

Protect tribal rights, Kumudben urged

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Kakinada, Oct. 16: The social service organisations in the agency area of East Godavari district have sent a memorandum to Ms Kumudben Joshi, Governor, seeking her help in protecting the rights of tribals.

The organisations complained that anti-tribal measures were taken up in Tribes Advisory Council [TAC] meetings. They said TAC was working under the influence or pressure of the ruling party.

In the recent AP Karshak Parishad Act, there were no reservations for tribals in the elections of its office-bearers. The tribals still formed majority in scheduled areas. Since there were no reservations, the non-tribals had filed nominations, they complained.

In the Cooperative Act also, non-tribals were getting elected for the majority of posts.

The organisations appealed to the Governor to modify the AP Nyaya Parishad Bill in tune with the population of scheduled areas by a special notification.

The Survey Settlement Department totally ignored 1917-1959 Acts prohibiting a non-tribal from purchasing the land of tribals. The department had issued land pattas to non-tribals. A great deal of tribal land was alienated under these operations. The High Court made the situation worse by upholding the validity of settlement operations, they said.

They asked the Governor to examine the situation and protect the interests of the tribals.

The TAC in its meeting in December, 1988, resolved that the powers of Director of Settlement

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may be delegated to district collectors, who were well acquainted with the facts and records and were accessible to the tribals.

Without doing anything in this matter, the Government started attempts for repeal of Section 1 of 1970 Act and renotification of scheduled areas. When new criminal procedure code was introduced all over the country, the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 1976 by a special notification had allowed the old CRPC to continue in scheduled areas of the State.

As per old CRPC [under Section 125], a concubine was not eligible to get maintenance from her husband. Several tribal women were deprived as a result. According to tribal customs and practices, there were no concubines and a concubine and wife enjoyed the same status.

The continuation of old CRPC led to such problems, they complained.

Sakti, Laya, Girijana Deepika, Spandana, Yard Girijana Praja Sangham, Chaitanya Sravanthi, Nava Nirmana Samithi, Janachetana and Girijana Seva Samithi conducted meetings in agency villages and told the tribals that Section 1 of 1970 Act should not be scrapped. It should be implemented to protect the tribals from the exploitations of non-tribals. They appealed to the Governor to take initiative in the matter.