

Tribals gearing up to occupy lands

AP Times News Service

KHAMMAM, Nov 25. The tribals of Aswaraopet and Dammamet mandals in Khammam district are preparing to stake claim for the lands under the illegal occupation of the non-tribals.

With the support of Sakti, a voluntary organisation, the tribals have been making arrangements in a big way to occupy these lands.

Tension has been prevailing in Aswaraopet and Dammamet mandals, bordering West Godavari district.

Doublespeak on rights decried

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NIZAMABAD, Nov 25. Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) vice-president G Haragopal has said that if politics fail to do justice to the poor, they will choose their own path to solve the problems.

Delivering the third J C S Prasad memorial lecture here recently, he criticised the government's double standards on the human rights issue. Jampala Chandra Shekara Prasad, hailing from Ethonda village in Kotgir mandal of this district, had sacrificed his life for the poor, Haragopal said.

Politics in India created a lot of disparities between the poor and the rich, he said. Haragopal said that if the government neglected the economic and other problems of the people, they would start movements to achieve better living conditions.

The RDO of Kothagudem is camping at Aswaraopet to conduct land survey with a view to pacify the tribals.

In Dammamet mandal, the tribals took over 10 hectares of land belonging to the non-tribals recently. The tribals created terror at Rajanagaram village of Aswaraopet mandal by forcibly entering coconut groves.

The tribals of Bibragudem, Peddapollagudem, Lathapuram, Guttovarigudem and Tallamada villages have formed a committee to look after the movement. Their movement has been slowly spreading to all the tribal villages in the area.

Considering the seriousness of the issue, the revenue department has started the survey of the lands to solve the issues.

The tribals also occupied 50 hectares of low-lying land near a tank at Kesappagudem of Aswaraopet mandal.

The mandal revenue officer of Dammamet reclaimed 22 hectares of land from landlords and handed it over to the landless tribals. But the move has not satisfied the tribals.

The tribals of Dammamet mandal organised a secret meeting at Patwarigudem and chalked out an

action plan for intensifying the movement. The tribals identified some lands at Mallaram, Rachuripalli, Dibbagudem and Tallamada villages and warned the landlords that nobody could enter these fields until a survey was conducted.

A Sakti volunteer told **Andhra Pradesh Times** that the landless were in a better position than those having lands merely on paper. The landless families have every right to claim the land from the government.

A majority of tribal families lost their lands to the landlords who were in possession of these lands for the past 30 years. Many non-tribals occupied the tribal lands after the 1970 regulation.

A tribal from Rajanagaram of Aswaraopet mandal said, "I had 1 hectare of land in my village. But non-tribals occupied my land because of non-payment of debt."

On the other hand, the Sakti volunteers have been surveying the lands of tribals and educating them on their rights.

Meanwhile, the non-tribals in these two mandals have been fearing attacks by the tribals.