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### Koragas highlight `failure' of district administrations

By Our Staff Correspondent

Udupi, Jan. 2. Mr. P. Gokuldas, President of Federation of Koraga Unions, said on Wednesday that the district administrations of Udupi and Dakshina Kannada had ``failed" in implementing the law banning ``ajalu paddati".

Speaking to presspersons here, he said the State Government enacted a law banning ``ajalu paddati", a form social evil prevalent among the Koraga community, in August 2000.

But the implementation of the law had left a lot to be desired. Despite lodging complaints, the Udupi District Police had not taken action to stop ``ajalu paddati". The lethargy in the implementation of the law was obvious in the instances of ``ajalu paddati" taking place in every village. The federation had taken up the matter with National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), which in turn had asked the State Government to submit a report. Stating that vested interests in society were bent on retaining ``ajalu paddati" for their benefit, he said they were threatening and coercing the youth of the Koraga community to continue with it.

The recent statement of Mr. Vinaykumar Sorake, Udupi MP, that beating of the ``dollu" was different from ``ajalu paddati", had come as a blow to the Koraga community. The federation had taken a serious view of this ``latest amendment" by the MP. He sought the resignation of Mr. Sorake for making such an ``unconstitutional statement".

Stating that systematic efforts were being made to break the unity in the Koraga community, he said one should not differentiate between ``dollu drum beating" and ``ajalu paddati" as the latter thrived because of the prevalence of the former. The youths of the Koraga community beating the ``dollu" were looked down upon and treated as outcastes.

There was a weak provision in the law banning ``ajalu paddati", which insisted on a complaint before action was taken, he said, and added that the members of the Koraga community were poor, illiterate, and ignorant, and did not lodge a complaint. Legal experts from the National School of Law were being consulted to overcome this problem.

Mr. Balaraj Kodikal, Mr. B.K.Ramesh, Mr. Bogra Korga, Mr. Devidas Shetty, and Ms. Bharati, leaders of Koraga development organisations, were present.

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