



# ASECA CHANNEL

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## Editorial

There is always dearth of people who take interest in spreading social awareness on various issues affecting the growth and development in the society. If one considers Adivasi Society in particular, the situation can very well be imagined. Besides some organizations who are mainly dealing language and literature related issues, very few organizations are working towards attaining certain improvements in the society. It is observed that some organizations/enthusiasts organize workshops, meetings and to a limited extent the Conference. The number of Conferences is limited due to financial constraints as organizing such event requires considerable efforts and resources. The nature of such event and their modus operandi need to be discussed to have an understanding on the matter mainly on the desired vis a vis actual outcome aspects. The workshops and meetings though have a number of serious/important matters, are organized mostly locally. Due to its limited coverage, it is considered or seen relatively less important. On the other hand whenever a conference is organized, it generally attracts the attention of many with a widespread coverage. It is indeed the zeal and zest of the people apart from the organizers, which bring them to a common platform and participation in large numbers is ensured naturally. It has even been experienced that hostile anti canvassing from vested interests notwithstanding, people attend the conference in large numbers. This intrinsic quality of the society has remained undiluted till to day and is a matter of pride and hope for its members. Due to this particular nature, all sections of the society beginning from the common person to social leaders to political leaders show interests to participate. It is natural to show interest to attend such conference when a crowd is ensured in addition to the issues involved.

Whenever people start preparation for the same, various quarters vie for the space during the event. It is not always possible on the part of the organizers to accommodate everybody that also with people having different worldview and orientation. This problem arises during finalization of guests' list. Due to this inherent problem area, misunderstanding is spread by the aggrieved party (mainly political party) that such event is being organized on the behest of such and such political party. The party, which is not finding a mention immediately, accuses the organizers about the political leaning towards the party based on the list of the dignitaries for the occasion. The organizers are besieged with such claims and counter claims and in the process consume their valuable time in assuaging the sentiments of various quarters.

Though everybody primarily claims to be second to none as far as seriousness and social affairs are concerned, but the state of affairs of respective society does not support this claim.

The format adopted by the organizers in different parts of the country for the conference on social issues is found to be inappropriate to the extent that the conference is not able to produce an intended outcome. The energy spent for organizing such event is huge but organizers are not amused with the discussion in terms of degree and depth. During the review of such event it is widely expressed that the conference is falling sort of producing the desirable viable social force. The programme mainly involves open session and other cultural events like dance, song and merry making. The initial zest to organize such event is converted into fatigue and disappointment. In the long run, it is very difficult to regenerate same tempo and commitment. As such, few persons who are voluntarily committed to such thinking lose interest and as a result it is discontinued and the society is deprived of such event of social importance. The solution lies with the people and people should find out some possible solutions to this problem area.

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### Sahitya Akademi Awards 2007

Sahitya Akademi awarded 24 authors in different languages for the year 2007. The awardees are: Mrs. Purabi Bormudoi, Assamese; Mr. Samarendra Sengupta, Bengali; Mr. Janil Kumar Brahma, Bodo; Mr. Gian Singh Pagoch, Dogri; Mrs. Malathi Rao, English; Mr. Rajendra Shukla, Gujarati; Mr. Amarkant, Hindi; Mr. Kum. Veerabhadrapa, Kannada; Mr. Ratan Lal Shant, Kashmiri; Mr. Devidas R. Kadam, Konkani; Mr. Pradip Bihari, Maithili; Mr. A. Sethumadhavan, Malayalam; Mr. B. M. Maisnamba, Manipuri; Mr. G. M. Pawar, Marathi; Mr. Lakshman Srimal, Nepali; Late Dipak Mishra, Oriya; Mr. Jaswant Deed, Punjabi; Mr. Kundan Mali, Rajasthani; Mr. Hari Dutt Sharma, Sanskrit; Mr. Kherwal Saren, Santali; Mr. Vasudev Nirmal, Sindhi; Mr. Neela Padmanabhan, Tamil; Late Gadiyaram Ramakrishna Sarma, Telugu; Mr. Wahab Ashrafi, Urdu.

**Kherwal Saren** was born in 1957 at Raghunathpur, Post office Bela Tikri, Medinipur, West Bengal. After his graduation from Seva Bharati Mahavidyalaya, he took his Masters in Political Science from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. Besides Santali, he knows Bengali, English and Hindi also. Presently working as Senior Assistant in the State Bank of India,

Jhargram Branch, West Bengal. Began writing at an early stage. Some of his important works are Kherwal Ko Disa Kate (ବନ୍ଦୁକରଣର ବନ୍ଦୁ ଶୁଣିବି. ବନ୍ଦୁକରଣ), Sari Se Nase Bengal Rase (କରଣର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଉପରେ ଉପରେ ଉପରେ), Bahamai (ଦୁର୍ଗ), Thari Dakare Met Dak (ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଉପରେ ଉପରେ ଉପରେ) and Serenj Akalare Kherwal (କରଣର ଉପରେ ଉପରେ ଉପରେ ବନ୍ଦୁକରଣ). He has edited a monthly magazine Avensakwa (କରଣର ଉପରେ ଉପରେ ଉପରେ) and presently is the editor of a quarterly magazine Kherwal Jaher (ବନ୍ଦୁକରଣର ଉପରେ ଉପରେ). Recipient of Gurugomke Award from AISWA and Lahanti Patrika Award etc.

His award winning Drama book Chet Re Chikayena (କରଣର ଉପରେ ଉପରେ ଉପରେ) depicts the present day real situation of rivalry politics involving atrocitie, killing and kidnapping among rival groups. The style of depiction is simple and attractive and creates vivid sequences for performance. The play has its relevance in the disturbing political environment that must seek peace and development of villages and the welfare of the people. The play is a brilliant addition to Indian dramatic literature in Santali.

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## Position Paper

### National Focus Group on Problems of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Children

Source: National Council of Education Research & Training (NCERT)

{Continued from February 2008 issue}

They are largely isolated or compelled to form their own separate social circles. They also find themselves succumbing to dominant religio-cultural practices in a bid to avoid conflict and gain acceptance (Chaudhary, personal account). A disturbing tendency noted by several studies and further substantiated by poignant personal narratives is the use of children as servants by high caste teachers. Children are assigned a range of menial tasks – from cleaning and sweeping the school to fetching “paan” and cigarettes for the teacher (Artis et’al, 2003; Talib, 1998, 2000; Sachidananda, 1989). They assign SC/ST children menial jobs and shift the onus of low learning on children and their families. Tribal children have been punished for talking in their own languages. There is an undue obsession with language purity and correctness (Saxena and Mahendroo, 1993; Kundu, 1990, 1994). Placing disadvantaged students in ‘better quality’ schools doesn’t seem to solve the problem. Studies have suggested that feelings of isolation, alienation and experiences of discrimination do neutralize the impact of better facilities.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The above survey of the field reality of schooling of SC and ST children propels the conclusion that state policy and bureaucracy together serve to provide quantitatively the most inadequate and qualitatively the most inferior education. While expansion of government schooling has undoubtedly represented a shift from mass exclusion to mass inclusion, it has been an incredibly delayed, weak and highly discriminatory inclusion. Grossly unequal provision, accompanied by an alienating curriculum and disinterested and discriminatory teaching learning process seem to have kept alive the traditional Brahmanical principle of closure. SC/ST children are largely “cooled out” at the primary level itself. There occurs an effective physical exclusion of SC/ST children or they achieve low levels of schooling, which do not necessarily reflect learning.

It appears that given the present trend of the state’s abdication of its responsibility for mass education, and depleting provision, the situation of disadvantage thus will not only persist for the SC/ST, there will be a widening of the relative gap between them and the higher castes and classes, in both the quantities and qualities of education. We need to urgently respond to this situation.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

At the very outset it must be stated that for policy and programmatic changes that we have recommended can only succeed if equality and justice are firmly brought back on the educational agenda. In any event, there is enough indication, given the requirements of scale and sustainability, of the dire need for establishing full fledged, high quality regular schools in educationally impoverished areas. This need can hardly be fulfilled without massive funding and committed state support, the creation of a nurturant environment and active encouragement of a public education system by society. The relationship between cultural and educational goals needs to be publicly debated with a view to come to terms with question of cultural hybridity and cultural difference and a host of epistemological and ethical issues. Development of culturally sensitive policies and programmes is the key concern. This is important particularly in the context of the caution sounded by researchers about difficulty of making schools closer to tribal childrens’ worlds. Specifically the recommendations of the Focus Group are as follows:

##### Institutional Context

- a) Provision: We strongly reiterate the need for equitable provision in terms of quality of schooling at different levels, educational infrastructure and other facilities, qualified teachers, teaching learning materials, texts and others. It is crucial to enhance the autonomy and working conditions of teachers, and teacher self-esteem. All nonteaching work load must be taken off the teacher. The educational environment of substandard dysfunctional schools must change for any meaningful and effective curricular reform.
- b) We recommend the need to identify areas and groups which continue to suffer marked exclusion and neglect to enable a more focussed implementation of positive discrimination policies. We also emphasize the need to invest greater financial and educational resources for their educational development.
- c) School Organisation: There is need for flexibility in school structures and cultures. School times, calendars and holidays must keep in mind local contexts.
- d) The school system requires a more generous and efficient provision of facilities meant for SC and ST children. It is important for all concerned to engage with those struggling for rights of these communities, especially those committed to their educational advancement. (To be continued...)

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

(Source: Planning Commission)

## {Continued from February 2008 issue}

▪ The Bhumij is next only to the Santhal in having nearly 40 percent of the workers in the class of labourers. Again like the Santhal, 37.6 percent are in the non-agricultural sector with 29.6 percent as non-agricultural labour. In services they are 2.7 percent; business, 2.2 percent; others, 3.1 percent.

▪ The Lodha, regarded as one of the most backward tribal communities in West Bengal predominate as a class of labourers (59.8%). There are few owner-cultivators (3.9%).

They are almost wholly concentrated in the non-agricultural sector (81.4%) with 45.1 percent engaged in non-agricultural labour. As many as 17.6 percent are in service, 5.9 percent in business and 12.7 percent in animal husbandry, forest products, etc.

### Some Inter-State Comparisons

Except for the Bhumij and Lodha in West Bengal, and Ho and Lohara in Jharkhand, the other four tribal communities namely, the Santhal, Oraon, Munda and Mahali appear in both the States. Of these, the Santhal predominate both in Jharkhand and West Bengal. A point to note is that 67 percent of the Santhal in Jharkhand whose main occupation is agricultural labour, are primarily migrant agricultural labourers to the prosperous agricultural district of Burdwan in West Bengal.

▪ The Santhal in West Bengal have a significantly higher percentage of owner-cultivators (36.6%) than the Santhal in Jharkhand (20.6%). When it comes to agricultural labourers, they are much higher in Jharkhand (51.7%) than in West Bengal (24.4%). We have already noted that a large percentage of Santhal agricultural labourers from Jharkhand are seasonal migrant labourers to West Bengal.

▪ A much large percentage of Mahali have declared their main occupation as owner-cultivators in West Bengal (39.1%) than in Jharkhand (2.3%). However, it has been noted that 45 percent Mahali households in Jharkhand own land and as high as 88.7 percent declare their subsidiary occupation as petty owner-cultivators. Interestingly, 86.7 percent of Mahali in Jharkhand are self-employed in the production of bamboo goods. Another sharp contrast with respect to Mahali in West Bengal and Jharkhand is with regard to their being in service. In West Bengal 56.3 percent are in service, as compared to only 4.7 percent in Jharkhand.

▪ Notwithstanding the exclusive urban sample of Oraon and Munda in Jharkhand, their participation in the service

sector in both the States does not show great divergence. (Oraon in Jharkhand 63.4%, in West Bengal 47.8%; Munda in Jharkhand 54.4%, in West Bengal 50.8%).

## SUBSIDIARY OCCUPATIONS

### Scheduled Castes, Bihar

Subsidiary occupations are secondary to the main occupations. They are declared by those who are in main occupations. In Bihar, out of the total 966 Caste earners, only 227 (23.5%) are in subsidiary occupations. It is significant that almost all the workers in subsidiary occupations are either agricultural or non-agricultural labourers. Amongst the Musahar it is the lowest with 7.2 percent.

### Jharkhand

In Jharkhand where we have a small sample of 129 Scheduled Caste earners, only 7.2 percent are in subsidiary occupations. Neither the Chamar nor the Dom who are located in Ranchi town are engaged in any subsidiary occupation.

### West Bengal

In West Bengal there is a somewhat greater participation of Scheduled Castes in subsidiary occupations. Out of 1021 Scheduled Caste earners in main occupations, as many as 292 (28.6%) are in subsidiary occupations. Of those in subsidiary occupations, as many as 55.5 percent are engaged as agricultural or non-agricultural labourers, 13.7 percent are in cultivation, and a significant 29.5 percent are engaged in other occupations in the non-agricultural sector. The overall pattern is consistent with the diversified pattern of occupational structure of Scheduled Castes with respect to their main occupations. All the eleven Scheduled Castes are into subsidiary occupations. The Bhuiyan, among them, have the highest worker participation in subsidiary occupations (55.8 percent). Most of them (74.4 percent) are agricultural labourers. The Sarki and the Konai come next, with 38.5 percent and 38.3 percent respectively. However, among the Konai 88.3 percent are agricultural labourers, whilst amongst the Sarki, they are 68.6 percent. Nearly one-third of the Chamar earners are agricultural labourers but equivalent numbers are also petty cultivators. The Bagdi and Bauri are significantly into non-agricultural occupations but not as labour.

### Scheduled Tribes, Jharkhand

The picture becomes different when we examine the subsidiary occupations of Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand.

Out of 1451 Scheduled Tribe earners in the main occupations, 670 (46.2%) are in subsidiary occupations. Of these, as many as 58.2 percent are engaged in petty self-cultivation, 28.1 percent are agricultural labourers, 9.1 percent are non-agricultural labourers and a meagre 4.6 percent are in other non-agricultural occupations. It may be recalled that among the Mahali, who are largely selfemployed

in production of bamboo products, only 3.5 percent workers declared their main occupation as owner-cultivators, when 46 percent households owned cultivable land. In their case, owner-cultivation becomes secondary to self-employment.

Significantly among the Mahali the percentage of petty cultivators is the highest at 88.7, followed by the Santhals at 72.5 and the Ho with 40.4%.

Since the Munda, Oraon and Lohara are primarily urban based, they do not figure in subsidiary occupations.

A significant feature is that in spite of the fact that a large number of earners are engaged in petty owner-cultivation, many of them do not declare cultivation as their main occupation. This indicates the relevance and necessity of getting data on main and subsidiary occupations according to the perceptions of the earners themselves.

#### **West Bengal**

In West Bengal the engagement of Scheduled Tribes in subsidiary occupations marginally higher than in Jharkhand. Out of 1513 earners engaged in main occupations, 773 (51.2%) are in subsidiary occupations. However, the proportion of earners declaring petty cultivation as subsidiary occupation (37.4%) is lower than in Jharkhand. As many as 44.9 percent declared themselves as agricultural labourers, 6.3 percent as non-agricultural labourers and 11.4 percent as in other non-agricultural occupations.

When we move to the individual tribes there is moderate to high participation in subsidiary occupations. All earners among the Munda are in subsidiary occupations, followed by Bhumij with 60.1 percent, Mahali with 51.6 percent, the Santhal and Oraon with nearly 47 percent and the Lodha with 34.3 percent.

There is a predominance of agricultural labourers among the Bhumij, Lodha, Mahali and the Santhal, ranging

between 50 and 60 percent. The Munda are mainly into non-agricultural labour (57.1 %). The Oraon are petty cultivators (66.4%) and non-agricultural labourers (31.0 %). Petty cultivation among the Santhal is also substantial (32.9%).

#### **Migration Pattern, Scheduled Castes: Bihar**

In our sample of 392 Scheduled Caste households in Bihar, 47 (12 percent) households sent 57 members to different parts of the country in search of occupations.

As many as 30 of these households are from the district of Saran in north Bihar and 17 of these are from the district of Patna. The castes from which migrants have been identified are the Chamar (18 households), Dusadh (9 households), Chaupal (8 households), Musahar (8 households) Dhobi (2 households), Dom and Bhoogta, one household each.

The occupations in which these workers are engaged are brick kilns (Haryana, Assam), agriculture labour (Haryana, Punjab and Western UP) and as labourers in rail-road construction. **(To be continued...)**

#### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Kherwal Jarpa Samiti, Khunta, Mayurbhanj, Orissa 757 019 is organizing Birth Centenary Celebration of Saonta Susariya Shyam Sundar Hembram on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at Khunta (Purnapani), Mayurbhanj.**

The programme includes honouring contemporary veteran persons, a Seminar on Social and Cultural matters followed by Dance and Drama Competition. For further details about the programme the organizers have requested to contact the following persons:

1. Mr. Gajendra Nath Soren, 06795-247517
2. Mr. Bholanath Tudu, 09937871418
3. Mr. Ram Chandra Hembram, 09937598537
4. Mr. Nimai Charan Murmu, 09937472596
5. Mr. Narendra Hembram, 009437090633
6. Mr. Dularam Soren, 09437278020
7. Mr. Ramdas Soren, 09437172535

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