

**BOOK REVIEW****VILLAGE DISPUTES AND THEIR RESOLUTIONS IN INDIA: PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS BY DR. DAVIS PRADHAN CMI, KARNATAKA LAW JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS, BANGALORE, 2017**

Somabha Bandopadhyay

*University Junior Research Fellow,*

*The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata*

This book is an outcome of extensive research that has been conducted both through empirical data as well doctrinal analysis of existing literature on the subject matter of dispute resolution. The book revolves around an interesting and not much legally researched area of village and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. The research aims to culminate the different modes of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms and their nature across various states in India. The empirical research brings insight into the present scenario of the traditional dispute resolution mechanisms by laying down the features of the different villages that have been studied and their indigenous mechanism of dispute resolution that is intrinsic to *their* system of resolution. The author has brought about a parallel comparison with the existing legal and judicial systems of resolution of disputes in India that have legislative backing. This research brings about an interesting synergy between the traditional and ancient dispute resolution systems with the present dispute resolution systems

including that of the major tribes in India.

This extensive and vast research covers a large subject area that factors in multitude of ways of dispute resolution, its benefits, problems, nature of disputes adjudicated as well its legal dimensions. By tracing the journey from the ancient period to the present, the author has remarkably put forth the *Indian way* of dispute resolution and this work thus, sheerly contributes to the much needed and sought after indigenous dispute resolutions at the world platform. This research also culls out beautifully the richness in the dispute resolution tradition in India noting that this out of court settlement is not a new addition to the Indian diaspora and its legal regime, but a practice dating back to ages. The subject-matter of village dispute mechanism is often not given the due importance it needs and this research has shed off that and magnified the glory that resides in the tradition related dispute resolution mechanism.

The author has divided the chapters into primarily six chapters that have been further

sub-divided into various parts. These chapters include a holistic idea of the village dispute mechanisms in India and the significance of the Gram Nyalaya Act 2008 with the legal parallels on other mechanisms of dispute resolution. While the first chapter on introduction and methodology lays out the prelude to the research, the second chapter portrays the dispute resolution mechanism of ancient India from the Vedic period to the post *Smriti* period including the Mughal era and the British era. The third chapter is the most resourceful since it provides the entire spectrum of the villages under study, nature of the disputes and the modes of resolution mechanism. The chapter looks at the interior dynamics of resolution with focus on tribal areas of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and coastal areas of Orissa and Tamil Nadu. It has also looked at 13 parallel judicial systems like Devta Institutions in Himachal Pradesh, Kangaroo courts in Orissa and Bihar, Dharmasthala in Karnataka, etc. The tribal dispute resolution mechanisms that have found mention in the work are Adi, Angamis, Anals, Bodos, Chothe, Garos, Misings, Maring, Moyon and many more. Chapter 4 explains the formal and alternative dispute resolution mechanism in India by elaborating through differentiations the court centered and non-court centered litigation strategies mostly in use in India. The second part of the chapter critically assesses the rural population's access to justice through the

traditional resolution mechanisms. Chapters 5 and 6 introduces and explains the Act of 2008 in depth and with empirical data brings forth the illustrations of its effectiveness. To the authors realization through this research, these institutions are designed exclusively as extensions of the formal court system and hence the solution that the author has for the mechanism is the Nyaya Swaraj Gram Adhiniyam that ensures effective delivery of justice and accessibility of justice to the rural populace is made much more convenient.

The most important portions of this book that weaves together the story and gives the essence of this research can be identified as Part I on the 'Profile, Nature Of Disputes And Mode Of Dispute Resolution Mechanisms Of Villages In India- An Empirical Study', Part II delving into 'Dispute Resolution: Parallel Judicial Systems Existing In The Villages Of India Today- Problems, Challenges And Prospects', Part III on 'Dispute Resolution Among The Major Tribes In India' and Chapter 5 on Dispute Resolution In The Villages Of India: The Gram Nyayalaya Act 2008- A Critical Analysis'. A cumulative reading of these enables the readers to understand the points of arguments that the author puts forth and thus the recommendations laid out.

Overall, this book gives an elaborate explanation of the village dispute resolution mechanism in India that is surely a

contribution to the alternative dispute resolution jurisprudence and intrigues into a much needed area of discussion something that mostly misses the legal discourse.