



Hind Swaraj Study And Shanti Sena Camp

Patna 21-14 Feb 2014



For past three years we have been holding one 4-day Hind Swaraj Study camp for senior members of our group in Bihar and Jharkhand and some others selected from one-day Swaraj Samvad meetings held in different places. We have held in past three years 27 one-day and four two-day Swaraj Samvad meetings in about two dozen places, enlisting



more than 200 men and women for Hind Swaraj Study camps and Shanti Sena training; forming groups of like-minded people around at least one or two Shanti Sainiks (who have done one or more 4 day Hind Swaraj Shibirs) in 5 places in Jharkhand and 22 places in Bihar. Bihar-Jharkhand core-team has 22 senior Shanti Sainiks, Hind Swaraj Campaigners along with their groups, active in nonviolent intervention in

grassroots issues of social/communal disharmony; disputes and conflicts over land and common properties; public grievances against local administration; anti-liquor campaign; public awareness campaign and action for education among dalits, 'maha-dalits' and for education facilities for girls; voters' education and monitoring of violence during elections; and, Hind Swaraj propagation among the youth and the educated.

Swaraj Peeth organized in Patna from 21st to 24th February its 17th 4-day Hind Swaraj Study Camp ever since we initiated Hind Swaraj campaign about 15 year back under the guidance of Ven.

Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche. We have since then organized more than 70 one-day and



two-day Swaraj dialogues. The earlier phase, from about 2001 till 2009, we started as an experiment to see what appeal Hind Swaraj carries today, after a hundred year. We took up Hind Swaraj in order to conduct an experiment for exploring the nature of freedom consciousness and state of swaraj consciousness. We experienced an overwhelming response from variety of participants in these dialogues and study camps. It confirmed that the ideal of swaraj has not receded into unconscious, though a lot of layers of modern

propaganda and education have suppressed it. A complete reading of Hind Swaraj with interpretative commentary answers all the questions and doubts that trouble people's perplexed mind and for which they neither get satisfactory answers in religious discourses, nor in political education or in radical theories and prescriptions of NGOs, civil society activism and movements. In deciphering the meaning of swaraj they find the meaning of everything, all the affairs of life and all phenomena. It is an ideal for which everyone can strive equally and in striving for which the private, communitarian, and the national goals are harmonized and so do the private and corporate activity. Today these are not only in disharmony, but intrinsically contradictory with each other in a state of perpetually and exponentially growing conflict. We have formally done away with the most basic condition to be called one people, one nation. We have burdened our state heavily, beyond its capacity, with the responsibility to perform through the means of rewards and punishment, as a deterrent to our disintegration. While reading/ studying Hind Swaraj the reader awakes to the deeper bonds and the co-extensiveness of his/her identity, oneness with the other and the ways and means - cultural and structural- of actualizing ever expanding humanity within, integration with the rest.



Swaraj consciousness lies in a state of repression, aggression, neglect and depression, waiting to be attended to, to be awakened. Thus we call it Hind Swaraj Campaign for building 'swaraj awareness.' We developed a process during this phase. In the post 2009 phase, i.e. in the follow up of the Hind Swaraj Centenary International Conference in November 2009, Swaraj Peeth decided to

undertake experiment in nonviolence in insurgency affected J&K. and a part of Maoism affected tribal area of Bihar/Jharkhand.

With 25 participants including three women, 6 leaders from the heart of insurgency area of Banka district of Bihar, and others involved in Hind Swaraj Campaign and some newly enlisted, the four day-study camp was about reading and interpretation of Hind Swaraj text by Rajiv Vora at the AN Sinha Institute of Social Studies, Patna. Every one read turn by turn, offered reflections and comments based on experience and their own



rather un-modernized mindset, raised questions and doubts with utmost attention and total involvement. They were told in the beginning that full interpretation and

explanation of every *sootra* and statement in HS is not possible in four days, hence we would deliberate only on some of them, though reading will be done line by line. By the end of the fourth day we managed to complete half of it that, in the main, constitutes the explanation on how India was lost; or, in other words, what does loss of freedom defined in terms of Swaraj mean. Up to chapter 13 forms the *poorva-paksha*; the rest is about how to regain true freedom, swaraj; its means and the methods.



Shri Surendra Pandit, with two Master's degrees, who has spent best years of his life fighting for justice and dignity in the jungles of Bihar and Jharkhand as a very high up - a formidable Zonal Commander - said they must have a full rendering of HS in their own area. "Let it take eight days, ten days....we must have it complete with detailed



interpretation of every word of Gandhiji.... Nothing of this sort we had ever expected... it so much cleared our vision.."

Bhuvaneshwar Turi, a former Area Commander sang a song in his language narrating the plight of Adivasis. People thought he had stopped abruptly and asked him to complete the song. He said " no, no, now I can not sing it any further..." I asked him what the matter was. He replied with a

sense of embarrassment " It says bad things about Gandhiji, now I don't stand by that thinking. I like Gandhiji now....." Bhola Prasad, the youthful dynamic leader whose job as an Area Commander used to be of an interlocutor, who sat through the night and read the HS during last year's HS camp in Delhi and changed the course of his life since then, said " I have understood that I must conquer my enemy by love... HS tell me that the struggle starts with oneself first, if we have not overcome our selfishness and weakness we cannot achieve swaraj. HS teaches



me the worth of my culture and my people as so it does for every one. Now I can see things with much clarity, HS has changed me and I got what I was searching for..." He held HS in both hands and raised a slogan with great enthusiasm..." Every one decided to carry on HS campaign and planed their own activities.





It is a very curious coincidence that last year just after HS camp in Delhi four participants from tribal Maoist area in Banka intervened in a vexatious land issue amicably “by what we learned in the shibir” according to them and effectively prevented social-political

polarization. This year too, just after two days of the camp Shri Amarkant Lala resolved a tense land dispute of his area in Madhubani in which he had intervened since long and which had turned ugly. There are many who are active and struggling independently. They are not NGOs. The legacy of Gandhi-Vinoba-JP and other spiritual-cultural movements lives not in the institutions in their names, but in such individuals who are disillusioned because of the sorry state of these institutions and movements and therefore have turned away from them. Such individuals and their groups are coalescing around Hind Swaraj campaign. There were at least a dozen of them whose selfless dedicated work in their own area, villages, is exemplary. They find this association and Hind Swaraj-study most reassuring and empowering, something they were looking for. ---x---

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