



Tribal villagers of Kakavada of Pampachodavaram taluk agitating against the opening of an arrack depot in their village. A board displayed by the villagers declares: "Ma... kottu yaduu" (we do not want liquor shop in our village).

Tribals up in arms against sale of arrack

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The tribal population of Kakavada, 15 km from Pampachodavaram, in the East Godavari agency area, has risen in revolt against the opening of an arrack depot in their village.

The main reason for the resistance from the villagers to the running of arrack sales in the village is the fact that people who had their hearts full quarrelled among themselves, and became victims of harassment from men of Andhra Pradesh Special Police camping near the village.

The villagers, certainly an overwhelming majority of them, expressed themselves against the functioning of the arrack shop in the village in view of the fact that it attracted a number of tribals from other villages and became a centre of constant feuds.

Moreover, the arrack shop, according to the villagers, is not a licensed one. The people who got the right to sell arrack spread to centres originally not authorised for the purpose to increase their sales. Kakavada is one of them.

The educated among the tribals

aided by social workers from outside started an agitation against the arrack sales in the shop which was opened on May 8. Twice last week the villagers tried to stop the sales by seizing the arrack cans and putting them in a hut under lock and key.

The police on a complaint from the arrack shop people arrested four tribal youths. One of the youths, V Samala, is a student of Veeresalingam Theistic College at Rajahmundry while another, S Adi Reddy, runs a kirana shop started with the help of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA). The two others held are H Chinmali Dora and N Adigarayana of the same village.

A non-tribal arrested in con-

nection with the same case is Dr P Sivaramakrishna, director of Sakti (Search for Action and Knowledge of Tribal Initiative), a voluntary organisation working for the furtherance of tribal welfare programme in co-ordination with ITDA. Dr Sivaramakrishna was a school teacher in the area before. He later did research and was awarded a doctorate for his work on anthropology and folklore in the tribal areas.

Dr Sivaramakrishna is understood to have tried to help the tribal agitators in stopping the arrack sales by the new shop in the village. He tried to bring about a peaceful end to the matter by persuading the arrack shop people to close down the shop conceding the just demand of the villagers.

The social worker as also the four tribal youths were released on bail on the night of June 8 itself. But the cases against them which includes wrongful confinement of persons, outraging the modesty of woman, simple hurt and criminal intimidation continue in the records as also the agitation by the villagers for closure of the arrack shop.