

Nutthi Narasaiah, Andhra Pradesh

Born in 1926 and worked as a child miner in the coal mine at the age of 12. The person who used to take in child workers, used to ask him and other children on a high piece of stone so that he could have a look, and then order "Go to work"! His parents were themselves coal miners in Elangu. Then they shifted with child to Kothgudem, which was also under Nizam State, but owned and/ or worked by the British. Contract system was widespread. He used to work long hours in the inclines. He had to separate different types of coal. At that time, there were no notes, only Nizam's coins! He used to work 8-9 hours.

The elders and seniors used to talk about a lot of things. They even used to sit together talk something among themselves. He was curious but they asked not to listen to what they talked. But he insisted. And thus he knew some of the things.

By 1946-47 the struggle against Nizam intensified. He used to accompany various people to and across the dense jungles around. The workers of the mines used to help them. Narsaiah used to go to Bhadraachalam across the jungles. He used to avoid arrest in order to help the movement. The British border was only 20 miles away. He helped mobilise thousands of miners, when police came to arrest Seshagiri Rao. At the age of 17-18 he used to do a lot of organising work among the workers. Swami Ramnath Tirth and other Congress leaders used to come, and they shouted slogans and their meetings used to disperse.

Narsaiah was in Gulbarga jail for 13 months. They were told that Stalin had told them to withdraw struggle. So he and others withdrew. Then they took to open struggles and organising classes.

He helped Komaraiah, the TU leader, a lot in the open in organising Singareni workers' union. Makhdoom stayed in Kothagudem for 2-3 months. He and others organised 2-3 day strike after release in 1953. It was also for labour tribunal. Labour Appellate Tribunal came into being in 1956. Then there was Majumdar Award in 1959. They fought for wage board.

Nutthi Marasaiah described in detail about the Gorakhpur and UP workers, who used to be brought to work in the mines. They used to be kept separately, along military pattern. They used to be beaten a lot by their "Commanders". Narasaiah and others took up their cause. Later when they gradually settled, their other demands were taken up by the TU organisations. Many of others were "Burma Labour", those brought back or run away from Burma. Narasaiah and others demanded that they be allowed to have and keep families. His union, particularly Singareni workers' union taught them

how to properly fight for their demands. They also fought for the safety measures, and started getting results by 50-60s.

Now he is not so active because of age, but earlier he used to work a lot among the workers and explain to them. For example, the import of coal from Australia and other countries after liberalisation policies of Narasimha Rao government.