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Editorial

Empowerment, co-operation, federation have been accepted by tribal people slowly but gradually as the tools for integration, upgradation and upward social mobility. The exposure and mingling with other sections of society have brought a new kind of thinking among the Adivasi people and in some cases it has been seen that people have started organizing themselves with the new kind of eagerness and enthusiasm. The section which is yet to find out the new approach of their emancipation is yet to take a forward step and is still to adopt a mechanism to help them out from the gloom and doom which they experience currently in their daily life. The expectations are high among people to achieve something in life but in real life to realize one's expectation into reality is not so easy. The rising and high cost of higher education has become a hindrance to progress and adivasi people and poor people are not in a position to afford such high cost and are forced to remain outside the purview of better education. They would not be able to cross that line in order to make themselves within the boundary of self satisfaction and upgradation.

The cooperation at grassroots level is missing among the same class of people who share social common identity. The unit has been scattered, isolated and comprising at micro level. The day to day requirement is being fulfilled internally and locally and as such there is no feeling of coming together and forming a strong social base for mutual help and understanding. As the social requirement is being fulfilled, they are yet to emerge as a strong social group to be reckoned with. There is lack of network which is giving rise to a constraint for a broader outlook and positioning in the contemporary society. The micro level institution at village level has been limiting itself in dealing with local or village level issues whereas people from the same group who are exposed to outside world or who seek to introduce themselves with pride and positive identity are not getting enough material to do so. The sense of security which other groups of Indian community is able to provide to their future generation is lacking in the tribal community. The tribal community is not organized itself to the extent that could provide security, sense of pride and protection to its future generation when the latter confront the outside world. There is a growing gap between the urban and rural population belonging to the same community and gradually the hiatus is growing to an

alarming level. The common thread of language through which they were traditionally bound together is being compromised and the emergence of language gap has made them remain isolated from one another. Though in all respect they belong to one community and share common identity, the internal gap has been able to separate them from one another. This aspect has been talked about from time to time in various forums and due to various efforts so many people have realized their mistakes and are coming back to learning their mother tongue. The trend of back to basics or originality has been encouraging and people are now very much anxious and eager to remain in their respective roots.

There is no reason why a community with sizable population cannot come forward to be together for charting out new strategy for their emancipation and empowerment. The people who are at various level of development intellectually and financially should take charge of the new initiative to bring together people of same identity to forge a better combination towards bringing a new era of social consolidation.

Young, educated and unemployed people who are not involved in active politics can take a lead in bringing together people with principles to work towards a common goal. Though it is not easy to find out people who will only be interested in social affairs, but considering the fact that all cannot be accommodated in the political process, others have to work in non-political areas for self development as well as community development. There is also a need to encourage people who are currently involved in mass mobilization in the areas of prohibition and spreading education. The non-governmental sector approach would be more appropriate in dealing with such cases. The precedents of success stories in the fields of social mobility, cohesiveness, brotherhood, spiritualism are there in the country and only requirement is the desire to emulate such approach, dedication and determination to do good things for self as well as for greater welfare of the community. All are not aware of the facts that there are areas where people have excelled in bringing together people for peace and prosperity and the need of the hour is to sensitize people regarding the virtues and value systems associated with such noble approach and attitude. When good works are initiated, it is always experienced that blessings pour in in the form of co-operation, resources and good will from various quarters for addressing the genuine and general cause.

TRIBAL PROFILE AT A GLANCE - MAY 2013

Source: Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India

{Continued from September 2013 issue}

3. EDUCATION...

GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO (GER) - Boys			GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO (GER) - Girls		
Classes	ST	All Categories	Classes	ST	All Categories
Classes I - V (6 - 10 Years)	137.2	115.40	Classes I - V (6 - 10 Years)	136.7	116.7
Classes VI - VIII (11 - 13 Years)	90.7	87.70	Classes VI - VIII (11 - 13 Years)	87	83.1
Classes I - VIII (6 - 13 Years)	120.5	104.90	Classes I - VIII (6 - 13 Years)	118.7	103.7
Classes IX - X (14 - 15 Years)	57.1	69.00	Classes IX - X (14 - 15 Years)	49.1	60.8
Classes I - X (6 - 15 Years)	108.2	97.60	Classes I - X (6 - 15 Years)	105.3	94.8
Classes XI - XII (16 - 17 Years)	32.7	42.20	Classes XI - XII (16 - 17 Years)	24.8	36.1
Classes IX - XII (14 - 17 Years)	45.4	55.50	Classes IX - XII (14 - 17 Years)	37.3	48.4
Classes I - XII (6 - 17 Years)	96.8	88.00	Classes I - XII (6 - 17 Years)	92.8	84.8

Source: Statistics of School Education 2010-2011

Gender Parity Index (GPI)			NUMBER OF GIRLS PER HUNDRED BOYS		
	ST	All Categories		STs	All categories
Classes I - V	1.00	1.01	Classes I - V	94	92
Classes VI - VIII	0.96	0.95	Classes VI - VIII	91	89
Classes I - VIII	0.99	0.99	Classes I - VIII	93	91
Classes IX - X	0.86	0.88	Classes IX - X	81	82
Classes I - X	0.97	0.97	Classes I - X	92	90
Classes XI - XII	0.76	0.86	Classes XI - XII	74	79
Classes IX - XII	0.82	0.87	Classes IX - XII	78	81
Classes I - XII	0.96	0.96	Classes I - XII	91	89

Source: Statistics of School Education 2010- 2011

Source: Statistics of School Education 2010- 2011

{To be continued...}

Folklore of the Santal Parganas

Translated by **Cecil Henry Bompas**
of the Indian Civil Service, 1909

{ASECA CHANNEL intends to publish the stories in order to familiarize the stories among the general public for their better appreciation}

Preface

The Santals are a Munda tribe, a branch of that aboriginal element which probably entered India from the North East. At the present day they inhabit the Eastern outskirts of the Chutia Nagpore plateau.

Originally hunters and dwellers in the jungle they are still but indifferent agriculturists. Like the Mundas and Hos and other representatives of the race, they are jovial in character, fond of their rice beer, and ready to take a joke.

Their social organization is very complete; each village has its headman or *manjhi*, with his assistant the *paranik*; the *jogmanjhi* is charged with the supervision of the morals of the young men and women; the *naeke* is the village priest, the *godet* is the village constable. Over a group of villages is the *pargana* or tribal chief. The Santals are divided into exogamous septs—originally twelve in number, and their social observances are complex, e.g. while some relations treat each other with the greatest reserve, between others the utmost freedom of intercourse is allowed.

Their religion is animistic, spirits (*bongas*) are everywhere around them: the spirits of their ancestors, the spirit of the house, the spirit dwelling in the patch of primeval forest preserved in each village. Every hill tree and rock may have its spirit. These spirits are propitiated by elaborate ceremonies and sacrifices which generally terminate in dances, and the drinking of rice beer.

The Santal Parganas is a district 4800 sq. miles in area, lying about 150 miles north of Calcutta, and was formed into a separate administration after the Santals had risen in rebellion in 1856. The Santals at present form about one-third of the population.

The stories and legends which are here translated have been collected by the Rev. O. Bodding, D.D. of the Scandinavian Mission to the Santals. To be perfectly sure that neither language nor ideas should in any way be influenced by contact with a European mind he arranged for most of them to be written out in Santali, principally by a Christian convert named Sagram Murmu, at present living at Mohulpahari in the Santal Parganas.

Santali is an agglutinative language of great regularity and complexity but when the Santals come in contact with races speaking an Aryan language it is apt to become corrupted with foreign idioms. The language in which these stories have been written is beautifully pure, and the purity of language may be accepted as an index that the ideas have not been affected, as is often the case, by contact with Europeans.

My translation though somewhat condensed is very literal, and the stories have perhaps thereby an added interest as shewing the way in which a very primitive people look at things. The Santals are great story tellers; the old folk of the village gather

the young people round them in the evening and tell them stories, and the men when watching the crops on the threshing floor will often sit up all night telling stories.

There is however, no doubt that at the present time the knowledge of these stories tends to die out. Under the peace which British rule brings there is more intercourse between the different communities and castes, a considerable degree of assimilation takes place, and old customs and traditions tend to be obliterated.

Several collections of Indian stories have been made, e.g. Stokes, *Indian Fairy Tales*; Frere, *Old Deccan Days*; Day, *Folk Tales of Bengal*; and Knowles' *Folk Tales of Kashmir*, and it will be seen that all the stories in the present collection are by no means of pure Santal origin. Incidents which form part of the common stock of Indian folklore abound, and many of the stories professedly relate to characters of various Hindu castes, others again deal with such essentially Santal beliefs as the dealings of men and *bongas*.

The Rev. Dr. Campbell of Gobindpore published in 1891 a collection of Santal Folk Tales. He gathered his material in the District of Manbhum, and many of the stories are identical with those included in the present volume. I have added as an appendix some stories which I collected among the Hos of Singhbhum, a tribe closely related to the Santals, and which the Asiatic Society of Bengal has kindly permitted me to reprint here.

My task has been merely one of translation; it is due solely to Mr Bodding's influence with, and intimate knowledge of, the people that the stories have been committed to writing, and I have to thank him for assistance and advice throughout my work of translation.

I have roughly classified the stories: in part 1 are stories of a general character; part 2, stories relating to animals; in part 3, stories which are scarcely folklore but are anecdotes relating to Santal life; in part 4, stories relating to the dealings of *bongas* and men. In part 5, are some legends and traditions, and a few notes relating to tribal customs. Part 6 contains illustrations of the belief in witchcraft. I have had to omit a certain number of stories as unsuited for publication.

C. H. Bompas.

Part I.

In these stories there are many incidents which appear in stories collected in other parts of India, though it is rather surprising that so few of them appear elsewhere in their entirety. We have however, instances of the husk myth, the youngest son who surpasses his brother, the life of the ogre placed in some external object, the jealous stepmother, the selection of a king by an elephant, the queen whose husband is invariably killed on his wedding night, etc. etc.

Few of the old Indian stories found in the Kathâ Sarit Sâgara or the Buddhist Birth stories appear in recognizable form in the present collection.

I. Bajun and Jhore.

Once upon a time there were two brothers named Bajun and Jhore. Bajun was married and one day his wife fell ill of fever. So, as he was going ploughing, Bajun told Jhore to stay at home and cook the dinner and he bade him put into the pot three measures of rice. Jhore stayed at home and filled the pot with

water and put it on to boil; then he went to look for rice measures; there was only one in the house and Jhore thought "My brother told me to put in three measures and if I only put in one I shall get into trouble." So he went to a neighbour's house and borrowed two more measures, and put them into the pot and

left them to boil. At noon Bajun came back from ploughing and found Jhore stirring the pot and asked him whether the rice was ready. Jhore made no answer, so Bajun took the spoon from him, saying "Let me feel how it is getting on", but when he stirred with the spoon he heard a rattling noise and when he looked into the pot he found no rice but only three wooden measures floating about; then he turned and abused Jhore for his folly, but Jhore said "You yourself told me to put in three measures and I have done so." So Bajun had to set to work and cook the rice himself and got his dinner very late.

Next day Bajun said to Jhore, "You don't know how to cook the dinner; I will stay at home to-day, you go to plough, and take a hatchet with you and if the plough catches in a root or anything, give a cut with the hatchet." So Jhore went ploughing and when the plough caught in anything and stopped, he gave a cut with his hatchet at the legs of the bullocks; they backed and plunged with the pain and then he only chopped at them the more until he lamed them both. At noon Bajun saw the bullocks come limping back and asked what was the matter with them. "O," said Jhore, "that is because I cut at them as you told me." "You idiot," said Bajun, "I meant you to give a cut at the roots in which the plough got caught, not at the legs of the bullocks; how will you live if you do such silly things? You cannot plough, you must stay at home and cook the rice. I will show you this evening how it is done." So after that Jhore stayed at home and cooked. Bajun's wife grew no better, so one day Bajun, before he went to the fields, told Jhore to warm some water in order that his wife might wash with it. But Jhore made the water boiling hot and then took it and began to pour it over his sister-in-law as she lay on her bed; she was scalded and shrieked out "Don't pour it over me," but Jhore only laughed and went on pouring until he had scalded her to death. Then he wrapped her up in a cloth and brought her dinner to her and offered it her to eat, but she was dead and made no answer to him, so he left it by her and went and ate his own rice. When Bajun came back and found his wife scalded to death he was very angry and went to get an axe to kill Jhore with; thereupon Jhore ran away into the jungle and Bajun pursued him with the axe.

In the jungle Jhore found a dead sheep and he took out its stomach and called out "Where are you, brother, I have found some meat." But Bajun answered, "I will not leave you till I have killed you." So Jhore ran on and climbed up inside a

hollow tree, where Bajun could not follow, Bajun got a long stick and poked at him with it and as he poked, Jhore let fall the sheep's stomach, and when Bajun saw it he concluded that he had killed his brother. So he went home and burned the body of his wife and a few days later he performed the funeral ceremonies to the memory of his wife and brother; he smeared the floor of the house with cowdung and sacrificed goats and fowls. Now Jhore had come back that day and climbed up on to the rafters of the house, and he sat there watching all that his brother did. Bajun cooked a great basket of rice and stewed the flesh of the animals he had sacrificed and offered it to the spirits of the dead and he recited the dedication "My wife I offer this rice, this food, for your purification," and so saying he scattered some rice on the ground; and he also offered to Jhore, saying, "Jhore, my brother, I offer this rice, this food, for your purification," and then Jhore called out from the roof "Well, as you offer it to me I will take it." Bajun had not bargained to get any answer, so he was astounded and went to ask the villagers whether their spirits made answer when sacrificed to: and the villagers told him that they had never heard of such a thing. While Bajun was away on this errand, Jhore took up the unguarded basket of rice and ran away with it; after going some way he sat down by the road and ate as much as he wanted, then he sat and called out "Is there anyone on the road or in the jungle who wants a feast?" A gang of thieves who were on a thieving expedition heard him and went to see what he meant; he offered to let them eat the rice if they would admit him to their company; they agreed and he went on with them to steal; they broke into a rich man's house and the thieves began to collect the pots and pans but Jhore felt about in the dark and got hold of a drum and began to beat on it. This woke up the people of the house and they drove away the thieves. Then the thieves abused Jhore and said that they could not let him stay with them: "Very well", said he, "then give me back the rice you ate." Of course they could not do this. So they had to let him stay with them. Then they went to the house of a rich Hindu who had a stable full of horses and they planned to steal the horses and ride away with them; so each thief picked out a horse, but Jhore got hold of a tiger which had come to the back of the stable to kill one of the horses; and when the thieves mounted their horses, Jhore mounted on the tiger, and the tiger ran off with him towards the jungle. Jhore kept on calling out "Keep to the road, you Hindu horse, keep to the road, you Hindu horse." But it dragged him through the briars and bushes till he was dead and that was the end of Jhore.

{To be continued...}

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