

SOUVENIR

All India Conference of Santals
On 8th & 9th February, 2003

At – Balasore, Orissa

All India ASECA

SFS Flat No.326, Pocket – 10, Sector-11 (Extn.), Rohini, Delhi-110 085

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Development through Social Capital and Santals' search for religious Identity

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Introduction:

Many aboriginal indigenous people or tribe in India are struggling and fighting against the odds from time immemorial for their existence, development and identity. Santals', the linguistically largest tribe in India, struggle is not an exception. Their Language movement, Script development, Struggle for own state are the mirrors in the tribal history of India.

Among the myriad problems this Country is beset with perhaps none is more urgent and knotty than the development of the underprivileged. People of different school of thought put forward different methodology like education, agro-economy, political will etc. for Santals' development but many times fails to mention the ways and means to achieve the same or fail to implement them and it remains a good model for development in the drawing board without many takers. Karl Marx concept of "money" as Capital, 20th Century economists' emphasis on human Capital has failed to explain Why many of the downtrodden communities are not being developed till date? Santals despite thousands year of their existence, more than 200 years of help from missionaries, more than 50 years of Independence, Special provision in the Constitution of India, thousands of NGOs and Santal Associations working for themselves are still in miserable present position .The financial Capital (money) can only give the basic need of a man i.e. Food, Clothing and Shelter , The

human Capital can emphasize on Education and Health but so far has failed to achieve the prosperity of mankind. The coining of term like human development Index (HDI), human poverty index (HPI) by United Nations and it's measure, gives the horror of un-uniform development of human being throughout the World. Probably answer to all this is development through the concept of "Positive Social Capital".

From time immemorial, groups of people have created strong communities based on commonly observed rules and mutual self help. These social links discourage deviant behaviour through ostracism and other social penalties, create a climate of trust in which agreements are honored and grievances redressed, and facilitate collective action against threat from outsiders and risks from natural disasters [Aiyar 2000]. This is social capital, which unlike economic and human Capital, can't be owned by individuals, but by social groups. So social capital after Coleman, is generally understood to mean social structures and network necessary for effective collective action. Being less tangible than financial and human Capital, it is difficult to measure and so has been ignored in the past, yet Positive Social Capital is an invaluable asset.

Religion, the most critical ingredient of Society, or Social Capital, is being very strongly embedded into our constitution of

India, which is the basis for living of the modern human civilization. Indian is a secular country and does not have any state religion. Our Constitution guarantees every citizen and even the non citizens also the right to freedom of religion, conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of any religion. It gives all religion equal status, accept and respect them equally and thereby every religion enjoy same Constitutional protection without any favour or discrimination. The right to freedom of religion is a Fundamental right for every citizen which is in the Part-III of our constitution. The nature of freedom for religion can be examined from the contents of Article 25, 26, 27 and 28 of the constitution as follows:

Article 25: Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion

- (1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion.
- (2) Nothing in this Article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the state from making any law
 - (a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice;
 - (b) Providing for social welfare and reform or throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.

Article 26: Freedom to manage religious affairs

Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right (a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purpose ; (b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion; (c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property ; and (d) to administer such property in accordance with law.

Article 27: Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion

No person shall be compelled to pay any taxes, the proceeds of which are specifically appropriated in payment of expenses for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion of religious denomination.

Article 28: Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions.-

- (1) No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds.
- (2) Nothing in clause (1) shall apply to an educational institution which is administered by the State but has been established under any endowment or trust which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such institution.
- (3) No person attending any educational institution recognised by the State or receiving aid out of State funds shall be required to take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted in such institution or to attend any religious worship that may be conducted in such institution or

in any premises attached thereto unless such person or, if such person is a minor, his guardian has given his consent thereto.

Santals mostly shy away from discussing the spiritual requirement of their life (Without which mankind can't survive in the earth). They have confusion on their religion, it's recognition and provision for recording in the Census operation. From the very secular nature of the Constitution of India, the author's perception is that here in India every religion is recognized and there are provisions for inclusion of them in the Census operation. As per the record there was provision for inclusion of any religion of an individual's choice in both the 1991 as well as 2001 Census Operation. As far the implementation part of it, if it is not being implemented throughout India uniformly than it can be challenged in the appropriate Court of Justice, because by doing so the very fundamental rights of every citizen of India is being violated. Theoretically it can be said that in India **“ Even a single person profess/practice some particular different religion, it is recognized by above provision of the constitution”**, but it is up to the follower of that particular religion how He/She conceive, perceive, follow, develop, nurture or project his/her religion to the people around him? All the developed Countries/Peoples in the World

have got very developed, well structured, disciplined, documented religion to pursue as part of their Life. The development of Santal society can be perceived from their religious development which is not in positive direction because the majority individual Santals who have developed in some direction are not contributing positively as per their capacity for their community development. In this connection the famous quote of our 1st. Prime Minister late Pdt. Jawahar Lal Nehru While addressing an All India conference of the tribals held at Jagadapur, Bastar, Madhya Pradesh in March 1955 can be recalled.

“Wherever you live, you should live in your own way. This is what I want you to decide yourselves. How would you like to live?. Your old customs and habits are good. We want that they should survive but at the same time we want that you should be educated and should do your part in the welfare of the country.”

Data

1991 Census Table of Santal religion in erstwhile state of Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa where majority of Santals live, are analyzed and the status of it is presented as below.

Table No. 1:- Religions Recorded for Santals in erstwhile State of BIHAR			Table No. 2:- Religions Recorded for Santals in the state of WEST BENGAL		
SI. NO.	NAME OF RELIGIONS/ OTHER PERSUASIONS	NO.	SI. NO.	NAME OF RELIGIONS/ OTHER PERSUASIONS	NO.
1	BUDDHIST	145	1	BUDDHIST	244
2	CHRISTIAN	82,122	2	CHRISTIAN	42,248
3	HINDU	2,015,604	3	HINDU	1,581,696
4	JAIN	40	4	JAIN	14
5	MUSLIM	2,742	5	MUSLIM	1,219

Table No. 1:- Religions Recorded for Santals in erswhile State of BIHAR			Table No. 2:- Religions Recorded for Santals in the state of WEST BENGAL		
SI. NO.	NAME OF RELIGIONS/ OTHER PERSUATIONS	NO.	SI. NO.	NAME OF RELIGIONS/ OTHER PERSUATIONS	NO.
6	SIKH	151	6	SIKH	143
7	ABUTANI	1	1	A.C.	10
8	ADIVASI	130	2	ADI	20
9	BIDIN	190	3	ADIVASI	837
10	BORO	11	4	BAHAI/BAHAIS	69
11	DUPUL DHARMA	7	5	BIDIN	244
12	GORUGU	209	6	BONGA	42
13	HAJONG	148	7	CHANG NAGA	98
14	HEMA	9	8	GARO	2
15	HILL MIRI	40	9	GORUGU	3
16	JUNGWANSOM	11	10	HALBA	2
17	KHARWAR	2,371	11	HAMI-HENOWA	1
18	KOLHA	1	12	HILL MIRI	20
19	KOM	1	13	HORI	11
20	KORKU	1	14	MANAB DHARMA	1
21	MARAMBANGA	59	15	MARANGBORO	4,823
22	MARANGBORO	19	16	MARING	1
23	MINYALA	10	17	MIKIR	10
24	MOMBA	162	18	MINYALA	2
25	MORSHI	2	19	MIRI/MISHING	204
26	NISHANG/NISSI/BANGNI/DAFLA	42	20	NASH	7
27	NON-CHRISTIAN	12	21	NISHANG/NISSI/BANGNI/DAFLA	4
28	PANIKA	228	22	NOCTE	478
29	PUYIM	5	23	PAGAN	221
30	RANGANG	11	24	PARDHI	11
31	RIMIT MATAI	9	25	PNAR	73
32	SANAMAHI	10	26	RANGANG	22
33	SANSARI	10	27	SADRI	6
34	SANTAL	6,073	28	SAKAT	5
35	SAORA	220	29	SANAMAHI	3
36	SARANG	576	30	SANSARI	32
37	SARI DHARMA	18	31	SANTAL	3,680
38	SING BONGA	478	32	SAORA	546
39	SOHRAI	7	33	SARANG	732

Table No. 1:- Religions Recorded for Santals in erswhile State of BIHAR			Table No. 2:- Religions Recorded for Santals in the state of WEST BENGAL		
SI. NO.	NAME OF RELIGIONS/ OTHER PERSUATIONS	NO.	SI. NO.	NAME OF RELIGIONS/ OTHER PERSUATIONS	NO.
40	SONGSAREK	26	34	SARI DHARMA	343,912
41	SUMTONG	52	35	SARISAR	605
42	SWARNA	229,558	36	SAURIYA	1
43	TADVI	184	37	SHARABUI	23
44	TAGIN	8	38	SOHRAI	6
45	TANA BHAGAT	12	39	SONGSAREK	50
46	TANGSA	32	40	SWARNA	10,382
47	TANGSA LONGRI/LONGRI	556	41	TADVI	505
48	TANGSA MORANG/MORANG	4,349	42	TANGSA LONGRI/LONGRI	2
49	TIBETAN	8	43	TANGSA MORANG/MORANG	134
50	TRADITIONAL RELIGION	1	44	VIGNANA	27
51	WANCHO	11	45	ZOROASTRIAN/ZOROASTRIANISM	18
52	ZOROASTRIAN/ZOROASTRIANISM	3	46	NO RELIGION/RELIGION NOT STATED/BLANK	289
53	NO RELIGION/RELIGION NOT STATED/BLANK	314	47	UNCLASSIFIED	3,484
54	UNCLASSIFIED	2,493	TOTAL		1,997,222
TOTAL		2,349,492			

Reference: Special Table for SC/ST No 15 & 15 Appendixes, 1991 Census

Reference: Special Table for SC/ST No 15 & 15 Appendixes, 1991 Census

Table No. 3:- Religions Recorded for Santals in the state of ORISSA		
SI. NO.	NAME OF RELIGIONS/OTHER PERSUATIONS	NO.
1	BUDDHIST	15
2	CHRISTIAN	2,616
3	HINDU	323,338
4	JAIN	28
5	MUSLIM	140
6	SIKH	1
7	ADIVASI	9
8	DANPU	1
9	GORUGU	33
10	JAHAR	239
11	JANBOW	11
12	JOWANGOON	11

SI. NO.	NAME OF RELIGIONS/OTHER PERSUASIONS	NO.
13	MARANGBORO	10
14	MOMBA	72
15	MORSHI	182
16	NAGA	1
17	NISHANG/NISSI/BANGNI/DAFLA	11
18	PARDHI	9
19	PASI	2
20	PUYIM	63
21	SANAMAHI	18
22	SANSARI	2
23	SANTAL	43
24	SAORA	11
25	SARI DHARMA	2
26	SONGSAREK	48
27	SUMTONG	58
28	SWARNA	300,665
29	TADVI	337
30	TAGIN	1
31	TANA BHAGAT	112
32	TANGSA	19
33	TANGSA LONGRI/LONGRI	107
34	TANGSA MORANG/MORANG	9
35	TANGSA MOSSANG/MOSSANG	21
36	ZOROASTRIAN/ZOROASTRIANISM	25
37	NO RELIGION/RELIGION NOT STATED/BLANK	534
38	UNCLASSIFIED	978
TOTAL		629,782

Reference: Special Table for SC/ST No 15 & 15 Appendixes, 1991 Census

Table No. 4:- Analysis of Religion of Santals in the State of BIHAR, ORISSA & WEST BENGAL as recorded in 1991 Census

SI No.	Name of Religion/Persuasion	Bihar		West Bengal		Orissa		Total	
		Population	%age	Population	%age	Population	%age	Population	%age
1	Buddhist	145	0.01%	244	0.01%	15	0.00%	404	0.01%
2	Christian	82,122	3.50%	42,248	2.12%	2,616	0.42%	126,986	2.55%
3	Hindu	2,015,604	85.79%	1,581,696	79.19%	323,338	51.34%	3,920,640	78.78%
4	Jain	40	0.00%	14	0.00%	28	0.00%	82	0.00%

5	Muslim	2,742	0.12%	1,219	0.06%	140	0.02%	4,101	0.08%
6	Sikh	151	0.01%	143	0.01%	1	0.00%	295	0.01%
7	Swarna	229,558	9.77%	10,382	0.52%	300,665	47.74%	540,605	10.86%
8	<i>Sari Dharam</i>	18	0.00%	343,912	17.22%	2	0.00%	343,932	6.91%
9	Other	16,305	0.69%	13,591	0.68%	1,465	0.23%	31,361	0.63%
10	Religion not Stated	2,807	0.12%	3,773	0.19%	1,512	0.24%	8,092	0.16%
Total		2,349,492	100.00%	1,997,222	100.00%	629,782	100.00%	4,976,498	100.00%

Reference: Special Table for SC/ST No 15 & 15 Appendixes, 1991 Census

Analysis

In this secular environment, the Santals are very much influenced by the majority mainstream developed religion like Buddhism, Christian, Hinduism, Muslim, Jainism and Sikhism. This might have happened because of the vacuum in their own religion, **SARNA**, Which is based on worship in natural environment. It is the most alienated among all other community traits i.e language, Script, geographical location etc. There is movement for separate State, movement for recognition and development of Language and Script but unfortunately *Religious development movement of Santals has not started so far*. From the beginning of the existence of mankind, Santals practice a completely separate religion, strongly bonded with the nature, which is certainly different from other major dominant religion of modern days. It is heartening to know that 84 different religions are recorded for Santals in all over India and in Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal it is 52, 36 and 45 respectively. Majority Santals in Bihar 85.79%, West Bengal 79.19% and Orissa 51.34% are counted as Hindu. Only 9.77% in Bihar, 0.52% in West Bengal and 47.74% in Orissa Santals are counted their own religion SARNA. From this figure it is observed that in Orissa significant percentage of people (47.47%) are counted as Sarna and it gives the picture of more social awareness of the Santals in Orissa. It is also observed that in West Bengal there are significant number of

people (3,43,912) who mention their religion as *Sari Dharma*. All these distortion in statistics of Santals religion might have happened due to less awareness of people on religion and their ignorance. An urgent and serious step has to be taken to minimize these statistical errors for religion of Santals which might help them to develop in other sectors also in lesser time.

Conclusion:

The religion, based on which the World is polarized today, there are happenings like 9/11, is a neglected entity in Santal's life. The Santal intelligentsia, educated mass and the people at large need to introspect themselves, their thinking process, make strategy for the future and act accordingly to address the religious angle of their life as U.G. Krishnamurthy has rightly said that “*All the political ideologies and even the legal structure are the warty outgrowth of the religious thinking of the man.*” We need to develop the knowledge of a priest, culture of a military, the distributive spirit of the commercial, and the ideal of equality of last, through the development and nurturing of **Positive Social Capital** for our santal society.

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LOCAL SOLUTIONS FOR LOCAL PROBLEMS

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The social existence carries with it intra as well as inter community problem, dilemma and conflict. These, as such, become an integral part of social life. Society has developed systems and institutions to deal with such situations. There are community-based systems and institutions dealing with intra community welfare, disputes whereas inter community welfare, conflicts are dealt generally by modern systems evolved over a period of time based on continuous learning and experience. These modern institutions are developed and put in place based on the indigenous and/or western principles and techniques. Community based systems and institutions have been developed/ followed by the members of that community and these systems and institutions continue to render service for the welfare of a community in particular and contribute to achievement of general peace, brotherhood and goodwill among people.

Santals have inherited a social system of justice from their forefathers. The philosophy and principles of various laws to deal with various situations are there and these are referred all the time to find a solution for a crisis. The philosophy and principles are based on social belief, sentiments, ideas and values. The continuance of social systems and procedures makes them somewhat unique from others. Over a period of time the social systems and procedures have acquired variance on spatial basis but without sacrificing the basics. The identity of Santals

is a macro phenomenon but with local approach in dealing with various problems. As such, one experiences the variation in judgment while dealing with a same or similar situation at some other places.

From time immemorial, Santals have tried to find out solutions locally through their social systems, institutions, understanding and sagacity to deal with local or neighbourhood problems. Though there are systems and institutions to deal with larger issues transcending political or geographical boundary line, these institutions have not been strengthened or organized into a viable and independent institutions.

The questions arise why there will be a longing for finding out local solutions for local problems when modern systems of administration are available. The considerations are:

1. Low cost
2. Easy access
3. Quick disposal
4. Simple
5. Flexibility

What are those local problems?

Problems do arise during traditional/social associations like Enej senrenj, Bonga buru, Social rituals, and other problems can be in the areas of health, education, exploitation, justice, poverty, land, sanitation, communication, water, shelter (housing) etc. All these problem areas can be categorized

as local and/or general in nature. In all these traditional as well as other areas, traditional systems and institutions can play a vital role to effectively offer a local solution.

Approaches:

Let's imagine a situation. For resolution of a dispute, there can be two approaches: one is, people sit together, discuss the conflict/dispute and try to find out a solution or at least some kind of working solution as per provisions of traditional system. In this scenario also matter may not get resolved and there are provisions or arrangements also to deal with such situations. Second one is, to knock at the door of institutions like panchayats, police stations, other administrative machinery or the court. Traditionally, Santals follow the former route for all kinds of disputes. But latter approach is the burgeoning trend among present day Santals.

Which one is better?

It cannot be said in general, which one is better than the other. Both the approaches have their own standards, merits and utility. But one has to make a choice depending upon the ground reality considering various pros and cons of these institutions.

Some questions:

1. Whether to continue with the same/existing system or some improvements are needed?
2. Can we solve our problems locally/ourselves?
3. What is the role of traditional institutions when panchayats under the Panchayati Raj System are in place?
4. When transportation, communication network/facility was limited people

were finding local solutions to their own problems irrespective of modern system of justice/ administration. The situation has changed immensely.

5. Do traditional institutions have required resources (human/financial/infrastructure)?
6. Whether Santal system of administering justice is adequate to cater to the needs of present day reality (segregation of people in terms of education, wealth, political power, social power, occupation)?
7. Whether we can maintain our community feeling as we are being offered power through modern system?
8. Whether social institutions can be integrated through a system of hierarchy with defined roles, responsibilities, duties and authority?
9. Can we out rightly do away with modern system, if not what is the boundary line?

Whether people solve problems locally?

It is commonly noticed that people have in fact developed small models of solutions for local problems. The spread has been very limited and their application is local or regional. Some of the examples, which are beyond the provisions as per social customs, are:

1. Some token money instead of Ganang
2. Local participation for forest protection
3. Co-operation through monetary/material help during death rituals
4. Regulation during community dance

5. Monetary/material help to set up Ol Itun Asra or Schools

The list is not exhaustive but an indicative one.

Point of concern:

For Santals, traditionally all kinds of disputes were resolved through solicitation and mutual co-operation. It is noticed that most of the time matter could not be resolved due to reasons like the verdict was too stringent to be implemented or there was no co-operation from respondents' side or there was total stalemate during the course of discussion/analysis. May be due to this reasons, gradually people chose to follow modern approach rather than the traditional one. Our forefathers maintained the social order and discipline though they were illiterate. When they were able to do so, present day experience shows that it is very difficult most of the time to find out solutions locally to a local problem. The dimension of this complexity is becoming unlimited. There is a need to introspect to find reasons for the system failure on the basis of concern and seriousness of the situation.

Considering the strength of Santals in regard to economic, social and educational, the approach to solve problems locally through traditional institutions seems very appropriate. Though there are modern systems and institutions in place to deal with each and every situation/problem, it is becoming increasingly costly to get the justice. The educational and economic backwardness restricts many to an access to modern systems be it in the field of health, education, justice, land, sanitation, communication, water, shelter (housing) etc.

Case study:

There was an attempt to find out if people are facing problems due to social customs, practices and procedures. The main thrust is to see whether social practices can be equally applied among all the members irrespective social, economic or other status. Survey conducted during 1st conference of All India ASECA at Rourkela during 10-11 Feb, 2002 on ability to pay ganang price, 28%, 19%, **41%**, 10% respondents opined Some, Many, All and Cannot say respectively. Like this there were other questions in that questionnaire.

In Bankura, the same question was asked to a group of 10 students (MBBS, Law) and the reply was given YES unanimously. The author had discussed the same topic with some responsible persons to know whether provisions are prohibitive to follow our customs/ traditions. The response has been different from place to place and person to person. These all can be sorted out locally considering the reality.

Weaknesses of System/Institution and their rectification:

No documentation: It needs to be documented various practices. There is also need to evolve micro as well as macro level solution packages to address various emerging situations. These packages may be used as an alternative to the already existing system. It is worthwhile even to consider development of tailor made solution packages for local/specific applications.

Weak institutions: Social institutions have become weak due to reasons like lack of willingness among the people for its empowerment. These institutions can be strengthened by the active involvement and contribution of people. There is a need for

contribution for maintenance and management of these institutions.

No clear-cut guidelines/code: The rules and guidelines are all orally transmitted from one generation to another. But guidelines/codes are required to be documented, adopted for reference and enforced so as to achieve equal treatment for similar situations.

Conclusion:

There is a need to review social rituals, as it appears to be too costly. This exorbitant cost is forcing people to be in the debt trap. As long as people are inside the debt trap and always repaying their past debt, there will be no surplus and as such no further development work for them or for the society can be undertaken.

Considering the financial and social peculiarities, Santals should resolve their dilemmas, conflicts. Unless small things are solved amicably, Society cannot move forward nor will be able to complete any

job. A society with conflicts, confusion and social burden cannot think forward. It is becoming more and more important as modern administrative process in India has become extremely expensive and time consuming. In the absence of own system, the possibility of building up capacity in a community, which comes from their cohesiveness, similarity and uniqueness, will be a distant dream. The need to strengthen own institutions arise, as some of social aspects are not covered under the purview of modern system. Moreover, social matters may not be properly analysed/ understood by person(s) who are alien to the social milieu.

The process of enquiry and dialogue on social matters should continue in order to find out some possible/feasible solution. The only submission is to adopt a flexible approach so as to keep community unity compact and intact. Otherwise, people will be forced to adopt their own system leading to the erosion of social sense of belongingness.

Issues related to the development of Santali language and literature, and the significance of Ol Chiki

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Abstract: *This paper discusses the issues pertaining to Santali language, which, currently, is at the verge of alteration owing to influence of Indic languages, non-standardised use of different Indic scripts for writing Santali, state monitored policy of education and prevailing social-political environments. The paper starts with analysing the present day problems, highlighting the opinions of modern policymakers and their views over the Santali language, the contribution of Pandit Raghunath Murmu and Ol Chiki for Santali literature, the antiquity of Santali language specially with reference to Sanskrit in Vedic period, and unique features of Santali language as well as Ol Chiki script. Lastly, it has focussed largely on the role of Santal organisations and its prospective long term policy and strategy for shaping Santali literature and forming Santal opinions via print media.*

Introduction

Santals, one of the largest indigenous groups, also known as *Adivasis*, in Indian subcontinent, having major concentration in four Indian states, viz., Assam, Jharkhand, Orissa, and West Bengal, scattered sparsely, in two other neighbouring countries, viz., Bangladesh and Nepal, woven with amazing social traits and with marvellous cultural threads, are enveloped by wonderful linguistic mosaic. Santals as a community, who prefers to call themselves as *Hor*, are pushed into whirlwind in the complex, often less understood, dynamics of socio-cultural and linguistic paradigm, where neither their language has status of endangered language by linguists nor it has recognition as contemporary one. Santali as language is well studied and well documented, yet it does not find its place in 8th schedule of Indian constitution, a gleaming marker for political recognition in the modern policy makers' view. A fiercely freedom loving community, who attracted world's attention, when the charismatic

¹ On study leave from National Aerospace Laboratories, Bangalore, India.

leaders like Sidhu and Kanhu offered fierce resistance to British mighty armed forces during Santal *Hul* in 1855, a remarkable battles in history of Indian freedom movements. A community which carries most of the modern philosophies and values of western civilisation living amidst many of the alien societies. Santal is a community, which can claim to be built up and lived up in democratic set-up for thousands of years, where women enjoys much better status than that of adjoining society, and which has glorious past, wonderful tradition, rich heritage, ancient roots and vignettes. Why do they lag behind in the race of progress and development as community as whole ? Why are Santals, in spite of being numerically larger than other *Adivasi* community in India, lagging behind even other *Adivasis* ? Probably the answer lies in one famous Chinese proverb , which says, “ **If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people**”.

Socio-political background

In order to understand the fundamental problems, there is a need to be aware of the socio-economic and political state of affairs that exist today in the Indian subcontinent and to analyse its impacts on the Santal society. According to recent census, Santal population is more than one *crores* (10 million), which is significantly high to claim a political weight. But, the reality is far from satisfactory, and they have very little political voice owing to inadequate access of formal and informal education, absent of general awareness of constitutional rights of a citizen and lastly, lack of unity among the meagre numbers of educated and well-off Santals. Education being state's subject, each and every state has right to formulate its own educational policy based on its people requirements. Often, the political orientation and leanings of ruling party, opinions and interest of dominant community take centre stage and become prime movers for formulating education policy, and consequently, its culture, history and leanings dominate text books of school curriculum.

As a result, Santals are more familiar with dominant community's language and learned its exaggerated history and over glorified culture and heritage, which is often at the cost of demeaning that of Santals. However, the real history behind the originality and superiority of Indic scripts says that all Indic scripts are derived from *Brahmi* alphabets of the *Ashokan* inscriptions, and comprised of almost similar forms, sequence, barring one or two additions or deletions of alphabets in one to another.

Furthermore, the Indic languages like Bengali and Oriya have originated from Prakrits and Hindi from Maithili, and in later stages, they are formatted with Sanskrit grammar form [Diniels, 1996]. Therefore, it can be said, without loss of generality, that the genesis of Indic languages are the fusion of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrits/Maithili with generous adaptation and absorption of words from Santali language as well as other Austro-Asiatic languages. A paradox of the present day developments is that the very set of languages, which, indeed, are derivatives of Santali language or extracted a large numbers of words from Santali language in one form or other, are trying to dominate over the Santali language and wish to project themselves as much superior than Santali. Currently, in all means, the dominance of derivative languages is so deep which have, undeniably, constrained a section of Santals to believe, Santali as mere dialect, a notion of unfortunate consequence and adverse impact on Santali language.

These circumstances have been further aggravated, owing to rising feelings and sentiments of regionalism among Bengali, Oriya, Hindi and Assamese, where Santal mostly live, and they have virtually hard-pressed the Santali language to suffer the outcome. The numerical strength and the educational status of Santals, in none of these states, is creditable or influential, and as a result, the stepmotherly treatments are meted out with impunity. The hope to get a desirable share of attention for development of Santali language in the near future, is also a misplaced thought and, will remain so in distant future too. Adding insult to injury is the regrettable fragmentation of Santal community along political and regional lines, a deplorable development, which often exposes them to more vulnerability and pushes them further at the verge of exploitation. Decades ago, English was one of main language for administrative work in many of the states. But, as the central govt has started the policy of promoting, rather enforcing Hindi as a national language for India, the dominant community of state is compelling its people to use more and more regional language for administrative and judicial work, and other official purposes to safeguard the state's own language and script, which is further mounting the plight of Santals and making the conditions from bad to worse.

The interstate rivalry and states' antagonism towards centre, has pushed Santal as community and Santali as language at the crossfire of ongoing tussle of powers and the propagation of irrational sense of nationalism ignoring the very base of pluralistic foundation of

Indian civilisation, and consequently, Santals are experiencing major difficulties of being sparsely scattered in four states. Konkani is the community besides Santal, whose people are distributed in different states and who are an unfortunate companion of Santals, are finding themselves too in distress conditions. It would not be exaggerated to state that Santali language is more endangered of losing its charm and magnificence in such process than Konkani language. Konkani is written in Kannada script in Karnataka; in Tamil script in Tamil Nadu; Malayalam script in Kerala ; and Devanagari in Goa and missionaries prefer to use Roman script. Nevertheless, they have been able to standardise the orthography of Konkani in various scripts, specially more meticulously in Kannada script. The disastrous consequence of carving states based on languages have now started showing their ugly heads, and the growing regionalism and antagonism are affecting mostly languages like Santali and Konkani. The onus of creating such problems for Santali language largely lies on Hindi community and regional dominant communities. As the majority of present day problems of Santals, are of political origin, the general political awareness and unity among Santal community is another paramount requirement of the day, so that cohesively and strongly, Santals can fight for their education, developments, linguistic rights.

Contribution of Guru Gomke

Language plays a major role in identity formation and often works as major source of attributes for community identity, as a result, the survival of language is essential to progress as cultural community and script spearheads such activity in playing very significant role for promoting a language. Before the invention of Ol Chiki, the fragmentation of Santali literature along the lines of scripts, was an unfortunate shortcoming for the progress of Santali literature, due to its non-commutivity in nature, which was, in turn, affecting creative writing, a leading requirement for the progress of a language. The situation was so humorous, that a Santal Scholar need to be conversant with five scripts to really make a headway in the Santali language and its literature. Pandit Raghunath Murmu realised the problems more than half century ago, and consequently, he himself took up the work to resolve the problem of using different scripts and devised a new script, called Ol Chiki. Concurrently, he created a plenty of Santali literature in wide range of subjects, topics, fields, which marked a new era of Santali literature. His collection of books ranges from novels to short stories, poetries

to songs and religious sermons, from books on Santal society to books for learning primary mathematics, from Santali grammars to books on great tribal persons.

It is a common knowledge that there exists an impressive research works by foreigners in Santali language, which indeed, is a major boon for the progress of Santali language. However, there are terrific dearth of creative writings by non-native speakers. Therefore, the community participation is an important decisive factor, without which the generation of creative writings for augmenting the literature and driving a language forward to become a successful contemporary language in the eye of world, will not have a glimpse of success. This propel the responsibility to Santal community itself to promote Santali language and grow as cultural and linguistic community. The Ol Chiki movement led by Pandit Raghunath Murmu, gave Santals novel direction, provided Santali language a fresh hope, offered Santali literature new dawn for development, growth and, this sprang a plenty of new creative literature in Ol Chiki, leading to a restoration of authoritative identity of Santali as language and Santals as Community. **The nucleation of language movement seeding around the Ol Chiki script, has enormous potential for growth of Santali literature in the years to come, provided it is nurtured carefully, allowed to flourish with well concerted thoughts and plans, and a decade is enough for it to thrive along with dominant contemporary literature.** The forthcoming centenary celebration of Guru Gomke will provide an abundant space for crafting well thought strategy and devising well concerted plans for propagating his vision and ideology for further development of Santal society.

Impediments for Ol Chiki

Time and again, in the intellectual forum, numerous scholars and linguists express their view without going much deep insights and looking at ground reality that exists today. Further difficulties are created, when they are being regularly quoted or projected in different media and journal as universal truth. This phenomenon has become more and more common place due to fear of policy makers and, in turn, by sponsoring such forum, more often than not, to counter the growing awareness of linguistic rights and sense of preserving cultural heritage, specially among the *Adivasi*. The script like Ol Chiki has become a symbol of unity among *Adivasi*, and it stands in the way of assimilation in the dominant culture and its community. One Indian linguist, Dr.

U. N. Singh argues, “It is very difficult to argue with a majority language speaker, particularly if his or her own language happens to be written a little differently from all conventions of writing. One easily overlooks the fact that the developed European languages like English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese all employ the same writing system with or without slight additions and alterations, and yet they would pass any test that aims at conferring the status of these languages as speech varieties. Nearer home, in South Asia too, Hindi, Marathi, and Nepali use the Devnagari writing system and are still generally accepted as miles apart-linguistically. Another classic case is the system employed by Assamese and Bengali(with a difference of few letters)- both being written a variety of the Eastern *Brahmi* writing systems.” [Singh, 2001].

This simple and linear logic can well be used in simple and less complex scenario; moreover, they are based on certain assumptions, viz., homogeneous socio-economical and education conditions etc. What he has overlooked, is that the socio-economic condition and, political environments in European countries, was entirely different from what it exists today in India. The present Indian society is caste ridden, inter caste marriage is taboo, the people of lower strata of society are being oppressed, there is a rampant prevalence of untouchability and huge disparity among communities. On the other hand, Europeans were much better placed and stand along with, in altogether different sets of values and ethos. Apart from this, Europeans communities were more independent and equally developed among themselves, so fair playing was more natural than exception. **In this background, it is sensible to remember, the choice of Roman script for European languages was largely due to religious rather than linguistic considerations.** Discounting, few differences, viz., language and few customs, culture and food habits etc., they are essentially the same, and in this respect, religion had played great role in shaping European communities. On the other hand, in India, the enormous diversity among the communities did exist, due to non-influence of any institutionalised religion, and as a result, Indian minority communities were allowed to carry their culture, heritage, customs and tradition from the time immemorial. These thousand year old traditions are being threatened today by imposing culture and language of presently dominant community, which sometimes does not truly reflect Indian heritage, in the veil of education, economic development and modernisation.

No one can deny the necessity of progress of society with time; however, the developmental programme can be so designed and accomplished so that it does not annihilate one's cultural legacy, roots and vignettes. In order to protect from any onslaughts, a separate script becomes essential ingredient to carve out culture, to preserve customs, to restore heritage and to form its community identity. It is worthwhile to highlight that, Dr. U. N. Singh might not be aware of the ongoing tussle between the Nepali and Devnagari scripts, and presently, Nepal Government is ferociously reluctant to accept Devnagari as their script, and asking for separate code points for Nepali script in Unicode/ISO/IEC 10646, and at the same time, the relation between Assamese and Bengali is not sweet either. Therefore, in no way, a script could play role of national unity as viewed by national script planner or by Gandhiji, who called in early 1930s to give up all scripts in favour of Devnagari script. **In these circumstances, it is worthwhile to mention that the use of Devnagari script for writing Sanskrit, is the invention in modern times and the use effectively had started with the advent of printing technology in India. In earlier times Sanskrit manuscripts were written in variety of local scripts**[Diniels, 1996]. Evidently, Indian unity lies in diversity, that is clearly manifested from the countless present day regional problems. When Indians could endure pluralistic form of society for thousands of years, what prevents them now from continuing the trends? The sooner, we understand this, the better would be the prospect of unity and future of India.

Antiquity of Santali language and its recognition

Of late, a section of scholars begun questioning the theory or proposition of Aryan invasion in Indian subcontinent, which often termed the present upper castes, specially Brahmin, in the notion of alien. As a result, there has been continuous efforts by many of Hindu scholars and linguists to disprove this theory [Newsgroup, 2001]. Since, the theory of Aryan invasion came from the study of history of languages, when in 18th century, European linguists, had started comparative study of various languages and tried to find common ancestors, they eventually noticed a remarkable similarity in Sanskrit with European languages, and subsequently, new theory arrived, that termed the genesis of Indo-European language as common ancestor. This theory, however, is not without any deficiency and not fool proof either. Nevertheless, the recent genetic study of DNA sample of Indian population confirms this notion,

which of course, is not a topic to be discussed here [Majumder, 2001].

In the pursuit of carving indigenous foundation of Sanskrit language, several endeavours have been made in this direction. In doing so, more formal and in-depth study on Santali language have begun for considerable time, which is the hope to disprove Aryan invasion theory. The flip side of this endeavour is the discovery of novelty and originality of Santali language and its recognition. Santali is coming for the consideration, due to Santali language's unique features, viz, the presence of voiced and voiceless /h/ in Santali language, an amazing similarity in grammatical syntax with Sanskrit and the use of Sanskrit words in pure form in Santali, which have even ceased to exist in any Indic languages. [Kuiper, 1948] [Bodding 1929]. It can be well argued that in no conceivable way, Santals can borrow the words from Sanskrit. However, because Sanskrit was closely guarded and secretive language restricted to only Brahmins, a hunter community like Santal, in no imaginable way, can get in or come into contact with them. In contrast, there is a possibility that Santali words have been adopted in Sanskrit language, and this paradigm cannot be justified without admission of the notion that Santals were a part of great Indus civilisations.

Often European scholars argue that the presence of Sanskrit words, in Santali in particular, in Munda languages in general, can be imported from Sanskrit after assimilating some of them in Santal populations, which, however, does not pay any attention to many of the well-established theories of biology and genetic engineering. To support this theory, a further assumption, saying that all the languages spoken by Austro-Asiatic family are based on loan words and the races are migrated from outside Indian subcontinent, a notion which even laymen may find difficult to comprehend. When pleasant climates that was prevalent in south Asia, could not bear human race, how, the rest of world living with harsher climates, could do so? Fundamentally, in other words, stating that Indian subcontinent was, indeed, vacuum, and devoid of any human race, perhaps, that even includes animals, reptiles, insects, or all flora and fauna, and all the present Indian population, with special reference to the people of Austro-Asiatic family, obviously including other living creatures, have migrated from East Asia or West Asia or Africa. **For disregarding the importance of many linguistic missing links, the basic conviction beneath the assumption is that Santals cannot carry the language for thousands years in undistorted forms, but it is,**

probably, ignoring a number of novelties and usages in Santali language, a natural derivation of the forms for words, where, sounds generating out of actions or movements from animated or unanimated objects or sounds associated with living being and its corresponding words, are robustly approximated, and its canonical grammatical structure, when retaining its exhaustiveness of classifications, yet minimising the use of words with interchangeable formulation of noun and verb, or sometimes, with the use of closest forms. However, the ongoing efforts of disproving Aryan invasion theory, without accepting contribution or assimilation of Santals/Munda/Khasis etc. race with Aryan race, is unattainable or difficult to make any headway. Nevertheless, it can be stated from available linguistic evidences without loss of generality, that Santals were, either a part of, or lived in the fringe of great ancient Indus civilisations, Harappa and Mohendrodaro and had contributed in one forms or others for its developments. It is worth mentioning that the findings of the genetic study on DNA of Indian population observes that a little variation of genetic code patterns among the female populations, whereas, notable variations among that of male population. Furthermore, the degree of variation increases with the increase in gap between existing caste hierarchy, which, indeed, points towards the notion of assimilation of Santals with them (Munda population in general),thus, facilitating the transmission of a number of words of Santals(Munda words in general) into Sanskrit. Probably, any kind of comprehensive study without any presumption and conviction in mind, in the field of etymology, ethnology and anthropology may resolve the mystery of civilisation in prehistoric time and probably recognise, formally, the antiquity of Santali language. Any efforts or attempts by scholars will be observed with great interest.

Ol Chiki in education

It is known that *“education brings awareness and awareness brings revolution”*, thus, propagating education is the principal decisive issue for comprehensive development of community, its language and literature. Education in native language has many advantages and has insightful impact for community development in cohesive and more comprehensive way, by formal or informal education, or adult education. Although, Santali language has impressive number of works, poetry, folklores, drama, short stories, up till now, its realisation in education is still in infancy. There are impressive numbers of committees set up by Government of

respective states for introduction of Santali, reports are being submitted on regular basis, and these cycles are continuing for quite some time, but, when we look at ground reality, situation remains at a standstill, often gets worsen, and implementation remains as a tale of fiction. This situation is particularly true, with the state of West Bengal. More often, there is more concern for a tiny number of educated people than for large number of illiterate mass. It is more than 50 years, since India got independence, but the policy of educating Santals in native language or at least introduction of Santali as language paper, was not given due attention all along and sometimes, wilfully avoided to do so, partly due to promotion of languages of dominant community of various states, and partly due to the fear of galvanisation of Santali mass as separate identity, which sometimes works as nucleus for forming powerful political community. As a consequence, an extra burden of learning one language for educating even in the beginning is added in their shoulders, who are already tackling a number of adversaries like poor economic conditions, social injustices etc. In the long run, Santal students are strongly placed in the receiving end vs other students on many fronts, but those who can not cope with the burden, prefer to discontinue the schooling, and as a result, a high drop-out among the Santal students is observed in village areas.

It is, sometimes, incomprehensible, why do a Santali student need to learn regional language, when most of the dominant community’s people are preferring to learn English for greener prospects. Would it not be wise to formulate a policy, which will reduce an extra burden of learning state’s language to be educated, at least, in the initial stage of learning ? Is it not enough for Santals, to learn Santali as first language, English as second language and state’s language as third one ? In India, English is still a language for higher education, thus, learning English is enough for opening a gateway for higher education. **Naturally, the question of usage of Roman script versus Ol Chiki, comes up here, and the answer lies on the trade off factor, where, the passion for learning the Ol Chiki script can greatly offset the burden of learning an extra script, and this is specially true in adult education and in the prevailing circumstances, where education is no longer a synonym of white colour jobs and prospective future, but a pretty instrument for unfolding talent and latent depositions, and developing the intrinsic intelligence, apart from providing keys to the treasure of knowledge and the gateways to a**

world outside. Another strong reason, which often numerous people failed to understand, to have separate script is that, Santal being deeply conservative as they inherited marvellous value systems and cultural formation, which has been imbibed upon them in many years, the propagation of education without adherence of their cultural values may not yield the desired results and has been demonstrated so in past 50 years and up till now, it has created a sense of fear that education is more and less a synonym of alienation with their own culture and mental formation, eventually, making them rootless people and putting in a peculiar state of dilemma once they are educated and this is precisely, where, Ol Chiki can create strong links between educated Santals and mainstream Santal population, and provide a mechanism by creating a delicate balance between retaining its cultural value systems and formation of mental state, and at the same time, to propagate the education assertively among them. By all accounts, so far, Ol Chiki has proven successful in doing so in the areas, where, it has substantial influence.

Sometimes, people argue that learning Ol Chiki may place Santal students in disadvantageous position vs. others in the job market. However, they are unable to foresee the future job scenarios, specially the teaching in primary level, instead considering only the present ones. As the implementation of Ol Chiki is carried out and Santali language in Ol Chiki becomes part of education curriculum, it will create more prospects of job opening for Santals, eventually, placing dominant communities at other ends vs. Santals in the competition of such jobs, if not completely pushing them out of bounds from such jobs. In this scenario, either they have to allow such jobs to be taken up by Santals or they themselves have to learn Santali and Ol Chiki to compete for such jobs, which is the most welcome situation and has a highly constructive impact for Santali as language and Ol Chiki as script. These are also major driving considerations against implementation of Ol Chiki. There is a need by Santali organisations to put up concerted efforts to promote Ol Chiki without the help of state machinery and build organisations as self-sufficient and self-sustainable.

Significance of vernacular media

Vernacular press and local media have reflective impacts on a language development. It exercises great deal of influence over their general mass. Thus, any promotion of the language, without effective vernacular press, will not have much needed effect on

the language development. Since long, there were considerable attempts by Santals to bring Santali magazines or news papers, however, majority of them had died out slowly due to lack of patronage and want of sufficient readerships. It could be noted with dismay, a community with more creative minds, did not push its weights in any non-print media. Although, of late, there is one or two such efforts, by and large, they are not up to mark, and it remains to be seen, the people's acceptance of it after the demise of hype of new kind. Any kind of further encouragement will be a most welcome step in this direction. The effort to bring News paper and magazines in Ol Chiki has several constraints and hindrances, specially in terms of usage of technology in earlier times. But with the advent of modern computer based DTP technology and its easy, royalty-free associated softwares and tools, viz., free true type Ol Chiki fonts, Open Office suites etc, did drastically revolutionize the scenario. Nevertheless, very few Santali magazines/news papers in Ol Chiki are in surface, and it can be noted with consternation that albeit of good effort, the present author was not able to locate more than three such examples.

In this context, it is worth noting that the domain of reach or spheres of influence, of any print media is far reaching, as it not only works as communicator, or medium, but also as an instrument for forming general opinions. Therefore, it necessitates a great deal of training and skills to flawlessly discharge this function. There is a need to develop analytical skills, to understand the deep insights of subjects, to structure the contents, and to articulate the intended message, and these require further professional training, developing the habit of readings, awareness, and lastly, the dedication and commitment for work, and zeal to excel. Obviously, an all-pervasive media endeavour demands a well-thought and well-planned move backed by sound institutional and financial efforts, and its influence would extend far beyond the purview of one community.

Need for Standardisation

The overwhelming task to resolve the problems of use of different scripts by adopting single script, in favour of Ol Chiki, is much talk of the day and so is its challenge. A script that has been devised and optimised based on the usage of Santali language, retains its many unique features, crafted with indigenous touch, blended with the essence of modern linguistic science, can well be used for mass education in primary level, mass communication and its socio- linguistic context. **The great novelty of Ol**

Chiki script is its usage and formulation with approximating sounds and symbols or actions performed, which fairly resembles the natural evolution of Santali language. Moreover, our study shows that Ol Chiki writing system explicitly distinguishes the short vowels and long vowels, perfect use of voiced and voiceless /h/ and the unique treatments of diacritic *Ahad*, which neatly preserves the morphophonemic relationships between the glottalized and voiced equivalents. These features stand in marked contrast to the usage of any other scripts, in which Santali is, currently, being written.

An interesting finding has been mentioned in the report of “the Committee on Santali language”(set up by Govt. of West Bengal in their extraordinary resolution published in the Calcutta Gazette dated 5th March 2001 to study the feasibility of introduction of Santali language in Ol Chiki Script in academic curriculum of West Bengal), which has been submitted to Government of West Bengal on 31st May, 2002. Recently, a section of summary of it, has been published in *Lahanti Pratika*, a bilingual newspaper, dated 1st December, 2002, and it observes that over 86% of Santals sampling over 10,976 people, favoured their voice for Ol Chiki [Lahanti, 2002]. This finding clearly indicates the moods & sentiments of overwhelming majority of Santal population, who, indeed, desire for a single script to be used and that is Ol Chiki. Therefore, the next task for leaping forward, is the standardisation of orthography for Santali in Ol Chiki script. In this context, it can be well recalled that, after the work of Panini in about 460 BC, which describes over 4000 *Sustras* (axiom) for Sanskrit grammar, further deformation or alteration of Sanskrit language have successfully stopped, and very little change is observed in Sanskrit language during its existence for over more than 2000 years. The work of grammar and dictionary for standardising the orthography, pronunciation, usage of words, will greatly help in promoting Santali language, specially in the context of Ol Chiki script usage, and certainly can arrest the deformation or alteration of Santali language in the years to come, and also safeguard it from the onslaughts of deliberate unfavourable government policy and the continuing threat of assimilation.

Responsibility of Santal Organisations

After the invention and spread of Ol Chiki, education among the Santal mass took new dimension, within short period of effective existence, it opened the window of more prosperous world to the Santals, and at the same time, it made them aware of their own

cultural identity, heritage and history. **Albeit of positive impact, and the restoration of forgotten history, the constant propagandas by state machinery with the help of mass media, sometimes, with wilfully crafted logics, sometimes, with linearly extrapolated logics from one paradigm to another, has been able to make the dents in the confidence of literate Santals.** This is precisely where, a Santal organisation can come up and stand to argue against any apparently convincing arguments by exposing its vagueness and frame a similar set of counter arguments.

No one can deny the contribution and impact of Ol Chiki movement for the development of prosperous Santali society. Therefore, its further development is very much needed and will ultimately help to shape a Santal society from infancy to a matured one in the coming years. The forthcoming centenary celebration of Guru Gomke will open up ample opportunities to sit together by all Santal organisations, specially three major ASCEAs, which have considerable mass base and widespread networks, to frame a judicious long term strategy coupled with few short term ones to leap forward Santali language and make it at par with any contemporary language and Ol Chiki as modern script.

Need for Integrated plan for Ol Chiki development

Of late, there are considerable efforts for the promotion of Ol Chiki by individuals and organisations, but, these efforts are not being synchronised with well thought-out policy. Like free markets policy of economics, there is a need to formulate the Ol Chiki development plans and policies. This will provide organisations or individuals with ample freedoms for devising the implementation strategy, yet it conforms to the global plan and its direction. The development of Santali language and Ol Chiki literature can be formulated as an integrated plan for the next 10 or 20 years. The plan of this integrated project may contain many components. **The concise list of issues, discussed soon after this, of outmost importance pertaining to Santali literature and Ol Chiki script, currently requires urgent attention of Santal scholars, academicians and organisations. Without the appropriate conceptualisation, thoughtful detailing and successful implementation and execution of these issues, the attempts of making significant advance in the subject in question, will meet with serious impediments and remain susceptible to vulnerability of concern and trouble**

in the coming years. The issues can be classified broadly into two categories, viz., strategic issues and general issues. The strategic issues are those, whose execution and successful implementation can have significant impact on the overall mass, irrespective of location and boundary, on the other hand, general issues are those which have location specific impact. Here, the discussion of issue will be confined to the strategic issues only.

Resolving consensus in favour of Ol Chiki: This is really a daunting task even for an organisation of outstanding stature and, for Santal organisations, it is no exception. When there is a direct or indirect views against the use of Ol Chiki in Santali language, the enormous challenges are open for Santal Organisations. It would, not only have to fight against the odds of existing conditions, poor economic background of Santal mass, but also to many of the concerted propagandas orchestrated by vocal group with sound financial backing. However, there is hope for Santal organisations as they have the people on their side whose unadulterated love and enthusiasm for Ol Chiki script could be effectively used to turn the table in Ol Chiki's favour.

Standard text books: The availability of standard and high quality text books for Ol Chiki is a need of the day, since majority of NGOs, suffer major set back due to lack of standard text books, without which the propagation of Ol Chiki will not be much effective. These text books, specially for primary education can be written based on the consensus of people of different regions and there is a need to widely circulate them among the ordinary people. Of course, the attention for making creative and innovative books for nursery and primary level and associated tools to reach kids, presenting them in audio-visual rhythmic form, where they can afford, are other important requirements.

Standardisation: The standardisation of Santali language, its orthography, pronunciations, usage and grammar are some of the principal important tasks that need to be undertaken on priority and urgent basis. There is a master piece of work by Rev. P.O. Bodding, yet, the standardisation of orthography for Ol Chiki script remains to be done. As a result, many of Santal writers or authors come out with their own orthography, and it leads to a certain level confusion where some words of Santali language loses its commutivity in due course of time, and general readers suffer a great deal of problems due to the inaccessibility of standardised or well agreed

orthography. The Ol Chiki literature is still in shaping stages, therefore, any standardisation effort, may not attract a sizeable corrections or modifications, if at all needed; on the contrary, if left out, in culmination of Ol Chiki literature, we would stumble upon a serious problem of variation of orthography for the same sound. Therefore, development of standard dictionary, easily available and simplified grammar books can markedly transform the prevailing circumstances, and subsequently, it would mark a leap forward of one step for the Santali language development.

Print media: Bringing more and more journal and news paper in Ol Chiki could pave the way for development of Santali language and it can contribute remarkably in creating awareness among the Santals. Since, to maintain quality of any magazine or news paper, there is a need to develop the skills of presenting message, analytical insights of problem, deep understanding of well crafted words. Therefore, unless these skills are developed from buds, it is unlikely to flourish in later stages. Thus, any attempt to encourage students of Santal dominated colleges or schools, to bring out annual magazines, where Santal organisations can partially finance and provide DTP technology related assistance, if required various editorial supports, would have much needed impact on Santali literature in long run.

Low Cost publishing: Santal organisations can either explore the possibility of building publication houses or encourage the individuals with entrepreneur skills to move in such a direction for Santali literature. Due to the advent of computer technology, publishing and printing cost has come down drastically, and has become more and more economic and flexible too, even for limited prints. Any venture in this direction may provide a certain kind of long term solution for Santali literature and open up alternative employment opportunities. At the same time, it can look after marketing of the creative writings of the authors and poets. This idea would greatly help the scholars and writers, who in turn, can spare more time for engaging themselves in creative works rather than worry about printing and publication aspects. Unless, there is a good market, the authors or writers are unlikely to work as full time writers, without which development of Santali literature will remain at the mercy of pastime writers, and occasionally, these writings are not up to the mark. There is already an effort by Wesanths portal (<http://wesanths.tripod.com>) to promote and encourage the listing of many Ol Chiki books and

writings, so that it helps to publicise the works of Santal writers in the national as well as international market, and at the same time, to create a network for existing publishing houses for Santali literature and build up a single portal for promotion of their publications for international customers and markets. In this regard, internet technology is playing one of the effective media for promotion of writings. This notion is in the formative stage, nevertheless, it has been able to promote the legacy of Ol Chiki and its works across the globe.

Conclusion

Ol Chiki as script and Santali as communicative language have great influence on Santal people, and have manifold impacts, generating awareness among the common mass on the one hand, familiarising them with outside world on the other hand. Obviously, this can be achieved only when the spread of education can be realised in each and every village of Santal community. As it is often observed, there is an untainted love and passion for Ol Chiki script among the Santal population, being an indigenous script invented by a fellow Santal. This very emotion and passion can be capitalised for their benefits, rather than exploiting it for achieving political ends, and promote it as an instrument for the spread of education among the Santals. Therefore, the key to the success of Santal community squarely lies, on how effectively Santal organisations are devising strategy and policy to promote Ol Chiki among the Santals in the coming years, and in doing so, they will, not only solve its issue of identity crisis that the Santals face today, and generate interest for education, but also help to eradicate the problems of evil practices and customs by generating awareness, and improve the economic status by making them acquainted with modern science & technology. As the Chinese proverb goes, spreading education through Ol Chiki, a plan and venture for lifetime benefits of Santals, so is its importance. It has long

standing implication and deep rooted manifestation for progress and growth of Santal society, and will help in moving them from a community of hunter status to a community of twenty first century comprising of perfect blend of novelty and originality of Santal roots and vignettes, on the one hand, and the characteristics and attributes of advanced, progressive and modern society of the world, on the other hand. This dream can well be realised, if there is a concerted effort by all organisations for promoting Ol Chiki based on well thought-out strategy and plan, backed by strong commitments and firm dedications.

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Lack of Language Consciousness and its Impact on Santal Society

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Abstract

Today's Santal parents have a common problem that their children are neither interested to attend community gathering nor ready to adopt Santal culture and tradition. An obsession remains in their mind being born as Santal. Always try to avoid the situation, where their identity gets notified as Santal. Finally they prefer to marry a non-Santal rather than a better qualified Santal. In many cases it is observed that the root cause of so many problems is one i.e. inability to speak Santali. Children say "Our parents have not taught us" and parents say "We failed to teach Santali to them". It seems like either it's Einstein's complex theory, which children could not learn or like costly study of USA, which parents could not afford. Unfortunately the reason is neither. Here some environmental issues have been discussed, which are responsible for a Santal child to turn into such pseudo-Santal. Also some approaches are described, following which such problems can be easily avoided.

Introduction:

Santals are one of the largest indigenous groups, which have grown up many civilisations struggling more against human suppression rather than natural disasters. Being the descendant of one of the oldest natives of India, they should have ruled the Indian valley over years. But the fact is that hitherto they are one of the backward and suppressed communities in Indian society. Their existence is hardly found in any advanced field of science, technology or social, cultural and political scenario in national or international level. Even being one of the beneficiaries as Scheduled Tribe defined by Indian Government, they have taken more than half century to come up to the present level. And still statistics rates them as poor, uneducated, backward community. By introspecting the life style and social behavior of Santals, it is observed that one of the reasons for not progressing as per demand of time is their lack of self

esteem. And one example of their lacking of self esteem is that many people do not speak their own language i.e. Santali. History tells that progress of a community depends upon the progress of its mother tongue. Language is the symbol of community's existence for outside world and internally acts as a magical string binding individuals with love and affection, and unites massively for overall progress of the community. One of the reasons for disappearing many small communities in course of time, is the lack of patronage of their own language. It is seen that some people condemn their language and community when they become rich and think that they are independent or globalised in better words, but in reality they feel that they should not be identified as the descendant of the backward class. On the other hand, the poor people of the community expect some help from them, which is needed for over all growth of the community. Today Santal community is facing the same problem. The rich people

from the community hesitate to identify themselves as Santal where as poor people lack the community help to progress in life.

Background Study:

It is pity to know that most of the second generation children are neither capable of talking in Santali nor ready to adopt Santal culture. They do not feel to belong to the community and try to avoid Santals as per as possible. Although avails the government benefits of being Santal, but never come up to resolve any problem of community. Finally prefer to marry a non-Santal and disappear from Santal Community. In some cases, they blame their parents and community for not providing proper education in this direction. This is one social disease in our community. It can affect the next generation in such an extent that none will be there to interact in Santali. In other words, the whole community will disappear in the course of time. For existence of the community, time demands to introspect the problem and react promptly to eradicate it properly. The medicine for this is to learn and speak Santali as well as enrich the environment where Santal language can grow.

Case Studies as Causes:

Some cases have been analysed below which makes Santal child to pseudo-Santal being handicapped of its mother tongue.

1. Mostly in urban areas, many educated Santal parents prefer to talk in local language at home instead of Santali. One reason is to teach their children that

particular language so that their children can feel comfortable in education and surroundings from very beginning. Although they have plan to teach Santali to their children later on, but they do not find proper time and situation to teach. It is not because of busyness of parents or children but the ignorance of both and lack of facility. The final consequence is that children miss the opportunity to learn Santali.

2. A central government employee, who gets transferred once in every 3-4 years to different state. When the child was small, they were in Bhubaneswar inside Oriya community. The child automatically became fluent in Oriya from his friends and neighbors. At that time, the parents did not encourage/impose him to learn Santali since Oriya was first priority as needed to interact in school. Got admission to a central school, hence now the importance is given to learn English. By the way, father got transferred to some place, where the common language is Hindi. From TV, friends and surrounding, he learnt Hindi also. Now in 7-8 years old, he is fluent in Oriya, Hindi and English. Learning languages one after another is not the only task for him, but also needs to excel in study. It seems like a genuine case for not learning Santali. But it is not.
3. Parents talk in Santali among themselves but when they talk

with their children, use local language. The typical assumption of these parents that their children will learn automatically. But due course of time, it is observed that neither the children able to speak Santali although most cases they understand, nor the parents bother about teaching them. The consequence is same and they behave as mentioned above.

4. In childhood, many speak Santali as they were born in village. But for better study they migrate to urban environment, where they do not get chance to talk in Santali. After few year, it is found that they forget to speak or struggle to speak in Santali. Finally they stop speaking Santali.
5. There are some people, who hesitate to speak in Santali although they know it. The reason behind this, is that they are hardly aware of Santals' marvelous culture and noble and natural tradition, simple and hardworking life style, and its glorious history, which has given birth to many heroes of the nation. They know Santals as half naked black men live in forest as painted by upper caste people. They know the sensational story of untouchable people as Santal. They feel pity on the community when they read in newspaper the live stories of Santals as downtrodden and suppressed by others due to their poorness and ignorance. Instead of trying to solve these social problems, they try to hide themselves and avoid speaking Santali.

Consequences:

When a Santal child does not know Santali, he feels uncomfortable mixing with his other Santal children, who talk in Santali. When an older person asks in Santali, he feels embarrassed for not being able to answer in Santali. So he always tries to avoid the situation, where he has to talk in Santali. Attending Santals' gathering becomes a boring session for him. He prefers his friend circle among non-Santal children. Inside his mind some sort of bitterness towards Santal people gets created. Although due to parents' pressure he obeys different Santal rites and rituals on different occasions, he feels uncomfortable among his non-Santal friends. Gradually when he becomes older, although he is better than same aged Santal guys in other fields, he finds himself defeated while talking in Santali. It is very difficult for anyone to bear the defeat only because of language ignorance. So gradually he tries to keep himself far from such people. When becomes young, tries to find a non-Santal life partner with the fear that he may have to face the embarrassment situation if marries to a Santal. And finally after marrying to non-Santal, with the pressure of life partner, prefers to detach all sort of relationship with other Santals. And in such cases, there is huge chance for parents getting bad treatment from such children. After all, the society loses one Santal. By doing so one after another makes significant impact on our society. Gradually the day will not be far when government will focus on this community, which will diminish very soon like today's Lodha community, which are hardly few thousands in number living mainly in Mayurbhanj

district in Orissa and Medinipore district of West Bengal. History will write as there was a community named Santal, which is no more. Avoiding Santali is very much observed among rich Santals, so following them by others is quite expected. Thus there is a pretty good chance of this danger with in next few generations. When a Santal rises with stamp of community, community expects help from him, when he becomes rich and educated. But when such person avoids community, it becomes big loss for the community. The poor people of the community will remain ever suppressed by others and depressed for their poverty and ignorance. And as a consequence, the community will remain like present days' undeveloped and backward group in coming years.

Since Santals are grown up in different parts of Asian continent e.g. India and Bangladesh, and their dense population mainly in Orissa, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Assam, their mother tongue Santali is the best medium to interact among themselves across the location. For the government officers, who need to interact with rural Santals, should learn this language as these people can effectively talk in this language rather than any other languages.

It is found that many books are written in Santali about their culture, tradition, history, heritage, life and lessons. It is seen that Santals have rich culture, noble tradition, natural life style, glorious history and ancient heritage. So if anyone wants to know about this, should learn the language as well as learn the script for it, i.e. Ol-Chiki.

Since education in Santali will be taken up by different State Governments in future, there is huge need of Santali linguists in these areas. Unless someone

knows Santali and Ol-Chiki, he is going to miss this opportunity.

Approaches to Cure:

This is a social problem in our community, which affects immediately to the elite class of Santals and consequently to the whole Santal community. One can understand the impact of the problem, only if he is sufferer of such problem or have someone close relative who is facing the problem. Parents of such victims are the most sufferer for this. They want their children to be like them, where as due to their ignorance they fail to make them. Unfortunately they are blamed by others. Here some approaches are discussed, which may be applied to different victims and can get out of this problem.

The first step of getting out this problem is learning Santali. Speaking Santali and writing in Ol-Chiki is two steps solution. Expertise in these fields gives additional confidence on dealing people better way. Having good knowledge on Santali culture, tradition, history and heritage is the third step in this direction.

As far as time is concerned to learn this language, script and others, it is always better to learn sooner than later. It does not need any specific time or age to learn. It does not need any specialised training to learn when there are so many Santali speaking persons all around. And in fact this is not the task of only victims, but the whole community should take the responsibility to help others from getting out of this difficulties. Some approaches are analysed below where this task can be handled very efficiently:

When the child grows up in Santali environment, he does not need extra attention to learn the language. Surrounding teaches him everything. But unfortunately outside such environment, he doesn't get such facility for which he needs extra task to be done by parents. For them home is the best school to learn and parents are the ideal teachers for him. If the parents do not talk in Santali at home, then they can not expect their children to learn Santali. Depending upon other load on the child, the urban parents should give emphasis on the child to learn Santali. They should not pressurise on children for this, rather they should make the situation in such a way that the children show interest to learn it. In urban areas, some people invite other Santals along with children so that children of both family can interact with each other, which makes them friend. At the same time, they get chance to observe how the older Santals talk and behave. Sometimes on the presence of small children, parents should talk in Santali about these children in such a way that they should understand at least this much that their parents are talking about them. Hence they put interest to listen what parents are talking and try to understand. When these children attend different family get-together they find their friends, so do not feel boring. At the same time when they watch seniors' conversation, realise the importance of understanding the language. Gradually they put effort from their side to learn. But it is good not to wait till this time to teach children rather at every step they should be taught. This is one of the worst scenarios where case is being handled properly. Another case is that the parents taught their small child some Santali songs and when any Santal guest comes,

they used to ask her/him to recite the song. After the song the guest used to praise her/him and encourages her to learn more. It creates interest on her to learn more and more. Sometimes in different Santali get-together, small children are also given chances to give speech in Santali. It not only gives zeal and encouragement to those children who speaks but also to the children who watch them. Praising to the children who speaks in public gives challenge to those who watch them. Thus for little children the case should be handled carefully without hurting them. The main thing over here is that parents should try constantly to teach, for which they can find out the best way by themselves.

Second case is for the grown up young students who are in colleges. Here the responsibility to teach Santali to fellow Santal student should be taken by each student. In one case senior students ragged one fresher as she was not able to talk in Santali and forced her to learn with in few months. Under pressure, she managed to learn few sentences and crossed the ragging period. But later on when she became independent, the bitterness of ragging gave her negative feeling for which she hesitated to learn Santali and started avoiding Santals. Even finally she decided to get her life partner outside Santal society. Another case, one Santal boy was totally ignorant about Santal language. Some Santal guys made him friend and for first few days, used to talk with him in his convenient language. Win his heart in few days, they became very close. His friends started taking him to other Santals' house and Santal get-togethers, where he had to talk in Santali. He felt uncomfortable but due to his strong friendship with others, he decided to learn Santali. He realised the

importance of this and hence finally came up with good knowledge in Santali. From this two cases, it can be concluded that at any point of time, none should be forced to learn Santali. But need to make situation such that he feels the importance of learning Santali. For college goers, making group of Santal students and doing different extracurricular activities among them gives opportunity to develop Santali feelings among them. They should organise different competitions like essay writing, debate etc as well as publish Santali magazine to improve their Santali literature. This is the best time for them to show their real talent in this direction as well as to improve it. During this period, if a Santal student is moulded to work for Santals, then later part of his life, where ever he may be, the love and affection towards his fellow Santal brothers pulls him to work for them. This is the demand of the time for Santal society.

There are some people who do not talk Santali even they are adult. Most of them prefer not to talk either because they want to hide their Santal identity or they are not strong in Santali, for which had to adopt some other language for conversation. Since they lack such quality, they try to avoid Santal gathering as well as gradually stop visiting Santal friends also. Here comes a big responsibility of rest of the Santal community. They should try to teach them in different situation. In fact it is very difficult to teach a matured person. But the best way to deal his situation is to keep close relation with him and make him feel the necessity of learning this language.

To promote this language, it is very much essential for the community to provide facility. The first and foremost

step in this direction is to include this language in study syllabus in the Santal populated states. On this area, there is some progress, but expected much more in near future. In urban areas, where most of the people suffer from this problem, it is needed to conduct free Santali education irrespective of government's initiative. Although there are some books are available in the market to learn Santali, but more books are needed for the literature to grow. Eligible people should write books, journals and magazines frequently to enrich the Santal literature. Also people, who have ability to purchase such books, should purchase it with the aim that they will learn from the book as well as they will help the writers and publishers to write and print more and more books. A high tech and well organised Santal publication house is needed, which will provide opportunity to the poor writers to sell their creativity, which will definitely help the Santal society.

Conclusion:

This is needless to say that knowledge on Santal language is essential for every Santal. It is not only needed for social interaction but also to reform our society. It is high time to include this language in the 8th Schedule of Indian Constitution. In this regards, Prompt and united response is expected from all Santal organisations and individuals. Speaking in Santali, social interaction in Santal gathering, mass co-operation for Santal welfare, making environment for our future generation to grow with Santal feeling are all inter-related and unavoidable. Every Santal needs to work for this, otherwise time will give survival call for saving existence of the community.

Role of Santals in Changing Economic Life

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During the period of 55 years of Independence developments have taken place in Santal society. But it has been seen that the development is getting concentrated in some specific region with reference to the spread and total population of the community. And a handful of those who managed to reach their primary goal of life had to leave their villages for better prospect in their life. It is required for the betterment of the society. But it is observed that it is resulting wide gap between two classes of the Santal population. The world is fast changing in all aspects and failure to keep pace with the change of time would mean less developed and backward in progress and development. So to reduce this gap, the Government as well as the educated mass has to take the responsibility to spread the awareness of education along with economic development to the grassroots level.

Main occupation of Santal is cultivation. In Santal society, both men and women play important role for maintaining their respective families. Apart from the household work, women help their male partner on cultivation. Not only that, the contributions of the women in different sphere of the economic activities are like food and wood gathering, labour in coal industry and mining etc. These types of work are often termed as unskilled. But there are lots of skilled talents in almost every family of Santal society. However, these are not being portrayed in that sense, in that level in the society.

The theme of the paper is utilizing these skills in small-scale industry which involves social forestry, handicrafts etc.. Till now Govt. departments as well as many private businessmen have used their skill but monetarily this society have been deprived and exploited for not being paid the reasonable rate. Volunteers with the support of Govt. have to play pivotal role to facilitate this process of economic empowerment to Santal society. So different NGOs and the educated mass have to do the following task:

- 1.To develop social consciousness and sense of civic responsibility.
- 2.To initiate small economic programs for women.
- 3.To impart job oriented vocational training.
- 4.To promote entrepreneurial ability among youth.
- 5.To organize legal awareness camp.

Each task/program will be followed by an awareness building effort among Santal people where the program is introduced.

Social consciousness and sense of civic responsibility: -

It plays a very important role to uplift any society. It ensures the stability and invulnerability of social relation. So educated mass and organizations have to spread the awareness of developing skills, personal independence in social and

economic life through raising social consciousness. For that volunteers have to organize meeting, discussion and conduct tour in different areas so that people are aware of their own problems and if they become conscious, will able to solve their problem by themselves. So in this program organizers have to encourage people to begin a program to mobilize local resources for their own use as well as to reinforce the commitment and discipline needed for people to become self-reliant.

Small economic programs for women: -

It is already mentioned about the contribution of women in economic field. Apart from the household work they work with men in fields, forest and farms. It is seen that maximum Santal women are involved with handicraft besides cultivation. Of course their production of items depends on the resources they get from that locality. Therefore organizers have to implement the program that will fit for the particular location. So the program will vary from area to area. As a whole this program not will only describe the field of their enterprise but also ensure how they will take part in urban business.

Job oriented vocational training: -

Through various training center organizers have to provide specific training to increase technical skills on agricultural production, handicrafts manufacturing and other entrepreneurial skills with the help of modern science and technology so that Santal people get success to establish various small income generating projects. This will help to expand not only the growth of their business but also improve the quality of the production.

Entrepreneurial ability among youth: -

Entrepreneurship education is now a growing field in university business school and public schools, which helps many young people to achieve successful entrepreneur career. It focuses on the skills needed to conceive of and start up a new business. There are some key aspects of entrepreneur like risk taking tendency, short-term problem solving, customer service etc. Since more stress is given here on the grassroots level, organizers have to impart this entrepreneurial ability among youth through various formal and informal training. Organizers have to let them understand how to obtain the resources needed to start a new business and how to use those resources effectively. They have to make them aware of loan facility provided by Govt., banks and various non-profit organizations. Therefore, organizers' task is to give the information to the Santal youth about the basic principles of managing business effectively.

Legal awareness camp: -

Organizing periodical legal awareness camp is also very much essential. Organizers should provide legal consultants to our society to guide our men and women on legal matters. It will provide them the guideline to handle all kind of legal issue by themselves. Santals have to be made aware of their rights and benefits through this type of legal aid and guidance.

Main purpose of these tasks is to enhance the income level from existing resources and to create additional job opportunity for Santals using local resources and skills. Santals have resources both man and skill. What is needed most is vision

and courage to do the right things at right time. Since it is high time, Santals have to find out other sources of income apart from cultivation. After getting enormous knowledge from the organizers, Santal people can start their own small scale business to uplift their standard of living. While starting a new business, a person can face difficulties, adversity may come, but they have to overcome it. Organizers and individual endeavors should also provide assistance to those persons at that time.

Now a day there are some Santals who possess MBA or other degree of business administration. Though possession and non-possession of a degree is generally not a factor to start up a new business, but this degree assists a high technical achievement as well as increases upside potential of how far one can take their

business. So they should come forward voluntarily to guide the common Santal people to make the economic structure stronger.

However, people should not escape themselves by giving all the responsibility to the organizers. It is not possible for the organizers to make these programs feasible if each and individual Santal do not take the social responsibility in direct or indirect way. Though it is not possible for the Govt. to give special attention to Santal people only, then also author expects the assurance and help to come from the Santal elected representatives. Therefore, all intellectuals educated mass, organizers and elected Santal leaders have to work together to make these programs a reality, for the sake of the economic growth and development of Santal society.

NUMBER & CIRCULATION OF NEWSPAPER

Language	Dailies	Weekly	Circulation (Total) 1998
Konkani	1		1232
Manipuri	1		1558
Sanskrit	3		0
Kashmiri	----	1	----
	Weekly / Fortnightly	Monthly/ Quarterly	Half Yearly / Yearly
Santali	2/11	46/42	4/18

LINGUISTIC COMPOSITION

Sl. No.	Language in % age	1981
1	Hindi (Lingua franca)	45.00
2	Hindi (Including dialects)	38.77
3	Telugu	7.96
4	Bengali	7.56
5	Marathi	7.28
6	Tamil	6.56
7	Urdu	5.18
8	Gujarati	4.87
9	Kannada	3.95
10	Malayalam	3.81
11	Oriya	3.36
12	Punjabi	2.73
13	English (Lingua franca)	2.50
14	Assamese	1.64
15	Bhilli/Bhilodi	0.65
16	Santali	0.62
17	Kashmiri	0.47
18	Gondi	0.47
19	Sindhi	0.29
20	Konkani	0.23
21	Dogri	0.22
22	Tulu	0.20
23	Kurkhi	0.90
24	Nepali	0.18
25	Khandeshi	0.17
26	Manipuri	0.13
27	Others	2.69

