

8. Adi Narayana (AITUC), general secretary, Vishakhapatnam Steel Plant

BIO-NOTE

Ashort biographical note on Desmanta Rao Adi Narayana, General Secretary, Vishakhapatnam Steel plant workers' union (AITUC), interviewed on September 10, 2004 at Vizag steel Plant, Ukku House, Ukkunagar, Vishakhapatnam

Born on 15 June, 1956 in Naidupur village in Vishakhapatnam, Adi belonged to one of the families displaced by the construction of the steel plant. His family was shifted from its roots in 1982 and resettled on a different place where they again named their village Naidupur. Adi was studying in ITI at the time and was an active member of the CPI. His family got Rs 17000 for the land that was taken over which costs now several lakh. However as his father had land in other villages too the family was economically well placed.

After finishing his studies, Adi Narayana joined the movement for employment for the displaced families in the steel plant. The management conceded and alongwith others, Adi too got job in 1986.

Since the inception, the plant was facing problems. Even after inauguration in 1976 by Indira Gandhi, the government was not clear whether the plant should be Vizag. The agitation launched state wide by CPI for steel plant in the state had forced the government to have it in Vizag which had a sea shore as well as facilities of a city. However as the construction cost itself became higher than expected, the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi refused to start the plant. It was at this point that Mr Andropov, the Russian President visited the plant and promised to provide the necessary machinery.

There was still no money and government allowed the plant to take money from private agencies. Tirupati temple trust was approached alongwith others and the work was started. The workers here were all young and were keen to keep their jobs at any cost. Therefore the plant was running in full strength. However, the struggle was also kept alive. Once the workers walked thirty miles to reach the collector's office with their demands. Adi was the architect of a new type of movement where the workers never went against their own jobs nor they compromised on their demands. And yet in 1998, the plant was declared sick and efforts were made to disinvest the plant. But Adi approached the workers and told them to work hard. He took a delegation to the then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee alongwith twenty MPs. They all requested permission to keep the plant alive and he permitted.

Since then, the plant has recovered from its sickness, the only unit in the country to improve so much. From 2001, the plant started giving profit and the credit goes to workers and their union as well as Adi Narayana.

TRANSCRIPTIVE NOTE

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