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Andhra Pradesh Tribals Protest Poor Infrastructure, Land Title Delays on World Indigenous Peoples Day

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On World Indigenous Peoples Day, tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh staged protests across several districts, demanding improved infrastructure and the timely issuance of land titles. The demonstrations included a symbolic “donkey yatra,” highlighting the slow pace of government action on their longstanding grievances.

Residents of remote tribal hamlets expressed frustration over the lack of all-weather road connectivity to their villages. Community leaders explained that poor roads severely restrict access to healthcare, education, and markets, particularly during the monsoon season when many areas become isolated due to flooding and damaged paths.

“Promises have been made for years, but nothing has changed,” said a protest organizer, who requested anonymity. “We often have to walk miles on rough, muddy terrain just to reach the nearest medical facility or school. When the rains come, it becomes impossible.”

A central issue for the protesters is the delay in granting pattas, or legal land ownership titles, under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. While the law mandates recognition of traditional forest land rights, activists claim that bureaucratic hurdles and disputes over encroachments by non-tribal settlers continue to slow the process in many tribal areas.

Protesters also alleged inadequate action by government agencies on complaints of illegal encroachments, resulting in the loss of ancestral lands to private parties. They criticized official reports for portraying “paper progress” that does not reflect the realities on the ground.

The “donkey yatra” served as a powerful symbol of administrative delays, drawing public and media attention. Participants carried placards demanding “Roads, Land, and Dignity,” emphasizing how infrastructure development and land rights are inseparable in the fight against tribal marginalization.

Local advocacy groups stress that poor infrastructure perpetuates poverty and exclusion. Without reliable roads, access to markets, schools, and emergency healthcare remains limited. For communities reliant on agriculture and forest produce, transportation challenges translate into economic hardship and vulnerability.

Delays in land title issuance exacerbate these problems, leaving tribal families uncertain about land ownership, risking displacement, and excluding them from government welfare schemes linked to land records. Activists warn that this insecurity undermines social stability and threatens cultural heritage.

The protests ended with a memorandum submitted to district officials, demanding immediate processing of pending patta applications, strict enforcement against illegal

encroachments, and priority funding for rural road projects in tribal areas.

Officials confirmed receipt of the memorandum and assured that the issues would be forwarded to the state government for consideration. However, community leaders remain cautiously optimistic, recalling past assurances that failed to produce tangible improvements.

Choosing World Indigenous Peoples Day for the protest linked local struggles in Andhra Pradesh to a wider global call for indigenous rights and development. For many participants, the day was not one of celebration but a renewed demand for action.

Until infrastructure is built, land rights secured, and promises fulfilled, tribal communities vow to continue their protests, donkeys and all.