



Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement

For Prelims: [Vinoba Bhave](#), [Mahatma Gandhi](#), [Freedom Struggle](#), [Philosophy of non-violence](#), [Self-governance](#).

For Mains: Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement and its Post Independence Impact.

Why in News?

Recently, a village in Maharashtra moved to the Bombay High Court, demanding the implementation of the Gramdan Act.

What is Gramdan?

▪ Bhoodan Movement:

◦ Background:

- It was a **socio-political movement** started by [Vinoba Bhave](#) in 1951 in India.
- Vinoba Bhave was a **disciple of [Mahatma Gandhi](#)** who **chose him as the first individual Satyagrahi** and had actively participated in [India's Freedom Struggle](#).
- After independence, he realized that the issue of landlessness was a major problem faced by rural India and in 1951, he started the [Bhoodan Movement or the land gift movement](#).

◦ Objectives:

- It aimed to **persuade wealthy landowners to donate a portion of their land** to landless peasants.
- The movement gained momentum when Bhave walked from village to village, requesting **landowners to donate their land**.
- Bhave's approach was **rooted in the [philosophy of non-violence](#)** and the idea that the landowners should donate their land out of compassion and empathy for the poor.

▪ Gramdan Movement:

- The next phase of the Bhoodan movement was the Gramdan Movement or the village gift movement.
- It aimed to create **self-sufficient villages by bringing about collective ownership** of land.
- The Gramdan movement **urged villagers to donate their land to a village council**, which would then manage and distribute the land to the villagers.
- This movement gained **support from many political leaders** and was seen as a solution to the problem of unequal distribution of land in rural India.

▪ Significance of the Movement:

- The movement was successful in many parts of India, **with thousands of acres of land being donated** by landowners.
- The Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement had a **significant impact on Indian society** and politics; it helped in reducing landlessness, bringing about a more equitable distribution of

- land and empowerment of rural communities along with promoting self-sufficiency.
- It paved the way for the **protection of natural resources** by giving everyone in the community equal rights and responsibilities towards them and empowering the communities to move **towards self-governance**.

▪ **Drawbacks:**

- Sometimes, the **land donated was either unfertile or under litigation**.
 - Hence, large areas of land were collected but little was distributed among the landless.
- It was **not successful in areas where there was disparity** in landholdings.
- Also, the movement also **failed to realize its revolutionary potential**.

What is the Current Scenario of the Gramdan Act?

▪ **Gramdan Act in Different States:**

- Today, seven states in India have **3,660 Gramdan villages**, the highest being in Odisha (1309).
 - The other six are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- In September 2022, the Assam government repealed the **Assam Gramdan Act, 1961 and Assam Bhoodan Act, 1965**, by passing The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2022 to counter encroachment on donated lands in the state.
 - Till that time, Assam had 312 Gramdan villages.

▪ **Some Common Features of Gramdan Act:**

- At least 75% of the landowners in the village should surrender land ownership to the village community. Such land should be at least 60% of the village land.
- 5% of the surrendered land is distributed to the landless in the village for cultivation.
 - Recipients of such land **cannot transfer the same without the permission** of the community.
- The rest remains with the donors; they and their descendants can work on it and reap the benefits.
 - However, they cannot sell it outside the village or to one in the village who has not joined Gramdan.
- All the cultivators who have joined Gramdan should contribute 2.5% of their income to the community.

▪ **Concerns:**

- The act has lost its relevance in many villages mainly due to **poor implementation of the law**.
- In some villages, the descendants of those who had given their land under Gramdan are frustrated that they cannot sell their land outside the village and **call the act 'anti-development'**.

How is the Act Significant for Forest Conservation?

- The Gramdan Act can help ensure community forest rights by **empowering local communities to take control of their natural resources**, including forests.
- Under the Gramdan Act, land and other resources are vested in the community, which means that the **community has the power to make decisions about** how these resources are used and managed thus giving them a say in forests management and the benefits from their sustainable use.
- In the context of community forest rights, the Gramdan Act can provide a **legal framework for communities to assert their rights** over forest land and resources.

Prelims

Q. In the 'Individual Satyagraha', Vinoba Bhave was chosen as the first Satyagrahi. Who was the second? (2009)

- (a) Dr. Rajendra Prasad
- (b) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
- (c) C. Rajagopalachari
- (d) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. Critically discuss the objectives of Bhoodan and Gramdan movements initiated by Acharya Vinoba Bhave and their success. (2013)

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