1,300 Lambadi thandas set to become panchayats

New Panchayat Raj Bill introduced in Assembly

The new Panchayat Raj Bill of Telangana was introduced in Assembly on Wednesday and it will be taken up for debate and enactment on Thursday.

A significant feature of the Bill was making ‘thandas’ (habitations of Lambadi tribals) gram panchayats reserved for STs if they had 100% tribal population. They numbered about 1,300 out of a total of 12,741 gram panchayats, including 4,380 new ones, in the State.

Speaking to mediapersons after introduction of the Bill in the House, Panchayat Raj Minister Jupally Krishna Rao said the conversion of thandas into gram panchayats fulfilled a major election promise of the TRS. The government formed gram panchayats even if their population was less than 500.

Cheque powers

The reservation period for election to gram panchayats was increased from five to 10 years. The cheque drawing power will be jointly held by sarpanch and upa sarpanch. The gram panchayats will have co-opted members like in municipalities. They can appoint up to three such members.

Mr. Rao said the collectors will have power to initiate action against erring sarpanches. An appellate tribunal will be constituted to go into the decisions of the collectors. There will be no change in the elections to gram panchayats. They will be direct elections without party symbols.

The new law Telangana Panchayat Raj Bill – 2018 repeals the Telangana Panchayat Raj Act, 1994. The first ordinary elections to gram panchayats, mandal praja parishads and zilla praja parishads as per the new Act will be held within one-and-a-half years.

Reservations

The Act envisaged that the offices of sarpanches of gram panchayats shall be reserved for SCs, STs, BCs and women in proportion to their total population.

The reservation shall be by rotation as far as practicable, commencing from the first ordinary elections held under this Act. The offices reserved to SCs, STs and BCs during the earlier ordinary elections hall not be again reserved to the same categories till a cycle of reservation in that category was completed, except in the case of offices reserved for STs in gram panchayats in scheduled areas and villages where STs constituted 100% population.