

## LAND DISPUTES' BETWEEN TRIBALS, NON-TRIBALS

## Human rights panel for strict implementation of H.C. order

By Our Staff Reporter

HYDERABAD, JUNE 2. The Human Rights Forum demanded strict enforcement of the High Court order regarding formation of village committees, reading of records in the villages and survey of land to locate unlawful occupation by non-tribals. This would go a long way in resolving the disputes raised by the tribals.

Mr. S. Jeevan Kumar and Ms. Suneetha, Forum convenors, told reporters here on Wednesday that two fact finding teams of the Forum visited the tribal areas of Jeehugumilli, Buttalgudem and T. Narsapur mandals of West Godavari district and the adjoining Dammamet mandal of Khammam district following the tribal non-tribal clashes over the harvesting and sowing of crops in disputed

land. The tribals had identified land which they believed to be in the unlawful occupation of the non-tribals and drawn the attention of the Revenue officials to it. Only when the non-tribals insisted on enjoying the fruits of the land whose ownership rights were in dispute that the conflicts took place. Where the non-tribals tried to harvest the crop forcibly, the tribals indulged in pre-emptive harvesting which the police called theft and trespass, Mr. Jeevan Kumar said.

A total of 28 cases of trespass and theft were foisted on tribals of Dammamet mandal in Khammam district. In West Godavari district, 59 tribals were arrested in connection with some old cases for the offence of trespass and theft of crop. The arrests were accompanied by midnight raids, abuse

and severe beating. One Soyam Chandrasekhar of Kothur, a tribal activist of Shakthi, was implicated in 23 cases, Mr. Jeevan Kumar alleged.

The only incident of violence from tribals' side was the killing of a non-tribal farmer in Bachuletigudem in T. Narsapur mandal, Mr. Jeevan Kumar said.

He condemned the anti-tribal attitude of the police and Revenue officials. He demanded all cases of trespass and theft filed on tribals, except that of rioting in Bachuletigudem, should be removed. Such cases amounted to converting a social and economic struggle into an act of crime.

Government should exhibit a sense of urgency in reviewing the implementation of the Regulation 1 of 1970 to restore peace.