

**Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adibasi Trust**  
(Registration under Trust Registration Act 1982)  
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### **Christmas and New Year Greetings**

Dear Friends,

We hope this letter finds you in good health and in peace. Every year during Christmas we take the opportunity to thank you for accompanying us on our journey towards a sustainable development of our village communities. And each time we give you a brief description of our activities during the past year.

I think our greatest achievement is that we are able to continue, year after year, our regular programmes in our three centres: Rolf Schoembs Vidyashram (RSV, a Non-formal Santal School), Bishnubati and Ghosaldanga, without a single break. This is due to the dedicated and disciplined efforts of our senior and junior staff. Sona Murmu is in charge of Ghosaldanga activities as well as the two hostels and the bio-orchard at RSV. Sanyasi Lohar runs our school at RSV with its various extra-curricular activities. Boro Baski is in charge of the Museum of Santal Culture and, with Ramjit Mardi, looks after the activities in Bishnubati. Snehadri Chakraborty who lives in Santiniketan, looks after the complicated processes of managing our finances as well as our construction and repair work. They provide the backbone of our work and only due to them other, special events are possible. We should also include our Junior Leaders, led by Ramjit Mardi, many of who are teachers in our centres, who have begun to accept and execute many programmes effectively. They, for example, are in charge of our various Santal festivals and other special events. Let us name only Baha Parab (Santal Spring Festival), Teachers' Day at Ghosaldanga, the annual educational tour (this year to Shimla), Children's Day at RSV, Children's Fair in April at Bishnubati as well as sports tournaments.

The Evening Coaching Centres at Ghosaldanga, Bishnubati and at the three adopted villages Bautijol, Panchabanpur and Bandlodanga have continued well throughout the year, monitored by Uttam Baski of Bishnubati. Mention must be made of our bio-orchard at RSV which Montosh Das has developed and continues to serve, day after day, the many trees, vegetables and flowers growing at the bio-orchard of RSV.

Let us now mention several special programmes and events. This year, too, the Bose Institute of Kolkata, one of the premier research institutes of the country, collaborated with us on income generation programmes in eleven different villages through their Bio-Technology project (open especially to tribal villages). The project aims at helping individual families to get an extra income through skills which are traditional in our villages, like fishery, goat-keeping, mushroom cultivation, bee-keeping, and vermicompost. The Bose Institute appreciates the active leadership

of Mr Pintu Ghosh, of Bishnubati, who is in charge of the projects in all these villages. Mr. Hirak Ghosh, the Chairman, and Prof. Samir Ranjan Sikdar, the Coordinator of the Bose Institute Projects, continue to give us their guidance and goodwill.

After its inception in 2007, the 'Museum of Santal Culture' at Bishnubati had been somewhat inactive as a community centre. In 2011, Mr. Ludwig Pesch of the Tribal Cultural Heritage in India Foundation (Amsterdam), infused fresh life into the museum by helping us to organize workshops on several areas – like flute making, drum playing, photography and publishing and producing children's books and audio and video albums on the life of the villages captured by the children. The making of the Museum Catalogue is the final project supported by him. The development of the Museum of Santal Culture reached another level when Boro Baski returned from the Bodding Symposium 2015 at Oslo. We got connected with the prestigious 'Museum of Cultural History', Oslo, and its keeper, Prof. Oivind Fuglerud, who visited us with his colleague, the conservator Dr. Anne Habu Karin, in September-October 2017. Prof. Tone Bleie of the University of Tromso who was the co-organizer of the Symposium with Prof. Oivind also visited us on 9<sup>th</sup> December and attended our Museum Day Celebrations at Bishnubati. International connections help us to realize the importance of our humble village work more deeply.

Gokul Hansda, the President of our Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adivasi Trust, has, spread over the entire year, organized and conducted Teachers Training programmes for both the primary and the secondary level. Assisted by Sanyasi Lohar and others, Gokul has invited many resource persons from Santiniketan and even from Kolkata, to conduct regular courses for our teachers and senior students. Teachers Training will continue next year as well.

We are happy that again and again we receive young enthusiastic and capable German volunteers through our 'Friends of Ghosaldanga and Bishnubati' (Frankfurt). This year we welcomed especially Lilli Knodt and Frederick Paret (who is still with us). – We had the good fortune to have stay with us for one and half years an elderly lady from Kolkata, Mrs Upoma Ghosh. She worked especially to develop our mushroom cultivation as a healthy food supplement. She taught in the RSV school, helped and guided wherever she could and inspired us with her positive thinking and zeal. Unfortunately, she died on 6 September during a holiday trip. We conducted a moving Memorial Service in the presence of her son. – Special mention must also be made of Rishikesh Thapa, a senior student of Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, who stays in our Boys' Hostel since several months taking part actively in the life of RSV; he teaches English and organizes the sports activities of the school.

A number of individuals and institutions have visited our projects for their learning experience and exposure. To name just two: the Santal Youth Group' Johar, Dumka and the students from Bolpur High School. On 9<sup>th</sup> December, the students of class XI from Auxilium Convent School Bandel visited our project as part of their school project work on 'Rural Economy and Cottage Industry'.

However, despite these positive achievements there are failures too. Despite many years of encouragement, we could not produce women leaders in the villages. We are also searching for promising young people who can be developed into teachers and community leaders. We are only partially successful. We also hope to create finances through our own efforts in the villages which continues to be very difficult.

However, we thank all of you who have supported us morally and financially to continue our life. We especially thank the members of 'Friends of Ghosaldanga and Bishnubati' in Germany headed by Mrs. Marianne Pal Chowdhury, and the many student volunteer friends who taught us a lot by being with us and still support us from their country. Without them our work would not have been continued as it is today. We also thank our numerous friends and well-wishers in India for being in touch with us in our various activities.

We wish all of you a HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A CONTENT NEW YEAR 2018.

Boro Baski                      Sona Murmu                      Sanyasi Lohar                      Gokul Hansda  
Monotosh Das                      Snehadri S. Chakraborty                      Martin Kämpchen  
Ramjit Mardi and his team of Junior Leaders

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