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Editorial

At the time of distress one looks for precedents, ideas and sayings of prominent, eminent persons. It is sure that one comes across many such examples and usages to refer to come across difficulties or tide over the crisis. There are many organizations in India which are working on voluntary basis and doing their bit in undertaking various activities which ultimately result into well being of the communities at large. Such organizations are based on the principles of selfless contribution, voluntary participation and mutual cooperation. In the process, some tend to progress at a faster pace and along with that they earn name and fame and people come to know about them and their good work. Many a times, others who are also doing their bit with the same spirit and pace do not get due recognition and appreciation. Some organizations absorb this trend through further activities with greater motivation and at the same time for others it becomes very difficult to absorb this reality. In the process, people who are managing such organizations become somewhat disappointed and discouraged. All know that it does not happen always that talent and good works are appreciated at once and by one and all. Still, human tendency to engage in the act of comparison spoils everything and as an outcome jealousy and competition become visible. The organizations though voluntary in nature tend to engage themselves in the avoidable competition and leg pulling.

When we look around, we come across many monuments, institutions are being developed by the volunteers and as a result of participation of people for a good cause or good project/proposal. Though many hurdles are being faced by the organizers, these remain inside the four walls of the organization(s) and are not open to public knowledge and domain. The organizations which are prominently conducting themselves through transparency and discipline are progressing and those with questionable standings perish sooner or later. The Adivasi communities in India have many organizations to seek for the intra as well as the inter community developments. But so far none has demonstrated a pan India influence and are continuing with a limited influence. Most of the organisations are not self sufficient and as such always in need of outside support. The membership though exists are full of non performers and even non participants. The

existence is only in the paper and participation is almost nil. It is being experienced that the level of participation among the illiterates is negligible. The organizations founded by non-Adivasis and proclaim to be working for the Adivasis or the downtrodden invariably do not have a member from that target group in the management committee. As such, all the plans and programmes which are being chalked out are based on the secondary level information or knowledge.

Besides all such minor or major drawbacks, directly or indirectly these organizations are contributing positively towards making some changes and bringing some comforts to the disadvantaged people. Coming to the workings of the organizations of Santals created and managed by Santals for the welfare of Santals, the experience is somewhat not encouraging nor motivating. It is commonly experienced that whenever an organization is being created in a locality or a region, a similar organization immediately takes birth with the same aims and objects with a different set of people. It is a matter of time when another organization surfaces but it does take place with certainty and with extra vigour. It is natural to expect that the organizations cooperate among themselves as they are dedicated for the same or similar aims and objects. But that kind of resolve or activity is very rarely seen. The cooperation becomes the first casualty followed by acts which in no way can be attributed towards helping a community is pursuit of excellence or a community struggling for its existence and survival. The meager wherewithal which are being collected are being utilized towards financing the rivalry and avoidable sense of competition. The ultimate goal has been reduced to a goal of infighting and discouraging each other. The trend as well as background has limited the participation of people and as a result even a national level organization is yet to evolve though the Santals are an international community. One can draw similarities with the international community as the problems are similar as such approach and involvement have to be similar. Other communities in India which have presence in many countries organize themselves in a grand way with an aim to resolve many issues common to them as members of the same community. There is no such organization for Santals with

sound financial strength and strong peoples' support which can deliver in terms of international standard.

When the need has become acute and intense, organization level non-cooperation has to go. The people who are at the helm of affairs should accommodate many nuances in the interest of common goals and mutual benefits and come forward with open mind and large heart to form a solid base of understanding and sense of solidarity, fraternity and brotherhood. There may be issues, but keeping in mind the meagre resource in

command and enormity of responsibilities and gigantic tasks to be undertaken there is no other option but to come together and form at least an alliance if not a formidable entity.

It is not the idea through this article to discourage nor to demean existence and contribution of many Santal organizations but aims at urging people to learn about strengthening the structure and empowering the stature of such voluntary organizations engaged in community welfare at urban as well as rural areas.

Unraveling Indian Census Data on Santals (Education)

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In the month of August and November, I had highlighted the status of education of Santals in the state of West Bengal and Orissa in their mother tongue language “Santali” with “Ol Chiki” script. It is unanimously agreed that education is vital for development of human being as an individual or as a society. The overall education status of Santals in the villages of Orissa as per Census 2001 is tabulated below:

EDUCATION STATUS OF SANTALS IN THE VILLAGES OF ORISSA as per 2001 Census

		Total population			Illiterate					Total population			Illiterate		
Sl. No	Age Group (Years)	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Sl No	Age Group (Years)	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
0	All ages	727,474	366,908	360,566	497,924	204,891	293,033	10	15-19	60,557	32,311	28,246	26,942	9,771	17,171
1	0 - 6	134,539	68,735	65,804	134,539	68,735	65,804	11	20-24	51,621	24,676	26,945	27,195	8,242	18,953
Age 0 to 6					27%	34%	22%	12	25-29	56,811	26,924	29,887	34,303	10,580	23,723
2	7	21,204	10,829	10,375	13,055	5,968	7,087	13	30-34	51,946	24,833	27,113	35,373	11,965	23,408
3	8	27,747	14,565	13,182	15,051	6,764	8,287	14	35-39	51,945	26,383	25,562	37,962	14,727	23,235
4	9	17,479	9,190	8,289	7,337	3,005	4,332	15	40-44	38,625	20,517	18,108	29,443	12,548	16,895
5	10	27,606	14,583	13,023	12,585	5,173	7,412	16	45-49	33,674	17,727	15,947	25,721	10,660	15,061
6	11	11,597	6,271	5,326	3,819	1,415	2,404	17	50-54	24,924	12,700	12,224	19,861	8,138	11,723

7	12	25,620	13,368	12,252	10,878	4,182	6,696	18	55-59	18,040	8,400	9,640	14,604	5,264	9,340
8	13	13,487	7,093	6,394	4,624	1,620	3,004	19	60-64	18,600	8,351	10,249	15,938	5,861	10,077
9	14	14,173	7,750	6,423	5,170	1,898	3,272	20	65-69	10,786	4,428	6,358	9,411	3,150	6,261
Age 7 to 14		158,913	83,649	75,264	72,519	30,025	42,494	21	70-74	8,337	3,478	4,859	7,332	2,565	4,767
					15%	15%	15%	22	75-79	3,094	1,290	1,804	2,684	919	1,765
15 & above		432,781	213,877	218,904	290,030	105,757	184,273	23	80+	3,821	1,859	1,962	3,261	1,367	1,894
					58%	52%	63%	24	Age not stated	1,241	647	594	836	374	462

From the table above it is observed that the profile of illiterate Santal population based on age is; 27% children below age of 6 years, 15% between 7 to 14 years and balance 58% population are above 14 years of age. It is most common that these 58% (290,030) persons above 14 years are certainly neither school going persons nor expected to attend any formal education in their life period. Also most likely the 15% children between 7 to 14 years are comprised of none going school children due to various reasons, school drop outs or child labor etc. So these whopping 73% illiterate Santals can't be educated through normal education Institutes like existing or new schools, colleges or universities. Hence to improve the literacy level of these 73 % (58 %-> Non school going+15 %-> Either school dropout or non school going children) rural illiterate Santals, the only option available is to formulate a suitable non formal education strategy & policy for implementing during non working hours. So it may be prudent to devise and implement a "PRAUDHA SIKHYA- Adult Education" like non formal education scheme in Santals' mother tongue language "Santali" and "Ol Chiki Script" for 73% illiterate Santals living in villages of Orissa. The government's effort in this direction is already been tested. It is the turn of NGO and the fellow educated Santal brothers and sisters who can realize the above proposition to improve the education profile of Santals in villages.

Learning Teaching Problem of Tribal Children

(Source: Orissa Primary Education Programme Authority)

{Continued from November 2011 issue...}

BONDA

Responses of Community Leaders/Parents

The discussion with the Gram Sabha Members and VEC Members is quite discouraging as revealed in the negative response.

Whereas, the community leaders and elders are concerned about the schools, they contribute to the development of the schools and they are involved in the mid-day meal scheme, while these are the encouraging signs. There is a need of Gram Sabha Members and VEC for active participation in school.

Setting showing the transaction of language used

The community leaders are reacted to Oriya and MT separately approximately 80% and above have observed that MT is used in nine different settings whereas use of Oriya is limited to 30% and minimum being 20% outside the community and in the market place.

Attitude of the Local Community towards the MLE Programme

The opinions are calibrated in five different ways such as Opinion of community leaders on the usefulness and efficiency MT Instructions, Ability

of the children to acquire adequate competency and comprehension in MLE situation, Helpfulness of mother tongue education in earning and employability of children in future, Desirability of the local tribal MT's in teaching learning situations, Adequacy of teaching learning resources in place for implementation of MLE Programme. The results revealed positive attitude in almost all cases except for teaching learning, resource for MLE is required in more number.

When attitude of community members are fairly positive towards the MLE programme and its components, any intervention must capitalize on this factor.

General Responses

The community members have also given some overall general responses. In their opinion performance of children in primary school are bad or average (70%). Interest of the teachers in taking into the learning needs of the children is (70%). It was also of interest to see the extent to which literacy skills are used by the community members and it was found that only the literacy skills is confined to either writing letters or reading newspapers.

JUANGA

Responses of Community Leaders/Parents

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{To be continued...}

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