

A More than 50 Years Journey Overcoming Many Obstacles

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During Emergency:

There was intense oppression on activists of mass organisations during emergency. At the same time the government spread illusions of reforms on a large scale. A positive atmosphere developed among the girijans about the promises of the government. Even in the tense situation of emergency the party organisers mingled with the people of Kondamodalu. In this period of confinement, they starved for food that was being supplied late by the tribals. They suffered from diseases like malaria. They steadily made the adivasis aware of their problems. A book was published exposing the land reforms proposed by the government. Pamphlets were widely circulated asking the people not to believe the deceptive promises of the rulers and to strengthen the girijana sangham. They educated the people to insist on the implementation of the promises of the government. They sent girijans to the officials with individual petitions to implement the 20-point programme announced by Indira Gandhi and very soon people understood the real nature of reforms promised by the government. Kondamodalu comrades proved in practice that working in the mass line means to work is not only when the masses are marching ahead but work with much determination when the people's movement lags behind and must strive to generate their consciousness. The political work during the emergency in removing the illusions about the government showed a direction to adivasis to agitate for their lands.

During the emergency organisers were arrested in Dwarapudi, Kakinada etc. Comrades A.V. Rami Reddy, P.V. Ramanareddy who are looking after the agency, Comrade Jaswantha Rao in charge of Kakinada unit of the party, the courier of state leaders of UCCRI (M.L.) Comrade U.Sambasivarao, party leader of plain area Comrade Gubbala Subbarao, Agency Comrade Kundla Gangaraju were arrested at different places. East Godavari Conspiracy Case was registered on them along with Comrade Viswam (Simhadri Subbareddy) who was not arrested. All these who were arrested in 1976 were released on bail in the middle of 1978. From 1976 to 1978 Comrade Somayya (Nakkala Moshe) was incharge of the movement in the agency.

After Emergency Until 1982:

Open activities started soon after the lifting of emergency. Public activities increased after the release of comrades from prison. In the month of August 1978 public meetings were held under the auspices of girijana sangham in 11 centres. The girijans of Kondamodalu became active in getting back their lands. In the sowing season of 1979, they took seizure of 60 acres of banjar land from landlords.

Agency Girijana Sangham Conference was held in 1980. It gave a call to take control of lands and be ready to face the oppression from the government. Adivasis moved accordingly. They cultivated 100 acres during 1980. All that time the police camp that was started in 1969 continued in Kondamodalu. By 1981 the district police officers came with additional force. They negotiated

with adivasis by deploying the police around them. They asked the adivasis to approach courts and get the orders in their favour. If such orders are given by the court, they promised to hand over the lands along with crops. Some adivasis bent towards going to the court. The party leadership told them that nothing will come out from the court. But at the same time, decided to go to the court also. Within a short period, people understood that this cannot be solved in the courts. So, they decided to solve the problem by going into the lands.

In this period there was a split in the UCCRI (M.L) party which was leading this movement. The split came because of the party leader Comrade Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao and his followers. The educated comrades working in the East Godavari Agency movement were influenced by this split. P.V. Ramana Reddy, one among them, supported D.V. (of course, afterwards he was in several other groups). Another comrade A.V. Ramireddy lost faith in the revolutionary movement and became passive. These developments took place when the adivasis were ready to take the movement to a higher level. Comrade Somayya, who had the proletarian base stood firm in the midst of this split. At that time, Comrade Viswam (Subbareddy) was in higher responsibility in the party. In addition to those responsibilities, he constantly guided Comrade Somayya and thus supervised the Kondamodalu movement. The state committee of the party sent organisers to agency and plain areas. From then onwards Comrade Ramakrishna and other comrades worked in the revolutionary movement of the agency.

By 1982 under the leadership of the sangham the Adivasi people entered into the lands. At that time the ruling Indira Gandhi government was planning to enact Forest Conservation Act 1980. The Agency Girijana Sangham propagated widely that the proposed act is going to be a dangerous noose to girijans. A procession and a public meeting were held in the early rainy season of 1982 in Kondamodalu against the Forest Act. This meeting created political background to Adivasis to enter into the lands.

By the sowing time of 1982, Adivasis under the leadership of the sangham ploughed and cultivated approximately 240 acres of land. The girijans decided to get back their lands with fighting spirit. In that year the landlords, their touts and pettandars were also active. They too came to a decision that without bloodshed it is not possible to get hold of the lands. They were ready with their plans and conspiracies. They took all precautions politically and physically accordingly. This class contradiction resulted in the attack and firing of the police and landlords in Peddagudem village in Kondamodalu. In the firing Kunjam Ramulu and Madim Lakshmaiah became martyrs. The party leadership made the people ready for struggle. Even before this incident people began to move carrying their traditional weapons. Those who were involved in court cases stopped attending the adjournments. Volunteer squads were created to protect the crops in the lands seized from landlords. The rumours that the landlords would make use of big smoke bombs made the adivasis keep onions with them. As expected, the police entered the Peddagudem village on 29th November and used tear gas. Girijans were protecting themselves by hiding behind the trees and bushes and attacked the police with their bows and arrows. As the arrows were over Comrade Kunjam Rajulu came out from the hiding place and while shooting with a sling, he was shot dead by a bullet. The police took away the corpse of Rajulu with them. Lakshmaiah also received a bullet shot while shooting arrows by standing on the shores of the farm. He was seriously wounded and while taking him to the hospital in Rampachodavaram, on the way he expired. In the last moments of his life, he enthused courage among the comrades and his mother. Those who took the corpse of Lakshmaiah were ready even for arrests. The police stopped all those who reached Rampachodavaram. The leader of this group Comrade Illa Ramireddy and some more youth were arrested and sent to the central

jail in Rajahmundry. After post-mortem, the body of Lakshmaiah was handed over to his mother and two elderly people who were not arrested. It was becoming dark at that time. The mother of Lakshmaiah, Bajaaramma, the leader of the sangham Gorre Laxamma, their relative Madi Siramayya buried Lakshmaiah's body by the side of a canal near Rampachodavaram and returned to Kondamodalu.

Thus, Rajulu and Lakshmaiah became martyrs by showing their adventurous and fighting spirit. While burying the dead body of Lakshmaiah, Bajaaramma and Gorre Laxamma displayed great mental balance. The ordinary became extraordinary. This is the speciality of people's path.

The incident on November 29th, 1982 and resistance of people are not accidental. They are the result of intentional political organisational efforts. People had used all kinds of political, organisational and self-defensive methods that were equal to the level of the movement.

The democratic forces protested the firing in Kondamodalu. A fact-finding committee visited the place; and intellectuals, democrats and fraternal revolutionary organisations condemned the atrocities of the police in Kondamodalu.

From 1982 November to September 1985 :

After the firings in 1982, there were certain political developments in the state. In the elections held in the month of January 1983 Telugu Desam Party came into power for the first time in Andhra Pradesh. But the disputes with landlords and the police in Kondamodalu continued up to August 1985 when an attack was made against Comrade Chintalada Peddireddy.

The Agency Girijana Sangham conference was held on 24th June 1983. In that conference a review of the struggles waged hither to was made. It paid tributes to martyrs. It discussed the future programme. A policy to be followed towards non-tribal landlords, small scale farmers and landless farmers was formed. The policy of land distribution among the adivasis was finalised. A ceiling was fixed and put into practice in regard to non-tribal big landlords.

On the other hand, the feudal forces continued attacks in one form or other and filed cases in the courts. The police again tried to interfere in favour of landlords. They arrested the women harvesting the black gram crop and put them in the police camp. Protesting these arrests hundreds of women invaded the police camp. They found fault with the police who arrested women who are breast feeding their children and categorically asked the police didn't they suckle milk from their mothers. They demanded the police to arrest them also. The police withdrew the case in the face of the fighting spirit of girijans which continued even after the firings that took place erstwhile. Then the collector entered the field. The collector asked the girijans to leave the 40 acres crop to Ramayamma, the relative of Sivayya Patrudu the owner of 150 acres. After discussion girijans were ready to give the crop of that year. The other small landlords were disturbed as big landlords were making agreements with girijans. This brought a split among the non-tribals. Up to this time the girijans of Kondamodalu were on the side of non-tribal landlords but with this split they broke their relationship with them and joined in the sangham.

As a last resort the landlords made an attack on the girijans of Kondamodalu in August 1985 to take revenge. They beat black and blue the leader of sangham, Com Chintalada Peddireddy. There was huge protest outside and in the print media on the incident. This was condemned by MLCs like Jaffer Shariff, advocates like Kantamneni Ravindra Rao, Modugula Papireddy, leaders of OPDR and different people's representatives. In this situation the government deputed the Sub Collector of Rajahmundry to Kondamodalu. (Rampachodavaram revenue division was not formed at that time). The Sub Collector promulgated Section 145 preventing the landlords obstructing the cultivation by girijans and he confirmed that the lands were being cultivated by

girijans. The government transferred the sub inspector of police. After all these incidents the heads in the government came to a confirmed opinion that it is not correct to deal the girijans equitable demands as a law-and-order problem. The fighting spirit of girijans did not subside even after firings and repression. The revenue department and sub collectors came to the fore and decided to deal with this movement politically but not by repression.

On the other hand, the landlords who failed to disrupt the land struggle of adivasis took refuge in the courts. They challenged the Section 145 issued by the sub collector preventing the landlords disturbing the cultivation of girijans in the High Court. As the High Court was not in their favour twice, they approached the Supreme Court. As respondents the Agency Girijana Sangham approached the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court also defended the right of adivasis for cultivation and rejected the demand of non-tribal landlords. In the political atmosphere prevailing at that time and as Kondamodalalu land struggles were getting social sanction it became impossible for landlords to disrupt the Adivasi movement for lands. So, some families of landlords left Kondamodalalu in 1985.

According to the decisions taken by the conference sufficient land was left according to ceiling policy to non-tribal farmers and the additional land was handed over to the sangham. Some of these lands were allotted to non-tribals who had no land at all. Sangham stated that hardworking people are friends to people. It made it clear that it is against exploitation and is not against non-tribals if they do not think of exploiting girijans.

By then adivasis were able to cultivate 500 acres. Landlords had propagated that though adivasis took lands from them, they do not know cultivation. But the fact is, it was adivasis who did cultivation as coolies and bonded labourers for the landlords. Though they got lands there were no bullocks, ploughs etc which are basic necessities for cultivation. This became a problem to the Sangham. The leadership and people struggled a lot to solve this problem. 10 families were made into a group in which only one family had a plough and bullocks and nine families did not have ploughs and bullocks. They took some acres of land and cultivated the land. They planned to buy ploughs and bullocks within a year or two. Some adivasis became carpenters. After getting ploughs for every family the land was divided among the families. In this process the agricultural policy of the sangham was formed. It was decided to extend the collective culture of Adivasi life and struggle to cultivation. All those who cultivate the lands of the sangham are to contribute the fourth part of their crop to sangham's collective fund. Such preserved food grains like paddy, chilli, tobacco etc. were to be distributed among them during food scarcity in September and October months. Thus, they decided to live collectively by distributing the food grains among themselves. The same policy is being practised even today. They decided to spend some part of this joint crop for the expenses of court, cases and for Sangham necessities. Some lands were kept without distribution for the sake of the youth who marry in future and form into families. Even if the crops are grown in them, they are not the family's share of land.

On August 16th, 1986 there were floods to Godavari. Those floods were in large scale compared to 1953 floods. The activists of Sangham worked extensively to save the villagers. Not only the villagers but also the police men were also saved from drowning by using their boats. They fed them and showed the way to Rampa chodavaram. The police constables thanked the adivasis who helped them even though they fired at them on some occasions. This is the case of a contradiction between nature and man.

From 1983 girijan conference to the fourth conference in November 28th and 29th of 1989 the adivasis formulated a land policy for tribals and non-tribals, agricultural policy of the sangham and crop policy. These policies were further developed by collective discussions and

experiences. From 1985 to date the same policies are being followed. By this we can understand the role of the people in formulating these policies. No programme or policy was implemented in Kondamodalu without the role and participation of the people.

Even though there was no police camp in Kondamodalu after 1986, all these years no law-and-order problem had arisen. By naming the land problems of adivasi area as law-and-order issue, in order to protect the landlords who grabbed the lands illegally the police camp was started. For its maintenance a great amount of money was spent. The police tortured the adivasis. No law-and-order problem was there when the adivasis acquired rights on their lands and when they dealt with the problems according to the directions of the Sangham. The people used to solve their petty quarrels before the elders of the village in a gram panchayat. There are very few occasions in all these years when people approached the Devipatnam police station.

The Extension of the Movement from 1990 to 2004:

The activities of this period are already sufficiently in a printed form. Let us see the main activities.

Comrade Somayya, who played an important and key role in the organisation of Kondamodalu girijan movement died of illness on 18th March 1991. He steadily worked in the area from 1969 to 1991 at the grass root level. His funeral and the first death anniversary in 1992, launching of a martyr column and subsequently his death anniversaries up to March 18th 2022 were celebrated most successfully.

From the decade of 1990 onwards the Kondamodalu movement spread with leaps and bounds and this extension of the movement continued in various phases according to the policy decisions taken by the Sangham.

By 1977 there were activities in many areas of the agency of East Godavari district. By the 80s as the movement is extending it became necessary to concentrate more on Kondamodalu. Though there was an atmosphere of clashes with other revolutionary forces working around Kondamodalu we decided not to organise in the areas where other revolutionary organisations are working. During 1980s in light of people's path, without extending in and around Kondamodalu we selected areas where other revolutionary forces were absent. We started working in some areas of Vizianagaram and Koraput districts. Work was taken up in Makkuva and Komarada areas which were not touched by Srikakulam movement. Before that a concentrated work was taken up in Koraput, Malkangiri areas. Within a short period, the movement around Duggeru and Koraput yielded good results.

The hill area at the back of Godavari in the agency of East Godavari is named as area of Gandhi. As some revolutionaries are working in that area, we decided not to organise our Sangham there except doing propaganda about our political stand on the problems of people there.

Observing the achievements of Kondamodalu movement from 1982 people of different areas invited the Sangham to work in their areas. Particularly the adivasis of Godavari coast and East and West Godavari district agency decided in their village level assemblies to welcome the Sangham. All these villages are influenced by the inspiration with cooperation given by the Sangham of Kondamodalu in 1969. Because of repression and because of the splits made by landlords these villages did not respond to the call of Sangham previously. But now after observing the success of the Sangham they too began to support it. By 1988 the activities of the Sangham were started in Thutigunta, Thellavaram, Manturu etc villages of West Godavari district. Slowly from Venkatareddygudem and villages near Polavaram came into contact with the Sangham. The struggles for land spread slowly in all these areas.

By 1994-95 the Sangham spread its activities from Dondapudi to Kunkala, and Manugopula agency villages. During 1930-50 decades girijan movement was organised in these villages. From 1948 to 1951 adivasis of this area fought for lands against zamindars. Those movements were fizzled out then because of the splits and repression. The adivasi elders, who in their youth participated in the then struggles - Kokkera Chandraiah, Karakam Ramayya garu went on foot to Kondamodalalu and met Comrade Viswam. They invited the Sangham to their area promising that they would organise it and protect it. Thus, those villages again started the land struggles that the Agency Girijan Sangham was waging. The agitation of the people protesting the grabbing of land by the zamindar in Manugopula was attacked by the police and landlords and as a result on November 4th, 1997 Com Karam Parvathi became a Martyr. The land struggle continued further after the firing and repression. In order to achieve this much of success and to create a committed leadership for revolutionary programme they had to make serious efforts for 40 years.

The Girijana Sangham of Kondamodalalu cherished everyone who wanted to get back their lands and were ready to fight against the atrocities of the landlords. The Sangham supplied necessary seeds and activists to those who were willing to cultivate the lands. Kondamodalalu girijans never displayed selfish attitude that 'our lands belong to us'. They knew very well that only by building several Kondamodalalu movements only their struggle would be fruitful and it is going to be a long-drawn struggle to keep their lands in their hands. With this understanding they lent their support to all those tribals and non-tribals who were in troubles within a radius of 100 kilometres of Kondamodalalu. In Chintur area there are many villages of Gutti Koya tribes. They are at a distance of 100 kilometres from Kondamodalalu. The forest department used to harass them by burning their villages complaining that they migrated here from Odisha and Chhattisgarh. All political parties are present in Chintur and Bhadrachalam areas. But the Gutti Koyas of that area instead of approaching them used to come to Kondamodalalu for protection from dangers that they encounter. The Sangham supplied them with clothes, medicines, food grains, seeds and activists also to work in their area.

This is the practical answer to those critics who always complain that Kondamodalalu movement did not expand all these years.

In this period several political disputes with different revolutionary forces had arisen. The disputes were with Tudum Debba group in West Godavari, CPI(M.L.)-Prajapandha group in Devipatnam area and with Maoists in Chintur. Maoists and local pettandars had killed six adivasis by branding them as police informers. In all the disputes the Agency Girijana Sangham decided to limit to the internal discussion with revolutionary groups. Moreover, the Sangham decided to take these disputes to the democrats and request them to interfere in solving them. As a policy matter the Sangham gave replies publicly only to the public accusations of the comrades belonging to other groups.

As the Adivasi movement was extending from Kondamodalalu to other different parts, in 1992 C.P.I (M.L.)-Janasakthi party was formed with the unity of seven revolutionary groups. The people of agency heartily welcomed the unity of revolutionary groups. At that time in the plain area of East Godavari district severe repression took place because of certain actions of the leadership. Leaders were arrested under TADA. Generally, activists go to agency area from other areas. But in support of the party and the people, the adivasi activists came to work in the villages of the plain areas. People behaved in a very balanced way during that period of splits. They faced the splits and at the same time followed the principles of unity. At the time of repression when so many people were sent to Kondamodalalu in the name of shelter the adivasis bore the burden of looking after their welfare including their financial necessities. Some leaders

sent activists to disrupt the Kondamodalu movement. The adivasis educated them with proper politics and sent them back. Though those leaders commented negatively that the Sangham itself is turned into a landlord, the adivasis took note of them and took precautions from splits with the support of the leadership of that area. Thus, they protected the movement and extended it.

In addition to this, in 1999 Comrade Jenni Tirupati became a Martyr in Duggeru of Vizianagaram district while resisting the landlords. The repression that was let loose at that time resulted in the imprisonment of 72 activists and many other adivasis. At that time the activists and people of Kondamodalu went to Duggeru area and supported them by going around all the villages.

In this way by 2004 there was an extension programme of the activities of the Sangham from Dondapudi of Polavaram area to Chintur of Khammam district and in various villages of East and West Godavari and Khammam districts. In 1998 elections a team of 100 male and female youth did propaganda supporting the MCPI leader Comrade Murla Yerrayya Reddy as a candidate for Bhadrachalam parliamentary constituency.

It is necessary to inform the role played by the people of this area under the leadership of the Sangham. Right from 1986 floods to 2006 they prepared the people to face the floods with proper precautions and did not wait for the charity of others. The Sangham prepared them in such a way that they helped one another with great self-confidence while facing the natural calamities. The political awareness created among them by the Sangham made the adivasis to take relief measures in protecting the victims of Mantur boat tragedy. They immediately spread the news of the tragedy to the outside world and took all kinds of measures to help the victims. Several people congratulated the brave deeds of the youth on the occasion under the leadership of Comrade Veerapu Reddy.

2004 - Construction of Polavaram Project - the Struggles for Land - Movement for Rehabilitation :

The Congress party came into power in 2004. The construction of Polavaram project was started as a part of Jalayagnam. Now certain changes took place in the strength of Adivasi struggles for land. In every village in tribal areas, there are social contradictions between tribals due to blood relations, locals and outsiders etc. When the outsiders do not interfere, these contradictions flare up at the time of the production of palm wine or toddy. Again, these contradictions subside as soon as the rains come and agricultural work commences. But the landlord class after entering the agency made these contradictions antagonistic and made use of them for their selfish advantages. The friendly contradictions were converted into antagonistic contradictions. They divided the adivasis into two or three groups in each and every village. The basis of the contradictions between landlords and the people is in the exploitation of adivasis. A kind of unity resulted among the adivasis in the process of their struggles for land and contradictions among them disappeared as revolutionary girijan movement entered in the agency. Even then some of the girijans were away from land struggles or remained neutral. Some others fought in support of landlords against the Sangham. But land struggles continued in spite of these neutrals and opponents.

In this situation big contractors came along with Polavaram project. They are leaders of the ruling party and members of parliament (Nama Nageswara Rao, Rayapati Sambasivarao etc.) With their entrance the bureaucracy became active. Previously when there was contradiction between landlords and adivasis, the bureaucracy which had to implement 1/70 Act was not able to take an active stand on behalf of landlords. With the advent of Polavaram project the officials brought a competition between development and the lives of the girijans. (Development versus

Adivasi life). They argued that in order to build the Project which will bring development, some of the villages of Adivasis should be inundated. All these forces unitedly tried with the help of neutrals and opponents of land struggles to devoid of the results of struggles of adivasis. Corruption worked as a fuel to this. In several villages the land compensation was grabbed by the landlords instead of adivasis. All these developments happened in a process.

The foundation stone of Polavaram project was laid in November 2004. By that time Raithu Coolie Sangham (Andhra Pradesh) and its affiliated organisation Agency Girijana Sangham placed before the government their demands for rehabilitation as follows:

1. The construction of the project is to be started only after providing a comprehensive rehabilitation to all the displaced.
2. Rehabilitation is not an act of charity. It is the right of the displaced people. The sacrifice made by them is to be recognised. Justice is to be done first to them and for others only after that. So, they are to be given land for land and forest for forest.
3. Individually adivasis are poor. But socially they are rich. They are the joint owners of common and joint properties. The revenue and Land Acquisition Acts do not take these aspects into consideration while granting compensation. 95% of adivasis do not possess pattas (legal documents of ownership) for their lands. But they are cultivating the lands. So, at first the government has to treat them all as peasants and grant land to land to each and every family.

On these three demands the Agency Girijana Sangham has been fighting since 2004 with great militancy. It has struggled to make the people understand about comprehensive scientific rehabilitation. Wherever people understood this it moved forward along with them. It tried to make people start from where they stopped to face difficulties. In the name of the construction of the project the government dealt in an aggressive way. Without consulting the people, the project work was started. They destroyed the graveyards and graves of adivasis with poclaines. They did not heed to their sentiments. The officers did not care the resolutions of gram sabhas and set aside all the rules. Moreover, Govt arrested the leaders of Agency Girijana Sangham, Comrades Sunnam Rajulu and Kunjam Ramarao and put them in jail accusing them of sedition.

In these conditions the girijans were afraid of their future and were very much agitated. The aggressive statements of the government that the project will be completed by 2009 made the girijans very much depressed. In that mental tension they stopped doing the household work and cultivation. In such a situation the top leaders of the Agency girijan movement Simhadri Subbareddy and others toured in the agency villages. They held meetings and in those meetings, they enthused courage among the girijans. They prophesied correctly in 2006 that the construction of the project would not be completed even by 2020. They also explained that the government cannot complete the project by 2009 as announced by them because of differences among the ruling groups and because of scarcity of funds. So, the leaders called the girijans to cultivate their lands without any fear and to fight for rehabilitation. The girijans were asked to stand there until their lands are inundated by the construction of the project and continue their cultivation. People understood this and responded to this call and stood courageously. The people of Kondamodalu and other villages continued the cultivation up to June 2022.

The Prejudiced Officers of Land Acquisition - the Struggle of the Displaced for their Rights on Land - the Experiences of Kondamodalu:

The landlord class decided to disrupt the struggle for land rights by the adivasis of Kondamodalu with the help of the land acquisition officials of Polavaram project. Some land disputes that were already settled in favour of the girijans were reopened by officials in order to

help the landlord classes. Without the knowledge of adivasis they served notices to the landlords through special court for land disputes and filed cases in the special court. In 1969 itself according to the 1/70 regulation a special deputy collector court was established with revenue officers as judges to look after the agency land disputes. Trials of land disputes were held in the sub divisional level courts after taluk court. At the end, by 1989 the district court gave a judgment that 'non-tribal landlords had occupied the lands of adivasis and they have to vacate those lands and handover them to adivasis'. Even the Supreme Court confirmed that the lands were being cultivated by adivasis. From 1985 onwards all those lands were being cultivated by adivasis. The landlords vacated those lands and left those places long back.

Now the case which was closed with a judgement by the district court is reopened and show cause notices were served to girijans saying that landlords are cultivating those lands and so why they may not be vacated and registered cases accordingly. Though the landlords are not cultivating the lands the officers confirmed that the lands are being cultivated by landlords. This fact was not in the notice of the adivasis who are actually cultivating those lands. They made it a issue of landlords and the officers. All this is done according to a conspiracy. In these courts generally by remaining silent government officers helped the landlords to get victory. In the name of the implementation of the judgement of the court the land acquisition officers handed over the compensation to landlords. This is their plan. By understanding all this adivasis of Kondamodalu joined in all the cases in 2013 as respondents. They stood firm facing the machinations of the landlords and explained in the courts their argument in those cases.

In course of time in 2013 a new Act of Land Acquisition came into force. It became necessary to government officials the resolution of grama sabha and referendum. The officers in their usual way prepared a false record showing that a grama sabha was convened in Kondamodalu. The adivasis approached the High Court contradicting this report. The High Court granted stay for the implementation of notification in this case saying that there is prima face evidence in the arguments of adivasis. Under these circumstances the officials came forward with the initiative of IAS officers to come to an agreement with the adivasis of Kondamodalu. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was made on 22nd June 2017 to buy a land of 426 acres at the place selected by adivasis and hand it over to them and to get compensation from the government for the cultivating land of 150 acres of adivasis. The adivasis withdrew their case in the High Court only after project officers and land acquisition officers signed on MoU.

Even before the implementation of this MoU some other forces planned to pay compensation for land to landlords. The special deputy collector who happened to be the officer in charge of land disputes gave some judgments on the cases of 2011 just before the Covid-19 lockdown on January 8th and 9th of 2020. All those judgements were written with back dates. Even before these judgments the land acquisition officers paid 17 crores of rupees as compensation for land to landlords. An agitation was launched on these judgments during Covid period by adivasis. A stay was granted on those prejudiced illegal judgments given by district collector and special deputy collector. The cases were handed over to the immediate higher officer of the special deputy collector. Then the district collector ordered to hear all these cases as sue motto by the settlement court which was under the PO of the ITDA project officer. After hearing the PO, court gave a judgment rejecting the arguments of the landlords in February 2022. The revenue officers and land acquisition officers who paid compensation to landlords illegally and also as they were involved in some other corruption cases were arrested and jailed. Cases were registered on them and the hearing is going on.

The inundation of upper regions of the Godavari during floods increased from 2019 onwards. The construction of coffer dam in the upper region of the project in the Godavari is the reason

for this inundation. So, the people of several villages of Devipatnam vacated their villages and went to colonies without getting compensation. But the villagers of Kondamodalu panchayat went to upper areas during the floods and lived there in huts. They decided not to vacate their villages until the land problem was cleared. They would go to Neladonelapaadu colony only after the completion of the construction of colony and after the release of basic notifications about the lands. The basic notifications in regard to 426 acres of land noted in the MoU were released. Even before that 42 crores of rupees were released for the buying of 426 acres for 424 families. The adivasis decided to be alert until the process of getting the lands is completed. Accordingly on 19th April, 2022 they inaugurated their colony. They started a new chapter in their lives with new problems and new challenges.

The struggles of Kondamodalu adivasis proved that great awareness and fighting spirit are necessary to encounter the landlord classes. The experiences of this struggle teach us the lesson that the struggle for land depends on legal forums, and in different forms in addition to the fight for land on the land itself. The organising of oppressed people behind the Sangham with determination is an absolute necessity for the victory.

The struggle for land by the adivasis of Kondamodalu in addition to the struggle on the land had several phases - approaching the courts, government offices and depending on revenue records and etc. In every phase the struggle for a comprehensive and scientific rehabilitation is linked with their struggle for land.

Getting inspiration and support from Kondamodalu, land struggles of Adivasis spread to Venkatareddy Gudem, Kunkala, Manugopula etc areas in West

Godavari district. The Adivasis fought to the last under the leadership of the Martyr Comrade Veerapu Reddy who did yeomen service for the development of girijan movement.

All this while the people of Kondamodalu owned the leaders and activists as their own and showered great love and affection on them. These affinities are connected with the politics of the movement. Many activists came forward to work in Kondamodalu temporarily or for a long time. Whatever short period it may be the people remember the work done by those activists. They did not spare those who were born and grew with them and later joined other organisations against them.

During this time many leaders of girijan movement became martyrs. They are Comrades Kundla Gangaraju, Kundla (Veju) Rami Reddy, Madi Pandayya, Chintalada Peddi Reddy, Chintalada Bullabbayi (Thutigunta), Gorre Laxmamma, Vanjam Kannamma, Sunnam Raju, Chedala Veerapu Reddy etc. With the inspiration of the leaders like Comrades Manam Ramarao, Jaswanth, and adivasis great companion B.D. Sharma the movement is advancing.

S.Jhansi

**State Committee of Andhra Pradesh
CPI (M.L.)**