

VISITED BY : BHARATI  
DATE OF VISIT : 19TH TO 23RD JUNE '91  
PREVIOUS VISIT : Bharati and Charles Skinner  
26TH, & 27TH NOV '90.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

1. As a part of the regular visit.
2. To discuss the future program with SAKTI

The Visit was organised as follows:

19th evening : Visited Gandhinagaram (Rampachodavaram Man  
-dal)  
20th evening : Visited Labbarti and Mullimetla (Rajavomangi  
Mandal)  
21st morning : Marredumulli Colony (Marredumilli Mandal)  
Pedda Barangi (Rampachodavaram Mandal)  
22nd : Staff meeting.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

SAKTI has been supported by OXFAM since 1985 and the information available about it's work is dispersed in the various tour reports, annual reports and evaluations. I have attempted to consolidate the available information here, which could give the reader a comprehensive picture of the Organisation's work, in relation to the problems of the area, over the past 6-7 years. It would thus be necessary to read all sections of the report in same order.

THE REPORT IS STRUCTURED AS FOLLOWS :

Background of the organisation  
Background of the area - History and Legislation  
Specific problems  
The work  
Staff structure  
Future plan

## THE ORGANISATION

SAKTI literally meaning Power and an acronym for 'Search for Action and Knowledge of Tribal Initiative' was the outcome of Dr. P. Sivaramakrishna's long and deep involvement with the tribals; mostly in East Godavari and Khammam District. Dr. Shiva's intensive knowledge and deep insight into the Adivasi (tribal) lifestyle and culture could be attributed to the 10 years experience gained, first as a school teacher in an Ashram School (meant for the adivasis) and later as a research scholar doing his Doctorate on Adivasi culture; the thesis being - "An Oral Literature of Telugu Hill Tribes - an Ethnoscience analysis." The prolonged interaction with the tribals was probably the cause for Shiva's subsequent involvement in development work. His association with OXFAM dates back to '82 when he was working with GSWA (Oxfam partner APD.040). He has also been associated with Lokayan in its studies relating to forests, forest industry, dams and other related topics. His extensive contacts gained during the course of his work in the past 15 years (since '76) can be seen in his rapport with the local tribals, bureaucrats, environmentalists, social activists, media and several other concerned people; which he has used very effectively in his work at the local level and in changing Policy. Dr. Shiva is infact one of the few academics working at the grass roots.

Prior to being registered as an independent Organisation in 1985, SAKTI was the East Godavari Branch of GSWA, based at Rampachodavaram. It was probably Shiva's involvement in the relief work following the Godavari floods in '83 that finally culminated in the formation of SAKTI.

## THE AREA

SAKTI, with its headquarters at Rampachodavaram, also the divisional headquarters having the various Government Offices (Sub Collector, ITDA and GCC) works in 5 of the 7 1/2 tribal mandals under the jurisdiction of the Rampachodavaram ITDA (E.G. District). A rather backward area, it offers a diametrically opposite picture to the extremely prosperous and developed belt - in terms of agriculture, commerce and industry - in the plains/delta area of the same district.

The agency area of E.G. comprises seven and a half Mandals viz. Marredumilli, Y. Ramavaram, Addategala, Gangavaram, Rajavomangi, Rampachodavaram, Devipatnam, and Sankhavaram (part) covering an area of 4191.65 sq.km, constitutes 38.2% of the total geographical area and is the home of 3.8% (tribal) population of the District. The Agency area comprises 725 tribal villages (134 being uninhabited) with an average population density of 36 persons per sq km against a district average of 342 persons per sq km. The variations in density (the first two mandals being the least and the last three being the most dense) gives an idea of their terrain, habitability and the distance from the non tribal belts.

The area is bounded by the river Godavari in the West, Visakhapatnam District on the East, Khammam and Koraput (of Orissa) on the north (all tribal areas) and the non agency part of Sankhavararam Samithi of E.G. District., in the south from where the non tribals moved into the agency.

The tribes living in the area are Konda Reddy, Konda Dora, Koya Dora, Konda Khammara, Konda Kapu and Valmiki in distinct pockets in the hills and some Yerukulas and Yanadis in the plains.

The agency of EG can broadly be divided into two Distinct terrains - 1) the hilly tracts covered with deciduous forests, falling mostly under Marredumilli and Y. Ramavaram Mandals with altitudes ranging from 2000 to 4000 ft. 2) the relatively flat area interspersed with small hills and undulating terrain cut across by several meandering streams which either flow westwards into the Godavari or Eastwards into the seasonal rivers Yeleru and the Pampa.

The source of livelihood of the tribals depends largely on the available resources - land (extent and type), water, forests, transport, government schemes, credit, markets and raw material available to them; which in turn depends on where they are located.

In the hilly regions the tribals who live in isolated settlements largely practice Podu (slash and burn cultivation) on the hill slopes. The cultivation traditionally includes both agriculture wherein the main crops are maize, minor millets, oilseed (niger, castor, giligili), pulses (mainly red gram), and horticulture/plantations mainly oranges, some jackfruit and more recently coffee and cashew plantations encouraged in a big way through the Social forestry Scheme of ITDA (Integrated Tribal Development Agency).

In addition they also collect a large variety of minor forest produce - tamarind, myrobalum, honey, brooms, medicinal roots, barks, seeds, gum cariah, etc., which they sell mostly to the GCC (Girijan Co-operative Corporation) a quasi government body and a monopoly purchaser of minor forest produce.

In the valleys the tribals practise settled agriculture and grow paddy, maize, minor millets, oil seed basically giligili, pulses, and more recently in an increasing measure tobacco and cashew. All cultivation except in case of tobacco and to some extent cashew where insitutional support (in the form of credit and inputs) is available, is carried on without any chemical fertiliser.

The tribals also supplement their diet through hunting and fishing in the streams.

As in the case of the uplands the source of cash income is basically from the sale of surplus pulses, MFP, cash crops, wage labour in bamboo felling operations of the paper mills, forest department works, government construction works. Unlike the uplands there is a smaller variety of MFP (for instance broom material is not common but custard apples are) however, this is compensated by the availability of palm fibre in the lean season, for nearly six months of the year.

### The Legislation

In view of its distinct terrain, demography, economy and history, the Agency/Scheduled areas are governed by a different set of legislations.

In its recorded history since 1766, this (EG) Agency has been a scene of rebellion, the root cause of them all being land. With the introduction of Zamindari, Muttadari, Mahaldari and other systems (basically for administration and revenue collection) by the British in 1765, the excessive collection of land tax, the role of money lenders and traders, and the resultant alienation of lands were the major causes of the dissatisfaction in the Agency.

The Commercial vending of toddy and arrack meant that the tribals could no longer brew their own arrack and were liable to pay some sort of tax/price which in effect benefitted the state and the nontribals. This infringement of their custom /lifestyle aggravated the situation further. The production and consumption of toddy and arrack is intrinsically linked with the tribal life style and toddy is virtually their only source of nutrition in the summer months.

There were several rebellions against the British Company in 1813, 1835, 1839 as a consequence of which the Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Act (1839) was enacted as per which a Collector / Agent to the Government, having Civil, Criminal and Revenue powers, was appointed and the area came to be known as Agency.

Subsequently forest Legislations (which date back to the first memorandum issued in 1855, the Forest Act 1865 and subsequent amendment of 1878) all of which progressively curtailed the traditional rights of the tribals over the forests and to collect forest produce increased the plight of the tribals. The demarcation of forests (1878) into Reserve, protected and village forests restricted the movement of the forest dwellers and empowered itself (state) to prohibit any act which damaged the trees, even on lands that did not belong to it.

The forest policy that followed (in 1894) laid a primary emphasis on Environmental conservation and only a secondary one on revenue and other commercial requirements. However, in the light of demands for higher revenue, and the increasing (power and hence) resistance from the land owning classes against increase in land taxes, the then Government resorted to commercial exploitation of forests.

And unlike the landed class, the tribals could be

easily deprived of their source of livelihood because they did not have sufficient bargaining power.

This approach had a negative impact on the forest dwellers, in addition to leading to malnutrition, impoverishment and indebtedness, it also led to over exploitation of the forest that remained accessible to them. Thus, the forest policy brought about a change in the outlook, from one of keeping a balance between their economic needs and ecological conservation to one of exploiting them for survival, since they lacked any other source of income.

In fact the restrictive forest legislation and policies were the cause of many a rebellion in the tribal belts in the country. The 1882 Madras forest Act had curtailed the traditional rights of the hill men to collect forest produce, to graze cattle and to do podu in reserve forests. This resulted in the Lagarai rebellion of 1916-17 and later the Alluri Sita Ramaraju revolt in 1920-24.

That there were so many rebellions in such a short period (6 in a period of 100 years) by a relatively reticent and peace loving people goes to show that -

- i) The exploitation of traders, Zamindars, and Government Servants (all the non tribal entrants into the area) was unbearable.
- ii) Money lenders and traders who tampered with an otherwise simple production - consumption economy by introducing the concept of "distribution"/commercialisation and monetisation also succeeded in alienating the lands in their favour.
- iii) The excise and the forest policies of the Government which resisted the traditional occupations and customs were disliked by the tribals.

Contrary to the forest legislation which protected the forests from the people (the tribals in practice) the legislation with regard to debt and land had the objective of protecting the tribals from the exploitative non tribal.

It would be noticed that every major amendment in the legislation governing land was made following some violent uprising and resulted in making the law more stringent. Two of the 3 major amendments to the law were followed by land surveys and updating of land records.

The Agency debt and land transfer Regulations of 1917, which

prohibited the alienation of land of hill tribe to a member of non hill tribes without the permission of the Agent. Unfortunately, with the local administrative machinery comprising of indifferent (non tribal) Officers, land continued to move out of the control of tribals; this was further expedited with the development of transport and communication links in the Agency, ironically to facilitate governance and maintenance of law and order! However, in the absence of a conclusive land survey, this exchange could not be recorded.

Following the formation of the state of Andhra Pradesh (1956), the A.P. Land Transfer Legislation 1959 was promulgated which not only banned all transfer of land to non tribals but also had given the power of resumption of land to tribal after evicting the nontribals illegally in possession of the land.

Following the enactment in '59, precious little was done by the Government to implement it; not even the working rules were framed for nearly 10 years after the enactment of the law. The Government started moving only after the Naxalite uprising of the Srikakulam in the mid 60s; framed the working rules and promulgated the Regulation of 1970 which further strengthened the law of 1959 by banning all transfer of land to the non tribals in the agency.

What needs to be taken cognisance of is the fact these constitutional safe guards were also circumvented by non tribals.

#### Land Surveys in the Agency

The earliest land surveys done in the Agency date back to 1915 and 1902. A resurvey was done in 139 villages in 1932 - 35 in the villages directly under the British and in the remaining 420 villages covered by Muttas and Estates, no survey was done until 1970 ( see section on settlement operations below.)

There were however, some rigorous attempts to assign pattas (titles) to the tribals between 1944 - 49 and 1,60,000 acres were distributed to 11,198 tribals.

#### Settlement operations 1969, 70

After the abolition of Estates, Muttadari and Mahalwari systems, settlement operations were conducted in 1969,70. Here a person if non tribal had to prove continuous occupation of the said land for 8 years and not in contravention of the act of 1959. The same was for a period of one year in case of tribal to be eligible for a title / patta (commonly called settlement patta).

Several illegalities were however committed in these operations -

- a) Creation of false receipts by Mutta clerks showing payment of tax for the requisite period.
- b) Terrorising tribals and driving them away and getting the land measured out in the name of non tribals.
- c) Issue of pattas on thickly forested land (banned by law) to facilitate sale of timber by non tribals.
- d) Most Tribal claims were ignored. Elsewhere the tribals were by and large not aware of the settlement operations. By the time they realised that their lands were given on patta to the non tribals, it was too late to appeal to courts which by and large treated the settlement pattas as final and irrevocable.

As a result of the manipulations the land holdings of the non tribals is supposed to have jumped from 9805 hectares before '69 to 16,789 hectares after settlement. And the procedure for challenging the settlement pattas through the directorate of settlements is a long drawn and a time consuming one, was not rigorously pursued.

#### Telugu Magani Samaradhna

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Since 1970 several thousands of acres were brought under cultivation but the tribals were not given pattas. In order to identify all such cases and in an attempt to update and classify the land records a systematic Agency survey was done in 1986-87 following this around 13,023 ha. were assigned to the tribals. This survey gives details of land possession - legal and otherwise, extent of waste land, land available for distribution etc.

History portrays the area as a potentially rich one in the hands of relatively weak people, with a weak leadership, little political will in their favour, protected by an indifferent administrative set up by and large comprising of elements having a close nexus with exploitative non tribals and challenged by the militant forces. All of these while claiming to work for the cause of the tribal ultimately give him little justice, direction and respect.

It is not surprising, that little has changed in the area and to date the major issues effecting the tribals continue to be

land and forest rights, unfavourable trade conditions, liquor sales by non tribals, credit and exploitation of tribal women by non tribals - effectively a virtual loss of control over their lives, and habitat and consequently a lowering of their morale.

## Specific Problems

The following are some of the specific problems which are faced by a development agency, and therefore also SAKTI, working in these areas -

### 1. Land:-

- a. Benami transfers (where the land is in the name of the tribals, unknown to him, and is enjoyed by a non tribal).
- b. Transfer of land from tribals to non tribals through lease or mortgage.
- c. Encroachment by non tribals in places where land records are not available, tribals not being aware of the boundaries, land records not being made available to tribals by unsympathetic lower level govt. functionaries.
- d. And by non tribals using sheer force to threaten the tribals.
- e. Large tracts of fertile lands (especially along the Godavari and other streams) being purchased (at low rates) and registered in the names of tribal women whom they kept as mistresses.
- f. Acquisition of lands by non tribals in the names of their tribal servants who were under verbal contract to them (similar to 1).
- g. The Samiti Presidents of tribal Panchayat Samitis and Tribal MLAs lending their names for registering lands purchased by non tribals in exchange of the political and monetary incentives offered by the latter.
- h. Acquisition of lands in the names of non tribals who become tribals by acquisition of bogus certificates. This is a common problem with Konda Kapu certificates where the Kapus (a dominant agricultural caste in the plains of the EG District) moved into the area and very conveniently added on 'Konda' to their original caste. (interestingly there was elected Mandal President who was one such certified tribal).
- i. The local MRD, delaying informing the tribals when a judgement in his favour, thus giving time for the non-tribal to obtain a stay order from the high court, thus delaying (and probably) denying justice to the tribal.
- j. And the settlement pattas even if fraudulently obtained are difficult to challenge.

### 2. Forest

- a. Mono culture especially of teak and similar species not beneficial to the tribals.
- b. Indiscriminate felling of forests by paper mills and other forest based industries. Loss of trees like the wild mango which is a source of food for the tribals (for instance in EG the government has leased out 25% of the reserved forest i.e., 60,000 ha. for a period of 20 years at a



throw away price.

- c. Smuggling of timber with the connivance of forest department; tribals are used as the labourers in all the logging and sawing operations and are invariably not paid proper wages.
  - d. Market pulls for timber encourage tribals also into deforestation who are invariably caught and punished by the department.
  - e. Indiscriminate felling of bamboo in the forests leased by the paper mills which prevents their natural regeneration
  - f. Issue of land pattas (title) over uncultivable forest land to contractors by corrupt Government Officials who then sell away the timber at huge profits.
  - g. Non payment and non revision of minimum wages in forest works.
3. Harassment by police.
  4. Lack of educated and strong leadership among the tribals.
  5. Low levels of literacy, entrepreneurial and other skills.
  6. Low control on pricing and grading of minor forest produce and cheating in the weighments.
  7. Low productivity of land and limited agricultural skills in the tribals.
  8. Cornering of all government contract works by non tribals as the tribals are neither skilled nor have the working capital.
  9. Exploitation of the tribal women by non tribal men (including government employees) who live with these women while they are in the Agency and leave them to very often with responsibility of bringing up the children when they move out.
  10. Some of the Government programs though well intentioned are not well designed eg. the social forestry scheme which by and large provided the minimum food requirement of a tribal family for 5 years (in the gestation period) promoted cashew indiscriminately even at places in black cotton soils. Excessive dependence on a single cash crop is risky. Likewise, the credit given for quite a few programs is far higher than necessary and leaves the tribal with a higher debt.
  11. More recently, the ILTD (a Unit of Indian Tobacco Company) has started promoting tobacco in the area. The lucrative returns have led to a large scale shift from regular crops to tobacco. Apart from decreasing the fertility of the soil and introducing fertilisers into the area and increasing the dependence of tribals on external credit (from ILTD), the tribal is cheated in the weighment and grading. Very often the tribals do not get a good yield as they are not used to growing tobacco, and thus are tempted to lease out the land to non tribals which could again begin the process land alienation. It is also likely that there would be some adverse effects on health.

This year however, the GCC has stepped in to provide the entire credit for the tobacco thus attempting to prevent non tribals

from getting credit and thus access to the land.

## THE WORK

The role of SAKTI is determined by the problems of the area. Of those stated above, the organisation has worked on most of them.

It's work in the area has progressively changed since '85; the range incorporates running skill development trainings, providing agricultural inputs, and the like to mobilising people on land, forest, wage and liquor issues, influencing government functioning and policies on the same, helping the tribals to gain access to the government departments, ensuring the implementation of government programs, to more recently a mix of issue based work and implementing development programs.

The nature of work done by SAKTI is not very easy to quantify. As the work is more issue based covering a large area around a hundred villages in radius of roughly 60-80 Km. There is a 'programme component' which also falls within the frame work of issues taken. Besides most of the programmes are tapped from Government sources and thus the function of the Organisation is to a large extent helping people tap these, and in sorting out problems that arise in the process.

For specific activities taken up each year also refer ANNEXURE I

The components of work are by and large common to all the areas, however different issues assume priority over the others in particular mandals. This depends on the capabilities of the particular mandal organiser, the political situation, the issue that brought the organisation into the particular area etc.

Devipatnam Mandal is on the coast of the Godavari river and is flood prone. The area being fertile has also been occupied by powerful non tribals. The intervention in this Mandal is mainly for flood rehabilitation whenever necessary and to organise tribals to over come the exploitation of non tribals on land and credit and to some extent marketing issues.

Rampachodavaram Mandal : being a central place with Government Offices has some urban character. The issues that need tackling are mainly petty cases of cheating, cheating of women by non tribals especially the transferable lower level government staff and other non tribals who come to the area.

Rajavomangi Mandal : has large tracts of fertile plains and is closer to the non agency area of East Godavari. This has resulted in large scale occupation of lands by non tribals and hence land issues assume a greater importance.

Marredumilli Mandal: is adjacent to this forest area and issues that need to be addressed are mostly related to forest conservation, smuggling of timber, wage issues in forest and other contract works, irregularities in marketing of minor forest produce.

Addateegala Mandal : has been included in SAKTI's area of operation only this year and the intervention has been made specifically to study the impact of the ILTD programme and work on the problems identified.

SAKTI is basically continuing with its ongoing activities which include land, forest, liquor, wage and marketing issues, fighting for maintenance for cheated tribal women, running thrift program, helping tribals to alth

Land Issues : The issue was rigorously pursued between '87 and '89 when the local Sub collectors were sympathetic to the tribals; the irregularities in land ownership were identified and brought to the notice of the Sub Collector. The cases were filed under LTR (Land Transfer Regulation Act) and were within his judicial powers. Most of these cases were dispensed in favour of the tribals; as it was relatively easy to pressurise the lower level administrative machinery to ascertain facts. The practice of holding village courts by the Sub Collector, as suggested by Sakti, helped quicken the process of judgement. These efforts enabled the transfer of nearly 1,000 acres to the tribals on ground.

As of now most of the land cases under LTR have been disposed off; these efforts have also made the tribals aware of their land rights and given them the courage to fight the nontribals. However little headway could be made in case of nontribal lands with settlement pattas.

Sakti is currently handling roughly 200 cases at different stages in various courts, covering about 500 acres. In most of these cases the non tribals have settlement pattas and the procedure is a long drawn one.

Sakti also has a complete set of land records of 5 agency mandals. This information helps it to identify any irregularities in land holdings and also guide the tribals on the matter.

Forest Issues : Sakti plays the role of a watch dog to prevent smuggling of timber from the forests. Karniah and the tribals of Marredumilli keep track of the timber lorries and bring illegal transactions to the notice of the Department and the press. It's major achievement however has been in the Godavari Plywoods (GPL) case.

The State Government had leased out around 25% of the reserved forest in the EG district ie around 60,000 ha to GPL for a period of 20 years at a price of Rs.70/- per cubic metre. The forest comprises mango trees which provide the soft wood required by GPL. The problem was on two counts - the market price of the mango timber was much higher - Rs.1500/- per CMT. The fruit bearing mango trees are a protected species and it is only the old trees which are available for timber purpose. However GPL clean felled the forests with rather disasterous consequences on the environment.

Sakti moved the court to stay the felling operation. The matter was taken up in the Legislative assembly and the prices were revised; more litigation followed and the case is pending in the

Supreme court .The factory has been under lock out since '87. Also refer ANNEXURE II for more details.

Labour/Wage issues -Most of these cases are taken up in Marredumilli mandal through a Labour Contract Society that Sakti promoted in the area. In the last one year over 40 cases were filed against 17 contractors. Of these 15 have been settled in favour of the labourers who did not receive their minimum wages, 22 cases on the same matter were settled out of court. Taking up the issue also resulted in the office of the Assistant Commissioner of Labour (ACL) being shifted to Rampachodavaram which would be more accessible to the tribals. This has also resulted in the Government departments and the contractors revising the wages.

Women's Issues: Over 25 cases of maintenance for cheated tribal women were filed against the non tribal men all of whom/except 3 are government employees. Of the above 10 cases have been disposed in favour of the women.

Liquor Issue : SAKTI also made considerable efforts and succeeded in stopping the sale of arrack (liquor) in the area. The sale of liquor in the agency is illegal, however, this continues due to the strong links between the politicians and the arrack contractors and the indifference of the police.

Several attempts made by the agency and the tribals finally forced the police to take action against the arrack shop owners. It may be recollected that liquor is an inextricable part of tribal tradition and is brewed by the tribals; the protective legislation prevents sale of liquor by non tribals as it leads to indebtedness and other associated problems.

The thrift and credit programme, though started in '88, picked up only last year for two reasons

- a) Because SAKTI realised the importance of the programme as dependable source of ready credit for the tribal women.
- b) Because the appointed one person to specifically follow up the thrift program.

As of now 50 villages and 450 women are covered under the program and their savings total to 15,300. The concept of credit is just being introduced and the system are yet to be developed.

Involvement in govt. programs : The more recent program is the monitoring of the loans disbursed by the GCC raising tobacco. Tobacco farming was introduced by the ICTD and Godfrey Phillips two years ago. As the returns appeared lucrative, several of the tribal farmers shifted from food crops to tobacco cultivation. Some of the associated problems have been increased in use of chemical fertilisers, cheating in the weighments and grading of tobacco, and also an increase in alienation of land to non tribals by those tribals who are not experienced in growing tobacco.

In order to check the problem, GCC stopped in to provide credit and inputs for cultivating tobacco. As a result this has kept out the non tribals who are not eligible to take credit from GCC. In the Rampachodavaram division, it has covered nearly 9000 farmers and an area of 15000 acres.

SAKTI has been requested to monitor the program by GCC and has successfully weeded out the non tribals from the list. SAKTI is following up the programme further to study the actual returns from the crop, the effect on the soil fertility, health of the people working in the fields and the tobacco and any other problems so as to use the material to educate tribals against large scale to tobacco.

In addition it has also started the follow up of the Manya Pranta Chaitanya Yatra, the Eastern Ghats March, undertaken by over 50 voluntary agencies to plant nursery program and the monitoring of the assistance given by GCC for growing tobacco. The follow up of the Padayatra is also interesting. While at one level the aim of the Padayatra is to focus on the larger environmental issues of the Eastern Ghats, SAKTI has also started taking up more localised issues which would lead to a greater involvement of the tribals. One such issue is the Bhupatipalem reservoir which when constructed would be submerging.

The Staff structure of SAKTI:

There is a core group of workers in SAKTI which has been fairly stable over the past 3-5 years though their roles change as and when necessary. There is also a section of staff in which there is considerable turnover.

At the time of my visit the staffing pattern was as follows:-

The core group consisted of -

1. Director : Dr. P. Sivaramakrishna
2. Co.ordinator: Ms. Sarada
3. Mandal in charges :
  - Rampachodavaram : Chakrapani
  - Devipatnam : Joga Rao
  - Marredumilli : Karniah
  - Rajavomangi : Venkateswarulu
  - Addateegala : Satyanarayana
4. One gardener  
One agricultural assistant.  
One watchman  
One typist.

In addition there were two women workers Varahamma and Varalakshmi and Chinna Rao who assisted Karniah in Marredumilli.

The organisation functions in a fairly democratic manner which is infact is its strength. The maximum turnover has been in the case of women staff most of whom are non local as it is difficult to find educated women locally. The rest of the team has been fairly stable and the only recent entrant is Chakrapani who joined as Thrift Organiser last year and is now been made Mandal organiser this year but works under the guidance of Joga Rao who is senior.

The organisation plans to expand the scope of its activities and hence plans to recruit 3 more women organisers, one thrift organiser and a cultural organiser.

The following is an extract from its various annual reports giving an idea of its work in general

1985

- A beginning was made; there were some attempts to train the tribals in dryland agriculture so as to wean them away from the practice of Podu and in vegetable cultivation so as to reduce their dependency on the non tribal farmers/ the plains. Three farmers took up vegetable cultivation as a result.
- Establishing a direct link between the tribals and the ITDA office and thus decreasing their dependence on the VDO and other village level government functionaries who tended to be exploiters.
- Initiating marketing of palm fibre to break the monopoly of the traders .
- Helped set up a brick making unit with ITDA assistance to train tribals to make bricks.
- Helped four tribals to set up Kirana shops (petty trade) with ITDA funds to promote entrepreneurship among the tribals.

1986

- training 20 women in making leaf plates.
- training 30 persons in carpentry & blacksmithy
- raising cashew nursery of 1,40,000 saplings and afforested 520 ha with the same.
- organising Rs. 20,000/- from ITDA to advance to tribals so that they could withhold tamarind purchases till

- / prices were favourable.
  - intervention into the palm fibre marketing to benefit tribals in 30 villages.
  - legal aid to tribals in their land cases; documentation of case details on ownership of land etc., took roots at this stage.
  - mango plantation in 13 acres and intercropping
  - organising training and production of cane furniture for 15 persons including 5 women.
  - encouraged and helped tribals to set up provision shops which were hitherto owned by non tribals.  
(training to 110 persons in all; training link up with ITDA for finance, thro TRYS)
  - collaborating with ITDA to develop cashew plantation in 570 hectares in 17 villages as a part of podu rehabilitation measures.
  - construction of school building worth 10 lakhs in a remote (inaccessible by vehicle) Kakawada village
  - tackled 14 criminal and initiated 21 civil cases under LTRP.
- \* year of problems

1987

- \* training in grading of palmfibre
- \* technical training
- \* survey in 44 v. reg the reserve line
- \* introduction of bamboo work
- \* case initiated against Godavari Plywood factory
- \* continued trg in cane - 4 men 2 women
- \* dug 3 drinking water wells in remote villages
- \* attempts at building peoples' movement
- \* meeting of 2000 tribals on land problems  
on forestry in districts
- \* involvement in women activities and softer issues - health survey and programmes
- \* 10 maintenance cars, 30 bails
- \* removed into Devipatnam on land cases

1988

- \* increase in emphasis on land issues, increase in area of operations - collecting data in land cases in Rajpovomangi & Devipatnam list given to sub collector
- \* started the practice of holding village courts instead of courts in the Sub collectors Office at Rampachodavaram.  
judgement given in 150 acres in favour of tribals.
- \* regular meetings with tribals to occupy the land
- \* legal battle of with non tribals began
- \* meeting and rally organised with 1000 tribals on land issues
- \* collection of land records of 4 mandals
- \* health camps
- \* 6 maintenance cases - 3 given maintenance
- \* GPL case in by tribal and by SAKTI in S.C stays against pattas



- \* provided
- \* worked in 400V in Rajavomangi, Devipatnam Mandals on land case.
- 200 cases settled through village courts.
- \* Procession against HC stay - D&R
- \* bail for 10 person.
- \* drinking water
- \* health programme - 60 TB cases
- \* forest - recovered stolen wood/timber worth 1 lakh and imposed to the tune of 7
- \* the stolen amount by Department.

Land Records - procured for 4 mandals.

Met the Governor along with 6 other representatives of on the of 1/70

Helped 50 tribals in getting bails, wage issues, from police harrasment.

6 maintenance cases filed

training programs conducted on women & law and Community Development for women.

Village Sangams initiated in 80V in R&D mandals

Followed up the GPL case and managed to stop the plywood factory from functioning.

Case filed for conduct of elections for Co-operative Societies in tribal areas where elections were not conducted since '83.

Initial meetings for Padayatra - Eastern Ghats March planned.

10 grain bank initiated.

Participated in Tribal Womens' meet along with Thrift

90

Padayatra

Follow up of land and forest issues and other programmes. Thrust on labour issues eg., min wages.