

Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram
Resolution Passed in Kendriya Karyakari Mandal (KKM) Meeting

22nd September, 2016 Pindwada-Rajasthan

Resolution No. 5. Protect Traditional Faith and *Devasthan* (Places of Worship) And Develop languages and dialects of Janjati Communities.

Five characteristics have been established by the Government based on which Scheduled Tribes are identified, namely 1) Primitiveness, 2) Distinct Culture, 3) Shyness to contact with rest of the communities, 4) Geographical Isolation and 5) Economic Backwardness. Unity in diversity is specialty of the India's ancient culture. Our distinct ways of life and values have evolved by incorporating the uniqueness of various Janjati Culture. Cultural Identity of the Janjati communities has taken shape from time immemorial accumulating the experience and wisdom inherited from their ancestors. These values of Janjatis can be experienced in their day-to-day life and in their devotion towards the nature and unknown spirit beyond the nature. Their culture including festivals has also grown according to their indigenous faith and traditional wisdom. Therefore protection of faith and cultural identity of Janjatis is necessary for their proper development.

Many laws have been enacted for the development, security and protection of Janjatis. But nothing so far has been done to preserve their faith and culture.

Janjatis enjoy a community way of living. Devasthanas at village level have got a very significant importance in their lives; but no effective measures have so far been taken by the society or the Government to protect and safeguard these Devasthanas. Traditional Priests like Baiga, Pahaan, Bhumka etc have a very important role to play in religious rituals and other social activities among Janjatis. The unseen spiritual powers in the nature; which are known in different terms in different Janjati communities are pleased by priests chanting mantras for well being of the people and to keep their lives healthy and pleasant. Realizing the Supreme God in the nature and keeping devotional approach towards it, in fact, is a scientific one. Because of this approach, the equilibrium and ecological balance in the nature is maintained. People at large are depended on such priests in their day-to-day lives even today. We need to understand the scientific approach behind these rituals and not give up them terming as superstition in the name of modernity. Therefore, it is need of the hour to identify all such traditional priests; and to encourage and recognize them.

Janjati dialects and languages have got an important place in preserving their cultural values. All their acquired wisdoms could easily be imparted through the mother tongue. The Government has ignored preservation of Janjati languages and dialects, so far. As a result these are almost in the verge of extinct. Bodo in Assam and Santhal Janjatis in Jharkhand have succeeded in promoting their languages and now these are recognized under VIII Schedule of the Constitution. If each and every tribal languages are protected with a view to enrich the cultural values and the wisdom inherited by the fore-fathers, the nation will be much more glorified by the eternal cultural way of life.

Considering all the facts narrated above KKM of ABVKA demands the Government that:

Places of Worship and other traditional holy places must be protected. This should be done in consultation with local people of each and every village considering their belief as well as their necessity.

1. Considering the significance of traditional priests in the Janjati communities their services should be utilized in the best interests of the society by recognizing them; Government should identify and honor them.
2. Promote the Janjati languages-dialects with a view to preserve their traditional values of life, documentation of their folk dances, instruments, songs, tales, *Mantras* etc for the benefit of future generations and also ensure that certain provisions are made for enriching and encouraging their languages.
3. Janjatis should observe their traditional festivals with all fervor, enthusiasm and rituals. They should assure to defeat the nefarious design of Church in adulterine their festivals. Janjati persons migrated in towns and cities will have to take special note of it.

Provisions of reservation policy and other protective measures are made for Janjati communities in our Constitution so as to develop the Janjatis according to their own wisdom without losing their cultural identity and values. For that it is necessary that they keep their traditional knowledge intact and preserved. If these traditions and values are lost in the name of modernization, it will be a great loss for our coming generation. KKM, therefore, appeals to the Janjati communities to do all the needful to be vigilant towards above concerns.

They will have to do all efforts for fencing or boundary-walling of their Devasthanas, it's repairing, maintenance and beautification, protecting them from the encroachments of hostile alien faiths and anti social elements and liberate of such encroached places. Gram Sabhas and other traditional institutions will have to come forward for this task. All concerned ministries and departments like Culture & Heritage Protection, Devsthanam and the Tribal Welfare may be approached and their resources utilized for this work.

