1st Phase-Workshop on

Banam Making

(One of the ancient musical instruments of the Santals)

Date & Time- 18 -19 August 2018, from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm
Venue: Museum of Santal Culture, Bishnubati, Birbhum
Organized by Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adibasi Trust, Birbhum, West Bengal
Funded by Museum of Cultural History, Oslo, Norway

CONCEPT NOTE

The Banam (single-string wooden lute or fiddle) is one of the ancient musical instruments of the Santal tribe. The instrument is made of wood; the lower part is covered with cow-hide and tightened with bamboo pegs. According to its different types, shapes and sizes the Banam has different names and creates various tunes. Banam-Making is an art, and not many people among the Santals are engaged in pursuing it.

There are various stories on the origin of the Banam which are mostly related to Bongas (spirits). Typically, the Banams have human faces, animals and sometimes of abstract figures of Bonga figures carved on them. They are mostly used to accompany the songs that are related to the spirits and ancestors, like the songs in Dasai Parab (Dasai Festival) or Bhandan (Death Rites). Thus the Banam is not only a musical instrument that creates music and joy but it also has a great role in creating the ambience to connect human souls with their ancestors and spirits. The songs that go

with it the Banam help us to understand the deeper meaning of the spiritual and religious life of the community.

Despite having such an important role of Banam in the Santal cultural heritage the making and use of the Banam is declining in the community and is threatened by extinction. The old and learned villagers who normally make and play the Banams are unable to transmit their skills and knowledge to the young generations, who mostly remain busy in preparing school lessons and get little time to sit with the old people of their village and learn from them. Another reason is the young generations' attraction to the fast and loud Bollywood music.

In this background, we plan to organize a Workshop of Banam Making on the museum campus at Bishnubati. Traditional Banam makers and the young generation who have an inclination towards Banam making are invited to make the Banams in a month-long workshop. The process of Banam Making will be documented on videos as well as in photographs. To preserve and to transmit the traditional art of Banam Making and the knowledge of how to play the instrument and to create awareness about the importance of this art are the main objectives of this Workshop.

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PROGRAMME

Inaugural Session

Speech: - The Role of the Banam in the Socio-cultural life of the Santals

By Sri Debu Murmu (Giri), Sarpukurdanga, Birbhum

(Traditional Banam maker and player & Recipient of the 'Gunijon Sambardhana' by the Govt. of West Bengal)

The Banam Makers

Baidyanath Murmu, Hatoikora, Birbhum — Born in a Banam making family and a trained artist from Kala-Bhavana,

Visva-Bharati.

Barka Tudu, Mirzapur, Birbhum — Traditional Banam maker and player

Borhan Hansda, Achaipara, Birbhum — Born in a Banam making family and a trained artist from Kala-Bhavana.

Budi Baski, Bishnubati, Birbhum — Traditional Banam maker and player

Gupin Mardi, Supur, Birbhum — Traditional Banam maker and player

Sanjoy Murmu, Ramnagar, Birbhum — Traditional Banam maker and player

Lakhiram Hembrom, Ghosaldanga, Birbhum — Traditional Banam maker and player

Nunulal Marandi, Bhurkundabari, Purulia — Traditional Banam maker and player

Prabhat Bagdi, Kamarpara, Birbhum — Born and brought up in a Santal village and a trained artist from Kala-Bhavana

Sahadeb Kisku, Ramnagar, Bibhum — Traditional Banam maker and player

Saheb Ram Tudu, Bhurkundabari, Purulia — Born in a Banam making family and a trained artist from Banaras Hindu University

Sanyasi Lohar, Ashadullapur, Birbhum — Born and brought up in a Santal village and a trained artist from Kala-Bhavana

Some Murmu, Bekajol, Birbhum — Traditional Banam maker and player

Sonatan Murmu, Bekajol, Birbhum — Traditional Banam maker and player

Interested persons in the workshop may contact the following

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