



# ASECA CHANNEL

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## Editorial

The whole Country is engaged with the ensuing General Election as well as election for some State Legislative Assemblies. All the stakeholders are playing their role in participating in this process or choosing their representative(s). The political parties have finalized or in the process of finalizing the strategies to win the election with required number of seats and thereby achieve the majority to form the government. The common electorate is, however, mostly without any strategy and does not have a platform to voice his concerns. As a result some choose not to participate and so do not cast their votes. On the other hand others participate religiously in the election process with a better hope. This section, in fact, facilitates a process resulting in continuation of democratic system. But day by day resentments among the people are on the rise and they expect something new and bold from the system. But how far this is achievable can be seen in the future only.

During this period, media plays a vital and important role in sensitizing people and make them aware on various issues through news and views with relevant statistics. This has brought some thought process to everybody's doorsteps. The piece of information, it is sharing, has become source of knowledge and instrumental for introspection.

Some of the facts which have been brought out in the Times of India recently on the basis of survey conducted in 10 cities relating to the affairs of Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Minorities and Women deserve reproduction. These are: 57% feel liberalization has not helped poorer sections; 60% believe politicians have failed the weaker sections; 93% believe politicians have not tried to foster growth etc. 79% of ST students drop out of school before reaching or at 10<sup>th</sup> class. This

figure is almost same (71%) for the students belonging to SC community.

Apart from the statistics, the protective laws relating to land transfer has prevented specifically the ST communities benefiting from the industrialization/green or white revolution. Even the people living in the urban places or its periphery have not reaped the benefits out of demand of land and associated much higher market value of their land. If steps have been taken to modestly allow transfer of land among the STs while continuing with the restriction of non transfer of land with other as usual, the poorer people could have been benefited. This has restricted them from becoming entrepreneurs or realizing the decent market value of their property particularly in places declared under Scheduled V of the Constitution. There is continuous demand to review the provisions to make them more progressive and people oriented by allowing transaction at least among the STs irrespective of the land holding. Even instances are there, financial institutions refuse to sanction loans citing the impediment(s) emerging out of the operation of the provisions of the law.

As per the stipulation of Election Commission, a candidate is allowed to spend upto the ceiling amount i.e. Rs 25 lakh for a Lok Sabha constituency and Rs 5 lakh for a Vidhan Sabha Constituency. This is an official figure and privately people talk about requirement of at least 4 times of the official figures. Even this official figure is taken for consideration, it can be seen that majority of the leaders belonging to the SC/ST do not have adequate wherewithal. This fact can easily be established from the affidavits submitted by the candidates. The problems relating to SCs/STs are expected to be addressed by mainly the leaders representing this segment exclusively and for this reason only there is reservation of seats. But paradoxically, they are not

able to deliver due to inherent problems associated in the system, process and arrangement.

When the candidates do not have enough sources, they depend on either party funding or funding through other sources. All the candidates spend some amount as their share to become a leader as per or more than their capabilities. The trend is such that in the process all the aspiring candidates except the winner loose whatever limited resource they have, which was accumulated through lifetime savings. In other words, the election process is contributing towards making them poorer. At the same time, the winner is overburdened with financial debt to such an extent that his total time during the office is spent in returning the courtesies received from various sources. In such a situation, where is the time to think about the welfare of the people or the commitments given in the manifesto.

With an expectation to win an election, the leaders from SCs/STs community spend so much. If that amount were utilized in social development purpose, the fate of this section of the society would have been better. Therefore, onus lies with the people to ponder on this issue seriously and elect the

representative(s) where option is least cost to give relief to the suitable candidates for the overall development of the society.

The electoral systems and provisions in our kind of democracy provides for choosing the representative not by majority but with the principle of first past the post i.e. the candidate securing at least one more vote from his immediate competitor is entitled to get elected. This is going on. We have accepted this as our general policy. However, this has a serious drawback as this arrangement forces a candidate or party to look for a fraction of votes and not necessarily the majority of votes. This is in fact the root cause of adopting divide and rule policy in our democratic set up resulting in weakening the social fabric of various independent societies/communities.

Considering the prevailing arrangement, where is the time and scope to remember Gandhiji and his talisman "Think of the poorest person you have ever seen and ask yourself if your next act will be of any use to him." We have miles to go.

## APPRECIATION

**All India ASECA & ASECA CHANNEL express heartfelt thanks to the following for their quick response and support to our Appeal published in Mar'09 soliciting support for the publication of ASECA CHANNEL & other projects**

1. **Er. Purna Chandra Hansdah**, A/48 Sector 5, Rourkela, Orissa - 769 002
2. **Mr. Bhalanath Tudu**, Qr. No. B/9 Sector 16, Rourkela, Orissa - 769 003
3. **Mr. Baidyanath Mandi**, Ol Bel Library, Arambati, Post: Nimpura, Kharagpur, West Bengal - 721 304

## ARTICLES FOR SANTALI MAGAZINE TITLED TETANG (ᱵᱚᱠᱤᱨ)

All of you may be aware that ASECA, Rourkela is publishing a Santali Magazine titled TETANG (ᱵᱚᱠᱤᱨ) annually which is proposed to be released on the occasion of the Guru Kunami Celebration. We earnestly request all the writers, poets, thinkers, social workers to send their articles (Poetry, Short stories, Essay, Reviews etc.) in the address given below so that we receive the same latest by 30.4.2009.

**With Regards & Johar,**

Shri Arjun Marndi, Secretary, ASECA, Rourkela Branch, Guru Gomkey Bhawan, A/43, Sector 16, Rourkela Dist: Sundargarh, Orissa - 769 003. Contact No.: **09437647577**.

The articles may also be submitted using E-mail Id of **DISHOM KHABAR** i.e. [wesanthals@yahoo.com](mailto:wesanthals@yahoo.com)

# Scheduled Communities: A social Development profile of SC/STs (Bihar, Jharkhand & W.B)

(Source: Planning Commission)

{Continued from March 2009 issue}

## Table 5.7: Cooking arrangements among the Scheduled Castes in Jharkhand (Not reproduced)

Interestingly, among the Dom, 28.6% households have separate kitchen scoring over the Chamar (12.5%).

- As for fuel, the electric/kerosene stove is the most commonly used utilities for cooking. The gas chulla is significantly absent.

### West Bengal

In West Bengal, 26.6 percent Scheduled Caste households have separate kitchen, 46.3 percent cook inside and 27.1 percent cook outside.

## Table 5.8 : Cooking arrangements among the Scheduled Castes in West Bengal

With respect to individual castes, households having separate kitchen is highest among the Sarki (80.0%) followed by Kami (69.6%), Konai (38.1%), Mal (35.7%), Chamar (31.3%), Bhuiyan (26.7%), Bagdi (16.9%), and Patni (13.3%). Surprisingly, only 8.8 percent of Dhobi households have a separate kitchen. None of the households among the Bauri and the Dom have separate kitchen. As for fuel, only 6 households have gas chulla (Dhobi 4 hhs, Mal 2 hhs).

Wood and Kerosene oil are used most extensively.

- Among those who cook inside their homes but do not have separate kitchen, the Patni tops the list (83.3% hhs), followed by Dhobi (79.4%), Bhuiyan (66.6%), Konai (61.9%), Dom (55%), Chamar (47.9%), Bagdi (41.5%), Mal (34.3%), and Bauri (34.0%). Only the Kami do not have any households in the category.

- West Bengal has the largest percentage of households having to cook outside.

The Bauri figures the highest in this category with 66.0 percent households, followed by Dom (45%), Bagdi (41.5%), Karmi (30.4%), Mal (30.0%), Chamar (20.8%), Sarki (16.6%), Dhobi (11.8%), Bhuiyan (6.7%), and Patni (3.3%). None of the households of Konai do outside cooking.

### Scheduled Castes

#### Jharkhand

In Jharkhand 34.2 percent of all households have separate kitchen, 64.0 percent cook inside and only 1.8 percent cook outside.

## Table 5.9 : Cooking arrangements among the Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand (Not reproduced)

Cooking amongst the tribals almost universally takes place inside their homes, whether or not they have a separate kitchen. Among the Mahali and the Santhal a separate kitchen is a predominant feature (60.4% and 54.7% respectively), even if they are all rural households. The urban-based Oraon and Munda come next (42.9% and 35.1% respectively). The Lohara paradox continues with only 5.2 percent households having kitchen even when they are predominantly urban.

- As for fuel, the urban based households of the Oraon, Munda and Lohara have 25 gas chullas between them (25% among Oraon, 16% among Munda and 5% among the Lohara).
- The rural based, Mahali, Santhal and Ho are mainly using wood and kerosene.

#### West Bengal

In West Bengal, 35.7 percent of all households have kitchen. As many as 44.0 percent households cook inside their homes and 20.3 percent had cook outside.

### Table 5.10 : Cooking arrangements among the Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal

With respect to individual castes, the households having separate kitchen is the highest among the Oraon with 70.5 percent households, followed by Mahali with 54.5 percent, Munda with 45.5 percent, Bhumij with 34.7 percent, and Santhal with 29.9 percent. It is lowest among the Lodha (6.8%).

- Among those cooking inside, but without separate kitchen, we have 86.4 percent of Lodha, 52.0 percent of Santhal, 43.1 percent of Bhumij, 22.7 percent of Mahali, 18.2 percent of Munda and 6.4 percent of Oraon.

- Among those having to cook outside, the Munda with 36.4 percent households stand out prominent, followed by Oraon (23.1%), Mahali (22.7%), Bhumij (22.2%), Santhal (18.1%) and Lodha (6.8%).

What is conspicuous about West Bengal is that nearly one-fourth of the Scheduled Caste and Tribal households are cooking their food outside.

#### Health seeking behavior

Fundamental to health-seeking behaviour is the reproduction of society, culture and economy. Efficiency of labour in whatever form is directly linked with the state of health of the members of the society. It is on account of this that health is a major aspect of state policy. Primary health centres, immunization programmes, hospitals at various levels, provide the structure of health care, disease and illness. Further, we are aware of the parallel existence of traditional and modern modes of treatment and health care. (To be continued...)

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I, KUANR CHANDRA KISKU, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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