

NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2025

Two days workshop on PESA: A two-day workshop on the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) was successfully held on January 17th and 18th, 2025, at Jharna, Namkum, with 34 participants from the SIGN and Project staff. The workshop provided an in-depth exploration of PESA, its provisions, and its relevance to tribal governance, under the guidance of expert resource persons Galdson Dungdung and Walter Kandulna. Workshop began with the learning what is Scheduled Area and what



is the importance of it. Scheduled Areas refer to regions predominantly inhabited by Scheduled Tribes (STs) and are specifically identified under the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. These areas have unique cultural, social, and economic characteristics, and the designation of Scheduled Areas is meant to protect tribal communities from exploitation and ensure they have a say in decisions that affect their land and resources. This status is

crucial for safeguarding tribal autonomy and promoting self-governance.

Then it went ahead with the difference between PEAS and JPRA saying **PESA (Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act)** is designed specifically for Scheduled Areas, and its provisions empower Gram Sabhas (village councils) in these regions to take critical decisions regarding local resources, land management, and development processes. PESA ensures that the governance system respects tribal customs, traditions, and the collective decision-making process of the community, whereas

JPRA (Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Act) applies to the entire state of Jharkhand, but it does not specifically cater to the needs of tribal communities or the distinct nature of Scheduled Areas. While JPRA works to promote local self-governance, it centralizes certain powers within the Panchayat system, which can limit the autonomy of Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas.

Further participants learnt how JPRA limits the power of Gram Sabha saying JPRA is primarily aimed at

strengthening the state's governance structures by decentralizing authority and



ensuring local participation in governance. However, in the context of Scheduled Areas, it often undermines the traditional powers of Gram Sabhas by placing more control in



the hands of the Panchayat system. This reduces the Gram Sabha's ability to make independent decisions on local matters, particularly related to land and natural resources, which are vital to the tribal communities. Whereas PESA, in contrast, is a landmark law that empowers Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas by granting them greater control over local governance, including the authority to manage natural resources, approve development projects, and protect the cultural and traditional rights of tribal

communities. PESA allows Gram Sabhas to exercise their autonomy in decision-making, ensuring that development and policies are aligned with the needs and interests of the tribal population. This empowerment helps ensure that tribal communities can preserve their customs and safeguard their natural heritage.

The workshop at Jharna, Namkum, offered valuable insights into the differences between PESA and JPRA, highlighting the specific needs of tribal governance and the importance of protecting the rights of tribal communities through effective legal frameworks. With the knowledge gained from this workshop, participants are now better equipped to advocate for the implementation of PESA and work towards a more inclusive and self-governed future for tribal areas.

State Level Speech Competition: A Platform for Talent and Thought Leadership

The highly anticipated final round of the State Level Speech Competition took place on January 24th at the Social Development Centre, uniting talented intermediate students from seven districts: Ranchi, Lohardaga, Simdega, Gumla, Khunti, Mahudanr, and Latehar. The competition



centered on critical topics such as the CNT Act, PESA, and the 5th Schedule, providing

a powerful platform for students to showcase their knowledge, passion, and commitment to addressing pressing social issues.

The event featured the top 1st and 2nd place winners from the preliminary district competitions. Each participant selected their respective topics through a lucky draw,



adding an exciting element of surprise to the proceedings. The competition served as a display of eloquence, confidence, and sharp critical thinking, as the students delivered compelling speeches that reflected their deep understanding of the issues affecting their communities and society at large.

Archbishop Vincent Aind, the esteemed

Chief Guest and President of SIGN, graced the event with his presence and delivered an inspiring address. He congratulated all the participants for their dedication and hard work and commended SIGN for organizing the competition. "By hosting such competitions, SIGN truly lives up to the significance of its name," he remarked, emphasizing the importance of encouraging critical thinking and fostering open dialogue among young minds.

Before the announcement of the final results, an engaging quiz session was held for the spectators, which included around 100 intermediate students from St. Anne's Intermediate College, Ranchi. What made the quiz particularly interesting was that all the questions were based on the



speeches delivered by the participants. This interactive activity kept the audience actively involved and added an extra layer of excitement to the event.

The event also took time to honor the esteemed judges: Deepak Bara, a social worker and filmmaker focused on tribal issues; Roshan, a dedicated social worker; and Sr. Leena Padam, SCN, a well-known social worker. Their contributions to the event were highly appreciated.

Following the quiz session, the names of the top three winners were announced: **1st**



Place: Namrata Kujur of St. Joseph's +2 School, Vishrampur, Garwa, **2nd Place:** Nanheshwar Yadav of St. Xavier's College, Mahuadanr, Latehar and **3rd Place:** Priyanka Minj of Gosner College, Simdega. Each winner was recognized for their exceptional oratory skills and insightful reflections on the given topics.

The State Level Speech Competition proved to be an excellent platform for students to voice their opinions on significant societal matters, empowering them to actively contribute to the development of their communities. The event successfully combined thought-provoking discussions with engaging activities, leaving everyone in attendance inspired and motivated.

District Level Hockey Tournaments: In an inspiring showcase of unity, talent, and community spirit, the District Level Hockey



Tournaments for tribal youth were organized by SIGN on 26th January across two districts. These tournaments aimed not only to

promote the importance of physical fitness and sportsmanship but also to bring together the youth from various tribal communities, fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie among them.

The tournament in **Khunti** featured six teams, each competing with passion and determination for the coveted title. After a series of intense and exciting matches, the **Tutuyu** team emerged as the champions, displaying exceptional teamwork and skill on the field. The **Chalkad** team gave a strong performance, securing the runner-up position, while **Karudih** proudly claimed third place. The



competition was not just about the game; it was about celebrating the collective effort,

unity, and spirit of the tribal youth, encouraging them to work together for common goals.

Over in **Gumla**, the competition was even more thrilling, with eight teams taking part in the tournament. The matches were fiercely contested, and **Sugasrwa** came out on top, clinching the championship title after a hard-fought battle. **Sonatoli** showcased



remarkable resilience and skill, securing second place, while **Harradipa** earned the third position. The tournament in Gumla highlighted the raw talent and dedication of the participants, many of whom demonstrated incredible promise and potential.

Both tournaments provided an excellent platform for the youth to display their athletic abilities, while also offering them a chance to engage with their peers and mentors. These events were not only about winning titles but also about learning the values of leadership, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

The success of these tournaments demonstrates the power of sports in uniting communities,

empowering the youth, and encouraging them to take an active role in shaping their futures. The events underscored the importance



of sports as a tool for developing leadership skills, fostering discipline, and instilling a sense of pride in one's community and heritage.

A big congratulation to all the participating teams for their dedication, hard work, and unwavering spirit. Special recognition goes to the winners, **Tutuyu**, **Sugasrwa**, and **Chalkad**, for their impressive performances. The success of these tournaments would not have been possible without the support of the organizers, whose commitment to youth engagement and community development played a crucial role in making these events memorable.

Let's continue to support and celebrate the incredible talent of our tribal youth, ensuring that such platforms remain open for growth, learning, and unity for years to come!

Tribal Dance Competition in Gumla District: In a vibrant celebration of tribal culture, SIGN organized a Tribal Dance Competition in **Gumla district** on 26th January, aimed at promoting and preserving the rich cultural heritage of the tribal communities. The event was an exciting platform for local youth to showcase their traditional dance forms and engage in a celebration of community pride.

A total of **7 teams** participated in the competition, each presenting energetic and colorful performances that captivated the audience. The performances reflected the deep-rooted traditions and diverse cultural expressions of the tribal communities in the region. After

a series of dynamic and enthralling performances, the **Bhelwatala** team emerged as the **first-place winner**, dazzling the judges and spectators with their impeccable choreography and energy. The **Sugasarwa** team secured the **second position**, while the



Butri team took **third place**, earning praise for their skill and passion.

This competition not only highlighted the beauty of tribal dance but also served as an important initiative to promote and preserve tribal culture, especially among the youth. By encouraging the younger generation to participate in cultural activities, the event contributed to

a deeper sense of pride in their traditions and a stronger connection to their roots.

The event was a resounding success, bringing together tribal communities



from across the district and fostering a sense of unity through shared cultural expression. Special thanks to all the participants for their outstanding performances, and congratulations to the winners for their remarkable talent. This dance competition was a true testament to the vibrant and diverse cultural tapestry of the tribal communities in Gumla. As the competition concludes, the hope remains that such initiatives continue to inspire and preserve the rich tribal heritage for generations to come.

Mausami Rag Singing Competition: On 26th January, **SIGN** hosted a unique **Mausami Rag Singing Competition** in **Gumla** to promote the rich tradition of Mausami



rag among the youth. The event aimed to teach young people the art of singing songs that are in harmony with

the seasons, a practice deeply rooted in tribal culture. A total of **5 teams** participated in the competition, each showcasing their talent and cultural knowledge by playing the **Mandar** (tribal drum) and singing traditional Mausami rag songs that reflect the changing seasons. The performances were a blend of rhythm and melody, with each

team beautifully interpreting the connection between nature, seasons, and music. After a series of impressive performances, the **Bhelwatala** team emerged as the **first-place winner**, captivating the audience with their skillful drumming and melodic precision. The **Sugasarwa** team secured **second place**, while the **Sonatoli** team stood **third**,



earning recognition for their heartfelt and vibrant rendition of traditional songs. This competition was not only a celebration of the unique Mausami rag tradition but also an effort to ensure that this

invaluable cultural heritage is passed down to the younger generation. By encouraging the youth to embrace these seasonal songs, the event highlighted the importance of connecting with nature through music and preserving these ancient practices. The Mausami Rag Singing Competition was a resounding success, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for tribal music and culture among the youth of Gumla. Congratulations to all the participants for their dedication, and special recognition to the winners for their outstanding performances. We hope such initiatives continue to inspire the younger generation to keep these traditions alive for years to come.