

Santal culture, environment awareness and love of nature

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Abstract:

Santal community is closely related to the natural environment. They live in natural landscape and they spend their daily life by using natural equipments. So that, they are very much pleased to the nature, their culture and religion festival is very closely related to the nature. As they live in the lap of nature they love the nature very much and expressed their love through various nature related festivals like- Baha, Saharai, Karam, Era Sim etc. For studying their culture, we interact with some people who belong from santal community.

Keywords- Santal, Environment, Landscape, Religion, Nature, lap, Baha, Saharai, Karam, Era Sim.

Introduction: From the very beginning of human civilization primitive human beings lived in natural landscape and nature by nature. The tribal community in India is developed by depending upon the nature. Their daily life is in harmony with nature. As they sustain their livelihood by using natural equipments within their habited. There are multiplan relationships with nature.

Now in present days, not only nature but ecological imbalance is also the main problem in the world. For increasing the environmental awareness among the people different projects, environmental awareness seminar, etc are applied. As there is decreasing the natural wealth various natural hazard and anxiety increased. Uncontrolled industrialization and excessive waste of natural wealth make the world more polluted and not suitable for living. And by standing at this point relevance of discussion about the santal community and their nature related festivals are very much meaning full

Santal community is one of the most primitive indigenous community of India. In West Bengal mainly they are found in Purulia, Bankura, Medinipur, Jhargram district and also some other states of India like Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Assam. In some country like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan they are also alive.

People from each community have their own cultural and traditional festivals have broadly distinguish one community from another and here santal community also have their own cultural festival which are deeply related with nature and give them own identity.

Importance of environment in human life:

The term "Environment" is derived from the French word 'environ' which means "surrounding". So the

environment means everythings which is surrounded us.

In human life environment have play an important role for survival. So peoples are very much indebted to the environment. The various components of environment play an important role in our daily life. So the whole human society has responsibility and duty to protect the nature mother. In this way of thinking santal community is far ahead of other community. They organised various programmes to remind these responsibility and duty such as –

Baha:

In santali the word 'Baha' means 'Flower'. They celebrate this festival in spring time, the Bengali month of 'Falgun' which is the first month of santal calendar. As the time of spring nature is decorated by various flowers. So, they celebrate this festival as flower festival and this is also their religious festival. In this time some common trees like Sal, Mohuwa, Palash, Neem, Mango etc-are flowering and bear new leaves and fruits. According to their thinking, this time is the reproductive period of this tree and they thought that trees should not be disturbed by cutting and plucking their branches, leaves, fruits. So, the santal do not drink mohuwa extract (Hadia) or never eat the fruit or flowers. Women do not use the flowers to tied their hair and for decoration till the Baha is not celebrated.

In santal community this festival is celebrated for two days. On this festival 'Naike' (village priest) is the main celebrant. They celebrate this festival on 'Jaher Than'. First day in the morning they cleaned the place of 'Jaher Than' with cow dung. Naike with the youth of the villagers goes to the jangle and brought the stalks of sal tree. By using this stalks they build various small cottage by different

names of their village Gods and decorate the cottage by various designing 'Alpana'.

Second day in the morning the Naik sends the young men of the village to the forest far celebrating. Sal flowers which they tribute in 'Baha' festival. This festival is also known as harvesting festival. As the sal leaves, mohuwa flowers etc are started harvesting. At time of evening all villages return to the 'Jaher Than' and inaugurate the festival by singing and dancing. The Naik distributes sal flowers to the every family. Women beautify themselves by tying flowers in their hair and men put the glowers behind their ears.

Sarhae:

One of the most important and biggest festivals of santal community is 'Sarhae'. The term 'Sarhae' is derived from the word 'Sarhao' which means 'Thanksgiving'. Through this festival they thank giving to the god for having necessary foods, wealth, animals to keep them healthy and alive. It celebrates in various places at different time. In some places it is celebrated at the Bengali month of 'Kartik' and somewhere at 'Magh'. By celebrating this festival, they pray to god for developing their wealth, health, animals and offspring.

They celebrate this festival during 5 days. First day is known as 'Um'. This day on the morning all villagers clean their houses and taking bath for the preparation of festival. By the instruction of the 'Naik', the head of the village, the 'Godet' along with the children's collected rice, vegetables, wealth. Then from every house hold and gather together at the place known as 'Ghnor' or 'Ghnod'. After that Naik prays for protect themselves from any dangers to the God. After that the villagers putting an egg or some paddy stalk and gathering the all cows to make them pass away through that place. The cows which touch the egg or crush the paddy is consider as the holy cow. After that they are eating 'Khichuri' drinking 'Hadai' and singing and dancing.

The second day is known as 'Daka Maha'/'Sardi Maha'/'Saardi Maha'. The main ritual on this day is to invite the relatives specially married daughter or sister to come to her parental house. Meat cake, a delicious food, is prepared in every family. They clean all their agricultural tools as well as cattle on this day. They purify the house with cow dung. They prepare 'Hadia' and on the evening they singing and dancing together.

The third day is 'Khundao Maha' which is popularly known as 'Goru khunta'. This day is mainly dedicated to the domestic animals. From the morning they clean their animals with water and

applying oil to the whole body and beautify by flowers and paddy stalk- women gives them rice and soft grasses for eating. Mainly by this ritual they tested their cows or bullocks for harvesting on the field before winter.

The forth day is known as 'Jaley Maha' mainly on this day they make their relationship more strong. Villagers go from home to home by singing and dancing and collected 'Hadia'.

The last day that is known as 'Gaadoy Maha'/'Sakrat'. In the morning male members go to the forest for hunting. On the evening they all gather in the field near the village and Naik prays to the God. After eating, singing and dancing they return to their respective house.

Thus by celebrating this festival they remind the importance of domestic animals in agricultural field.

Marang Pata:

In santali the word 'Marang' means 'Big' and 'Pata' means festival. They celebrate this festival on the last day of Bengali month 'Chaitra' or the last day of spring. On that day all gather on 'Jaher Than' and there 'Naik' prays to God by sacrifice a hen. After the worship they make 'Khichuri' and meat. Then male member harvested to leaf of sal, asathha from the jungle. By using the leaf they made dish and plate for eating. Then they eat grain grist on this plate.

Before the celebration of 'Marang Pata' they do not harvest any leaf from any trees and not eating the neem leaf. As the time of spring all trees are bear sprout so by harvesting the leaves they protect the trees and consequently the environment.

Conclusion:

Santal spend their livelihood very close to the environment and to the lap of nature. They celebrate main festival. Among them, the main features of their festivals is that they follow the cycle of nature and agriculture to celebrate festival accordingly. Behind the every festivals their is an important message they gave to the community about environmental impact for our existence. By their various rituals they protect our nature and animals as at the time of Bengali month 'Asharh' to 'Bhadar' they do not harvested and eat fish. Originally this time is the reproductive period of fish and by these rituals they protect various indigenous fish and other fish.

They almost celebrate their all festivals on 'jaher Than'. 'jaher Than' is a small place in the lap of nature where they made small cottage with sal

trees. By this way they store many sal trees on 'jaher Than'.

They celebrate their every social function by using various leaves, flowers, branches of trees. Their every function is deeply related with nature. The way of their celebration of their festival there is no disturbance or harm to the environment. Whereas every rule and regulation of the festivals indirectly protect the environment and nature.

Overall we can say that by celebrating their festivals they show their regard and love to the nature and they remind the bestow of environment.

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