

ADS in introducing

Academy of Development Science



What characterises Academy of Development Science?

Academy of Development Science (ADS) was established as a people-oriented science and technology organisation concerned primarily with problems faced by village communities; particularly tribals. We have been working on rural development issues in four tribal villages in Maharashtra State since 1981.

Up to 2004 we worked intensively on issues such as traditional medicine and primary health care, conservation of plant genetic resources, grain banks for food security, employment generation through enterprises, education, and watershed development. Around 2000, however, land alienation emerged as a major threat for the tribal communities. ADS took up work on land rights and has since moved closer to a rights-based perspective.



What priority areas will ADS focus on in the coming four years?

We are deeply concerned about the increasing alienation and marginalisation of tribal lands and livelihoods. More and more tribal families are giving up their claims on land and turning to wage labour for their livelihood. ADS collaborates with other NGOs in the Konkan region to address land rights and land-based livelihoods of tribal families. We are also investing efforts in building people's institutions and facilitating a people-led process for community mobilisation and leadership.

ADS is presently focusing on the following issues:

- Securing tribal families' access and rights to land, water and forests
- Housing
- Food and nutritional security
- Agriculture
- Water conservation



What does ADS consider the main opportunities and threats/challenges in achieving its goals in the near future?

We regard the emerging tribal leadership and peoples' institutions, efforts by tribal communities to assert their rights, and pro-tribal forest land rights legislation as some of the main opportunities.

The main threats to the livelihoods of tribal communities in the region are the massive influx of urban people (which is leading to land alienation, over exploitation of water and forest resources, forced migrations, etc.), deforestation, setting up of hazardous industries; lack of efforts by the government to implement land reforms and other development programmes; and the low levels of employment skills.



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