

## Impact and Assessment of Developmental Strategies on Tribal Society: A Case Study on Santal Tribes of Amkhoi Village of Illambazar Block, Birbhum District, Westbengal

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### Abstract

The Dictionary of Sociology defines Tribe as a “social group, usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organization.” According to D.N.Majumdar, “a tribe is a collection of families, bearing a common name, members to which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage profession or occupation and have developed a well assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligation.” Therefore, a tribe has been defined in various ways and the people coming from the tribal community listed in the constitution are called as Scheduled Tribes. India is a diversified land where number of tribes spread over different parts ranging from forest and plain areas to hills and inaccessible areas at different level of economic and socio-cultural development. Although, various schemes and projects by state and central government have been put forwarded for development of them in different times but the result is not same everywhere. The present paper tries to reveal some impact and assessment of developmental strategies on Santal Tribes of Amkhoi village of Illambazar block, Birbhum District.

**Introduction:** India has the second largest concentration of tribal population after that of African continent (Article: Rights of tribals in india with respect to access to justice, June 25, 2016). According to the 2001 census, population of the schedule tribes in the country was 8.43 crores. Comprising about 8.2% of the total population, approximately there is one tribe-man for every thirteen Indians. They occupy around 15% of the total geographical area of the country in difficult and inhospitable terrain in the hills and valleys. Among the total scheduled tribes in India, Santals are the single largest dominant tribe with a population of more than one crore. They call themselves ‘**Hor -Hopon**’ meaning child or children of human beings (Hembrom T. 1996). But in the government records they are mostly found as Santal.

Belonging to pre Aryan period, these tribes of India are found in regions of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, chattisgarh, West-Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya & Tripura. The district having significant Santal population are Santal Prganas, Giridi & Dhanbad in Bihar- Jharkhand; Bankura, Midnapur, Purulia, Jalpaiguri, Burdwan & Birbhum district in W.B. and Mayurbhanj, keonjhar and Balasor in Odisha etc. They are also concentrated in smaller number in Bangladesh & in Nepal.

Generally, the basic problems of the Santal tribes are the problems of low standard of living, hunger, starvation, illiteracy, disease, poor sanitation & housing facilities and so on are the common to their day to day life. They have also been subjected to exploitation for centuries together by the non-tribal such as money lenders, forest contractors, traders, land lords, officials & politicians.

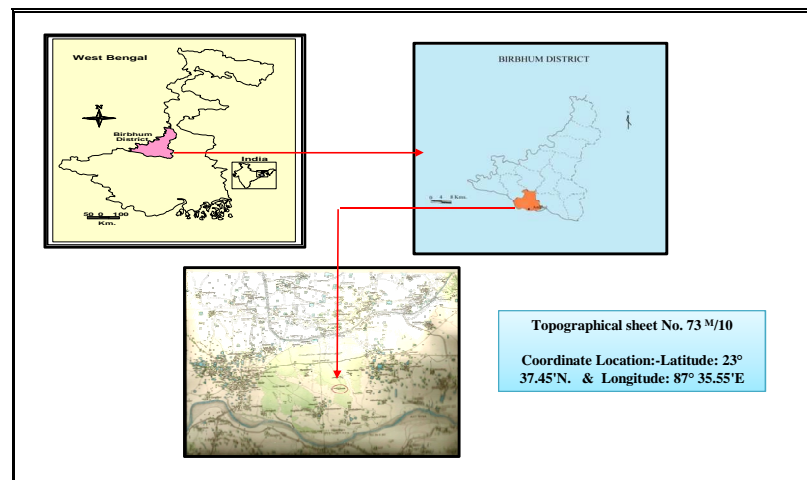
There has been no effective participation of the Santal tribes in decision making & development processes and administration of their own affairs. Generally the policies

& programmed have been formulated without consulting them. This is one of the important causes of discontentment among them. Keeping all these considerations in view, government of India, state government & some Non Governmental Organizations (N.G.O's) initiated some special schemes or strategies for their progress in different fields such as agricultural cooperation, communications, health, housing etc. but ultimately they are being blackmailed in the name of welfare.

The aforesaid problems of the Santal Tribes & inefficient disguised developmental strategies of government for them influenced me to introduce in front of all the problems of village members of the study area, what they think about the concept of development & developmental strategies; what's they need or need not and so on.

**About the Study Area:** Amkhoi is a small uni-ethnic village of Santal only, within the mouza of Chaupahari & Lakhipur. Previously they lived in Dumka district of Jharkhand. Then they came to that place and settled permanently after cleaning Sal forest. Recently they have collected original land tenure shift record from the forest department of the state government. The coordinate of  $23^{\circ} 37' 25''$  north latitude and  $87^{\circ} 35' 33''$  east longitude represents the location of Amkhoi village over the earth surface. The village is totally surrounded by Chaupahari protected Sal forest. The nearby place of the study area is Illambazar and Bolpur which is located about 8km. and 24 km. away.

### Location Map of Amkhoi Village



**Objectives:** The prime objectives of this case study are as follows:

- 1) To highlight & evaluate the present economic profile of the villagers.
- 2) To make a systematic study upon the socio-cultural status of the inhabitants.
- 3) To focus on what type of developmental strategies taken by the government and NGO's.
- 4) To evaluate the socio-cultural and economic change before and after Independence.

5) To find out up-and-coming problems of the villagers & corrective measures to overcome these.

**Materials & Methodology:** The whole work has been done with the help of three types of steps like Pre field, Field and Post field. In the pre field stage selection of study area, collection of topographical maps and books for literature review, collection of secondary data regarding Santal Tribes for making some conceptual framework, preparation of questionnaire etc. has been done properly. Field stage has been completed with the generation of primary data through household survey following random sampling survey method and taking necessary photographs etc. Lastly, in the post field stage collected data has been compiled and analyzed using standard cartographic techniques processed in MS Excel (such as bar, pie) and some statistical tools like dependency ratio, sex ratio etc. The calculating formula of dependency ratio is addition of no. of children (aged 0-14 years) and the older population (aged 65 and above), dividing by the working age population (aged 15-64 years), multiplying that by 100 whereas the sex ratio is defined as “the no. of females per 1000 males.”

### Result and Discussion:

**Economic Profile:** Actually, forests are closely associated with Santal tribe’s economy & culture. They depend on forests for foods, fuel, housing materials, herbal medicines, fodder for cattle and material for agricultural implements. Their culture is also influenced by forests. They worship many trees. But this traditional symbiotic relationship between Santal tribes & forest has been completely shattered due to exploitation in forestry operations. Consequently, a large number of Santal tribes are facing severe geo-economical problems. The village Amkhoi, due to lack of proper irrigation scheme, infertile soil etc. has fragile economic based. As a consequence, agricultural activities take once a year mainly & productivity was very low. On the other hand industrial sector is almost absent. Only a cottage industry like making dish by Sal leaves is found. The economic profile of the village can be explained through the study of occupational structure (Table & Fig. 1.1), distribution of cultivated land (Table & Fig. 1.2) etc. where percentage of daily labour & families of no cultivated land are significant.

Sl. No	Occupations	No. of engaged	Percentage
1	Farming	20	37.04
2	Business	01	1.85
3	Daily Labors	25	46.30
4	Animal -Husbandry	02	3.70
5	Self-Help-Group	05	9.26
6	Services	01	1.85

Table: 1.1 Occupational Structure  
Questionnaire Report

Source: From

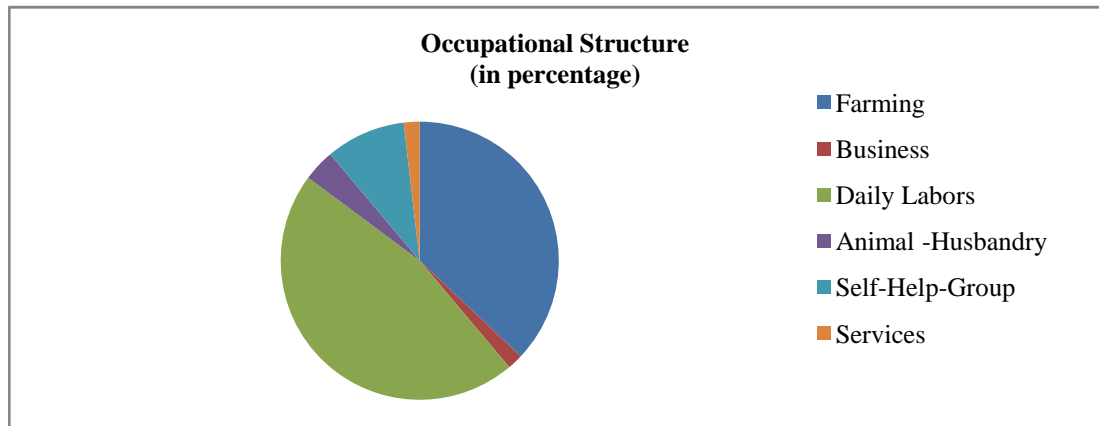


Fig.- 1.1 Occupational Structure.

### Distribution of Cultivated Land

Cultivated Land Owned by the Familie	No. of Families	Percentage
No Cultivated Land	9	39.13
Cultivated Land Less Than 1 Bigha	8	34.78
Cultivated Land 1-3 Bigha	4	17.39
Cultivated Land More Than 3 Bigha	2	8.70
Total No. of Family Interviewed	23	100

Table 1.2 Distribution of Cultivated Land Source: From Questionnaire Report

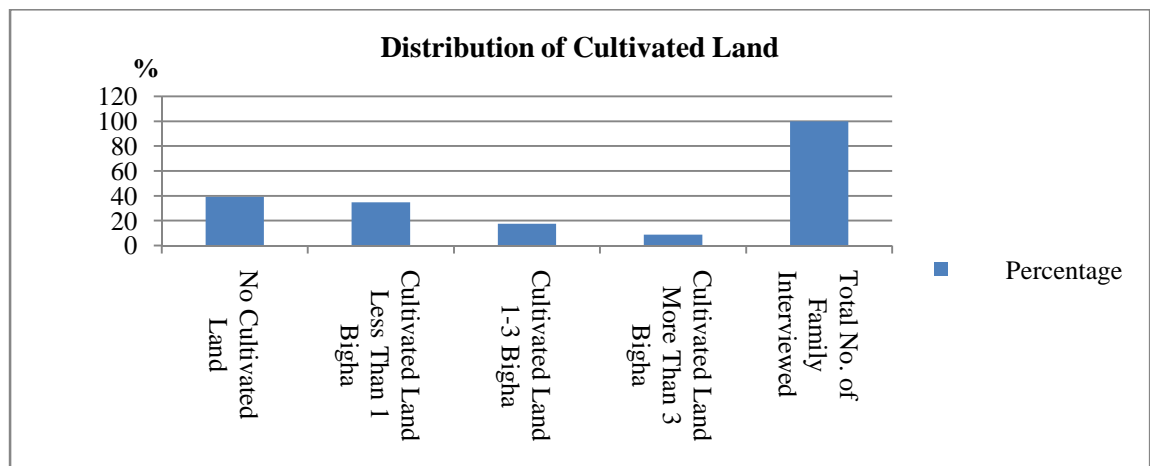


Fig.-1.2 Distribution of Cultivated Land

**Socio-cultural profile:** Here the empirical study of social morphology from different social status point of view has been done mainly with help of random sampling of 23 households. The results can be expressed by following ways through the questionnaire data manipulation & interpretation like literacy rate (44.82%), sex ratio (58:58), family dependency (53%), average family size (5.04) etc. “Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits (Wikipedia.org).” It is the key of nations because it arise human awareness, consciousness etc. Normally male are more literate than female in all over country. But here an interesting phenomenon is that female and male literate is 53.85% and

46.15% respectively (Table & Fig. 1.3). In the case of education level most of the people are reached upto primary education and the village has no one graduate (Table & Fig. 1.4).

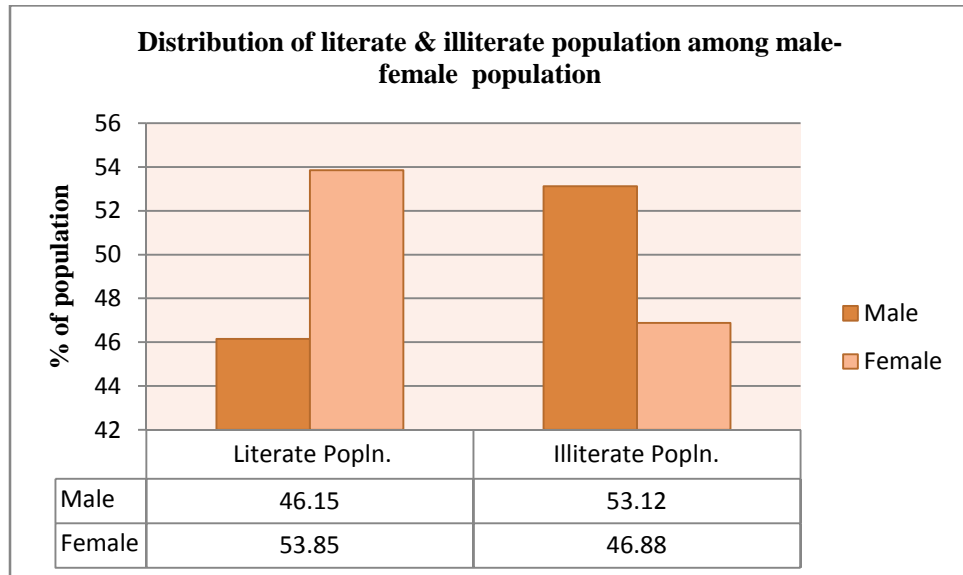


Table & Fig. 1.3 Distribution of Literate & Illiterate Population among Male-Female

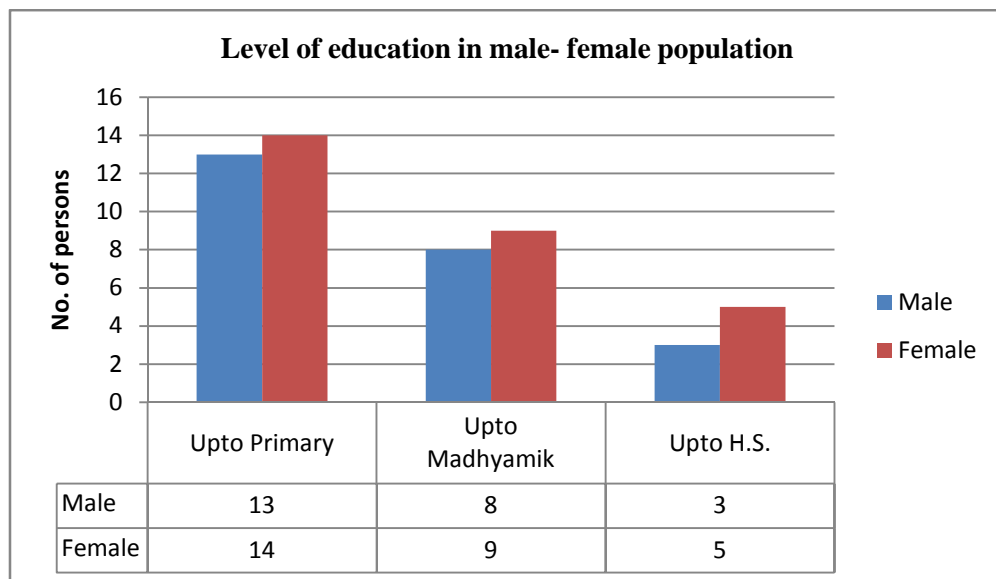


Table & Figure 1.4 Level of Education in Male Female Population  
Source: Questionnaire Report

**Economic & socio- cultural changes:** We know that Santal community is a united tribal groups and it is mainly found before Independence. But after Independence they are fragmented in nature or turned into different way. Therefore, so many economic & socio-cultural changes are taken place among their society. Say for example, in case of base of economy, they were mainly engaged in hunting, fishing, collection of forest product; but after Independence they are performed settled cultivation. Some socio-economic changes of them in pre and post Independence period are shown here in tabulation form (Table 1.5).

Criteria	Before Independence	After Independence
Base of economy	Hunting, fishing, collection of forest products	Settled cultivation
Religious faith	They believe in Environmentalism, Totemism (Their God & Goddess are Marang buru, Jaheraera & Majhi) and Sohrai, Baha, Karam, Magsim etc. are their principal festival.	Recently they are Idol worshiper and doing various type of main stream of festivals like Saraswati Puja, Shiv-raatri etc.
Religion	Sarna, Sari Dhorom	Turned into Christianity
Cultural equipment	Khol, null, jumko etc.	Miking system
House type	Mud walled thatched roofed houses	Mud walled tin or tile roofed houses
Language	Santali (Alchiki Script)	Bengali, Hindi, Odia etc.
Village politics	Social harmony	Groupism, Individualism, Political turmoil

Table 1.5 Economic &amp; socio-cultural Changes.

**Emerging problems:** Although central government & state government has been schemed different types of developmental strategies like Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP), reservation in service, scholarship & stipend etc. for the all round improvement of their life, but after finishing expedition in the field Amkhoi, some problems can be identified about the economic, social, cultural as well as physical aspects, those are - A) Among 23 families, only 7 families are recognized as Bellow Poverty Line (BPL) & 16 families are Above Poverty Line (APL). Although all families would gets BPL facilities. B) Total number of job card is 22, whereas Antoday card number is only 3. Four students & an aged person are getting student stipend & allowance respectively. But in the study area not a single person are getting widow pension. C) Only three or four families are taking benefit of electricity. The result of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act Scheme (or 100 days work) is nil. D) The villagers has got only one S.S.K school and for higher studies they have to go either another village areas or towns like Bolpur, Illambazar etc. E) The villagers facing some linguistic problems as their mother tongue is Santali and they have to read in Bengali in the schools. F) They have not any idea about the financial assistance from the state as well as central government for higher studies. G) The villagers have no primary health center, no visiting medical board for the vaccination of the child & mother. The lack of awareness about the environment leads to spread of diseases like fever, diarrhea, malaria etc. The villagers use some trees leaves, roots, buckle etc for get well soon. In case of emergency villagers have to run either Illambazar around 8 km or Bolpur around 24 km from the habitat. H) The most of the village members have no idea to use the bank facilities. As a consequence, most of them have no bank accounts and they are not concerned about it. Whatever they have, they keep in their houses. I) Some another problems are lack of irrigation sources, low productivity of crops, crisis of local market, shortage supply of drinking water as layer is so deep and water is ironic nature, useless road condition, culture of alcohol addiction frequently.

**Concluding remarks remedial measures:** India is a diversified developing country economically, socio-culturally & environmentally. So many tribal groups are living in

our loving India such as Kol, Bhil, Munda etc. Among them Santal is the largest dominant ethnic group in our country. But, balanced development is not achieved in every section of them. Though, after getting freedom from British rulers, different developmental strategies has been formulated through various planning period by Indian government for the economic & socio cultural upgradation of the Santal community. But it is hurtful to say that impact of developmental strategies is lopsided in nature. Because on the one hand we see rich people becoming richer & poor are poorer on the other hand due to modern invasion social & cultural traditions are degrading gradually. Therefore, in conclusion I want to opine that Santal Community, they have their own tradition believes, faith, culture on their own. But we, the modern people are trying to introduce different developmental strategies to make them modern. So for that what we are doing? We are introducing new beliefs, new culture, and new economy which are fitted for us. But we never think that how much effective it will be on them. So here the basic problems and there are some wide gap between modern civilized people like us and the Santal community especially the villagers of the study area. Because the villagers are poor, but they are persons of dignity & self respect. They are simple & honest and avers to any kind of imposition. They have little interest to get developmental benefits from the government. Say for example the result of N.R.E.G.S (100 days work) in this village is nil. Even if people of the study area are economically poor and facing some socio cultural changes owing to modern invasion, but from the perceptual study I saw that all of them are satisfied in their life. Here the concept of development is fulfilled from satisfactory point of view; not from poverty, unemployment, literacy point of view. So, it is high time to say that developmental strategies only will be fruitful if strategies are made *by the Santal community, of the Santal community & for the Santal community*. Recalling the famous words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India “the tribals may be the allowed to develop own their own genius and we should not impose anything on them.” Now, for the subtraction of villager’s main stream of problems (Except human satisfaction) and come into a stable position, there should be need some special attention on:-a) Provision of the irrigation facility through reclamation of ponds during Ravi and Boro cultivation for the better storing capacity. b) Arrangement of production requisites like farm implements, bio-fertilizer, HYV seeds etc at a reasonable price. c) Bank loan should provide at low interest for the subsistence farmer. d) Several types of agricultural camp at village level by the ‘Jeevika Sebak’ and ‘Krishi Prayukti Sahayak’ for awareness of the farmers to increase the production through proper scientific way. e) Arrangement of free of cost soil testing for proper crop cultivation in the village. f) Provision of marketing facilities for agricultural production, medical facilities, infrastructural facilities like transport & communication, sanitation, safe drinking water etc. g) Text book should be in mother tongue (Santali), employing their community based teachers, village education committee or managing committee should be increased by the Santal members. h) Introduction of Family Planning Programme to check population growth, dependency ratio. i) Stipulation of cultural center to restrict their transformation into Christianity.

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