

Richness in Scarcity

From Purulia and Patamda to Bankura: West Bengal



Given the enthusiasm of one of the youngest HBN collaborator and SCAI coordinator, Jaydeep Mandal, the entire logistics of Shodh Yatra fell in place through a very close network of volunteers of DRCSC having many initiatives in the region; Basudha- an NGO having a collection of 540 traditional rice varieties, Social Upliftment Trust, a grassroots organisation and volunteers¹ of SCAI. There were professors from China, students from European universities and journalists from Switzerland besides farmers, volunteers, students and professionals from all over the country walking together from three places in Purulia and Jharkhand. They finally met at Bhagabandh to walk together to conclude the physical yatra at Basudha. But then the inner journey may have continued further for many of them. Some of them were deeply impressed by the standards of sanitation among Santhal tribals in Purulia; their aesthetics and willingness to share knowledge. Gujarati farmers could not resist expressing a feeling that many farm implements from Saurashtra could be used there; similarly, the lack of water conservation efforts by state and civil society groups (except service centre) also appeared a bit strange to the Yatri.

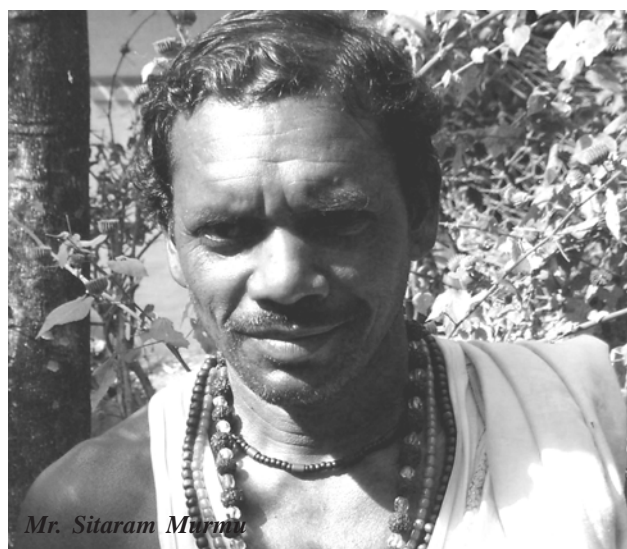
The contradictions in developmental processes were obvious; naxalites were active in some of the regions; police guarded the way in the night when we passed through certain villages; but will poverty and slow rate of economic development not legitimize the growth of extremist movement? Pressing concern was as to how do we engage with angry and other youth and generate more entrepreneurial development options for them? Fellow Yatri sang Tagore, Nazrul and other folk songs bringing out the living cultural diversity and richness so poignantly.



A week long walk, every summer and winter in different parts of the country for more than a decade to recognise, respect and reward the grassroots innovators and traditional knowledge holders, creative children and centenarians has taught us a great deal about genius at grassroots. Walking in Purulia and Bankura, and Patamda, drought prone regions of West Bengal and Jharkhand was reminder of the cultural richness of a semi-arid landscape. With single crop of paddy in most parts of Purulia, fields after fields showed the standing dried stubble of paddy. Animals could graze anywhere but would not find much greens. Water in the ponds would dry up in the next two to three months. Cycle of migration would begin if not begun already. For a region that has remained deprived of many basic amenities, occurrence of extremists' violence is not unexpected. But why would people protest if the welfare arm of the state, or opportunities from markets or civil society could extend to the people in need? Some succour was provided by a few NGOs involved in organisation of the Shodh Yatra. But a great deal remained to be done.

The life of Santhal tribals was a lesson in simplicity, frugality but also submission to the situation of scarcity of basic needs that existed. Ayodhya hills are quite rich in biodiversity and forests. But, should that be the reason for so much poverty to exist? In most houses, one would only notice dried fallen or chopped wood for fuel purposes. More than the food, the fuel seemed scarce. And that meant long hours for women. The knowledge for survival was so abundant and yet valued so little, not only by outsiders but even many of the local people. Why else would something known and effective in one village be not known to other people suffering from the same problem just two kilometers away.

A herbal healer Gohiram Soren, Celingdha disclosed his formulation for asthma where he uses the combination of four plants viz. 'Kosum' (*Schleichera oleosa*), 'Kumbir' (*Careya arborea*), 'Bahera' (*Terminalia bellirica*) and 'chatni' (*Alstonia scholaris*). We called up our colleagues at NIF, Ahmedabad to find the available literature on these plants. After the scrutiny of scientific literature, it was found that out of the four plants, two were reported for asthma, the third was reported for cough and cold, and the fourth one was reported for pneumonia, which proves the credibility of the folk claim made by Soren if such proof was needed. Another herbal healer Sitaram Murmu who has a herbal garden consisting of nearly 100 species in it, disclosed the formulation for malaria, which consists of combination of well known and less known plants in classical literature. Many other distinctive practices for treating several diseases like jaundice, typhoid, and asthma were also documented.



The informed consent of the healers was obtained on video and paper wherever possible so that further research could be started. Some of the healers would also be supported to streng-then their local phar-macy.

As we walked through the forests and talked to the local communities, it became more and more apparent that even the tribal societies were becoming 'vertical' rather than maintaining their 'horizontal' nature. State interventions, weak as they are, have created hopes of vertical structures coming to rescue for the local communities without contributing to the strengthening of local structures. This is a challenge not just in West Bengal but all over. The knowledge network at local level has to be strengthened so that we do not find so much gap at such a short distance.

In most of the schools we visited, before organising an idea competition, we played a small game. We asked everybody as to what did they do with the match stick after lighting a candle or fire. Everybody said that they threw it away. Our next question was, imagine how much of wood was being wasted when millions of people around



the world threw such sticks away. Everybody realised the point. At this stage, we asked them to redesign the stick so that it can last longer. Then followed very interesting ideas almost everywhere in the same vein. One could put the combustible substance on both ends of the stick or make the stick longer. Stick could also be reduced to one third size and popped out by pressing the box having a hole and then picked with a holder. The extinguished stick can then be dipped in a small bottle with quick dry combustible substance so that one could dip it and ignite as long as possible. The point was quickly made that to invent or innovate one did not always need lot of material resources, a big workshop or too much of education. Anybody, by changing the context of the problem, could discover new ways of solving it. In some places, we followed up this exercise with another one. We asked everybody to find different uses of the extinguished stick. The ideas that emerged quickly ranged from making a toothpick, painting stick, clearing nails to putting vermilion mark on the forehead. More than forty such uses were mentioned. Being innovative was easy, and it did not require a special skill. The new technique was brought out in few minutes. After that the students were challenged to come out with new ideas and in many places, they did think of absolutely original ideas.

In Basudha, Binodbaati we organised a two-phased competition for new ideas on the last day. In first one, we called two boys, one from the village and another from Kolkata and asked them same questions about the uses of match stick. And then opened it to everybody. The little boy from the village scored much higher than the other boy from Kolkata. In the second round, everybody was asked to come out with an idea of a new product. One of them, Bapi Roy came out with a fascinating idea of a four sided television. In most of the meetings in rural areas, people prefer to sit in a circle so that they can look at each other and at the same time, enjoy a fire in the winter or a folk theatre performance. The multimedia database that we were showing required people to sit behind each other and face other person's back. The suggestion of the four-sided television would make it possible for people to sit in a circle and watch the programme and also look at each other. On further investigation, we found that no such product had been developed by anybody so far.

On the way from Patamda in Jharkhand, another student Sanjay Karmakar thought about a fishing rod with a siren and a light. The idea was that many times while waiting for the fish to be trapped, the mind gets diverted and one misses the fish. Alarm and the light will be switched on the moment the bait is bitten by the fish. Akash Kumar from Patamda gave an idea to develop a 'ludo' for the

blind and illiterate it on a poster. All along the Shodh Yatra route, we gave prizes to the students who came out with such very creative ideas.

All the Shodh Yatris who viewed the exercise realised that when children could be so creative and discover their own potential so easily, why could not they, as adults, also innovate? Discussion on this issue kept them animated in the whole journey and some of them even started thinking of new ideas.

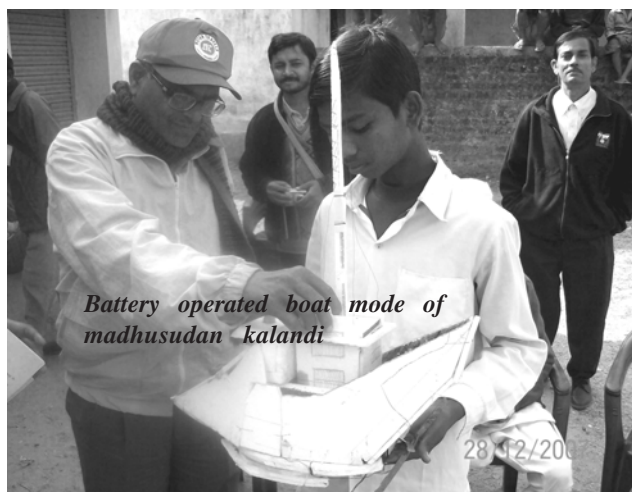
While passing through Kashipur crossroads, we had a roadside meeting in the evening. Initially, the response was lukewarm. We took out the laptop and showed the videos of some of the innovations. The amphibious cycle developed by Mohd. Saidullah of Bihar, which worked on road as well as in water, was always an instantaneous hit with the viewers. So were many other videos like washing cum exercising machine of Remya Jose, tree climbing device of Appachan and Mushtaq Dhanjibhai, a polio affected person for modifying a three wheel scooter which he could drive, Kanakdas for a cycle, which converted the shocks generated by bumps on the road into propulsion through gears linked to the rear wheel, etc., were also appreciated. The bystanders then understood the point. One of them told us about a workshop mechanic who made paddy threshers and we went there to see his designs. Another one mentioned about a young boy Raju who had developed an FM station, which broadcasts music at no cost to anyone. We could not meet him on that day but later we managed to contact him. Though his station was illegal, he was performing a great community service. He did not broadcast any advertisements. He had a phone-in-service in which anybody could request for a song or announce a spiritual



or social event. He had such a great understanding of the sequence and the location of about 2500 songs on different CDs and cassettes that he could immediately locate and play the desired song. He also publicised

government's programmes for polio vaccine, education, and other activities. He had developed a transmitter with 25 km range in just Rs. 5000 as against commercial transmitter with about 70 km range costing Rs. 3,00,000. The problem was that public policy did not favour a low cost innovation, which could create tremendous impact on local economies and socio-cultural conditions. New performers could become popular and thus might get livelihood opportunities by being invited to various functions and local administration could monitor the proper use of such transmitters.

Madsudhan Kalandi had made 'Chaudal', a battery operated boat model in Mekhada village Kashipur. Nepal Pramanik had such an extraordinary skill in making clay parts that he could make them shine through a clay polish. There



Battery operated boat mode of madsudhan kalandi

was a particular kind of soil, which was used for polishing. Sushanto Saihis had used wooden triangular frame in his cycle instead of steel frame. Surayakanta Murmu had made a simple torch light by joining old cells without too much of casing and other attachments.

While passing through the villages, we honoured many herbal leaders and senior citizens above 90 years or 100 years. Several recipe competitions were organised through

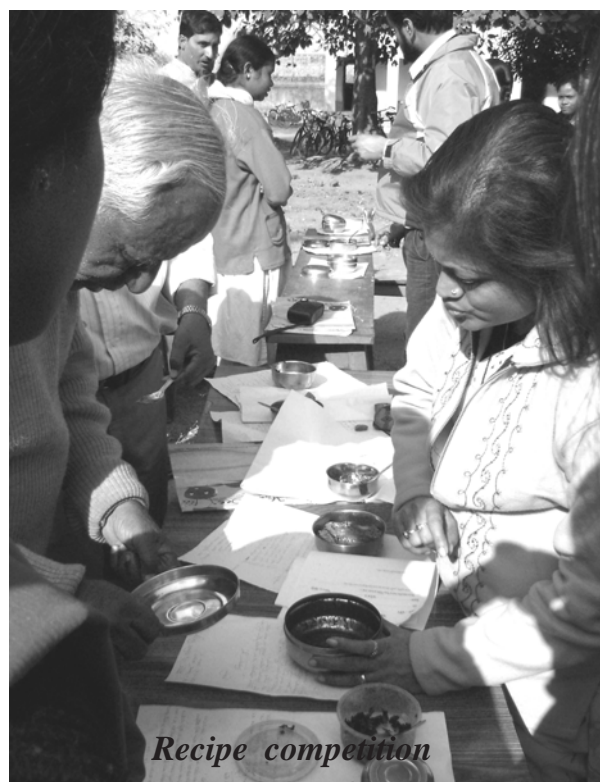


Mohit Majhi, a centenarian being honoured

which we learnt about the creative uses of either uncultivated plants or less obvious parts of plants or different processes of using existing materials. The notion that the food of the rich is quite poor and that of the poor often is rich, at least nutritionally, came out forcefully in several recipe competitions. Similarly biodiversity competitions were organised among the school children all along the Shodh Yatra route to assess their knowledge on the locally available herbal resources. It was a delight to notice rich awareness of the students about the uses of several plants and also to know that transfer of this knowledge was actually taking place from the older generation to the younger. The students with outstanding entries were rewarded with prizes.

Weed Control in Paddy by using the mulch of pigeonpea leaves:

This was a common practice among a small community at Ayodhya hills. They used pigeon pea leaves as mulch before transplanting paddy. When we searched the



Recipe competition

literature databases in the evening we did not come across any report of this kind. In Cassava, the leaves had been used but there was no such widespread practice anywhere in the world. This could, after validation, become a very important technology for weed control and soil fertility management. For poor people who can not afford chemicals and others who did not want to use chemicals, this could provide a sustainable alternative. It is a different matter although that the Agriculture Department may have no incentive to diffuse such non-chemical, non-monetary

technology, which helped people become self-reliant. Farmer researchers at Basudha have been using pigeonpea leaves for eight years to control "mutha" (*Cyperus rotundus*) grass, a difficult weed of paddy field.

Creativity in scarcity:

While passing through a village Loahardih, we came across extraordinary designs on the mud walls of the huts. The Santhal tribal people did not have much material resources inside the hut but maintained a very high degree of cleanliness outside. The art work on the walls by Sumita Mahato, Sonali, Sabitri and Rebati Mahato were outstanding contributions. Why wouldn't they be recognised as artists? How do we create platform for such grassroots artists to share the richness of art and culture in everyday life? Couldn't some of them become designers of walls and wall murals in the cities and neighbouring villages? Why such skilful artists should be considered only unskilled labourers while conceiving various poverty alleviation and employment programme? How could India become a knowledge society without learning to value the knowledge and culture of such artists? In an earlier shodh yatra in western Uttar Pradesh, we had come across an outstanding painting on a heap of dung cakes. Wherever creative women found a space they could call their own, they gave vent to their creative impulses.

Creating music out of leaves:

Phatik Bawri was an outstanding performer who could create very deep classical tones in the music performed



Phatik Bawri

by using just any leaf. He demonstrated his talent in Jorda village. All the shodh yatri were spellbound listening to his extraordinary music.

Samar Kumar Dutta in Chakaltor village could tell the day of the week for any date hundreds of years before or after the date. He seemed to have a system of calculation by which he could quickly find out which day of the week, a particular date would be.

A herbal skin cream:

While having roadside meeting in the small town of Bangla Indapur, we were talking about innovations and invoking bystanders to help us locate somebody who has developed



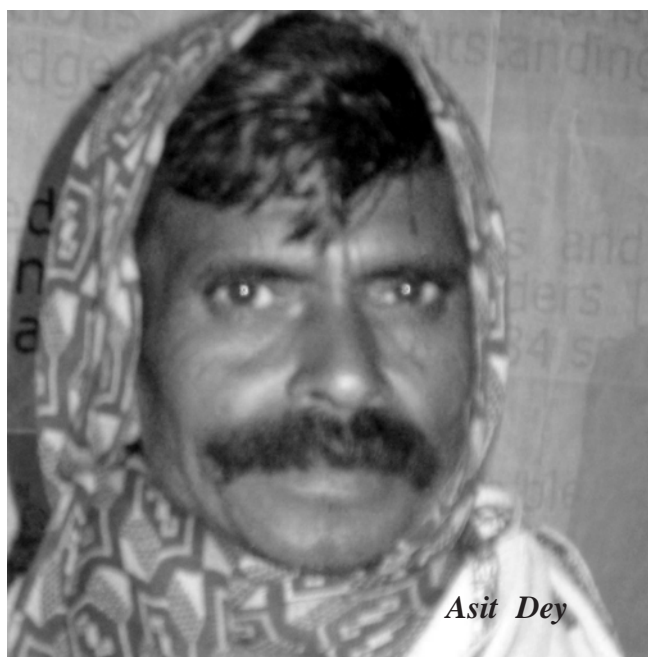
Preeti

a new solution to any local problem. For more than half an hour, we could not find any innovator though there were a few herbal healers whom we honoured. Then came a little girl, Preeti Choudhary who brought in her bag, a skin cream made by her mother. They had heard our appeal on the public address system. This was a very remarkable moment. The innovation by Mrs. Rina Choudhary, mother of Preeti, could be seen by everybody through the samples Preeti brought. She claimed that this was very good for skin and had a good fragrance too.

Prashant Bhui from Aailtya village in Bakura district had designed a cycle-based mobile charger. Deeplai Pal of Danga village shared the idea of pumping water employing a joy ride used by children. In the same village, Bappa Ghorai gave an idea of generating energy from the wind thrust created by a fan.

Developing new paddy variety: "Asit Kalma"

A young farmer, Asit Dey went to see his relatives around 17 years ago. While coming back, he saw some plants which looked very different. He decided to collect some seeds and then grew them separately. Every year, he selected the plants which were disease free, did not have much attack of the pests and yielded well. After a few years, he developed a variety, which he gave to some of his friends and neighbours for evaluation. In the last five years, the variety has covered almost all the fields



Asit Dey

suitable for the purpose in the village. Farmers called that variety as ‘Asit Kalma’. The traders found the grains very similar to ‘Swarna’ variety although farmers grew it without much fertiliser and pesticide. In fact, many farmers grew it completely organically. They got about eighteen quintals per hectare yield, which was comparable to the best local variety but without any additional cost of purchased inputs. The traders mixed the grains of ‘Asit Kalma’ with that of ‘Swarna’. Most of the farmers growing this variety had small holdings. They could not

afford to sell it with a separate name. Even if one pooled the production of this variety by all the farmers of the village, it would not fill even half of the truck. Thus, the variety had diffused but the consumers and the market did not seem to know about it. When asked about the experience, Asit said, “I have seen what Basudha had done. They are maintaining more than 500 varieties, I have developed only one. I am extremely happy that other farmers have liked it so much. I don’t expect anything in return.”

Innovative Cycle Pedal Paddy Thrasher : Dharnidhar Mahato, village Balakdih

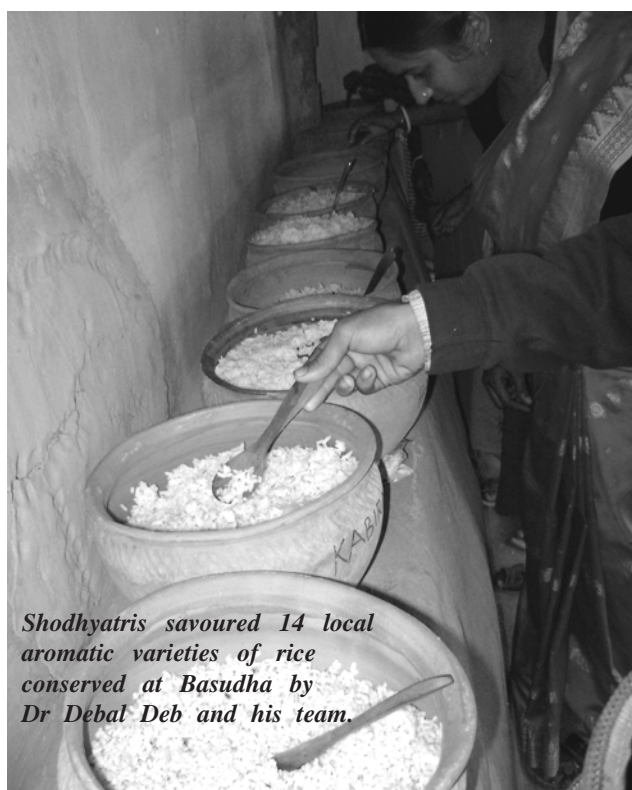
Dharnidhar Mahato, Balakdih, had developed a Rs 500 paddy thrasher with one-fifth the cost and twice the output (1000-1200 kg paddy thrashed per person per day) of a regular thrasher. He was honoured in a school



during a night meeting. He was overwhelmed by the recognition and felt very happy that his efforts were appreciated publicly. When NIF offered to support three more thrashers so that he could lend them to neighbours to test and then may be buy, he was overjoyed. He said, “I did not realize it was such an extraordinary thing. I merely tried to solve my own problem.” He also added, “*Banai chhi theeki, kintu aami etaar naam ekhono aviskar korte pari nahi*” (I have invented the machine but I have not been able to give any name or invent any name for this innovation yet). Next day, we sent the money for making three more thrashers to him through a local teacher.

Trapping Fish in Drying Pond: Yudhistir Kalandi, village Balakdih

By March-end, most ponds in Purulia district start getting dry. Some people are aware that even when there is no more water on the surface, there could be some water in the burrows in the bed or the sides of the ponds where some fish find shelter. Yudhistir Kalandi of Balakdih had found some plants (probably, *Blumea lacera* (Burm.f.)



Shodhyatris savoured 14 local aromatic varieties of rice conserved at Basudha by Dr Debal Deb and his team.

DC.), which when crushed and inserted into the burrows, made the fish come out. Some of these plants affected the eyes of the fish adversely. Once the fish came out, people could catch them and use them. In a scarce economy, one would expect no food source to be left untapped.

Pumpkin-Bottlegourd Vine Fusion (a kind of air layering but not exactly): Bijay Pramanik, village Kenda

The road side meeting outside of Kenda village was one of the most memorable experiences. We stopped on the way and asked the people standing around to share any



experience of innovation by them or known to them. But nobody would tell us any thing. Nothing new had happened was the common refrain. No matter how many examples we gave, nothing seemed to jostle their recollections. And then suddenly, before we were about to leave, we saw a sparkle in the eyes of one of the person listening to us so long quietly. He was Bijay Pramanik. Bijay said, “*Kumda gach aar lau gach - duto eksathe lagiye tader je doga beroy segulo eksathe jurhe diyechhi. Tader theke bhalo phal hoy.*” (I planted a bottle gourd and a pumpkin sapling closely and then fused them at one place and after that both plants have yielded more fruits).

He realized that pumpkin flowered a month earlier than the gourd. So when pumpkin needed more nutrients, it took from the gourd vine and vice versa.

We asked if the people standing there knew about Dharnidhar Mahato’s innovation, but they replied that they did not know. We teased them: they knew every gossip about film stars, then why did not the news of innovation reach them? One of them said, nobody reports such news. Bijay himself was very reticent about his innovation, when asked, how did he stumble upon this

idea, he said, “I have been doing experiments in my field. Sequential flowering and fruiting of both the plants gave me this idea. I know that these crops are related in some way.”

Now that he is encouraged, he agreed to keep us informed of more of his experiments. We also told him that we would share with him the feedback of replicated trial of this very interesting practice. We had not heard about such a practice earlier or found it in the literature.

Par-Boiled Paddy Distributor: Ranjit Ghorai, village Jagdalla

Ranjit of Jagdalla village had developed a simple but very effective parboiled paddy spreading machine. It could spread about 800 kg parboiled paddy in five minutes. Generally this task is done manually using a tray. The parboiled paddy is very hot, and labourers get hurt sometimes, and get blisters on their fingers. He wanted to develop a solution for this. He was scouted by a volunteer, Jagataram Ghosh of Panchad village, who is also an innovator.



Ranjit said, “*Eta seddho dhan melar janyo vyavahar karte anek taratari hoy, aar suvidha hoy.*” (I have made this machine for spreading boiled rice and the work becomes very easy and fast). “*Erakam jinisher aamar nijer darkar chhilo, tai nijer janya eta baniye chhi*”, (I made it for my own use. I needed something like this). Ranjit describes the other uses of the machine, “*Khete gobar malar janya vyavhar kara hoy, tar janyo anyo labar darkar hoy na*”. (It is also used for spreading cow dung compost in the farm field, and there is no need of hiring any labour for this purpose).

In this case also, the problem is very pervasive; the solution is a trolley and a sluice gate kind of opening at

the bottom where the size of the opening can be adjusted. While carrying the par-boiled rice to his another site meant for drying, he keeps the opening closed. When asked how he thought of it, he smiled and said, “Is not this problem quite serious or bothersome? I was not satisfied with the conventional practice so I asked a blacksmith to help me and got this fabricated.” Since the shape was like inverted pyramid, the flow of grains was aided by gravity.

Next day, in the next village, we asked the same question, whether the people knew about it and we got the same answer: no, they did not.

Single Finger Pen : Arindam Chattopadhyay, village Bankura

In the same village, Bankura, we met another innovator, Arindam Chattopadhyay, who heard about the National Innovation Foundation (NIF) through a newspaper advertisement last year and sent his entry and a sample of the *single finger pen*. He came to see us and we decided to support him to fabricate 500 such pens to test the market. In case the market accepted it, we could scale it up hundred or even thousand times. The idea was very simple. A small refill-based pen is attached to a ring worn on a single finger. It could be useful to physically challenged people who did not have thumb. It could also be useful for the normal people for ticking a sheet or just writing. Such a pen was not available in the market.

Local people in the village did not even know about his innovation. So much indifference to contemporary creativity! Even the innovator did not talk about it himself.

Herbal Healer (a kind of village pharmacy): Govind Chand Mahato, village Peera

Govind Chand Mahato acquired the herbal healing skills from his grandfather and has treated a large number of



patients so far. He dispenses medicines for fever, pain, jaundice, typhoid, paralysis, etc. He uses plants not only from the local region but also from other places. Mahato maintains a register that has records of prescriptions written by his grandfather.

When we asked about the money, if any, given by the patients, he replied, “*Taka kari amar ki darkar. Rogira kichhu dile oi diye oshudher jinish gulo kini.*” (What shall I do with the money; the money given by patients is used for purchasing the herbal ingredients).

When we asked him about the register he had, he mentioned, “*Aamar dadu likhechen, dadur sange aami bone giye giye jari-buti gulo chinte shikhechi, sei janya amio e-guno kaje lagate pari.*” (This register was written by my grandfather. I used to explore the forest with him and learned to identify plants and their uses. That’s how I also became a healer).

He has a very large collection of herbs collected from the local forest as well as from outside to dispense to various needy people, regardless of whether they were able to pay him or not. Of the many formulations, some of those recorded by the *shodhyatris* were quite uncommon and seemed to merit further research. He initially claimed that his wife did not contribute much in this but later admitted that she indeed helped him in grinding and powdering the herbs. At this stage, we asked whether a grinder, pounder and other such devices would help him provide those proven medicines to patients for which sufficient evidence existed even in the formal research databases. His prior informed consent (PIC) was taken to enable further research that SRISTI and NIF might like to pursue on some of his practices. As a follow up activity the materials required by him were provided by NIF.

Arun Kumar Ram, the Man Behind the Tiger Mask

Arun Kumar Ram works with an NGO, Uthnau, to help tribal farmers grow organic food. A keen student of nature, he observed many years ago that the tiger seldom attacked from the front. He looked at several other prey–predator relationships and got further confirmation. He



designed a mask of a human face to be worn on the back of the head and not the front, in order to confuse the tiger and prevent it from attacking from the back. The Forest Department liked the innovation and replicated it on a large



scale in the Sunderbans. They reportedly never gave credit to Arun Kumar Ram, but the fact remains that attack by tiger came down drastically. However, Dr Debal Deb, founder of Basudha, Bankura, has got him recognition as an innovator through publications in India and abroad. This was an idea that diffused widely but the innovator has remained relatively unknown

Schools, Crafts and Environment

Barring a few school buildings that were in good condition, in many places in Purulia, the school windows did not have glass panes. There were hardly any educational charts hanging on the wall. Unlike our experience in Maharashtra, we did not find names of the local achievers on the school walls. Similarly, unlike



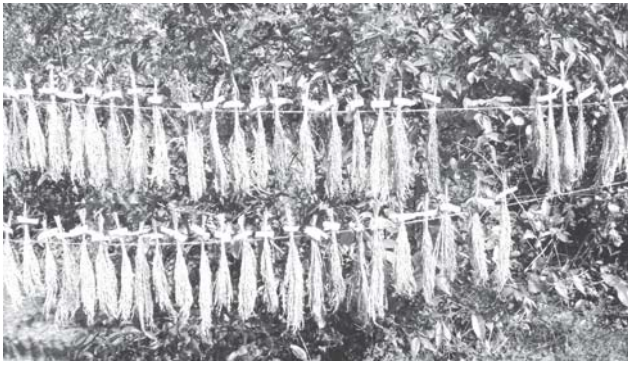
schools in the Kashmir valley and even in nearby Jharkhand where every institution displayed inspiring quotations and public service messages. The schools in the Bankura and Purulia district of West Bengal showed a total lack of these.

In many villages we came across trees that were over 100 years old for which we tried to entrust the responsibility for conservation to local youths or



community leaders. Sacred groves were intact in only a few villages. In most places, they had been damaged or fragmented.

The economic conditions seemed quite bad and not many means of alternative livelihood were evident. Rural industrialization had not picked up and possibilities of absorbing labour within agriculture were highly limited. Water conservation was an imperative but nothing much had been done except by a few NGOs, which had conducted very innovative experiments. Development Research Communication and Service Centre (DRCSC), also known as Service Centre, had persuaded owners of some of the large ponds to hand these over to a group of poor farmers. These farmers were given a variety of vegetable seeds and information about sustainable agricultural practices and encouraged to grow small plots of vegetable on the banks of the ponds. The benefits were shared between the landlord as well as the poor farmers leading to better utilization of scarce water. They had also performed some experiments on water harvesting although the idea had not yet caught up among the villagers. Basudha has developed an extraordinary collection of over **500 local varieties** of paddy primarily from different parts of West Bengal, with some from other regions of the country as well. It has conserved them by growing them in small plots. The very process of conservation had inspired many farmers to make their own selections. Some of the locally developed varieties



such as ‘*Asit Kolma*’, developed by Asit De, yielded as much as high yielding varieties without supplemental nutrients. These varieties have never been given a chance by formal system to express their potential under varying conditions.

We also met many brass metal workers, weavers who wove the entire fishing nets with the help of a simple rod, and many craftsmen who made idols and toys of



bell metal. A few of them had been given opportunities to attend exhibitions.

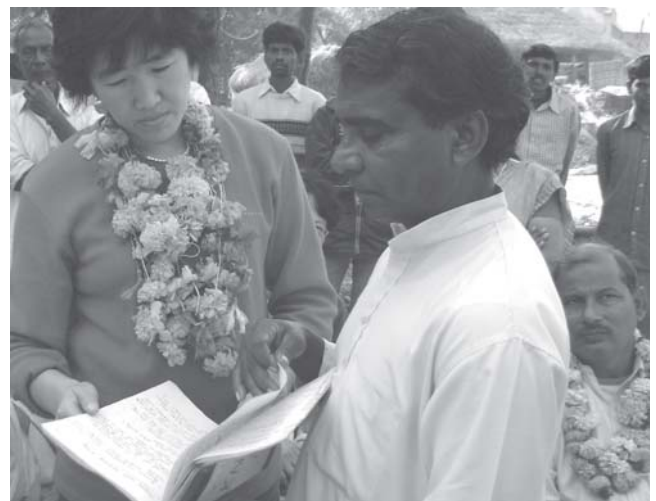
There was no sustained effort to provide domestic and international market access to these artisans. Similarly, there were many *baul* singers who had a tremendous capacity to combine folk with classical music and create intriguing allegories. Most of them got pittance if at all for their extraordinary cultural skills. There is no popular portal as yet at which their music and other crafts could be showcased for creating economic opportunities for such culturally rich people. [Editor’s note: students of SVNIT, Surat are trying to develop a portal for dissemination of such folk culture. The idea is to encourage listeners to listen free for few seconds and then pay for downloading. The revenue is expected to go to the folk singers whose music or design is downloaded].

The *Shodhyatra* was an extremely rejuvenating experience. The warmth of the local communities was overwhelming and their ability to live with few resources was impressive. It was a very instructive experience for

Professors Zhang Liyan and Biyan, co-*shodhyatris* from the Tianjin University of Finance and Economics (TUFE), Tianjin in China. As mentioned elsewhere (CHIN III), China is replicating Honey Bee Network experience very rapidly.

Keeping Knowledge Systems Active: Village Knowledge Register

There is no doubt that many children we met had high ambitions. However, given the economic decline, the region would need far more reconstruction to sustain their hopes. Among the *shodhyatris* were some farmers from Gujarat, who could immediately see the potential for upgrading farm machinery as well as livestock. Given the rich soils and sufficient moisture, growing horticultural crops was another possibility. In several schools, the idea of a Village Knowledge Register (VKR) was discussed in the context of a 200 year long project. The functional knowledge of the previous 100 years had to be catalogued, sifted, organized and valorized for the next 100 years. Otherwise, the conservation of resources would not take place. To the surprise of the *shodhyatris*, the headman of the village Gedawala presented the Village Knowledge Register of his village before the *yatris*, who found that it contained documented



information of more than 100 herbal practices related to human and veterinary health and agriculture. The efforts of the villagers in making the register were sincerely applauded by the *yatris* and it was earnestly wished that others would also take a cue from them.

The unrest in several parts of the region because of continued neglect had given rise to the spread of Maoist philosophy. The entrepreneurial path is not available and the conventional state interventions were limited in their effectiveness. A radical departure in developmental approach is urgently needed. Perhaps this *Shodhyatra* will trigger the search for it.