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Editorial

Santali writers are being felicitated by the Central Sahitya Akademi for the last nine years. In these nine years the creations of the writers have been recognized and they find a place in the august gathering of the literature fraternity of the Country. It is not a less achievement by any standard. The thinkers and the other discerning people always are elated by this development. The occasion which is being graced by people was considered to be a feat difficult to achieve. There are a lot of contributions from across the Country to see the Santali language flourish and be recognized by one and all. The determination and aspiration of a society have at last borne the fruit and people are realizing that everything is possible provided one pursue with sincerity and with commitment. The writers who had started their literary activities in earlier period had faced many hurdles in all areas – machine (technology), market and money. The present day writers feel much comfortable in terms of the technology as it has made printing an easy task. The quality and volume of books as such can be made appreciably better and larger within a short period of time. It is very easy now-a-days to print books which in the earlier days was a herculean task. The composing, editing and printing activity was repetitive and as such a time consuming affair to bring out a final product. The quality of books has since been improved and one is delighted to see the outer cover of the books even one does not find time to go or browse through the book.

The process and present level of development has thrown open an avenue where many budding writers are coming out with new ventures and new ideas. However, as one grows, the level of responsibility increases and as such should be equipped with matching level of maturity, dedication and sincerity. Though the level is improving there always remains a crave to do better and faster. The pace with which the Santali literature is progressing is appreciable and noteworthy. People are writing and still in pursuit of betterment and excellence are the good things that we can cherish to improve.

There are good numbers of books available now-a-days and expectedly the number of readers is also growing. In book exhibitions, students ask for the copies of books which are in the syllabus. The arrangement with which the book sellers are displaying their books is a pointer of the status of market of Santali books. The trend is not so gloomy and that is the consolation.

For growing literary movement, there has to be some groups who would propagate and push the movement. That group is either in the form of literary activists or the financiers. It is observed that there is a requirement of publishing houses those would promote and facilitate the growth of the literary activities. The resource is the backbone of any activity and more one invests there is a possibility of reaping good results. The public has always supported the good initiative and it can be safely hoped that this kind of initiative would be appreciated and patronized. Considering the return from such initiative it is not expected to get patronage from others as return is the main or only consideration of such investment venture. As assured return is not the criteria or it is not happening in the present time, so one is constrained not to expect possible help from the established publishing houses. Under this circumstance and reality the only approach left is to organize and pool together resources voluntarily and in the no profit no loss venture. There are sizable number of people who could be counted in realizing this idea. The groups of professionals who talk about contributing something to the society should consider this idea and to promote literary movement though establishment of publishing house(s). It is a venture which they can manage it properly with their experience and expertise. The possibility is there and it is time to see that whether the requirement is being recognized and felt. Once the feeling is generated, it is possible to pool together resources may be thorough collectively or individually. It is noteworthy to mention that some individual entrepreneurs have started the onerous task of establishment of publishing houses and they are continuing and managing their enterprises. The

infusion of more resources to this area by the able and discerning people would be additional impetus to the ongoing literary movement. Any initiative which is

pursued with desired love and affection is going to yield better result, environment and future.

TRIBAL PROFILE AT A GLANCE - MAY 2013
SOURCE: MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS, GOVT. OF INDIA

{Continued from March 2014 issue}

Number of households having MGNREG job card per 1000 households, per 1000 distribution of households by status of getting work in MGNREG works and average number of days, got work during last 365 days for each household social group

Scheduled Tribe

All India	Number of households having MGNREG job card per 1000 hhds.	Per 1000 distribution of households by status of getting MGNREG work					Sought but did not get MGNREG work	Did not seek MGNREG work	All (incl. n.r.)	Average number of days worked in MGNREG by hhds./ got MGNREG works
		Got work								
		Less than 20 days	20 to 50 days	50 to 100 days	100 days or more	all				
ST	541	143	129	123	3	398	197	363	1000	42
All social groups	347	102	76	62	2	242	193	538	1000	37

Source: Report No. 543 of NSS 66th round, 2009-10

{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}

{Continued from March 2014 issue}

X. The Girl Who Found Helpers.

Once upon a time there were seven brothers, and they were all married, and they had one sister who was not married. The brothers went away to a far country for a whole year, leaving their wives at home. Now the wives hated their sister-in-law and did their best to torment her. So one day they gave her a pot full of holes and told her to bring it back full of water; and threatened that if she failed

she should have no food. So she took the pot to the spring and there sat down and cried and sang:—

“I am fetching water in a pot full of holes,
 I am fetching water in a pot full of holes,
 How far away have my brothers gone to trade.”

After she had cried a long time, a number of frogs came up out of the water and asked her what was the matter, and she told them that she must fill the pot with water, and was not allowed to stop the holes with clay or lac. Then they told her not to cry, and said, that they would sit on

the holes and then the water would not run out; they did this and the girl dried her eyes and filled the pot with water and took it home. Her sisters-in-law were much disappointed at her success, but the next day they told her to go to the jungle and bring back a bundle of leaves, but she was to use no rope for tying them up. So she went to the jungle and collected the leaves and then sat down and cried and sang:—

“I am to fetch leaves without a rope
I am to fetch leaves without a rope
How far have my brothers gone to trade?”

and as she cried a *buka sobo* snake came out and asked why she was crying, and when she told it, it said that it would coil itself round the leaves in place of a rope. So it stretched itself out straight and she piled the leaves on the top of it and the snake coiled itself tightly round them and so she was able to carry the bundle home on her head. Her sisters-in-law ran to see how she managed it, but she put the bundle down gently and the snake slipped away unperceived. Still they resolved to try again; so the next day they sent her to fetch a bundle of fire wood, but told her that she was to use no rope to tie it with. So she went to the jungle and collected the sticks and then sat down and cried:—

“I am to bring wood without tying it,
I am to bring wood without tying it,
How far have my brothers gone to trade?”

and as she cried a python came out and asked what was the matter, and when it heard, it told her not to cry and said that it would act as a rope to bind up the sticks; so it stretched itself out and she laid the sticks on it and then it coiled itself round them and she carried the bundle home.

As the sisters-in-law had been baffled thus, they resolved on another plan and proposed that they should all go and gather sticks in the jungle; and on the way they came to a *machunda* tree in full flower and they wanted to pick some of the flowers. The wicked sisters-in-law at first began to climb the tree, but they pretended that they could not and kept slipping down; then they hoisted their sister-in-law into the branches and told her to throw down the flowers to them. But while she was in the tree, they tied thorns round the trunk so that she could not descend and then left her to starve. After she had been in the tree a long time, her brothers passed that way on their return journey, and sat down under the tree to rest; the girl was too weak to speak but she cried and her tears fell on the back of her eldest brother, and he looked up and saw her; then they rescued her and revived her and listened to her story; and they were very angry and vowed to have revenge. So they gave their sister some needles and put her in a sack and

put the sack on one of the pack-bullocks. And when they got home, they took the sack off gently and told their wives to carry it carefully inside the house, and on no account to put it down. But when the wives took it up, the girl inside pricked them with the needles so that they screamed and let the sack fall. Their husbands scolded them and made them take it up again, and they had to carry it in, though they were pricked till the blood ran down. Then the brothers enquired about all that had happened in their absence, and at last asked after their sister, and their wives said that she had gone to the jungle with some friends to get firewood. But the brothers turned on them and told how they had found her in the *machunda* tree and had brought her home in the sack, and their wives were dumbfounded. Then the brothers said that they had made a vow to dig a well and consecrate it; so they set to work to dig a well two fathoms across and three fathoms deep; and when they reached water, they fixed a day for the consecration; and they told their wives to put on their best clothes and do the *cumaura* (betrothal) ceremony at the well. So the wives went to the well, escorted by drummers, and as they stood in a row round the well, each man pushed his own wife into it and then they covered the well with a wooden grating and kept them in it for a whole year and at the end of the year they pulled them out again.

Another version of this story gives three other tasks preliminary to those given above and begins as follows:—

Once upon a time there was a girl named Hira who had seven brothers. The brothers went away to a far country to trade leaving her alone in the house with their wives; these seven sisters-in-law hated Hira and did what they could to torment her; one day they sowed a basketful of mustard seed in a field and then told her to go and pick it all up; she went to the field and began to lament, singing:—

“They have sown a basket of mustard seed!
Oh, how far away have my brothers gone to trade.”
As she cried a flock of pigeons came rustling down and asked her what was the matter, and when they heard, they told her to be comforted; they at once set to work picking up the mustard grain by grain and putting it into her basket; soon the basket was quite full and she joyfully took it home and showed it to her sisters-in-law. Then they set her another task and told her to bring them some bear’s hair that they might weave it into a hair armband for her wedding. So she went off to the jungle and sat down to cry; as she wept two bear cubs came up and asked what was the matter; when she told her story they bade her be of good cheer and took her into their cave and hid her. Presently the mother bear came back and suckled her cubs, and when they had finished they asked their mother

to leave them some of her hair that they might amuse themselves by plaiting it while she was away. She did so and directly she had gone off to look for food, the cubs

gave the girl the hair and sent her home rejoicing. {To be continued...}

SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDS 2013
Award in Santali to Arjun Charan Hembram

Arjun Charan Hembram, Santali Poet, writer and activist was born in 1952 at Dantia, Odisha. He holds a Masters degree in English and has retired as Manager from SBI. He started writing from 1965 and published his first short-story in Banakusum magazine. His first collection of folk songs Chiki Gaban was published in 1985. He has three poetry collection to his credit which includes Ladesarzom and Chana Bonga. He is the Founder-Editor of Hanshasli and Chai Champa Santali literary journals. He was also Editor of Sandhaini, a Santali journal. At present he is the Editor of Santali fortnightly Bahabonga. Recipient of several awards including Academy of Tribal Dialects and Cultural Samman (1997), All India Santali Writers' Association Award (2000), Pandit Raghunath Murmu Fellowship and Fakir Mohan Sahitya Sansad Felicitation (2014). He knows Bengali, Odia, English and Ho besides Santali.

Chanda Bonga is a collection of poetry in Santali by Arjun Charan Hembram. The work reflects Santal Culture, modern thoughts like globalization, economic reforms and mass movements. It captures the element of modern poetry like symbolism and images of eternal life of beauty and truth. The poems depict vividly contemporary happenings of the society, our country and world as a whole. As such, Chanda Bonga is considered a significant contribution to the genre of Indian poetry in Santali.

Selected Bibliography:

Poetry: Chiki Gaban (1983), Ladesarzom (1985), Chanda Bonga (2011)

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Other Awardees: **Assamese:** Rabindra Sarkar (b. 1941, Dhuliyori Bharir Sanch – a collection of Poetry), **Bengali:** Subodh Sarkar (b. 1958, Dwaipayana Hrader Dhare – collection of Poems, **Bodo:** Anil Boro (b. 1961, Delfini Onthai Mwadaiarw Gubun Gubun Khonthai – collection of Poems, **Dogri:** Sita Ram Sapolia (b. 1938, Doha Satsai – a collection of Poetry, **English:** Temsula Ao (b. 1945, Laburnum For My Head – collection of eight short stories, **Gujarati:** Chinu Modi (b. 1939, Khara Zaran – collection of Poetry), **Hindi:** Mridula Garg (b. 1938, Miljul Mann - Novel, **Kannada:** C. N. Ramachandran (b. 1936, Akhyana-Vyakhyana – collection of Essays), **Kashmiri:** Mohi-ud-din Reshi (b. 1951, Aena Aatish – collection of short stories), **Konkani:** Tukaram Rama Shet (b. 1952, Manmotayam – collection of literary essays), **Maithili:** Sureshwar Jha (b. 1928, Sngarsa Aa Sehanta – memoir), **Malayalam:** M. N. Paloor (b. 1932, Kathayillathavante Katha – autobiography), **Manipuri:** Makhonmani Mongsaba (b. 1959, Chinglon Amadagi Amada – travelogue), **Marathi:** Satish Kalsekar (b. 1943, Vachanaryachi Rojanishee – collection of Poetry), **Nepali:** Manbahadur Pradhan (b. 1933, Man Ka Lahar ra Rahar Haru – travelogue), **Odia:** Bijay Misra (b. 1936, Banaprastha – Play), **Punjabi:** Manmohan (b. 1963, Nirvaan – Novel), **Rajasthani:** Ambika Dutt (b. 1956, Aanthyo Nahi Din Hai – collection of Poetry), **Sanskrit:** Radhakant Thakur (b. 1961, Chaladuravani – collection of Poetry), **Sindhi:** Namdev Tarachandani (b. 1946, Mansh Nagri – long Poem), **Tamil:** R. N. Joe D' Cruz (b. 1963, Korkkai – Novel), **Telugu:** Katyayani Vidmahe (b. 1955, Sahitya Akasamlo Sagam – Streela Kavitwam-Katha-Asthitwa Chaitanyam – collection of 28 essays), **Urdu:** Javed Akhtar (b. 1945, Lava – collection of Poems).

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