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Editorial

Beginning is difficult but as the issue is deliberated again and again and people start to understand the difficulties and complexities, some kind of solution or at least thought process emerges. The thinking on a particular subject takes the shape of common dissemination, when a sizable number of people start appreciating, analysing the issues and the underlying processes. The new subject takes a longer period to receive acceptance and appreciation of people but when the same is percolated down to various strata of the society new era of hope and beginning emerges. There have been talks of formation of group(s) of discerning people of the society who would deliberate on various issues being faced by the member of the society in their daily life particularly on social issues and universal adoption of Ol Chiki. It has been experienced that when people meet and engage themselves in some kind of dialogue there emerges a new direction and decision. From a decent beginning of calling people for an informal discussion, if continued for a considerable period it will give a positive and perfect outcome.

The concept of Majhi Mohol has thus emerged and going to take a shape. It has the acceptance of common village folk now and they see some future in pursuing the agenda. The initial agenda is to establish good and cordial relationship among the traditional village headmen. Till now the concept of fraternity has not been suitably developed as the groups seldom mingle with each other in various peaceful occasions. Most of the time, it is the conflict which brings them together. During the conflict period, there is very little chance to know each other or to exchange good behaviour or goodwill. In search of possible solutions to the problem areas or crisis, many a times it happens that the village headmen are divided on the lines of the plaintiff and the accused side. The local influence or any kind of weakness influences the verdict on the matter which permanently results in acrimonious relationship among the village headmen. There is no instrument or larger groups to hear the case and try to

find out possible solution or review the verdict to safeguard the interest and long term lasting relationship among the people. The cascading effect of such a verdict delivered on the basis of partiality aggravate the situation for good and in the absence of healing touch there always is a possibility that people are divided rather than coming together and forming a bond in the larger interest of identity and solidarity.

There are immense possibilities to bring people together. That is possible in case some kind of faith and belief could be established in instilled among the people. The people should know what is being done is done with the hope to bring in some better possibilities and fairer system so that people can live life peacefully with a sense of pride and security. The people at the moment are apprehensive of Adivasi continuity, unity, prosperity, peace and togetherness. The imminent identity crisis is being feared and all are eager to face the challenge and do something so that the solidarity and fraternity could be preserved and protected. The influence with which Adivasi community is now living is varied in shade and character. The intention and impact of various influences have not been analysed properly by the people who are considering themselves at the receiving end. There have been talks all around but little actions or activities are visible at the ground level. The present trend of discussion should be converted into an action packed initiatives and then only one can hope some better future for the Adivasi community. The need of the hour is to identify, recognise the problem areas as well as the people who will address the issues and to start contributing in the building of a healthy, mature and able institution(s). There is hardly any time left to initiate such policy and programme. The success of such programmes would shape the Adivasi future for their dignified existence and diligent outlook. The macro level plans and programmes should also be aligned with micro level initiatives. The integration in the micro as well as macro level plans only herald a new era of hope, happiness and honour.

Celebration of 109th Birth Anniversary of Guru Gomke and Majhi Mohol Conference at Had Hadi, Baripada, Mayurbhanj, Odisha on 14th & 15th May 2014.

The Guru Kunami was celebrated in a befitting manner. The important aspect and characteristics of the celebration is the active involvement of grassroots people particularly people from villages. Their involvement and participation is worth noting and it gives immense pleasure to see that people are serious and it is the leadership which should emerge to take them along and their aspirations forward. The gist of topics on which discussions were held during the Conference is given below. The decisions on various issues have been taken and gradually those will be implemented.

1. Relevance of teachings of Guru Gomke and importance of Ol-Chiki for the overall development of the Santals.
2. Need to observe Guru Kunami as an occasion for introspection and discussion
3. Status of Majhi and other Traditional System, Jaher and Jaher land.
4. Causes and reasons why Majhi Mapanji system is becoming defunct.
5. Importance of creation of an institution for and by the Majhi, Monehor, social workers and intellectuals for establishing cordial relationship among them.
6. Possibility of development of Majhi system into a self sustained institution for taking up matters with the concerned authorities.
7. Preparation of project report on development and maintenance of Jaher and its submission to the Chief Ministers of the States by the Majhis.
8. Development of Majhi Mohol and Santal Survival Fund in each block of the districts.
9. Sufficiency of present system or is there a need to do something for the better future.
10. Requirement of training to the Majhis as well as other individuals of the society.
11. Recognition of Majhi Mapanji system. Possibility of drafting a bill for duty, responsibility, regulation, authority and function of the Majhi Mapanji system.
12. Responsibility of an individual as a member of the society towards making a sustainable and self reliant society.
13. Santal identity and sense of fellow-feeling in the changing and emerging scenario.
14. Who is representing Adivasis in the Government?
15. Administration and the special status of Scheduled Areas.
16. Impact of land ceiling in economic development.
17. Status of issues pertaining to the tribal land transferred to non tribal people.

18. Extension of financial assistance from the financial institutions / banks to tribals. Difficulties in accessing financial help from the public institutions and thereby being deprived to enhance economic advancement.
19. Harassments to and problems faced by the tribal employees.
20. Consumption of alcohol and its ill effects on the society.
21. Possible education system for tribals.
22. Health status, Development and happiness index of Adivasis.
23. Status of implementation of Forest Rights Act.
24. Creation of a Culture Training Institute.
25. Need to bring in discipline in the social affairs.

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 April 2014 issue}

X. The Girl Who Found Helpers.

The sisters-in-law were only made more angry by her success and plotted how to kill her, so they ordered her to bring them some tiger's milk that they might make it into curds for her wedding. Then she went off to the jungle and began to weep, singing:—

“I brought the hair of a bear:

How far away have my brothers gone to trade.”

At the sound two tiger cubs came running up and asked what was the matter; they told her to be comforted and they would manage to give her what she wanted; and they took her and hid her near where they were lying. Presently the tigress came back and suckled her cubs and as she did so she declared that she smelt a human being, but the cubs laughed at her and said that it must be they whom she smelt; so she was satisfied, and as she was leaving them they asked her to leave some of her milk in an earthen pot so that they might have something to drink if she were long in coming back. The tigress did so and directly she was gone the cubs gave the milk to the girl who took it home.—The story then continues as before.

XI. How to Grow Rich.

Once upon a time there was a woman whose husband died while she was pregnant, and she was very unhappy and used to pray daily to Singh Chando to

give her a man child in place of her husband; she was left well off and among her property were three gold coins, and as she was afraid of these being stolen she decided to place them in the care of the village headman. So she took them to him and asked him to keep them till her child was born; and no one was present at the time but the headman's wife. In due time her child was born and by the mercy of Singh Chando it was a son; and when the boy had grown a bit and could run alone his mother decided to take back the gold coins, so she went to the headman and asked him for them; but he and his wife said: “We do not understand what you are talking about? We know of no gold coins: where are your witnesses? You must have had witnesses in such a business.” And they drove her out. She went away crying and called the villagers together and asked them to decide the matter. So they questioned her and the headman but as it was word against word they could come to no decision; so they settled to put the parties on oath, but the headman and the woman both swore that they had spoken the truth, saying, “May we die if we have spoken falsely.” Then the villagers made them swear by their children and the woman and the headman laid their hands on the heads of their sons and swore; and when the woman swore her son fell down dead and she took up the dead body in her arms and ran away with it.

The villagers were very sorry for what had happened but the headman and his wife abused them for not having believed their word. The woman had not gone very far before she met a stranger who asked why she was crying and when she told him, he said: "Do not cry: you told one falsehood and so your son has died. Take your child back to the villagers and tell them that it was five gold coins and not three that you gave to the headman and if you do this the child will come to life again."

So the woman hastened back and found the villagers still assembled and she told them as the stranger had directed; and she agreed to be sworn again on the body of the child, and the headman promised to pay five gold pieces if the child were restored to life. So the woman laid her hands on the dead child and swore, and it was restored to life. Then the headman was dumbfounded and reluctantly brought out five gold pieces and gave them to the woman. She gave five rupees to the villagers and they made the headman give them ten rupees for having deceived them, and they bought pigs and had a feast.

In the course of time the boy grew up and his mother urged him to marry. He asked her if she knew how to choose a wife and also what sort of cattle to buy, and she said that she did not know; her husband had not told her this. So the youth said that he would go to Singh Chando and ask.

His mother washed his clothes for him and gave him food for the journey and he set out. On the way he met a man who asked him where he was going and he answered that he was going to make a petition to Singh Chando. "Then," said the man, "make a petition for me also. I have so much wealth that I cannot look after it all; ask him to take away half from me." The youth promised and went on and he met another man who said that he had so many cattle that he could not build enough cow-houses for them

and asked him to petition Singh Chando to diminish their number; and he promised, and went on and came to Singh Chando, and there he asked how to choose a wife and how to buy cattle. And Singh Chando said, "When you buy a bullock first put your hand on its quarter and if it shrinks and tries to get free, buy it; and when you want a wife enquire first as to the character of her father and mother; good parents make good children." Then the youth asked about the two men he had met; Singh Chando said;—"Tell the first man when he is ploughing to plough two or three furrows beyond the boundary of his field and his wealth will diminish and tell the second man to drive away three or four of his cattle every day and their number will decrease." So the youth returned and met the man who had too many cattle and told him what Chando had said, and the man thought "If I drive away three or four head of cattle every day I shall soon become poor" so from that time he looked out for any straying cattle and would drive them home with his own; if the owner claimed them, he gave them up, but if no claimant appeared, he kept them and so he became richer than ever. And the youth went on and met the man who was too rich, and when he heard what Chando had said he thought "If I plough over the boundary on to my neighbour's land it will be a great sin and I shall soon become poor;" and he went to his ploughmen and told them never to plough right up to the edge of the field but to leave two of three furrows space, and they obeyed and from that time he grew richer than ever. And the youth returned to his mother and told her all that had happened and they understood the meaning of the advice which Chando had given to the two men and acted accordingly. And it is true that we see that avaricious men who trespass across boundaries become poor.

{To be continued....}

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