

## **Padala Ramarao**

A short biographical note on Padala Ramarao, a member of the AITUC General Council since the time of NM Joshi and an active member of the Progressive Writers' Association in Andhra Pradesh, interviewed on September 22, 2004 in Rajamundri, Andhra Pradesh

Padala Ramarao was born on April 22, 1922 in an extremely poor family. He could not get any formal education but learnt Hindi, English, Telugu and Sanskrit on his own when he was in prison.

Padala has written 103 books and one of them is his biography of Alluri Sitaramraju, a mass leader who fought for the cause of tribal and got killed by police. Padala also translated Marx on Trade Union and also Lenin on Trade Union.

Padala started trade union work in 1941 and organised the weavers which was not included in AITUC till 1957. Padala and his friends launched a movement against scarcity of yarn in 1936 in which many weavers came with them and after few years their organisation was formed. At that time there were 1600 handlooms were functional in the town out of which more than 1600 families sustained themselves. All over the country, there were one crore and twenty five lakh weavers in the country. Padala helped to organise the weavers all over the country and went to Sholapur in Maharashtra also which was considered to be one of the main centres. Padala was elected vice chairman of the state unit of the AITUC.

Padala had been instrumental in organising the sweepers employed by the municipality at a salary of only Rs 6 a month in the 1940s. At the moment they are getting Rs 6000 a month.

Padala was particularly interested in the cause of unorganised labour and organised the building and construction workers. He even led them to Delhi. He was particularly thankful to late Com Indrajit Gupta who always responded to his call and came. Padala is the state President of the Building and Construction Workers Federation.

Padala had also organised the shop assistants and led their agitation several times.

In 1941, Padala had helped to organise the Paper mill workers too when the production capacity was only 30 tonnes a day while now it is more than 300 tonnes.

Padala was also active in organising the timber workers. The timber merchants were selling the logs on the basis of its length and size but the workers were getting only very nominal payment. Padala led their agitation in 1946 and government brought Malwa police which was considered to be very cruel to crush the agitation. Padala was detained without any charges and kept in several jails and sub jails. Later when the Communist party was banned, Padala was kept in jail from 1947 to 1952. It was in this period that he learnt languages and started writing. After he came out of jail, he earned his living through writing books.

For writing the biography of Alluri Sitaramaraju, Padala visited the tribal areas extensively. His book is considered to be the only authentic one on the theme.

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I have written 103 books and one of them is the biography of Alluri Sitaramraju, a mass leader who fought for the cause of tribals and got killed by police. I also translated Marx on Trade Union and also Lenin on Trade Union.

I started trade union work in 1941 and organised the weavers which was not included in AITUC till 1957. Alongwith my friends, we launched a movement against scarcity of yarn in 1936 in which many weavers came with us and after few years their organisation was formed. At that time there were 1600 handlooms functional in the twon out of which more than 1600 families sustained themselves. All over the country, there were one crore and twenty five lakh weavers. I helped to organise the weavers all over the country and went to Sholapur in Maharashtra also which was considered to be one of the main centres. I was elected vice chairman of the state unit of the AITUC.

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