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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, Bumijii, Kuru, Kora, Godah, 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 many 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 below:

SIMILARITY OF KOL SANTAL AND AFRICAN LANGUAGES

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English word</th>
<th>Kol Santal word</th>
<th>Tumbuka words</th>
<th>Bemba word</th>
<th>Sona word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In</td>
<td>Ini</td>
<td>Ini</td>
<td>Ini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Manwa</td>
<td>Mawnalumme</td>
<td>Umwomme</td>
<td>Murumme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Suraj</td>
<td>Jhuwa</td>
<td>Akasuba</td>
<td>Jhuwa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kol Santal words are also found in the language of some Mongolid people. A large group of Mongolid people known as "can" entered India from China crossing the Himalayan range. These people use some words which have a common meaning with the Kol Santal words. For e.g.:

SIMILARITY BETWEEN KOL SANTAL AND CAM LANGUAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kol words</th>
<th>Cam word</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duno</td>
<td>Duna</td>
<td>Double</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luduk</td>
<td>Ludgee</td>
<td>Fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhak</td>
<td>Bhag</td>
<td>To divide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
languages of the world opens that origin of human being might be somewhere in Germany, 2 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 Jiu 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 Jiu 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 deaths 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 tortoise and collected on the tortoise back. Gradually, the clay became soft, and then hard. Slowly, the plants sprouted out and grew into flower and fruit yielding trees.

The two geese 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 dur and Bait dur (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 enter India.

**MEANING OF NAME OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**

Parimal Chandra Mitra listes countries and the places like Germany, Peruses, England, France, Italy, Greece, Europe, Asia, Africa, China, Russia, Iran, lark, 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)
- **Bharat 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.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kol Words</th>
<th>Tamil Words</th>
<th>English Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kodi</td>
<td>Kodi</td>
<td>Twisted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orak-bhit</td>
<td>Uraivitam</td>
<td>Plinth of house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orak</td>
<td>Uraivu</td>
<td>Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map</td>
<td>Mappu</td>
<td>Pardon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kal</td>
<td>Kalam</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
The Santals construct two roof house called a *Bangla orak*’ (gable house). It is rectangular in shape, it 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.

**REFERENCES**

2. Ibid., p.2
3. Ibid., p.2
4. Ibid., p.6