

SWARAJPEETH TRUST:



Impact of Hind Swaraj Teachings in Insurgency Area

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Introduction: It was eleventh interaction in past three and a half years (other than about two dozen Swaraj Dialogues in Bihar and Jharkhand) with the youth of insurgency affected tribal villages of Banka distt. in Bihar (declared as Maoist district). I was in these villages of Banka district, on the border of Jharkhand from 11th to 14th. Visiting and travelling in this area over the years, to their homes and villages, meeting the youth, holding their camps and meetings in the jungle is making difference. A veteran, who wielded gun for 7 years, was in disbelief seeing one very bright leader with me, who



has quite a following and good reputation in the region and is now an active part of Hind Swaraj and nonviolence campaign. He is involving his team to reach the message of Gandhiji and of Gandhi Shanti Sena to every home in this region, poster about what it is and how to join it in 5000 homes and a series of Hind Swaraj and nonviolence camps in these tribal villages.

MAGIC OF GANDHI'S HIND SWARAJ TEACHINGS:

Bhola Prasad had called at his residence 14 energetic youth from his area, each one of whom had stories of personal experiences that often drive the youth to the path of violence to seek protection (of land, forest, dignity), revenge or settlement of honor. Bhola, their leader had only three days back resolved a 14 year old land dispute between two parties, through what he told his people his learning of the teachings of Hind Swaraj. His handling of the dispute assumes special significance in the background of killing of two people only a week back in the midst of holding a 'panchayat' on a similar dispute right in the same



area, Most of these youth had participated in a day's peaceful demonstration Bhola organized at the Block office in last January, which, in itself was not a very 'normal' action by disadvantaged tribal youth in this area. There, during the *dharna* he had talked about his participation in Hind Swaraj camp and Gandhi Shanti Sena. Besides narration of their experiences that drive them towards offensive and create a wedge between them and the police and the administration, they had some questions: "why is the police given the gun?" "Why do they always target us and think that we are always on the wrong?" "How to control anger?" "How should we struggle?" "How did

Gandhiji succeed, how could he take every one with him?"

A veteran who fought an armed struggle for 6 years in this area later said " I can understand others joining you though that is easy at all in this area," pointing out to some former Area and Zonal Commanders "but" he exclaimed " it must be some magic that you won over Bhola..." In this entire region Bhola is popular and has a reputation of honest, no-nonsense truthful person.

There were some apprehensions among the youth due to recent tough statement on Maoism by the Union Home Minister. However we decided to concentrate on our work and plans. Hence we discussed the next Shanti Sena/ Hind Swaraj camps for the youth of this area to be held in this Jungle area itself. He showed a desolate school building in the jungle where we will hold the camp.

