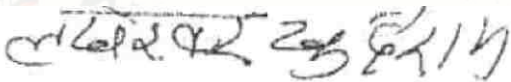


## MLE—Voices

(The story of Shri Lakheshwar Kudram, B.A., B.T., & Dip. in Lok Sangeet (Folk Music) , Assistant Teacher, Middle School, Netanar, Chhattisgarh written in Hindi for Prof. Ajit Mohanty and translated for SWARA)

I was about 6 years old when my father got me admitted to Janpad Prathmic Shala, Nangur. The teacher who used to teach me in Class I did not know (my language) 'Halvi' at all. I did not know any Hindi except two words: 'coming' (aana) and 'going' (jaana). I found the class very burdensome. I did not like going to school. On the other hand, my father used to put pressure on me to go to school. On the pretext of going to school, I would go hiding somewhere in the forest till 1.30 p.m. and come home to eat and go back again and then wait till 4.00pm. One day my father came to know. He scolded me. But, I refused to go to school. This is how I got out of the school. Sometime, approximately after 6 months, a new teacher who had knowledge of the local language came to the school. Block level school games were coming up and players were needed. I used to run the 'frog race' well. The newly appointed teacher enquired about me and, on the pretext of playing in the game, I went to school. In the first meeting I was impressed by the new teacher because he spoke to me in my own language. Now I started feeling good about going to school. The games lasted for 3 days and these 3 days were not less than 3 lifetimes for me. My mind was transformed. Whatever I am today is because of the kindness of the teacher who spoke to me in my mother tongue.



**(Lakheshwar Kudram)**