

Gopal Rao, Kurtadikar, Maharashtra

Born 16 June 1925 in Kurtari village in Nanded district, Maharashtra. His father was an advocate. He did his matriculation in 1941 and LLB in 1948 in Hyderabad. He participated in Students' movements in Nizam's state, as Hindu students had to face a lot of problems. He was in Hyderabad Students' Union. Took part in 1942 movement.

He took active part in Maharashtra, Andhra and Karnataka Parishads, i.e. anti-Nizam organisations. Participated in anti-Nizam struggles like "cutting of trees", "Flag hoisting" agitation on the occasion of India's independence.

In TU movement

In 1946, there was a textile workers' strike in Nanded, Warangal, Aurangabad, Hyderabad, etc. for several months. Following this agitation, ID Act and industrial committees were introduced or applied. Later on, organised Municipal workers in Nanded, and got them registered. Many workers were beaten up. They got the matter referred to the Industrial Tribunal with demands of minimum wages, etc. Since he was an advocate also it was easier to look after both organisational and legal work. Municipal workers' unions were formed in Jalna, Selu, Parbhani, etc. Kurtadikar also became a municipal councillor, and later was elected to the Assembly too.

The govt. formed several committees including Rege Committee, Datar Committee, etc. He and others pressed for the implementation of the recommendations of the Rege Committee. Datar Committee dealt with the issue of rationalisation. There was Shalke Award too.

He is the Treasurer of a number of TUs eg. Usmanshahi Textile Mills workers' union, etc. Kurtadikar had to wage intense struggles when workers were compelled to manage and instead of 2 looms; during the "rationalisation period". He also participated in power-loom societies, which dealt with a part of production process.

He had to fight intense battles against the "yellow Flag" unions foisted upon the workers through Nizam's terror. It was a difficult period but ultimately the workers could achieve success against the Nizamshahi.

From 1952 to '75, he fought five elections even got elected. Among his major achievements has been formation of housing societies for the homeless.

Even at this ripe age Kurtadikar continues to be active as treasurer and legal advisor to the workers' unions.