

The Santhal: Socio-Economic Miserable Condition and Quality of Life (An Overview of Bantali Rakhasahi Village, Mayurbhanj District, Odisha)

Rajeswar Maharana¹, Smrooti Prajna Patel²

¹Ph.D., Research Scholar, Department of Anthropology, Central University of Odisha, Koraput.

²Ph.D., Research Scholar, Department of Anthropology, Sambalpur University, Jyoti Vihar, Burla, Odisha.

Abstract

Socio-economic condition signifies an economic and social combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others; based on income, education and occupation. The tribal population is identified as the aboriginal inhabitants of our country. The Santhal are the third largest tribal communities of India after the Gond and the Bhill with a population over 4.26 million. They are largely distributed in the district of Balasore, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Sundergarh of the state of Odisha. Over fifty percent of the tribal population of the Mayurbhanj district is constituted by the Santhal. The present study makes an attempt to focus on the socio-economic condition of Santhal people of Bantali Rakhasahi village of Mayurbhanj district of Odisha and is an attempt to find out the factors those affect their Socio-Economic conditions. Data have been collected by using different qualitative methods like participant observation, group discussions, interview Scheduled. Sample subjects were drawn randomly from 131 Santhal households of the village. Olchiki is their mother tongue. Art, music and dance are highly prized in their culture. Their settled life has made them agricultural community as agriculture is their primary occupation. Their life is intimately connected with the forest and their economy. The community people live more or less in isolation with a very simple lifestyle. They face many problems relating to their day to day life as they are not getting healthy housing facility, proper sanitation facility, proper nutrition, safe drinking water, and other household amenities and so on. For improving their socio-economic conditions some of the basic services should adequately be provided. They need opportunities to develop their socio-economic status. There is a need to put more attention on educational aspects of scheduled tribes, where this only can motivate them for future life. The planners and policymakers have to evolve suitable strategies and formulate relevant policies to enhance tribal development.

Keywords: The Santhal, Social life, Educational level, Health status, Socio-economic condition.

Introduction:

In the World context after Asia, India is being the second largest tribal-dominated country. According to the Anthropological point of view, India is one of the most fascinating nation in the world. As many as 427 tribal communities are residing in India, of whom 75 are declared as particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs), who are spread across the country. Earlier they were known as primitive tribal groups (PTGs) after 2006 Govt. of India redesignated them as PVTGs for the purpose of giving special attention for their allround development (*Census, 2011*)^[3]. Generally, the term "tribe" has originated around the time of Greek and the early formation of the Roman Empire. The Latin term, "tribus" has since been transformed to identify a group of persons forming a community and claiming descent from a common ancestor (*Fried, 1975*)^[6]. In India, the tribal communities are mainly concentrated in Central India region and North-East India region. Originally a tribe was simply a territorially defined social group. On the basis of numerical strength Bhill, Gond and Santhal are the major tribes of India, while Onge, Andamanese, Chenchu, and Mankirdia are the minor tribes of India. The Santhals are the 3rd largest tribal communities of India after the Gond and the Bhils respectively, with a population over 4.26 million. Due to the characteristic behaviour; like simplicity in nature, living in remote and dense forest with less easily accessible areas and also

practicing nomadic habits, the autochthones are referred as *Adivasi*, *Adimjati*, *Vanavasi*, *Girijana*.

According to 2011 census, Odisha is the largest tribal populous state in the country. There are 21, 63,110 households are meant for the tribal groups in the state. Total tribal population in the state is 95, 90,756 of which Males and Females are 47, 27,732 and 48, 63,024 respectively. The decadal growth rate of the tribal population during 2001-2011 is 17.7% which is higher than the states decadal growth rate i.e. 14%. Odisha is the tribal dominated State where 62 tribes with 22.21% of the total population are habituating. Among them, 13 are considered as the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Due to lack of developmental facilities, lack of adequate primary health facilities, common socio-economic and demographic factors such as poverty, illiteracy, etc. the tribal societies in India are considered as the weakest section of the population. (*Basu, 1994; Thakur et al., 1991*)^{[1],[18]}.

Mayurbhanj district is one of the most tribal populous districts in the state. The tribal constitute about 56.6 percent of the total population of the district, though the population of Mayurbhanj is only 6 percent of the State's total population. The Santhal are the 3rd largest tribal communities of the state after the Kondh and the Gonds (*Census, 2001*)^[2]. They are residing in the state of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Tripura and other few parts of the country and have been living a simple life based on the natural environment and have developed cultural patterns congenial to their physical and social environment (*Mareeswaran et al., 2017*)^[10]. In Odisha, the Santhals are largely distributed in the district of Balasore, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Sundergarh. Out of 26 Blocks of the Mayurbhanj district, the Santhal tribes are mainly residing in Bisoi, Bijatola, Baripada, Bahalda, Joshipur, Khunta, Rairangpur, Suliapada and Udala blocks.

Objectives:

- To understand the origin, demographic structure and settlement patterns of the Santhal of Bantali Rakhasahi.
- To study their quality of living with regard to their access to healthy housing, sanitation, drinking water and other essential household amenities.
- To assess the education and health status of the Santhal living in the studied village.
- To trace the social and economic background with regard to access to agricultural land, occupation and other livelihood activities.
- To identify the factors those affect their Socio-Economic status.
- To suggest suitable measures to improve their conditions and eradicate the problems relating to the Socio-Economic condition.

Area and People

The village Bantali Rakhasahi is located in the Bijatola Community Development Block of Bamanghati sub-division in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha was selected for the present purposes of the study. And it is predominantly inhabited by the Santhal tribe. The erstwhile traditional hunter-gatherer Santhal have transformed into settled cultivator and wage labourer at present. Though the Bantali Rakhasahi is a multiethnic village, the Santhals are predominating i.e. 687 persons (M: 373, F: 314) as compared to the other communities in the

area. They call themselves *Hapan*, meaning child or children of human beings. It is only in the mouth of others they are regionally called Santhal or Santal. But they are locally known as *Majhi*. Their traditional village council consists of the Headman (*Majhi Haalam*), the Assistant Headman (*Jog-Majhi*), the Priest (*Naike*), and the Messenger (*Godett*). It also includes one adult male member from each household. They are mostly followers of the *Sarna religion*, a belief system following *Singbonga*, or the Sun God. *Thakur Jiu* is their God and *Marang Buru* is their guiding spirit. In addition to these, they have clan and family deities or spirits called *Bonga*. The dead ancestors are also considered to be the realm of *Bonga*. These spirits operate at the village, household, ancestor and sub-clan level. They have 12 clans with a caste system based on descent. Normally the villages of the Santhal tribes are located mostly in forest areas where they hunt, fish or clear the land for agricultural purposes. The characteristic feature of the Santhal village is a sacred grove “Jaher” on the edge of the settlement where many spirits live and where a series of annual festivals take place.

Methodology

The present study is based on exploratory research design. The study is confined to the Santhal tribe of Bijatola Block of Mayurbhanj District. For this study, anthropological techniques and methods such as participant observation, group discussions, interview Scheduled and informal conversations were taken place. The “Holistic Approach” was used to understand the livelihood of Santhal people in detail.

The research protocol includes different types of data covering socio-cultural and demographical traits. During the time of collection of information, basic data pertaining to ethnography and general aspects of the people and area were gathered. In short, for quantitative data, fully structured questionnaire was used and for qualitative data, in-depth interviews and observation were carried out. However, the secondary data have collected from various books, journals and Govt. records.

The sample subjects were drawn randomly from 131 households from different four small hamlets, located at Bantali Rakhasahi. Out of which 43 households located at Bantalitolla, 31 in Bagmatolla, 47 in Marangtolla and 10 are in Dollantolla (*Building sahi*) respectively.

Result and Discussion

A: Demographic view

Racially the Santhals are an Austro-Asiatic tribe with dark brown to black coloured skin, grey to brown coloured hair, medium to flat nasal form and medium height. They are very conscious about their identity and culture. They developed their own script *Olchiki* and have been continuing language movement in Eastern India. Although they can speak Santhali dialect along with Ho (*Larka*), Odia and Hindi.

Table-1: Total Ethnic Distribution of the Research Area

Sl. No.	Ethnic Compositions	Family		Male	Female	Total	
		No.	%	No.	No.	No.	%
1	Santhal (Tribe)	131	74.85	373	314	687	75.99

2	Kamila (Gold Smith)	24	13.71	54	64	118	13.05
3	Komar (Black Smith)	09	5.14	19	22	41	4.53
4	Munda (Tribe)	05	2.85	11	14	25	2.76
5	Kolha (Tribe)	03	1.71	08	07	15	1.65
6	Ghasi (S.C)	02	1.14	08	05	13	1.43
7	Gouda (Milk Man)	01	0.57	02	03	05	0.55
Total		175	99.97	475	429	904	99.96

The universe comprises of 175 households of the village Bantali Rakhasahi in Bijatola block, where the tribals are residing. *Table-I* depicts the total ethnic distribution of the research area. The total population of the studied area is 904 consisting of 475 (52.54%) male and 429 (47.45%) female. The most dominating tribe among them is Santhal which is our main concentration here. The Santhal occupy 131 households which is 74.85% of the total number of households of the village having 687 (75.99%) members out of which 373 (54.29%) male and 314 (45.70 %) female members reside followed by Kamila (*Goldsmith*)- 118 (13.05%) , Komar (*Blacksmith*)- 41 (4.53%), Munda – 25 (2.76%), Kolha- 15 (1.65%) and Ghasi- 13 (1.43%). Whereas only (0.55%) were consisted of Gouda (*Milk Man*). The sex ratio of the total universe is 903 (*lower than the national Sex Ratio i.e. 940 as per the 2011 census*) where as it is 841 among the Santhal.

Distribution of Santhal Tribe:

The composition of population according to age and sex is formally known as age-sex structure which is one of the most commonly method for analysing age composition and varies from place to place depending upon the state of demographic transition (*Ramya, 2014*)^[13]. Age-sex structure is one of the key parameters by which socioeconomic status of villagers can be measure (*Chandana, 1996*)^[4]. The following table (*Table-2*) is highlighting the distribution of subjects according to age group and sex. Out of the total population of Santhal, male was found to be **373** numbers. Out of which 10.99% of male respondents are in the age group of 0-9 years, 9.91% are in the age group of 10-19 years, 14.74% are between 20-29 years, maximum 23.86% of the male subjects are found in the age group of 40-49 years followed by 23.05% of 30-39 years of age group and 17.42% of the respondents are above 50 years of age. While in case of female this is found to be **314** in total; out of which 11.14% of female respondents are in the age group of 10-19 years, maximum 28.34% of the female subjects are found in the age group of 20-29 years and 7.32% are between 0-9 years at a minimum, 22.92% are between 30-39 years, 17.51% are presenting the age group 40-49 years and 12.73% are above 50 years of age.

Table-2: Age group and Gender wise classification of Santhal Tribe.

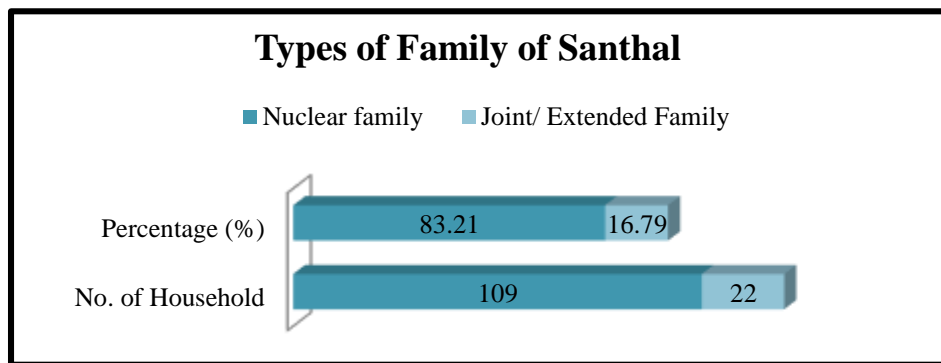
Sl. No.	Age group (Year)	Male		Female		Total	
		No.	% (out of total Male Pop ⁿ)	No.	% (out of total Female Pop ⁿ)	No.	%
1	0-9	41	10.99	23	7.32	64	9.32
2	10-19	37	9.91	35	11.14	72	10.49
3	20-29	55	14.74	89	28.34	144	20.96
4	30-39	86	23.05	72	22.92	158	22.99

5	40-49	89	23.86	55	17.51	144	20.96
6	50+	65	17.42	40	12.73	105	15.28
	Total	373	99.97	314	99.96	687	100

B: Social Life

Family:

For an Anthropologist, Family is most familiar i.e. known as the basic social unit. It defined as an association of husband and wife and their children. The family is attributed with many important role and function like- economic, socio-cultural, psychological religious and many more in the society. Generally, Santhal families are nuclear type consisting of father, mother and their unmarried children. Joint families are also not uncommon which consist of father, mother, son, daughter-in-law and their unmarried children. Father is the supreme head of the family and the decision taken by him is final. The authority of residence and inheritance are patriarchal. Out of the 131 households among the Santhal 109 (83.21%) are Nuclear families and 22 (16.79%) are found to be Joint/ Extended families (*Graph-1*).



Graph-1: Types of Family among the Santhal

Housing Pattern:

Man has dual relationship with his environment. He is a creator, originator and designs the whole cultural complex. Santhal called their houses as *Olla*. The housing condition and the place of residence is an indicator of the quality of life as it is a core component of a human life. In *Bantali Rakhashai* village, most of the houses of Santhal are constructed by bamboo, with mud walls and covered with straw roof. There are few houses got found in modern types like bricked wall with either concrete roof or asbestos sheet that mainly depends upon the economic condition of the family as the economic condition of the villagers controls the housing condition in the village.

Table-3: Distribution of Household as per pattern of Houses (*Olla*)

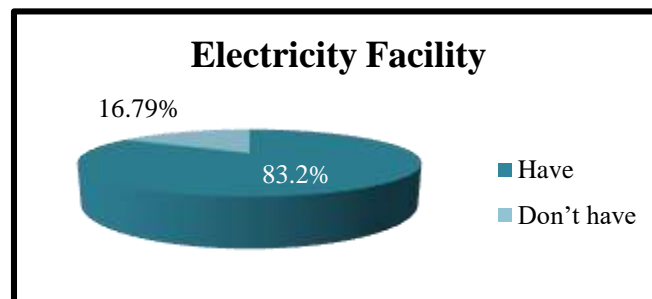
Roof	No.	%	Wall	No.	%	Floor	No.	%
Thatched with Straw	77	58.77	Muddy	54	41.22	Muddy	58	44.27
			Cemented/ Bricked	23	17.55	Cemented	19	14.50
Tile Plate			Muddy	24	18.32	Muddy	27	20.62

(khaapara)	31	23.67	Cemented/ Bricked	07	5.35	Cemented	04	3.05
Asbestos Sheet	23	17.56	Muddy	00	00	Muddy	18	13.75
			Cemented/ Bricked	23	17.56	Cemented	05	3.81
Total	131	100		131	100		131	100

Outside of every house a shed is made on the verandah just adjacent to the outer wall. Some of the houses of Santhal have a courtyard; in every Olla there is a *Tulsi Choura*, a brick/ mud made structure where a *Tulsi* plant grows. Every morning the Santhal woman watered the plant after taking bath and in evening put a light there with incense stick. **Table-3** shows the distribution of respondents according to their types of houses (*Olla*). Majority of the houses (58.77%) were built up by thatched with straw (*Bussu Olla*), whereas 23.67% and 17.56% houses were built by Tile Plate (*khaapara*) and Asbestos Sheet respectively. The walls of the houses were constructed by mud or cement/bricks having muddy or cemented floor.

Electricity Facility:

In the contemporary era electricity is the most essential feature of almost every human society. In the village, of the total households of the Santhal, 109 (83.20%) households have electricity connection whereas only 22 (16.79%) households don't have electricity connection as they are located in the remotest periphery of the village (*pie-chart-1*).



Pie Chart-1: Availability of Electricity facility in the studied village

Marital Status:

Marriage is a social institution, which admits man and woman to a family life. It is socially approved sexual and economic union between a man and woman. Marriage provides a child with socially recognized father and socially recognized mother. In Santhal society marriage between same clan is prohibited. Those that marry within their own clan are seen as incestuous and driven out of the tribe. Marriage is a bio-psychic-cum-socio-religious institution. Family as the complex of social norms that define and control the relations of a mated pair to each other, their kinsmen, their offspring, and society at large (Hoebel). Marital status is an essential feature in the study of the condition of social structure of any given society. In the study village among the Santhal marital status is divided into four divisions i.e. married, unmarried, widow/widower and divorcee. Among them majority of the respondents is married i.e. 63.75%, while unmarried respondents were found to be 23.72%. The percentage of widow/ widower and divorce are 7.71% and 4.80% respectively (*Table-4*).

Table-4: Distribution of Subject According to the Marital Status.

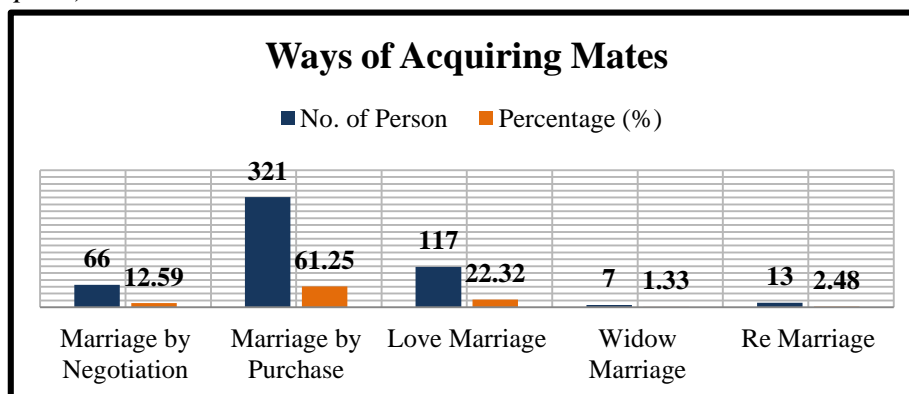
Marital Status	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	% (out of the total Pop ⁿ)	No.	% (out of the total Pop ⁿ)	No.	%
Married	219	31.87	219	31.87	438	63.75
Unmarried	120	17.46	43	6.25	163	23.72
Widow/widower	18	2.62	35	5.09	53	7.71
Divorcee	16	2.32	17	2.47	33	4.80
Total	373	54.29	314	45.70	687	100

Types of Marriage:

The Santhal have different types of marriage. Their marriages are exogamous. They called marriage as '*Bapla*'. Mainly two forms of marriages were found among the Santhal communities in the studied area. These are Monogamy and Polygamy (Polygyny). Monogamy is the leading form of marriage under which one man marries one woman at a time whereas, marriage of a person to more than one person is called as Polygamy. Polygyny is one of the forms of Polygamy where one man has two or more wives at a time. In the studied area around 95.41% families were found to be practised Monogamy while in case of Polygamy (only Polygyny) it was only 4.59%.

Ways of Acquiring Mates:

The manners in which mates can be acquired are various in tribal India. The institution of marriage among the Santhal is different from that in the Hindu society. Marriage among them is generally regarded as civil contract having the purpose of enjoyment of sex, procreation and companionship and not a religious sacrament. Therefore religious solemnization does not take place anywhere. The forms of marriage, the ceremonies, the taboos and the laws of dissolution of marriages are different in Santhal World from the Hindu society. At the end of every marriage, the Bride Price '*Pann*' is collected which may be paid either in cash or kind or both. Among the respondents, majority have acquired their marital partner through marriage by purchase i.e. 61.25% followed by love marriage (22.32%) then marriage by Negotiation (12.59%). 2.48% were found to be remarried while the percentage of widow marriage is only 1.33% (*Graph-2*).

**Graph-2: Distributions of Subjects According to the Ways of Acquiring Mates in the Studied Village**

Divorce:

Divorce can be obtained easily; however, some maintenance has to be given while divorcing. If marriages are undertaken within one's own group, such couples are hated and chased away from society. There is also the practice of the son-in-law staying in his in-laws' house. In Bantali Rakhasahi village both male and female are found to be divorced which is 2.32% and 2.47% of the total population respectively.

Role of Women:

Though the Santhal families are patriarchal in nature, but women play a very important role for the social production. Although she occupies a different position but she is said to have rights with obligations according to customs and traditions. The religion of Santhal is men's religion. Women are not allowed to be present at the sacrifices except at the time of offering in the house for the ancestors and the family Gods. Now the civil condition of the Santhal Women has also been undergoing changes along with the impact of modernisation. Santhal Women are gaining their new identity in the field of science, education, art and culture. The spirit of games & sports may be seen in full bloom among the Santhal Women.

C: Educational Situation:

Generally, the level of education in a society reflects the prevailing conditions of its political economy and is identified as one of the most important determinants of economic growth of the nation. Currently, the tribes lagged behind not only the general population but also the Scheduled Caste population in literacy and education. The tribal education has been seen in a very pitiable condition due to various factors, like; the remoteness, poverty, poor health condition and so on. The poor economic condition is a great hindrance to the successful education of the tribal people (*Maharana, 2015*)^[9]. Further, *Patel, 2017*^[12] stated that "the students come from families of low socio-economic background find it very difficult to continue their education at a very early stage and it has been estimated that sixty-five percent (65%) of the causes of wastage are due to economic reasons. This is because at the age of 9 or 10, the child becomes an economic asset, because he/she can work at home or earn something outside. This is especially true of girls who have to assist the over-worked mother at home".

We can see here the classification of respondents into seven categories according to their level of education. More than 1/4th of the total population are illiterate i.e. 25.47%. The female illiteracy level is higher than that of the male. 25.18% have completed the primary level education while in case of Upper Primary level education it is 15.72%. The percentage of Secondary level education is higher than that of others i.e. 26.20% in which the male respondents acquire a major part (17.61%) out of the total population while only 8.58% (out of total population) is acquired by female. A few have attended Higher Secondary level and Graduate level education which is 3.93% and 2.76% respectively. Only 0.72% is having Post Graduate degree in which male contribution is 0.29% (out of total population) while women contribute only 0.43% (out of total population) (*Table-5*).

Table-5: Distribution of Subject According to Level of Education.

Sl. No.	Levels of Education	Male		Female		Total	
		No.	% (out of the total Pop ⁿ)	No.	% (out of the total Pop ⁿ)	No.	%
1	Illiterate	76	11.06	99	14.41	175	25.47
2	Primary (class I-V)	83	12.08	90	13.10	173	25.18
3	Upper Primary (class VI-VII)	57	8.29	51	7.42	108	15.72
4	Secondary (class VIII-X)	121	17.61	59	8.58	180	26.20
5	Higher Secondary (+2)	20	2.91	07	1.01	27	3.93
6	Graduate (+3)	14	2.03	05	0.72	19	2.76
7	Post Graduate & Higher	02	0.29	03	0.43	05	0.72
Total		373	54.29	314	45.70	687	99.98

D: Health Condition

So far as health is concerned, it is in a very grim state. Santhal living in this remote village during the survey found suffering from various diseases such as, tuberculosis, faliariasis, malaria, pulmonary diseases, sickle cell diseases, measles, tetanus chronic and diphtheria. The poor access to general food and nutrition, bad sanitary condition, unhealthy housing and poor access to safe drinking water are responsible factors for morbidity and mortality among the Santhal (*Dung Dung and Pattanaik, 2013*)^[5]. Besides, irregular visit of health personnel to this village, poor public health and medical care institutional services and impoverishment to afford health care consultancy and medicine, cost of private health care referral services has further aggravated their health condition. In the absence of allopathic health care system, they are customarily dependant on traditional medical practices and practitioners. However, the village has one health sub-centre (sub-divisional hospital) but without any medical staff and medicine.

Source of Drinking Water

Safe drinking water is the most essential feature for healthy human life. Most of the households take water from tap through a pipeline connected to water tank (which has not been cleaned since a couple of years) for drinking. There are four open dug wells which are privately owned by the community. Ponds are also there which are used by the villagers mostly for taking bath and drinking and bathing purposes of domesticated animals. Some households directly exploit the river/stream for the need of water. Natural flowing water from rivers is also used for domestic usages. During the summer season poor households, who do not have their own tube wells and wells, have to depend on the rivers for the drinking purpose.

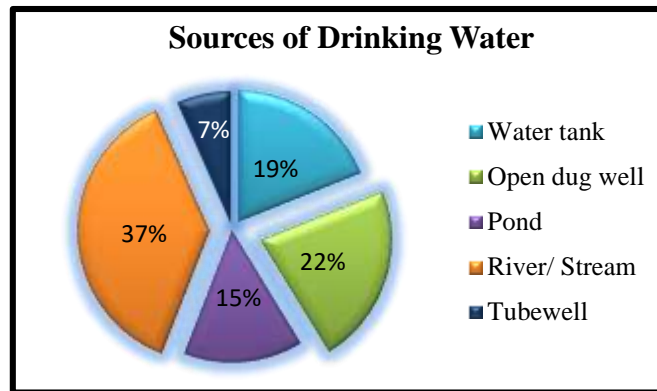


Chart-2: Sources of Drinking Water among the Santhal of the studied village

Sanitation Facilities

Sanitation of a place relates to the health condition of people of that place (*Ramya, 2014*)^[13]. In the studied area the Poor Santhal families do not get the facility because of lower income. There is no sanitary system in their traditional houses. But some of the families have this facility in their houses. Of the total 131 Santhal households, only 19 (14.50%) households have sanitation facility in their houses to some extent whereas 112 (85.49%) does not have the same.

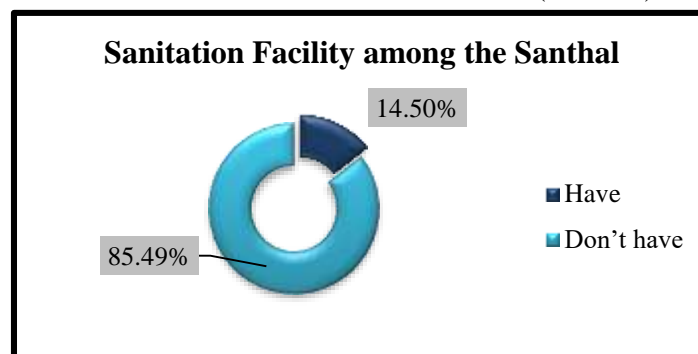


Figure-1: Sanitation facility among the Santhal of Banthali Rakhasahi village

E: Economic Life

The economic life of the Tribal Groups revolves around the forest. Basic needs of the people are fulfilled by forest. Forest nurtures their life. The components of forest ecology fulfil their socio-economic, bio-social, religio-cultural and psycho-social needs. They collect their basic amenities from the forest and their economic life is interwoven with the forest eco-system. Santhal is one of the largest and advanced tribal groups of India too and practice settled cultivation. Even though they are settled cultivators, their cultivation practices have not improved over time and there is no noticeable impact of modern agricultural technology in the area. Now-a-days agriculture and being agricultural labourer is the main occupation in the studied area. During the leisure period, adult male prefers to go forest for hunting the wild animals. Women wished to go forest for collecting the firewood for cooking. Girl child are staying at home to keep and taking care of their younger one. The Santhal are engaged in fishing too and migrate in off season to West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Andhra Pradesh and even to Assam. The cost of living in rural Orissa is one of the lowest in the country and the cost of living in urban Orissa is even lower than the rest of India. In terms of real per capita income,

the State has lagged behind the national average ever since independence (*Jana and Ghosh, 2015*)^[5].

Table-6: Primary Occupation among the Santhal of Bantali Rakhasahi village

Sl. No.	Primary Occupation	Male		Female	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Agriculture	126	45.98	102	42.32
2	Labour/Wage Earning	73	26.64	135	56.01
3	Lawyers	02	0.72	----	----
4	Govt. Service	07	2.55	02	0.82
5	Aganwadi Worker	---	-----	02	0.82
6	Company Job	46	16.78	----	-----
7	Medicine Men	03	1.09	----	-----
8	Other	17	6.20	-----	-----
Total		274	99.96	241	99.97

As agriculture is the main occupation among the studied respondents; 45.98% male are depending upon agriculture while it is 42.32% in case of female. 26.64% male and a majority of 56.01% female are engaged as daily wage labourer. Two male members (0.72%) are found to be as lawyers. 2.55% male and 0.82% female are in Govt. service. 0.82% female is working in the Anganwadi centre of the village. 16.78% male persons are engaged in various companies. Three numbers of medicine men are there in their community who comprises 1.09% of the respondents (*Table-6*).

The Santhal who lived in the Bantali Rakhasahi village of the Bijatola block of Mayurbhanj district, who are depending largely on agricultural activities, agricultural labour, daily wage labour, eco-activities like forest collections and simple form of contract basic labour. On the other hand, the settled life of Santhal has made them agricultural community, so their main occupation is agriculture. Hunting, fishing and collecting is their subsiding occupation. Before becoming agriculturalists they have definitely passed through the hunting stage which is evident from the fact that they are particularly hunters and perform large scale hunting expedition annually. After the advancement of their knowledge they started the cultivation but gradually they settled in the plain by clearing jungles and preparing paddy fields. Because they are industrious and hardworking by nature, they become able to settle in the plain area.

The major income of the Santhal comes out from the agriculture; the sense of Agriculture is paddy farming and kitchen garden. The income also comes from the stone breaking from a nearby hill, and from forest collection. Their wages also vary from male to female, normally male are getting Rs.250 per day, whereas female are getting Rs.170 per day. They rather prefer to work for the members of their own community either on nominal payment or on labour exchange basis. The feeling of superiority and inferiority is not found there. They treat each other equally.

Some of the Santhal people go to the forest and bring some dry wood, and sell in the market and earn money. The people at a time collect and load it on a bicycle. The cost of the full bicycle loaded firewood is varying from Rs.350-450. They never try to cut the living trees, as it is punishable by the Forest Department or by the Village Panchayat. By the enactment of the Forest Police Act, no one can try to cut the forest trees or destroy the forest. If someone disobeyed the rule, the village Panchayat will be decided to punished or fined on him. Among them, a total of 90% of the poor households are collected Tendu leaves, Tendu fruits, Mahua leaves, Mahua flowers Mahua seeds, Sal leaves, Sal seeds, Amla, Harida, Bahada, Honey, Imli, Tooth sticks, Firewood and so on. They sell 9% of Tendu leaves in the weekly market or local market while out of the rest 91% they prepared Bidi and sell it with a very reasonable price. Some of the Santhal sell the charnel of hog-palm (*Ambdaa*) in the Rairangpur market. The cost of charnel is Rs.55-70 per bucket.

Table-7: Distribution of Family According to Number of Earning Member.

Sl. No.	No. of Earning Member of Family	No. of household	%
1	01	11	8.39
2	02	69	52.67
3	03	22	16.79
4	04	14	10.68
5	05	15	11.45
Total		131	99.98

Table:7 depicts more than fifty percent of the families are having only two earning members i.e. 52.67% followed by families having three earning members (16.79%). Whereas it is 10.68% and 11.45% in case of families is having four and five earning members respectively. A total of 11 households (8.39%) have only one earning member which indicates the miserable economic condition of the village.

Table-8: Distribution of Family According to the Total Annual Income of the Subject.

Sl. No.	Annual Income (Rs.)	No. of Family	%
1	Below Rs. 20,000	06	4.58
2	Rs. 20,001-50,000	29	22.13
3	Rs.50,001-80,000	46	35.11
4	Above Rs.80,000	50	38.16
Total		131	99.98

The above table (*Table-8*) clearly shows that 4.58% of the total number of households annual income range from below 20,000 whereas 22.13% of the families annual income is between Rs. 20,001-50,000, 35.11% of the families annual income is Rs. 50,001-80,000 and only 38.16% of the families earn an annual income range above Rs. 80,000.

Agricultural Land Holding:

It is evident from *Table:9* that 64.12% of the respondents have 1- 5 acre of agricultural land in their own, 3.81% have 6-10 acre and only 2.29% have more than 10 acre whereas 29.78% are having no agricultural land and earning money by working as wage labourer.

Table-9: Distribution of Family According to Agricultural Land Holding.

Sl. No.	Agricultural Land Holding in Acre	No.	%
1	Land less	39	29.78
2	1 – 5	84	64.12
3	6-10	05	3.81
4	More than 10	03	2.29
Total		131	100

Public Distribution System:

There is a public distribution outlet in Mundathakura one kilometre away from the studied village. This facility is not proved to be very effective in dealing with the basic consumption and needs of the community. The distribution system in the region provides limited commodities which include rice, wheat, kerosene and sugar. Each card gets 25 kg rice @ Rs. 2/ per kg, 10 kg wheat @ Rs. 8/ per kg, 2kg sugar @ Rs. 13.50/ per kg and 5 litres kerosene @ Rs. 11.50/ per litre per month. All these things are accessible to them who are below poverty line.

Marketing Facilities:

Almost all communities have reported to be linked with the market for the sale of their ‘produce’ and the purchase of essential commodities. Every community in rural and tribal areas produces something for a market like cereals, cash crops and horticultural products (*Singh, 1996*)^[17]. In tribal societies, the significance of marketing is not only noticed in the economic domain, but also embodied the socio-cultural activities. The tribal market is best represented by the weekly market. It is the vital organ of their marketing system. It seems to be suited to the requirement of the vast majority of the country people. The weekly market may describe as the nerve centre of the exchange system of the tribal region (*Mehdi, 1987*)^[11]. The market centre in tribal economy are not only important for business but also centres of social gathering as they provide occasions for social get-together to discuss varied topics of mutual interest ranging from enquiries about crops, market trends, political issues and last but not least are matrimonial affairs, which are usual at these places (*Rao, 1988*)^[14]. This place is important for the exchange of information between individuals and between communities.

Now a day’s market (*Haat*) is assuming an important place in the tribal economy for the transaction of goods and services. Markets have existed since a long time and have several socio-economic functions for the tribal community. Essential items for everyday consumption are brought in these markets. People from Bantali Rakhasahi go to Bijatola weekly market which is about six kilometres away from the village. The weekly market stands open on every Wednesday. They also depend on the daily market to sell and purchase of different vegetables from Badamtalia, which is just 2 kilometres away from the village. When we visited weekly

market, we not only stress on economic exchange, but the non-economic transactions are also marked. These non-economic exchanges includes; social-exchanges, the arrangement of the matrimonial relations, selecting a bride or groom, establishing rapport among the people of kin group and other such fulfilment of social obligation.

Table-10: List of the Weekly Markets

Name of the Weekly Market (<i>Haat</i>)	Distance from Bantali Rakhasahi	Market Days
Khanta	03 kilometer to West	Monday
Bankati	05 kilometer to South	Sunday
Bijatola	06 kilometer to East	Wednesday
Rairangpur	07 kilometer to West	Friday
Handia Bhatti	06 kilometer to North	Saturday
Bissoi	23 kilometer to East	Saturday

Animal Husbandry:

Animal husbandry forms a fundamental part of the way of life of several rural as well as tribal people. The Santhal people practices animal husbandry and raise livestock. They domesticated different species of animals such as cattle, sheep, goat, pigs, and yaks and so on. The domesticated animals not only help them in agricultural activities but also supply them with milk and meat for day to day life. Dogs are domesticated for the purpose of security. While offering of male goat or sheep, fowl or duck, is an almost mandatory sacrifice at many socio-ritual events. Livestock are rare not just for the food, but also to fulfil the needs of religious ceremonies and festive occasions. Sometimes animals are mortgaged to seek loan from the rich people.

Expenditure:

While interviewing and collecting data on patterns of expenditure among the Santhal people, we the researchers faced a lot of trouble. The people hardly remember what they spent in a year. At the same time, they do not want to disclose their personal information to use in public or for any official purpose. Finally, with the help of some educated persons of the village we are able to collect some of the information which is described bellow;

i) Expenditure on Socio-Religious Function:

Every community has its own way to meet it a basic need for the existence of its members falling which they are threatened with extinction. Festivals and feast are organized and responses the several cycles. The expenditure of rituals and festivals occupies a major place in their total budget. Every function is organized on a community basis and they fixed the amount of money to pay for the purpose.

ii) Expenditure on Food and liquor:

Food is gold pen bowl for a human being. Food is the hub of primitive life. Food quest is the propelling force behind the arduous agriculture, kitchen garden and collection of forest produce. Their morning meals consist of only puffed rice (*Khejedii*) or watered rice (*Baskey daka*) also called as *Pakhalo* with roast potato/ boiled potatoes and a pinch of salt (*Bulum*). The

same or more or less food is taken during mid-day with cooked green leaves, curry, tomato with dried fish (*sukhua*) and added salt. The night meal comprises *Pakhalo*, rice with vegetable curry.

The cooked rice is eaten with vegetables and dried fish of various types. Greens leaves and mushroom has eaten more during end of the summer and full of rains. Mushrooms (*udd*) are soaked in turmeric water for an hour before cooking. Salt and turmeric powder are the only condiments used for preparing curry. Green chilly is added for taste. Garlic is used when green leaves are cooked. For the preparation of fish and mutton curry they use garlic, onion, ginger and chilly. Dishes are cooked by using mustard oil. Chicken, mutton, and pork are relish by the Santhal. Pork of non-vegetarians stuff is the main items food on festive occasions and marriage ceremonies.

Handia is the main or we can say the basic food item for the Santhal people in daily consumptions. Of all alcoholic drinks Desi Wine, Handia, *Rasee*, *Mahuli*, etc., are essential for them. They take it occasionally and seasonally. Both men and women take this type of liquor in many occasions irrespective of their age. For taking handia, they have no bar or any hard rule in their society. Generally, they prepare *handia* by their own so they take it as their staple food item. In their society, no social or ritual ceremony is observed without *handia* or any liquor. Milk does not constitute as a food item in the diet of the Santhal. But except Mother's milk, no other milk is given to the new born babies.

iii) Expenditure on Dress and Ornament:

For the sake of dress and ornament, the Santhal generally spend the money one time in a year during the festival of the Makar Sankranti. And rest of the year as per their need they purchase it from the market.

iv) Expenditure on House Hold Article:

The Santhal were spending their money in various ways. They were buying household articles like; iron axe, knives, scissors, shaving razor etc. For daily use they use to buy glass, mirror, clock, key, water pot, plates, match box, fishing rod, torch light, lantern, luta, steel glass, aluminum vessels (*dickichhi*) and modern item like Bicycle, Motorbike, Radio, Mobile Phone, Charging Torch, Shoes, Camera, The other items are like- Kerosene Lamp, Bottle, Bag, Mat, Fire Wood, Money Purse, Bathing Soap, Washing Powder, Shampoo, Perfume, Mosquito Net, Sugar, Tea, Paan, Khaini, Tobacco, Beedi, Country Liquor, and the like.

v) Expenditure on Fuels:

In the study area, Bantali Rakhasahi village the Santhal spent some money in fuel. Their days begin with the sunrise and ends with the sunset. The man and women do not work at night. Generally, by 7.30 p.m. the whole family finish their dinner and go to bed. Most of the houses do not require any elaborate arrangements of light. While they cook, the entire room is kept lighted by the hearth fire. And they take their dinner with the help of this light. Sometimes they also use the kerosene lamp, (locally known as *dibiri*) and candle using matchbox. They purchase kerosene oil from the weekly market or local market or co-operative society. People

often use the lantern and battery torchlight. During any occasion, they hire the electricity from the village main electric transformer. For this, they use the long service wire from their home to main transformer.

Some people go to the forest, cut the dried trees, and bring it to their home. At the need of fuel both male and female are participate in the collection of firewood. The consumption of fuel does not entail any extra expenditure whereas labour wood is available almost free of charge in the nearby forest.

vi) Expenditure on Medicinal Cases:

The common diseases found among the Santhal are- Malaria, Diarrhea, Dysentery, Viral Fever, Skin diseases, Cold Fever, Cough etc., for treatment of the same majority of the people seek the help of the traditional medicine man the *Kabiraj* or *Vaid*. Besides the magical healing, the Santhal also practices the herbal preparation according to the advice of the medicine man. They use many types of root. They sometimes take the allopathic medicine from Rairangpur Sub-divisional Hospital. This is a government hospital, people can avail medicine from there but it lacks medical staffs and medicines also. Some private medicine stores are also available at nearby villages, they rarely visit there where they have to pay for the required medicines.

vii) Other Expenditure:

The other expenditure of the Santhal people includes; entertainment of their guest and relatives, visiting the relatives houses, buying agricultural equipments, pesticides, manure, water pump for irrigation, giving tuition fees of the children, and sometimes use to go to the Rairangpur Cinema hall to watch movie and the like.

F: Food Habit

Food is one of the most vital necessities of life from prenatal stage to extreme old age. Food is a prerequisite of nutrition which nourishes the body. Thus it is the main source of energy to the human body. Food is anything eaten or drunk which yields heat and energy for building up of new tissues as well as for regulation of the metabolic process. The chief function of the food is to supply materials to meet the physiological needs. It serves social and psychological functions (*Shukla and Rastogi, 2008*)^[16]. Their staple diet is prepared with water base called *baskey daka* and they do not take any wheat-based preparations. Most of the people take meals thrice a day, where as some of them take meals twice a day. Only a few take meals with pulses mostly three or two days in a week, with a negligible percentage of them consume it on daily basis. Some of them take pulses only once in a week. One of the prime reasons behind the dearth of pulses is, Santhal do not cultivate pulses; they have to purchase it (not through barter system, which they do in case of green vegetables and rice) from the market by paying cash.

Santhal of this village acts as vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian. Their common diet includes rice with vegetables, different types of fruits; green leaves various types of proteinuous seeds etc. Some of the people cultivate these things in their cultivable land. Important vegetables they produce include potato (*Allu*), tomato (*Bilati*), drum stick leaf (*Mungaalla*), chili (*Marich*),

cauliflower (*Bahakabi*), cabbage (*Patam*), turnip (*Ollkabi*), bitter gourd (*Karlla*), cariander leaf (*Dhuniasakam*), gram (*Chhola*), ladies finger (*Vedwa*), raddish (*Mulli*), arum (*Saru*), brinjal (*Bangal*). They also use various types of fruits, such as green apple (*Jodda*), black berry (*Jammu*), coconuts, guava, jack fruit, mango (*Ull*) and orange etc. Besides, vegetable food items the Santhal also use non-vegetable food, which include domestic as well as wild varieties are hunted now and then. These include chicken (*Sim jill*), mutton (*Merom jill*), pork (*Sukri jill*) and dried fish (*Rahul haku*). They also eat the meat of wild animals like, rat (*Gudu*), rabbit (*Buru kulei*), wildcat and wild boar (*Buru sukri*).

Generally, they take meals twice and thrice in a day. In the morning time they eat soaked rice water of the previous night, with roasted potato (*Allu-bharta*) and tomato with mustard oil (*Tullisunum*) or sesame oil (*Till Sunum*) roasted drumstick leaf (*MungaAlla*) and also use *Chatni* like burnt resin with little bit salt, then they go to the field with their lunch box (*Patam*). They believe that without taking rice they cannot work properly, it gives energy. They return from the field in the afternoon and after taking bath they eat boiled rice with different vegetable items. Sometimes they catch fish from their agricultural field or nearby river, they roast fish seasoned with little bit of mustard oil or sesame oil. In the night, they eat the same food prepared for the lunch. Children also like to take fried rice (*Khejedi*) during the breakfast.

Drinking, Smoking and Chewing

Consumption of liquor is more or less a part of their food habits and became a part of their culture. They use liquor in their socio-religious functions. During different festivals they use liquor (*Parye*) and country rum (*Handia*) at the *Jahira-than* to worship their deities. They buy country liquor for Rs.30/ per litre. Both male and female drink these liquors very often and some of them drink daily. Their attitude towards drinking is expressed in many ways. They drink country liquor (*Mahuli*) and country rum (*Handia*) when they feel tired. Some take it as they are habituated and without it they cannot get sleep.

Some believe that *Rassi* and *handia* serves as a medicine to relieve from stomach pain. Further liquor assumes a sacred place in their rituals and in day to day life. Men are smoking *Beedi* and cigarette for their pleasure. Most of the men and women are having the habit of chewing the betel leaves along with tobacco while some have the habit of chewing tobacco alone. With the advent of the non tribal people they were found to drink the foreign liquor.

Major findings

Santhals are a prominent group among the Scheduled tribes in Mayurbhanj. They have a worthy traditional culture and way of living. They have their own unique customs in every aspect and event of life. Some of the key constraints being faced by the Santhal of the Bantali Rakhasahi village may be summed up as follows:

- The housing condition in the village is not that much developed. Most of the Santhals still dwell in traditional houses.
- They have poor economic status as their income is low due to constraints in agricultural production. It is not sufficient for them to live a healthy and prosperous life and does not fulfill the basic needs.

- Alcoholism among men is very high which appears to be major problem among them.
- As electricity is not entirely distributed in the houses of the Santhal, some of the houses are yet to see the electricity being lighted in their houses.
- Their level of education is not satisfactory as more than 1/4th of the total population is illiterate. Moreover female illiteracy level is higher among them.
- The village does not have good medical facility. The only health sub-centre (sub-divisional hospital) is there but run without any medical staff and medicine.
- Many of the houses don't have any sanitary facility. This led to frequent illnesses among them.
- Over all the public services including electricity, water supply, education, health and sanitation etc. are not adequately provided.
- Lack of appropriate and adequate developmental strategies are the main problem experienced among the studied people. Their socio-economic life has been a source of concern since enough attention is not given to their specific needs.

Some suggestions for the enhancement of Socio-Economic conditions

In India, Various plan and program have been implemented after independence for the all-round development of the tribal people. But it is very sad to say that, due to lack of awareness among the people at the rural as well as tribal belt the proper implementation by the government worker are all failed. Tribal communities live more or less in isolation with a very simple lifestyle. Most of these communities are small in size and their growth rate is low.

Highly rich in natural resources, the district of Mayurbhanj needs the enhancement of capabilities of the tribes to participate in the mainstream economic development as they suffer from various dimensions of poverty. For the eradication of which some of the basic services and so also needs such as; the supply of safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, availability of nutrition should adequately be provided for improving their socio-economic conditions. To surmount the constraints of the Santhal people of the studied village, the following prospects may be suggested:

- As the Socio-economic condition is very important for everyone's life its need to be improved and developed.
- Housing conditions should be improved so that people could improve their standard of living.
- To increase the literacy status among the Santhals as well as the villagers' necessary measure should be taken up with the proper implementation of Right to Education Act, 2009.
- In order to increase the female literacy rate the availability of trained, qualified female teachers and developed infrastructure like separate toilets for girl students should be provided in educational institutions.
- The existing health sub-centre in Bantali Rakhasahi village should be improved properly so that villagers could able to make use of the available medical facilities. Further it needs trained medical staffs in the health sub-centre.
- Proper sanitation strategy should be developed with the help of government and non-governmental agencies to content with improper sanitation in the village.

- The Government has to provide provisions like loan facility and other development programme to improve their economic level. An adequate credit facility should provide to the poor tribal farmers so as to raise their agricultural productivity.
- Finally it may be mentioned that as the tribal of Mayurbhanj are very rich in art and craft the Government should take necessary steps to enhance their capability which is very essential for their social and economic development.

Conclusion

The study provides an exceptional prospect to explore the demographic, social, educational and economic structure of the Santhal of Bantali Rakhasahi village of Bijatola Block of Mayurbhanj district, Odisha. It covers various issues which directly associated with the socio-economic status of the community. At present they are engaged in economic pursuits ranging from hunting to settled agriculture. However, agriculture dominates the tribal economic scene a very few percent are engaged in non-agricultural pursuits. Forest land is the main asset possessed by the tribal (*Jayakumar and Palaniyammal, 2016*)^[8]. The Santhal unable to meet their everyday requirements as they solely depend on the agricultural economy. Further, they have very limited access for housing, education, electricity, health and sanitation, etc. In spite of many developmental programmes, the economic standards of the tribals is still very low and therefore, there is a need for joint efforts and better coordination of all the stake holders who are working directly or indirectly influences the development of tribal community (*Seraphinus, 2014*)^[15]. In the light of the above, the planners and policy makers have to evolve suitable strategies and formulate relevant policies to enhance the speed of tribal development. This obviously entails a clear understanding of the socio-cultural of tribal life, the participation in developmental programmes for their livelihood security.

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