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Socio-cultural Background and Changes of Santal Society in West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Socio-cultural changes are the very important issues in the society. Basically, in the Adivasi society among the socio-cultural changes are highly crucial environmental situation. The Adivasis or Tribal population is identified as the aboriginal inhabitants of our country. There are numbers of tribes living all over India as well as various parts in the World. The 'Adivasi' construct up 10.4 per cent of India's population (Census 2011). In this qualitative paper the other studies in depth socio-cultural background and changes of Santal or Scheduled Tribe people from different published literature.

1.0 Introduction:

Generally, the term "Tribe" has originated around the time of Greek and the early formation of the Roman Empire. The Latin term, "Tribus" has since been transformed to identify a group of persons forming a community and claiming descent from a common ancestor (Fried, 1975). In the Indian Constitution, Article 336 (25) of the constitution said that Scheduled Tribes are the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within search tribes or tribal communities which the Indian President may specify by public notification under Article 342 (1). Adivasi or Scheduled Tribe people are the second largest population in India. According to Census report 2011, in India 104 million people belong to the indigenous communities known as adivasi or Scheduled Tribes. Maximum number of Adivasi or Scheduled Tribes population was found in ten states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Odisha, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal. Santal are the largest population in Adivasi or Tribal community. The Santals constitutes more than half of total ST population of the West Bengal (51.8 percent).

The tribal people live in India in three different zones. In North Eastern zone following tribal groups live-Gurung, Limbu, Lepcha, Aka, Mishmi, Mikir, Rabha, Kachari, Garo, Khasi, Chakma, Naga, Angami, Sema, Pham, Chang and so on. In the central zone following types of tribes are living- Gonda, Munda, Kandh, Baiga, Bhil, Bhuiyan, Bhumig, Koli, Shavara, Kharia, Oraon, Ho, Santal, Juong and so on. In the Southern zone following types of tribes are living- Chenchu, Kota, Kurumba, Badhaga, Toda, Kadar, Malayan, Muthuvan, Urali, Koya, Soliga, Kamikka, Paniyan, Yerava and so on.

According to M.D. Jenson, "Social change may be defined as modification in ways of doing and thinking of people. According to Jones, "Social change is defined variations in or modification of any aspect of social system, process, social patterns, social interaction or social organisation.

Therefore, the social change is explained to various aspects of social phenomena, social system, social custom, social tradition, social system, social habits, social interaction and organization setup.

2.0 Objective:

To study the Socio-Cultural changes status of Adivasis or Tribal communities. To find out, the Socio-Cultural background of the Santal society.

3.0 Method:

The researcher adopted the qualitative approach in this study.

4.0 Cultural and tradition of santal society:

Culture is taking as a system of ideas, beliefs, value orientation, and patterns of meaning, inherited conception, and the mental constructs of values. So far as tribal are concerned, every aspect of their life is integrated and interrelated. Recently, Subrata Guha and M.D. Ismail observe the religious beliefs, food habits of the Santals and also their festivals which are depend on nature and everyday work in the forest. In their studies that dependency on forest based economy also influenced their cultural norms, traditions and values.

4.1 Language of santal people:

Santal language belongs to the sub family of Austro-Asiatic cluster and classified under the 'Mundari' group of language. Santali was a mainly oral language until the development of Ol-Chiki

by Pandit Raghunath Murmu in 1925. According to Census of 1961, the Santali (Ol-Chiki) language was spoken by 3,130,829 persons; it is their mother tongue of all over Santal peoples.

This script is probably the only tribal script in India which has been able to establish itself in teaching, printing and distribution. Murmu founded in 1950 an institution for the propagation of Santal culture and literature which has since developed into a large network, operating in several states under the name of ASECA (Adivasi Socio Educational Association). Pandith Raghunath Murmu hopes that all Santals would adopt his script.

4.2 Food:

The Santal people's food habits are fully dependent on nature and their nearest forest. The Santal peoples collected are mainly hunting, gathering, various foods, and woods. After cooking of rice, they put into the water and take whole day in it's and it called "Da Madi" in Santali language. That 'Da' means water and 'Madi' means food. It's a mainly vegetable food. The Santal peoples are mainly like vegetable foods and some like non-vegetable foods. "Haandi" is the most popular beverage of the Santal people mainly made by rice with mixed with tree root. In all family as well as social festival and ritual 'Harira' is the main drink for maximum of them.

4.3 Dress of Santal people:

The Santali cultures are very interesting and identity of Indian tradition culture. Santal people wearing of typical dresses that is totally different from modern culture and they are strongly followed by their traditional dresses. Therefore, male members are wearing with a medium piece of cloth wearing round his waist which is commonly known as Dhoti. And Santali women are dresses with a larger piece of cloth or sari the white sari with red border is a common used during the time of festival. The Santal women like to wear various types of ornaments; these include necklace, ear ring, bangles, wristlets, ring girdles etc.

4.4 Marriage system and ritual:

Marriage is a social institution, which involved man and women to a family life. It is socially approved sexual and economic union between a man and women. Marriage provides a child with socially recognized father and socially recognized mother. Marriage status is an essential feature in the study of the condition of social structure of any given society. The marriage system of Santal community is very interesting and traditionally. The Santal have different types of marriage. They called marriage as 'Bapla'. Following the Santal there are 7 different ways of marriage.

- 1) Kirin Bahu Bapla: This is type of arrange marriage of young men and women who have not previously been married. It is arranging marriage.
- 2) Tunki Dipil Bapla: Here no payment is made; Bamboo basket (tunki) plays an important role here.
- 3) GhardiJawae Bapla: This type of marriage is preferred by the father of the bride who has no son but an only daughter.
- 4) Itut Bapla: Itut Bapla is a marriage done by capture.
- 5) Sotho Goth Bapla: In this marriage, both parties are observed and due to lack of time the marriage ceremony is not possible. The girl is send with her son-in-law, and later marriage.
- 6) Khardi Jaway Bapla: This marriage is son-in-law marriage. The young men stay at their father-in-law's house after marriage, and with social acceptance.
- 7) Edigos Agu Gono Bapla: This marriage is done by observing. This marriage is not officially due to the lack of cost and the marriage tack place after discussions with the parents of the two houses.

4.5 Religion And Worship:

Indian tribe have religion complexity is found in terms of various tribal religions. These are always 'core' and 'peripheral' elements in tribal religion. As far as the Santals are concerned they have beautiful of socio-cultural montage in the present caste rifted Indian society. Santal have separated religion and it is called 'sarna' or 'sari', but yet recognized by Constitution of India. The God and Goddess of Santals are Marangburu, Jaheraera, and Santal people are believed in God (Nature). They have belief on numerous bongas. Some important bongas are as follows, Marang-Buru, Gosai-Era, Pargana-Bonga, Taher-Era, Manjhi-Bonga, Manjhi Hram, Manjhi -Buri, Sing-bonga, Mareiko, Turuiko, Manjhi Buri etc. there are 178 different bongas in the beliefs of the Santals.

Religion being an important constituent of culture regulates other constituents and unified them into a culture system. In simple tribal societies religion is usually co present with power structure. So, their supreme deity is Dharam and Thakur or Sing Bonga who is identified with the sun and is worshipped with great reverence as the creator of the universe.

4.6 Creative arts and craft of santal culture:

Santal people are creative persons in India. The Santal have natural talents in art crafts which is reflected in their beautiful wall paintings, housing architecture and wood works. Their doors are bejewelled with colourful drawings. And inside walls are also decorated with beautiful drawings by

the Santal women. Some of their traditional craft and artwork have slightly been adapted in the present day under the influence of modernization. On the other hand a larded contingent of the young generation have go much been influenced by modern global culture that they do not have the patience to learn their own artwork and continue with it.

5. Conclusion:

The santal people are the largest community and ethic group in West Bengal. Traditional art & craft are a part in their life. They are celebrating their festivals, rituals throughout the year wearing their traditional dresses. These celebrations are made with tribal songs & dances in the open courtyard of the village as with beating drums of various type locally known as Madol, Dhol, etc. they speak among in their own language called Al-Chiki. Now, the Santals are considered as one of the upcoming progressive tribes of West Bengal. Urbanization, the government policies like “Sarbo Shiksha Avijan” and “Mid-Day Meal” project has influence the spread of education among the Santal areas. The technological enhancement is also one of the most important causes of the important of Santal.

Hence, now a-days many of the Santal youths are moving towards town and urban areas for education and in search of jobs. Occupational mobility has also brought a drastic change in their living pattern. There has been a continuous effort since independence by the government to raise their socio-economic standards. For their social and economic upliftment, Government has launched a number of development programmes which have brought a drastic change in their way of life by improving their status of education, economy, communication, health and sanitation etc. emphasis has been laid on their educational development.

So, Adivasis society and their culture witnessed several changes particularly since independence in West Bengal, India. Therefore, various factors influencing them and bringing them close to other groups and societies of the countries is expansion of education and modern technology.

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