

NEWSLETTER JULY 2023

Awakening Tribal Soul: This month we had three workshops on Roles and Responsibilities of Priest and Nuns to preserve Tribal Heritage was organized by SIGN in three dioceses viz. in



Khunti Diocese on 1st July 2023 at Hoffman Social Service Society, Khunti, where Bishop Binay Kandulna presided over the workshop, in Gumla on 18th July 2023 at Bishop's House, Gumla, where Fr. Linus Pingal Ekka, the Diocesan Administrator of Gumla and in Sadhna Sadan, Chiyanki, Daltonganj on 20th July 2023, where Bishop Mascarenhas, SFX presided over the workshop. In the first

workshop we had two resource persons viz. Fr. Mahendra Peter, Tigga, SJ and Gladson Dungdung, whereas in the following two workshops only Fr. Mahendra Peter was the resource person. In all the Presidential addresses, the presiding Chairmen said that Tribal communities are undergoing a very critical period of its history. It is a cause of concern for all the Tribal. Anti-tribal forces are working against the tribal culture and heritage. He said it is the call of the hour to come together to preserve our tribal heritage. Priests and nuns have to play a vital role in reviving tribal values, heritage, customs. Then Fr Mahendra



Peter Tigga, the first Resource person of the day started with the constitution of India and then discussed the present situation of tribal community and need to work hard to preserve the heritage. He challenged the participants saying "Do we really love our heritage? What have we done to preserve and develop the heritage. He pointed out that Indi-piri has become Hindpiri,

Durang-dah became Doranda and so many. Jaipal Singh Munda addressed the tribal gathering from Indipiri ground. Where is that ground now?" He said that it is sad that our tribal families are having partition cases in court. Most of the families have property disputes. He exhorted the participants saying that only or spirituality can bridge the gaps. He also said, land is our biggest heritage. What steps have we taken in our diocese, parish and school level to save our land. How many of you have seen your institution's land documents?" We need to protect our land through enhancing legal knowledge, avoiding land related dispute among the family members and villages. He said that language gives us identity, but new generation is ashamed of speaking language and telling their surname.



Then, Galdson Dungdung talked about Tribal Philosophy, Mentioning **Co-existence**: In tribal community everybody; human, animals and plants; have space. There is no such word as exploitation in the tribal word dictionary. What are we doing to preserve our co-existence? Main part of tribal community is **Collectiveness**. It reflects in our work, dance, music, songs, festivals, hunting, constructing houses, marriage or decision making

in Gram Sabha. Tribal community is based on the value of **Equality**. In tribal community there is no discrimination based on rich-poor, male-female, upper caste-lower caste. There is no discrimination on the basis of colour of the skin. We are getting affected by the culture of the non-tribal community. Dowry is silently making its way in our community. Tribal society is an **Autonomous** Society. We are freedom loving people. 1855 Santhal Hul is the example of it. Fr. Hoffman and Birsa Munda worked for our heritage. Tribal community was **Self-Reliant** Society. Tribal community used to produce everything they needed, but sadly tribal communities are

turning from producer to consumer alone. It is all because tribal families are adapting urban life style. **Mutual Cooperation** is another pillar of tribal philosophy. But now it losing its importance. Tribal community used to be **Need-based** and not Greed-based. Tribal **Judicial system** satisfies



both parties. The proceeding continues till both the parties agrees.

Unfortunately, many are turning to modern judicial system, which is expensive and not concerned about the satisfaction of both the parities. Tribal philosophy teaches

to give **Respect to the rights of all**. As a child has the right on mother's milk, so also a calf has right over its mother cow's milk. Tribal do not put oxytocin injection to cow and sell its milk. If they go for hunting and a dog accompanies, after the hunting they give a share to dog also. Deanery wise Priests and Nuns discussed and came up with this decision that Priests and nuns have the responsibility to protect, preserve and promote the tribal heritage. With this a fruitful day was ended. After the deliberation from the Resource Persons, there were group discussion, where it was felt that tribal community has to work hard to preserve tribal heritage by promoting tribal language, tribal songs-dance, Gram Sabha, and Tribal values beginning from school level to college level, religious people to ordinary people and at the church level to village level. At the end, one person from each tribal community viz. Munda, Oraon, Santhali and Kharia were asked to come forward and sing a song in their respective language. With this program was concluded.

Training on Income Generation: On 5th and 6th July, 2023, two days training on Entrepreneurship and Income Generation was organized by SIGN at Gram Utthan, Gumla. There were 60 women participants learning

different ways of increasing their family income. On the first day Mrs. Jyoti Tirkey from Ranchi taught the participants how to make garlands and artificial flowers by using Satin cloth, Foam, Green tape, Artificial leaves, Thin Bamboo sticks (2-3 feet),



Floral stick, Stocking, ribbon, Golden wire, Pollen, Cotton thread, Scissor, pliers and Organza cloth. Though participants took some time to learn, but by the end of first day, they were happy to learn useful tricks of earning some income. Each participant made minimum of two pieces of artificial tulip flower.

On the second day Sr. Anupa, OSF taught the participants to make candles, washing soap and washing powder. Making washing powder and candles were easy, but making washing soap



was difficult, because they could not get the correct material for making washing soap. However, they learnt the process of making it and they are sure, that this learning will help them for their household work. Participants were very happy to spend two useful days.

Online Meeting: On 13th July Fr. Bipin participated in an online meeting conducted by by Strategic Planning team of Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) for setting up Goal, Objectives and Indicators for coming 5 years for the Social Apostolate of CCBI. Fr. Richard Pias, the Forum Director KROSS, Fr. Parimal, the Forum Director, ABCD and Fr. John Kerketta, The Forum Director, OROSA participated in this meeting. In this one-hour meeting, Strategic Planning team of CCBI suggested how to set up the Goal, Objective and Indicators and asked the group to prepare the Goal, Objective and Indicator and get back to them.

Annual General Body Meeting: On 24th July Annual General Body Meeting of SIGN was held in the Conference of Hall of Social Development Centre. 14 members of General Body attended the meeting. Secretary presented the Annual Report and the Audit Report. Members discussed about Justice, Peace and Development Commission and need for the Legal cell and Peace clubs in every Diocese. Finally, Auditor was appointed for the year 2023-2024.

Governing Body

Meeting: On 25th July at 3.30 pm the Governing Board Meeting of SIGN took place in the Conference of Hall of Social Development Centre. All the members



were present for the meeting. Secretary presented the Annual Report and the Audit Report. Members discussed about Safeguarding Policy and the related policy viz. Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy, Whistle Blower Policy. Secretary talked about what are all these policies, why it is necessary in the organization. Finally, members talked about Internal Complaint Committee and members suggested Fr. Mahendra Peter Tigga, SJ and Dr. Sr. Eileen Kujur, OSU as the external Members for this ICC of SIGN.

Awakening Tribal Soul: On 29th July 46 Fathers and Sisters from 15 Congregation came together to attend Workshop on Tribal Heritage. Fr. Joseph Marianus Kujur, SJ and Mr. Gladson



Dungdung were the resource persons for this workshop. Right in the beginning of the session, Fr. Marianus made it very clear that tribal society is undergoing a crisis, which is a structural problem. He said that vested-interest groups are trying to destroy the constitutional structure. Tribal is losing its identity by not using their surname. He said that in order to preserve and protect Tribal culture, customs and heritage, we

need to have political intervention. He said that provisions for Reservation, free meals distribution, distribution of lap tops are piece meal approach. We need to treat the root cause of underdevelopment. We need to talk about Tribal Identity and not addressing symptoms. Then he talked about Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, 5th and 6th Schedule. He said if Uniform Civil Code is implemented in Jharkhand, it will take away all the rights of Tribal communities. He also talked about National Population Register (NPR) and National Register of Citizen (NRC). He talked about land to be preserved by our tribal community. It should not be sold to anybody.

Then Galdson took the session starting with Delisting and talked about UCC. He said that the simple meaning of delisting is to remove the name from a prescribed list. Remove the names of the Christian tribals from the list of tribal category. They give the arguments that



since a few tribals have become Christians, so they cannot be tribal anymore. If we go by article 342.1 of Constitution, only the President of India has the authority to include any group of people into the list of schedule tribe, but not to exclude anybody from the list, whereas as per the article

342.2 Indian Parliament has the rights to partially or completely include into or exclude any tribe from the list. He said the day in this process there is also listing of some other groups, which is a threat for existing tribal communities. He said that delisting is not the fight for anybody's rights, but it is to get a few votes for their party. While talking about Uniform Civil Code, Galdson said, it is a death warrant for the tribals. He raised question, does our Indian Constitution gives permission

for UCC? Will not UCC bring adverse effect on the cultural heritage of the country? What will happen to special rights to Tribals? The simple meaning of UCC is to have one law for all the citizens of India,



irrespective of his caste, religion or community. Everybody's marriage, divorce, land matters, everything will be governed by one law. If it is implemented, the provisions given to the tribes under 5th and 6th schedule will not have any meaning. Provision made by the constitution to protect the weaker section of the society, will simply diminish. If UCC is brought as the law of the country tribal will lose their identity, culture along with their autonomy, proprietary, legal and traditional rights. After this, he spoke on Tribal Philosophy; Coexistence, Collectiveness, Equality, Autonomy, Self -Reliance, Mutual Cooperation, Need Based Economy, Judicial System, Democracy based consensus, Respect for the Rights of all. After this, participants were divided into 5 groups and to discuss what they could do at Congregational level to preserve Tribal Heritage.