



Samvaad Patrika

Internal Newsletter for Samvaad 2016

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November 16, 2016

Day #2: A perfect example of infotainment

The second day of Samvaad 2016 was a blend of information and entertainment. The day began at Tribal Culture Centre (TCC), Sonari, with several interactions between ethno-botanists, public health experts and traditional healers from across the country. Tribal representatives from various parts of the country raised their concerns during the discussion on Tribal perspective on Development, which was moderated by **Mr Biren Bhuta, Chief, Corporate Social Responsibility, Tata Steel**. The day ended on a light yet colourful note with tribes from Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Tripura, Manipur and Rajasthan performing their respective folkdances.

During the morning sessions, several issues ranging from land acquisition problems to the receding of tribal language were raised by tribal representatives. With a change in approach towards the format of the interactions, the Tribal Conclave, this year, promises to allow free flowing thoughts of the participants rather than a compartmentalised system of speech given by the delegates only. Apart from the tribal representatives, professionals were also present to share their expertise on the topics being discussed. **Aibar Swer, Meghalaya Basin Development Authority** raised concern saying,



"Tribes themselves need to formulate plans for their development. How can others chart out plans for our development?" **Dr. K R Antony, Former Director of the State Health Resource Centre, Raipur**, highlighted the importance of training of illiterate village women in addressing health issues in grassroots and spoke about the role of Mitanni (ASHA workers in Chhattisgarh) in bringing down infant and maternal mortality in Chhattisgarh. He cited examples of not well educated individuals, who with the help of training and supportive supervision are handling equipment like ECG and Ultrasound machine. Simultaneously, interactions happened between the health experts and traditional healers on various diseases. A total of 250 traditional healers have been invited to Samvaad 2016.

During one of the many group discussions of tribal healers and health experts, **Mr Gadadhar Behera** from Odisha said the roots of 'Samraj' and 'Bhansraj' plants are useful in treating stomach ache and chest pain. The discussions also witnessed the presence of **Dr. Palpu, Dr. Sudarshan and Mr. Simon Oraon**, all eminent names in the field of Tribal Health System.

After witnessing the exchange of knowledge between the tribesmen and health experts, the audience then moved towards Ganesh Puja Maidan where the cultural performances of tribes took place. With the conclusion of a gala evening, day two of Samvaad 2016 wrapped up

Highlights of the Day

- ★ Tribal representative at the panel discussion on Tribal Perspective on Development raised issues related to health education, forest rights, human relation with nature, receding of tribal language, forcefully being asked to convert to another religion, etc.
- ★ Health experts gave suggestions to traditional healers on the methods by which they can document their traditional medical practices, which later can be scientifically tested
- ★ The audience witnessed sparkling cultural performances by tribes such as the Varli (Maharashtra), Maram (Manipur), Bette Kuruba (Karnataka), Bhumij & Ho (Jharkhand), Tripuri (Tripura) and Sahariya (Rajasthan)

Chiefspeak'



Mr Biren Bhuta, Chief, Corporate Social Responsibility

Johar!

The theme for Samvaad'16 is '**Tribal Health Systems**'. When our teams go to remote, rural, naxalite-affected regions, we find that there is no access to healthcare facilities for the inhabitants. Today, it has become very difficult to get and retain doctors for rural areas.

Our objective is to find an alternative access to qualified healthcare for people living in these areas. The concept of Swasthya Swaraj or 'my health needs in my own hands' is one possible alternative. There are traditional healers in every community who have the art of healing diseases with herbal medicines. This art has been validated in a rudimentary manner over generations.

Our agenda is to get them their 'due recognition' and accreditation. This will also encourage the next generation to get into the field of tribal healthcare and thus generate livelihoods and preserve the wisdom ingrained in the tribal communities. Another agenda behind focusing on tribal health is to preserve the habitat of the tribal communities. Getting recognition will promote the tribal healers to plant more herbs which will result in afforestation,

which, in turn, will help preserve and protect the identity of the tribes as their existence is entirely linked to forests and the natural habitats. As Tata Steel, we also want to get into working with healers, to promote tribal medicine, to try to get it scientifically validated.

This year, we have gathered- 250 traditional tribal healers from across 20 states. They have brought herbal medicines and will be discussing about the methods of curing diseases. Today, as well as in the coming few days, we would get to see an exchange of information between them and practitioners of modern medicine. There are doctors, health experts, people working in public health sector and ethno botanists who have come from across India to take part in this discussion.

Did You Know ?

- ★ The Munda tribe of Jharkhand is popular for the method by which they derive their surnames. The names are derived from the legends of the past and thus each Munda name has a tale to its inception!
- ★ The Khasi tribe from Meghalaya has built living roots bridges in Cherrapunji. It has used the roots of Ficus elastic, a tree strong enough to be able to support the weight of 50 people at a time. The Khasi community saw this and now whenever they need to cross rivers, they simply grow their bridges!
- ★ Ank-rel, a leaf found in the forests of Manipur, can prevent the spread of poison in the body because of a snake bite. Boiled and applied on the bite, it has the potential to save a life

Click Corner



Dr H Sudarshan



Urmila Ekka felicitating Dr KR Antony



Tripuri tribe of tripura



Kuki tribe of Nagaland



Inauguration of Health panel discussion



Kondareddi of Andhra Pradesh



selected drawings from the sit and draw competition

Lasting Impressions



Padmashri Dr H Sudarshan,
Founder, Karuna Trust

"Samvaad is a great platform for traditional healers and health experts to get together and share their expertise on tribal health system. However, there needs to be a concrete impact of the discussions that are taking place, maybe, in the form of presenting the solutions to the issues raised to the Government of India. I hope for my rich experience of Samvaad 2016 to translate into a change. From the discussions that I was part of, I do see hope and confidence in the participants to bring about a change and integrate tribal health to the popular medicine system so that it is accessible to each one of us.



Dr. Avula Laxmaiah, Sr. Depty Director,
Indian Council of Medical Research

"The best part about Samvaad 2016 is the informal discussions taking place between traditional healers and health experts. We as health experts are getting an opportunity to understand the beliefs and logic applied in while preparing traditional medicine. We, at length, discussed about the cures of blood related diseases with traditional healers and interesting ideas were generated. I have observed that the claims made by traditional healers about herbal medicines are not scientifically validated. Hence, I recommend the healers to document cases, which have proved the effect of traditional medicine. Once documented, the particular herb or root can be tested and the cure can be scientifically validated. Unless it is not tested, it cannot be advocated or marketed."



Dr. Dileep Mavlankar, Director,
Indian Institute of Public Health

"This is my first visit to Jamshedpur. I wanted to understand the functioning of a CSR department and also learn more about the Tribal Health System. This initiative of Tata Steel to bring together traditional healers who are unknown to the general public is highly commendable. I hope that through such initiatives, the young generation would be motivated to work further in the field of traditional medicine. We need to protect and promote the traditions, culture and knowledge of the tribal community as it is receding. I also recommend healers to document their knowledge using audio visual medium for validation, which later can be referred by the future generation.

Samvaad Trending

Day-2 - #Samvaad4Tribes

- * 1,592 Twitter Mentions across the campaign
- * 300 Retweets
- * 17+ Million Impressions
- * 117 Replies

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For further information please visit <http://www.tatasteelindia.com/events/samvaad/samvaad-2016.html>