

## **Maseela Satyanarayana**

A short biographical note on Maseela Satyanarayana interviewed in Rajamundri, Andhra Pradesh on September 24, 2004

Maseela Styanarayana was born in 1948, though date is not known, in Rajamundri. He got his education in Rajamundri and was active in the Students' Federation before joining trade union. He is also the district secretary of the party.

The front where Maseela is most active is that of hamalis, or coolies who load and unload goods. These coolies work in groups that are called "Jatlu" and the leader of the Jatlu is called Maistry. The wages of the coolies are directly given to these maistries by the businessmen which is later distributed among the coolies in the jatlu evenly.

All these jatlus are rgistered in a union registered in 1953 and have a three-story office of their own with nine office bearers paid by the union. At present, the president of the union is a coolie unloading and loading goods from lorries. Vice president is a senior person with experience and also secretary of the Communist Party branch of 90 members organised by Maseela.

The general secretary of the union is also president of the town unit of the AITUC and his name has been recommended for advising the government for the proposed welfare baord for hamalis.

One of the joint secretary of the union is from Road Transport Corporation hamalis and the other is from iron and steel industries. The treasurer is from whole sale cloth market where 500 shops are cluttered at on place.

The office bearers are exempted from their work for a term of two years. However the present team is serving now its second term which is unusual. There are 2000 workers in hundred jatlus and 100 maistrys form a committee. If a jatlu cannot solve its problem on its own, the hundred maistrys sit to discuss the issue. If the committee cannot resolve the crisis, the appeal is made to the honorary president of the union, Com Prabhakar Chaudhry. If still not convinced, they would not be paid any wages.

The jatlus have helped other unions too at the time of crisis like strike or lock out. They offer jobs and relief to the agitating workers.

In the biggest jatlu, there are 130 members working in the state warehouse. For every one rupee the shop owner is asked to pay twelve paise extra that goes for the provident fund and medical facilities for the coolies. There is a wage hike by 28 percent at teh insistence of the union.

Maseela Satyanarayana works among these jatlus apart from the Andhra Pulp an Paper Mill workers' union.

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The front where I am presently working is that of hamalis, or coolies who load and unload goods. These coolies work in groups that are called "Jatlu" and the leader of the Jatlu is called Maistry. The wages of the coolies are directly given to these maistries by the businessmen which is later distributed among the coolies in the jatlu evenly.

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