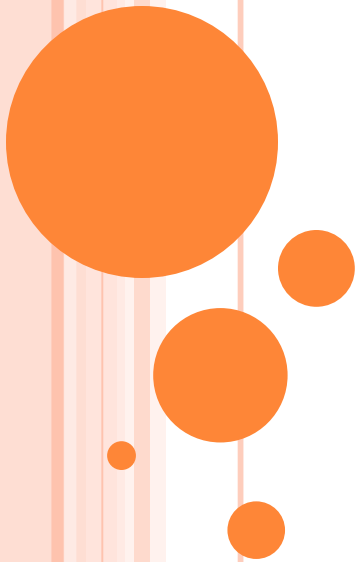


Sudhakar Reddy Udumula

***Journalism for
Social Change***



FEMALE INFANTICIDE-GIRL CHILD KILLINGS

Andhra Pradesh
INDIA

Series of stories exposing social malaise









TRIBAL BABY GIRLS STARVED TO DEATH

By U. SUDHAKAR REDDY

Parigi, March 13: Eleven newborn girl babies were starved to death by their parents over the last year in a tribal hamlet of Ranga Reddy district, 80 km from Hyderabad.

Lambada tribals in Cheruvu Mundali tanda of Kulkacharla mandal let the infants die by refusing to feed them. It is a long-standing practice to wrap the unwanted girl child in a cloth and leave them to die.

The villagers have not heard of the many programmes announced by the government for the girl child. Unemployment has forced people in the tandas to migrate to urban areas to search for livelihood.

In this scenario, the villagers see one more daughter as an added burden. Most of these families have surviving daughters. The villagers freely admitted that they had let the infants die. "My wife Bhagyamma gave birth to a female baby for the third time," said Jarpula Peerya Nayak, 27. "A daughter is a burden and we decided not to feed her. So she died." He hastened to add that he did not smother or strangle her. "We just let her die," he said. "It is very difficult to bring up girls and marry them off." On February 25, his cousin J. Ravi and wife Sujatha let their newborn baby starve to death. "My daughter died two days after birth since we did not feed her," admitted Ravi.

"We already have two girl children and can't afford to

CM aide to send notice to Naidu

By OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Hyderabad, March 13: State government adviser K.V.P. Ramachandra Rao, a confidant of Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, is planning to sue TD president N. Chandrababu Naidu for accusing him of land grabbing.

Mr Rao would serve a legal notice on Mr Naidu on Wednesday.

During a visit to Nadarugol on the outskirts on Monday, Mr Naidu had charged Dr Reddy and Mr Rao with grabbing government land. Sources said Mr Rao had warned that he would take action against Mr Naidu for the "malicious campaign".

Mr Ramachandra Rao had earlier served notice on TD leader Kodela Sivaprasada Rao, forcing the latter to retract his remark that the adviser was "acting like AP's Jayalalitha and amassing wealth."

Land Act repeal only by '08, AP tells Centre

By OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Hyderabad, March 13: The State government has decided not to repeal the Urban Land Ceiling Act (ULCA) till March next year.

Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy took this decision despite tremendous pressure from the World Bank and the Centre to repeal the Act. He is learnt to have told officials that if the Act was repealed now, the government would lose its grip on over 14,000 hectares of surplus lands caught in court cases.

Sources said that the State government would request the Centre to allow it to sustain the Act for one more year.

As per the Memorandum of Understanding between the State and the Centre on the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, it is mandatory to repeal the Act by March 31, 2007.

In a recent communication, the World Bank had also asked the State government to repeal the Act. The World Bank country director also spoke to the Chief Minister about this.

However, Mr Rajasekhara Reddy has decided not to submit to pressure.

"The Chief Minister is very firm on

Tribal girls killed

Continued from Page 1

have one more." After starving and killing the girl children, the tribals dig a grave in their fields and bury them. Then they put a stone on the grave. Villagers said that dogs had eaten parts of the body of Ravi's daughter and he had to bury her again.

Most of the 40-odd families in the village have either witnessed such killings or have performed it themselves over the years. Jarpula Lokya Nayak, brother of MPTC Pentya Nayak, is also learnt to have starved to death two girl children.

Most of the children starved to death were the third or fourth

daughters of couples. Female infanticide is also practised in Rokalgutta Tanda of Ipsavapalli panchayat, Gorigadda Tanda of K. Samudram and Nerellagadda Tanda. On March 9, schoolteachers, with the help of an NGO activist of Gorigadda Tanda, prevented K. Buggamma and Pandya Nayak from killing their fifth child, which also turned out to be daughter.

"Buggamma had said beforehand that she will kill the child if it was female," said Rajesh Rathod, headmaster of the Government Upper Primary School in Gorigadda Tanda. "After the baby was born, we told her that Lakshmi had come to her home. Only after that she fed the baby."

Kulkacharla deputy mandal revenue officer Y.B.N. Avalaram said that the recurrent infanticide had not come to his notice so far. "We will conduct an inquiry," he said. Parigi Inspector P. Maheswar also said that he came to know of the killing of the infants through mediapersons.

"The villagers told our constables that the babies were stillborn or were premature," he said. "We haven't booked any cases so far." Keshulamma, a midwife of Cheruvu Mundali Tanda, said that she had delivered 11 female babies in her village but all of them 'died' soon after.

The main reason cited by parents for killing the girl children is the huge expense of marrying them off, maybe 20 years later. "We have to give a scooter, five to six tolas of gold and Rs 50,000 cash to a good groom," said a villager. "How many people can afford that?" Because of this, villagers turn a deaf ear even if they hear the heart-rending cries of an unfed child on the throes of death.



J. Peeriya Nayak, who killed his newborn daughter.



FAMILY PLANNING UNHEARD NEAR VILLAGES WHERE CM STARTED PROJECTS

Tribals have no welfare plan

By OUR CORRESPONDENT

Hyderabad, March 13: The tribal colonies where girl babies are being killed are just 35 km away from Chevella, from where Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy launched all his pet schemes.

It is also the place where Prime Minister Manmohan Singh chose to launch the national food for work scheme. But the benefits of these schemes seem to have left untouched the tribals in Kulkacharla and Parigi mandals, where 11 female babies were killed recently by poor parents.

These tandas are a picture of gross neglect. The tribals have not heard of any the much-trumpeted welfare schemes. Even family planning is not promoted here with most tribal couples having five to seven children. Health services are abysmal and most of the tribal women don't go to hospitals to deliver their babies. Keshulamamma, an untrained midwife who has delivered most of the babies here, says that families don't have the means to travel to Kulkacharla for delivery.

"There is no transportation," she said. "I help the women in Cheruvu Mundali Tanda and surrounding 10 tandas to deliver babies."

The midwife herself has six daughters and has no idea of family planning schemes. Parigi RDC's M. Ravinder Reddy claimed that government schemes were implemented.

Registration of births and deaths is not done properly. Villagers of Cheruvu Mundali Tanda have urged the government to set up an Anganwadi. "We don't even get water here," said J. Ravi.

The government had a scheme to pay Rs 5,000 to the parents of a girl child, no one is aware of it. "I have six girl children but I have not got any money," said Pandya Nayak, a villager of Goni Gadla Tanda.



GORY TALE: Ravina Naik and Sujatha sit with their child at Cheruvu Mundali tande, about 80 km from Hyderabad. Ravina Naik killed their newborn daughter by not feeding her. PHOTOGRAPH BY PAVAN

Villagers head to Pune

By OUR CORRESPONDENT

Hyderabad, March 13: Tribals in Kulkacharla and Parigi area of Ranga Reddy district are migrating to Pune in droves in search of work. The rush is so heavy that the RTC is arranging two special buses daily to transport them.

Even as tribals alleged that they have no work, officials said that that they were acclimatised to seasonal migration.

J. Ravi Nayak, 20, who was about to board the bus to Pune says, "We are paid Rs 150 for construction work in Pune. We take our children along with us whenever possible."

His father Jamala Nayak who



A youngster leaves for Pune. A DC PHOTOGRAPH

was sending him off said, "Two of my sons migrated to Pune. It is easy to find work there."

The villagers wear a deserted look with a just few elderly men and women. The migrants come back

after earning money for a few months and go back again.

Narasimhulu Goud of MV Foundation who works in Kulkacharla mandal says, "There are 12,874 school-going children in the villages in the mandal of which 6,983 are boys. Among them 374 migrated to Pune along with families."

In Cheruvu Mundali Tanda Upper Primary School only 51 students are on the rolls. Half of them, mostly girls, stay away.

Headmaster K. Vasantha Rao said, "In first class the strength is 24, five in second class, 8 in third class and 11 in fifth. When we ask parents, they ask who will take care of their children when they migrate to Pune."

A pregnant woman at CheruvuMundaliTanda far off from Hyderabad - live in poor conditions – in the tribal villages



THIRD GIRL CHILD IN THE SAME FAMILY UNWANTED BY PARENTS



HOW THEY KILL GIRL CHILD

- Starving them to death by wrapping the new born in a cloth without feeding milk
- Putting husk(unhulled rice) in the throat and suffocate them to death
- Throttling them to death with wet towel



KESALAMMA AN UNTRAINED MID WIFE WHO CONFESSED THE KILLING OF THE GIRLS





A VILLAGER SHOWING THE GRAVE WHERE THE BODIES OF GIRL BABIES BURIED SECRETLY





- Girl child not sent to school
- Forced to work in the fields
- Child marriages rampant





THANK YOU

