

# Tribal mandals sought

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Kakinada, Jan. 24: Though the tribal pockets in the State are contiguous right from Khammam district to Srikakulam district and in Adilabad district, the mandals have fragmented them.

Drawing attention to the ongoing debate on the mandal-type of administration, Dr. Sivaramakrishna of Sakti, a voluntary agency working for the welfare of tribals based at Rampachodavaram, felt that while mandal administration was within geographical reach of the tribals, the concentration of tribals in these pockets was shattered and tribal had become minority in as many as 97 mandals.

While 42 mandals all over the State are homogeneous having full scheduled [Agency] areas, 34 mandals are comprising three types of

villages—scheduled, non-scheduled [but having the majority of tribals] and non-tribal villages. Thirty-five mandals are heterogeneous having two types—scheduled and non-scheduled but tribal majority villages. Twenty-one mandals are having scheduled and non-tribal villages.

The scheduled villages are governed by special laws under the fifth schedule of the Constitution. The tribal population in any of these mandals gets additional funds and attention of the Government. Tribals in a mandal comprising different types of villages [scheduled, non-scheduled and non-tribal] suffer due to the lack of homogeneous social and administrative set-up. Even the non-tribal villages in the tribal-majority mandals suffer since the administration naturally concentrates on tribal welfare.

It is desirable to reconstitute the tribal villages into homogenous mandals. Scheduled or non-scheduled villages should be formed into exclusive tribal mandals.

The tribal villages on the district borders such as Sankhavaram, Kotananduru, Prathipadu of East Godavari district and the villages in Natavaram, Oblugonda and Narsipatnam mandals of the erstwhile Narsipatnam taluk of Visakhapatnam district abutting the border of East Godavari should be brought into the district to the headquarters of which these mandals are near.

The tribals of 40 villages have been fragmented into 3 mandals in Prathipadu constituency and have not got the attention of the Government, though the constituency is represented by the popular leader, Mr. Mudragada Padmanabham.

Mr. Sivaramakrishna said Sakti was bringing out a booklet with details of State-wide statistics on this issue and the recommendations received from various groups among the tribals of different districts shall be published on the issue of tribal mandals.