Dialogue on Adivasi Experience and Perspectives for Development

adhikaar – "Rights"

khushhaalii – "Happiness"

sampuurn jiivan – "Fullness of Life"

Background Note

In modern society, until recently, there has been no place for the distinct cultures of Adivasi communities. These are different from the dominant society with regard to their languages, beliefs. Their forms of social, political and economic organisation are based on principles of solidarity, mutual support and reciprocity, as well as on a supportive and sustainable relationship with nature and resources - rather than indiscriminate exploitation.

National or private sector projects, whether it is mining or industries or hydro-electric dams or forests and wildlife or tourism, had mostly damaging effects on the local Adivasi communities. Acquisition of indigenous land always meant uprooting Adivasi communities from their land and resources. This is one of the principal causes for the disintegration of indigenous communities and their cultural degradation. Yet many Adivasi communities, especially the younger generation, are interested in social and economic advancement. What they want is genuine, self-determined growth and development.

Alternatives to the conventional development approach would be founded on con-stitutional and international human rights. In the field of social and economic development, the root principles would be solidarity, mutual respect and support, reciprocity and cooperation, a supportive and sustainable relationship with nature, focus on local capabilities and cultural diversity.

Towards that end, Adivasi Koordination in Germany (reg. soc.) has been facilitating dialogues on the identification of felt needs in the development process, on experiences already gained, for encouraging new concepts and approaches, and for identifying meaningful methods of support. Follow-up meetings at national and international level and with political decision makers will follow. Main speakers in these meetings were and shall be the local people with their experience in the field and in the languages of their choice.

Brief Report of the Dialogue Meeting

All together 65 persons participated in the meeting. This included coordinators from Germany and India, local coordinators from Rourkela, documentation group members, and participants from Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

First day: As an introduction to the theme of the conference, an address by Adivasi Koordination (summed up in the above Background Note) was read in three languages: English, Hindi and Oriya. Eminent Adivasi intellectual Kishore Kumar Kujur (Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Rourkela) gave a short message highlighting

the importance of the Dialogue Meeting. This was followed by the key note address given by Dr Nabor Soreng from Bhubaneswar on "Indigenous Experience and Perspectives for Social and Economic Change".

The first day afternoon started with thematic sharing by the Adivasi grass root activists where they highlighted their regional problems and experiences. Participants spoke the languages of their own preference, which were translated into Hindi and Oriya. The complete statements were video and audio recorded. The first day also included songs and dances.

Second day: After bridging from the first day, the word "development" was dropped in the following discussions: because in most cases the concept of "development" as it had been brought to Adivasi and Dalit communities in India has turned into a bad and bitter experience for them. "Development" itself has become oppressive.

The participants then tried to find alternative terms or words in their own languages: To express their own felt needs, their aspirations and visions for a change from the present condition. This resulted in a very lively debate with much consensus on this, and a great number of terms was suggested in Hindi, Oriya, Telugu and English, which were noted on sheets of paper and all fixed on a board as presented in the photo below.
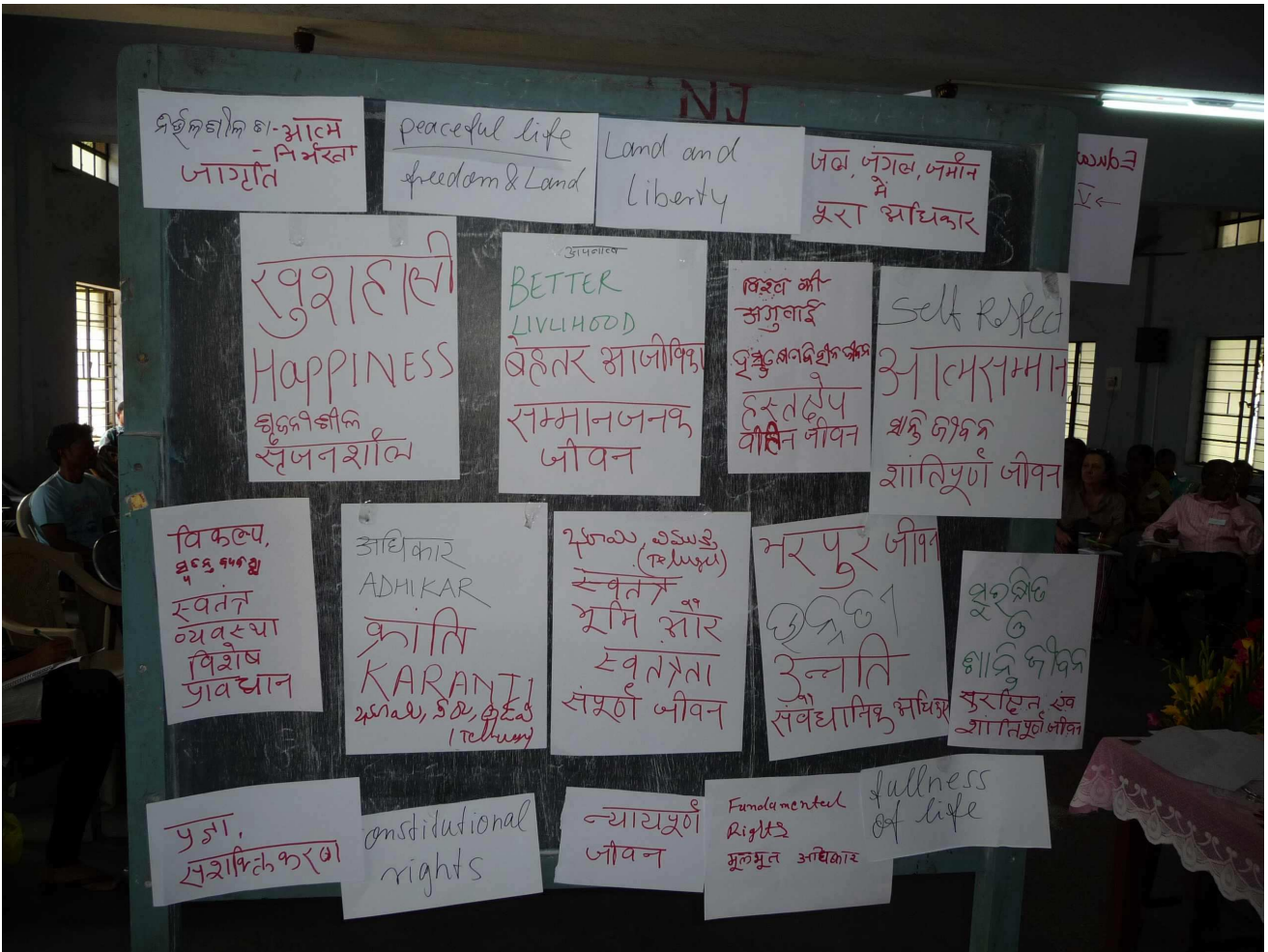
After the brainstorming for finding alternative words, four parallel discussion groups went into discourse for more conceptual clarity, strategies and action perspectives. This was followed again by plenary session in which the groups shared their findings, which were worded as presented in the photo below, and provoked lively discussions till the end of the meeting.
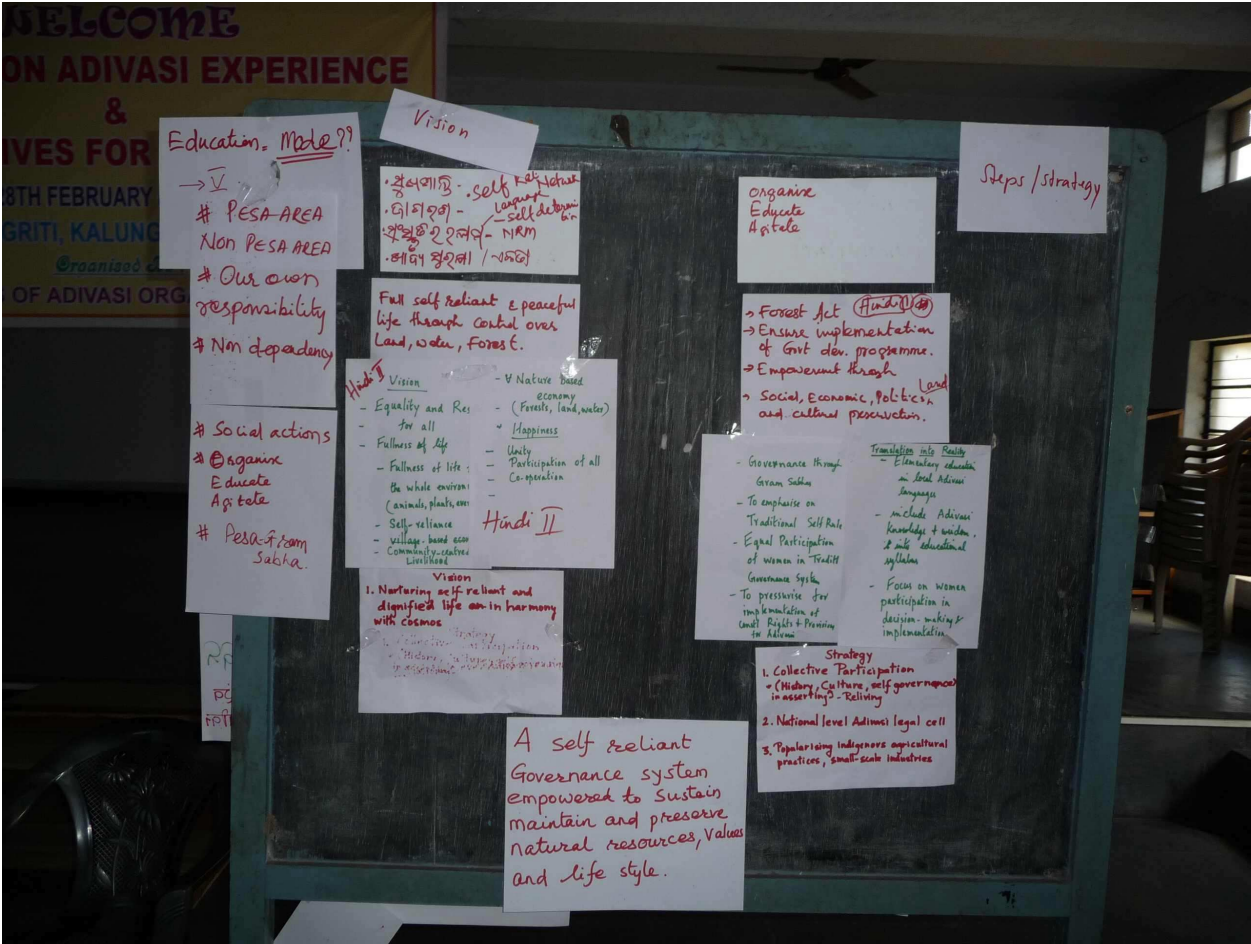
The recorded details of the visions – as alternatives to "development" – and their translation into action perspectives are analysed, thematically regrouped and presented as below: to be shared and further discussed among the participants of this Dialogue Meeting and any other supporters of the Adivasi cause …

Perspectives for Social and Economic Change

A. Brainstorming

The first part of this exercise was a brainstorming, unstructured, yet very spontaneous and natural. The chronological order in which the word were suggested reflects the perceived priority of the participants*:

	Hindi	Oriya	Telugu	English
1)	*adhikaar*	adhikaara		"rights"
2)	*kraanti*	paribartana, krantii		"change, overcoming, 'revolution'"
3)	*bharpuur jiivan*	sampuurna jiibana		"fullness of life"
4)	*unnati*	*unnatii*		"upliftment"
5)	*khushhaalii*	khusi, aananda		*happiness*
6)	*srijanshiil*	*srujanashiila*		"creativity"
7)	*aatmasammaan*	aatmasammaana		*self respect*
8)	*behtar aajiivikaa*	uttama jiibikaa		*better livelihood*
9)	s*ammaanajanak jiivan*	marjadasamphana/ gaurabanita jiibana		"dignified life"
10)	*bhuumi aur svatantrataa*	jamii ebong swatantrataa swadhinataa		"land and independence"
11)	bhuumi aur vimukti	jamii ebong swadhinataa	*bhumi, vimukti*	"land, freedom"

In the further course of this brainstorming session, many more terms were suggested, some in a way refining the first mentioned words, some attempting to summarize certain notions, and some also giving even more fundamental expression to the Adivasi peoples' visions and aspirations. The group discussions brought up some more words and key notions and also some considerations on how to work for their realisation.

* This and the following boxes contain – in *italics* – the original words or phrases in Hindi, Oriya, Telugu or English from the Dialogue Meeting. Translations or explanations in Hindi and Oriya are in non-italics, English translations are in " ".

B. Analysis

After thorough analysis and thematic bundling/regrouping, the combined results of the plenary brainstorming as well as the group presentations are summarized here, giving appropriate weight to certain most fundamental notions and elaborating a kind of organic (or rather "organismic"), comprehensive picture – and also a visual expression (cf. section D. Illustration, at the end of this paper) – of this exemplary exercise:

1. "Rights", "happiness" and "fullness of life"

Interestingly, the very first word mentioned in the initial brainstorming session was "rights" (in Hindi: *adhikaar*). This was continuously used in the further discussion. It is clearly an expression of the Adivasis' most existential concern. Many more aspects were added and discussed which will be presented later. Fundamentally, the term "rights" describes in a single word the vision, the central tool and the fulfilment of being Adivasi. It is their life line…

Further expression of the most fundamental human desire for happiness and a peaceful, fulfilled, dignified life is then reflected in a variety of key words which were brought up in different languages:

Hindi	Oriya	English
sukha-shaanti	*sukha-shaanti*	"happiness and peace"
khushhaalii	khusi / aananda	*happiness*
shaantipuurna jiivan	*shaantipuurna jiibana*	"peaceful life"
suraskhit aur shaantipuurn jiivan	*surakkhita o shaanti jiibana*	"protected and peaceful life"
suraskhit aur bharpuur jiivan	*surakshit evam sampuurna jiibana*	"protected and full life"
bharpuur jiivan	sampuurna jiibana	"full life"
sampuurna jiivan	samphadita jiibana	"fulfilled life"
puurnata jiivan	paripuurnata jiibana	*fullness of life*
srijanshiil	*srujanashiila*	"creativity"
sammaanajanak jiivan	marjadasamphana jiibana	"dignified life"
aatmasammaan	aatmasammaana	*self respect*

2. Extensions / Foundations of Adivasi identity

"Rights", happiness" and "full life" are the most central expressions. These are vitally connected and more pragmatically expressed in further terms/concepts which are of course all inter-linked and inter-related (and therefore arranged here without numerical order). However, they all relate to the historical struggles and specific life styles of the Adivasi communities.

Self-determination / self-reliance

Throughout the larger part of human history, indigenous or Adivasi communities have been following life styles distinctly different from those of the surrounding mainstream or dominant society. It is this difference that makes their identity as Adivasi. However, they have come under pressure from outside: from the pre-colonial and colonial rulers, from independent India's expanding industrialisation, urbanisation and initiatives for "development", and from recent economic liberalisation and globalisation.

One of the foundations of Adivasi identity/difference, therefore, is a self-determined and self-reliant life. As this is constantly under threat, it also comes as an explicit demand or claim or vision for Adivasis' future being. Key words brought up in this perspective were:

Hindi	Oriya	English
hastakshepavihiin jiivan	*hastakhepa vihiina jiibana*	"life without interfe-rence (from others)"
swatantra vyavasthaa	*swatantra vyavasthaa*	"independent organising without interference from outside"
vikaas sarkaar pee nirvar nahii kartaa, parantu ham loog kee uupar aur hamaaraa prayaas kee uupar	vikaash sarakaranka upare nirbhara kare nahi kintu aamamanka dwara ebong amamanka udyama	*development not dependent on government, but development by us, with our own initiative*
khud taae karnaa/ swayam sankalp	nija nispati nije neba/ sankalpa kariba	self-determination
ham loogoon kaa khud shaasan	amamanka nija shaasana	*our own self-rule*
aatmanirbhartaa	aatma nirbharashiilata	"self-reliance"
aatmanirbharta jaagriti	*nirbhalashiila jaagriti*	"waking up to self sufficiency"

Ownership and responsibility for resources

The control over resources is intimately linked to self-determination and self-reliance. This is also established as a fundamental right of the Adivasis. Ultimately, there came up a beautiful expression in the typical, comprehensive Adivasi or indigenous world view:

Hindi	Oriya	English
apnaatva	nijoswo anubhaba kariba, sampuurna rupee dakhala kariba	"feeling at home being in full possession"
jal jangal jamiin meen puura adhikaar	jala, jangala, jamii upare sampuurna adhikaara	"full rights on forest, water, land"
	Telugu *bhumi, niru, adavi*	dito
jamiin, jal, jangal uupar niyantran dwaara sampuurn aatma-visvaasa aur shaantimay jiivan	**Oriya** jamii, jala, jangala upare niyantrana dwaara sampuurna aatma-biswaasa ebong shaantimoyo jiibana	*full self-reliant and peaceful life through control over land, water, forest*
bhuumi aur svatantrataa	jamii, swadhiintaa	"land, freedom"
	Telugu *bhumi, vimukti*	dito
jamiin, swatantrataa/ swadhiintaa	**Oriya** jamii, swatantrataa/ swadhiintaa	"land and independence"
sampuurna jiivan sab kee liyee saaree vatabaran kee liyee	paripuurnata jiibana samastanka pain, sabu paribesa pain	"Fullness of life for all, for the whole environment (animals,plants, every-thing)"
sampuurna aatma-nirbhartaa aur samaan-janak jiivan prakriti kee saath	sampuurna aatma-nirbhartaa ebong samaan-janaka jiiban prakruti sahita	*Nurturing self-reliant and dignified life in harmony with cosmos*

Social and political relations

Another fundamental aspect of Adivasi communities is the primarily egalitarian society, where women are more or less on equal standing with men and participate in the decision making. The well-being of the community is an explicit concern. The concept of community is synonymous for cooperation, solidarity, sharing and unity. The community is also the basic unit for self-reliance and survival. The care for economic and food security are natural functions of the communities.

Hindi	Oriya	English
samaantaa aur izat	samaanataa ebong bhakti/ samana/ adara samastanka pain	*equality and respect for all*
bhaagiidaarii	samastanka sahabhaagii ebong sahajaga	"sharing, participation of all", "co-operation"
mahilaaoon kii bhaagiidaarii	mahila mananka jagadana/ ansa grahana	"participation of women"
nirnaya/faesala aur kriyanwayan karnee samay mahillaaoon kii sahabhaagita kee uupar kaarya-kendra karnaa	mahilamananka jagadana/ ansa grahana prakriya re nirnaya/ nispati neba ebong rupayana kariba	*focus on womenpartici-pation in decision-making & implementation*
shaasan pranali meen mahilaaon kii baraabar yoogdaan	shaasana parichalana karja/ shaasana padhatire mahilamananka samaana jagadana	*equal participation of women in traditional governance system"*
bhaaichaara/ekaatmataa/ puurn ekataa	eektaa, eekatwa, samaswarthata	*solidarity*
eekataa	e*ekataa*	"unity"
aatmasaman raksha karnaa tantra	aatmasamaana rakhya kariba byabasthaa	*self-reliance maintaining network*
samuday/ samaaj keendrit jiivika	lakasamuha kendrita jiibika nirbaha	*community-centered livelihood*
prakriti aadhaarit arthavyavasthaa (jangal, jamiin, jal)	prakruti aadharita arthabyabasthaa (jangala jamii, jala)	*Nature based economy (forests, land, water)*
praakritik sadhaan prabandhak	Prakrutika sambala parichalana	*NRM = natural resource management*
khadya surakshaa	khadya Sangrakhyana/ nirapata	"food preservation / security"

Culture

Adivasi communities have their distinct languages, religious traditions, social, economic and political customs. All these often had been disrespected and even suppressed by the mainstream or dominant society. But Adivasis are proud of these. The idea of protecting and asserting all their traditional wisdom and reclaiming their identity is intimately linked to this comprehensive concept of culture. There is also the call for awakening, awareness and empowerment.

Hindi	Oriya	English
sanskriti kaa rakshan	*sanskrutira rakhya*	*"protection of culture"*
sanskriti aur bhaasaa kaa sanrakshan	sanskruti ebong bhaasaro rakhya kariba	*preservation of culture and language*
samaajik, arthniitik, raajniitik aur saanskritik kaa sanrakshan	samajika, arthanaytika raajanaytika ebong sanskrutikara rakhya kariba	*social, economic, political and cultural preservation*
pragyaa	bibeka, antadrusti	"wisdom, insight"
jaagran/ jaagriti	*jaagaran*	"awakening"
sashaktikaran	gyaana ebong adhunatana kariba	"empowerment for knowledge and update"
ham joo khoyee hain uskoo waapas maangnaa	aame jaha haraichhu taha pain pherasta dabi kariba	*reclaiming what we have lost*

3. Strategies for realisation of the above

The key concept of **"lawful life"** is vision and fulfilment in one word. It comprises the realm of rights, and within it the triple dimension of respecting, protecting and fulfilling them. And it comprises certain activities carried out in fulfilment of these rights.

Again, these issues are all inter-linked and inter-related (and therefore arranged here without numerical order). However, they all relate to the ongoing struggles of the Adivasi communities to protect and genuinely develop their own specific life styles.

Rights

It is the central instrument for the fulfilment of Adivasi social, economic, cultural and political identity. A number of special, protective laws has been provided in the Indian Constitution and later important judgments have been given in the Courts. We also have to acknowledge that the constitutional provisions as well as the special laws and even Supreme Court judgments are being continuously violated: by the state itself and by vested interests (where

the state has failed to guarantee the rule of law). Fundamental human rights are also not something to be conferred or granted – they exist per se. Still, there is and has to be an ongoing struggle for their realisation. All this has been articulated clearly in the Dialogue Meeting:

Hindi	Oriya	English
nyaayapuurna jiivan	aain-sangata jiibana	"lawful life"
muulabhuut adhikaar	maaulika adhikaara	*fundamental rights*
samvaidhaanik adhikaar	sambidhaanika adhikaara	*constitutional rights*
vishesh praavadhaan	bisheesa byabasthaa	"special provisions"
saamvaidhaanik adhi-kaaroon jaisee kii PESA kanuun aur nayee upa-aadivaasii kaanuun koo kriiyanyayan karnee kee liyee milaana aur ladaana	saambidhaanika adhikaara jemiti ki PESA ebang nua upa-aadibasinka aain ku ruupaayana kariba pain heba ebang ladhiba	*to unite and fight for implementation of constitutional rights of laws like PESA and for making of new pro-Adivasi laws*
saamvaidhaanik vyava-sthaaeen (CNT, PESA, Jangal adhikar aain) dwaara samarth pradaan karnaa	saambidhaanik byaba-sthaa (CNT, PESA, jangala adhikaara aain) dwaara khyamatasamphana kariba	*Empowerment through constitutional Provisions (CNT, PESA, Forest Act, etc.)*

It requires specific awareness and also expertise on the part of the Adivasis, on the basis of which legal aid and advocacy activities can be initiated:

Hindi	Oriya	English
jaagruktaa karnaa aur kanoon aur kanoonii samasyaaeen kee uupar jaankaari pradaan karnaa	sacheetana utalana kariba ebang aain o aain sambandhaniya samasya bisayare jaaniba	*awareness raising and knowing about acts and legal issues*
raashtriiya star aadivaasii niyam anusar/kaanunii	raashtriiya stara aadibaasii aain byabasthaa	*national level Adivasi legal cell*

Self-organisation / self-reliance / networking

Another important instrument in the process is local self-governance. Through this most issues of daily life are handled. This is another realm which is clearly linked to traditional Adivasi community life, which has been self-regulating in almost all aspects. And it is certainly the most apt body for self-determined development.

Hindi	Oriya	English
graam saabhaa kee dwaar shaasan- riidhigat swayam shaasan pee joor deenee liyee	graama sabhaa dwaara shaasana - swayang shaasana paramphara upare gurutwa deba / graama sabhaa dwaara paramparika swayang shaasana ku gurutwa deba.	*governance through Gram Sabha - to emphasis on traditional Self Rule*
swayam shaasan kee binaa, vikaas nahii hoo saktaa	swayang shaasana binaa uunaatii asambhaba	*without (self-) governance there can be no development*
graam sabhaa kee dwaar sambal/ sampati par niyantran karnaa	graama sabhaa madhyamaree samphadara niyantrana niya jau	*take control of resources through Gram Sabhas*
deeshaja/ swadeeshii krishi paddhatii, laghuu shalk vyavashaay kaa Lookpriyataa see badhaauti deenaa	adibaasii krushi sam-bandhiya pratha, chhata uudyaga ku janapriya kariba/ adibaasii krushi sambandhiya pratha, khudra silpa ku janapriya kariba	*popularising indigenous agricultural practices, small-scale industries*
vyaktigat ruup see nahii balki eek aadivaasii ruup see aur eek samuday kee ruup ses vikaas	byakti bhabare nahii kintu janee aadibaasii ebang gasthii hisaabree uunatii / uunatii byakti gata bhabare nuhe kintu aadibaasii maarga ree athaba gosthii-gata hisaabree heba uchita.	*development in the Adivasi way/ the community way... not individualistic*
saamuuhik sahabhaagitaa	saamuhika jagadaan/sahabhaagitaa	*collective participation*
bhaaiichaaraa/ eekaatmataa	eekataa, eekatwa, samaswaarthataa	*solidarity*
sarkaari vikaas kriyaakram kaa kriyanyayan koo nishchit karnaa	sarakaaranka uunatii-muulaka kaarjakramara gudikaa karjaree parinata kariba / sarakaaranka uunatii-muulaka kaarjakramara gudika nishchita karaiba	*ensure implementation of government development programmes*

Education

It is a sad fact that Adivasi communities in India have the lowest **literacy** rates. This is on one hand an indication to official apathy, indifference and ineffectivity, if not unwillingness, to bring education to remote areas. On the other hand, the conventional education system has proved largely irrelevant to the Adivasis. During the larger part of history also, indigenous languages and wisdom widely have not been recognized, rather they have been ignored, if not suppressed.

It is not only a long standing demand of Adivasi communities to have educational facilities even in the remote places where they live. But there is also need for the recognition of the indigenous educational system.

Hindi	Oriya	English
shiikshaa	shiikhyaa	"education"
aadivaasii bhaasaaoon meen praathamik shiikshaa	aadibaasia bhaasaaree prathamika shiikhyaa	*elementary education in Adivasi languages*
sthaaniiya aadivaasii bhaasaaoon meen shiikshaa / aadivaasii tatwa, visheeshtaa, prathaa, dastuur aur sanskriti koo aadhaar reekhaa pariipath	sthaaniiya aadiibaasi bhaasaare shikhyaa. aadibaasi tatwa, bisheswatwa, pratha, sanskruti / aadivaasii niiti, muulya-boodha, abhiyasa, sanskruti uparee adharita sthayniiya aadivaasii bhaasaabhitika shikhyaa	*education in local Adivasi language, based on Adivasi principles, values, practices, culture*
aadivaasii viveek koo aadivaasai bhaasaaoon meen shiikshaa deenaa (itihaas, vigyaan, har prakaar kii gyaan)	aadiibaasii bibeekku aadibaasii bhaasaaree shiikhyaa deba (itihaasa, bigyaana, bivina praakara gyaana) / aadibaasii abhigyaantaa o bigyaantaa ku aadibaasii bhaasaaree shiikhyaa deba	*Adivasi wisdom to be taught in Adivasi languages, (history, science, all kinds of knowledge)*

C. Conclusion

All these expressions and concepts combined together replace the word "development". All of the above also had already been expressed in Dr. B.R Ambedkar's famous tri-fold slogan: **"Organise, Educate, Agitate"**. But in this Dialogue Meeting the slogan has not only been quoted many times, but through this exercise it also has been spelt out in great detail. In the struggle for a better world at large, Adivasis can take a leading role.

Hindi	Oriya	English
kraanti	paribartana, samphurana bhabare jaya laabha kariba / aamula paribartana kariba / biplaba	"change, overcoming, revolution"
unnati	*unnatii*	"upliftment"
vikalp	bikalpa/ anya upaaya	"the alternative"
hameen sangathita hoonaa aawashyaktaa/ jarurat hai, hameen aapnee aap koo aur duusroon koo shikshit karnaa jaruurii hai phir hameen aapnaa adhikaar kee liyee ladnaa hai	aambhamananku sangathita heba darakara, aambhamananku nijaku ebang anyamananku shikhyita kariba darkara taha pare aamara adhikaara pain ladhiba darakara	*We need to get organized, we need to educate ourselves and others and then we have to fight for our rights!*
vishva kii aguvaaii	sansaaraku netrutwa deba / bisba ku netrutwa deba	„providing leadership to the world"

D. Illustration

From the above it is evident how different aspects are closely inter-related and one finds it difficult to present them in an analytical isolation and sequence. An attempt therefore is made here to give a visual presentation.

We have been considering and experimenting with different images so far:

1. bow and arrow
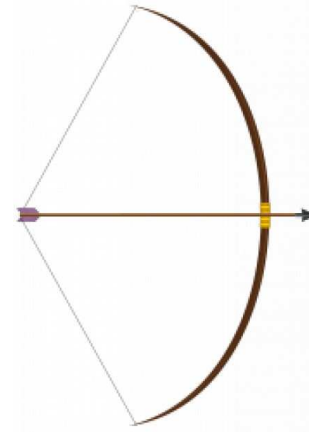
2. tree

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            XX       XX
        XX      XX    XXX
        XX       XX
          XXXXX
           XXX
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          XXXXX
         XX  X  XX
         X    X    X
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3. concentric circles/ellipses
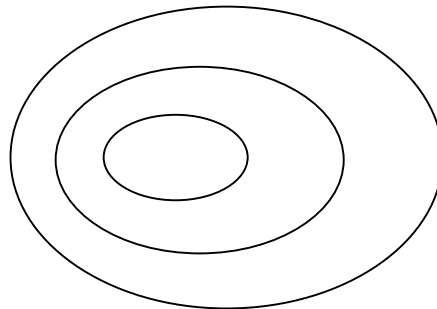
We believe that all three images do have a meaning and a certain logic for representing the indigenous or Adivasi world view and outlook for a better future. However, we should not be carried away by the logic of the images themselves, but rather perceive them as a kind of a **mind map** for illustrating the inter-relation of all key words arranged in this image form. All these are only the key words brought up in the Dialogue Meeting, 28 Feb/1 March, 2015, at Kalunga/Rourkela, Odisha.

This is to encourage further discussions, to find more key words or refine key words, and possibly invent further, more meaningful images, still better suiting this purpose.

1. Image of the arrow and bow

We could use here the arrow and bow as a kind of **mind map** for articulating the key concepts of Adivasi social, cultural, economic and political identity and survival:

a) Arrow and bow are **archetypal symbols of indigenous or Adivasi identity.** Normally, the carrying of arrows and bow by Adivasis is an expression of just that, and not of aggressive attitude, even when these can be used as weapons, (and even when it is mostly a representation of the male in indigenous societies).

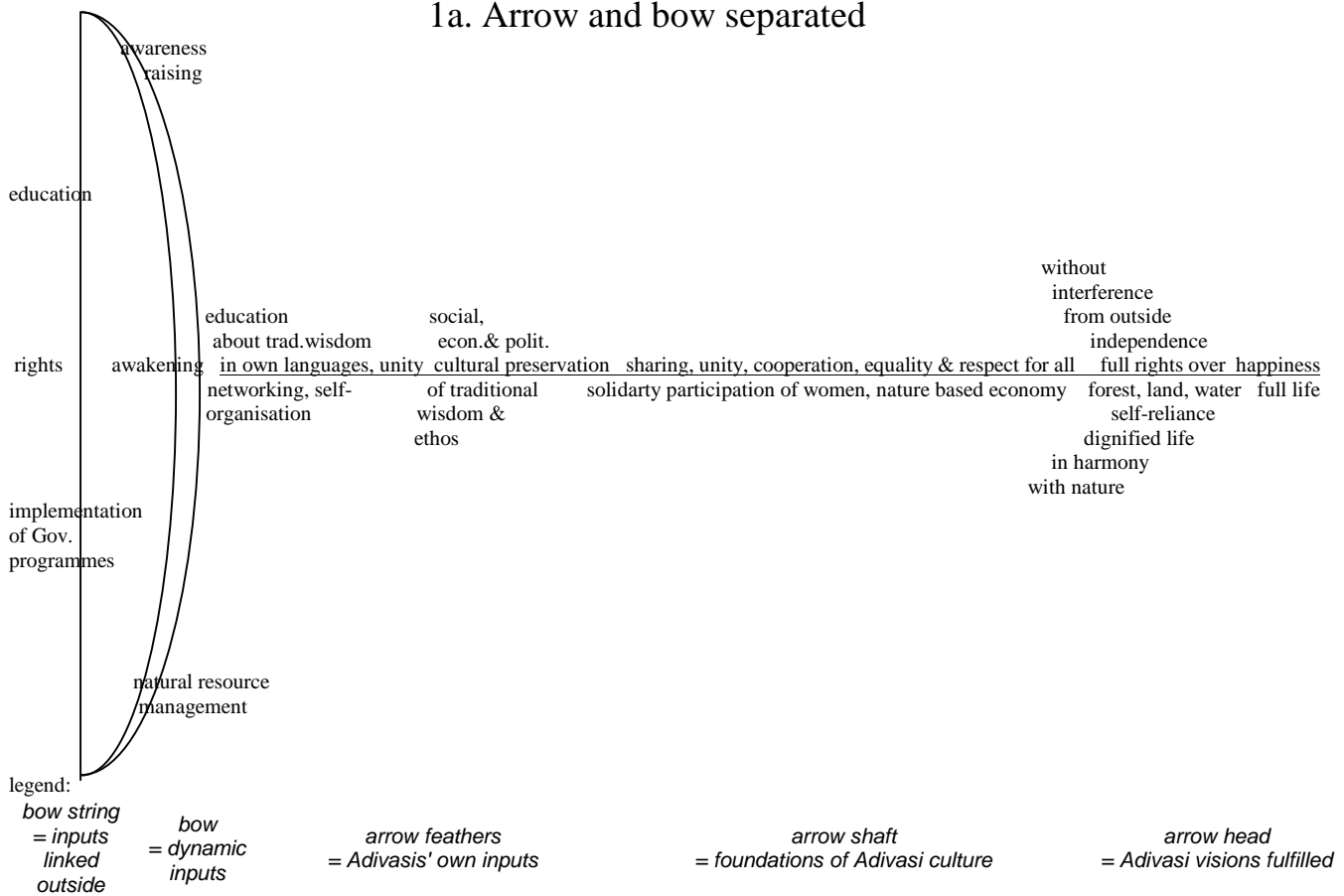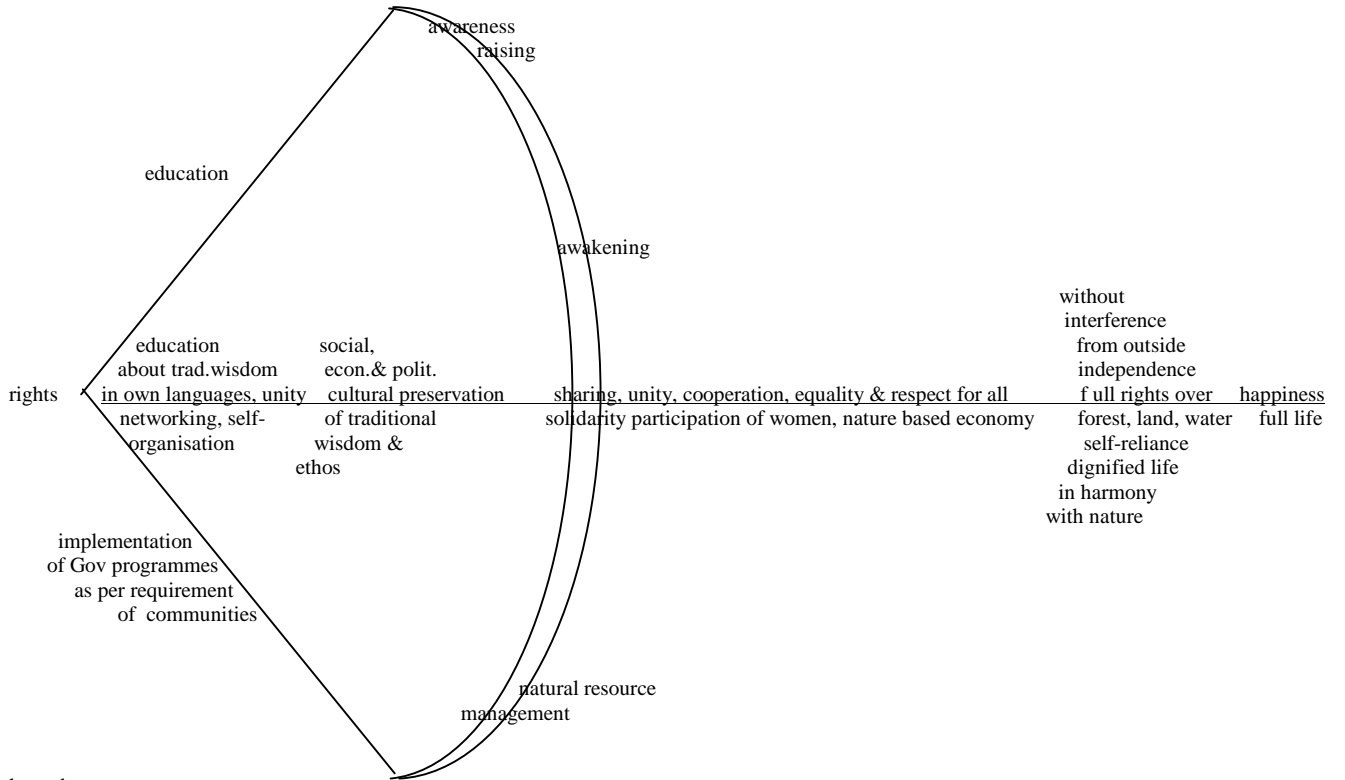**b)** We do perceive bow and arrow **here as symbolising the fulfilment of Adivasi identity and survival** (not so much as a symbol of progress).
It is for this reason – to serve as a kind of mind map – that we have inverted the order and made it "arrow and bow".

c) One has to **"read" this image from the arrow head** (Adivasis' vision) to the shaft (foundations of Adivasi society) to the arrow feathers (Adivasis' own inputs) to the bow (Adivasis's dynamic inputs) to the bow string (inputs linking with outside).

d) We have experimented with two versions of arrow and bow
1a) arrow and bow are separated; and 1b) arrow and bow drawn

1a. Arrow and bow separated

awareness raising

education

rights

implementation of Gov. programmes

natural resource management

awakening

education about trad.wisdom in own languages, unity networking, self-organisation

social, econ.& polit. cultural preservation of traditional wisdom & ethos

sharing, unity, cooperation, equality & respect for all solidarty participation of women, nature based economy

without interference from outside independence full rights over forest, land, water self-reliance dignified life in harmony with nature

happiness full life full rights over happiness full life

legend:
bow string = inputs linked outside *bow = dynamic inputs* *arrow feathers = Adivasis' own inputs* *arrow shaft = foundations of Adivasi culture* *arrow head = Adivasi visions fulfilled*

1b. Arrow and bow drawn

awareness
raising

education

awakening

without
interference
from outside
independence

education   social,
about trad.wisdom   econ.& polit.

rights   in own languages, unity   cultural preservation   sharing, unity, cooperation, equality & respect for all   f ull rights over   happiness
networking, self-   of traditional   solidarity participation of women, nature based economy   forest, land, water   full life
organisation   wisdom &   self-reliance
ethos   dignified life
in harmony
with nature

implementation
of Gov programmes
as per requirement
of communities

natural resource
management

legend:

bow string   *arrow feathers*   *bow*   *arrow head*
= inputs linked   *= Adivasis' own inputs*   *= dynamic*   *arrow shaft = foundations of Adivasi culture*   *= Adivasi visions fulfilled*
outside   *inputs*
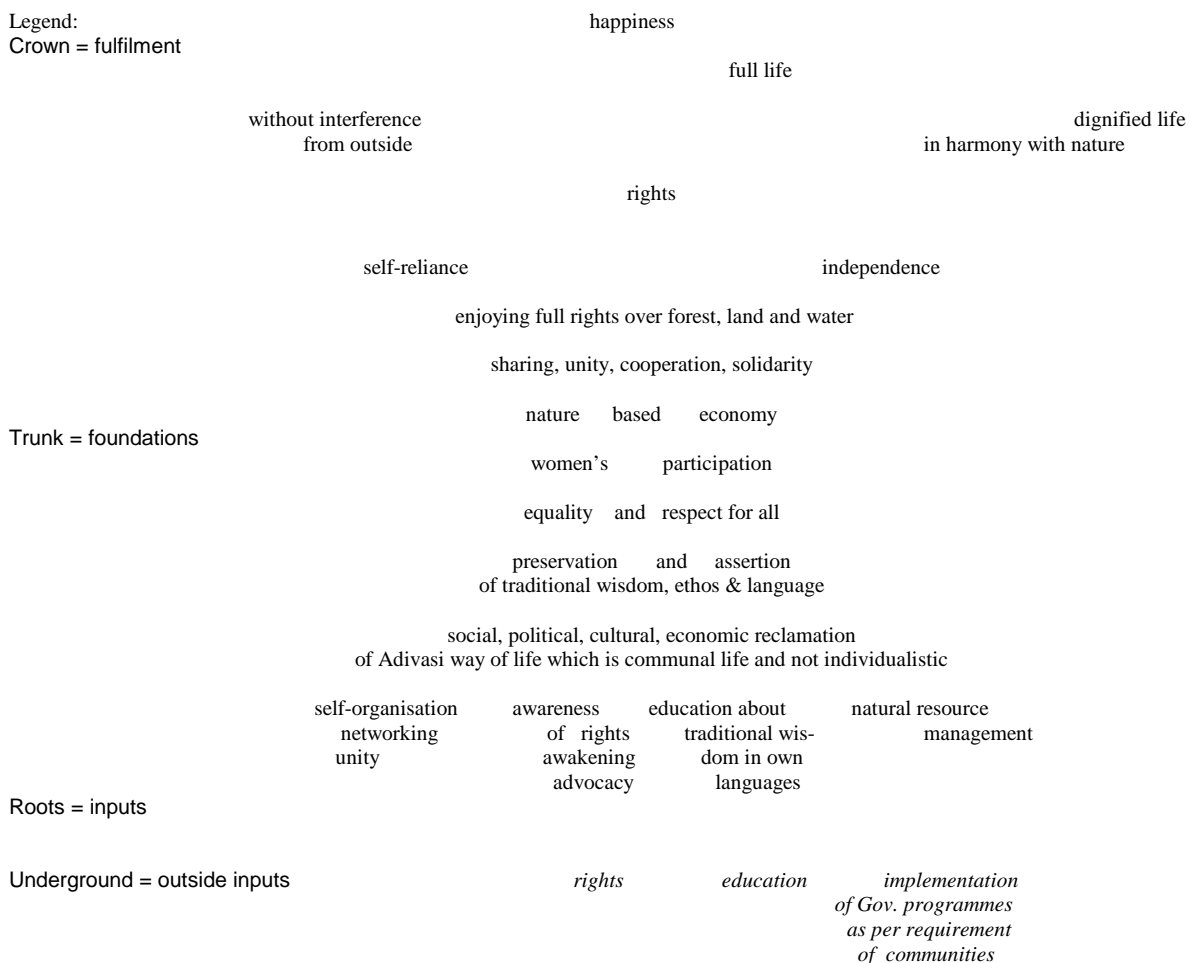
2. Image of the tree

We could use here the tree as a kind of **mind map** for articulating the key concepts of Adivasi social, cultural, economic and political identity and survival. Trees are doubtlessly very intimately linked to the Adivasi universe:

a) providing shelter against sun and rains,

b) as a natural resource for house construction, for making of furniture and implements, for fuel, for human nutrition and animal fodder,

c) as abode of spirits and gods,

d) …

One has to **"read" this image from the crown** (Adivasis' vision or fulfilment) to the trunk (foundations of Adivasi society) to the roots (inputs) to the underground (outside inputs).

There could also be a group of trees (like in the "sacred forest" or sarna).

2. Tree

Legend:
Crown = fulfilment

happiness

full life

without interference
from outside

dignified life
in harmony with nature

rights

self-reliance

independence

enjoying full rights over forest, land and water

sharing, unity, cooperation, solidarity

nature   based   economy

Trunk = foundations

women's   participation

equality   and   respect for all

preservation   and   assertion
of traditional wisdom, ethos & language

social, political, cultural, economic reclamation
of Adivasi way of life which is communal life and not individualistic

self-organisation   awareness   education about   natural resource
networking   of rights   traditional wis-   management
unity   awakening   dom in own
                     advocacy   languages

Roots = inputs

Underground = outside inputs   *rights*   *education*   *implementation*
                                                                        of Gov. programmes
                                                                        as per requirement
                                                                        of communities

3. Image of concentric circles or ellipses

We could use here the circles or ellipses as a kind of **mind map** for articulating the key concepts of Adivasi social, cultural, economic and political identity and survival. The image of the circle itself carries the idea of wholeness, completeness, harmony, integrity, fulfilment, which are essentially human visions or desires. The concentric arrangement may convey a dynamic aspect…

In this way then, the concentric circles may well represent the basically human aspirations or desires for peaceful and fulfilled life, even more so as the circles or rings in this image are made out of the key words of the indigenous or Adivasi people.

One has to **"read" this image from the centre** (Adivasis' vision or fulfilment) to the inner ring (foundations of Adivasi society) to the outer ring (inputs for change).

3. Concentric circles/ellipses
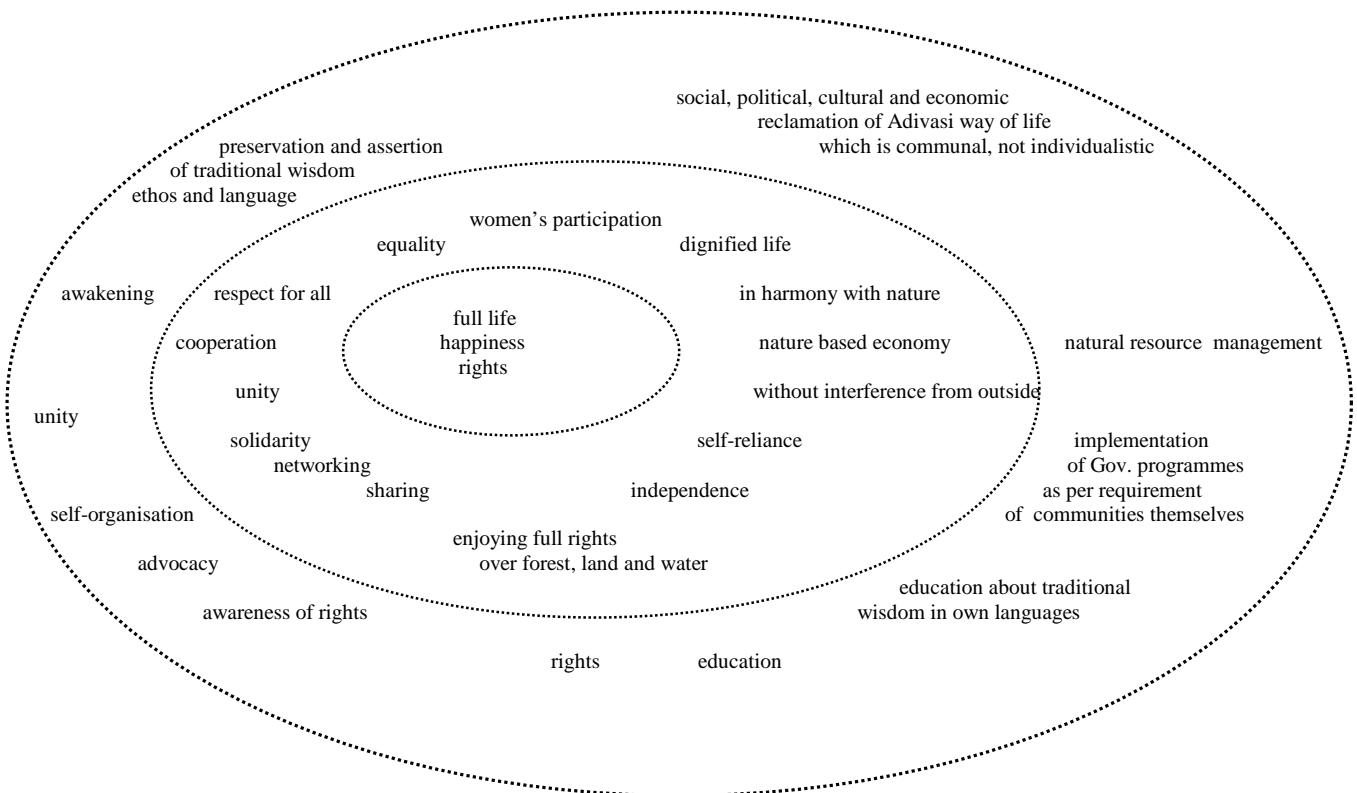
E. Further Experiments and Exercises

Anybody coming across this small document should feel encouraged to work with it, adapt it to her/his own purposes, think and experiment further, and possibly share new images (like from music and dance) and findings with the initiators at:

info@adivaani.org, sarini-jl@gmx.de

Solidarity Action Research & Information Network International *(sarini)*
Towards a non-violent & non-oppressive society

sarini is a word from Sanskrit language. It means "the one that moves on steadily (like a creeper)". It is the female form.

sarini is an informal, voluntary network of like-minded people sharing in the view that the present political structure, social, economic and environmental conditions require a radical transformation, which, however, is unlikely to be achieved and wanted by those in power and through their traditional top-down planning approach.

sarini takes on a radical bottom-up approach that is responsible to the community in every respect.

sarini is coordinated in a strictly non-hierarchical manner. Individuals, action groups or support groups sharing in the above view and intention may at any time join *sarini* and establish themselves as autonomous local or regional groups. They may also opt out of *sarini* at any time. No *sarini* member or group shall ever dominate any other member or group.

sarini operates entirely through the voluntarism of her members.

sarini makes relevant informations, consistent with her intentions, accessible at local, regional, national and international levels by providing for translations into local regional, national and international languages.

sarini may function also in the way of a news agency, supplying informations researched and/or communicated by *sarini* members to news papers, journals and research journals. Multiplicity of publication is intended. Informations rejected or ignored by such media may be published by *sarini* in her own way.

sarini tries to obtain funds for carrying out her activities.

sarini research projects are to be formulated, carried out and evaluated in a participatory process of all the involved, especially the beneficiaries.

sarini will be accountable to funding agencies only through the voice of the beneficiaries of *sarini* engagements, and that, too, in a non-formalized manner.

sarini has been functioning already in many ways through individual contacts, and she will continue to do so. Yet, for her further growth and spreading, communications beyond *sarini* may be attached with this leaflet. So any recipient of such communications will get the idea, and communicating further automatically helps in expanding *sarini* without any obligations.

Contact: *sarini,* c/o Johannes Laping, Christophstr. 31, 69214 Eppelheim, Germany, sarini-jl@gmx.de

Adivasi-Koordination in Germany (reg. soc.)

Adivasi-Koordination is a network of NGOs and individuals engaged in human rights and development work. Since its inception in 1993 - the International Year of the Indigenous Peoples - the main thrust of Adivasi-Koordination's activities has been:
- to support the Adivasi in their struggle for survival and for their human rights (e.g. participation in protest campaigns);
- to document recent developments in the political, social and cultural context, with special focus on human rights violations;
- to provide information to a wider audience through publications, seminars and other means;
- to support Adivasi delegates in their contacts with funding agencies, governments and international organisations;
- to be in dialogue with Adivasi organisations and supporters in India.

Other activities of Adivasi-Koordination are:
- to publish an Adivasi Newsletter (in German, 2-3 issues per year);
- to build up an archive of audio-visual media (tapes, slides, videos, films);
- to build up a newspaper clippings archive and service.

Secretariat: Adivasi-Koordination, c/o Dr. Theodor Rathgeber, Jugendheimstr. 10, 34132 Kassel, Germany, adivasi.koordination@gmx.de, www.Adivasi-Koordination.de