also grateful to Dr. W.R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, NIRD&PR for his welcome address, Professor R. Radhakrishna, Chairman, S.R. Sankaran Advisory Committee for presiding over the function and for his presidential remarks and Mr. Tevita G. Boseiwaqa Tagniaulau, Director General, Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) for being the guest of honour.

We are grateful to Professor K.B. Saxena, Professor Ch. Hanumantha Rao and Professor Amit Bhaduri for delivering the keynote address, valedictory lecture and for presiding over the valedictory session of the seminar, respectively. The seminar was graced by a number of eminent scholars, policy planners and civil society organisations. We thank all the participants, paper writers and commentators for their valuable suggestions. We specifically thank Shri C.R. Bijoy for his role in improving this document.

We have received generous support and encouragement from NIRD&PR authorities and those associated with the S.R. Sankaran Chair. We are thankful to Dr. W.R. Reddy, IAS, Director General and Professor R. Radhakrishna, for their continuous encouragement and support for the seminar. Our sincere thanks are due to several officials including Shri Parimal Singh, IAS, Under Secretary to Hon'ble Governor at Raj Bhawan, Mumbai for their help relating to the seminar.

This booklet mainly contains suggestions from the deliberations of the seminar. We hope that it will be useful to researchers, policy makers, development practitioners and all those interested in the study of issues pertaining to India's tribals and their well-being.

Kailash Sarap

Professor, S.R. Sankaran Chair

SECTION - I

INTRODUCTION

Adivasis in India, numbering 104.3 million people belonging to various tribes (705) as per 2011 census, constitute about nine per cent of the total population of India. These communities in general and those who are living in hinterland States in particular, are one of the most vulnerable, marginalised and isolated / excluded social groups in the development process. Despite impressive economic growth in recent years and specific measures (protective and promotional) taken for tribal development since independence, these communities are still lagging behind in terms of several socio-economic indicators. There is a concern over how to protect the current sources of livelihood and promote economic and human development of these communities through vibrant and pro-poor institutions.

The New Era of PESA and FRA

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act ushered in a national framework of decentralisation and local self-government through a three-tier Panchayati Raj (PR) system. While all the provisions in the 73rd amendment were not applicable to the Scheduled Areas, the provisions that suited customs / traditions of tribals and recognised their right to protect and manage their resources and livelihoods were extended to these areas in 1996 through an Act of Parliament - the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 popularly known as PESA. It is applicable to Fifth Schedule Areas comprising 10 States, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Telangana (newly formed State in 2014).

A decade later, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, became operational since 1st January, 2008. FRA provides substantive rights on forest land to forest dwelling scheduled tribes and other traditional forest dwellers and created an institutional mechanism for recognition of rights and the power to protect, preserve, conserve and manage community forest resources.

FRA and PESA are considered to be paradigm shifts that can impact the tribal communities favourably by ensuring access to resources and rights which facilitate

self-governance. However, despite the enactment of PESA Act nearly two decades ago and FRA a decade ago, these historical legislations have failed to impact the livelihoods of Adivasis.

Need for Dialogue

Examining the problems of implementation, opportunities and challenges, for effective implementation of PESA and FRA and other development programmes which are in operation in tribal areas the S.R. Sankaran Chair at NIRD&PR organised a two-day national seminar on 'Governance, Resources and Livelihoods of Adivasis in India: Implementation of PESA and FRA' during November 18-19, 2016. The broad focus areas of the seminar were:

- Governance issues and functioning of existing institutions and their current status of implementation relating to PESA
- Displacement of tribal persons, acquisition and alienation of land and PESA, FRA and LARR: What were intended to be achieved?
- Implementation of different provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006
- Synergy in the implementation of FRA with other related Acts/policies (such as PESA, MGNREGS)
- Habitat rights – A way forward to document, recognise and respect the cultural and religious practices of communities
- Minor Forest Produce (MFP); its marketing and value chain
- Functioning of other institutions/schemes such as ITDA, Tribal-Sub Plan, MGNREGS, and Large Area Multipurpose Societies and synergy in their working.
- Working/micro/management plans of departments and ownership of MFP by the gram sabha: How to resolve conflicts?

SECTION - II

SUGGESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTS AND PROGRAMMES

The participants, cutting across different disciplines and backgrounds ranging from researchers, policy makers, activists, NGOs and field practitioners, identified a number of key issues and concerns, and suggested a number of measures to make the implementation of PESA, FRA and other development programmes more effective. Five technical sessions were devoted for deliberations on the above themes. Suggestions from the deliberations of the seminar are given below.

Broad Suggestions

Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996

- A. Issue Directions under Proviso 3 (Directions to the States regarding administration of Scheduled Areas by the Union Government) and Proviso 5 (Directions regarding Central/State Acts not to apply or to apply with modification to the Centre/States by Governor) of the 'provisions as to the administration and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes' under Fifth Schedule of Article 244 (1) of the Constitution:
- Nullifying all upgradation of Panchayats to Municipalities in Scheduled Areas since the passage of 74th Amendment to the Constitution (1992)
 - Amending the State Panchayat Raj laws to ensure compliance with PESA
 - Amending all relevant subject laws of the States to comply with PESA
 - Listing out all scheduled tribe habitations in all the States which are outside the Scheduled Area where the scheduled tribes are the largest community as compared to other communities and the States to make proposals for their notification as Scheduled Areas
 - Amending and/or enacting legislations on prevention of alienation of tribal lands and restoration of alienated tribal lands, preventing transfer of lands from non-tribal lands to another non-tribal and amongst scheduled tribes and instead transferred to the respective gram sabha on payment of market-based compensation paid from Land Consolidation

Fund (LCF) instituted by the State government for this specific purpose. The gram sabha may use such lands as village commons or allot to eligible scheduled tribe families. Such lands shall be non-transferable titled lands to the gram sabha

- Rationalising Fifth Schedule Area by reorganising Scheduled Area into compact Scheduled Area Districts, Tahsils/Talukas gram panchayats and revenue villages
 - Bringing forest land recognised as Community Forest Resource rights under Forest Rights Act, 2006 in Scheduled Area villages into the Scheduled Area
- B. Union Government to enact the provisions of Municipalities (Extension to Scheduled Areas) bill in the parliament
- C. Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Panchayati Raj to examine the functioning of Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule as well as the Autonomous Councils constituted through State legislations to formulate the appropriate arrangement patterned on Sixth Schedule for incorporating in the State Panchayat Raj Acts of the Scheduled Area States through a Direction under Proviso 3 of the Fifth Schedule by the Union Government and/or Direction by Governor under Proviso 5 of Fifth Schedule
- D. President of India to issue directions to the Governors of Scheduled Area States to forthwith and unambiguously fulfill all their constitutional obligations under Fifth Schedule of the Constitution

Specific Recommendations

Proper Functioning of Gram Sabha

- The gram sabha in Scheduled Areas should be at the level of ‘a habitation or a group of habitations, or a hamlet or a group of hamlets’ and notified or re-notified where necessary to be strictly in compliance with PESA.

- Legal awareness among all the primary stakeholders should be provided for effective functioning of the gram sabha. The role of women must be ensured in the decision making process at gram sabha.
- The role of gram sabha should be ensured in the local governance as per the provisions of PESA without any executive interference.
- Executive actions at tehsil/taluka or ITDA level on the subjects falling under the purview of PESA provisions shall be in accordance with the decision of gram sabha.
- All development activities should be in accordance with the provisions of PESA, and the decisions of the gram sabhas and the gram panchayats as required for local self-governance.
- Demarcate the habitats of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in revenue lands in the Fifth Schedule and secure and protect the habitat for continued access and use by PVTGs.

Forest Rights Act, 2006

There was a general consensus that the tenurial security along with governance rights provided by FRA, 2006 could enhance and sustain the livelihood of forest dwellers. The participants made the following key recommendations:

General Suggestions

Union government to issue directions under Section 12 of FRA to all States to:

- Review and withdraw all forest offences falling within the purview of FRA within a period of one year
- Give first priority to determine and approve Community Forest Resource Rights [sec.3(1) (i)] in all eligible villages and habitat rights of PVTGs [Sec, 3(1)(e)] and to constitute community forest resource management committees [Rule 4(1) (e)]
- Make gram sabha's consent mandatory for any afforestation, conservation and management activities by any external entity on forest land recognised under FRA

- Ensure that FRA right holders are provided credit from financial institutions
- Ensure that all forest rights of all eligible Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) are recognised.
- Amend Indian Forest Act, 1927 and State forest laws, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and Forest Conservation Act, 1980 to comply with FRA.

Gender Justice

- Ensure that women are represented at least in equal numbers on all the decision making forums, the Forest Rights Committees (FRCs), gram sabhas and as many as possible in Sub-Divisional Level Committees (SDLCs) and District Level Committees (DLCs).
- The relevant government departments should encourage the representation of displaced families at the local/village level FRCs/gram sabhas and other bodies. FRCs should include women from the displaced communities and the concerns that they bring to those bodies should be foregrounded.

Specific Suggestions

- The process of implementation needs to be scaled-up covering all the required provisions under the law.
- Capacity building and training of the statutory authorities, FRCs, gram sabhas, SDLCs and DLCs should be institutionalised with an ongoing programme covering all the FRA potential areas in a planned manner and in depth.
- Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights and Community Rights (CR) are to be given priority over Individual Forest Rights (IFR).
- Every village would have a CFR. Speedy processing of these CFR claims which are lying pending for a long time with the SDLC or DLC should be taken up in a time-bound manner.

- Titles are rejected without any reasoned explanation to the claimant and the gram sabhas. This is a clear violation of the Act. This needs to be addressed.
- The claimants and gram sabhas are to be informed about the status of the claims that they have approved within a specified time by the SDLC and DLC, who cannot delay decisions on the claims over long period without any explanation.
- Issuing titles stipulating conditions are not permissible under the law. Where issued, they are to be reissued without the conditions.
- The records of rights have to be updated as per the titles issued under FRA.
- Conflicts arising due to overlap between IFR, CR and CFR titles within the village are to be reconciled by all the statutory authorities, viz., the gram sabhas, SDLC and DLC.
- A clear distinction is to be maintained, recorded and reported between CR, CFR and development rights under Section (3) (2) instead of clubbing all as community rights as is being done now.
- There is no accountability fixed by the Central and State governments for prompt and proper implementation. This needs to be urgently rectified.
- Dilution of FRA provisions by whosoever needs to be challenged by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA). For example, the decision of the Maharashtra Forest Department to promote Joint Forest Management (JFM) and notification of Village Forest Rules are clear violation of FRA.
- Titles that are given in the name of Panchayats, Van Suraksha Samithis etc., need to be replaced with the name of gram sabhas within a specified time.
- There is no mechanism to support the gram sabhas of villages that have already obtained CFR titles. Post-CFR claim villages need to be supported.

- Despite several guidelines from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, there are attempts made by the Forest Department to promote JFM in areas falling under the purview of FRA. This is a violation of FRA as the gram sabha is the statutory authority to conserve, protect and manage the forests.
- Ensure inclusion of wife's name in the title as required under FRA and all women names in household list. Recognise and earmark single women and daughters' claims wherever such claims are submitted.
- Direct all gram sabhas to ensure that women are included at least equally in all their committees relating to management of CFRs.
- FRA applies to Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs). SDLCs and DLCs, especially in Scheduled Areas, are rejecting the claims of OTFDs despite gram sabha's approval stating falsely that FRA applies only to STs, or rejecting the claims of OTFDs alleging lack of specific evidences for the 75 year residence criteria.
- Take urgent steps to dismantle and/or reconstitute the State Level Monitoring Committees (SLMC), DLCs and SDLCs that are not constituted as per the provisions of FRA. Dismantle sub-committees constituted to carry out some or all functions of the statutory authorities as it ultra vires the law. The Tribal Department, being the nodal agency for FRA implementation at the State level, is to be provided all necessary authority, infrastructural and human resource support for effective implementation of CFR in the State.
- Forest villages and un-surveyed villages should be identified and listed out for conversion as revenue villages as required under FRA.
- Data collection and compilation as per various categories of forest rights should be carried out and errors identified and rectified at all levels.
- DLCs, on a priority basis, should facilitate the community tenures of PVTGs over their customary habitat and habitation through consultation with traditional leaders and other PVTG members.

Tribal Sub-Plan and Other Tribal Development Programmes

- Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) should be revitalised with adequate and efficient human and other resources to function as nodal agencies in Scheduled Areas.
- In Scheduled Areas, as required under PESA, the Tribal Sub-Plan should be under the control of and supervised by the gram sabhas and gram panchayats. Under the PESA structure, the gram sabhas have the power to issue utilisation certificates for development work undertaken in the villages.

Land Acquisition, Displacement & Alienation in Scheduled Areas: PESA, FRA & LARR

- Ensure no land acquisition is carried out in Scheduled Areas as far as possible as provided for in the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act of 2013 (LARR).
- Ensure that the consent provisions for land acquisition and forest diversion are strictly followed with adequate participation of women and with 50 per cent quorum. If violated, prosecute the concerned officials.
- Afforestation programmes including using of CAMPA funds should be carried out in forest lands after the concerned gram sabha certifies that FRA implementation is complete and gives consent for the programme. Afforestation programme shall not be carried out on revenue lands used by scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and other weaker sections and without the consent of concerned gram sabha.
- Ensure that there is awareness of the provisions of LARR as well as PESA and FRA along with related other laws such as the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and relevant orders, directions and guidelines among the concerned administrative and police personnel, besides Adivasis.

Agricultural and Non-farm Sector Development and Other Welfare Programmes

- To enable tribal farmers/FRA beneficiaries gain easy access to farm inputs, the State should establish Farmers' Facilitation Centres (FFC) for clusters of villages to ensure the availability of all the required services and facilities at one place. The logistics provided in the FFC should ensure both backward and forward linkages covering financial, technical and marketing support. The FFC should house suppliers of inputs such as seeds, fertilisers and pesticides and provide farm machinery on custom-hiring basis.
- Extend all rural development and other welfare schemes that are available to the farmers belonging to revenue villages to the forest villages by converting forest villages into revenue villages.

Convergence of MGNREGS with FRA

- Implement FRA in conjunction with MGNREGS and other such programmes initiated by States for the development of land, forest and watersheds in the villages.
- There should be awareness among the implementing agencies about the convergence that can be taken up in IFR / CR / CFR lands.

Marketing and Value Addition

- Producer organisations or collectives such as cooperatives, producer companies, and SHGs and their federations help these farmers/forest produce collectors to realise economies of scale and participate in modern competitive markets.
- Ensure to build the capacity of small farmers to manage their institutions such as collective markets for crops, vegetables and forest produce to benefit from value chain crops and forest produce. Tribal farmers' SHG federations should be groomed to be alternative channels for providing efficient marketing services.

- SHGs of farmers and women should be formed and enabled to take up value addition measures for locally available forest produce. There should be periodic trainings/capacity building initiatives, demonstrations with the support of professionals/trainers. They should assess the efficiency or sustainability of these initiatives in terms of accessing subsidies, receipt of remunerative price, credit linkage, profitability, etc.
- Warehouse facility: Storage/ godowns should be established at the cluster of villages/gram panchayat level so that farmers/forest produce collectors can store their produce and based on warehouse receipts realise a part of the market price and can sell the same as and when the market price is favourable. It can be also procured by State agencies at reasonable prices.
- The ownership, collection and marketing of MFPs are to be controlled by the gram sabha as per PESA and FRA provisions and this has to be ensured.

Human Capital, Leadership Development, Awareness Building and Extension Services

- Strengthen education especially quality education (both in local dialect as well as in English medium) and health services in tribal areas to ensure that basic services are effectively accessible
- Enhance awareness and capacities of tribal youth with existing literacy levels and augment their skills for inducting them in various services in rural areas and for moving to self or wage employment in the non-farm sector on regular basis
- All trainings for forest / tribal development officers and staff on FRA, PESA and other tribal development programmes; forest and livelihoods should be included in the module and they should be sensitised on gender issues
- Enhance the provision of extension workers (both male and female) with proper training in tribal areas

Role of Governor's Office

- As per para 3 of the 5th Schedule of the Constitution the Governor needs to dispatch an annual report or a report as and when it is required by the President of India. The Governors should ensure timely preparation and dispatch of such constitutionally mandatory reports and also their wide scale circulation among different stakeholders
- As per para 2 of 5th Schedule of the Constitution, the Governor, as the head of the State directly holds special responsibility and executive power over the Schedule Areas. So an effectively functioning '**Tribal Cell**' that would deal with Scheduled Areas and scheduled tribes is to be set up in the office of the Governor
- Ensure a strong functioning of '**Tribes Advisory Council**' (TAC) in each State with tribal representation

About S.R. Sankaran

Shri S. R. Sankaran, a Civil Servant, is known for his commitments and actions for the upliftment of the poor and the marginalised. The seamless integrity between his life, ideas and work was the unique dimension of his personality. As a Civil Servant, he took Constitution as a mandate and made every opportunity to put in practice the fundamental principles of equality, non-discrimination, justice and affirmative action in favour of the economically backward sections. He believed that his true vocation as a civil servant was to serve the people where the poor occupied the primacy of position. Within the poor, his concern was about SCs and STs as they have been at the lowest rung of the social hierarchy, wallowing in chronic misery and deprivation and subjected to daily acts of injustice and indignity.

The transformative role that Shri Sankaran as a Civil Servant, played in the lives of the poor is exemplary to date. His deep understanding of the social environment of the poor is remarkable. In his view, the poor are typically unorganised, hard to reach, inarticulate, often invisible by residing in periphery. Along with lack of access to land and other natural resources, lack of access to education makes them vulnerable to manipulation by adversaries they suffer leading them to internalise the ideology of dependence and submission. The conditions of poor can be compressed into five disabilities, such as lack of access to land and employment; unfree labour; low wages; institutionalised discrimination; and deprivation in social services. His work during his career and after retirement devoted to uplifting the poor by relieving them from such adversaries and organising them. While working for the poor he had not only used his professional skill but also brought to bear on the problem of human touch and his moral values.

Shri Sankaran was a legendary civil servant, a crusader for social justice, a civil rights activist, a perceptive critic of development and public policy with extraordinary sensitivity, clarity, and above all, an epitome of compassion. A single social goal of his entire life's work was the reduction of contradiction between political and socio-economic inequality.

S.R. Sankaran Chair

S. R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour) is instituted at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Govt. of India with the objective of promoting research on issues that would enhance understanding and help in improving the world of work and the life worlds of the rural labour. Collaborative research, seminars, workshops and policy dialogues involving institutions, organisations, policy makers and other stakeholders with similar objectives, and placing the results in the larger public domain through working papers, articles in learned journals, books and policy briefs are part of the activities set out for the Chair.



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