



CARE FOR ENVIRONMENT IMBIBED BY SANTALS THROUGH CONVEYANCE OF INDIGENOUS GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE BY FOREFATHERS

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Abstract

History shows that ancient people loved the natural environment because it gave them food, shelter and comfort. Santali people have the indigenous knowledge which is conveyed by their ancestors. Those indigenous geographical knowledge, teaches them to love nature. Environment and its positive use is a key factor for sustainable development. The purpose of the present study was to know different indigenous geographical knowledge of Santals and its conveyance to the next generations, which create love for natural environment and their inhabitants. People were randomly selected from different Santali pockets of Birbhum district, West Bengal. Their opinion was taken through questionnaire and interview schedule. Self reporting technique and observational technique was used to gather information. Implementation of that indigenous geographical knowledge has immense positive effects on environment. The present study aims at exploring that indigenous geographical knowledge which is environment friendly and the process of acquiring those wisdom which make Santals more caring towards nature.

Key words: Indigenous geographical knowledge, Santals, care for Environment.

Introduction:

Indigenous Education specifically focuses on teaching indigenous knowledge, models, methods, and content within formal or non-formal educational systems. We can find different types of indigenous people all over the world. They have different languages, different cultures and different attire. They love to live in their own world. The knowledge of indigenous people helps us to combat different environmental problems when we are facing global warming. Environment and its positive use is a key factor for sustainable development.

A tribe is a group of people living in a primitive condition and still not popularly known to more modern culture. There are many tribes living all over India as well as various parts in the World. Out of them, Santal is an important tribe which contributes more than 50% of the Indian tribal population and can be found mainly in the states of Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Tripura and Orissa. The Santals constitutes more than half of the total ST population of the West Bengal (51.8 per cent).

Tribal people have the indigenous knowledge and experience traditionally oral myth they apply those in every sector. Sometimes it gives a good result. This title focuses mainly on the indigenous geographical knowledge of the Santal community related to nature. They do not have the formal geographical knowledge. But they can solve the problem with their primitive knowledge gained from their grandfathers. Investigation revealed that love for nature is imbibed by the Santal community through the indigenous education by their ancestors. Many of their acts towards environment decrease the environmental degradation.

Indigenous Knowledge is very much interesting indeed. In 2004 Tsunami occurred in the southern part of India, Java and Sumatra, Japan. After the devastation, Indian Government was very much worried about the Ongi and Jarwa tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Island. After a survey, they knew that they had the Indigenous Knowledge, that when water recedes, they had to climb to the hill top. Because of that knowledge they were safe. To see the sky the tribal people can forecast the weather. To see the soil, they can tell what type of soil that is, which type of plants can grow in this type of soil. They also have some Indigenous measures of pest control to the field. Tribal people used to apply much Indigenous Geographical Knowledge to combat agricultural, climatological problems which are less harmful for nature.

Objectives of the study:

1. To search the Indigenous Geographical Knowledge related to Environment of the Santal community.
2. To assess how Santal community acquire the Indigenous Geographical Knowledge and experience.
3. To find out the acceptance of Indigenous Geographical Knowledge & experience with the level of education of Santal people.
4. To analyze the result of Indigenous Geographical Education to create love for Environment.

Delimitations of the study:

- The study has been delimited only in the Birbhum District Santal community.
- The study has been delimited only the Indigenous Education of Santal people.

Methodology:

The investigator broadly stated questions about human experiences and studied through contact with people in their natural environment generate rich, descriptive data that helps to understand Santal's experiences and attitudes. Therefore Purposive Random sampling method was used to choose from taking key points during interviews, a voice recorder was used. The researcher, gather more information about indigenous knowledge and insight of what they might have failed to explain during interview by observing the people's activities, as well as observation of people at work. Information used in this paper is generally qualitative in nature based on field observation, household serve and informal discussion.

1. Population and Study Area:

The population of the present study is the Santal community of Birbhum District, West Bengal. The researcher has visited several Tribal (Santal) villages in the districts of Birbhum, West Bengal, India.

2. Sample:

Samples of 600 Santals were selected for the study in Birbhum District, West Bengal. Normally the study areas were conducted in three sub divisions in Birbhum district namely;

1. Rampurhat
2. Sadar-Suri
3. Bolpur

3. Tools:

Interview schedule has been developed by the investigator to find out the indigenous geographical knowledge related to Environment of the Santal people. Reliability and validity of the interview schedule was checked. Observation schedule was also made to notice their daily life and their culture.

4. Techniques:

Self-reporting technique and observational technique was used to gather the information. The subjects were selected through Purposive Random Sampling. Some information relating to indigenous Geographical knowledge was collected from the people who are very near to the indigenous people.

5. Data Collection:

The investigator visited different Santal villages of Birbhum District to know the ancient Geographical knowledge about nature, their acceptance to the new generation, and their effects among the society. Through interview schedule data will be collected. Through observation schedule different facts of lifestyles of Santals are noted.

Analysis according to objective 1 :

- **Indigenous Geographical Knowledge related to Climatic hazard and Natural calamity:** Santals have the Indigenous Geographical Knowledge. They can sense the hazard. Seeing the activities of birds, animals, they can feel that. Birds make nest in the lower zone, that indicate the year having stormy situation. This is their ancient knowledge. The younger one learns those from childhood days. The leeches mainly live in the damp area. Tribal see that leech come out from water before the earthquake. Leech can feel the tremor in the water. Tribal observe the behavior of leech and understand the cause behind the behavior. People cannot escape from any natural calamity. But precaution makes the devastation less. Santals are grateful to the creatures of nature for helping them to battle with any inconvenience of nature.
- **Indigenous Geographical Knowledge related to construction of huts:** The weather of Birbhum District is very much known factor to them. Depending upon that knowledge the Santals make their hut. The interior is very much cool. The mud house with hay on the top, defeat the hot weather. From Indigenous Education they learn that. They make house in a particular alignment, to get wind. That is much better from air conditioner which has a bad effect on environment. In Birbhum, the mud is full of stones and gravels. Villagers mix paddy stacks, with mud. They mix it very well. With local wood and 'Konchi' they frame the house. They also mix sticky molasses, with the mud to make the house termite free. Termite is very much seen in Birbhum because of the weather condition. After the house is made tribal coat the house with black tar. That works as a waterproof. So with natural components they make house. Santals colour the walls of the houses with natural colours. They find blue colour mixing blue with water and 'Kharimati', a type of white soil. Tribal use different soil to colour the house walls. They also draw pictures on the walls. The floor of the house is coated with cowdang and water.
- **Indigenous Geographical Knowledge about Agricultural practices:** Most of the Santals of Birbhum cultivate crops in ancient methods of farming. Santals use indigenous method of pest control. They give smoke of 'Tamak' leaves to the plant or splash water mix with bitter leaves. They also give cowdang ash to brinjal plant to get rid of pest attack. Research shows that give result without any harm. Their local wisdom teaches that. Pesticides have an adverse effect to the living being.
- **Primitive techniques to prevent poisonous insects:** According to ancient knowledge, oil extracted from 'Neem' fruit and smoke of neem leaves are good for removing mosquito and insects. Modern innovation of mosquito liquid and coil is not good for health, investigation reveals. These innovations are effective against insects and mosquito but it throws bad, long term effect upon living being.
 - **Use of environment friendly material:** Mainly women are weaved mat with Palm and Date leaves. They collect different kinds of seeds, leaves and make ornaments with that. Some of them make lucrative showpieces with those seeds. With the leaves of 'Sal' tree, plates, bowls are made which is very nature friendly. People use those plates, bowls in many functions. They know that they have to survive in nature; no one can live if natural environment is ruined.

Analysis according to objective 2:

In our society we can see reflection of family's upbringing upon a person. A person carries his/her family tradition in their behavior, speaking, dressing sense etc. The survey also leads that the Santal of Birbhum district learns many things practiced in daily life, from their ancestors. New generation used to mix with different cultures. So intermixing of different cultures is seen in the behavior of mainly the tribals who live near city.

The Santals of interior village follow the traditional method of agriculture. Different agricultural method is also discussed in TV, radio & newspaper. That also helps the farmers. New generation also get guidance from TV, radio to combat natural disasters. They also have the traditional knowledge, which help a lot. One of the villager of kanta Pahari village of Nalhati recalled the memory of learning the process to make mud house from her grandmother. Few of them admitted that they learn to make the design of mud house from their mother. But now they mix new ideas with that knowledge which strengthen their daily life.

Analysis according to objective 3 :

Previously Tribal people lived in groups in interior part of Birbhum district. They did not like to mix up with other peoples. Gradually they mix with other peoples. Primary schools for Santali community established. Primary education is given by their own language. Mixing up with other students make them friendly and more knowledgeable about others culture. A child born in a Santali family has the indigenous geographical knowledge from his\ her elders. After getting the education he\she have the formal geographical knowledge, which helps to understand a situation in better way. The survey points out that the new generations who take education gained the formal knowledge and give a new opinion which is good for them. They get an idea depending upon ancient knowledge as well as formal knowledge.

Analysis according to objective 4 :

The survey reveals that the Santal peoples of the Birbhum District are very much dependant on Indigenous Geographical Knowledge. From childhood they learn those knowledge from their elders. Many Santals who take education, have the general geographical knowledge, that enrich them. They understand that their ancestor's Indigenous Knowledge related to environment is more near to nature. Beliefs related to environment have a great value to them. Indigenous wisdom make the Santals of Birbhum District more caring for nature. They are less dependant to technology.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it can be said that there are different Indigenous Geographical Knowledge related to Environment of Santal Community of Birbhum District. Through Indigenous Education those wisdom spreads among others. Love, care for nature is transmitted through generations. Their caring action towards nature is noticeable. Now environmental pollution and degradation is a burning issue. We have welcomed modern technologies, ideas without thinking their adverse effect on environment. Which prove dangerous to our upcoming life. We prevented the flow of river, made dams. Flood occurs; river lost its river bed. We use the mobile phones, which is an important gadget now a day, that emit rays which is dangerous for human. Birds are affected by rays. Use of large number of vehicles increase the use of petroleum and its by products. People used to burn coals. In Other word, we lost the amount of non-renewable resources. So the idea of sustainable development came. Indigenous Geographical Knowledge of Santals protect environment and obey the idea of Sustainable Development. This knowledge is channelized through education to the new generation. This can lead a better world.

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