

## **August 9-World Tribal and Indigenous People's Day- Rampant Violations of Tribal Rights in Telangana**

The celebrations of World Tribal and Indigenous People's Day were yet to start; and dozens of tribals were in prison because of their just demand for the right to "podu" (Zoom) cultivation in the entire Telangana state. On 6<sup>th</sup> August at Yellanna Nagar of Konijerla mandal in Khammam district 23 people were arrested. Out of these 23 most of them are women. Among them, 12 people, are mothers along with their month-old babies. All were booked under the attempt to murder and other serious charges and kept in prison. After the commotion only the (attempt to murder) charges under 307 were withdrawn from FIR and the charges like attacking on government officials etc remained. From Utnoor to Bhadrachalam every tribal area is witnessing the same land conflicts between the tribals and forest officials and police about podu lands.

Nearly 10.40 crores of Adivasis and indigenous people live in India which is approximately one-fourth of the world's total indigenous population. Historically self-sufficient, with independent cultural identities they have been facing forcible displacement, dispossession and repression. According to the report of Prof Xaxa's high level committee, about 40 percent of all people displaced in India due to development activity (pegged at 24 million) even though they constitute less than 10 percent of the total population. In two Telugu states the forcible displacement of Adivasis is due to irrigation projects like Polavaram, Opencast Mining, and like Kawal and Amrabad Tiger Reserves, National parks etc. Nearly 3 lakhs of Adivasis are going to be displaced by Polavaram project alone.

### **'Haritha Haaram' (Green Garland) – Denial of Tribal Rights**

The government of Telangana has ambitiously launched "Haritha Haaram" the afforestation programme in the state. They declared to plant nearly 230 crores of plants in the entire state. The Government's real intention is not to create a green Telangana but to occupy vast tracts of forest areas which have been under occupation and cultivation of tribals for generations. The forest officials implement this Haritha Haaram as a tool against the Forest Rights Act of 2006 to undermine the Adivasis' forest rights. The total potential forest land in Telangana under the jurisdiction through Forest Rights Act is nearly 39.57 lakhs acres. But 2.11 lakhs individual forest rights claims were filed for area amounting to 7.61 lakhs acres so far. Out of the 2.11 lakhs claims, 99,486 claims over an area of 3.31 lakhs acres were recognised, and the remaining claims were rejected; the percentage of total claims was only 43.50. Out of these 3.31 lakh acres of forest lands, the government granted pattas are 25 percent only. With this practice the government took away 70,000 lands from forest cultivators in erstwhile Khammam District only. The large chunk of forest

lands are handed over to imperialist corporations like Bhadrachalam ITC paper mills. The land lords, Imperialists and their compradors are occupying the vast tracts of forests.

### **Land Alienation-Rejection to Implement 1/70 Regulation**

In all of these 7 years the Government of Telangana has not taken a single step forward to protect tribal land rights. According to The Koneru Rangarao Land Committee in 2006 a large chunk of land held by non-tribals in spite of LTR 1 of 70, the committee identified 21,000 bill maktha lands in Kothaguda (Warangal Dist) are in occupation of non-tribals. In Bhadrachalam agency alone 15,000 acres have been under the illegal occupation of non-tribals as per Girglani Report. On the other hand the Government of Telangana is diluting the letter and spirit of Tribal Land Protective Regulations (Land Transfer Regulation) 1 of 70. It has legitimized the non tribal land-lords holdings through Land Survey and Raithu Bandhu scheme.

The method of district reorganization process is also against the entity of tribal areas. In Telangana there are 1165 scheduled villages in the entire scheduled area, and 247 adivasi villages which were exempted from scheduled area previously, but which should also be incorporated. Instead of forming an adivasi district depending on the cultural and tribal entity, the government attached the tribal areas to dominant non-tribal areas. Old Bhadrachalam is linked with Kothagudem and called Bhadradri Kothagudem District. In all acts and thoughts the ruling classes are trying to marginalize the adivasi communities to the bottom mark.

Through all of these years the aspirations which were spread among adivasis by the leaders in the formation of a separate state of Telangana have not been fulfilled. Instead of that the adivasis have been betrayed by the rulers and ruling groups. There was a glorious path of adivasi struggles of Komaram Bhim, Indravelli and Godavari valley for Jal, Jangle, Jammam (water, forest, land). The united struggles of oppressed adivasis along with oppressed classes are the only hope to obtain the right to survival and self dignity.