



# ASECA CHANNEL

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## Editorial

Celebration of festivals, merrymaking are all pervasive in the Santal society. There is not a single month which is without any celebration. Agriculture being the predominant occupation, life flows along with the change in season and growing of crop. From the sowing to harvesting seasons, the occasions are plenty where people celebrate and prepare themselves for moving forward. This is the way of life one passes through. Besides normal life, there is a perceptible change in the way of life of Santals where they have tried to experiment so many things and come out with some innovative ideas and principles. One such event is the observance of some non-traditional events such as worshipping some great personalities of the society who have contributed in a positive way towards making a progressive and forward looking community. One such personality is Pandit Raghunath Murmu, the inventor of 'Ol Chiki - the script for the Santali language'.

From a modest beginning in the urban centres, the birth anniversary popularly known as 'Guru Kunami' is being celebrated now in the urban as well as in the rural places. This is a growing phenomenon and people involve themselves intensely in the occasion and the celebration is based on one's ability and awareness. The essence is quite clear. People organize themselves in a way which is worth emulating and is a case for others to realize. The appreciation for such engagement of people cannot be expressed in words. One needs to participate to know the ethos and sense of belongingness. The spreading of event to the rural areas is contributing towards making people aware of the importance of mother tongue. Mother tongue has been a topic widely debated and deliberated with respect to its viability as a medium of education for upward mobility of this community. The invention of 'Ol Chiki' has been a

bonding thread which brings together a community in to a common platform. The common platform is a subject which is craved by every community in the world. The Santal community is feeling secure as it is blessed with some ideals and tangible elements which provide them the sense of belongingness and camaraderie.

Some pertinent questions are being asked from time to time whether Santal community has fully reaped the fruits of such activities. Though some express their satisfaction, others voice their apprehension on the result or outcome of such process. One section terms it as an occasion which provides an alibi of coming together and engage oneself in cultural activities. On the other hand, other dominant section thinks that this occasion has provided a majority of population to introspect and analyze the whole spectrum of challenges influencing the development Santals, Santali language and literature. The exchange of ideas among people though limited in context and coverage, is helping people to at least come together and share something. The essence of sharing and caring is pervading various layers of community conscience which is encouraging and in the long run would be rewarding. The show must go on and the occasion should inspire the next generation who would be the torch bearers in the future.

The celebration of Guru Kunami should be considered as a yardstick to measure the intensity of a resolve to move forward and to establish a bold bedrock upon which the future of the community can be superbly shaped towards placing this community in a better light. More and more participation, contribution during the occasion and afterwards would be helpful in realizing the goal of maintaining uniqueness, becoming independent from the burden of growing through a language apart from mother tongue and for charting a direction for upward mobility.

## Unraveling Indian Census Data on Santals

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The interesting clips of T.V. news channel captioned as “WHAT IS THERE IN NAME (Obama & Osama)?” was aired recurrently after the hot news of killing of Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan’s Abbottabad. One can understand what a difference a single letter “B” or “S” in a name can mean to the world so differently. In a similar perspective what could / should be the name of Santal religion? Is it Sarna, Sari Dharam or any thing else? A large number of Santals and other tribes in the state of Orissa, West Bengal & Jharkhand record their religion as Sarna and in West Bengal, significant number of Santals record their religion as Sari Dharam.

It is observed that during 1991 Census, 11% (5,40,605 out of 49,76,496) of ST Santals in the State of Orissa, West Bengal & Jharkhand recorded their religion as SARNA whereas during 2001 census, this figures has increased to 21% (12,23,439 out of 59,04,817) which is a clear sign of increased social awareness amongst Santals in India but as per 2001 Census, still major 62% of Santals in above 3 States record their religion as Hindu, 4% as Christian and 11% as Sari Dharam. It is again observed that a whopping 42 Lakhs of population in various States of India record their religion as SARNA. Therefore, apart from Santals, around 30 Lakh other people / tribals in India who record their religion as SARNA. The details of these population in 3 states are depicted in the below Table.

### Number of ST population Who have recorded their religion as "Sarna" in the State of Jharkhand, West Bengal & Orissa as per 2001 Census

Jharkhand			West Bengal			Orissa		
Sl. No.	Name of Tribal	Population	Sl. No.	Name of Tribal	Population	Sl. No.	Name of Tribal	Population
<b>Sarna</b>								
1	Asur	7,632	1	Bedia etc.	462	1	Bathudi	177
2	Baiga	381	2	Bhumij	1,491	2	Bhuiya etc.	240
3	Bedia	12,287	3	Ho	375	3	Bhumij	3,311
4	Binjhia	4,727	4	Karmali	155	4	Binjhia etc.	825
5	Birhor	1,556	5	Kora	309	5	Gond etc.	57
6	Birjia	2,608	6	Lodha etc.	80	6	Ho	5,867
7	Bhumij	62,725	7	Lohara etc.	68	7	Kharia etc.	659
8	Chero	191	8	Mahali	775	8	Kisan	189
9	Chick Baraik	13,265	9	Munda	3,118	9	Kol	231
10	Gond	20,886	10	Oraon	5,998	10	Kolah Loharas etc.	178
11	Gorait	2,339	11	Santal	86,459	11	Kolha	18,870
12	Ho	676,726	12	Savar	91	12	Kora	65
13	Karmali	3,927	13	Generic Tribes etc.	445	13	Lodha	66
14	Kharia	37,583	<b>Sub Total</b>		99,826	14	Mahali	1,934
15	Kharwar	12,751	<b>Sari Dharam</b>			15	Munda etc.	4,116
16	Kisan	18,527	1	Bhumij	522	16	Mundari	379
17	Kora	2,938	2	Kora	1,851	17	Oraon	9,975
18	Korwa	4,085	3	Lodha etc.	196	18	Santal	287,844
19	Lohra	62,421	4	Mahali	608	19	Shabar	173
20	Mahli	34,766	5	Munda	915	20	Sounti	492
21	Mal Pahariya	4,790	6	Oraon	430	21	Generic Tribes etc.	221
22	Munda	532,877	7	Santal	619,847	<b>Sub Total</b>		335,869
23	Oraon	766,138	8	Savar	404	<b>Grand Total</b> 4,200,132		
24	Parhaiya	1,174	9	Generic Tribes etc.	1,795			
25	Santhal	836,175	<b>Sub Total</b>		626,568			
26	Sauria Paharia	805						

27	Savar	1,369
28	Generic Tribes etc.	12,220
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>3,137,869</b>

*Total number of ST in the state of Jharkhand, West Bengal*

*& Orissa who has recorded their religion as Sarna is 42,00,132*

From above, it shows that 8,36,175 out of 27,78,121 in Jharkhand, 86,459 out of 22,80,540 in West Bengal and 2,87,844 out of 7,77,204 ST Santals in Orissa as per 2001 Census recorded their religion as SARNAs. It is also evident from above Table that 31,37,869 in Jharkhand, 6,26,568 in West Bengal and 3,35,869 people in Orissa recorded their religion as Sarna as per 2001 Census. The Indian Union Cabinet has already decided to make a separate Census based on religions. Special campaign / effort is required in coming days prior to various Census operations to improve the religious status of Santals / Tribals and also awareness on religions of Santal / Tribal community needs to be improved tremendously in order to develop the society in this front.

## Learning Teaching Problem of Tribal Children

(Source: Orissa Primary Education Programme Authority)

*{Continued from May 2011 issue...}*

### **Bonda**

High hills located in the remote South-Western tip of the Malkangir uplands and North-West of the river Machkund, in the undivided Koraput regim, are inhabited by sparsely populated primitive tribes. Bonda's are one of them.

The hills in which they live are known as Bonda hills. Once they were regarded as a criminal tribe amongst the tribes of Orissa. Though numerically small, people of this tribe have successfully retained the distinctive features of their unique culture, chiefly on account of their geographic isolation and more perhaps due to stubborn and independent spirit. Their language is called Remo, which comes under the Astro-Asiatic language belonging to Munduari group.

The tribe is divided into three groups – The Upper Bondas or Bara-Jangur group, who inhabit the slopes at 3,000ft. altitude from the mean sea level, around Mudulipara in Khairapur Block, the lower Bondas who inhabit the foothills under symbiotic relationships with the surrounding peasant communities, and the Gadaba-Bondas, who being greatly influenced by the Godabas, live at the same altitude as the Upper Bondas. Both the Bora-Jangur group and Godaba Bondas are considered Hill Bondas.

From a geographical point of view the Bonda settlements can be divided into three groups – the Hill Bondas or Bara-Jangur group consisting of 12 villages, the Godaba group of Hill Bondas consist of 13 villages, and the plain group in a cluster of 24

villages. All these villages come under Kairapur Block.

### **Santal**

The forest clad, undulating, hilly regions of the district of Mayurbhanj and adjoining areas of Keonjhar and Balasore districts are inhabited by many Munda speaking tribes, of which the most important and predominant community is the Santal. Numerically speaking this community is one of the largest tribes of Orissa. At present most Santal can speak and understand Oriya. The Santal of Orissa never claims their present habitat as their original homeland. Rather they are proud of describing a legend, which gives Ahiripiri as their birthplace and Chaichampa as their fort located some where in Bihar.

In the past, the Santal were nomadic in habits and used to wander from place to place in search of agricultural land. Some scholars link their traditional homeland with central India (Dandakaranya area). Later they came to the Chhotanagpur plateau and adjoining districts of Midnapur and Singhbhum. At the close of the 18th Century they made their home in Santal Parganas. At present they are spread over large tract of land within the geographical jurisdiction of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Tripura. They constitute one of the largest tribes in the country as a whole.

The development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is one of the main objectives of the state. There has been a continuous effort since

independence by the government to raise their social-economic standards.

Stress has been laid on educational development. As a progressive community in the state, the Santal avail themselves of the maximum facilities provided to them. The opening of residential schools and hostels, and the provision of scholarships, have provided ample opportunity for the Santal to educate their children.

### Saora

The Saora is one of the oldest known tribes of Orissa, so widespread that they are found in all the districts of the state. But their main concentration extends over Parlakhemuni sub-division of Gajapati district and Gunupur subdivision of Rayagada district. The two sub-divisions, being contiguous, form a compact area of Saora land. They are called by various names such as Savara, Sabara, Saur, Sora, etc. and have a racial affinity with the proto-Australoid physical features which are dominant among the aborigines of central and southern India.

Being one of the most primitive and ancient communities, frequent references to the Saora are found in Hindu mythology and classics. They are widely found all over central India, comprising Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. In northeastern states like Assam and Tripura they have sizable population in the tea plantation zones, where the Saora work as labourers. Sora is an uncultivated language, and has no recognized standard. It varies considerably not only between villages but also between individuals', says Rammurti, the authority on the Saora language. It belongs to the Austric family of languages to which Mundari belongs. There are no doubt poetic themes in the language. Verrier Elwing says: "The Saora who give the impression of being rather matter of fact and prosaic are surprisingly picturesque and metaphorical in their speech".

The Saora, who have very little knowledge about environmental sanitation, do not keep their villages clean. Also, in the rainy season the village streets become muddy in the absence of a proper drainage system. All these conditions are optimal for mosquitoes and flies to breed abundantly. As a result the Saoras suffer from various diseases, of which malaria, gastro-intestinal disorders; diarrhea, hookworm and roundworm infections are common. They also suffer from malnutrition, which is very much marked among the children.

The problems faced by the Saora are many and deep-rooted. Reduction in the productivity of widens over the years and the ban imposed by the government on cultivating these lands have become serious problems, which are threatening to shatter their economy.

### CHAPTER IV: OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS - Objectives of the study

- To identify the learning needs of the Tribal children.
- To study the profile of teachers in terms of their qualifications, experience and exposure to meet the learning needs of tribal children, and explore aspects of their teaching difficulties.
- To study the language situation in the community and assess the need for using tribal languages in the school.
- To assess the level of achievement of the tribal students completing class-I in language comprehension and mathematics and at present reading in class-II. As well as literature and mathematics for students completing class-IV and presently reading in class-V and study the difference in achievement of students in both the classes separately in relation to region tribe and gender.
- To suggest suitable remedial measures for the improvement of the prevailing situation;

{To be continued...}

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