

Land as Private Property: Land Relations in the Hill Areas of North East India

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This is an ICSSR funded collaborative project with Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati, which started in January 2013. Dr. Gorky Chakraborty of IDSK is the co-investigator of the project. It dealt with identifying the causes as well as understanding the process of changes in Land Relations among the hill tribes of the region. The concept of land as property is a strange phenomenon to many tribal societies in the world. Understanding and analysing the changes related to such an institution is always a challenging task. How do the property relations emerge in land? What role does the external agency play in influencing such an order? Are the changes in the land relations endogenous to the tribal power structure? Is a different land use pattern a harbinger to a new set of land relations? Does the continuation of the customary laws prohibit bringing about progressive land legislations? How does the socio-cultural construct associated with land change with a change in land relations? A set of similarly inter-related questions emerge when one analyses issues related to land in the tribal societies located in different areas of NER. Field surveys have been made in seven states of the region. The final report was submitted to ICSSR in June 2014.