

400 tribals held under TADA without hope of release

From Our Staff Reporter

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More than 400 tribals were being incarcerated under the provisions of TADA (Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act) for the last several months without any hope of being released. The number of tribal women deceived by plains people in the name of marriage is more than the number of land dispute cases. A lion's share of the compensation paid to tribals in various motor vehicles cases is being knocked away by middlemen leaving the kin of the victim with a paltry amount.

These were some of the revelations made at the Girijan sadassu at Rampachodavaram, about 50 km from here, on Sunday. The district free legal aid and advisory committee organised the sadassu. The District and Sessions Judge, Mr. K. B. Siddappa, who is also the chairman of the legal aid committee, presided.

Mr. Seethamsetti Venkateswara Rao, MLA who raised the issue of incarcerated tribals under the TADA, urged the authorities to take steps for their release, if necessary, by relaxing rules. The tribals were the victims of the ongoing struggle between two groups, the MLA said. Mr. Venkateswara Rao also referred to the land disputes that had been going for the last one decade and wanted them to be settled expeditiously.

Mr. Sivaramakrishna, director of a voluntary organisation, brought to the notice of the meeting how interpretation of law had robbed many tribal women of their case for maintenance. Many people from the plains deceive tribal women in the name of marriage. When the tribal women go to court for maintenance, the judgments went against them. While dealing with

these cases he wanted the tribal customs to be taken into account. Among tribals, a concubine is treated on par with the legal wife, he pointed out.

The Joint Collector, Mr. K. Mangapathi Rao said special task forces with senior officers had been set up to tackle or land transfer regulation cases expeditiously. There would be a special drive to solve the cases from January, he said. Injustice had, in fact, been done to tribals in these cases.

Mr. M. B. B. S. Sarma, advocate, gave an account of how the compensation amount sanctioned for accident cases was being knocked away by unscrupulous middlemen. He said that not more than Rs. 2,000 was needed to be spent for getting a compensation amount of Rs. 1 lakh.

Explaining the ever increasing number of pending cases in courts, Mr. Siddappa, said while there was one judge for every four lakh population in the U.K., in India there was one judge for 10 crore people. With a view to reducing this burden, the process of conciliation and compromise was being followed.

The district public relations officer, Mr. Subrahmanyam, proposed a vote of thanks. A large number of tribals attended the sadassu.