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ISSN (Online) : 2455 - 3662
SJIF Impact Factor :3.967

EPRA International Journal of
**Multidisciplinary
Research**

Monthly Peer Reviewed & Indexed
International Online Journal

Volume: 3 Issue: 1 January 2017



Published By :
EPRA Journals

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ORIGIN HISTORY AND IDENTITY OF SANTAL

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ABSTRACT

The history of human society shows that many tribes have lost their identities. This has created a great commotion among the tribes. They have forgotten their values which are important for maintaining their identity. This is the case with the Santals who has a unique philosophy in their religion and culture. But they could not safeguard it due to various reasons. Santals are scattered in many places, thereby have come under the influence of other culture living in the modern society. They have adopted themselves to modern life, Science and technology. In the process they have forgotten their values. The Santals speak an independent language "Santali". They have preserved their language through great number of folk songs and tales in addition to that they have preserve their language by day to day conversation in their mother tongue. Santals also have their mythological knowledge regarding the origin of the earth and every creation living in the world. They also have rich art and architecture and well planned housing system. These help them retain their identity. The article will highlight the identity of Santal and the similarity of Santali language with other languages of the world.

KEY WORDS: Language, Santal, mythology, origin, tribe

INTRODUCTION

The Santals are one of the third largest tribes and the oldest inhabitants of India. Hence they are also well known as Adivasis. Originally, the Santals were called the *Kol* (being send) Santals in India. But the *Kol* people belonged to different groups comprising *Santals, Mundas, Gond, Lhond, Sabar, Birhor, Bumiji, Kuru, Kora, Godab, Ho*, etc.¹ All these people speak one language the Santal language. Later on the Santals gradually got scattered and began living with different groups and in different places resulting in variation of language and pronunciation of words.

In India the Santals are found in Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Odissa, Assam and in Tripura. Besides, these tribes are found in Bangladesh and in Nepal also. Although they have lost their many

<u>English word</u>	<u>Kol Santal word</u>	<u>Tumbuka words</u>	<u>Bemba word</u>	<u>Sona word</u>
I	<i>In</i>	<i>Inini</i>	<i>Inini</i>	<i>Ini</i>
Human	<i>Manwa</i>	<i>Mawnalumme</i>	<i>Umwomme</i>	<i>Murumme</i>
Sun	<i>Suraj</i>	<i>Jhuwa</i>	<i>Akasuba</i>	<i>Jhuwa</i>

Kol Santali words are also found in the language of some Mongoloid people. A large group of Mongoloid people knows as “*cam*” entered India from China

identities, they yet use the Santali words in their language which play an important role in understanding the depth of their origin and identity. The Santali words are found to be similar to many languages in the world. This is known through analysis of the languages spoken in different parts of the world. This analysis is given bellow:

SIMILARITY OF KOL SANTAL AND AFRICN LANGUAGS

In Africa some languages spoken are - *Tumbuka, Bemba, Sona* etc. in which some words are used which carry a similar meaning to the *Kol* Santali Words. For e.g:

crossing the Himalayan range. These people use some words which have a common meaning with the *Kol* Santali words. For e.g.:

SIMILARITY BETWEEN KOL SANTAL AND CAM LANGUAGE

<u>Kol words</u>	<u>Cam word</u>	<u>Meanings</u>
<i>Duno</i>	<i>Duna</i>	Double
<i>Luduk</i>	<i>Ludgee</i>	Fat
<i>Bhak</i>	<i>Bhag</i>	To divide

According to Parimal Chandra Mitra India was a no man land before the Pre-Historic Stone Age. Since then, people migrated to India from different groups and in different period.² The different groups of people who migrated to India are as follows:³ The first group of people who entered India in the Pre-Historic Stone Age from Africa *via* Arabia are known as *Negrarit* or *Negribotu*. The second group which entered India are spread all over India and beyond India like Melanesia, Polynesia etc., from West-Asia and known as *Proto Austroloid* people i.e. *Kol* people like *Munda, Santal, Gond* etc. in India. The third group of people known as *Mediterranean race* from Greece, Aegean Island, Miser, Palestain, Syria, Asia Minor etc. The fourth group of people is known as *Western-Brachyeeepals* entered India in batches from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. The next group known as *Nordic* people entered India *via* Iran and Afghanistan form the Mediterranean area. The last Group of people known as the *Mongoloid*, entered India from the East and North of India, Crossing the Himalaya range. Although these people migrated to

India from various countries of the world, yet their place of origin seems to be one and the same because certain words which are spoken in their languages have similar meaning.

The *Negrarit* or *Negribotu* people who entered India first, have partially lost their separate identity due to gradual assimilation into other larger groups of people. In the same way the third, fourth and fifth group of people also partially lost their original identity and formed a new composite culture. Like the others, the *Kol* people although affected partially in composite culture still retained their separate identity in India as well as in the other parts of the world. The major reason for retaining their identity was, they wanted to remain in group in isolation and follows their culture and tradition strictly and rigidly. Now a days due to the influence of science, technology and economically backwardness they have abandoned some outdated habits and culture. The Anthropologists have not ascertained the place of origin of the human being. Parimal Chandra Mitra, from his study of various

languages of the world opens that origin of human being might be somewhere in Germany,⁴ where the language of human beings was one.

SANTAL MYTHOLOGY

According to Santal mythology *Thakur Jiu* (God) after creating the earth crust covered it with water. He later created some aquatic creature- crab, crocodile, whale, prawns, fish; and worm, tortoise. He then creates man. First he made two people out of mud, but day horse trampled upon them destroyed them. *Thakur Jui* then made two geese- male and female from the material taken off from his chest and breathed them to life. Later when the gees grew up they faced difficulties while making a nest for shelter.

Thakur Jui then decided to make the exposed part of the earth's crust. He then called a crocodile to bring land from the depths of water. But the crocodile failed to do so. Then, one after another He called prawn, fish, whale, and then a crab. But these creatures also failed to bring the land from the depths of water.

Lastly, He called the land worm and ordered it to bring land from the depths of the water. The land worm agreed to do so; but begged a large tortoise for help because after bringing land from the water it must be accumulated on the flat tortoise back. When the tortoise also agreed, the land worm dived into the water ate the clay and collected on the tortoise back. Gradually, the clay become soft, and then hard. Slowly, the plants sprouted out and grew into flower and fruit yielding trees.

The two geeses called Hans and Hasil then got place for shelter to rest. The Hasil laid two eggs, from which two wonderful human babies were born. The two human babies grow up and a man and a woman known as *Pilchu Haram* and *Pilchu Budhi* the first human couple from whom all present day people descended.

However, the Santal mythology may not be accepted in the present scientific age, but it has a significant argument behind the origin of the human beings. Historians, anthropologists and scholars say that the *Kol Santals* have migrated to India from the countries of west Asia. In the book *The Tradition and Institution of Santals*,⁵ also mentions some places like '*Cae disom*', '*Campa disom*', '*Turuk disom*' through which Santals proceeded towards Eastern countries. The *Turuk disom* may be Turkistan and *Cae disom* and *Campa disom* could not be ascertained with the name of the present countries. Therefore, Some Santal entered India through the Himalayan range and some others through Afghanistan and entered India *via sin duar* and *Baih duar* (Kybar pass and Bolan pass). After entering the

India, the Santals settled permanently in the Indus Valley area for several thousand years and developed socially and economically. They also could read and write in *Khond* script. The script which they used was discovered from the excavation of the Indus valley civilization.⁶ Due to nemesis (i.e. natural calamities) the Santals were forced to leave Indus Valley area and entered India.

MEANING OF NAME OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Parimal Chandra Mitra lists countries and the places like Germany, Peruses, England, France, Italy, Greece, Europe, Asia, Africa, China, Russia, Iran, Iark, Misor, Bongodes, Mesopotamia, Babylon etc.,⁷ and deciphered the word with the help of the *Kol* language and argues that all the people of the above mentioned countries originated from the same place. For example:

Germany = the Original human being. ("*Jar*" = original /unvarnished + "*Manwa*" = man/human being.)

England = Motherland. ("*Enga*" = mother + "*Lodam*" = land) It may be called a plain land at the foot of the hills.)

France = an attempt to increase food. ("*Fra*" = to increase + "*on*" = food + "*Ce*" = to attempt, apply oneself to)

Italy = to try to be Satisfied. ("*Ito*" = to try + "*ali*" = to be satisfied)

Greek = obstruction removed. ("*Gira*" = obstruction + "*iko*" = to remove)

Asia = to depend on love. ("*As*" = to depend/to aim + "*Io*" = love + "*a*" = suffix)

Africa = Calamity removed. ("*Afro*" = calamity + "*Ika*" = to remove)

Russia = Successful in longings. ("*Ras*" = successful + "*Io*" = longings/Love + "*a*" = suffix)

Iran = Harsh law of nature. ("*Ira*" = Harsh + *an* = law)

Iraq = Harsh mark of nature. ("*Ira*" = Harsh + "*aq*" = mark)

Misor = Mixed people. ("*Mesao*" = Mixed + "*Hor*" = man, people)

Bharot Borso = Inception of Earth of deep *divine* Blessing. ("*Bhao*" = Divine + *or* = inception + "*ot*" = Earth/world + "*bor*" = blessing + "*s*" = deep + "*o*" = Suffix)

Bongodesh = A country of God. ("*Bonga*" = God + "*Desh*" = country)

The ancient civilization, naming and their meaning is also explained by breaking up of *Kol* Santal words as follows:

Mohenjo-Daro = oh readiness for strong hold. ("*Mohonj*" = readiness + "*ho*" = oh + "*darho*" = strongly/ strong + "*o*" = suffix)

Horoppa = to guard alighted twister. (“*Hor*” = to guard + “*op*” = to alight + “*pa*” = to twist + “*a*” = suffix) (Mitra, 1988).

Some historical names in Santali are also been explained in a similar way some of them are:

Chandhudaro = to send urgent news of watching to its destination by passing it on from village to village. (“*Chando*” = urgent/urgently + “*Huda*” = to send the news to its designation by passing it on from village to village + “*Horho*” = to guard/to watch + “*o*” = suffix)

Larkana = A construction once round like a chain. (“*Lar*” = once round like chain + “*Kana*” = a verbal tense suffix indicating present tense)

Ojanta = Not to make the root known. (“*O*” = No, Not + “*Jan*” = to know, to inform + “*Ta*” = root foundation)

Lahor = A dig causing to sink. (“*La*” = to dig + “*Horo*” = to sink)

Punjab = safe custody Lopped. (“*Pan*” = to lop + “*Jab*” = safe custody).⁸

KOL SANTALI LANGUAGE AND TAMIL LANGUAGE

However, in India the *Kol/Santali* language is closely related with Tamil language.⁹ For e.g.:

<u>Kol Words</u>	<u>Tamil Words</u>	<u>English Words</u>
<i>Kodi</i>	<i>Kodi</i>	Twisted
<i>Orak-bhit</i>	<i>Uraivitam</i>	Plinth of house
<i>Orak</i>	<i>Uraivu</i>	Home
<i>Map</i>	<i>Mappu</i>	Pardon
<i>Kal</i>	<i>Kalam</i>	Time

From the aforesaid historical background and sources of language of the people of the world, it may be assumed that the *Kol/Santals* are the people who were scattered in different parts of the world and the languages discussed above shows that the Santals are also the oldest inhabitant of India.

The Santals are the people who prefer to live in isolation manner. Thus they have been able to maintain their culture and tradition even though they are scattered in many places world. But now-a-days they have started living amidst other people in the society.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The Santals construct their house by themselves with either wooden or bamboo posts. The roof is thatched with *Sauri* (thatching grass) which lasts only for two to three years. The walls are

constructed with split bamboos and are plastered with mud. The ground inside the one roomed house is filled with earth and smoothed with mud mixed with cow dung. To complete the house a low earthen walls is built in one corner to provide a *Bhitar* (separate dwelling place inside) where rice beer is offered to the *orak’ Bonga* (house spirit). No outsiders are permitted to *Bhitar* (inside). A fire place used for cooking is also made of mud inside the room, it may be one or two sided. It is made in such a way so that it may able to accommodate paddy grains. The Santals house is without window. There is only one entrance to the house. The inside of the Santal house is consequently quite dark even in the day hours. Except in the cold season when the inside is warm, they generally stay inside day and night.



(A traditional house of Santals)

The Santals constructs two roof house called a *Bangla orak* (gable house). It is rectangular in shape, its breadth is two third of its length. The original size is 4.50 m by 3m, but now generally it is considerably larger. Another type of house is called *Catom orak* (umbrella house) having a four side roof. Santal build house round the courtyard, and also keep a shed for the cattle. They keep a big space for courtyard because every kind of ceremonies is performed there including the marriage which cannot be conducted anywhere. In other word the courtyard is an important place which they specially keep in the midst of the houses.

They never built the house facing the *Kulhi* (Village Street). For water, the Santals always look for natural spring and fetch water, from the pools, tanks, or streams rivers. They also dig wells to be used by the individual family or by a number of families together.

CONCLUSION

Origin identity and history is important for every group of people. Human being is not an isolated being. Hence, it requires a group. Similarly, Santals are group of people called as Kol Santals. In modern days though many Santals in different part of countries have missed to retain their identity, their language became an important factor for their identity. Through the language they describe the mythology and accordingly formed a belief system. Among the varied identity art and Architecture is another unique identity of Santal. Thus, they could maintain their identity in different part of country.

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