



ASECA CHANNEL

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Editorial

The birth anniversary of Pandit Raghunath Murmu has become a special and significant occasion for Santal people. This occasion is being celebrated in organized way in various parts of the country for more than three decades. Due to this length, there are some observations from various quarters on this occasion which need further deliberation and understanding. As this occasion is being celebrated widely, there naturally emerge points for introspection and further courses of action. The points which are raised in recent time are when the occasion along with relevance remains the same why the contents, direction, levels of participation, understanding undergo changes with the passage of time? It is natural that the value, motivation, mission and vision change with the understanding and perceptions of the individuals or group of people. It is, therefore, pertinent to see the developments and if necessary to have a relook/review of the same. Over the years, it is experienced that this occasion is losing its sheen and gradually it is not able to provide enough stimulus in accomplishing the long cherished mission and vision. This occasion is also not able to create a platform of regeneration, solidarity and co-operation. Remembering a great personality and to remember his teachings are the hallmark of celebrating such occasion. The time has come to make an assessment whether this occasion has produced the envisaged result and how people are being benefited? Whether they consider this occasion as a foundation for their upliftment, renaissance or wellbeing? The relevance of this occasion being properly understood and appreciated remains to be examined and evaluated.

One of the glaring developments is to celebrate this occasion in two different dates. One should not, however, be surprised to learn the emergence of another date for the same occasion and patronized by some influential groups individually or collectively. Before, something is consolidated a division is being created and pursued vigorously with arguments and logic. In the process, people are intensively engaged in outdoing

each other and are not able to generate opportunity which might have brought about positive changes and influenced the life of Santals immensely in pursuit of upward mobility. As a result, the benefits before being accrued are being neutralized by the fabricated conflict and internecine weakness. As a result, this occasion until now has offered a limited influence on the administration in general and social group in particular.

It is indeed very interesting to see that all the ASECAs (Adivasi Socio Educational and Cultural Associations) and their branches all over the country and very few other social associations are celebrating birth anniversary on Baisakh Kunami (Full moon day of Baisakh month) which they claim is as per the wish of Guru Gomke. However, majority associations other than ASECAs have started celebrating this occasion on 5th May every year. The protagonists of the date argue and give statement that Baisakh Kunami fell on 5th of May in 1905 and as such there is justification to celebrate the occasion. On referring the calendar of 1905, it can be seen that 5th May was not the Baisakh Kunami. As such, this reality puts a question mark on the proclaimed basis to celebrate this occasion on 5th May. The motto may perhaps be to thrust a silent competition with a resolve to outdo others. As a result of a divided house, the occasion is not being able to foster a spirit of brotherhood, solidarity and a strong resolve to press for the common benefits for which the skeptical administrators are having the last laugh.

For any group activity, it is natural to have a captain/leader to steer the group and members of the group maintain discipline and show respect equally to the seat of authority and each other. The rule of the game is not personal and players play for the team or group to become victorious. For achieving a goal, team hit a target collectively following certain discipline, path and strategy. The result is always disastrous for the team or group following different direction and understanding and Santals will not be the exception. But Santal society seems yet to learn and follow this important and fundamental code and rule.



GURU KUNAMI CELEBRATED AT HADHADI, BARIPADA ON 9TH MAY 2009



GURU KUNAMI CELEBRATED AT MALKANGIRI, ORISSA

Letter to the Editor...

Dear Sir,

At the outset, Johar ge Gomke. MARANGBURU ADIVASI CULTURAL ASSOCIATION, MALKANGIRI, ORISSA organized Gurukunami Celebration on 9th May 2009. There are about 40 kherwal Brothers and sisters from Bhanj and Keonjhar in Malkangiri district employed in Govt as well as Private Sector. There are only 5 Santal villages (Numbered MV-2 to MV-6) nearby Malkangiri Town. These Santals had migrated from East Pakistan (Bengle) as refugees and are settled by DNK Project since 1964 after India Pakistan War. Approximately Santal population is nearly 2000 (two thousand). They are still in a developing situation. I am sending some photographs which may be published in the ASECA CHANNEL.

Thank you,

Thakurdas Hansdah, Advisor of the Association, Executive Officer, NAC, Malkangiri, Orissa.

OBITUARY



It is not always true to be great and influential to do some good things in the society. There are many in our society who willingly contribute for a common cause. **Shri Gopal Murmu** of Had Hadi, Baripada comes in the latter category. From a modest interaction with All India ASECA, he had become its one of the dedicated volunteers and resource person. The experience of a teacher came handy in extending help. He was instrumental in identifying suitable land for installation of statue of Pandit Raghunath Murmu at Had Hadi, Baripada in the Centenary Year 2005. From that year onwards, he along with other villagers were taking care of the statue and continued to help All India ASECA in organizing Guru Kunami annually.

Shri Gopal Murmu left for his heavenly abode on **26th May 2009** at an age of about 40. He died of accidental electrocution. He was a person of very sober, gentle and amiable nature.

He is survived by wife, a son and two daughters. We pray God to bless the departed soul with eternal peace the family with enough strength to bear the irreparable loss.

All India ASECA joins the family in mourning the sudden death of Gopal Murmu.

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

(Source: Planning Commission)

{Continued from May 2009 issue}

- Among the Lohara out of 21 children 14 got immunised at the District Hospital, six by MPHWS and one by the private doctor.
- Among the Ho, out of 39, 24 children were immunised by Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM) at the subcentre, 15 at the village camp.
- Among the Mahali, 2 children were immunised by ANM. Among the Santhal, out of 42, 32 children were immunised by ANM.

West Bengal

Among the Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal, 122 children (40.7 percent) out of 300 children were immunised. The percentage of male children immunised is equal to that of female children. This is in sharp contrast to SC children in West Bengal. As among the Scheduled Tribes of Jharkhand, there is a parity between male and female in the immunisation of children in West Bengal. However, there is a difference in the type of immunisation. In Jharkhand two third received only polio, whereas in West Bengal, majority of the children received primary doses of Polio, BCG and DPT.

The children immunized among the Santhal is highest with 53.7 percent, followed by Munda with 44.4 percent, Mahali with 38.5 percent.

- The children immunised among the Lodha is the lowest with 10.0 percent, followed by the Bhumij with 17.5 percent and Oraon with 27.4 percent. As among the scheduled castes in West Bengal, the majority of children are immunised by ANM at the subcentres.

Concluding Observations

There is distinct trend towards getting children immunised. However, for achieving the target of universal immunisation, more concerted efforts and awareness generating programmes need to be vigorously pursued at this stage.

There is a conspicuous shift in attitude taking place among the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in their health seeking behaviour. They are now inclined to approach hospitals, private clinics and get treated through allopathic 'quacks' for relief from disease and ailments, as well as for preventive immunisation.

Table 5.14: Immunization among the Scheduled Tribe children in West Bengal (Not reproduced)

(To be continued...)

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