



**LIFE, CUSTOM AND SPIRITUALITY OF SARNA SANTHAL
OF SANTHAL PARGANA
IN RELATION WITH CHRISTIANITY**

TESINA DE LICENCIATURA

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AUTOR: GOMASTO SOREN CMF

Madrid, 2021



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Visto Bueno del Director

DR. JUAN ANTONIO MARCOS RODRÍGUEZ OCD

Fdo.

Acknowledgement

There are five hundred tribes, among them *Santhal* are the largest tribe of India. They are one of the largest groups of indigenous people (Tribe) in Indian subcontinent. They have been spread over the vast area of the country. *Santhal* are also found in Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan. They belong to the pre- Aryan period. I am one among them. Hope this work will help me to become spiritual person.

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General Introduction

Santhals are one of the largest homogeneous tribal communities of India, counting more than 10 million people¹. Despite this geographical distance, *Santhals* share the same language, cultural tradition and values. Their religious system is very complex and complete in itself. They live very simplified way of life. Santhal village is surrounded by agriculture fields, pastures, ponds and a common place of worship known as *Jaher Than* and *Manjhi Than*. *Manjhi Than* is located in the center of village and the *Jaher Than* is outskirts of village. They believe that these two places are the dwelling place of God, where they protect the village from all external evil forces. The village are large and the numbers of households vary from fifty to hundred. Their house enclosed within boundaries are arranged in a linear pattern on both the sides of a wide village street. The houses are kept neat and clean. The wall painted by white mud and the floor is plastered and painted by cow dung and mud. Each house is a sacred place known as *bhitar* (interior) where the ancestral spirits are worshiped.

The first motive of this paper is personal enrichment. This paper work will help me to have better understanding of life, custom and spirituality of *Santhal* of *Santhal Pargana*. As they are the unique triable community in India who have moved from place to place, they have migrated from *Hihiri Pipiri* to different parts to India even they live in neighboring countries. In spite of various migration from place to place have maintained their religion and their spirituality. The second motive is that, this work will be useful for the community of *Santhal* and non-*Santhal* community, and will promote peaceful co-existence.

The spirituality of *Sarna Santhal* among the people of *Santhal Pargana*, is practice in unique way. In the *Sarna Santhal* religion, the majority of reverence falls on a court of spirit, who handle different aspects of the world and who are placed with prayers and offerings in order to ward off evil influences. These spirits operate at the village, household, ancestor and clans, along with evil spirits that cause disease and can inhabit village boundaries, mountains, water, and the forest. The spirits are intermediaries between the visible and the invisible reality. These creators cause of all making the *Sarna Santhal* religion in a deep sense, animistic. As in *Sarna Santhal* religion, religious specialists are drawn from the village or family and serve as wide range of spiritual functions that focus on placating potentially dangerous spirits and coordinating rituals. They have no temples and they do not worship any idols.

¹ Boro Baski. "A Brief Introduction of Santhal Life and Culture and Our Approach to Development". *The tribal cultural heritage in Indian foundation* 1 (2000): 1-2.

After the arrival of Christianity in the Northern Eastern India around 1715 the Church was built in Kolkata. The Church grew faster and reach to its braches to the *Chotanagpur* and *Santhal Pargana*. The group of tribal people accepted the Christianity². In 1867 the Norway missionaries reached to *santhal pargana*. With the arrival of Paul Olaf Bodding the life and history of mission changes. Paul Olaf Bodding started his mission in 1889 after Lars Olsen Skrefsrud, together they created the first alphabet for the *santhals*. With the influence of Christian missionaries many people embraced the Christianity³. The people of *Santhal Pargana* accepted Christianity the mission grew in this areas.

After the arrival of Christianity and gradual spread of to Christianity, the *Santhal* community began to divide into two religions. They primarily non-Christian, they called themselves as *sanatan*⁴, and some part of India called themselves as *bidin*⁵. In course of time, there was a division within the groups based on religion and now they are divided into two religions, such as *Sarna Santhals* and Christian *Santhals*. The *Santhasl* who remain in their own religion are called *sarna santhals* and those who converted to Christian are called Christian *Santhals*.

When we evaluate that after the conversion of *santhals* Christian, they have influenced the *Sarna Santhals* community. There is an impact on the *Sarna Santhal* community. I am concern for the *Sarna Santhal* of *Santhal Pargana* and their life, culture and their spirituality. The land of *santhal pargana* is a beautiful place to live in; but at the same time it is full of contrasts. The people are divided into the two religions who lived together from the human existence. As the time passes the political influence has more impact on the life of *santhal* as a whole began to look at each other with suspicion. There is paradox of life among the *Santhals* as whole, the community is divided into two and they look at each other as threat for their own community⁶. The all-round development is seen in the Christian *santhals* and therefore there is threat for the *Sarna Santhals*.

² Mathew Wilkinson. *Sketches of Christianity in North India*. London: Seeley Burnside and Seeley, 1844, 4.

³ Olav Hodne. *The Seed Bore Fruit: A Short History of the Santhal Mission of the Northern Churches: 1867-1967*. Dumka: Benagaria Mission Press, 1967. 65.

⁴ The meaning of *sanatan* is “from the beginning”. The religion which existed from the creation of the world, there is no founder nor the date when the *sarna santhal* religion began.

⁵ Bidin is the term used for to differnciate the Christian santhal and bidin santhals, though this term still in used, but it has the meaning of exclusion.

⁶ Mathew Wilkinson. *Sketches of Christianity in North India*. London: Seeley Burnside and Seeley, 1844, 12.

Objectives of this Paper

1. To study the life, custom, religious practices, and spirituality of *Sarna Santhal* of *Santhal Pargana*.
2. To highlight the challenges and problems they have faced during the migration from place to place, to keep up their religious practice and the language.
3. To know their creation history of human being and the concept of human existence.
4. To understand the problems of *santhal* who follow Christianity and within the homogeneous groups.
5. To help peaceful co-existence by celebration of festivals of both the religious communities of Christian *Santhals* and *Sarna Santhals*.
6. To promote co-existence in time to conflicts between these two communities and to become promoters of Christian spirituality.

Division of The Chapters in a Nutshell

The first chapter shall deal with the life, origin of *Santhal* according to the existing myth which they believe to be creation of human as well as the creation of the entire cosmos. The people of *santhal pargana* have migrated from place to place and they have detail history of it. The homogenous people who were together has displaced and migrated from different parts of India. They have internal division within the community which called Paris (clans), divided into twelve tribes. After the migration they have reached to their own land called *Santhal Pargana*. In their homeland they began a new history of life and began to live a ritual way of orderly life. They also practice the ritual elements such as love for nature, which is the basic of their life. The rituals and prayer in the life of *Sarna Santhal* have a special relevance to the daily life of the community from birth to death.

The second chapter will concentrate on the foundation of our study. So, it deals concretely with the spirituality as integral part of *Sarna Santhal*. *Sarna Santhal* as the last unite of creation. The *Sarna Santhal* myth depicts the creation of human is by the bird and sustained by Creator God. They view nature as the face of God and all the created things have the face of God, reveal the beauty of creation.

The third chapter deals with the specific spirituality which is practiced by the *Sarna Santhal* of *Santhal Pargana*. The migration from place to place is seen as the life struggle in their life. The migration has its own impact on the life of *Sarna Santhals* people. All through

their migration journey, they have learnt that human life is mystery and cannot be known everything. In the migration process the *Sarna Santhal* have maintained their religion. In the changing reality with the *Sarna Santhal* religion has gone through various process of its renovation.

The last chapter deals with the *Sarna Santhal* and the influence of Christianity within the community. It deals with the *Sarna Santhal* as the animistic religion. There is also mutual exchange of life, culture and spirituality. They have common worship as common spirituality. The celebration of festival sign of cultural celebration as well as spiritual renovation in their life. Most of the Christian *Santhal* celebrate their festival in the light the of the *Sarna* religion. There is enculturation of the festivals in both the religions.

Methodology

The kind of methodology I have followed to write this paper is that of comparison, research, and derivation. I have also used Inductive approach, which is particularizing from what is generally spoken about *Santals* and believed to be true by most of the authors. Therefore, this paper is written after consulting so many well researched books of illustrious authors both *Santals* and non *Santals*.

The title of this work is *The Life, Customs, And Spirituality of Sarna Santhal of Santhal Pargana In Relation with Christianity*, is only an attempt to present to you the glimpse of spirituality of *Sarna Santhals* and their relation with Christian *Santhals*. However, I do acknowledge that this presentation does not exhaust the whole information about *Sarna Santhals*.

Chapter 1

Origin and Customs of *Sarna Santhal*

Introduction

There are five hundred tribes, among them *Santhal* are the largest tribe of India. They are also found in the neighboring countries. They have long history of origin and customs. They have migrated from place to place. *Sarna santhal* have unique culture that has relation with the Old Testament. As they are scattered all over India and neighboring countries, we shall focus on only the land of *santhal pargana* and their life, existence and ritual way of life.

1.1. Life of *Sarna Santhal*

There are more than five hundred tribes and sub tribes in various parts of India. Among them the *santhal* constitutes one of the largest tribes of India. *Santhal* are the most dominant tribal to retain an aboriginal language and religion to the present day. They are one of the largest groups of indigenous people (Tribe) in the Indian subcontinent. They have been spread over the vast area of the country. They are found in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and Assam. There are also *santhals* living in Arunachala Pradesh and Meghalaya. *Santhal* people are also found in Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan. They belong to the pre- Aryan period. They have been described as the most integrated and possibly most resilient tribe in India. The origin home land of *Santhal* has been a mystery but there is a oral tradition of the origin of the *santhals*. According to the oral tradition the original homeland of *santhal* is called *hihiri pipiri*⁷ and from there, they migrated to various other places like, *Hohoro Bomboro, Ayaro Payaro, Dudumul, Ajodana, Jhal Dak, Aere Kaende, Haradata, Khoj Kaman, Sasang Beda and through Tore Pokhori, Baha Bandela to Chae Champa*⁸. These are all some mythological places whose connection to the reality is somewhat unknown.

The term *santhal* is a derivation of *saotar*, which means “dwelling place” a place in India, where they are known as Santhal. The *Santhals* are called by different names in different places. In *Santhal Pargana*, they are called *hor*, in *Chotanagpur* they are called *majhi*, in West Bengal they are called *saotar* and Nepal they are called *satar*, which is often taken as a

⁷ P.O Bodding, *Santhal Folk Tales*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1999, 22.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

pejorative term reflecting hegemonic attitude and disrespect to the people, as well as a form of domination by Aryan people, who came from Sindhu valley. They are the oldest inhabitants of *Santhal Paragana*. They themselves called as *hor hopon* which means son of human being⁹.

They are proto-Australoids as their ancestor and so called proto-Australoids had embarked journey towards eastern frontier on India and eventually settled there. The *Santhals* belong to the proto-Australoids groups of people and they came to India soon after the Negritos. They are named so because of the similarity of the racial type with that of the Australian tribes¹⁰. Apart from the unsolved mystery of their origin, when and from where they came, the other aspects such as their religion, their culture is very rich among other tribes of India. In spite of various obstacles, *Santhal* are tremendous anxious to retain their tribal identity as various social transformations are making serious damage and causing de-tribalization. Whether it is culture or language, religion or customs, there have been infiltration from various dominant social groups such as Hindus and other religions.

There have been various opinions about the origin place of the *Santhal* as a tribe. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that they are one of the oldest inhabitants of the Indian sub-continent. The *Santhals* seem to have secondarily primitive people, even before the arrival of Aryan speaking people in India. There is a difference in the view point on whether *Santhal* are the emigrants to India. The *Santhals'* own notion about their origin is mysterious. They also retain the idea that they have come from far off place, the land of sunrise. Even though the *Santhal* are not certain about their place of origin, they have their crystallized idea about the origin of man and the creation of the universe. The *Santhal* narrate these cosmological matters in their myths and songs, which they sing in any occasion, notably in context with their practices connected with festivity such as *Karam, Dasae, Sohrae* and other festivals.

The origin of *santhal*, might have been in Persia and Afghanistan, territory and entered India from the Northwest, and they settled in *Chotangpur* plateau¹¹. There is also other opinion, about the origin and migration of *Santhal*. They came from North-East India, and found their way to the *chotanagpur* plateau and near hill by the line of their sacred river *Damodar*¹². As they were wandering group, moves from place to place in search of dwelling place. They went

⁹ Josy Troisi. "The Santhal". *Readings in Tribal*, Vol. X (1972), 42.

¹⁰ Ramachandra Guha. *Tribal Heritage, A Study of the Santhals*. London: Lutterworth Press, 1949, 36.

¹¹ L.O. Skrefsrud. *A Grammar of the Santali Language*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2017, 44.

¹² Edward Tuite Dalton. *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*. Kolkata: Office of The Superintendent of Government Press, 1872, 221.

to central Alluvial valley of the Ganges South West to the hills, under the pressure of the Aryan invasion of the valley from the North.

With reference to the other theory, *santhal* occupied the country on both sides of the Ganges, but more especially that in the North. Starting from the North-East, they gradually worked their way up the valley of Ganges till place called Mirzapur in Bihar. They lived in the river bank and have livelihood. The proof can be seen in their livelihood. They lived on the agriculture and the animals they had for their survival.

There have been identified the countries, rivers forts and so on mentioned in the traditions of the *santhal* with those of similar names in *Chotanagpur*. Localities have been identified that comes from the cultural background and the tradition. They belong to more remote period that location which appear in the *Chotanagpur*, and the countries separated from many years ago. As *santhal* were wandering in search of the permanent place, they never wrote their history. They were not educated to write down their migration history. However, the legend of the *santhal* are regarded as an account recent past migration will be found in the fairly tell.

There is also the general view, with regard to the origin and migration of *Santhals*. There was once a large and important *santhal* colony in *Parganas Chai-Champa* in the *Hazaribag* district of new state Jharkhand, and that there is some evidence that a fort of *Santhal* were taken by the *Mohammadans* who came to India long after the Aryans. When I mention the date of taking away of the fort, then it belongs to be about 1340 A.D, the following migration which we could hear in the legendary history of *Santhal* migration, that they left the *Chai-Champa Gar* (Fort) and reached to *Santhal Paragana*.

The recent migration has been to the East, which is the direction they might have primarily faced, have been expected to follow every migration. According to *Santhal* tradition, those in *hihiri-pipiri* and *chai-chmapa* situated on the North-Western boarder of the *Hazaribag* and in the direct line of advance of the numerous migration with various group of people.

The *chai-champa gar*, many believed that was in the district of *Hazaribag*, as they left the *Chai Campa Gar*, they adopted new social custom. Before changing their custom, they believed that the rising of the Sun is the birth place of human person. After the birth of *Hans* and *Hasil*, they implored God to help man and recommended them to fly out and found *Hihiri Pipiri* for the origin of *Santhal*. The other tradition also says that the origin of *Santhal* is the ocean.

Santhal have a distinct culture, all the celebration is part of cultural promotion. The main intention of celebration of festival is to keep up the custom and culture. All the *Santhal's* customs are part of spiritual exercise. All the customs and celebrations are not only for enjoyment but to fulfil the rituals. Here we shall highlight the practice of customs as part of performing as ritual celebration.

Santhal celebrate the life cycle ritual, such as initiation, marriage and burial are celebrated individually. The other collective rites are related to the agricultural cycle. The very beginning of life, in the society is performed as social custom. When a child is born, the *santhal* midwife of *Dagrin*¹³ cuts the umbilical navel chord of the child with an arrow and buries it, in the house where they usually pray. Then the child is named on the seventh day of the birth, the seventh day, signifies the holiness in the sarna religion. The first born son is given the name of his grandfather: he is also given another name for calling. In family a child is named through fulfilling the custom.

There is also celebration of confirmation, called *chatiar* and *janam chatiar*, these two celebrations are celebrated together, the *janam chatiar* (baptism in Christian context) is done after the child birth, the mother after giving birth consider to be ritually unclean. She remains secluded in the family till the ritual of *janam chatiar*. During this period, she is not allowed to enter into kitchen, not permitted to touch the things of the family till seven days. After seven days there will be celebration that has to be fulfilled and then the child can be taken out of the house.

There is the celebration of *chaco-chatiar*, is like Christian celebrate the confirmation, called *chaco chatiar*. This celebration is one of the most important celebration of *santhal* society. The child has to enter into the adulthood and to be the part of the society. The adult becomes the full-fledged member of the society. After this celebration adult participate in all activities of the society. It enables him/her to take his individual decision in the society. He/she participates in all the ceremonies in the *Santhal* community. Without this no *santhal* boy or girl could enter into matrimony. After the *chaco- chatiar* an adult become active member and legal person in the society.

Santhal social organization has very interesting characteristics. It contains flexibility in rigidity. Marriage is one of the important components in the dynamics of *Santhal* society.

¹³ A village woman who assists during the child birth, take care seven days' child and mother.

Santhal have different types of marriage. Their marriage is monogamous and the marriage is known as *Bapla*. There are seven types to marriage among *Santhal*. They are *sagai bapla*, which is the most popular and most accepted marriage among the *Santhal*. The arrangement of marriage is done with the help of match maker, with the consent of boy and girl, with the agreement of their parents and approved by village heads.

1.2. Exodus of *Santhal*

Migration is a part of human history: nevertheless, the 19th and 20th century have witnessed mass exodus of people from one place to other. It is normal for country like India that was caused due to survival. The migration has its positive and negative approach. Positive approach is that the migration can reduce poverty but the migration also has negative approach that the migrated people sometimes may lose their identity and spirituality. In case of *Santhal* there is no clear cut line between religion, custom and culture.

Santhal moved from place to place in search of permanent dwelling place. Here we will discuss about the exodus of *Sathals* from their homeland *Santhal Pargana, Jharkhan* the new state which is separated from Bihar in 2000. *Santhal* went to different part of India and outside of country. The region is gripped under utter poverty, illiteracy and under development, which mars the picture from every human development index. In such situation they are compelled to move from *Santhal Pargana* in search of employment and survival. As they migrate from their homeland *Santhal Pargana*, for economical reason, they have carried their spiritual life too, wherever they are living now.

The livelihood of *santhal* is fully dependent on agriculture but agriculture also suffers due to the traditional mode of cultivation and lack of scientific and modern farming. Therefore, the agriculture alone cannot help the family to survive. To support the family, they have to look for the other support. They have to search for opportunity. Due to the lack of industry they are forced to migrate from their homeland *Santhal Pargana*¹⁴.

Santhal are physically hard working people and docile in their nature. *Santhal* cut the thick forest and established villages for themselves during the second half of the 18th century. They are good in cultivation and agriculture activities. There were two things in this time, the first problem came to them is the occurrences of drought and the second problem was famine,

¹⁴ Damian Tudu. "Migration of Santhal Laborers from Jharkhand". *Journal of Humanities and Science* 23 (2018): 9-13.

several times in the past which affected the livelihood of *santhal*. In such situation they were forced to move from *Santhal Pargana* to West Bengal for agriculture work. Large number of them migrated to the other part of West Bengal especially to *Burdawan* district for agriculture work, since then, it became a way of life for many *santhal* to go to West Bengal whoever families faced financial difficulties. Many poor families would lock their house, entrust their cattle to relative and migrated to plains to west Bengal for agriculture work.

Santhals have their house and land for cultivation but due to the lack of irrigation facility and financial problems they could cultivate only one crop in a year. They don't have other option than to migrate to cultivable land for their survival. Every year people from *santhal Pargana* go to west Bengal and some of them have settled there. Slowly, they disconnected from their homeland and permanently settled in west Bengal.

Santhal migrated from *Santhal Pargan*, reached to Bangladesh, which was part of India before the separation. They also migrated to *Murshibad* for agriculture work. Some of them migrated to *Dakhisin Dinajpur, Uttar Dianjpur, Malda northern* state of west Bengal.

Santhals labours migrated to *Japlaguri* District of west Bengal during the period for British as labourers to tea garden. The *santhal* are now settled with land and properties in many villages of *Jalapaiguri* District. *Santhal* migrate every year for the duration of one to three months for employment.

Santhal were migrated to tea estate of Assam by East India Company¹⁵, by force and later by British rulers to work in bondage labours in tea garden. Now they are settled there, and called tea tribes. They are still being exploited by the tea planters and the economic condition for these labours have not improved much.

There are *santhal* people live in Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. As they were persecuted and tortured by tea planters physically and economically, some of them moved to Meghalaya and some of them went to Arunachal Pradesh and small group of *santhal* went to Tripura. From Assam good numbers of *santhal* went to Bhutan.

Among the 59 indigenous communities, *santhal* are categorized as a highly marginalized indigenous people living in south-east region of Nepal. They are one of the first *santhal* who settled in *Jhapa* and *Morag* district by clearing the *charkose jhadi*. They

¹⁵ Damian Tudu. "Migration of Santhal Laborers from Jharkhand". *Journal of Humanities and Science* 23 (2018): 9-13.

cultivated, but could not become owners of the land. They cultivated the land of landlord in lease or contract and half of product was given to the landlords. The land reform program for 1967 did not bring advantage for them. They were forced to leave the place but strong enough to affront the landlord and remained in the same place.

Santhal in Nepal migrated from India and Bangladesh due to their low economic condition causing them to settle in the dense forest areas of *Jhapa* and Morang district of Nepal. Along the farming, they go for fishing and hunting. Hunting is not merely a hobby for the *Santhals*, but it is a part of their culture and tradition. Even today, *Santhal* go out for hunting with bow and arrow as a symbol of maturity. This process is necessary to establish them as responsible member of the community.

There are also *santhal*, living in Orissa, some part of west Bengal namely *Bankura*, *Jhargram*, *Medinpur* and *Purbi Singhbhum*, *Kharsarwa*, and *Dhanbad* District of Jharkhand. They have their identity different from the rest of the *santhal*. But this difference does not mean that they are not part of *santhal* community. Out of sixty two tribes forty five tribes are found in the district of *Mayurbhanj*¹⁶. *Mayurbhuj* is bounded on the north by district of *Singbhum* of Jharkhand and *Midnapur* district of West Bengal: on the south by district of *Balasore* and *Keonjhar*, on the West by the district of *Keonjhar* and *Singhbhum*¹⁷. It was the largest and wealthiest of the feudatory state of Orissa. The scenery of the mountain range is very attractive with its undulations detached abrupt hill and forest tracts. Groves of ancient mango trees, many of them are of enormous size. This is a prominent feature of the landscape of Orissa. It is one of the most attractive parts of the Indian peninsula.

There is very clear division between the *Santhal* those who are migrated from *Santhal Pargana* and went to Orissa and some part of west Bengal and south part of Jharkhand, has little different to each other. They have more influence of Hindu customs and culture. They even consider themselves part of Hindu religion.

The family and the community social capital are not only limited to the dense network among the people in the community: the economic and culture capital also plays an important role in enhancing the family and social community and vice versa. The frequent migration and group exodus of *Santhal* have influence in their life. They have changed and adapted

¹⁶ M. Ahmed. *District Census Hand Book Mayurbhanj*. Cuttack: Orissa Government Press, 1967, 17.

¹⁷ Subhash Chandra Karua. "The Santhal of Mayurbhanj". *A Study of Their Original Homeland* Vol. 67, (2007): 596.

according to the situation and place. The adaptability according to place and situation is always good, but they have failed to keep up their social environment, failed to keep up the rich social tradition.

The people have changed their custom, better to say they have adjusted according to the place and have forgotten their language and culture. They have forgotten their tradition. As a consequence, the sense of spirituality is lost in the *Sarna Santhal* society, thus the concept of religion changes and as a result the spiritual life changes.

The exodus of *Santhal* from place to place has not been useful for them. It is the total exploitation of life of *Santhal*, the culture, economy, religion and the spiritual life of *santhal*. For example, *Santhal* of Burdwan from West Bengal have got different religious practice than than of *Santhal Pargana*. Though, the origin is from the same place and even the migration is not taken place long ago. They have the influence of Hinduism of West Bengal. The Hindu culture and custom have more influence on *Santhal*. There is change of religion, customs and tradition thus life style has been different. Therefore, the migration changes the mentality of a person, even his spiritual life.

The common exodus is a feature of social and economic life across many countries. All the migration is not directly driven by the economy; it has great significant in the economy of the society when it is driven by the negative force. The forced exodus has all negative aspect in the society and life of every individual. Along with the economic aspects there is an involvement of religious aspect. Therefore, most of the place in case of *santhal* have negative impact on them. They have lost their status of life, and certain privileges they don't have as people of *Santhal Pargana*.

1.3. Twelve Tribes of *Santhal*

After the creation of the world *Plichu Haram* and *Pilchu Buddi* gave birth to seven sons and seven daughters. In later stage as they grew up all brothers and sisters married among themselves. Thus, they formed a seven exogamous *paris*. With the time passes five more groups were added in *santhal paris*. A twelve clans (*paris*) which signifies "twelve tribes of *Santhal*". A sacred affiliation is linked to these clans. Each of the clans are derived from the plant or animal. Every tribe has connection with the animal, that is called totem. For example, Soren tribe has connection with the horse. Soren tribe cannot go for horse riding. There is a belief that prevailing among the *santhal* that totems have some connection with the deeds of the ancestors of the clans.

Santhals are divided into twelve *paris*. The *pris* system controls the life of *santhal*, including marriage, life style, public relation of the *santhal*. *Paris* has the important role to fix the relation with others. The way you have to talk and to relate with others. The twelve *Paris*, which signify the origin. According to their belief system, the parish is related with the blood. The *paris* can't be changed. When we change the *paris* we change the status of relationship with others. Therefore, *paris* is an indelible mark that cannot be changed.

At the same time, we talk about the *paris*, it does not signify the social structure or hierarchical system. The division of *paris* is related to the creation of human history; we talk about the creation of *Santhal*. It has to be maintain and kept up for the life and purification of society. We have details of *Santhal paris* that existed up to date among *Santhal* community.

The kinship terminology changes according to the relationship. The main principle of the terminology is distinct between consanguinity relatives and affinities. All the cousins are as equal as blood relegation sisters and brothers. There is no possibility of marriage between mother's brother's daughters and sons. The most distinctive *santhal* community system is not changeable.

There is totem system within the *Santhal* community. It has a means of personal and spiritual identity. *Santhal* have their own totem symbol according to their *paris*. According to *Santhal* community, they have most animal their totem. The idea, concept, message that totem communicates has spiritual connotation. The totem denotes their ancestors. The totem involves taboos that people should not eat the meat of a particular animal. Thus, totem joins the family and strengthen the community.

Kisku: *kisku* have a kingfisher as their Totem. They are considered as king of *Santhal* community. They are called *kisku rapaj*, which signify the king of *Santhal*. They are given high social status in the community.

Murmu: Murmu are represented as by the *Nilgai* or antelope. As the genesis of *paris*, it is said that ancestors of Murmu *paris*, when they went first time hunting they hunted *Nilgai* or antelope. Therefore, they offered first sacrifice as antelope. It is this animal which was first sacrificed by *Santhals*. Since that time, *Santals* started hunting and eating of animals, subsequently become fond of hunting and eating of meat. The antelope being purely a land animal is responsible for the destruction of *Santals* in the creation myths.

Marandi: The term *Marandi* changes according to state and place, in Jharkhand they call themselves *Marandi*. West Bengal, *Mandi* and in Orissa the term is used as *Mardi*. They are linked with grass, as the *marandi* grass is found with paddy. As *Marandi* grass grows with the paddy, therefore, they are considered as rich among *Santhal* community. They were appointed treasurer and stewards in the king's place of *kisku*.

Soren: *Soren* are soldiers of the *Santhal* community. They are called *soren sipahi*, which signifies, protector of the community. They have the responsibility to protect the society from external forces. Star is the totem for *soren*. The star represents the *soren paris* in *santhal* community.

Tudu: *Tudu* are the drum bitters and happiest people in the society. They are musician, and they have the responsibility to entertain entire *Santhal* community during any social gathering. *Tudu* has owl as their totem.

Baske: *Baske* are cooks and associated stale rice. They are believed to offer stale rice to Gods and thus they are prohibited to eat rice with water. Horse is their totem.

Bedia: Bedia tribe has very little significance among the *santhal* tribe. They were considered as untouchable within the community. Though, now this practised completely ceased to exist. They did not have any responsibility in the community. There is some taboo still exist that marriage with Bedia *paris* will have evil fortune in life. That could be the reason, today there are limited number of Bedia *paris*. They were not given any work in the society.

Pauria: *Pauria* has pigeons as their totem. Like *Bedia*, *Pauria* has insignificance role among the *santhal* community. Therefore, we don't have more information about them.

Hansdak: *Hansdak' paris* members claim to be one of the highest status as they have derived from the name of their clan from first ancestors. The term *Has* designated wild goose and while *dak'* in Santali means water. This *paris* is, therefore, linked to the original state of world and first ancestors. It is the most senior among the all *paris* of the *Santals* since it is related to myth of creation. Moreover, swan or goose is not just animal. It builds nest on earth, walks on earth and flies on sky.

Hembrom: *Hembrom* are fourth order in the hierarchy of *santhal* community and have betel nut as their totem. It is believed that the ancestor of the *Hembrom paris* was born with a betel nut string around his waist. There are also those who believe that their ancestors were actually born under a betel nut tree, which is totally hard and solid.

Besra: *Besra paris* are considered as business people in *Santhal* community. Their primary duty is to buy and sell among the *Santhal* community. They have to climb the mountain and trees to avail things for the community. Their symbol of totem is monkey.

Chore: *chore* have the responsibility to take care the animals of the community. They are the shepherd having more animals and produce food for entire community. They have more restriction in the society. They could not marry with all twelve *paris*, but with only few tribes. This restriction leads them to reduce their number. Many youths could not marry. Their number slowly reduced in the society. We find handful *chores* among *santhal* community.

Santhals have so strong feeling towards their totem that they feel one with animals or species of their own totem. They have respect for the animals as their family members. But this practise slowly disappearing from *santhal* community. Even the totem and marriage restitution have been removed from the *santhal* community.

1.4. Historical Background of *Santhal Pargana*

My thesis will be based on people of *Santhal Pargana*, life, customs and spirituality of *santhal*, therefore, I would like to give detail about the land of *Santhal Pargana*. How this land came to exist? How this land is important for the *santhal*? What is the favourable condition in *santhal Pargana* that became the centre of all the *santhal*? Why it is called *mare disoam, jonom disam*¹⁸(birth palace, home land) of *santhal* ?

The history of *santhal Pargana* is rich and interesting. It centres mainly around the history of *Rajmahal* (king's palace) and the *Dumka* city. It is the headquarter of *Santhal* homeland and is interrelated with histories of *Godda, Deoghar, Pakur, jamtara, and sahebganj*. There was also *jungal terai* part of *Santhal Pargana*, consists of *Bhagalpur* and *Hazaribag*.

1.5. *Santhal Pargana* in Medieval Period

In medieval period the map of *Santhal Pargana* changed, after the arrival of Muslims in the country some of the districts were added to *Santhal Pargana*. There was a battle of *Rajmahal* present day of *Santhal Pargana*, in this battle king Man Singh won. He added some more districts form West Bengal. *Santhal Pargana* became headquarter of Bihar, West Bengal

¹⁸ P.O Bodding. *Santhal Folk Tales*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House,1009, 35.

and present Jharkhand.¹⁹ Thus *Santhal Pargana* regained its glory and was once the capital of Bengal too.

1.5.1. *Santhal Pargana* Under British Rule

After the Plassey battle, there was an arrival of British rule, during the British rule the capital was shifted to Kolkata. In *Santhal Paragana*, they were against a band of simple but determined opponents. *Santhal* were great lovers of freedom and could not tolerate any intruder in their homeland. The British were very much concerned to control the them. The British appointed the military Governor of *Santhal Pargana* to have control over in the land. The military partially succeeded in this mission. The military prepared a scheme to win over them, which was left to be elaborated and put into action by military of *Santhal Pargana*. They passed rules and regulations to obey, and disobedient should lead the rigorous punishment.

One of the new military officers who in the capacity of joint magistrate of *Chotanagpur* toured the older district of *Santhal Paragana* in 1818 to enquire into the causes of local unrest and in 1819 suggested to William the officer, of Kolkata, that the hill tracts inhabited by the *santhal* should be declared the direct property of Government so that they could be looked after. The study was made about the existing norms and the *Santhal Pargana* was renamed as *Damin I koh*, which means skirt of the hills.²⁰ After this change of name and office, British began to impose on the *Santhal* the revenue of land and crops. The land tax was so high that poor *Santhal* were not able to pay. There was an emergence of *Santhal Hul*.

1.5.2. *Santhal* Rebellion 1885-86

Santhal settled in *Santhal Pargana*. As per the William W. Hunter, the permanent settlement for the land tax in 1790 resulted in general extension of *santhal* were hired to rid the lowlands of the wild beasts since the great famine of 1769 had everywhere encroached upon the margin for cultivation. *Santhal* who were encouraged to settle in the district were simple and hardy. They fell an easy prey to the scrupulous human and non- *santhal* traders. The British gave them land for cultivation and in returned asked them to pay more tax.

Santhal of *Santhal Pargana* could not accept this and rebelled against the British Government. The reason behind rebelling to British rule were very clear. The British imposed heavy tax from the innocent *Santhal* and there was no check to them. The second reason is that

¹⁹ S.P. Singha. *Santhal Hul, Insurrection of Santhal 1856-57 Exploit of Sido Kanhu Chand and Bhairo*. Patna: Bihar welfare Research Institute, 1990, 43.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

the local administration was extremely corrupt. The third reason is that; the land they have cleared was taken by British forcefully. The police also were equally corrupt and shown partiality towards the people of the land. They were forced to live the place and to migrate from *Santhal Pargana*.

1.5.3. The Role of *Sido, Kanu* and his Family in *Santhal Hul*

Santhal people believed that there was a emergence of *Maran buru*²¹, in the form of *Sido Murmu* and *Kanu Murmu* and his family. *Maran Buru* sent *Sido Mrmu* and *Kanu Murmu* as great leaders have liberated the entire community from landlord. According the *Santhal* mythology, God appeared to *Sido Murmu* and *Kanu Murmu* and gave them a blank white paper to right the fortune of the *santhal* community.

Santhal got leaders *Sido Murmu, Kanu Murmu, Chand Murmu* and *Bhairo Murmu* all four brothers of village of *Bhognadi* near *Barhait of Sahibganj* district of *Santhal Pargana*. There were also their sisters namely, *Phulo Murmu* and *Jhano Murmu* who played significant role to change the fortune and life of *Santhal* of *Santhal Pargana*. *Singrai* was the son of *Baijal Manjhi* of *Littipara*. *Kanu Murmu* was Killed in action and *Sido Murmu* was arrested and hanged at *Barhait*. The object of their uprising was the economic emancipation. The first spark of the revolt was ignited at the town *Littipara*. *Kena Ram Bhagat* was a leading merchant and money lander of *Amrapara*. The altercation, which took place, led to the arrest of *Baijal Manjhi*, who was sent to *Bhagalpur* jail, where he died shortly without trail.

His son *Singrai* raised the banner of revolt who was also hanged in *Barhet* market after summary trial. They became infuriated and began *Hul*²² ensured as precursor of so called first Indian freedom movement of 1857. The foreign rulers took this as a challenge to their authority and pounced upon them with mighty forces and began to brand them as their enemy. The large numbers of their community were put in jail and began to persecute them.

There is different opinion about the *Santhal hul* and freedom movement. According to some historian, the *Santhal Hul* was only for the *Santhal Pargana* and for *Santhal*. *Santhal* of *Santhal Pargana* continued rebelling against British rule. *Santhal* participated different movement in the freedom of the country. The movement gathered momentum and government

²¹ *Marang* means "the great" and *buru* means the "mountains". *Da, hoy, dharti, sengel, dhiri* (the water, air, land, fire, rock) are the elements of the nature which belongs to the *Marangburu*.

²² Commonly known as *Santhal Hul*, was a rebellion in present-day Jharkhand, in eastern India against both the British colonial authority and zamindari system by the *Santhal*.

had to send military forces and use violence in order to control the situation. *Santhal* reacted very favourably to the civil disobedience movement and some of them moved appealing to the *Santhal* to join hand with the freedom fighters.

The quite movement of 1942, spread to entire *Santhal Pargana*, for that matter in *Santhal Pargana*, there was general strike and protest. On the 12th August 1942 a procession was taken out at *Godda* and soon the entire districts of *Santhal Pargana*, there was a flame against of British rule.

1.6. Post Independent *Santhal Pargana*

The Government considered the *Santhal Pargana* hills as demographically underdeveloped section of the society and embarked on policies and plans for their emancipation. The Government's effort in the past could not bring the expected result and the life of *santhal* community remain as poor as before. There was no change in life of *Santhal* community. The landlords still continued to persecute *Santhal*. The landlords continued to demand tax from them. Once again they were in need of good leader to deliver them from the hand of landlords. In such a situation there was emergence of *Santhal* leader Shibu soren, who worked for *santhal* of *Santhal Pargana* in the model of *Santhal Hul*.

1.7. The Foundation of Political Party by *Binod Bihari Mahato*

When we speak about the *santhals* of *Santhal Pargana*, we cannot forget the contribution done to *santhal* people by *Shibu Soren* and *Binod Bihari Mahto* by founding the political party called *Jharkahnd Mukti Morcha*, (JMM) for the liberation of *Santhal* from landlords. This mass base is primarily in the state of Jharkhand, though it has an influential presence in the neighbouring states such as West Bengal, Bihar and Odisha. The party has a Centre-Right political position and operates on the political ideology of Regionalism²³. In other words, the *Jharkhand Mukti Morcha* or the JMM, demands the rights and privileges of the Jharkhandis. Its political struggles and revolutionary ideals are geared towards the development of the state of Jharkhand and the oppressed community of *Santhal*.

After the detaile description mention above we come to know about the land of *Santhal* and their political situation. We also have known the existence of Jharkhand and *Santhal Pargana*. Here I would like to narrate about the *Santhal* and their religion.

²³ Sanjay Kumar Praveen Rai. "The Shrinking Political Space for Jharkahand Mukti Morcha". *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, (2012): 24-29.

The case of the *Santhal Pargana*, there were many struggles against exploitation and land alienation. Now they have settled social cultural, political and religious life. *Santhal Pargana* constitute 41.5 per cent of the population by *Santhal*.²⁴ *Santhal* belong to *Sarna* religion and some of them have become Christian. Some political leaders try to brand *Sarna Santhal* as Hindus but they are not Hindus. They are natural worshipers, animists and they have everything of their own.

After the arrival of the Christianity, their presence in the region of *Santhal Paragana* is six percent, according to the census of 2011²⁵. The Christianity among the *Santhal* is gradually growing. From the very beginning of the arrival of Christianity, *Sarna Santhal*²⁶ had no objection or any kind of hesitation towards Christianity, but recent years they have more conflict with the Hindu and Christian. In this thesis, I shall try to narrate their way of life, specially the *santhal sarna* of *Santhal Pargana*.

1.8. Ritual Life as Way of Spiritual Expression

All the activities done in the *Sarna Santhal* community has a religious connotation. *Sarna Santhal* has no private religious celebration. All religious celebration is done in the group as village. There is social structure to perform the liturgical celebration, and to take care the administrative aspects of *Sarna Santhal* celebration. As all the activities are holy in the society therefore, they lead a ritual way of life which is expressed in everyday life.

The important thing to know in *Sarna Santhal* community is that, they have a uniform way of living. Practically, all of them in the village live by settled life. They are well aware of the fact that a drought or destructive blight on the crops inevitably means hunger for all, while a good crops means prosperity and good life. As they have serial seasonal rites and festivals which mark the different stages of life as grace and blessing form God. They believe that if they failed to perform annual rituals, their spirit would be displeased and visit the village with calamities. They rejoice over on the good harvest and give thanks to God. As they have food for following years.

The feast they celebrate help them to relax from the work. In *sarna santhal* community every celebration has social and spiritual aspect. It is sspiritual in the sense that they help to

²⁴ Nitya Rao. "Life and livelihood in *Santhal Parganas*". *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38 (2003): 39.

²⁵ Sitaram Chamalagain. *Education Status of Santhal Community*. Norway: The Arctic University, 2016, 2.

²⁶ A group of *santhal*, they left an arrow in the sky; it fell down under a *Sal* tree. They started worshipping the tree and named their religion as "*Sarna*" because it is derived from a *Sal* tree. Thus, *Sarna* religion came into existence. There are priests and an assistant priests called "*Naikey*" and "*Kudam Naike*" in every *Santhal* village

obtain and maintain communion with their spirit. It is communal that they celebrate together thus maintain and strengthening their social and family bound.

Sarna Santhal have an organic and well-organized social structure that is both function and self-sustaining. Traditionally, *Sarna Santhal* possess a well structure social organization to ensure discipline in the whole community and harmony among themselves. The *Sarna Santhal* world view of democracy is a broad concept that includes the symbolic triad of human being, animals and forest. A holistic view of the *Sarna Santhal* lifestyle, customs and culture have significant role in their life. A society is organized to perform functions necessary for the well being, maintenance of the society and spiritual growth.

1.8.1. The Village Life and Religious Performance

Religion is the substance of culture; culture is the form of religion. In the olden day's people seem to have believed that each of them had its own religious traditions and its particular god and goddess. It is the dialogue between man and the God. << *Santhal* religion is a potent force in strengthening the social solidarity of the people. *Santhal's* concept of righteousness is bound up with his social consciousness>>²⁷. *Santhal* deities have been classified with different grades.

Santhal have different gods and they called them by different names, but they don't have the statue of the Gods. It is of secondary importance wherever the influence comes from. Their religion is called *Sarna religion*. They have their own methods of prayer. They don't have written form of prayer but they believe that their good life is part of prayer.

The basic unit of *Sarna santhal* communal system is village. For the efficient running of the village admiration and call for religious activities they elect a village headman and his assistants from among the leading members of the group. A full fledged village council consists of seven official namely *manjhi* (village headman), *paranik* (assistant headman) *naeke* (a village priest who performs all the village religious activities) *kudam naeke* (the priest worshipping local spirit, and help priest for liturgical celebration, or in other word he is deacon). *Jog manjhi* (guardian of morals life of *santhal sarna* community and be vigilance during all the social gathering and liturgical celebration). The *jog paranik* (assistant of the *paranik*), and *godet* (the messenger of the village, who calls for meeting and gather things for spiritual celebration).

²⁷ Josy Troisi. "The Santhal", *Readings in Tribal*. Vol. X. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 19972, 61.

The ordinary function of the *manjhi haram* (village head) has the social authority, at the same time he is a spiritual father for the village people. He has the responsibility to guide the village in spiritual path. He has the duty to take care the *manjhi than*²⁸ (it is a place of worship where each village gather for worship, each *Santhal* village has *manjithan*), and the *jaherthan*²⁹. He has to see to it that the yearly festival of the village participates in the ceremonies of birth, marriage and death, if the sickness breaks out in the village, he must summon a meeting and arrange for special sacrifice. Because of his role he is also called spiritual father. The *manjhi haram* is the first settler of the village, who has begun the village.

The *naeke* is a spiritual man of the village. He has spiritual responsibility to perform all the spiritual celebration with due reverential manner. His only concern is to perform during common worship. Before any sacrifices and ritual, he needs to have fasting and penance. He has to sleep on the floor using the hay and 24 hours fasting is compulsory. He should abstain from sexual activities at least 24 hours. Same time his wife has the moral duty to help him and prepare him for spiritual sacrifices on behalf of the entire village.

The election of a *naeke* can be compared with the election of Saul in the Old Testament. To be *naeke* there are some qualities that one needs to possess. Always *naeke* has to be a first born in the family. He has good health, mind and body. He should not have pier ears, not tattoos in his body and good character.

The *manjhi* will summon the meeting, called by *Godet* to announce the date for the election of the new *naeke*. The *naeke* is for life long, but depending on the *naeke*, he can decide and tell the assembly of the people his inability and incapacity to carry forward the sacred rituals. After the meeting, there will be fixed date for the election of new *naeke*.

Village is organised to secure the greatest possible degree of co-operation not only in temporal affairs but also in dealing with the spirit world. Good relationship is established between their society and the spirit world. The *naeke* maintains the right relationship with the *santhal sarna* spirit. He is a man set apart and is conscious of his separation from his people. He is not appointed by the fellow villagers but by the *bonga*³⁰, that they worship. Investing of a new priest occurs after the death of his predecessor. The *bonga* take possession of the individual and so establish the identity of the priest. The process that takes place is very interesting.

²⁸ Founder's shrine of the village, spiritual center of the village.

²⁹ Sacred grove of the village, where every *santhal* village has a sacred grove.

³⁰ According to *santhal* belief *bonga* is spirit as well as God, there are good and evil *bongas*.

The mark of possession, the result of the process known to the *santhal sarna* is known as *rum*.³¹ The behaviour of a person possessed is similar to that of one who has suffered a sudden onslaught of insanity and he speaks in the character of the spirit who has for the time being taken possession of his personality. The eldest son the *naeke* assumes the office after his death. But there is condition if the *Santhal Sarna* community feels that a son of *naeke* is worthy and capable of performing all the activities, then the village *manjhi haram* approve and he continues to be *naeke* of the village. The son is expected to know the activities and regulations of the *naeke*.

All *Santhals* are expected to observe certain restrictions in daily life. These restrictions are to preserve the society in good state as they believe. Through these taboos the *bonga* remain pleased. The *manjhi than* and *jaherthan* are considered sacred. Therefore, all should respect these places. No one should plough this area or cut the tress from here. Nobody should go near to the sacred grove without permission. It is the dwelling place of God.

The marriage outside the tribe and within same *paris* is not permitted. Adultery and homosexuality are also prohibited very strictly. Such breaches are believed to incur the wrath of the *bonga* and to bring immediate punishment. The relation between the wife of younger brother and elder brother is a taboo. They are not supposed to have any physical contact. They cannot be alone in the same room or in a courtyard. They must never sit near each other. They are also expected not to mention the names of these persons. When they have to be referred, they are referred in terms of their children.

According to the custom, it seems to be that they are taboo, but for them, they are pragmatic moral values. They derive their validity from their efficacy. They are observed because they work, because they yield solutions and provide results. We find that in taboo there is social order. We find the world over, each culture having its own particular version of taboos. These can be traced to evident risk to heathy relation among *sarna santhal* community. They find sacredness in them.

They believe that apart from the various benevolent spirit, there are also malevolent *bongas* which have to be scared ways through exorcism or magic. They have to cope with a numbers of inexplicable supernatural phenomena. For this reason there are also *ojhas*³² as they are known, to protect their community. Many of these *ojhas* are non *Santhals*. *Ojhas* are needed because disease is seen as something unnatural, ascribing to the agency of evil *bongas*, with

³¹ *Rum* is a method where a person is not possessed by the spirit and act according to the spirit even speaks what God want him to communicate.

³² A Magicians or a man who knows about the herbal medicine.

evil eyes. Natural medicines are used by people or medicines given by *ojhas* (who has the divine power to know the future, they have relation with the *bongas* and control everything) are also used. When they failed they need to call upon a *jan guru*.³³

As they live a spiritual life, and everything they consider sacred. At the same time, they have very strict rule to follow in the society. There are some people, they are excommunicated from the society and live outside of the community, because they have not obeyed the norms of the society.

1.8.2. Ritual Elements of *Sarna Santhal* Community

The structure of *Sarna Santhal* ritual is formed by various components or elements which are inter-related related with one other. All the ritual is performed with piety and with due respect. There is a very thin line between the social structure and the religious aspect of *Santhal Sarna*. <<*Sarna Santhal* live not only in their human society but in a greater society consisting of supernatural being as well>>³⁴. The mind-set and religiosity is shaped by their life experiences. They have learnt from nature. The world is like a vast arena, where every human person lives and have close relation with *bongas*. The entire world is *towa dare*, which signifies, “the earth is tree that gives spiritual milk for nourishment”.

They are always surrounded by *bongas*. They believe that *bongas* are from the *Maran Buru* and they lived with him. But they revolted against *Maran Buru* and *Maran Buru* was not happy with the *bongas* and he sent them to the earth. They came down to the earth. They occupied the villages, mountains and riverside, big trees specially *Sal* tree and banyan trees, rock and thick forest. *Bongas* had jealousy towards human being, because the human beings were cared and loved by *Maran Buru*.

All the *bongas* are not equal, they have different responsibilities and functions among themselves. According to *Sarna Santhal* tradition there are one hundred and seventy-eight different types of *bongas*. We can classify them in ten categories. They are as follows: (1) village tutelary *bangas* consisting of *Marang Buru*, *Moreko- Turuiko*, *Jaher Era*, *Gosae Era*, *Pargana Bonga*, and *Manjhi Haram Bonga*. (2) The *Abge Bongas* or sub *paris bongas*. (3) The household *bongas* known as *orak bongas*, they are more powerful in the family. They are the protector of food and that they have in the family. (4) The *hapram bongas*, known as the *bongas* of the ancestors, the dead members of the family. (5) The tutelary *bongas* of *saket*, the

³³ A person among Santhal who is specialized in finding witchcraft.

³⁴ Josy Troisi. *Tribal Religion*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2000, 71.

exorcist spirit that help the *Santhal Sarna* family to exorcist the evil *bongas*. (6) *Jom sim bongas*, are in-charge of all the animals, they have to take care the animal and protect them from lions and bears in the forest. (7) The *diku bongas*, (The foreign *Bongas*) that they worship in the *Sarna Santhal* family. (8) The *bahre bongas*, (The spirit of the village outsides such as the spirit of what live in mountains, hills and forests). They have the responsibility that when the village people go for collection of fire wood, they have to protect them from all evils. (9) In this groups there are various types of *bongas*, the *naihar bongas*, (that are brought by the girls), when they come from their family to her husband's house. The *kisar bongas*, (they are invited in the family to help them to become rich). The *kisar bongas* are most danger *bongas* among all. If the family failed to satisfy them, the entire family will die, when the *kisar bongas* becomes angry. (10) The *curin* and *rakas bongas*, they are the evil *bongas* that they are to mislead the humanity. People are afraid of such *bongas*. *Sarna santhal* believe that *bongas* live in burial ground³⁵.

In *Sarna Santhal* religion, *chando bongas*³⁶ holds the fate of every human being. *Chando bongas* always looks with mercy to the entire human being. As he gives light to the world, for *Sarna Santhal*, the *chando bongas* rule the season and the day and night, as also the entire human being.

There are more benevolent *bongas* than malevolent. << In religion proper, the *Sarna Santhal* relation towards these supernatural *bongas* is one of the reverential fear, dependence, submission and proportion. Communion with these *bongas* is concretely manifested mainly through supplication, rice beer offerings and animal sacrifices made on behalf of a particular group, be it the whole village, sub clan or household. To these must be added the ceremonial sharing of sacrificial food and rice-beer libations, besides certain special observation >>³⁷.

In the process of mentioning the good *bongas*, it is better to know the second most worshiped *bonga* in the *Sarna Santhal* community. He is known as *Maran Buru*; we will know more in chapter three when we discuss on the *sarna santhal* concept of creation. As the name implies, she is *jaher era* (the lady of the Sacred Grove). *Jaher era* dwells in the *jaherthan*. *Jaherthan* is a sacred place, where they are believed that *Jaher Era* abides. It is the three *sal* trees that must stand in a row, at the foot of each tree has one stone for each of the *bongas*.

The *jaher than* is often considered by the *santhal sarna* as their national spiritual centre, since they all worship there. Sacrifices are performed during the principal festivals of *Santhal*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 73.

³⁶ According the *Santhal Sarna* religion, the Sun is the supreme governing God of day and night.

³⁷ Josy, 73.

Sarna namely the *baha* festival (the festival of flower), the *erok sim* (the festival sowing), *hariar sim* (the festival sprouting) and the *janthar* (the festival first fruits).

There are also malevolence *bongas*, that try to mislead the people and even there are some *bongas*, they are harmful to community. There are number of *bongas* involved in mischievous act, who find delight in bringing epidemic to men or to cattle. To fight with them and to protect people of the village, they have the spirit whose work is to protect all village people from external problems that comes from the neighbouring villages.

To conclude the discussion on *bongas*, that *Sarna Santhal* belief on *bonga* is as old as humanity. The very creation of the world the belief system among them have the strong belief in *bongas*. According to them, the soul has biological function. Between soul and spirit there is not much different. Soul is breath, whereas the *bongas* (spirit) is embodied in a human person, when a person dies, the *bongas* will go back to cosmos or go back to *Thakur Jiu*.

All the prayer is accompanied by sacrifice. Invocation through prayer is an important part of sacrifice. Prayer is always part of sacrifice, and there is no separate occasion for prayer. The offering of sacrifice is the acknowledgment of the received gift and dependence on the *bongas*. The sacrifices are called *dare samang*, accompanied by prayer, called *bakher* (means speak with God or the language that God understand).

Sarna Santhal offer the ritual sacrifice. They also offer their ordinary food, and product of their work. They offer the first fruits of all their products, such as rice, maize, flowers and so on. They also offer domesticated animals like fowls, pigs, pigeons. They offer libation of rice beer which is the most common offering among them. For all the village worship, the animals collect from the village people by the *Godet* of a village prior to the celebration³⁸.

The normal and regular offering is rice beer, the person feels that he is sinner and wants to please God, then he offers the animal sacrifice. The most acceptable sacrifice are goats and pigs. The poor family who cannot afford for goat and pig, they offer pigeon or chicken. They have three different place to offer their sacrifice. The sacred grove which is the dwelling place of the lady of the grove. It is a place of national God. The second place to offer sacrifice is called *Manjhi Than*. The third place for offering sacrifice is *bhitary orak*, inner sanctuary within the house, where they keep paddy. Where only head of the family has access and he has to offer sacrifice. Besides these above mention places are the place of sacrifice and offering. There is no other place then these to offer sacrifice among the *Sarna Santhal* community.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

The *jaherthan* is the place where all cannot be present. The *naeke* is accompanied by all the elder people of the village. The children and women cannot go to *jahethan*. They go only when the sacrificial act is done. The children go to eat the *jaher sura*³⁹, women go to bring *naeke* in a procession to welcome him and receive blessings that he brings from *Jaher Era*. The first born male member of every family can easily participate in the act of sacrifice. *Sarna santhal* are deeply rooted in their own *Sarna* religion with a set of belief and practices.

³⁹ Prasada, (Sanskrit: “favour” or “grace”) in **Hinduism**, food and water offered to a deity during worship (puja). It is believed that the deity partakes of and then returns the offering, thereby consecrating it. The offering is then distributed and eaten by the worshippers. it is not equal to the Holy Communion in liturgical Christianity.

Chapter 2

Spirituality, an Integral Part of Sarna Santhal

Introduction

Sarna santhal live an integrated life with holiness. They find holiness in passing World. This earth is not our permanent home for human being. We are here as long as God is pleasing with us. Human being are created by God and given us the soul. They have very strong orientation towards God. They are one with God in every moment, for them every moment is sacred. Therefore, they see the face of God in all created things. The creation they have in and around their house is the reflection of God. In this chapter we shall find that all the activities they do has spiritual connotation. Through the daily activities they experience the presence of God.

To be holy is a connectivity with the divine. The quality of being connected with the supernatural power. It is the recognition of feeling, or a belief that there is something greater than myself. Human is a small part of the cosmic or divine nature. A human is a beyond mundane everyday existence at the level of biological needs that drive selfishness and aggression. He is a significant part of a purposeful unfolding of life in our universe.

The holiness is calls for the affirming the healing, positive state of experience, with secure self-esteem, belief, worth and a capacity for love and generosity. An opening of heart is an essential aspect of true spirituality. Contemplative practices such as prayer and meditation are the common denominator of many religions and the foundation of spirituality. Without them, personal growth is much slower. As *Sarna Santhal* people are very close to nature and contemplate with nature their every aspect of life is connected with God.

2.1. *Sarna Santhal* the Pilgrim People

Sarna santhal have very significant understanding of human being. They call themselves as *hor hopon*. The term *hor hopon* means son of man. The term *hor* is derived from the *hod* (Road) which means road the pilgrimage or in civil terms the passenger. They are pilgrim people of peace, hope and inner serene. The pilgrimage is made not by travel but everyday life they live in the family. This pilgrimage is in search of peace and inner harmony

with Creator. It has connection with the migration and exodus to *Sanhtal* history. Which we have seen in the first chapter.

The *Sarna Santhal* religion has connection with the *bongas* (spirit), who keeps human life in order. The unhappiness of spirit causes the natural disaster. Therefore, they have primary concern, how to keep spirit happy. Human body is like a train. As the train has many coaches, same way our human body too. Where the engine takes us and we follow. Where *bonga* wants us to lead, we follow them. The *bonga* has the power to control our mind and thinking capacity. There are different coaches in the train. We come across different people and some of them we allow to enter in us. We carry them as long as we want. If the train of life go on well we carry them till the last stop, that is our death⁴⁰.

When we are filled with the spirit, we are guided in right path. We are freely governed by the divine will. In every mind and heart there is divine spirit and we are led by it. There is also the understanding, human body is like a cage. Our breath is the parrot kept in the cage. This concept seems to be more popular and more famous. This we can understand from the traditional songs. This song is sung by the *Sarna Santhal*, when there is death in the family. The song is as follows:

Baban badae boeha, babon badae.

Oka hilok co, jiwu miru do

Eken khanca geye bagiyaka⁴¹.

The meaning of the song is; we do not know when our soul will leave us. When our soul leaves us, our body will be like cage without parrot, body without soul. We have life as long as the soul is caged in the body. As a cage, without parrot is useless the same way body without *Jiu* (soul) is dead. Teresa of Avila also bring out this concept in her spiritual wring.

This earth is not a permanent place for human being. They are here as long as God desires. They compare the human life is like morning dew or a rain drop falling on the leaf of lotus. When the morning dew falls on the leaf of lotus, the morning dew remains on the leaf (only for sometimes). As the Sun raises and the sunshine fall on the morning dew, it disappears.

⁴⁰ Interviewed with Mr. Rajesh Tudu, age 72, Village Arjunpur, Madhupur, Jharkahnd *Manjhi Haram* of the village over phone on December 10, 2020.

⁴¹ Bodding, 66.

So as human life when time comes we have to disappear from the face of the earth. Through this song we understanding the shortness of human life on this Earth.

Jom abon nuyabon

raska te bon tahena

Noa stak sisir ban tahena

The meaning of the song is: let's eat and drink, lead a happy life, we as the morning dew disappears same way at any time, our soul also will disappear from this earth and go to its creator. The body will remain and back to its originality.

Sarna Santhal believed that they are all one and they are part of universal family. They believe even trees, water, rivers, animal and everything that exist on earth, they are inter related. The soul is connected with the *Marang Buru* (the supreme God). They are like spoke in the wheel connected to entire creation, which is the center hub, identically to all the reality. As a human we have transitory self and connected with *jiu* the eternal, immortal self, the soul. *Sarna Santhal* believe that they are create by *Thakur Jiu* and they have ultimate union with the Creator. The *Jiu* is not the object of consciousness but the subject of consciousness. It is consciousness itself. It cannot be known like any other object. Their true *Jiu* is identical with consciousness. This consciousness animate *Jiu* as well as entire thinking capacity. They are all ultimately connected with the *Jiu*. *Jiu* moves from body to body. The *Jiu* goes back to God from where the *Jiu* had come into the particular body.

They don't believe in rebirth, they believe that soul and spirit they receive from God after death goes back to him and God gives the spirit or soul whomever He wants. It does not mean that the *Jiu* is already there and God has no power to create. God has the power to create and recreate. It is the free will of God, that the return back *jiu* if He wishes he can gives to anybody if not he creates another *jiu* for new human⁴².

Man is essentially a *Jiu* (spirit and breath) uses a body and mind as instruments to gain experience. The *Jiu* is the vital consciousness serene and detached. The apparent *Jiu* is the embodied *Jiu* has the experience of birth and death, freedom and eternal life. Human body is

⁴² Paul Olaf Bodding. *Santal Folk Tales*, 2nd ed. New Delhi: 1936, 34.

made of five basic elements such as fire, water, air, earth and ether. At the death the physical body perishes and its five constitutive elements goes back to its origin⁴³.

Sarna Santhal concept of human being is very unique. *Sarna Santhal* believe that *Thakur Jiu* made man or women in the form of bird. The bird *Has* and *Hasin* are the first parents of humanity. They laid eggs and from that eggs two human being are born, one male and a female⁴⁴. They are called *Pilchu Haram* and *Pilchu Buddi*. They were as normal human being as we are today. Human being has the capacity to grow morally and spiritually.

Sarna Santhal do not believe that human being is gift of God, rather they believe that in every human person God exist. God is seen not in the face but in every person's soul that is connected with *Maran Buru*. The inmost being of every person there is a spirit of God. God has given us power by His presence in every soul to bring rational considerations to bear upon his or her understanding of creator in his own situation⁴⁵.

Sarna Santhal believe that, the world is full of divine power. There is also evil spirit in the World those who went against God have become evil spirit. The evil spirit work in darkness. The power of darkness and evil have their own function on this earth. The power of darkness dislodges a human being from his or her place given to him or her by God. Human being has no power to fight against this power of darkness. He has to depend on *Maran Buru*. When the *Maran Buru* is happy, the power to darkness and evil can be removed from the human being. Their strength lies in the presence of *Maran Buru* in them and therefore, *Maran Buru* must always remain in the resolve of their hearts⁴⁶.

Sarna Santhal believe that, human beings who progress true subjectivity, must not be controlled by environment factors. The inner priority is inner transformation and to change the social environment through moral reform, aspiring to achieve an ideal human centered society. Their life is centered around the nature. They have their house in the forest. They are very close to the nature⁴⁷.

I would like to explore the *Sarna Santhal* approach to salvation, in order to clarify that *sarna santhal* religion is a human- centered religion. In *Sarna Santal* religion we find there are

⁴³ Mikio Matsuoka. "The Buddhist Concept of Human Being: From the Viewpoint of the Philosophy of the Soka Gakkai". *Semantic Scholar* (206):52.

⁴⁴ Paul Olaf Bodding, *Santal Folk Tales*, 2nd ed. New Delhi: 1936, 66

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*,

⁴⁶ [unit-18-tribal-religion-two-case-studies.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](#), accessed on 18, November 2020.

⁴⁷ Mikio Matsuoka. "The Buddhist Concept of Human Being: From the Viewpoint of the Philosophy of the Soka Gakkai". *Semantic Scholar* (206):52.

two approaches to salvation. One is salvation through the union with *bonga* and the other is community salvation. *Sarna Santhal* cannot have salvation away from the community. Therefore, we don't find any ritual offering to *Maran Buru* in family prayer. In family prayer they remembered only *orak bonga* (family God). *Sarna Santhal* believe that the salvation is through union with *bonga* of family and *Maran Buru*⁴⁸.

2.2. Universal Brotherhood

When we explore *Sarna Santhal* view of humanity, that all living being alike possess *Sarna Santhal* nature is often cited. All human person are brothers and sisters in this world. The very fact of creation, *Sarna Santhal* believe that all creation comes from same parents, therefore, all we are brothers and sisters in entire creation. The very fact of *paris* system all *sarna santhal* are forced to maintained the relationship of universal brotherhood⁴⁹.

All life is an expression of the cosmic union, but only human being have the potential to become its subjective agents. Each individual manifests the subjectivity of the life of the cosmic in their own life, cares for and protects all other life, thereby established the subjectivity of the cosmic life. This cosmic human being or the greater self is ultimately connected with the *Maran Buru*. The true human dignity is derived from the fact that human life can possess in cosmic subjectivity. Based on this aspect there is cosmic humanism among *Sarna Santhal* community⁵⁰.

Sarna Santhal teaches, that each plants and animals possess the divine nature. *Sarna Santhal* considered both human being and non-human being as having equal religious dignity. We find among *Sarna Santhal* all the religious activities revolve around animals and nature. Most of the worship is done to the trees and animals. The biggest celebration of *Santhal* is *Sohrae* (Thanks giving celebration) that they help them in the cultivation⁵¹. Animals are copartner in their cultivation and livelihood. On this celebration mainly, it is to give thanks to *Maran Buru* for the involving animal in their cultivation. Also celebrate to give thanks to *Maran Buru* for the good harvest.

⁴⁸ Mikio Matsuoka. "The Buddhist Concept of Human Being: From the Viewpoint of the Philosophy of the Soka Gakkai". *Semantic Scholar* (206):52.

⁴⁹ Paul Olaf Bodding, *Santal Folk Tales*, 2nd ed. New Delhi: 1936, 66

⁵⁰ Mikio Matsuoka. "The Buddhist Concept of Human Being: From the Viewpoint of the Philosophy of the Soka Gakkai". *Semantic Scholar* (206):58.

⁵¹ *Sohrae* traditional prayer says that *sarna santhal* adore cow on *sohrae*.

The human being were not indispensable to the operation of the World, in the *Sarna Santhal* creation myth human were essentially as part of all and they exist in it. Myth explains the purpose of humanity as part of nature and there is no different grade for human being. They were crowned not because they were specially created but as a rational being they have more responsibility towards humanity and entire creation. The first human being is presented as individuals who were the progenitors of the human race.

They worship all trees, which they consider as holy according to their religion. Mostly they worship the *Sal* tree, from their origin comes “*Sarna*”. They worship mountain, stone and every created things of God. Therefore, every *sarna santhal* have an obligation to demonstrate natural subjectivity, have compassion for all living things. Act as creative managers of the ecosystem and builder of symbiosis. Every *Sarna Santhal* should base themselves on a spirit of respect for all life deriving from active compassion.

To summarize, every *Sarna Santhal* must always be aware of the dignity and value of life and be deeply grateful for the lives they take for the sake of substance. Every *Sarna Santhal* has responsible towards every life that comes from the *Maran Buru*. All the sacrifice is done according to the command of *Maran Buru* and hunting is done according to the norms given by *jaher bongas* the sacred grove, once in a year.

2.3. Human Being and Soul

The spirit is the meeting point of humanity and divinity. Spirit is the mediator between them. *Sarna Santhal* believe that human beings are regarded as fundamental being. To do good or evil is constant struggle in human life. They are asked to put into practice the benevolence law of *bongas* as measurement to relate with others. They practice absolute good, not good as opposed to evil. *Sarna Santhal* have the potential activities that they manifest the law of nature in their daily life. The creative life that they live in society by practice of morality, which represent the dynamic, absolute good that functions ceaselessly to destroy evil and manifest good⁵².

Human being has the capacity to distinguish good and evil. They have the freedom to choose what is good and bad. They become active agent of law to do good. The ethics of subjectivities human being apply for the good of entire creation. Through the self-discipline

⁵² Mikio Matsuoka. “The Buddhist Concept of Human Being: From the Viewpoint of the Philosophy of the Soka Gakkai”. *Semantic Scholar* (206): 60.

and having good relation with *bongas*, suppress the evil and realize good that comes from inner consciousness. *Sarna Santhal* that suggest that the master of the self should be in relation of the goodness to the others. The highest form of goodness is relationship with other including with nature.

The Universe is filled with the spirit of God. The spirit of God is in every created reality. They are united with God. They have close connection with fellow human being as well as with spirit of God. Their livelihood is based on the nature; even food they eat comes from the nature which is the visible face of Creator⁵³. The basic food, they receive, the fire wood with which they cook, the leaves plate that they eat comes from the forest. Thus, they have connection with divine spirit.

The *Sarna Santhal* daily life and value system is deeply rooted in the spirit of God. They believe that the nature, man and God are intimately linked. The *bongas* whom, *Sarna Santhal* worship, live in the natural things. They dwell in mountain, creeks, bushes and trees. Their songs, folk tales and their histories are linked to the forest, rivers and mountains. The people who have been evacuated from their own ancestral land have found very difficult to lead a meaningful life elsewhere⁵⁴.

They also live in total communion with others. They lead a community life which is cohesive and organic and unified. Their primary concern is community. Community interests come before any individual interest. They can sacrifice personal interest but not the community interest. The individual interest is not given much important, but when there is external force that goes against the culture and the community, all people unite to defend such external force. All the celebration from birth to death, all the ceremonies centered around the community. There are no private ceremonies among *Sarna Santhal* community. There is very little scope for individual celebration⁵⁵. In the community, decisions are taken through consensus and not through elections. As they live absolute community life, they lack competitive attitude.

⁵³ Paul Olaf Bodding. *Santal Folk Tales*. New Delhi: 1936, 66.

⁵⁴ www.indiantrabahaeritage.org under the foolwing creative commons licence dr, boro baski

⁵⁵ www.indiantrabahaeritage.org under the foolwing creative commons licence dr, boro baski

2. 4. Life after Death

Sarna Santhal believe, that till three generations after death need to have every ritual offering in honor of the dead. There is cremation and burial among the *Sarna Santhal*. Both are acceptable among them. If it is cremation some bones are collected by the elder son and kept for a while under the rafters of the house. They are washed and fed ritually by female mourners with milk, rice beer and sacred water. The display of bone and flower is the symbol of mourning among the *Sarna Santhal*. The bone is kept till 12 days in the family. After twelve days there is one more ritual called *bhadan*. In the day of *bhadan*, the bones are immersed in water by elder son of the dead. After that there is a sacrifice of goat. The dead now becomes an ancestor known by name, one latter the recitation of a ritual text releases him from identity to become a nameless ancestor. He/ she join other ancestors of the family.

Before reaching to the ancestors, the dead has to go through the process of purification in the presence of *Jom Raja*⁵⁶. After the purification, the dead reaches to *Hanapuri*⁵⁷ where he live eternally. From there he prays for his living family members. In spirit the living and dead family are united. *Saran Santhal* have very deep sense of remembering them in their day life.

Every *Sarna Santhal* before, eating and drinking remembered dead members of the family. Before eating they drop the grain of rice food on the ground, same way with the water and specially with alcohol they drop a little bit before having sip of alcohol, recalling them. This practice we can witness in every *Sarna Santhal* family. They have very close connection with the dead.

They also have belief that if a person dies pre mature or unnatural death, the soul will not go to *Hanapuri*. Therefore, they are not given full funerary rites, they have strong faith that the dead is present in spirit. The dead becomes evil spirit. The children when they die of disease like leprosy and small pox, before *caco chataiar*⁵⁸, they never give them total funerary rites. They will never go to *hanapuri*. They are not remembered; because they were not completely community members.

⁵⁶ Jom raja is a god who has the account register of every living sarna santhal, when they die they are judged according the jom raja what he has written in the register. He has the final decision to send everyone in *hanapuri* or hell.

⁵⁷ *Hanapuri* is *sarna santhal* understanding of heaven.

⁵⁸ The term *chaco* means able to “walk”, and *chatiar* means “to given name or the give equal right”. Which signify that child is grown up and he take be responsible.

The death of woman in pregnancy has very negative impact on the family and the society. They have very strong belief, that after death, pregnant woman cannot go to *hanapuri*. She will become *churin*⁵⁹. Therefore, when pregnant woman dies, they have to bury her away from the house, where there is no easy access to the village people. Village people prefer to cruminate the dead body of pregnant woman.

The ancestral worship is linked the cosmology and the worldview to idea of soul and life after death. The understanding of life after death, *sarna santhal* have great respect for the dead. They remembered every day. Each and every celebration they begin with the sacrifice made to the ancestor of the family. Every year they have common celebration in honor to ancestors. Ancestors become the binding force of continuity of the descent line from the past to the present. The ancestors worship has important role in the family and the *paris* system. Through the ancestor worship deceased continue to be the interactive lineage care for and revered by the living members of the family, in return contributing the prosperity to the succession generation as sources of mediators with divine power.

The ancestor who are worshiped are perceived as guardian figures who are difficult to please, whose degree of influence on the living usually decreases with increasing genealogical distance from descendants. *Sarna Santhal* believe that the power of the ancestors is ambivalent: as likely to punish as to reward. They also believe that the ancestor cannot punish the living members. Thus the link of death and living among community is very close and have spiritual connotation.

2. 5. *Sarna Santhal* Understanding of Creation

Thakur Jiu, the creator God by inherent authority as Sovereign by his command, He created and, well- ordered entire creation. Rather, like book of Genesis God spoke and all things originated. By the irrevocable power of God's creation words was grounded, in the authority of God himself. God existed before creation and above creation. Creation was not the emanation of divine person. It was separate from him, a new reality subject to his will.

In this unit we will apply some theoretical approaches to their myth on creation. We shall begin with a short definition of the genre of myth, and then deal with the significant of the myth of the creation. Like other primitive religion *Sarna Santhal* creation myth also serves

⁵⁹ Very strong ghost any time anywhere she can appear and freighted the people in, and as she has no permanent place, try to find out her dwelling place.

to regenerate the community spiritually. When we narrate the creation myth, there is spiritual sense in it. Through this we know their way of life⁶⁰.

Myth is a story that serves to relate particular to their customs, culture and tradition to explain natural and supernatural phenomena about the creation of the earth and the creation of human being including the animal and all living and non-living beings⁶¹. It was believed that myth belonged only to ancient culture or primitive culture. The fact is that every culture and customs is not hundred percent scientifically true.

In the creation myth, the *Thakur Jiu* creates a nature that continues to exist. The earth, the cosmos, human being, animals that live in the earth and under the water, the food, the seasons and so on. When they narrate the creation history is accepted as absolute truth by the people of particular group that they belong. When we read and hear the mythical story, we go back to its origin. Through this narration they are regenerated and renewed spiritually⁶².

As the tribal of India, most of them lack written documents on religions so also *Sarna Santhal* creation myth have oral tradition. There are two main versions of the *sarna santhal* creation myth that are generally known to anthropologists. But here I would like to mention the creation myth that is well known in the state of Jharkhand and particularly in *Santhal Pargana*.

In the beginning there was only water all over. At the lowest bottom of water there was a land. The *Thakur Jiu* felt the pang of creation. He brought into being the earth and the different animals like crab, alligator, whale, crocodile, tortoise, lobster and earthworm. But *Thakur Jiu* was not happy with his creation. He felt that his mission would not be continued till he created human being, that was his ultimate desire. He therefore, created man and woman and decide to breathe life into them. But just when he would infuse life into his creation, a *sin sadow* or a weird horses came down from the heaven and devoured the human effigies⁶³.

Thakur Jiu was very sad. He decided that he would never again attempt to create man. Therefore, he made a pair of swan from his breast. Then he infused life essence into them. Now the two creatures just floated on the water with permanent moorings. When swans were tired

⁶⁰ Ivy Hansdak. The Creation Myth of the Santhals". *Folklore Foundation Lokaranta* Vol. VIII (2015):14.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 14

⁶² *Ibid.*, 15

⁶³ Paul Olaf Bodding. *Santal Folk Tales*, 2nd ed. New Delhi: 1936, 66.

they could take rest on the palm of *Thakur Jiu*, which was a short respite followed by another bout of ceaseless and aimless floating⁶⁴.

Again this time the *sin sadom* appeared from heaven and threatened to kill the swans. But *Thakur Jiu* was on his guard this time. He was always looking after them. They were in the watch of *Thakur Jiu* himself. He dealt a stroke and the *sin sadom* turned into froth of sea. Now the swans began to float on the water. They needed the earth to rest on.⁶⁵ They need to sustain their life. They also prayed to *Thakur Jiu* that they need food and shelter. Without that they could find difficult to live.

Thakur Jiu summoned the *horo* (tortoise) and ordered him to bring earth from the bottom of the sea. As the command of *Thakur Jiu*, tortoise happily accepted. While tortoise was trying to bring the earth from the bottom tortoise could not succeed. The tortoise tried its best but failed. The *Takhur Jiu* was very sad⁶⁶.

Thakur Jiu then called the lobster and ordered him to fetch earth from the bottom of the sea. The lobster accepted the call of *Thakur Jiu*. The lobster tries to bring earth from the bottom, could not succeed. The same way every aquatic animal, such as, crocodile, Raghop Boal or whale and crab failed to bring the earth from the sea bottom.

Thakur Jiu called the earthworm to bring the earth from the sea bed. The earthworm came forward with zeal. The earthworm agreed with some condition. The earthworm told *Thakur Jiu*, that <<I will be ready to bring forth the earth from sea but, I should place the earth on the back of the tortoise>>⁶⁷. Then tortoise was tried with its four legs in heavy iron that till today could not break. The earth rest on the back of the tortoise.⁶⁸.

Thakur Jiu, then created the earth with the help of earthworm. He placed mountain, forest and sea on earth. When *Thakur Jiu* breathed life into the *ghus* grass, which floated on the water, the grass turned into swan birds. swan built their homes on the earth⁶⁹. They laid the eggs. Swan now swim on the water and heat their eggs. Suddenly one day the eggs hatched

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*,

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*,

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*,

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*,

⁶⁸ Idea taken from *Janam chatiar* story.

⁶⁹ Lea Schulte- Droeshe “Making Place through Ritual”, (PhD Thesis, University of Groningen, 2016), 120.

two human babies one of them male and another female. The male infant was named by *Thakur Jiu*, as *Pilchu Haram* and the infant female was named *Pilchu Budi*⁷⁰.

Now human couple needed a place to stay and the creation of land became the next task for *Thakur Jiu*. Land was created with the help of seven animals. The seven number here is the reason why this part of the creation myth is sung seven times during the performance of prayer⁷¹. All these seven creatures, prefer points out, are animals that operate in water and on land, thus connecting the two opposed elements. *Thakur Jiu* asked a *katkom* (crab), a *ichet* (shrimp), an *mangar* (alligator) a *boar* (a type of catfish), a *horo* (tortoise) and an *lendet* (earthworm) to bring up earth from bottom of the sea.

The *Thakur Jiu* told birds to take the human beings to a place called *hihiri pipiri*, (the place where first human beings were grown up) it can be compare with the Eden garden where Adam and Eva were placed. They live peaceful life with God. *Thakur Jiu* also took care the first human being. When geese saw two humans being have been born goose danced in joy and sung. The song is as follows.

Hae hae, jala puri re
Hae hae, nuking manewa
Hae hae, busnr akankin
Hae hae nuking manewa
hae hae tokare dohokin⁷².

Hae, hae do se laieben
Hae hae, maran Thakur jiu
Hae hae busar asankim
Hae hae, nuking manewa
Hae hae, tokare dohokin.

The meaning of the song is as follows:

Hey hey, kingdom of water
Hey hey, child of man
Oh, tell me

⁷⁰ Paul Olaf Bodding, *Santal Folk Tales*, 2nd ed. New Delhi: 1936, 65.

⁷¹ Lea Schulte- Droeshe “Making Place through Ritual”. (PhD Thesis, University of Groningen, 2016),120.

⁷² Paul Olaf Bodding. *Santal Folk Tales*, 2nd ed. New Delhi: 1936, 66.

Where I will keep you!
 Oh where?
 Hey hey, go to the Thakur jiu, oh child
 Hey hey, implore him for shelter.
 Hey hey ask him for clothes.
 Hey hey, child of man
 Hey hey, oh tell me
 Hay hay, where I will keep you, where!

As the they have no any written documents but the poetry has for all occasions to tell the life of *Sarna Santhal*, there we have one song that very specially mention every year during the *chatiar celebration* (confirmation celebration). The famous song is as follows.

All these songs are sung in the festival of Karam (Adina Cordifolia tree), after the name of a tree, which *Sarna Santhal* hold as sacred. Every year when karma is celebrated, this story of creation is repeated every year. All village people have to come and listen to the creation story. Till today each *Sarna Santhal* village have continued this practice.

The sung-poetry of *Sarna Santhal* reveals, as in the myth story cited above, that the major concern of their cosmology is the origin of earth and human beings. The earth stands for nature and as the earth produces foods therefore, human beings become part and parcel of nature. Their belief that in the beginning of creation there existed nothing but a vast sheet of water and the sky and in the days of such a deluge⁷³.

The creation myth provides the background for different *paris* emerged and how they are organized in the order in order to maintain social order. It also shows, that relatedness among them is not restricted to the species of humans, and the *paris* never changes.

2.5.1. The Participation of Entire Creation

Thakur Jiu created the planets, animal and human being through special creation. Through natural process He created the entire creation. In the creation myth of, we find that along with *Thakur Jiu* all the sea animals involved in creation⁷⁴. Though they could have failed to bring the earth from sea bed. It does not signify that God is not able to create the world. *Thakur Jiu* involve entire creation from two reasons. The first reason is that, as they participate

⁷³ Paul Olaf Bodding. *Santal Folk Tales*. Massachusetts: Cambridge Harvard University, 1938, 34.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

in the creation. The other reason is that they were not able to bring forth the earth from sea bed, that signifies that they are not equal to God.

As we find in the book of Genesis 1, 28 that Yahweh says let us make a man in our own image and likeness. It is the Trinitarian God who are involved in the Creation. In the Creation of *sarna santhal* myth, all the nature involved in a creation of man. The man is a crown of creation because man was created kept in the plan of God. The birds, and animals and God himself were principally involved in creation of man. God did not summon a man to dominate but to coexist with the *bongos* and nature.

Man is a rational being. They are well aware that life is not merely eating, drinking, mating and defending. They have to protected from all external force. The rationality of a person distinguishes from the other creation. By our intellectual and reasoning capacity we are call to a rational and spiritual. To be aware that human being are created by God, leads us near to our creator.

According to the Gita, human beings should realize that life is not meant for petty enjoyments, for small distractions. The human life is meant to know the root of what existence is all about. We should not be content with just see an object on the physical platform, but we should know the truth behind it. The purpose of human life, is not for enjoyment alone; it is for knowing the Truth⁷⁵. The excessive enjoyment destroys the life of human being. The material things will not help to reach out our goal, that will never become our happiness. In this unit we shall evaluate the creation myth and creation of human being.

2. 5. 2. Gradual Processes in Creation

Creation history has it significance. There is a transformation in the mythical creation. As in the creation myth there are specific feature that, the idea of origin combined with the migration. We encounter the ancestor couple as children of swans. They have totem, they extend their relation from human world to animal kingdom. Killing of totem animal will endanger the community⁷⁶.

Creation myth promote the significant relation of brotherhood. This gives the social identity. The *Sarna Santhal* oral history of creation has vital points of reference to their identity. The creation story has the significant role in their life. Their entire life is based on it. Social

⁷⁵ Swami B.G. Narasingha. *Shree Bhagavad Geeta*. Karnataka: Gosai Publishers, 2017, 24.

⁷⁶ Lea Schulte- Droeshe “Making Place through Ritual” (PhD Thesis, University of Groningen, 2016), 139.

norms are based on the creation story. The *paris* system is very strong among their community. If anybody violate the *paris* laws, he/ she is excommunicate from the society.

Most of their laws are based on creation myth, that unify within community. The violation of norm will lead to excommunication, called *bitalha*, the process of *bitalha* is very heard and punishment is harsh and costly. The punishment is given by the village council headed by *manjhi haram* with his *more hor* (five council members). Before they give a warning to the member. If he or she does not obey then, *bitalha* is done.

The *bitalha* is hard but not a final decision, it is not the ultimate warning, there is always an opportunity of coming back to the community for the guilty which has done through *jom jati*⁷⁷. This kind of punishment is given when they break the norm basic to the community and mention in the creation story.

There is a gradual development of religious practice and reverential fear towards the creation. There is a sense of religiosity towards all the created beings. The sense of oneness with the nature.

2. 5. 3. Man is a Crown of Creation

When we analyse the *Sarna Santhal* creation myth, we notice that, all living being take part in the creation of human as well as creation of the earth. There is no systematic order clearly like that of creation in the Bible. All the created animal helped the upbringing of the first human being on this earth. The bird who were as parents of human person, participated in the upbringing of human being. The cow, who came down from heaven to give milk. All the natural animals were concerned about the human being. Thus we can see that human being is the crown of creation.

Thakur Jiu created human being from the geese that sows that human being are not for eternity. Human being form the part of animal world. But human person with reason have capacity to relate with nature. Human reflect and represent *Thakur jiu* as they live on this earth and reflect entire creation. The *Thukur Jiu* has not commanded human being to rule over but to look at all created living being as the co- pilgrimage on this earthly journey. *Sarna Santhal* think that human person has the vertical and horizontal responsibilities. Every human person has to be cared and given due respect.

⁷⁷ The term *jom jati* means, eat within the community. Accused accept his mistake in publically, then as a sigh of repentance in reunion, he has to offer food for the entire village and after that he will be accepted in the village.

2. 6. Rice- Beer the Divine Offering⁷⁸

The alcohol has signification role in the *sarna santhal* religion. The rice beer is called *handi*⁷⁹ in santhali. Which means alcohol. But *tukuc handi*⁸⁰, that is set apart for the *Thakur jiu* to offer him before any celebration. There is no celebration without *tukuc handi*. *Santhal* believed that *Thakur Jiu* himself the grandfather taught them to brew rice beer. He had the motive that after became drunk, they were amorous with each other. That night, they slept together and had sexual intercourse. Later, the two humans were ashamed and made coverings for their body with leaves. When they confessed their sexual act to *Maran Buru*, he just smiled and said, “it does not matter”.⁸¹ After sometimes, *Pilchu Haram* and *Pilchu Budi* lived together as husband and wife. They bore fourteen children, seven boys and seven girls⁸².

2.7. Emergence of *Santhal Paris*⁸³

The first parents *Pilchu Haram* and *Pilchu Buddi* had fourteen children. There were seven boys and seven girls. These seven girls went to the forest to bring the fire wood. The same way boys also went for hunting. There used to be annual hunting for men. Before they entre to the sacred forest they offered rice beer to *Jaher Era*⁸⁴, in order to get more animals while they hunt. As they offer the rice beer, the remaining of the rice beer has to be divined and drunk by all. The remaining rice beer is considered, the divine gift when *Thakur Jiu* left for his people to be part of the worship.

All brothers were drunk and entered into forest for hunting. There they found their own sisters. As all they were drunk they had sexual relation with them. Thus, they became their husband with whom they have sexual intercourse. The marriage between these brothers and sisters resulted in the formation of first seven *paris* (septs, clans). Namely, *Hansdak*, *Murmu*, *Kisku Hembrom Marandi Soren* and *Tudu*. There were also later added five more *paris*, they are *Baskey*, *Besra Pauria Core* and *Bedea*. This division is not based on the category that one

⁷⁸ Rice beer is a type local drinks made out of rice fragmented, it is made to offer God.

⁷⁹ The term *handi* means alcohol in general, it can be made of rice, flowers and fruits.

⁸⁰ *Tukuc handi* – rice beer in santhali is called *tukuc handi*, because it is made un the mud pots.

⁸¹ Ivy Hansdak. The Creation Myth of the Santhals”. *Folklore Foundation Lokaranta* Vol. VIII (2015): 17.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 17

⁸³ A clan is the constituent of a tribe. Put another way, a tribe is a collection of clans that are almost always inter-related by blood. In the Middle East a clan usually extends five degrees. All clans in a given tribe claim descent from a single ancestor.

⁸⁴ *Jajer era* is a female goddess of *sarna santhal* community. Worshiped in *jaher than*.

is superior to the other. These division is made to have social order and better relation in the society. Among *Sarna Santhal* there is no cast system like Hinduism⁸⁵.

This indicates that the *Sarna Santhal* have perceived the primeval time in terms of abstract principle. They incorporate the principle of the world destruction alongside the world creation⁸⁶. The *Sarna Santhal* view of primal elements that they refer are air, earth and water, which have been consider by *Sarna Santhal* to form the fundamental elements of the Universe. The earth is made by these above mention elements.

2. 8. A Simple Not Scientific

Sarna Santhal accepted creation myth as the fundamental for their belief. For them the creation myth is memory and a sense of identity among the followers of *Sarna Santhal* religion. The creation myth is the way of life. It is said that, *Sarna Santhal* creation myth is guided by natural law. It has a reference point as natural law. It is testable against the empirical law. The *Sarna Santhal* myth is falsifiable.

The creation myth of *Sarna Santhal* does not gives detail accounts, for example the creation of water is not mention in creation. The *Sarna Santhal* creation myth seem that there existed everything before. We find very clear account of human creation. The earthworm put the earth in order. The creation myth says, that everything came to exist as *Thakur Jiu* desired. There was no time frame of creation myth. *Thakur Jiu* took his own time to create the World. *Thakur Jiu* in his complete freedom create the earth and human. The oral tradition narrates two creation story. There is short creation history and long creation history.

2.9. Nature as the Face of God (Spirit)

Sarna Santhal look at nature as the face of God. In this unit we shall explore the intimate relation with nature that exist among *Sarna Santhal* and their functions. Through the place of worship and the religious activities demonstrate the true relation that they possess with nature.

The *jaher than* - Sacred groves means a God or Goddess and treated as holy which as an adjective. The life of *sarna santhal* people revolved around the nature. They considered everything holy and sacred. They see the face of God in every created thing. *Jaher than* is the place where the village God exist. *Jaher era* is one of the female God among them. *Jaher than*

⁸⁵ Ivy Hansdak. "The Creation Myth of the Santhals". *Folklore Foundation Lokaranta* Vol. VIII (2015): 17.

⁸⁶ Paul Olaf Bodding. *Santal Folk Tales*. Massachusetts: Cambridge Harvard university, 1938, 44.

is an animated component in their society. The deity who dwells in the *jaher than* is called *jaher era*⁸⁷.

It should be consisting of trees belong to the primeval forest, and a cluster of trees is always permitted to stand round it, but only five trees are essential. Four *sal* trees and one *mahua* tree. Three of the *sal* trees must stand in one row: at the foot of each tree, there is one stone for each of the following gods. A fourth *sal* tree standing nearby has a stone for the *Pargana bonga*, and at the foot of a *mahua* tree, there is a stone for the *gossae era*. The stone is said to be put in their places at the command of gods themselves. Gods of the *jaher* are considered national deity worshipped by all *Sarna Santhal*, and the sacrifices are performed by the village *naeke*.

Manjhi than- It is built in the main street of the village. It consists of a small mud house, with a thatched roof over it, supported by five posts. The central post is believed to be indiscernible. There are various opinions about the *manjhi than*. Some opine that it is sacred to the spirit of the former *manjhis*, especially the first *manjhi haram*. Some say it is for *Pilchu Haram* the first and original *manjhi haram*. It has two significances: it is the place where, the villagers offer sacrifices and secondly, it is the place where the elders of the village meet to discuss village affairs and settle disputes. It is the place reserved for the family and the ancestral spirits. A low mud wall within the house separates it from the rest of the house. No sacred emblem or symbol is found in *manjhi than*.

Moreko- turui ko (five- six)- the literary meaning of five-six is treated as a complete single spirit. *Sarna Santhal* believe that the spirit presides over, and take care of the village from evil spirit. During the pandemic the village people, go to the *more-ko-turui* for community offering. It is the individual sacrifice but done in the presence of village people in *jaher than*⁸⁸.

Gosae era- The nature of the *gosae era* is very strange. *Gosae era* dwells among the people but unseen and unknown. She is worshiped in *jaher than* but her presence is among the people. She is worshiped in *jaher than* but the under *matkom* trees (*bassia latifolia*) in the sacred grove. During the celebration of *baha* (flower) they make tree tents but one tent little away from the two other is the tent for *gosae bonga*⁸⁹.

⁸⁷ Nayan Jyoti Das. "The Santhal Pantheon of Supranatural Agencies". *A Peer-Reviewed International Journal of Humanities & Social Science, Assam: Karimgaanj College* Vol. IV (2015), 70.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 70

Manjhi bonga (spirit of the village headman): The *manjhi bonga* is the repressive of all village people. In every *sarna santhal* village there is a *manjhi than* for manjhi bonga. *Manjhi than* is represented by three stones at the foot of the wooden pillar. It is the central place of *Sarna Santhal* village, all people have to access to worship in *manjhi than* with the person of *manjhi haram*. This *bonga* is responsible for the warfare of the entire village⁹⁰. *Manjhi bonga* has to communicate with *naeke* and *manjhi haram* is spiritual way.

Sima Bonga (village boundary spirits): The *Sima bongas* are in a group, they live in the boarder of village and they are very furious as they are often propitiated by the blood of human. Therefore, they are propitiated by the *kudam naeke* (the assistant village priest) pricking blood from his own thigh which is called *bulu mayam*. They live in the border of the village. The village people are very much afraid of these *bongas*. The village people believe that *sima bongas* send serpents and animals to attack people. As they are furious they have been given offering twice in a year⁹¹. The *ojha*⁹² also can please the *sima bongas*, when they are not happy. *Ohajas* they offer sacrifice outside of village to please them.

Bahre bongas (spirits of the surroundings): The *bahre bongas* are the sprits of the outskirts living in the neighboring village. *Sarna Santhal* believe that *bahre bongas* dwell in the pool, ditches, holes, ponds, deserted place, old house, burial ground and so on. They misguide the people. To please them, collective offering is made by the *kudam naeke*. During the several festival fowls are offered to the *bahre bongas*. The sacrifice is made by the *kudam naeke*, offering his blood mixed with rice. In this sacrifice all village people participate devotedly and contributing for the things needed for the worship.

Buru bonga (mountain and hill spirit): Initially they lived on the hill and mountains. As they live in and around the hills and mountains, they believe that the surrounding hills and mountains are abode of some spirits called *Buru Bongas*, who are responsible for ruining of the crops and various accidents. *Buru bongas* are considered as the patron *bongas* of journey. When they go for long journey before they begin journey, offer sacrifice to *buru bongas*⁹³.

Hapram Bongas (Ancestral Spirit): The term “*Hapram*” signify the dead members of the family. The spirit of the dead members of the family are called *Hapram Bongas* among *Sarna*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁹² *Ojhas* are people who knows and understand the language of bongas. They see the movement of *boangas* in the leave of *sal* to know that why they are angry with the humanity.

⁹³ Nayan Jyoti Das. “The Santhal Pantheon of Supranatural Agencies”, *A Peer-Reviewed International Journal of Humanities & Social Science, Assam: Karimagaanj College* Vol. IV (2015), 71.

Santhal community. They are worshiped by the living members of the family. There is different opinion on these aspects. Some people say that this ideology is borrowed from the Hindu religion or unless like other tribes of India. One thing is very clear that *Sarna Santhal* believe that after death a person is transformed into the spirit and live with dead ancestors. He joined the all family member those who have dead and gone from the earthly family. They form heavenly family and become *bongas*.

After the ritual done, by the living members of the family for the death member to permit him in union of *Hapram*. The dead member becomes *Hapram*, only after his funeral rites and *bhadan*⁹⁴ are perform. They believe that the death person intercedes from above for the living members. They also believe that the living member cannot see them but the death member of the family can see and directly.

Their life is surrounded by the *bongas*. There is an intimate relation between the nature and human events. This relation between *Sarna Santhal* and nature is manifested in life cycle. Their festival celebration also indicates the closeness with the nature. Every created thing is the replica of God. It manifests the face of God.

For the poor, animals are their wealth. They are bank balance in the family. They grow animal to sell them during the difficulties or when they in need of more money for particular purpose. In the time of sickness and death, they sell their animal for treatment. When they have animal they are secure that they have future. The family with more animals are consider rich and wealthy. Everyone pray that their menagerie may be filled with the animals. Therefore, the more animals are the matter of social statues.

The life of *Sarna Santhal* are surrounded by the supernatural *bangas*. This closeness is witness in their life cycle. All the gods have connection with nature. The supreme God of *Sarna Santhal*, *maran buru*, that signify the great mountain, the sacred grove, the *Jaher era* is the worship of tress and stones. Every aspect of human life has connectivity with nature, nature is god, god is nature. Their songs, folk tales and their life history, whatever we can think of in their life has connection with nature.

⁹⁴ *Bhadan* is a ritual done by the living member of dead, depending on the economic condition of the family, offer on this day a goat in the accordance to the *sarana santhal* ritual. All village people come together to offer him goat and chicken. All the together they eat as purifying of the village and the family of the dead.

2. 10. Human Responds Towards its Creation

Human beings are creatures among other creatures who live within the created realm. Yet with respect to dominion, humans are responsible to rule over the other creatures by virtue of humankind's distinction of being created as the desire of *Thakur Jiu*. Humans being are created, are given special care by *Thakur Jiu*. It is in this sense that humankind is the Creator's royal representative, ruler on earth but not dominator. Human beings are the lords of creation because they are specially created and care by *Thakur Jiu* himself. The beginning of the story is God's creation of humankind within the human context, the story line is in some way, about the relationship between creator and human being as they exist within the creations.

Chapter-3

Sarna Santhal Spirituality of Santhal Pargana

Introduction

Religion is as old as human being, and the religion is his life, a light unto his soul and lamp to his feet. The reality of human life is realizing through religion. The function of religion is to confirm the intimation and lead human being to the perfection⁹⁵. In this chapter specifically we shall discuss about the theological orientation of Sarna *Santhal* spirituality. *Santhal Pargana* is considered as home land of *santhal*. It has the largest number of sub-division in the state of Jharkhand. They are *Dumka, Deoghar, Jamtara, Godda Pakur* and *Sahebganj*. After independence in the year 1981 *Santhal Pargana* was divided into the four districts and now *Santhal Pargana* has five districts.

Santhal Pargana is a home land of *Santhal* as well as the historical place for them. It has a great significance in their life. The first freedom fighters were born in *Santhal Pargana* as well as who fought for the *santhal* heroes are born in the land of *Santhal Pargana*. They have fought for the land of the *santhal*, which we see as identity of the *santhal* community. Heroes of *Santhal* are *Sidho* and *Kanhu, Chand- Bhairo* who are considered not only freedom fighter and spiritual leader too. The supreme creator appeared to them and given them a white blank paper to write the future of every *Santhal* community. They have written the fortune and future of every *santhal* by their blood. In this chapter we shall see the theological orientation of *Sarna Santhal* spirituality.

3.1. The Theological Orientation of Sarna Santhal Spirituality

Sarna Santhal Theology is in the process. There are three approaches to *Sarna* Theology. The first approach is the contextualization and indigenization represented by various theologians. In this orientation the theologian adapts the cultural values. The culture is the part of their ethics and morality. There is no crystal clear division between religion and cultural. For example, the statue of Mother Mary with tribal dress bring conflict among the people. Some people think that cultural dress, cultural dance is also part of religion. The religion and

⁹⁵ T.M.P. Mahadevan. *Outline of Hinduism*. Bombay: Chetna, 1955, 1.

culture are interconnected. In other word, there is no religion without culture and they believe that culture is the outcome to religion⁹⁶.

The second approach takes a perspective that the gospel- values are already present in *Sarna Santhal* culture and world view. The *Sarna Santhal* creation story is not new to Christian religion. *Sarna Santhal* creation story. Here we find something in common, in creation of the Universe. The *Sarna Santhal* creation myth is in line with the Genesis creation story. In the Genesis there are two creation stories, the same we find there are two creation story in the *Sarna Santhal* creation myth. The *Sarna Santhal* creation myth has connection with that of the Bible⁹⁷.

The third approach is that *Sarna Santhal* theology and Christian theology should have meeting points. It promotes life and teach faith. *Sarna Santhal* God is *Nirguna*, which means cannot be explain by human by human language. There should be incorporation of the *Sarna Santhal* theology. The *Sarna Santhal* Theology has to emerge from their own understanding of time and space⁹⁸.

When we learn the theological orientation of *Sarna Santhal* Theology, there are some common character of their religion. *Sarna Santhal* religion lack of written scripture as their document. People of *Santhal Pargana* are very poor and from the beginning the arrival and several migrations have kept them away from better education. Therefore, they lack the written scripture and *Sarna* is the religion of memory passed on from generation to generation. The religious rituals teaching are transmitted orally from one generation to another⁹⁹.

Therefore, during the worship and religious celebration the male children are part of any celebration. This part of the culture as well as *Sarna* people believed that the religious practice of children will make them morally upright and socially aware of the dignity of human life. Moreover, they go grow spiritually and learn to practice religious activities in efficiency manner. *Sarna santhal* are succeed in it, and the prof is that till today the *Sarna Santhal* religions is alive and active.

There is no human made images or temples used for their worship. The natural objects are accepted as symbols of the divine presence. The oblations are given seasonally. The nature-

⁹⁶ Nirmal Minz. *The Study of Tribal Religion in India in Re-Visioning India's Religious Traditions*. Delhi: ISPCCK, 1999, 122.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁹⁹ K.P. Aleaz. "A Tribal Theology from A Tribal World View". *Tribal Culture in World View* 44 (2002): 20-28.

human is the key to their vision of life. All the religious rituals are based on their holistic vision of reality. They accept the integral relationships of nature, humans and spirit in their daily experiences. The totem we have seen in the last chapter is the concrete example of this continuity¹⁰⁰.

The another important character of they have is the worship of ancestors, we have seen in the last chapter. Ancestors are part of the life of those who are alive and they are interested in the welfare of the living. They offer of rice beer at the harvesting seasons to the ancestors and they believe that ancestors help them in cultivation and harvesting. This demonstrates that they have very strong faith on ancestors¹⁰¹.

3.2. Important Characteristics of *Sarna Santhal* Religion

The religion has the unique character that we can find in their religion as well as in their life. The religion which has survived without written documents. This religion is unorganized religion that every village have their own mode of celebration.

- A. There is an absence of any written scripture and holy books. This religion has no record of origin. This is the religion of oral tradition. The spiritual leaders and the elders have kept in the memory all the prayers and mantras, which they passed on to the next generation. The teaching of young generation is done during the common celebration. The teaching is done orally as well as practically.
- B. No temple and no human made images are used for the worship of the divine. They worship what is connected with the nature. There is no fixed date for any worship. People have to decide and fixe the date for the divine worship. Each seasons have the significant values. The life cycles and divine worship is based on the seasons. According to the season there is divine worship and the tune to the songs. The festivals and sacrifices changes seasonally.
- C. All religious rites observances, festivals are based on this holistic vision of really. The *Sarna Santhal* religion is a nature human spirit continuum is the key vision of their religion. There is total integration of nature, human and spirit. They have the experience of all this total integration. We have seen in the last chapter, that totemic system is the best example for this aspects.

¹⁰⁰ Paul Olaf Bodding. *Santal Folk Tales*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925. 46.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

D. Another important characteristic of *Sarna Santhal* religion is the worship of the dead the worship of animal and nature. The worship of ancestor remembers them in prayer. They also remember animals of the family including forest animals¹⁰².

The *Sarna Santhal* religion is time bound, it is to say all the divine worship follow the natural cycle of seasons. The time for them is circular way. Everything moves according to the nature. The time and history is related to the land. The land is the deciding factor to create history and time. They move with the earth cycle and surrounding environment. They expect the years to come and go in and endless rhythm like day and night. They move according to the rhythm of the universe.

All these rhythmic life is condition by the life. Their cultivation is based on the season what comes with its rhythm. The life of *Sarna Santhal* is very natural and food is based on the agriculture, therefore, we find that their life and religion also is condition by the nature. Their spiritual life is based on the season and condition of nature. Hence, the whole pattern of history and time concept, for them is life cycle, that is embedded in nature. It is the nature of soil that creates history and time and human moves along with the rhythm of nature. Therefore, when the surrounding environment is destroyed, they are left in a vacuum. They do not know what to do. Therefore, we can say that, the concept of history is rooted in creation¹⁰³.

The whole religious system is centered and deeply rooted on the land itself. The religious practices, rituals, ceremonies, festivals, songs, drum beatings, dance and tune to music are condition by seasons. The offering and sacrifices is done according to seasons. For example, the celebration the festival of *baha* (flower) is offered to God a dove. The also offer flowers to God. Some of the flowers is used for making alcohol, first they offer to God and rest they keep for themselves. Same way they offer all types of crops to God according to the seasons, in which they cultivate¹⁰⁴.

The nature is the actively presence of supreme being. Therefore, all the activities are oriented toward the nature. The understanding of land provides an ethical basis of sharing, caring and responsible stewardship. The land is not a disputable property because it does not belong to humans. Land according to their perceptive, cannot be commercialized, rather should

¹⁰² K.P. Aleaz. "A Tribal Theology from A Tribal World View". *Tribal Culture in World View* 44(202): 20-28.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

preserved and protected for the future generations. The land has to be shared among all the village people. They did it in the before, but now this practices have disappeared¹⁰⁵.

3.3. *Sarna Santhal Religion State of Simplicity*

They are hunting and gathering tribes basically. As the time changed, some of their nature also have changed. They are now almost settled in the *Santhal Pargana*. The majority of them live in six district of *Santhal Pargana*. They live a very simple life. Their life revolved around the forest. The food items are based on the forest. Their life is not so complicated, the songs and the culture is based on the forest.

Their houses and village are situated in and around the forest. It was easy for them to live with the nature and get food from the nature. They lead a very simple life. As they live in and around the forest, their religion has close connection with the nature. They believed that the forest provided them food and everything, hence, they had divine expertise with nature. This religion is as simple as their life. We don't find complication in their religions¹⁰⁶.

They get food on day basis, their social organization and religious belief are essentially concerned with successes in the securing food. Their belief system is connected with the food. Therefore, they are so concerned about the food that they eat and from it comes. Any case of ill luck that befalls the community either in respect of food, health or other concerns of life is attributed to the infringement of some taboo by some members of the community. The belief that the ill health is the consequent wrath of some evil spirit¹⁰⁷.

Sarna religion consists of belief in the sacred presence of the spirits with whom tribesmen interact in everyday language and through numerous rites and sacrifices, charms and spell in everyday life. They have found that the cause and effect theory from the very beginning, because they believe that spirit is nature, and when we go against the nature there is effect, that is to say the cause of nature has its effects¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁰⁶ Sumner B. Twiss "The Tribal Religion Two Cases Study", *Religious Pluralism* Vol. 70., No 4, (1990) 538.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 540.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 542.

3. 4. Religion Without Explanation

Sarna religion is spirit based in a haunting sense of the presence of spirit- power in the creation. The most important thing in life is to deal with the natural power and the spirit and ensure individual and collective wellbeing. They seek collectively the conciliation and communion with the more definitive and potent personal spirits and to deal with the more indefinite and impersonal forces by way of control, expulsion or an avoidance through appropriate rites ceremonies, spells and taboos. They are happy people and live a peaceful life. Their faith do account for the ultimate cause of the natural phenomena and happenings of life¹⁰⁹.

As the time changes, their religion have contact with the other religion have acquired on explanatory apparatus. Most of them live in *Santhal Pargana*. In the past, as shifting from place to place they had difficulties in cultivation. They settled in forest areas, they have to make land as cultivable. Now they have their own land. Now the traditional setting has changed considerable in course of time. With the increase in population and relative decrease in the carrying capacity of land. Therefore, they have migrated some of them and some of them have gone to live in the city and they have changed their life, even some of them have changed their faith. They felt that their religion has to be modified and codified.

3. 5. *Sarna* Religion Seeking Theological Complexity

Every religious system consists of a set of three essential elements: belief in the existence of a superhuman world, human's relationship to it and practice of ritual as an instrument of establishing relationship. We referee their belief system, the value system and to the action system, the practical aspect to their life. They have different form other religions such as religious belief, religious values and religious practices in real life¹¹⁰.

Their religion is as simple as the life they live. The religious belief, values and religious action are not treated as something apart from other kinds of belief and behavior. Though, the meaning of belief and behavior of *Sarna Santhal* appears simple to them, but for the outsiders it seems more mysterious. This is precisely because theirs is a religion without explanation. Their religion is no lees complete than the highly developed form of complex religion to the

¹⁰⁹ Paul Olaf Bodding. *Santhal Folk Tales*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Harvard university press, 1925. 48.

¹¹⁰ Sumner B. Twiss. "The Tribal Religion Two Cases Study". *Religious Pluralism* Vol. 70., No 4, (1990) 545.

extent that its implicit theology recognizes the same universal truth, need to be explained and described¹¹¹.

Every religion the believer communicates with this world through a symbolic code which they call the ritual language consisting of esoteric word, called mantra, purely passed on to the next generation through the memory. The *mudara*, gesture witnessed by young generation by participating in the ritual. The *dhavani*, the sound, which is uttered during the worship has to be memories by others. All these rituals are complex for the outsiders need to be explained and understood by others¹¹².

3. 6. Old Belief and New Interpretation

They believe in pray. They worship trees and hills while protecting the forest areas. Many people of them have gone to different religions, need to have renovation and new interpretation in it. They try to save religious identity they have demanded separate religion and need to have new interpretation. In response to anthropologists' misinterpretation of sarna religion and political party, the promoters of religion gave new interpretation to their old belief and customs.

As we have learnt that *Sarna Santhal* have no temple nor synagogues. The creator (*Maran Buru*) of all, fills heaven and earth. Every land is holy and no particular part or portion can be held as holier than the other. They don't have saints nor martyrs. They don't have the images to God and goddess. They worship in congregation but not a fixed date. They have to decide for community worship. They have a recent developed pilgrimage center where they go annually for pilgrimage. Not so extreme unless like Hindu fundamentalist, but they are modern is their spiritual life¹¹³.

They go to *lugu buru ghanta* bare every year for the pilgrimage. It is the most sacred place of *sarna santhals*. The water of this channel is called *Sitanala* is very sacred to them. They take bath in this brook before they proceed to offer worship to the deity *Lugubaba* up the hill. It can be said that the place bears a scared geography for the people visiting there.

The *Lugu Buru* is the place where the supreme God of *Sarna Santhal* wanted to teach his people, the place where could be the spiritual school for *Sarna Santhal*. After the creation

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 546.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 546.

¹¹³ Paul Olaf Bodding. *Santal Folk Tales*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Harvard university press, 1925. 49.

of the earth God wanted to impart them with the knowledge about social, spiritual laws and customs. For this purpose, they had descended to the earth. The *Lugu Buru* the place where they descended and imparted instructions on social and spiritual life. This is the spiritual center for their religion¹¹⁴.

There is old belief with the modern innovation of a highly structured religions. There is both *Sarna Santhal* and *santhal* in general ritual and culture followed by both communities. Though there was no such phenomenon like this pilgrim, but the modern time has change the mode of worship in their religion. The basic departure at this juncture is that the locality based mode of *santhal* solidarity had been replaced by a regional model of integration of the situation. The educated and elite sections of the *Sarna Santhal* here play an important role. Therefore, with the increase of education and affordability, such phenomena are sure to rise¹¹⁵.

There is a major shift from use of alcohol in the worship, which is an essential element in all the religious and socio- religious occasion of *Sarna Santhal*. The alcohol is used but the minimum only for the religious purpose. Thus, we find there is changed and renewed of *Sarna Santhal* religion¹¹⁶.

3. 7. The Exodus Experience of *Sarna Santhal* of *Santhal Pargana*

As we have seen, the migration of *santhal* in common. In this chapter we shall analyses the positive and negative aspects of migration. There could be various aspects of migration but here along with the spiritual aspect we narrate the economic aspects too.

3. 7. 1. Positive Aspects of Migration

- a. Their migration has some positive aspects; they have got some job for survival. Whereas in the homeland they have to work hard for their survival. The temporary need was fulfilled; they have become more competent living with the other religious people. They have to compete for survival.
- b. They have better life, comparatively they have good job those who have migrated from their homeland.
- c. As they have migrated from the mainland they have all the basic facilities of life. Their life is secured and survival has become easier and happier.

¹¹⁴ Kanhal Lal Tudu. *Karam Binti*. Dumka: Ashaperej Tudu, 2008, 122.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

- d. Their life style changes. The people of mainland and the *Sarna Santhal* of migrated can be noticed easily¹¹⁷.

3. 7. 2. Negative Aspects of Migration

- a. Livelihood and occupation basically *santhal* were hunters and gatherers. They were very close to nature and depending on it. They used to collect food from nature. agriculture was the main occupation. They were owner of the land hard working. But unfortunately, taking the advantage of their simplicity and illiterate, the mainland people have made their life horrible. Moreover, industrial and technological advancement have destroyed their source of food and created the livelihood crisis¹¹⁸.
- b. In the migration process the *sarna santhal* have lost their cultural identity. As they mingled with all other groups they have lost their culture and find difficult to continue their practice. They have their own culture the amalgamation with other signify the losing their culture identity.
- c. The migration of *sarna santhal* has a bitter experience, the model of the culture transmission took place among the *Sarna Santhal* people. The new generation where they have settled they practice the local culture and as they are minority their language and begin to speak the language of the local. Today, when we see the capital city of *Santhal Pargana*, all the *santhal* youth speaks only Hindi and they think speak Hindi is the language of superior race. Thus they have lost the identity of language.
- d. When they have their home land *hihiri pipiri* natural they have lost their self-respect. That indicates that, they have lost their homeland though *Santhal Pargana* is considered their homeland but find themselves out of place¹¹⁹.
- e. The core concern of this part of our them is the loosing of religious identity. Those how have missed the way and displace on the *santhal* exodus, have lost their religious identity. Many people have become Hindu and Christian. Those who have become Christian have changed the mode of celebration but at the same time kept up the cultural, tradition and spirituality¹²⁰.

Santhal people become landless people. The land occupies a very central place in the *Sarna Santhal* worldview. Land is perceived as sacred and co- creator with God. It is the land owns

¹¹⁷ Tambs Lyche. "The Impact of Culture Diversity and Globalization in Developing a Santhal Peer Culture in Middle India". *Emigra working paper* 46 (2007): 48-52.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹¹⁹ Subrata Guha. "Socio-Cultural Changes of Tribes and Their Impacts On Environment with Special Reference, To Santhal in West Bengal". *Global journal of interdisciplinary social science* (2015):148-156.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 149.

people and gives them an identity. It is the temple though which people become one with the supreme being, their ancestors, the spirit and other segment of creation. The land belongs to the creator God. The human worship of land is only a temporal. The creator is connected with the land. The God is part of the land. They believe that the *Maran Buru* enter with the seed and rises again along with the crop. Thus the supreme God bloom with the follower and rice, it signify the presence of creator and thus the creator feed his people¹²¹.

The land is essential for *Sarna Santhal*, without the land the supreme Being ceases to work. The land is the symbol of unity of all living creatures. The is not a mere space to be exploited, rather it's a place which gives identity to the community. Without the land, there is no personhood and identity. He land is the symbol of unity. The land holds not only the clan, village and community as one, but it also unites the supreme being. Without the land, it is impossible for *Sarna Santhal* to exist even is this case entire human race. The land is considered as mother¹²².

In the Torah, the idea for a land of Israel is born in tandem with the idea for a people of Israel. The covenant of God with Abraham includes a promise that the descendants of Abraham will inherit the area from the river Egypt to the Euphrates. From the time when God liberated this dependence from slavery and people of Israel transform from idea into reality, that the narrative of Torah emphasis the arc has one end, inhabiting this promised land. The land is a gift of God, given to his chosen people. The gift is given with the provision that they live up to certain moral and religious stands¹²³.

As the *Sarna Santhal* believe that the God is the real owner of the land. We too find in the culture of Israelite. Though the Israelites will reside in the land, God retains ownership. The land is the symbol of permanency, the same way a rule that emphasized that only God has the power to bequeath the land permanently. The land of Israel is most famously described as a place flowing with milk and honey (exodus 3,8). The nature of this holiness is ambiguous. Some way *Sarna Santhal* highlight the inherent sacredness of the land.

Sarna santhal, when they were migrated from place to place they had no land. The land the prof of identity and permanency. Without permanent identity they were in the foreign land, and

¹²¹ A. Wat Longchar. "An Emerging Asian Theology". *The Traditional Tribal World View and Modernity. Focus on North East India* 22 (1997) 66-73.

¹²² A. Wat Longchar. "An Emerging Asian Theology". *The Traditional Tribal World View and Modernity. Focus on North East India* 22 (1997) 66-73.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 66.

living in foreign land imply loosing of religion and language. They have to adopt the religion of the local place and local language. It is the complete lost from the self-culture and customs¹²⁴.

The land is the basic of *santhal*, without the land economically become poor. The poverty will lead to life without moral. The survival become prime concern for them. There is a social and cultural impact of displacement in the migration. There is a dismantling of communities, social organization structure. There is also dispersion of informal and formal network, associations, local societies. ¹²⁵.

The migration experience is painful for the *santhal*. Their economy system is destroyed. As they depending on forest for the livelihood and they have no access to forest. As they migrate from place to place they have to work for their survival, under the landlords. They fall prey to the landlords and the landlord exploit them. They become bounded labors. Thus, they lose their freedom and lose their identity. They forget their language and religion. They have to struggle for their freedom form the landlords¹²⁶.

They live total community life. During the migration many people could not reach to the homeland of *santhal*. On the ways from *hihiri-pipiri* they dispersed and lost the way and settled in the land to *Chotanagpur* areas. Besides, integration into a new community is a long and arduous process. These process many to be applicable to all. They have their own way of living style and culture and religion and the food system, therefore, the integration with other may not be accepted by them or other religious groups. If host community belong to a higher social caste/ class migrated people are likely to find the process of adjustment even more difficult. The food system of *Sarna Santhal* is the matter of concern in India. They are beef and pork eaters; they were felt to be ritually impure bringing defilement to the community. In all senses the migrated were completely unwelcomed immigrants into the area. They had already lost their social base power and dignity during the migration, they were denied a social anchor and articulation with other groups in the resettlement area which might have been extended to other ethnic groups more acceptable to the Hindu¹²⁷.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹²⁶ A. Wat Longchar. "An Emerging Asian Theology". *The Traditional Tribal World View and Modernity. Focus on North East India* 22 (1997) 67.

¹²⁷ Tambs Lyche, "The Impact of Culture Diversity and Globalization in Developing a Santhal Peer Culture in Middle India". *Emigra working paper* 46 (2007): 50.

Sarna Santhal culture is unique to themselves. Their way of life, religious practices are inextricably linked with their relationship with nature. Culture is rooted in a particular place, cannot be easily eradicated and put into other location. Their culture cannot be simply readily moved, since their social organization is not merely linked to the forest but rather to specific part of forest. All the ceremonies are also religious ceremonies in nature. Each *paris* has its own God who in their belief is the true owner of the land, which is not transformable. There God can't be moved from place to place and this leads to conflict of spiritually and there is disrespect to the ancestors¹²⁸. The migration leads to a sudden onslaught of dominant values threatening the very basis of their culture identity. In reality for them it is a process of discontinuation of their life, couture and belief system¹²⁹.

Children and women are more affected by the migration. Any migration they sufferer more than any others. They are the most vulnerable members of the community. Even in the society, they have no access with other faith of people. The impact on vulnerable groups, it has been pointed out that women, children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable for suffering during the migration of *santhal*. During the migration, the lack of food, malnutrition and ill heath take a toll on women who were already over walked and poorly fed in migration.

They are less educated, as they don't have the written books on religion, as they migrated from place to place have lost their religious practices. As they move from place to place the spiritual aspect changes and take different shapes in their spirituality, it is not so easy to remember everything. During the migration people were more concerned about the food and destination, rather than the religions. Thus they have surely missed the concept of prayer and worship as it's originality.

During the migration spiritually disturbed by the migration. After the migration the primary concern become economy not the spiritual life. The work culture and the accompany with whom they worked had influenced in their religious life. It is to say that; no way the migration was helpful for the them in general. To conclude this part, to understand the negative aspects of migration on their life can be understood through this song.

Ol menak tama, ror menak tama
Dhorm menak tama, amho menam.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 50

¹²⁹ Tambs Lyche. "The Impact of Culture Diversity and Globalization in Developing a Santhal Peer Culture in Middle India". *Emigrant working paper* 46 (2007): 51.

*Olem at lere, rorem at lere,
Dhoromem at lere am ho banum.*

The meaning of the song is as follows
You have written script, you have the language,
You have a religion, therefore, you exist.
If you lose the script, if you forget your language,
If you forget your religion you will cease to exist¹³⁰.

They have become more active in protecting their religion and their culture. Even there are political party in favour of their religion. They are various political party, who work for protecting and promoting their religion.

3. 8. Human Life is a Mystery

We are on safer ground after reaching to the permanent homeland of *Santhal*. The *Sarna Santhal* have respect of life and they consider life as mystery. Life is gift from God. *Sarna Santal* people live in the family and all the education is given to their children as well as the spiritual teaching. The human life is a mystery¹³¹. There is no rich and poor in the sight of God. *Sarna Santhal* from the very beginning they have been thought to speak truth and never to speak lie.

The life is not seen as problem rather a human life is to be lived fully. Life is not regarded as fundamental evil, but life is the gift of supreme Creator. The grim side of human life cannot be ignored. The grim side of life is due to our ill relation with the spirit. It is the time to come back to the supreme creator. The evil is not the essence of reality. When all of them live happily and have all the qualities as good person, will be consider god man on earth¹³².

They emphasize the need for ethical life as an indispensable condition of spiritual realization. He whose life is disorderly and who maintains no right relations with his village people devil dwells in him. Among them conducts counts more than the creed. If a person takes care of his moral life, he will enjoy on this earth. Everyday life experience is the experience of God¹³³.

¹³⁰ Any religious gathering and sarna santhal seminar begins with this song, very specially in the public gathering.

¹³¹ T.M.P Mahadevan. *Outlines of Hinduism*. Bombay: Chetana, 1956, 80.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 80.

They have certain mesuarment of virtues in their life. They cultivate all these virtues by learning in the family. The goodness is not the property of any one class or community. They are able to live a life with minimum and survive all kind of difficulties.

There are some of the spiritual virtues they are as follows:

- A. They purity of body and mind is the first running in the moral ladder. The restriction in way of life. They have to maintain certain purity of heart. The body is to regarded as the part of the supreme being. The body belong the earth and the breath belong to the creator. The breath we take is as long as the supreme creator wants. The door of heaven is barred to those who are unclean in heart. To keep pure our heart is part of godliness. The purity is the cleanliness in though, word and deed. He who cultivate all these qualities will find the practice of all other virtues¹³⁴.
- B. Self-control implies the control of the flesh and the control of the minds. The senses must be first restrained. One should be a slave to the wayward senses. The sense is like horse and the body as chariot. If the mind is not held firm, then the sense will be like a wicked horse, will become unmanageable¹³⁵.
- C. *Sarna Santhal* are people of detachment. They are able to live with minimum things. They don't have the desire to possess things. They consider things of other as the stone in road side. There are not a greedy people.
- D. *Sarna Santhal* are non-violence and peace loving people. All the religions of India from the Vedic Seers to Buddha have laid the greatest stress on the practice of this quality. They by nature they have been practicing this virtue¹³⁶. The non- violence and peace loving is in their blood.
- E. They are very innocent people. As I have mention that they are innocent people and very easily mislead by other people. They lack the education, perhaps without education they lack the rational capacity. Therefore, they need to have capacity to judge and not to be so innocent that people benefit from their innocence.

Here we have seen their characters, they have strong belief that life in given once, they compare life with morning dew. The Sun goes out the morning dew disappears. Catholic believe in atonement life is open to the eternal life. *Sarna* believe that after death their body will become part of the earth and our life breath will be given to others.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 81

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

Along with the good natures of their life, people take advantage of their humility and simplicity. The other religion people such as Hindu manipulate them and try to take away all their property and try under control them. They are also peace loving people, at the same time when they get angry they become violent and it is not easy to control them. In such situation they lack spiritual disciples.

3. 8. 1. Life Is a Mystical Union of Body and Soul

They believe that human life is mystery and life exist in the unity body and soul. The life is a breath; life is an air. As long as we breath we exist, once one stops breath he no more exists. He leaves his body the soul goes back to Supreme Creator and the body becomes part of the earth. According *sarna santhal* faith the body and soul separate from each other. After the death the body is left on this earth and the soul goes back to its creator¹³⁷.

They speak the joy of paradise as both physical and spiritual has to be experienced on the earthly life. They don't believe in the beatific vision in the future, what they live at present is everything for them. Eating and drinking including alcohol, playing an instrument is means of enjoyment. The vision of God is always considered in the present time. There is no place for future in *sarna santhal* spirituality¹³⁸.

They use the inclusive language; the inclusive language is external sign of spirituality. The sexuality is not well spoken among the *sarna santhal*. It is a taboo to speak on this matter. The adultery is considered very serious issues. The one is involve in sexual act in outside of the marital relation, the punishment is very serious. They consider involved in sexual act outside of marriage union, defile the entire village. There is no promotion of ascetic life out of family. They believe that everyday life has to be the experience of ascetic and monastic experience. At the same time they respect the single life, but they expect from such person to be model for other, if he fails to be the model for other they condemn such attitude¹³⁹.

Their asceticism is a different from rest of the religion. It is found in scrupulous observation of the rules of the religions. Ascetics are called *janguru* and *jugibabas*. They are in the family and take part in every activity of the family. They have social recognition, because they have divine power. The poverty has never become the ideal for them. They have the

¹³⁷ Peter Heinegg. *Christianity and The World Religions Paths of Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1986, 78.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹³⁹ Peter Heinegg. *Christianity and The World Religions Paths of Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1986, 79.

authority to possess wealth and some of the *bangas* are more rich than common *Sarna Santhal* of the society. *Sarna Santhal* practice almsgiving from the childhood. Almsgiving is considered, doing something to God¹⁴⁰. The wealth among *Sarna Santhal* is a sign of grace from God, the richness includes the wealth as well as animal of the house.

They believe that there is no salvation after death. The word salvation does not exist in their spiritual realm. They have strong belief that, when they do good on this earth they are already on heaven and they have achieved the salvation. They believe, that earth is the place where we have ultimate happiness on this earth. Do good on this earth and heaven is granted to every person. The salvation is individual through the community practice of spiritual life.

The centre of human being is the happiness of *Thakur jiu*. Our life exists on this earth as long as He is happy with us. *Sarna Santhal* does not promote that we are nothing, rather human person with the body made out of mud and air given by Him. The human real nature is identical with *Thakur Jiu*. There is no concept of transformation of body, from their earthly appearance to heavenly mode.¹⁴¹

3. 8. 2. The Mystery of Human Life in Relation with Christianity

We need not ask ourself why I am living in this world? what is the purpose of my life. No matter what types of life I am living and whatever may be my profession. When we find the answers of all these questions, then we shall know the purpose of life then, this will lead us to know the mystery of human life.

They are convinced that the money cannot satisfy man. When a true *sarna santhal* lead a complete union with *marang buru* will know the mystery of human life. God has a plan for every individual, and plan is for the good of man. The plan of God for human is to journey with Him and God will reveal on their earthly journey. God reveals his plan to a man doing good and be united with him in daily life¹⁴².

In Christianity, man has the image of God, He has created us in His image and likeness (Gen 1, 26). God created man different from other creation. He created man in His own image. A glove is created according to the likeness of a hand with the purpose of continuing the hand, same way man was created in the image of God with the purpose of containing God. we are vessel of God. God wants to be our content. As bottles are made to contain water, we are made

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 365.

¹⁴² K.P. Aleaz. "A Tribal Theology from A Tribal World View". *Tribal Culture in World View* 44 (202): 28-29.

to contain God. God should make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy (Rom 9, 23-24). Human being is essential combination of body soul and spirit (1Thes. 5, 23). The body is simple the physical body belonging to the physiological level contacting the things of the material realm and is the most superficial part. The soul is the mental faculty, belong to the psychological level, contacting the things of the mental realm and is a deeper part. The spirit is the deepest part of human being, belong to the spiritual level and contacts the things of God¹⁴³.

God wants to enter into the spirit of human person to become his content and his satisfaction. This is the core purpose of human existence. We have not merely created to contain food in our stomach or to contain knowledge in our mind, but we are created to contain God in our spirit. The spirit of human being and the spirit of God should be always united. That is primary goal of human existence¹⁴⁴.

God has created man in his image and likeness (Gen 1,26), therefore, man possess the nature of God such as truthfulness, goodness, loveliness wisdom kindness and to value the life, at the same time there is also an evil nature in human being which wars against his good nature. This is the battle between lust and reason¹⁴⁵. In every human heart resides charity, source of the good and pure works which sin wounds. Sin is in human being not able to carry out his good intentions. Human being cannot escape his evil nature. Saint Paul says that he intent to god good but he fails to do good (Rom 7, 18). In spite of good intention, he does not do evil, because in every person dwell evil nature.

Sin causes human being to die (Ep 2, 1), sin caused the mind the human being to be rebel against God (Col 1,21). The human body is earthly caused to sin and body wants to remain in sinful status (Rom 6,12). After the sin man goes against his creator and rebels against him. Man has tried every possible way to escape sin but he has found he can save by himself. But the merciful God decided to called him back in his love¹⁴⁶.

Christ is the Saviour sent form God to the world to solve the problems of human life (Col 2,9). He came to this world to redeem the man, (Jn 1,14) was nailed to the cross to

¹⁴³ Roy Hammerling. *The Lord's Prayer in The Early Church*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 13.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁴⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed. Washington, DC: US Catholic Bishops's Conference, 2000, No. 1849.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 410.

accomplish the work of redemption, who takes always the sin the world (Jn, 29). Since this Spirit is the life-giving Spirit, He dispenses God with His life into His believers (1Cor 15,45).

The peculiarity of their tradition is its abundance of myths and images which systematically analyses the human situation and the mystery of human life. There is a certain types of dualism in human being. Man is a rational free and social animal. Man is a combination of body mind and freedom. He is a mystery which he cannot know himself. His present and future completely depend on God. He is total dependent On God¹⁴⁷.

The *Thakur Jiu* is a supreme and living God. He sees and knows the human heart and in return human being should know him and to be part of his life. The supreme god participate in the joys and sufferings of human person, that is socio-economic prosperity and oppression of the every *Sarna Santhal*. He upholds the moral law and judges of human both now and in life so human is responsible to him for their deeds¹⁴⁸. The nature man and the purpose of his life can be known, his every existence as man depends on his relationship with God. Thus to the *Sarna Santhal* the nature of human being is good or bad depending on whether they are related to God or not. This idea runs parallel to the ideas of Christian theology which teaches that man is totally dependent on God for all his spiritual, intellectual and material possessions¹⁴⁹.

Human being is a creature of God, he has the potentiality for becoming the offering of God for being adopted into sonship and so somehow participate in life of God. It is when we consider this openness whereby a creaturely being may be taken up into holy being that we get, the we speak a breathing view of creation in all its unimaginable possibilities¹⁵⁰.

Sarna Santhal realises their potentiality for becoming offspring of God and to have communion with *Thakur Jiu* for their liberation from their contemporary culture of that is called evil spirit worship and remember the creator only in time suffering. Such situation they come back to God. The prodigal son, in time of suffering recalls the love of his father and comes back. The father accepted him his lost son (Lk 15,11-32). The *Thakur jiu* embraces them as they return to him.

¹⁴⁷ Paul Olaf Bodding. *Santal Folk Tales*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925, 50.

¹⁴⁸ Jonathan H. Thumra. *A Living Legacy*. New Delhi: The Tankhul Theological Association Publication, 2014, 48.

¹⁴⁹ Stephen Murmu. "Understanding the Concept of God in Santhal Traditional Myth". *Indian Journal of Theology* 12(2002) 74-86.

¹⁵⁰ John Macquarie. *Christian Theology*. London: SCM Press 1977, 229.

3. 9. *Sarna Santhal* Spirituality in The Changing Situation

The changing worldview of *Sarna Santhal*, as reflected in their theology, is to be seen in the perspective of changing environment. The moment a *Sarna Santhal* community loses this unique feather, its purity and distinction are lost for ever. At the same time the world is not static and closed. There has always active incorporation of the new elements and reformation of the old, the evidence of which can be found in the elaboration of myths and general belief. There is difficult arises when there is conflict in the understanding different religion.

3. 9. 1. The Education of Influence

Modern education allows for interaction between communities and this is where they encounter their cultural differences. Education poses different choices to *Sarna Santhal*- either to be engulfed in mainstream or to remain marginalized. In both cases *Santhal* are less than ill equipped to take full advantage of educational opportunity. But the government education, to a large extent, failed to create enough awareness among the people about the life and spirituality¹⁵¹.

Education could help to make the cultural transition from tradition to modernity less painful and less destructive. The shift tradition to modernity is the core issue by which one can understand the internal dynamics of their culture and religious complexity. As they have no much difference between religion and culture.

As the time passes, they have solid spiritual foundation in the Catholic School. They have capacity to understand *Sarna* and Christianity better. Now there is more positive element in *sarna* religion. As *Sarna Santhal* youth are more educated they demanded for separate identity. There is positive development in their religion. *Sarna Santhal* seems to be among the most misunderstood and most exploited lot even the issues related to the identity of their religion.

There is a change in the mind-set to *Sarna Santhal* that they felt the need of renovated and bring some changes in their religion and the sign of changing reality of the world. The author Baron Haimendorf in his book mention that there is change in the structure of the place of worship among the tribal. They don't follow the religion of Hindu or the other religion, there don't copy the other religion but try to implement their own religion in all way possible¹⁵².

¹⁵¹ Martin Kampchen. "Santhal reach out to the world", *Indian international centre quarterly* 32 (2006): 2-3.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 4

They have renewed their religion drastically. Even they have proper dress belong to their culture used during the worship.

Understanding the paradox of *Sarna Santhal* culture and modern development, some of the *santhal* group have realized that their children will not receive education that is sympathetic to *santhal* life and religion from the government schools. Therefore, they have begun a schools, hostels for students to keep up the culture and religion. The curriculum exposes their students to their own culture and tradition: to the *santhal* history, folklore of *santhal*, to keep up all the festivals and to know them, and the music of *Sarna Santhal*. The medium of teaching is done through mother tongue¹⁵³. The schools and hostels are built in the village or within one kilometre radius of the village so that the students can visit their families to take part in the household work of the family. They are exposed to the positive and negative aspects of *Santhal* life besides absorbing modern education.

Thus, they have groomed the educated youth in their religious dance, religious drama and music. Some of the groups have travelled various part of Indian and abroad to share their lives, culture and religion with the outside world. travelling in India, students consciously witness the glittering and competitive city life-styles. They also experience the good work social service and joy in sharing the religious experience. This helps them to make a choice in their lives in a critical way and by they connect their *santhal* culture and religion with outside of world.

3. 9. 2. *Sarna Santhal* Religion in Global World

The process of globalization has promoted cultural interactions and the acceptance of different culture and the establishment of universal norms of behaviour in which religious have also interested in a significant and a complex way. Some of the religious movement and propagation of religious ethics, and promotion of tolerance, transformation and acceptance of other ideas at the global scale. The unique of *Sarna Santhal* religion remained such a strong tradition in *Santhal Pargana*, even without written documents. Some of the *Sarna Santhal* have accepted Christianity but, maintain the customs and tradition of *Sarna Santhal*. Happily, they co- exist.

Today with the modern media communication *Sarna Santhal* tradition and the *Sarna Santhal* religion remains strong. The rich and great religion of *santhal* has a great important

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 9.

factors. The *Sarna Santhal* children are taught the religious values. They reveal a strong acceptance of other faiths. The philosophy of human- nature interrelationship has been in process of wider acceptance. Their religion appears as part of a new process of globalization for them in an era of transnational religions. Many *Sarna Santhal* poor people with religious values accept the faith and a good religious' life.

The impact of globalization along with the economy there is also impact on religion. The conservative tendency has been changed and *Santhal* are free to choose to any other religion. The globalization essentially means that global difference is shared by everyone and everywhere. The world has become a single place. This increase of complexity triggers defensive and nostalgic reactions for the more conservative religious groups. On the one hand there are more liberal groups, on the other hand globalization is regarded as an opportunity for strengthening the religion and to learn more about other religion¹⁵⁴.

The *Sarna Santhal* religion has never forced and never promoted its religion. They never intended to increase their numbers. In this global world *Sarna Santhal* religion is found different part of the world. In spite of globalization, their religion is active and survived from the creation of man till today. As other religions of the world have opened themselves to non-violence and have articulated their message in terms of global values of peace, spirituality and human development. Same way *Sarna Santhal* also promote the peace and its spirituality among the real life. In the global world, every religion has to contribute something.

3. 9. 3. Urbanization of Village

When cities started expanding or rural areas started urbanising, infrastructure needs to be developed. Roads need to be built, transportation system need to be put in place and sewage lines and drinking water pipe has to be laid. One thing here the place has to be displaced and the people has to leave form their home and forced to live in cities with minimum facilities. That to separate from the tribe people. The ownership and access to land and forests has been essential to the tribal people and their way of life, given the symbiotic relationship they share with water, forest and animals¹⁵⁵.

When the urbanization take place *Sarna Santhal* are not able to sell their land and if they sell to with less price and thus become poor and finally they become landless. Then they

¹⁵⁴ Tapas Kumar Sarangi. *Working of Forest Right Act 2006 And Its Impact On Livelihood a Comparative Study of Odisha and Jharkhand*. Hyderabad: Center for Economic and Social Studies, 2014, 81.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

loss their way of life and even their religion and culture. After the sell to their own land they the descendent of *Sarna Santhal* and other people reside together. As they live together, slowly they lose their religious identity, even they forget their own language. City *Sarna Santhal* feel something superior with village *Sarna Santhal*. They think that, they are rich and educated in the society. Therefore, they begin to reject their own past life. They begin to speak Hindi, English and many other language, except their own mother tongue¹⁵⁶.

As their surrounding get more urban, communities reduced to make use their agriculture lands. The community members are turning to daily- wage trades like construction and other service oriented industries as their traditional occupation of agriculture disappears. As we have seen that the people without land lose their identity and their religion. They are engulfed by in the city at the cost of losing their total identity.

The lack of viable options, both in terms of loss of agriculture activities and income, as well as inability to improve quality of life is impacting their community slow industrialisation and lack of sustainable land reforms causes lower growth of jobs, which translates to high levels of migration, which then leads to human trafficking. As a consequence, *Sarna Santhal* entire way of life is changing rapidly, and for the worse. The worry is that they are not connected to the kind of infrastructure that is available to the formal life, and have their own traditions, customs and religion fast will disappear. Need to be pondered both the life and livelihood of *Sarna Santhal* community as well as the city development¹⁵⁷.

Together we need to consider the interests of *Sarna Santhal* who live near urban spaces. The urbanisation has forced them to change their way of life to a certain extent. They are unable to unlock the potential of the land and are being exploited by powerful elements both within their community and outside of it. Need to know the ground reality of urbanization and its positive and negative aspects.

3. 9. 4. Emergence of Religion

Sarna Santhal religion demanding for separate religious code, the role of missionary one cannot deny their enormous energy in mapping the world's religious landscape, not just by proceeding second hand data in their armchairs, but by collecting facts first hand at the price of great discomfort and sometimes at the risk of their lives. At a later stage, during the implementation of their mission they have gathered data to know the people. The role of

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

Christian in fact-finding literature about *Sarna Santhal* religion is a treasure-trove of authentic information. The role of missionary like *P.O Bodding* cannot be ignored in the development of literature of *Sarna Santhal*¹⁵⁸.

Now they have demanded a separate code for their religion. The *Sarna Santhal* do not have a written code of moral law. Their idea of right and wrong comes from their tradition. Tradition is their measure of truth. Their way to salvation is through the community. The *Sarna Santhal* believe in nature. They say that had separated code of conduct of religion before the independent of India. The representatives alleged that its removal has *Sarna Santhal* and other tribes of index to be counted under different religions, which they say causes harm to the culture and to their religion and community at large.

They do not believe that they form the part of Hindu religion, rather they have distinctive religion which do not have any relation with the Hinduism. They do consider themselves followers of their religions, which is their own religion. Hindu force them to accept their religion, but now they demand for their religious code of conduct¹⁵⁹.

After the independence of India from British, there is decrease in the number of *Sarna Santhal* as well as the numbers of all the tribes. They are either counted as Hindu or followers of other religions. Left with no choices, many people are being forced to choose other religions.

In the absence of a separate religious identity, *Sarna Santhal* and all the tribal have practical problems in the community in everyday life. They are forced to write as Hindu as their religions. As a consequence, the disappearing of *sarna* religion is at risk. Without religious code of conduct historically they face the problems, because if you have not history you don't exist. After independence, all those who came to power were followers of the Brahmanical ideology¹⁶⁰. That is why they viewed *Sarna Santhal* and all other tribes from that that perspective. The Hindu fanatics have called them by different names as forest dwellers, a level that they have approved so far by accepting. As they were told continuously that they form the part of Hindu religion and now they have accepted and part of it in the society¹⁶¹.

3. 9. 5. Influence of other Religion

As *Sarna Santhal* are slowly educating, and go out of village and leave the village set up of life. Some of them follow their own religion continuing their own religious practice among the different culture and religion. The big number of the people after going to city forget

¹⁵⁸ T.M.P. Mahadevan, *outline of Hinduism*. Bombay: Chetna, 1955,209.

¹⁵⁹ Hubert Olympias Mascarenhas. *The Quintessence of Hinduism*. Bombay: saint Sebastian, 1951, 102.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 104

their own religion and try to imitate the religion where they are living. They find joy in following religion of others and feel shy in practising their own religion. After sometime they completely forget their religion and become part of other religion. The new generation may not know this, but the fact is that, in this way the *sarna santhal* religion disappears¹⁶².

Such a people when they come to the village they do boast their city culture and see the village people as uncultured and illiterate. They feel superior to the village people. But in reality, they have missed the beautiful culture and their religion. They find nowhere in the *Sarna Santhal* community.

The poor *Sarna Santhal* and in general all the tribes as they become rich they feel that they are beyond their culture and religion. They leave away from poor and come to the union with the rich people of the city. They joined rich and influenced people and forget their religion. They are more influenced than poor and in terms of religions and culture. Those who work in the office, they also are influenced by Hindu religion. As they are submissive too they forced them to follow their religion¹⁶³. Most of the public office in *Santhal Pargana* are Hindus holding the office. In their office *Sarna Santhal* become as minority, even in their homeland. *Sarna Santhal* people lose their religion very easily.

As a conclusion of this chapter, *Sarna Santhal* they have rich spirituality in their religion, even without written document the religion has survived till today. Whatever they do in life practice spirituality and encounter God. They fear nature as their God though given different names. They believe in nature and we can call them animism. Their belief system and religious contained in their folk dance, folk songs that they practice in common celebration. They don't believe in worshipping idols, and everything just believe in participating worship to God who is present in nature. They have strong sense of community living. Their spirituality is fulfilled in community living; one cannot acquire true spirituality out of community.

They also have different experience in their life journey in the time of migration from *hihira-pipiri*. The migration has changed their life and their living style including religious life and their spirituality. The human life is a mystery and they know for what they have created by supreme Creator. Once we know the purpose of our creation we know God, accordingly our life and morality is framed. As *Sarna Santhal* the morality is part of religion. It plays the very important role in the *Sarna* culture and religion. There is a lot to learn from their culture and their spirituality.

¹⁶² *Ibid.* 103.

¹⁶³ T.M.P. Mahadevan. *Outline of Hinduism*. Bombay: Chetna, 1955, 218.

Chapter 4

Influence of Christian Spirituality on *Sarna Santhal*

Introduction

Sarna religion is as an animistic religion. Animistic religion interpret that all the personal and impersonal objects carry spiritual values. In this chapter we deal with the *Sarna Santhal* as an animistic religion. *Sarna* religion are influenced by Christianity. Therefore, we find certain commonality between these two communities. The common element of both communities help them to have mystical experience. They have mystical experience through everyday activities that they do in family. *Santhal* people enjoy music and dance. They celebrate several festival as part of spiritual celebration. Celebration of festival is the means and sources of spiritual growth and promotion of unity between two communities of *Sarna Santhal* and Christian *Santhal*. Celebration has triple influence in society. The primary influence is celebration unite the people of two faith *sarna santhal* and Christian *santhal*. The second influence is that, celebration bring new life and new hope among the people. The third, there is spiritual growth in the life of every individual and brotherhood is promoted.

4.1. *Sarna Santhal* an Animistic Religion

The original meaning of the term ‘animism’ referred to a religious belief system, followed by the indigenous people, that natural objects and being, both animate and inanimate possess mental and spiritual faculties and powers. *Sarna santhal* form adoptive relations of kinship with many natural being, including plants and animals, and considered them to have subjectivity, intelligence, emotions and abilities to communicate. The universe is as natural as the distinct bodily forms to the different species that share in it. The term “animism” comes from the Latin word *anima*, which means “soul” or “breath”. It refers to that which empowers or gives life to something. Animism is the religion that sees the physical world as interpenetrated by spiritual forces all the personal and impersonal objects carry spiritual values and events have spiritual causes¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶⁴ C. Halverson, “Animism: The Religion of the Tribal World”. *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol.15 N. 2 (1998): 59.

The nature consists of different forms, spirit (anima) in universal. *Sarna santhal* believe that all being share in it, despite the differences in bodily forms. *Sarna santhal* offer the hope of a good life which begins with the respect and acknowledgement of the presence of human person and other- than- humans, who make up the community of life¹⁶⁵.

In their religion, culture and religion is inseparable. Their spiritualistic religion is an integral part of the culture and the way of life. They follow the ritual, in this process the rituals of their religion is a totally taken for granted requirement of living in the *sarna santhal*. It is an all of life daily experience based upon spiritualistic belief. They believe that non-living objects and living objects have souls and life. All objects have the supernatural power infused by the creator. The energy which exist in living and non-living objects have forces, that could be spiritual power that moves human person and influence them in their daily life. The spiritual energies are influencing them in order to determine future action and also manipulate their energy¹⁶⁶.

Sarna Santhal include people, animals, natural phenomenon and inanimate objects that possess a spirit that connects them to one another. They believe that their spiritual belief is part of nature. Their belief is not contrary to the modern organized religion but what they have been practicing from the creation of human continues till today. Animism is a key feature of both modern and ancient spiritual practice. They have been following from ancient time.

Historically, the human being experience the union of creation, which is the spiritual experience of human, when they have connection between individual soul and divine soul. The connection with the divine soul for *sarna santhal* is nature and they have believed, experience of divine in the nature. They have reverence for life in nature and personification of death indicate strong animism belief. There is an inter connection of life and spiritual life between nature and supernatural world¹⁶⁷. Among them there exists a strong totemist tradition. The totem, usually a plant, animal, stone, bird possess supernatural powers and is held in reverence as an emblem or symbol of the *Sarna Santhal* community. Often, there are taboos regarding touching, eating or harming the totem. The sources of the totem are the living entity. They believe in spirituality is much broader and holistic, the entity is dependent on the spirit that inhabits it¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁵ Graham Harvey. *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 200, 212.

¹⁶⁶ Gailyn Van Rhee. *Communicating Christ in Animistic Context*, Paris: Baker Book house, 1991, 20.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹⁶⁸ Graham Harvey. *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 200, 216.

They have a concept of Creator who is not very close to people but his presence is through the nature. Creator keep distance, abstract and unknown to the people. God is abstract to them, the distance and abstractness is the invitation to experience him which can be called as divine experience of spirituality. They have various gods according to place and season. Every god is worshiped in due season. They move from an abstract concept of God to divine oneness to fill the void with personal spirit being. Their religion infuses the sacred into a reality that has been emptied of anything spiritual by the evolutionary perspective. *Sarna Santhal* animism offers people to adjust with everyday needs and problems. Such as when one is ill, need of job and find a mate, this religion helps them to cope with the social reality¹⁶⁹.

They believe that supreme God is beyond their reach, and abstract to know him. He cannot be approached or known directly. The spiritual realm with which *sarna santhal* deal consist of personal being and impersonal spiritual energy. The personal spirit is often seen as being mediators between individual and God. There is impersonal spiritual force, that infuses special objects words and ritual. Such spiritual power is to fulfill our need. They are more inclined to attribute spiritual causes to their sickness or bad fortune. When they are sick they think that they have displeased the gods and as a consequence they are suffering from sickness. Then they look for the opportune time to make sacrifice to please creator, to get away from sickness. They also look for opportune time to begin work, marriage, begin constructing a building, going for hunting and travel. They also believe that offending spirit will inevitably exact retribution in the form of injury sickness and failure of our interpersonal relation, damage of wealth. They believe that after death the spirit of a person continue to exist until the ritual is performed in the name of death person. Then the dead spirit goes back to creator and the creator give the spirit into other new born in the family. The person who dies become an ancestral spirit. Then family continue to give offering to that ancestor because it has the power to protect the family¹⁷⁰.

They have assumptions that life is unchallenged truth. All of life is spiritual. The spirit world control everything in life. The spiritual beings are present everywhere and they control over entire human being. The *siddhi* spiritual power is gained through the secret knowledge and magic. The spiritual power is called the *siddhi*. They believe in spiritual power and that they respect all through their life. They also believe indwelling of spiritual power within certain

C. Halverson. "Animism: The Religion of the Tribal World". *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol.15 N. 2 (1998): 59.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

objects or people who lead a mystic life. A man who has *siddhi* is successful at fighting, not only with bow and arrows, quickness of eye and cultivation, he is successful because of the grace of supreme creator. The grace has been received through the help of ancestor and who is filled with mystical experience¹⁷¹. Sometime a man with *siddhi* will have to offer one of his family members to repay the fee of receiving the *siddhi*.

They think that all the objects are assumed to possess *siddhi* because of their distinctiveness. They think that some particular fruits if they hang in the door, put in the roof, sprinkle in the crops, and tie in the neck as neckless, they will be free from evil spirit. No external force, physically and spiritually can harm them. There are also skin and bone of animals contained the power to protect human person. Some of the fruits like lemon, chili and tamarin have the power to protect family, and the evil spirit cannot enter in the house. Therefore, they hang them in front of the entrance of the house. They also believe that evil spirit enters with men as they come to visit they can bring with them evil spirit for destroying the family. Blood is considered something holy, source of life. We find very minimum *sarna santhal* donate the blood, they have strong conviction that the blood can be only given to the family members not out of blood relationship¹⁷².

The *siddhi* has the power to control the emotion of *sarna santhal*. They are physically strong but spiritual tormented. They routinely display superb courage in *sarna santhal* warfare and endure incredible pain from every imaginable diseases and mishap. They believe that their troubles in life are generally due to their inability to keep the spirit satisfied. They live their lives fearfully looking back over their heads wondering if every ritual was performed according to the norms and to keep spirit happy. The power of an ancestor can take revenge, upon them for some grievance. There is a fear and phobias of every kind in their lives.

They like to control the spirit. From the begging *Sarna Santhal* children are taught about the evil spirit. They are told if you don't obey your parents, the evil spirit will come in night and harm you. There is always people in search of the *siddhi* to know evil spirit and have access with them and to dialogue with them. The person who has received *siddhi* tries to discover which spirits are dominating them at the moment finding the right magic rituals to temporally satisfy them. The whole energy is given to control over the spirit, in order to live a peaceful life. They seek secret knowledge through mediums. They try to approach their ancestors for help

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁷² Phatik Chandra Hembrom. *Sari Sarna*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1986. 68.

through elaborate offering of goats, chicken, pig and pigeon. They employ some insects such as earthworms, grasshoppers to take control over problem and given the future problem with symbolic information¹⁷³.

4.2. Influence of Christian on *Sarna Santhal*

Santhals divided into various religions. Therefore, it is better here in this chapter we shall analyse how Christianity influenced *sarna santhal*. How santhals who converted to Christianity have major role to influence entire community of *santhals*. There are good numbers of *santhals* who have converted to the Christianity. There are different opinions on the conversion of *Sarna Santhal* into Christianity. Some of them see it as threat to the *sarna santhal* community, whereas some political leaders see them as threat for their life, even losing their power. When Christianity came to *Santhal Pargana*, they have impact on the life of *sarna santhal*. There is a great impact on the life, custom and spirituality. The systematic understanding of initiation, development and functioning of Christianity in one of the most important *santhal* Christian belt of *Santhal Pargana* will help us, to know the impact on Christian *Santhal* and *Sarna Santhal*.

There is a culture indigenization, within the framework of a *Sarna Santhal* belief, the cultural practice of both communities are same. When the new convert is not able to judge the Christianity will face the conflict. Later generations the converts gradually developed a better understanding of the new faith; and with a greater socialization in the Christian way of life with being better in Christian ideas and values and better understanding of Christianity are able to make critical judgement of their action and began to scrutinize the culture they practiced. As a consequence, they are able to eliminate those elements, belief, and practices to the *sarna santhal* community, that helped them to maintain healthy distinction between *sarna santhal* and Christian *santhal*¹⁷⁴. Within the framework of a particular *sarna* belief or practice, it implies the replacement of such *sarna* religious elements by Christian elements that are generally contradictor to the former.

There is a cultural oscillation among them. There is a fluctuation between two essentially opposed sets of ideas and values belonging to the two different traditions. This

¹⁷³ C. Halverson. "Animism: The Religion of the Tribal World". *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol.15 N. 2 (1998): 72.

¹⁷⁴ Keshari N. Sahay. *The Impact of Christianity on the Uraon*. Submitted for the Doctoral Thesis, Ranchi University, 1963, 939.

opposes can be observed chiefly during the beginning phase to conversion and can be associated mostly with the first generation of converts who were converted to Christianity by early Christian missionaries. They were converted without any strong conviction about the religion. They were not given enough knowledge about the Christianity. They were converted without any proper religious training, many cases absolutely without catechism people were converted into Christianity. Whatever little instruction was given to them failed demonstrate their faith in life. Such people found themselves nowhere and could not explain the propose of conversion. They became lukewarm Cristian. They began to believe in taboo of the society. for example, a lunar eclipse presents occasion of fear for pregnant woman. *Sarna Santhal* believe that a pregnant woman goes out such moment, and looks at the moon, the child in the womb will have any physical deformity caused by the bad influence of an eclipse. The same practices and faith also can be witness among the convert *santhal* of *Santhal Pargana*¹⁷⁵.

Culture scrutinisation is a process that lead to elimination of certain religious elements that existed in *sarna* religion, and taken from the Christianity for the betterment of the *sarna* religion. There is also enculturation of *sarna* religion practiced by Christian *santhals*. There is vast theological difference between them, and several elements of the *sarna* tradition standing in direct conflict with Christianity were eliminated by converts¹⁷⁶. The belief in witchcraft, and magical conjuring, were eliminated from their belief system. Certain indigenous taboos and other practices like preventing a pregnant woman from going near to dead body in their belief, that it will harm the fetus, diverting the attention of malevolent spirit by placing a newly born baby on a manure pit, magically neutralizing the evil effect of a new born after three sibling of the opposite sex, superstitious, heathen practices and so on, were largely eliminated.

There were some elements in the customs, the practice of early marriage, polygamy, polyandry. There were various types of marriage and most of them have been eliminated. The process of marriage was very long and the process of marriage would last almost one year but the marriage celebration would last one week. Now the period and long process of marriage has been reduced to two days among *Sarna Santhals* and Christian *santhal*. This is the mutual influence of marriage among them.

There is also retention between these two groups. There are two types of social practices in the society, the religious practice and social practice. *Sarna Santhal* and Christian *santhal*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 930.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 932.

join together only for the social practice, whereas the religious practice is done only by the respective religious groups. The marriage celebration, birthday celebration and death ritual, has social connotation, where *Sarna Santhals* and Christian *santhals* freely can participate. There are also semi religious and semi socials celebration. In such a celebration, when the ritual performance is done, then they joined together only for social celebration¹⁷⁷.

Generally, after scrutinization, is followed by the process of culture combination. There is also mixing up or combination of *Sarna Santhal* culture and Christian *santhal* culture. There is a new set of concepts and ceremonies relating to marriage have been introduced, marriage as a sacred sacrament and a bond that can never be dissolved, betrothal, and the offering of Christian prayers. The religious practices and social observation have been mutually changed in the society. The Christian *santhal* decided not to go for boys and girls dance together in dancing platform, because the moral life was affected by it. Then the *Sarna Santhal* also joined with them and changed the system for the good of the society¹⁷⁸. In the initial, it was difficult but in due course of time a compromise was reached between *Sarna Santhal* and Christian *santhal* involving some degree of relaxation from both sides, which ultimately led to combination.

Cultural indigenization is the process in which a particular *Sarna Santhal* belief or practice, refers to the replacement of *sarna* elements by Christian ones, the two generally being contradictory to each other. The partial replacement of a *sarna* belief or practice by functionally similar Christian elements fulfilling indigenous needs. Such a specialized types of replacement of Christian elements does not seem to disturb the framework of the *sarna* belief, the new elements get integrated in it and are thus indigenized¹⁷⁹. The indigenization is the process by which an elements belong to one type of tradition or culture become fused with analogous in another tradition or culture. It indicates the replacement of *Sarna Santhal* elements with functionally similar to Christian elements.

We find that, as a matter of influence in the *sarna* religion, there is a cultural retroversion. It is the re- evaluation process of previously eliminated *sarna* elements and their re- adaptation after necessary modification to suit the changed needs and outlook of the converts and the both the community. In this process, everyone is free to make one's own value based judgement. The use of *sindur* (vermilion) is the typical case of retroversion among the

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 935.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 936.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 937.

Christian *santhal* community. It has been re- adopted by them after the re-evaluation of the use of vermilion. As a result, it is now not uncommon to see grooms putting vermilion, blessed by priest, in the parting of their brides after Church marriage. This we find common to all religions.

4.3. Common ground of *Sarna Santhal* and Christianity

Sarna santhal and *Christianian santhal* share several concepts in common and the Christian *santhal* can use them for building common ground. Both believe in the existence and the influence of the supernatural. Both *Sarna Santhal* and Christian *santhal* would stand together in their opposition to naturalistic thinking that says only matter exists. *Sarna Santhal*, like Christian *santhal*, believe that, while we might plant the seeds and cultivate the soil, there is a supernatural element that causes the growth. While the doctor is the one who dresses the wound and sets the broken arm, there is, again, a supernatural element that causes the healing.

When we do not take care nature, that means we don't care the face of God. With the *Sarna Santhal*, those consequences include things such as sickness, doing poorly in all aspect of life, fight in family, economical problems, death and conflict with the villagers come from God. With the Christian *santhal*, the consequences of offending or sinning against God is that it causes our relationship with Him to be broken and they will have to go through the same fate. They have hope that, there is a way to escape the consequences of our transgressions. They have to offer animal and pigeon sacrifices according to the sins they have committed. *Sarna Santhal* believe in some form of a supreme being who stands above the spirits and spiritual powers¹⁸⁰.

When we talk about the influence of the Christianity on *Sarna Santhal*, positively, there is spiritual growth among both the communities. The key difference between *sarna santhal* and Christianity are very significant. In *Sarna Santhal* God exists, but He is beyond our abilities to know Him or to communicate with Him. On the other hand, in Christianity, God He is beyond our comprehension, since He is infinite, He is nevertheless knowable, and He has made himself known to us through Jesus Christ and through the prophet (Hb 1,1-2). In Christianity, God has not remained distant and silent, but He has broken through to our world through Jesus Christ, through whom He has made known himself to us. Through sacrificial death of Jesus,

¹⁸⁰ C. Halverson. "Animism: The Religion of the Tribal World". *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol. 15 N. 2 (1998): 62.

He has paid ransom for our sins. The gods, spirits and ancestors of *Sarna Santhal* offer no such answers.

The once and for all nature of Christ's sacrifice, moreover, means that the matter of our sin is settled with God and the path is cleared for us to have a personal relationship with God. The God of Christianity is concerned both, with the ultimate and the immediate issues of life. God desires to provide not only for our eternal needs, but also, for our daily needs (1 Pet 5-7).

Sarna Santhal worldview of the spirits are seen as being either intermediators between them and God or as representatives of God. They sometime seem that they function independently. There is not clear cut view on them. According to Christianity, the good spirits are mediators and the evil spirit are deceptive and take the place of God in our life. They misguide us take us away from God¹⁸¹.

Sarna Santhal considered that the spirits and the interments of magic have the power either to do harm to others or to bring benefit to the community or individual, but Christian believe the communion of saints, each one of us has in common with all other believers. We have been forgiven his death and saved by his (Rom 5,10), set free from law of sins and death (Rom 8, 2) and pass from spiritual death to eternal life (1Jn 3.16). we have all been permanently adopted as children of God by the will of God (Jn 1, 12-13). We have been become God's handiwork to do good works that he has prepared for us (Ep 2,10), and we have all been given an enteral home in new Jerusalem in the presence of or lord Jesus, our lamb our temple, and our light (Rev 21, 22-27). God has demonstrated through Jesus Christ that He is greater than the spirits and magic power, for the one who is in us is greater than the one who is the world (1Jn 4,4 and Ex 8,18), and He has disarmed the powers and authority (Col 2, 15). Submitting to God brings freedom (Jn 8, 32-36) not bondage.

Christian impact in the light of these cultural process helps both the community to understand how from the very beginning of conversion the culture of the converts has gradually emerged out of the state of confusion, instability to greater understanding of crystallization and stability as they slowly gain a better knowledge of Christianity. After the process of retroversion, combination, and indigenization are likely to intensify the situation. *Santhal Pargana* has grown and more have a clear understanding of the teaching of Christianity and its

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

implication, they find themselves in a better position than before to assess the indigenous culture of their forefathers.

They try to judge the value of these practices in the light of Christianity, and feel inclined to readopt some of those already eliminated, with due modifications in them to suit their changed needs and purpose. These readopted *sarna* practices in due course might get combined with Christian elements, or some modifications might still take place and the Christian elements get indigenized in the framework of particular *sarna* belief or practices. The consideration of these cultural processes helps both the community towards a systematic understanding of the instantiation, development, and functioning of Christianity in one of the most important *Santhal Pargana*, on a broader level they might be applicable to other communities that were converted under roughly similar constitutions. This analysis will help us to know both the community even culturally same people but the religiously made gap would be completed¹⁸².

4. 4. Mystical Experience in *Sarna Santhal*

Sarna Santhal have the nature as the senses of sacredness and the evil spirit takes them to profane world. The good spirit will always lead to the sacred world; they live a transcend life by union with nature. All nature is the place of God and His presence. There is ordinary life that we live, and fulfill our daily life. If ancestors are not happy, they will lead us to profane world. For *Sarna Santhal*, the religion is a collective practice of *santhal*. They have to maintain distance between the sacred and the profane, which is typically done through the offering of ritual to gods and ancestor. The sacred activity is marked out from ordinary life¹⁸³.

Sarna Santhal religion is a rudimentary types of religion. When we use the word rudimentary it indicates the early stage of development or having a simple form. It signifies to basic factor or principle elementary. The development which has not completely developed is called to be rudimentary religion. It deals with the basic skills, the early stages of development or basic fundamental concepts of religion. When we apply to all these aspects we find that *Sarna Santhal* religion is rudimentary. The *Sarna Santhal* religion is very simple, having less norms unless like other religions. There is only basic fundamental concept of religion. They

¹⁸² Keshari N. Sahay. *The impact of Christianity on the Uraon*. Submitted for the doctoral thesis, Ranchi University, 1963, 940.

¹⁸³ A.B. Choudhury. *The Santhals: Religion and Ritual*. New delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1987, 34.

believe in nature as the source of inspiration for human person. The totem is the unifying means and ways thorough which mystical relationships unite man and nature. They have independent economy not based on city life, but based on village life. They are more concern about the spiritual issues and not the political issues or other aspect of life.

All religions are unique and have a set of belief system. Some of the followers have experience, that is beyond human wisdom. There is a senses of clear notion of transhumant, personal power developed out of them, and thus, a certain good ideas arose. An experience which is by contact and not through the sense but immediately or union of the self with a larger than self be it called the spirit world God or the absolute is for us a mystical experience. Any form of worship, through which that experience thought to be secured will, therefore, be regarded by us a mystical worship. Personal religious experience has its root and center in mystical consciousness. Same way *Sarna Santhal* religion has its spirituality and people practice in the mystic of it in daily life.

The word mystic is not very clear, it is doubt and confusing. The word ‘mystical’ in modern language, is the transcription of the Greek adjective *mystikos* derived from the Indo-European word, which means ‘close your eyes and close your mouth’. Which also signify that something is hidden, not accessible to view, which cannot be talked about. It goes back to classical Greek about the mystery of religion. Deferent people have their own way of defining mysticism. Evelyn Underhill understood that mysticism is the union with reality. A person who achieve this union to a great or lesser degree or who believes in it and try to achieve it in his life. All the religion has nature of union with the absolute origin of being¹⁸⁴.

The word mystic means an inner, immediate experience taking place at a consciousness level, one that governs in the ordinary life and have objective experience of the union, whatever form in let it be lived from the depth of the subject form or its deepest level, with the whole or absolute, the divine God or the spirit, or whatever we can give such an absolute. It is the direct consciousness of the presence of God. It is the direct and intuitive contact with the divine where it is the sensation before the thought, that brings us certainty, for example we can take that when we have the taste of the food then we have better experience then just to know about the food. Therefore, it gives the taste of the divine. The human desire creates thirst and always

¹⁸⁴ Pedro Cerezo Galán. *Filosofía, Literatura Y Mística*. Madrid: Escolar y Mayo Editores, 2012, 67.

likes to fulfill it, same way in the case of spiritual life of human tries to connect with the absolute reality.

In the mysticism the experience is more than phenomenal, the experience is like matrix or the mold of mysticism. Experience is acquired in the actual and effective course of life. It is not a set of thoughts that the intellect forge with or without truth, but the credit that the spirit charges in its effective trade with things. The experience is, in this sense, the natural place of reality. *Sarna Santhal* live in countryside and their life is very simple. They experience in the sense of natural places of reality. They have direct contact with the nature. They are surrounded by nature; they are one with the nature. They experience with the nature that is transcendent and real. They have the transcendent experience with the nature but they are lacking to express their transcendental experience. They believe that the language of the mystics cannot be spoken by human word. The human world has limitation and how we can express the personal experience that we have of mystical experience.

The mystic speaks the experience of God, which is subjectively knowing the reality. God himself is the subject of human experience, and God cannot be domesticated by human. The God experience is our subject matter in the mystical experience. *Sarna Santhal* people live in and around the forest and isolated place, where there is natural harmony of life. They believe, that in all created things are the representation of God. They belong to the animistic religion, and their belief is that, all the nature is the face of God¹⁸⁵. Their food system, the life style and even cultural costumes are green, which says that their natural inclination towards nature.

In Christianity, the recognition of Jesus a divine person and the second person of the Holy Trinity is a radical elements of spirituality. Knowing Jesus is to know God in person, Jesus says whoever has seen me, has seen the Father (Jn 14, 9). Christian believe that the divine essence can be made visible in a finite human being¹⁸⁶. The conversion of saint Paul can be framed within the mystical experience in general. He goes through a real storm of lightning and thunder cause by God, because it came particular time to help saint Paul and have experience of God. The voice of God is expressing his displeasure at Paul attitude. The whole life of Paul was immersed in Christ after conversion (Phil 1,21). The mystic means the cultivation of

¹⁸⁵ Phatik Chandra Hembrom. *Sari Sarna*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988, 32.

¹⁸⁶ J. Macquarrie. *Two Worlds Are Ours. An Introduction to Christian Mysticism*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005, 36-60.

interiority, attention to the inner voice of the spirit in himself, deep spiritual life and take as God as model of our life. As we consider, Jesus as the model of super mystic to follow him.

Sarna Santhal when they look at the hills remembers their creator, when they go to field and see the greenery ponder on the nature and supremacy of particular spirit, and when they go to riverside remember the supreme God of creation. They live decentering themselves to live centered on nature, whom they worship as Creator, deep spiritual life, intense love and desire for creator by being with nature, and live other oriented life is the true mystic life. Their activities are oriented towards the nature. The language is used in their conversation is deeply related to the God¹⁸⁷.

Sarna Santhal reflect and mirror the creator in every conversion. The language they use indicates that they live in the presence of God. When we speak in English we always say, it is very hot day or day is very sunny, it is raining. But when we speak in *santhali*, the same sentences in *santhali* is like these, the day is sunny, in *santhali* “God has made the day very sunny” or it is raining, in *santhali*, “God sends the rains”. All the natural events that takes place is always attributed to God. In the creation nothing happens without the knowledge of God. They live God conscious life and every movement they remember God. Every *Sarna Santhal* encounter the divinity among the nature¹⁸⁸.

God is present in the nature. As the Sun rises in the East, they remember the creator God and same way when there is the Sun set, remember the gift of God throughout the day. When the new moon appears, they have special reverence towards it. Every new moon brings good luck for the month. In it they see the fortune of the month. There are certain places where they remove their shoes before entering to such a place. They consider the place is holy and dwelling place of God (Ex 3, 5). *Sarna Santhal* have strong faith that the family, where they live is the dwelling place of God and they live in the presence of God, therefore, they never use shoes in their house. They live in the presence of God in their family¹⁸⁹. The family is the temple of *Sarna Santhal*, because in family they bury the navel cord after child birth, therefore, the house is the permanent place on this earthly journey.

¹⁸⁷ Phatik Chandra Hembrom. *Sari Sarna*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988, 38.

¹⁸⁸ I. Ramsey. *Religious Language. An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases*. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1967,48.

¹⁸⁹ Droesch, Lea Schulte. “Making Place Through Ritual” The Degree of PhD, University of Groningen University of Groningen., Germany, 2016, 73.

The image of road and its journey is one of the most powerful spiritual image in the Biblical world. Think about the journey of Abraham, Elijah or the collective migration of the people of Israel to the promise land or to Jerusalem after the Babylonian banishment. It is a source of Christian spirituality. The path is a means or process that leads to the human soul to God. The journey is the most powerful metaphor of mystical experience. Mysticism is a journey and mystic is a traveler and all the ways his struggles, such as his evil desire will be stabling stone for his journey. In this journey faith is guide and love is force that move him and union is the Goal of his journey.

Sarna Santhal had their migration from place to place and finally reached to their homeland *Santhal Pargana*. This migration has great impact on their life, including it has the spiritual impact. They have learnt to lead an isolation life which is not that easy for *santhal*. In their migration have made them to think and ponder about the human life. *Sarna santhal* have always ghetto mentality and therefore, we can say they follow spirituality in communion with community¹⁹⁰. Daily community and family activities become a revelation in life changing encounter with the nature. The Sun rises, there is sunshine that enter the house of every person, same way they believe that the creator God comes to visit our family.

The behavior of human person is the essential for spiritual life, along with it, the transformation of existence is the expression of total union with the creator. The spiritual connectedness remains the transcendent life of human person. In this spiritual condenses *santhal* are always united with nature. The cause of every relationship is nature and they love the nature. This relationship is creation itself, there is nothing can get on the way. There is no distance between creation and the life of *Sarna Santhal*. Thus, the mystic invades their life and changes their inner life. They are familiar with oneself and with nature. The nature surpasses the life of *santhal* and overflows everything as they are at peace with the nature. For *santhal* God is not the want but the need what they look for and what they love, the pure gratuity. The creation is gift what comes from God, the joyous gift including every breath they take is from God. Therefore, there is link between the life of *santhal* and nature.

The loving awareness, the inner movement of love, caring for other and listening to the voice of nature, as well as the inner voice, the sign that particular person is on the way to mystic. He tries to united with the absolute origin of being. Every day is admirable day, every day life experience is about the God and His experience. The admire of nature is the process

¹⁹⁰ Phatik Chandra Hembrom. *Sari Sarna*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988, 44.

of acceptance and glorification of God. What we encounter in life the nature is direct connection with the Creator. The bhakti of nature is to have mystical experience of God, which *Sarna Santhal* have experienced in their everyday life¹⁹¹. *Sarna Santhal* love creator and live with nature in perfect harmony, which is the true experience of mysticism. They are emotionally attached with the nature and they are sentimental towards the nature. Thus they are in the present always in the mystical experience of God.

4. 5. Celebration of Festival as Part of Spiritual Celebration

The social unity of the *Sarna Santhal* is witnessed during the celebration of the festivals. *Sarna Santhal* of *Santhal Pargana* are united and they have very strong and durable bond. In spite of all difficulties and problem they are united. They observe their festivals according to the time and seasons. The celebration of festival has its impact on the unity of *Sarna Santhal* community. The nature and environment play major role in the festival of the *Sarna Santhal*. They are very happy and joyful people, and everyday life is the day of celebration. There is diversity of festival, celebrated in different seasons, to spread the joy, peace and prosperity in their daily life¹⁹². There are several festivals but in this points I would like to mention only famous and the festival which is celebrated together by *Sarna Santhals* and Christian *santhals*.

4.5.1. Baha Porob (Festival of Flowers)

This festival is mainly celebrated to worship the new flowers of *sal* and *mahua* trees in February- March ahead of the spring season. This festival is celebrated on *Dol purninam* (the festival of colors). During the festivals, villagers collect flowers and offer them to the deities. The first day is dedicated to purification and gathering on the *jaherthan* and set up an abode for gods. The priest later visits all the houses in the village, where the women and girls wash his feet and he gives them *sal* and *mahua* flowers as per tradition. *Sal* flowers have special significance for *Sanra Santhal* from where the *sarna* word comes, therefore, *baha* festival is the basic and core of *Sarna Santhal*. This is also known as the festival of color as the different flowers are used during the celebration¹⁹³.

In this celebration, a community priest has a key role in festival. The water is blessed and carried by two bachelor boys along with the priest, which is given to them along with the

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁹² Boro Basky. "Santhals celebrate the seasons". *Ashadullapur Gramin Silpa & Sastha Bidhan Kendra* Kolkata (2014): 1-4.

¹⁹³ Phatik Chandra Hembrom. *Sari Sarna*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988, 48.

flowers. They began the celebration with the flute of *sakoa* which is made of the horns of buffaloes and men beat *mandar* (the musical instrument of *santhal*). Once again they come together at the *jaherthan* and began to dance and sing and the priest after offering prayer, performs various rituals in honor of the deity and their ancestors. They take out a rally from priest's house to the headman house, thus, they began the social celebration *baha porob*. It is the celebration of new life; every flowers are almost a month without leaves in the tress. Which signify death and renovation of life¹⁹⁴. Through the celebration of *baha* festival gets the *santhal* are inspired to make their minds as simple and innocent as the flowers. They also awaken their life with colorful imaginations with playing colors.

On the other hand, *santhal* Christian, also celebrate good Friday and Easter more or less come same time. As all the *sal* and *mahua* tress remain one month without leaf, which signify the lent of life, the time of conversion in our life. As new leaf and flowers come to *sal* and *mahua* trees looks beautiful, so also our life particular moment there is suffering like Jesus on the cross and 40 days in the desert, after resurrection there is new life. For the Christian the resurrection of Christi is the new leaf and flowers for them, that beautify the life. When we are in Christ, we are in Him a new creation, the old has passed away and the new has come (2 Cor 5,17). As the *sal* and *mahua* trees seems to be lifeless but in due season come to life on it, the same way if we have plan for good God has plan for everyone one there is future and a hope in him (Jer 29,11). Jesus invite us to be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and good and acceptable and perfect. God gives us and provided us after going through some difficulties.

4. 5. 2. Sohrai Porob (Festival of Thanks Giving)

Sohrai is the biggest festival of *sarna santhal*. The date of this festival is decided by village chief when the paddy corns, have been completely gathered in every family, them women clean every corner of their house and paint the walls with white colorful soil brought from river. The householder invites their relatives when the day is fixed for the celebration. The special invitees of the *sohrae* are sisters and sister in lows, daughters and son in lows. Therefore, this festival is the celebration of sisters and brother in low and daughter and son lows and the thanks giving for the gifts and the food they have received from their field. They also thank God for the cows that they have helped them throughout their cultivation. The celebration begins with the sacrifice offered by a village priest on the *Got tandi* (the place of

¹⁹⁴ Sukumar Barai. *The Santhal Religion and Rituals*. New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 2015, 22.

worship) a pair of pigeon and hens. Village priest returns from the place with companions while beating the *mandar* and *tamak*. They sing songs devoted to the cows from one hose to another¹⁹⁵.

The second day of this festival they welcome their invited and village people. All the invitees come with the rice beer. They dance and sing on the roads starting this day. They tie their cows and buffaloes out of their cowsheds. They apply some oil and vermilion on their horns and heads and tie chains on their necks made of paddy. They decorate their doors with some arts by mixing some flour with water and by cutting some pieces of flowers of silk cotton tree. Then the third day, is the last day of celebration. All the left over drinks are taken by all as departing gift to invitees. Thus this festival is also not distant from nature and environment. What they use in the celebration is so close to nature¹⁹⁶.

Christian *santhal* celebrate Christmas (*bara din*, or *maran din*), the local name of Christmas. This day to give thanks God the Father for sending us his son to this sinful world and accepting us his adopted sons. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (Jn 3,16). They thank God for sending his only begotten son to this world to know us and to be with us. When the time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons. We become members of the family of God (Gal 4, 4-5).

4. 5. 3. Dasae Porob (Festival of Durga Puja)

This festival is observed by *Sanra Santhal*, Hindu and all the people of India. This is celebrated during the busy period of cultivation. *Sarna* youth come together in particular house for recitation of mantra or divine lines devoted to goddess Durga. This is the biggest festival of all Indian. They are taught how to get rid of poisonous snake- bite or scorpion. The benefits and utilizations of different trees are also taught for the sake to treatment of some illness. There is also prayer for how to get rid of form headache, stomach ache and pain or other physical ailments, by recitations the mantra. Thus, the *dasae* festival is the celebration of the renewal of the celebration. They observe this festival in every village of *santhal pargana*¹⁹⁷.

¹⁹⁵ C. Mukharjee. *The Santhal with Illustration*. Kolkata: Mukharjee & Co., 1939, 89.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁹⁷ Josy Trois. *Tribal Religion: Religious Belief and Practices Among the Santhals*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1968, 27.

Christain santhal also join for this celebration for the promotion of brotherhood among both communities. They also partially celebrate this festival as the festival of renewal and reembrace to the commitment we have made in the Baptism. Prayer is essential for every human being to maintain his/her spirituality. The renovation of prayer is essential for human life.

4. 5. 4. Diwali Festival (Festival of Light)

This festival is celebrated all over India it is basically the celebration of northern India. It is celebrated Rama's triumphant return to the city of Ayodhya after 14 years of exile due to the plotting of his evil stepmother and after a heroic rescue of his wife Sita who has been kidnaped by king Ravana. Every tribes and different sects of people give different account of the origin of Diwali festival. But they all ultimately represent the victory of good over evil. In general, Diwali signifies the triumph of good over evil, of righteousness over treachery, of truth over falsehood, and of light over darkness¹⁹⁸.

Diwali is not only the festival of light that we might burn candles, firework and sparklers. This are the wonderful way of expressing our gaiety. It is a festival of light which dispels the darkness of our ignorance; it is a festival of the light which shows us the way on our journey through life. The purpose is not to glorify the candle or the firework. The purpose is to glorify the light of God. It is He who bestows the real light, the everlasting light upon the darkness of this mundane world. A candle burns out, and still a mind and the firework of a heart filled with bhakti are divine and eternal: these are what we should be celebrating. The light signifies the light of God, that penetrate through the ignorance and sin of our daily lives. They are divine light, shining its way through this mundane world¹⁹⁹.

The light of Diwali should be within us. It should symbolise the personal relationship between God and our families. Let the light penetrate inward, for only there will it have lasting benefit. A piece of cotton soaked in ghee, lit with a pure heart, a conscious mind and a desire to be free from ignorance is far brighter than hundred *dipaks* (mud light).

Along with *Sarna Santhal* brethren, Christian *Santhal* join the festival of light, by celebrating the Eucharist celebration as Christ the light of the world. Jesus himself say "I am

¹⁹⁸ Sukumar Barai. *The Santhal Religion and Rituals*. New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1968, 15.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life” (Jn 8,12). Christ is the true light of the world. As we the member of the church, therefore, we have to keep up our body well. When we look with good eye our entire body is full of light. There is life in our life (Lk 11. 34-35). We radiate the light of Christ as we are children of God. We resemble the light of Christ to the people (Jn 12, 36-37). As a Christian we are a chosen, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, we are His special possession, that we praise Him, because He has called us from the darkness into his wonderful light (1 Pet 2,9). Thus, there is enculturation of the festival of light within the Christianity.

4. 5. 5. *Magh Sim* Festival (Conclusion of the Year)

This festival is celebrated in the month of *magh* which also denotes the name of festival. This is the last festival of year, therefore, they give Farwell to all the workers. As everything dries way and summer begins. This is the time for relaxation and to be with the family members. This festival is not celebrated in the family, but it is only common celebration. There is a *sagun* (luck) idea of a pot filled with water on a festive occasion which signify the weal and woe of the beginning of any work. They consider the place as unlucky if the water of the pot dries up. There will not be any progress in life. The celebration of unity among the village people.

Christian Santhal also join with them and contribute for the celebration. As this festival help them to be united. Festival is for human, it enlarges socialization, the unity, affection and enjoyment are developed by the festivals. We should care for the nature. The culture, tradition should not be disturbed by these changes in environment and disturb by nature.

Sarna Santhal are the oldest tribe of India. They have moved from place to place due to poverty and illiteracy. The celebrating of festivals helps them to live together with peace and harmony. The celebrating of festivals also carries the message of brotherhood, goodness and morality. The pleasure of festivals equally touches the heart of all people without having any discrimination on the basis of caste and creed. The celebration of festivals reflects cultural activities, and mutual considerations. Here all the religion has its significance, and contribute for the development of human spirituality and celebration of festivals and religion are an imperative piece of the life of *Sarna Santhal* of *Santhal Pargana*.

General Conclusion

My paper work on the theme *Life, Custom and Spirituality of Sarna Santhal of Santhal Pargana, In relation with Christianity* has brought out the following conclusion:

1. Probing into this theme from the point of origin and customs, we come across that after the origin of *santhal*, they are divided into twelve clans, moved from place to place in order to find their homeland. The migration process was full of suffering and challenging.
2. Spirituality is an integral part of Sarna Santhal. The peculiarity of *sarna santhal* life is its abundance of myths and images which systematically analyses the human situations, the life, customs and spirituality which reveal profound insights of the characteristics of creator God.
3. The *Sarna Santhal* sacred story of origin of humanity combines the principles of creation and evolution, for according to it humankind is ultimately derived from two images, which were modelled in human, formed out of damp clay, but afterwards accidentally transformed into birds, from whose eggs the first man and woman were born. This story of origin of mankind finds some similarities with the biblical view of creation of Adam and Eve (Gen 1, 26-27; 2,7).
4. The *santhals* are one of the largest indigenous groups of people in India, they are different from the rest of the people. They called themselves, *kherwar*, when they are united in different tribes. Now they called themselves *hor hopon* which means “Sons of Man”. Later on they received the name *santhal*, because they settled, some years in the land called *soant* or *santh* which means peace, and it signifies the nature of *santhal*. According to this etymological meaning the tribes are called *santhal* which signifies “peace loving people”.
5. They have belief in supreme God called “*Thakur jiu*” among them the supreme God is identified with the natural objects, the Sun, thus He is *cando baba* or *sin bonga* (the Sun God). The *Tahkur Jiu* is the living God. He sees and knows the human hearts. When He sees sins and immoral activities of humankind, He punishes them through many natural disaster and particularly with the natural disaster and sickness. He is a living God, at the same time He cannot be perceived with physical eyes, but He himself sees

all. He has created heaven and earth, human being, animals, birds and insects in fact everything and everyone, he keeps controls all and supports our lives small and big.

6. There is a change in the life of *Sarna Santhal* community as well as the Christian *Santhal* community. They mutually help each other to build and to develop the customs and culture of their community. As the life changes, the culture as goes behind the lifestyle and the culture also changes. There is oscillation, scrutinization, combination, indignation and retroversion of the culture among the community in general. The religion is the factor positive sense that divide *santhal* among two groups, but culturally, they are same, united as one community. The culture is the unifying factor within these two communities. The culture is the only factor that can bring them both religious communities under one umbrella and to have peaceful inhabitation.

The second part of the conclusion about the newness which I have come across are as follows:

1. *Santhals* are peace loving people and they live with nature and love the nature.
2. The creation myth of *Sarna Santhals* and Biblical Creation, we find something in common. God creates the earth and human we found in Genesis chapter 1 and 2, the creation myth of *sarna santhal* also goes in same line
3. *Sarna Santhal* felt and experienced God as a real friend or helper in the time of migration, when they moved place to place, God was accompanying them. Same way we find in the Bible, that Israelite were made slave labor in Egypt (Ex 1,8-14). They were treated harshly, thus their life become miserable (Ex 1,15: 2,10). Under the leadership of Moses, God lead them his people (Ex 5,1). People of Israel moved toward promise land. That was the first migration of human history. They have changed some of the long established lifestyle, the established beliefs, practices and accept modern customs that was also accountable.
4. We realize characteristic features of lifestyle and livelihood of the *Sarna Santhal* of *Santhal Pargana* in the gradual process, the life, customs and their spirituality.
5. Spiritually, when we evaluate, that human being were in perfect harmony with the Creator. The separation is not from God, but human choose to be away from God, even though He is always with human being, present through the nature to protect and guide them. It is perhaps here that the Christian teaching of the fall of humanity may serve as a point of contact for the *Sarna Santhal* understanding of the present state of human life.

6. God upholds the moral laws in the life of *Santhal*, if they do wrong, God is there to judge them. God is the judge of human both now and in life after death and so human is responsible to Him for their deeds, God is the one, who keeps controls all and supports our lives small and big. God is not an abstract concept, He is present and in the nature and acting through the nature. He punishes them while committing immortal lives and liberating them while they are in all kinds of trouble.
7. We have seen, there are different gods, for every field there are one or more than one God. There are also spirits called *Bongas*, as helper to God. There are also evil spirits who disobeyed *Thakur Jiu*, therefore, became evil spirits called *barich bonga*. *Sarna Santhal* invoke also *Maran Buru*, who is the second most invoked God. Their God is God of most loveable God, therefore, they called him Father, Grandfather, and friend but not in human sense. They invariably refer to their dependence on God, whether in case of success or failure, trouble and happiness, they often invoke *Baba Dayate*, which means by the grace of God.

This paper is only the glimpse of *Life, custom and spirituality of Sarna Santhal of Santhal Pargana, In relation with Christianity*. This is only step to know something about the life, customs and spirituality of *Sarna Santhal*. It is just a drop in the ocean of their life. When we go through this work surely there will be some questions arising in our mind. Some of them can be answers and some may not be answered. This paper work is not all in all. We can further in future investigate on this them. There are some questions, still we can know more, they are as follows:

1. Why there is division between *Sarna Santhal* and Christian *Santhal*?
2. How *Santhal* can be united spirituality?
3. Which way *santhals* of *Santhal Pargana* are different from the resto of the World?
4. Will small numbers of Christian *Santhal* have influence on *Sarna Santhal* in future?
5. Will the social celebration of festival, have some positive influence in the unification of *Sarna Santhal* and Christian *Santhal* of *Santhal Pargana*?

Appendix: Key Concepts

<i>Bapla:</i>	Marriage in <i>santhali</i> is called <i>Bapla</i> .
<i>Bitalha</i>	The excommunication from <i>santhal</i> community is called <i>Bitalha</i> .
<i>Chaco chatiar</i>	The sacrament of Confirmation
<i>Chae champa gar</i>	The first dwelling place of <i>Santhal</i>
<i>Chatiar</i>	The sacrament of Baptism
<i>Chotanagpur</i>	South part of Jharkhand where Oran and Munda tribes live ²⁰⁰ .
<i>Dasae,</i>	The festival celebrated by Sarna Santhal, along with Hindu brethren in month of September or October
<i>Dhavani</i>	The sound, in normal sense but here it is the call of God
<i>Dipak</i>	Mud light used for worship and adoration
<i>Disom</i>	Home land of <i>Santhal</i>
<i>Durga</i>	Goddess of Hindu
<i>Has -Hasil</i>	A Pair of birds from whom human came to existence
<i>Hihiri- Pipiri</i>	After creation of human where they learn the culture and religion.
<i>Hor</i>	Human being or road
<i>Hor Hopon</i>	Son of man, human being
<i>Jaher than</i>	Place of worship by <i>santhal</i>
<i>Janam Disom</i>	Home land
Jharkhand	It is one of the state in India, where <i>Santhal Pargana</i> is situated, where <i>Santhal Orao</i> , <i>Munda</i> and <i>Kharia</i> tribes' population are found more relatively.
Jiu	Life and Spirit
<i>Jog Manjhi</i>	One of the village head who called for village meeting and collection of the things needed for worship.

²⁰⁰ [jharkhand tenancy act - Google Search](#) , visited on 3 of June 2021.

<i>Karam</i>	It is a tree worshiped by tribes in common, process of worship is called karam festival.
<i>Kudam Naeke</i>	Assistant village priest.
<i>Lugu Buru</i>	The mountain situated near the capital city of Jharkhand, considered this mountain as holy and they have annual gathering on this mountain.
<i>Magh</i>	It is the first month of the year which is holy ²⁰¹ .
<i>Mahua</i>	It is a tree found in the forest, the second holiest tree among <i>Sarna Santhal</i> community, the flower is used for make alcohol, this flower is holy to them.
<i>Mandar</i>	It is the musical instrument used for dance.
<i>Manjhi than</i>	place of worship situated in the centre of village.
<i>Maran buru</i>	The supreme God of <i>Sarna Santhal</i>
<i>Mudra</i>	Sitting position during the worship and meditation.
<i>Naeke</i>	Priest of the village.
<i>Ojhas and Janguru</i>	Those who have the knowledge of spirit and herbal medicine.
<i>Pargana</i>	A unite of administration in the new state of Jharkhand, where santhal are the major dweller in that area, and this term is used by the medieval rulers ²⁰² . The literal meaning is the unit of five village head who take care the justice issue in santhal community.
<i>París</i>	Clans, where <i>santhal</i> are divided into twelve clans, known as twelve tribes of <i>santhal</i> .
<i>Pilchu Haram</i>	According to <i>santhal</i> creation myth they are they first human being who were born from the egg of <i>Has Hasil</i> .
<i>Sagai</i>	The manner of relating with each other in family and village ²⁰³ .
<i>Sal</i>	The sacred tree for <i>Sarna Santhal</i> , the most sacred tree, from where the word <i>Sarna</i> comes, the place where <i>sal</i> trees are there for worship is called <i>Sarna</i> and those who worship there are called <i>Sarna Santhal</i> and their religion is called <i>Sarna Religion</i> ²⁰⁴ .

²⁰¹ P.O. Bodding. *A Santhali Dictionary*, Vol 5. Kolkata: Jai Gain, 1936.

²⁰² [santhal pargana tenancy act 1949 - Google Search](#). Visited on 3 of June 2021

²⁰³ P.O. Bodding. *A Santhali Dictionary*, Vol 5. Kolkata: Jai Gain, 1936

²⁰⁴ P. C. Hembrom. *Sari Sarna santhal religion*. New Delhi: Mital Pubpications, 1988, 26.

<i>Santhal</i>	<i>Santhal</i> are biggest tribe of India, <i>santhal</i> is tribe, it does not indicate the religion.
<i>Santhal Hul</i>	<i>Santhal</i> were under the landlord, and they were tortured by landlord, therefore, they called for a revolution, <i>Sidho Murmu</i> and <i>Kanhu Murmu</i> as their leaders. <i>Santhal</i> believed that <i>Sidho Murmu</i> and <i>Kanhu Murmu</i> were sent by God to liberated from landlord and British ²⁰⁵ .
<i>Santhal Pargana</i>	<i>Santhal Pargana</i> is derived from its name from two words <i>santhal</i> a major tribe of India this term was given by English people.
<i>Santhali</i>	The language spoken by <i>santhal</i> is called <i>Santhali</i> .
<i>Sarna</i>	The term <i>Sarna</i> means the sacred grove, the term comes from the <i>Sal</i> tree, <i>sarna santhal</i> believe <i>Thakur jiu</i> and all village goddess dwell in <i>sal</i> tree which also called <i>Jaher Than</i> . This religion is based on the concept of nature worship ²⁰⁶ .
<i>Sasan beda</i>	The place where <i>santhal</i> civilization took place.
<i>Siddhi</i>	A person who is enlighten, and who has power over evil and good spirit.
<i>Sindur</i>	Vermilion, it is worn by married women, the part of their hair. It visualizes that woman is married, and also used for worship.
<i>Sita nala</i>	The river which originates form the sacred mountain of <i>Hazaribag</i> .
<i>Sohrae</i>	The biggest festival of <i>Sarna Santhal</i> .
<i>Sunyata</i>	In the state of mediation the mind has feel emptiness.
<i>Tamak</i>	Musical instrument of <i>Santhal</i> .
<i>Thakur Jiu</i>	The creator God of <i>Sarna Santhal</i> .
<i>Tukuc Handi</i>	The mud vessel where <i>santhal</i> people use to make alcohol to make offering to God.
<i>Sarna Santhal</i>	<i>Santhal</i> those who follow <i>sarna</i> religion are called <i>Sarna Santhal</i> .
<i>Christian Santhal</i>	<i>Santhal</i> those who have converted into Christianity are called <i>Christian santhal</i> ²⁰⁷ .

²⁰⁵ [santhal pargana tenancy act 1949](#) - Google Search, visited 3 of Jnne 2021.

²⁰⁶ P. C. Hembrom. *Sari Sarna santhal religion*. New Delhi: Mital Pubpications, 1988, 48.

²⁰⁷ P.O. Bodding. *A Santhali Dictionary, Vol 5* (Kolkata: Jai Gain, 1936).

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