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## ATTITUDE OF SANTAL MOTHERS TOWARDS GENDER DISCRIMINATION

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### ABSTRACT:

*In India tribal communities are marginalized and continue to suffer discrimination. Tribal mothers face more discrimination still there fighting to achieve their equal right and gender justice. The attitude of gender issue is varying person to person and area to area. Still date a misbelieve exists that tribal (Santal) mother have usually enjoyed a higher social status then other mother from the general cast. This study is design to find out the gender discrimination among santal mothers. The selective area is Debra block under Medinipur West district. The investigators selected 50 santal mothers by using purposive sampling techniques. The samples were in the age group 20-40 and educationally 4 are illiterate,21 have primary education,8 have upper primary education,,5 have secondary, 7 have higher secondary and 5 are graduate. 41 sample are house wife and involved in daily labour, 9 are service holder, all of them are living in rural areas. For data collection the investigator used a questionnaire having seventeen items, developed by the present investigators. Results shows that the attitude of santal mothers towards their daughter is positive and gender discrimination though normal in the male dominated patriarchal societies. Its negative impact towards daughters and sexual subjective towards sons were not found. Most of the mother in the santal community remains poor and they need the special support from government and the non government organization.*

**Keywords:** Santal women, Gender discrimination.

## INTRODUCTION:

India is a multiethnic country and most of the communities are patriarchal that is male dominated. In the male dominated society women did not get equal social status like that of their male counterparts. Their condition may differ from place to place and society to society.

The tribal people of India are termed as scheduled tribes by the Indian constitution in West Bengal 40 different types of tribal's are living. Some of them are ASUR, MUNDA, ORAON, MECH, RAVE, GARO, KORA, TOTO, LODHA, SANTAL etc. All these tribal people are socially excluded from the main stream of the society. Tribals are excluded communities in India. Due to varied type of eco system, varied type of tribal population are living in India, According to 2011 census 10.43 crore tribal people are living in India that represent 8.3 % of total population. Among them 89.97 % are living in rural areas and 10.03% in urban areas. The sex ratio of tribals in India was 990 female per thousand males in India.

Gender discrimination is common in a patriarchal system and more patriarchal among marginalized women. Gender discrimination has meant that women are worst affected among the tribal community and also they face problems and challenges in getting standard socio-economic condition and health status. Due to marginalization poverty and lack of literacy tribal girls are worst affected among the tribal community and are vulnerable to abuse and unequal access to education. Early marriage, cultural taboos resistance against co-education classes, living outside the family etc are some of the major barriers which hinder women in Santal community.

Santal women have to face struggles and challenges in the community. Though very few Santal women face sexual exploitation by contractors, landlords, bureaucratic and those who hold power in mainstream society (Nishi k dixit, 2006).

According to Rao (1990) Santal tribal's treat their sons and daughters equally and rejoice at the birth of a female child. Santal girls never face any problem of upbringing and there is no dowry system from Santal girls during their marriage.

Among the tribals literacy rate though low but among the girls literacy rate is high because among the boys higher literacy rate than the girls. Though Santal girls face number of constraints and barriers to access and benefit from education. Poverty and hunger are the major cause of low literacy among the girls. Due to anganwari, mid-day-mil, kanyashree prokholpo and other facilities in West Bengal, more and more of Santal girls are educated and even a good number of them are present in higher education system.

## OBJECTIVES:

1. To study attitude of Santal women towards gender discrimination in their families.
2. To find out the child sex ratio of Santal families.
3. To find out the socio-economic background of Santal women.

**MATERIAL AND METHOD:**

Debra block is a block in the Kharagpur subdivision of the Paschim Medinipur district in the state of West Bengal. Debra Block has **total population of 288,619** as per the Census 2011. Out of which 145,559 are males while 143,060 are females. In 2011 there were total 66,456 families residing in Debra Block. The **Average Sex Ratio of Debra Block is 983**.

As per Census 2011 out of total population, 4.8% people lives in urban areas while 95.2% lives in the rural areas. The average literacy rate in urban areas is 87.4% while that in the rural areas is 81.8%. Also the Sex Ratio of Urban areas in Debra Block is 1,047 while that of rural areas is 980.

The population of Children of age 0-6 years in Debra Block is 31859 which is 11% of the total population. There are 16034 male children and 15825 female children between the age of 0-6 years. Thus as per the Census 2011 the **Child Sex Ratio of Debra Block is 987** which is greater than Average Sex Ratio ( 983 ) of Debra Block.

**The total literacy rate of Debra Block is 82.03%**. The male literacy rate is 79% and the female literacy rate is 66.84% in Debra Block.

Schedule Caste (SC) constitutes 13% while Schedule Tribe (ST) is 20.5% of total population in Debra Block. Debra Block has total population of schedule tribe of 59122 that consists of 29422 males and 29700 females. The present descriptive, epidemiological study with a cross sectional design was conducted in the tribal predominant villages ( chakkumar, simana and chandia) of Kharagpur subdivision of Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal. All the tribal mothers of

Reproductive age group, 15-45 years were considered as study subjects. Complete enumeration was done. The inclusion criterion was selected before preparation of the proforma. Only the mothers with one living children were chosen as participants. The respondents were informed about the nature, objectives and rationality of the study and afterwards the informed consent was obtained before data collection. All these activities were started after the study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee. After obtaining ethical clearance, the proforma was pre tested on ten mothers complying with inclusion criteria. After minor modification, final proforma was obtained. This tribal community people were mainly Santals residing in this locality for more than last 100 years. The people were well conversant in Bengali but their mother tongue was Alchiki. An Outpatient department was running weekly in the local club for providing health service to the people of this community as well as to neighborhood. Being a resident of the mentioned community I collected all the data and Complete enumeration of the household was done during the time of survey. Data was collected for a period of one month, October in this year spending 2 hrs in morning. Weekends were utilized for the purpose. Effort was made for finding the absentees during daytime by visiting again in afternoon on Sunday. The final number of respondents was 50. All the information was obtained by direct interview method. The process of analysis and report writing took fifteen days.

**Tool:**

The investigators studied in-depth about the culture and traditions of santal women. They also studied the philosophy of gender discrimination. On the basis of theoretical knowledge, the investigators develop a questionnaire having 23 items. They then sent the type questionnaire to three professors, who have expertization in questionnaire construction for their critical support. After getting the questionnaires from the expert they rejected those questions which the expert answered as low level item. Finally 17 item questionnaire were again sent to the same three experts for their criticism after 21 days. The responses finally accepted as the 17 items questionnaires.

**Discussion:**

Inspite of higher level of education the common peoples still posses are discrimination against the gender. This view is well established according to the news reported in the newspaper and other electric Medias. When there is a girl child in the family a good number of families cannot accept their girl child. But in the tribal families and more particularly in the santal families gender discrimination is almost negligible as they either doesn't bother about the gender of their first child or they never bother about gender of their babies, i.e. either girls or either boys. It may be because in the santal families both boys and girls equally support their family members by physical labors. On the other hand like the higher cast people dowry system is absent in the santal communities only in the illiterate santal families the bride have to pay dowry to the wife's family like 2 cows, 1 goat, cloths, country liquor and rupees 1.25 only. The total cost of marriage is bear by the bride's family. Therefore, perhaps the santal families have no negative views about their girls' child.

From this small study it is clear that there is no gender discrimination among santal families. The same is applicable for the Koradh families also. Even the santal mothers prefer to give birth of girls child which is different from the higher cast. At present santal families are also interested to provide education to both their sons and daughters. To drop out rate of santal boys are more than the santal girls. It means that santal girls are more advanced than the boys and therefore gender discrimination is less.

**Reference:**

Dixit, N.K. (2006). Tribals in India. Vista International, New Delhi.

	ITEM	ANALYSIS		
1	What gender would you prefer to be your first born?	DAUGHTER	SON	
		30	20	
2	If the first born is a boy what benefit would you get?	TAKE CARE OF THEM	KEEP THEIR LINEAGE	
		28	22	
3	If the first born is a girl what benefit would you get?	GO TO THEIR INLAWS	MOTHERS HELPING BHAND	
		37	13	
4	If the first born is a boy who would you prefer as your second born?	DAUGHTER	SON	
		50	0	
5	Did you ever try to determine the sex of your unborn child during pregnancy?	YES	NO	
		0	50	
6	Will you try to determine the sex of your unborn child?	YES	NO	
		0	50	
7	.Have you ever aborted?	YES	NO	
		12	38	
8	If the children of yours a consecutively girls who would you want as your next born?	BOY		
		13	37	
9	If the children of yours a consecutively girls who would you want as your next born?	YES	NO	
		29	21	
10	How much would you want to educate your daughters?	ACCORDING TO THEIR WISH	ACCORDING TO PARENTS' AFFORDABILITY	UPTO THEIR MARRIAGE
		26	15	9

11	.How much would you want to educated your Son's?	ACCORDING TO THEIR WISH		UPTO THEIR SETTLEMENT
		34		16
12	.Do you know that sex determination of foetus is illegal and a criminal offence?	YES		NO
		23		27
13	.If you are given the full liberty to give birth then how many children would you want and of what gender?		SAME GENDER	ONE SON AND ONE DAUGHTER
		0		50

14	What measures would take to prevent malnutrition in you and your unborn child during pregnancy?	VEGITABLE, OYSTER, VITAMIN, AND MEDICIEN	
		50	
15	.How would you arrange sustenance to the malnourished children?	VITAMIN, DOCTOR, HEALTHY DIET	
		50	
16	.What type of treatment would you arrange for boys and girls respectively if they have the same disease?	SAME TYPE OF TREATEMENT	
		50	
17	.In your opinion what are the main reasons behind the death of girls?	CARELESNESS	UNKNOWN DIEASES
		12	38

	VARIABLES		TOTAL NO
1.	CHILD'S GENDER	SON	46
		DAUGHTER	46
2.	MOTHER'S OCCUPATION	HOUSEWIFE	0
		DAILY LABOUR	40
		SERVICE	8
		BUSINESS	2
3.	MOTHER'S EDUCATION	ILLITERATE	4
		PRIMARY	19
		UPPER PRIMARY	8
		SECONDARY	6
		HIGHER SECONDARY	10
		GRADUATE	3
4.	MOTHER'S INCOME	2-5 THOUSAND	34
		6-10 THOUSAND	7
		11 AND ABOVE	8
5.	MOTHER'S ABORTION	MISCARRIAGE	0
		CONSENSUAL ABORTION	12
		NEVER ABORTED	38
6.	TYPE OF CHILD	ONLY DAUGHTER	16
		ONLY SON	8
		DAUGHTER-SON	14
		SON DAUGHTER	12
7.	MOTHER'S AGE OF MARRIAGE	14-17 YEARS	32
		18 YEARS AND ABOVE	18
8.	NO OF CHILDREN	1-2	46
		ABOVE 2	4