



ASECA CHANNEL

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BHANJ VEER GOMKE SUNARAM SOREN CENTENARY CELEBRATION 2017-18

Letter to Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha Dated 29th December 2017

Mr. Naveen Patnaik,
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha,
Naveen Niwas, Aerodrome Road,
Bhubaneswar - 751 001

Sub: Bhanj Veer Gomke Sunaram Soren Centenary Year 2017-18 - Request for intervention of Hon'ble Chief Minister for Centenary Celebration on 3rd & 4th February 2018 at Baripada

Respected Sir,

This has reference to the Bhanj Veer Sunaram Soren Centenary Celebration (SSCC) which is being organized by All India Adivasi Socio Educational and Cultural Association (All India ASECA) on 3rd and 4th February 2018 at Baripada. The need to write this letter to the Head of the State administration has become unavoidable as we are not getting any response from the District Administration. As Collector and District Magistrate is coming under your direct control, we feel it germane to bring the matter to your kind notice, consideration for a just and quick direction, order to the District Administration. We have a feeling that District Administration is working overtime to overshadow your popularity as the "Best Administrator" as we have not yet received a single response from the Collector's office since March 2017. All our letters have been either ignored or are not being given due attention even it pertains to the matter of SSCC. When District Administration can ignore such letters and prefers to sit on the letters, then undoubtedly the perception would be that the administration is lethargic and anti-people.

In 2005, we had interaction with District Administration regarding land for installation of Pandit Raghunath Murmu and development of a Cultural Complex at Baripada on the eve of Birth Centenary Celebration of Pandit Murmu. The response from the District Administration was very quick and we were invited to the meeting of District Land Allocation Committee. Incidentally, Mr. Pandian (presently Private Secretary to the Hon'ble Chief Minister) was the then Collector and District Magistrate of Mayurbhanj. We had the same expectation from the present District Administration which has turned out to be otherwise.

In order to bring out various aspects and perspectives, it is necessary to deal the matter in detail and sequentially. The letter may become lengthy, but in the interest of bringing out the truth and to put the matter in its entirety, it is requested to give it a patient attention to arrive at a conscious decision.

Bhanj Veer Sunaram Soren is an icon who had dedicated his life for the poor and disadvantaged. Few years back, a cement bust was erected at Bhanjpur Chhak with the initiative of Baripada Municipality. It is said that a Councilor was behind this initiative. Mayurbhanj district has been represented by many

leaders but Sunaram Soren remained a forgotten hero till this time of completion of one hundred years. Only very few (around 20 people) every year cared to visit the Bhanjpur Chhak on 4th February i.e. his birthday. It has been seen that the statue was in a dilapidated state till some responsible citizen repaired and painted the same. Till today, Sunaram Soren has been measured with a yardstick of only 8 inches i.e. the size of the bust.

When the Centenary Year was approaching, a consultation process was started and it was observed that nobody was interested to take up this job or spearhead the initiatives. Though some initiative was expected from the local administration or the State Government it was also not forthcoming. Sensing the official inaction as well as any action from the civil society, this Association took up the task and responsibility as part of social sensitivity, sharing and caring.

The celebration was organised by All India ASECA starting with a procession and gathering at the Bhanjpur Chhak on 4th February 2017. Soon after the celebration, a letter was submitted to the Collector and District Magistrate vide letter dated 17th March 2017 requesting for the following:

“Administrative approval in favour of All India ASECA for installation of a life size statue of Sunaram Soren at Bhanjpur Chhak by replacing the existing one.

Necessary direction to be issued to NESCO and / or any other associated entity for relocation of transformer which is located beside the statue to provide a good ambience.”

As there was no reply a reminder was sent vide letter dated 8th May 2017 to expedite the approval /clearance to the site for installation of life size bronze statue.

The same position of not responding prevailed. A meeting of the discerning citizen including the members of local social organization was convened on 21st October 2017. A steering committee was formed from the people who attended the said meeting along with a Convenor to represent All India ASECA to pursue the matter with the local

Administration and other concerned agencies. On enquiry by the said Committee it was told them that a letter has to be again submitted indicating that all expenses to be borne by the Association and there will be no financial implication on account of erection of a life size statue of Sunaram Soren. A letter was submitted on 23rd October 2017 and it was submitted that all the expenses would be borne by the Association. The said letter was forwarded by Additional District Magistrate on 27th October 2017 to Baripada Municipality and Superintending Engineer, NESCO seeking status and related report towards installation of the statue and shifting of transformer respectively.

Executive Officer, Baripada Municipality vide letter dated 08th November 2017 submitted its Report and status of the site to the District Administration with a copy to All India ASECA. It is evident from the letter that Baripada Municipality has cleared the proposal. Reminder letters have also been sent to District Administration on 8th December 2017 and 19th December 2017. **It is also understood that Baripada Municipality Council has also passed the resolution on 27th December 2017 in favour of All India ASECA to install the statue at Bhanjpur Chhak.**

This Association was contacting the dignitaries to grace the occasion and also to pay tribute to the great leader. In the absence of any communication from the District Administration, it was being delayed. As time is nearing, Hon’ble Governor of Jharkhand was approached on 18th December 2017 and Her Excellency has given the consent to grace the occasion. A request letter was sent on 20th December 2017 to Hon’ble Chief Minister of Odisha to send a message as well as to grace the occasion. It is pertinent here to mention that this Association has already invited vide its letter dated 8th November 2017 all Hon’ble Members of Parliament (both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) from Odisha, Hon’ble Union Ministers from Odisha, Hon’ble Members of Odisha Legislative Assembly from Mayurbhanj, Mayurbhanj Zilla

Parishad Members, All the Sarpanchs of Mayurbhanj District, leaders from other political parties etc. We have already received messages from the Hon'ble Members of Parliament belonging to Biju Janta Dal.

However, a pamphlet has been circulated around 22nd December 2017 wherein it has been mentioned of a Committee, Khewal Club and the decision of the Government of Odisha to install and unveil the life size bronze statue of Sunaram Soren at Bhanjpur Chhak, Baripada that is in the same site being requested by All India ASECA. This development has raised so many issues before the public of Mayurbhanj in general and the Association in particular.

We are not sure whether Government of Odisha has decided to play a role in the SSCC. Even if it has decided albeit very lately for SSCC, natural partner would have been All India ASECA. For the sake of argument if the matter published in the said pamphlet is taken as true, then natural question arises whether the issue has been discussed with all details and aspects as the decision of the Government will be counter-productive and unpopular which a responsible Government would not like to take. The pamphlet has also been circulated by same set of people (only three in the lead) who have accepted the assignment on behalf of All India ASECA through a process of consultation and in a public meeting held on 21st October 2017. How a responsible Government can rely on their capability considering their behaviour leading to doubtful integrity and character.

This Association is not paying much attention to such persons or their activities and it shall continue to take all necessary steps to organize the celebration in a grand manner. It was least expected that the initiative would turn out to be a matter of **Government of Odisha versus All India ASECA**. From the point of view of the Association it is a great honour but the objective of the Association is to bring in fresh conducive atmosphere of peace, friendship and brotherhood in the District of Mayurbhanj involving all the formations and groups for the sake of SSCC and Sunaram Soren who aspired to see a strong and viable Mayurbhanj.

The willingness to celebrate SSCC by Government of Odisha is a matter of pride and a welcome step. But the way it is being conducted will lead to controversy, which should be avoided. Above all, doubt is being raised as there is no official announcement of plans and programmes for SSCC. So we are constrained to bring out all details before the Head of the Government as District Administration has failed in winning the confidence of the people and addressing the issues in a proper manner. The resolution passed by the Baripada Municipality Council on 27th December 2017 is in favour of All India ASECA whereas District Administration is maintaining deep sea silence. **The selection of site by the District Administration which is different from the site being proposed by the Baripada Municipality Council has also raised another issue leading to protest by the affected parties.** As such, all developments seem to have been directed at derailing the process of SSCC by entangling confusion, mistrust and wrong decision.

We are not sure whether all aspects are in the knowledge of Hon'ble Chief Minister or Chief Minister's Office (CMO). Grapevine is spread by the same three people about the involvement of CMO and consent of the District Administration about this development. We cannot imagine the same and feel it prudent to bring out various fallouts and ramifications if present approach is followed. The development will be construed as if whole process is aimed towards hijacking the initiative of All India ASECA. The concerns and concepts are given below:

1. People want to see SSCC as a mass celebration with the participation of all strata of the society;
2. The statue making by All India ASECA is in its final stage of fabrication and a sum of Rupees 8 lakh has already been spent by the Association;
3. Why there is an initiative to sponsor a statue by the Government of Odisha from the taxpayers money when there is already a statue being made from the contribution of general public? Why there is a choice for the same place? If the statue is for Baripada and for Bhanjpur Chhak, it is wastage of

money by the Government. The same money can be spent for some other developmental purposes. The initiative of Government of Odisha to install a statue of Sunaram Soren is a welcome step and we urge that same be installed either at Odisha Bidhan Sabha precincts or at some suitable place in Bhubaneswar. Government can think of creation of Cultural Complex, naming of educational institution, development of Parks, creation of forests etc. after the name of Bhanj Veer Sunaram Soren;

4. The selection of site by the District Administration which is different than the site being proposed by the Baripada Municipality Council for All India ASECA has also raised another issue leading to protest by the affected parties. Is it a deliberate attempt to derail the mega event?
5. This Association is organising the event from the voluntary contribution and the outcome could be assessed if any decision is hurting the sentiments of the concerned people;
6. This Association has always accorded due recognition and protocol to various official dignitaries. For records, it had also invited the Chief Minister, Odisha on the occasion of the Birth Centenary Celebration of Pandit Raghunath Murmu in 2005. Though it was not possible to attend that time, we urge Hon'ble Chief Minister to grace the occasion this time definitely.

We sincerely request the CMO to take necessary immediate actions and issue necessary direction in this regard so that SSCC can be organised and statue of Sunaram Soren be installed at Bhanjpur Chhak by the replacing the existing one by this Association for which we shall remain ever thankful and obliged. We also request for a message to be published in the Souvenir. An early reply shall be highly appreciated.

We wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year 2018.

Thanking you and Johar,

Yours faithfully,

(Purna Chandra Hembram)
General Secretary
9868549137

Encl.: as above

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Copy to:

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