



ASECA CHANNEL

(A monthly Journal from All India ASECA)

Website: www.allindiaaseca.org

E-mail: allindiaaseca@hotmail.com

Volume: IX Issue: 11 November, 2010 Annual Subscription Rs50/- Single copy Rs5/-

Editorial

It was during the year 1977, Santal intellectuals in a meeting dedicated a place envisaged to be a knowledge centre for the upliftment of the tribals in general and Santals in particular. The place was selected none other than by Pandit Raghunath Murmu, the Guru Gomke. A declaration was made to establish a University at that place so as to pursue enlightenment and establish identity and dignity of the Santals. The euphoria was such that today also people remember that occasion with awe and still believe that something is being done for realising the goal. The clarion call given by the leaders of this community still reverberates in the hearts of the people. The site is located at a distance of 2.5 kilometer from Jhargram in the West Midnapore district of West Bengal. The exact place is called "Bet Kundri" and the same as demarcated is under the possession of the social organisation. Most of the people who keep interest on social affairs are aware of the fact. A marble bust of Guru Gomke has been installed in that precinct during Guru Gomke birth Centenary Celebration in 2005. The statue is being worshipped regularly. All India Santal Semled, Jhargram is running a school in a small semi finished single room pucca house for propagation of and teaching through Ol Chiki. In the same precinct, a building has been constructed which is planned to have 3 rooms and till date only two rooms have been constructed with proper ceiling. The large room is open without ceiling. The meetings and other gatherings are being organised by erecting temporary tarpaulin cover. This is the only asset Santals of West Bengal with population of more than 2.4 million have in the State of West Bengal which can be utilised for their emancipation and welfare. One does not come across any other list of properties Santals possess under their authority, command and control though there are many associations in the state proclaiming to be working for the benefit and welfare of the group. This structure, inadequate though, has been created by All India Santal Semled, Jhargram with the munificent donation of miniscule likeminded people. And one can draw

consolation from the proverb "Something is better than nothing".

The above stated association is also having limited sources to tap as people (read able and educated mass) desist from associating themselves from such activities. On the contrary, they are expected to spearhead such activities through appropriate initiative. People have started to identify themselves over and above the main identity that is grouping in professional line like Doctors, Engineers, Bankers, Students, Writers etc. So naturally there will be few left for promotion of the main identity. This is the dilemma and constraint under which the present Santal is living and striving to maintain its identity and independence.

It was a barren land at the time of identifying it and popular hope was that Govt. of West Bengal in due course of time would consider allotment of this land for the purported use. The regular petitions has not yielded any result till date. The people, who had shared the promise from the same dais, though are able to set up such institution, have not taken up any visible action in this regard.

The people have to give it a serious thought. At present Dr. Bidu Bhusan Hembram and his wife Mrs. Mary Hembram are in the forefront to lead and contribute with a small team of enthusiasts like Mr. Salkhu Murmu, Mr. Janaki Nath Hansda, Er. Kuanr Hembram and others for the continuance of a mission elucidated by Guru Gomke. They are able to organise seminars at a time when government authority is facing challenges to organise any event, congregation at "Patabindha Pata" was abandoned and celebration of "Durga Puja" is a lack lustre event in the locality. The emphasis is on the creation of such institutions with impeccable image, strong determination and indomitable desire who are helpful in bridging the gap during the time of duress. The Govt. of West Bengal, whole Santal population and the intelligentsia in particular should not remain as only mute spectator and helping hands should be extended in possessing the land and utilising the same for realising the utopian goal.

Proposed programme of the 23rd Annual Conference of All India Santali Writers' Association to be held at NALCO HRD Auditorium, Nalco Nagar, Dist. Angul, Odisha on 25th & 26th December 2010.

Date: 25.12.2010 (Inaugural Session) 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.

1. Reception of the Guests, 2. Inauguration of the Conference, 3. Welcome Songs, 4. Welcome address 5. Release of Souvenir & new books, 6. Felicitation to (a) **Sri Ramsundar Baskey** with Majhi Ramdas Tudu Award, (b) **Sri Mistri Soren 'Sonali'** with Sadhu Ram Chand Murmu Award, (c) **Sri Haripada Murmu** with Pandit Raghunath Murmu Award, (d) **Sri Sari Dhorom Hansda** as Poet of the year 2009 (e) **Sri Arjun Majhi** as short story writer of the year 2009 and (f) **Sri Biswanath Tudu** for winning Bal Sahitya Puroskar from Sahitya Akademi 2010. 7. Speeches of the dignitaries.

Chief Guest: Sri Pratap Jena, Hon'ble Minister, School and Mass Education, Govt. of Odisha.

Chief Speaker: Prof. Rajesh Sachdev, Director, CIIL, Mysore.

Guests of Honour:

1. Dr. Ram Chandra Behera, President, Odisha Sahitya Academy, 2. Sri Rajnikant Singh, MLA, 3. Sri Joy Bharghees, Director (P&A), NALCO, 4. Sri B. N. Swain, Executive Director (H&A), NALCO

President: Sri Shyam Sundar Hansdah, IG of Police

Vote of Thanks: Sri Abhiram Hansdah

Lunch - 1 pm to 2 pm

First Session: 2pm to 5pm

Topic: Santali Literary Movement: Our Vision

President: Sri Uday Nath Majhi

Guest: Sri Ram Chandra Hansdah, MLA

Speakers:

1. Dr. Damayanti Beshra, 2. Sri Chunda Soren, 'Sipahi', 3. Sri Jamadar Kisku and Others

Tea - 5pm to 5.20pm

Second Session – 5.20 pm to 6.30 pm

Topic: Poet Convention

President: Mrs. Yashoda Murmu, **Guests:** 1. Sri Sari Dhorom Hansda, 2. Sri Mistri Soren, 3. Mrs. Ratni Hansdah

Third Session: 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm

Topic: Importance of Jaher

President: Sri Nityananda Hembram

Speakers: 1. Sri Chhoteram Majhi, 2. Sri Meghray Murmu

Cultural Programme – 7.30 pm to 8.30 pm then Dinner

Date: 26.12.2010 4th Session 10 am to 1 pm

Topic: Linguistic Works and Development in Santali Language

President: Sri Shyam Charan Hembram, **Guest:** Sri Shyam Charan Hansdah, MLA

Speakers:

1. Dr. Ratan Hembram, 2. Sri Karu Majhi, 3. Sri Thakur Prasad Murmu & Others

Lunch - 1 pm to 2 pm

5th Session 2 pm to 4 pm

Topic: Santali Language Education: Writers, Educationists and Common People

President: Prof. Digambar Hansdah

Speakers:

1. Sri Ramu Hembram, 2. Sri Purna Chandra Hembram, 3. Dr. Naku Hansdah & Others

Tea - 4 pm to 4.20 pm

6th Session: 4.20 pm to 6.30 pm

Annual General Body Meeting of AISWA

President: Sri Rupchand Hansda, **Guest:** Er. Dayanidhi Marndi, **Election Officer:** Er. Kritibas Soren,

Vote of Thanks: Sri Thakur Murmu

Cultural Programme – 6.30 pm to 8pm then Dinner

This Conference is sponsored by the following Organisations:

1. NALCO SC/ST Employees' Welfare Association,
2. Nalco Nagar Kherwal Gaonta
3. Nalco Nagar Kherwal Ladies Club

For further details please contact:

All India Santali Writers' Association
Camp Office: 201, South Side, Kharagpur – 721 301
President: Sri Rupchand Hansda : 09475891494
General Secretary: Sri Jadumani Besra : 09474893880

Scheduled Communities: A social Development profile of SC/STs (Bihar, Jharkhand & W.B.)

(Source: Planning Commission)

{Continued from October 2010 issue}

When we examine the educational attainments of scheduled communities in the three States, what is most conspicuous is that the literacy rate is highest in West Bengal but its educational level from the school stage onward, is the lowest. Both in Jharkhand and in Bihar there are significant percentage differences at these levels of education in comparison to West Bengal. A similar pattern is in evidence with respect to the tribal communities in Jharkhand and West Bengal. This clearly indicates that West Bengal has a very large base of literates with very low level educational attainment. Whilst in Bihar and Jharkhand, they have a relatively smaller base of elementary education, but a significantly larger apex of higher level of education.

Dependency : We have noted earlier, with reference to agrarian system that except for small pockets of dependence, the class of labour, by and large, are free from ties of attachment with their employers. This is

reflected in the very low incidence of borrowings from the informal credit market. In Bihar we found some evidence of pockets of interest-free borrowings from willing landowners. Such loans are usually tagged to assured labour supply to creditor-land owners during peak periods of labour demand, at wages below the prevailing market rate. The difference in wages works out as the 'hidden interest' on the so-called interest-free loans. Landowners in such cases devise 'invisible ties' of attachment by creating structures of obligation. This situation is non-existent in West Bengal.

Housing and Health : Housing which is indicative of quality of life for the scheduled communities brings out some interesting features. Firstly, most housing is selfconstructed and self-owned. The differentiation that takes place among scheduled communities is with respect to katcha and pucca houses. In West Bengal the general pattern overwhelmingly is that of katcha housing. But this appears to be more of a cultural than economic

phenomenon. Secondly, urban housing of scheduled communities is universally pucca, but there is a significant percentage of rented housing.

As in West Bengal, the rural based tribal communities in Jharkhand, live preponderantly in katcha houses. Finally, State intervention in the form of Indira Awas Yojana is conspicuously absent in West Bengal.

In health-seeking behaviour there is a general trend towards reaching out to scientific allopathic treatment in Primary Health Centres, District Hospitals and private clinics. The scheduled communities, however, have not withdrawn from the traditional mode of treatment. They are utilising modern facilities and resources. Except for Scheduled Castes with urban bias in Jharkhand, health care support of State agencies is most markedly visible in West Bengal and almost invisible in Bihar.

Concluding Remarks : In conclusion, strictly from our universe of samples, certain contours of the three States with respect to scheduled communities can be presented.

Bihar seems to emerge as a State in which the resource base enjoyed by Scheduled Castes does not have a wide mass base. Whether it is the ownership of land, asset holding, literacy and education, health care and housing amenities, their reach do not cover a large population. The differentiation among the caste communities at these levels is quite sharp. The inequities are more conspicuous.

In Jharkhand the rural-urban factor clearly emerges as an important causal variable although the Lohara tribal community poses a paradox. Rural Jharkhand with its tribal communitarian imprint presents a picture of pervasive distribution of resources and assets at the level of the agrarian economy. Only in Jharkhand, do we find substantial percentage of households declaring non-agricultural occupations as their main occupation, even when many of them are petty land-owners, cultivating their own land. The differentiation among the tribal communities, particularly in the rural areas, is relatively less.

The pattern that emerges in West Bengal presents some paradoxes. Literacy is widespread but mostly at the

level of primary/incomplete primary level. The scheduled communities hardly figure at higher levels of education. Land ownership among the scheduled communities is significantly more extensive than in the other two States, but among the agricultural implements they own it is the plough which is practically to be found in most landowning households. Tribal communities in West Bengal, which are common to Jharkhand, have a somewhat better economic status in Jharkhand.

Scheduled communities, which have an earning status, lower than their literacy levels (except for the Lohara of Jharkhand), are all in West Bengal. These relative differences between two adjacent States but within a common cultural space can provide sources of alienation. Given that West Bengal has such an enviable record of land reforms there is cause for anxiety.

If we compare and contrast West Bengal with Bihar, they seem to present two distinct models. In Bihar the resource distribution is not extensive, but it is generating an upward mobile elite among the Scheduled Castes. West Bengal seems to reflect a non-elite generating mass base with a more even distribution of resources. Bihar has a narrow base with a growing elite pyramid.

Our study clearly suggests that literacy should not only have a wide base at lower levels of education, but should extend its base at higher levels of education. Only then will the value additions to human resource make for effective empowerment. Second, the material resource base at the level of instruments and forces of production has to be commensurately augmented for the empowerment to act on the factor of production. In order to do this, communities that are less endowed have to be accorded priority targeting. Third, that market accessibility for their products, circumventing intermediate levels of exploitation, are a necessary condition for providing requisite and efficient outlet of goods produced by the large masses of primary producers in these poorer communities. **{Concluded}**

FROM:

If undelivered please return to:
ALL INDIA ASECA,
 SFS Flat No. 326, Pocket 10,
 Sector 11 (Extension), Rohini,
Delhi - 110 085.

• **Editor:** Purna Chandra Hembram • **Published and Printed** by Kuanr Chandra Kisku on behalf of All India Adivasi Socio Educational and Cultural Association (Registered), New Delhi • **Printed** at S. K. Enterprises, B- 975, Mangol Puri, Delhi 110 083 and published from **SFS Flat No. 326, Pocket 10, Sector 11 (Extension), Rohini, Delhi 110 085.**