

SANTHALI: A NEVER ENDING STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

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ABSTRACT: *In India, millions and millions of children enter the classroom unable to understand the language by which they are taught. In our country children are taught in the old colonial language, or in a dominant national or international language, which young children do not speak at home. Therefore these children who come from different caste-creed and cultures and who have different languages face various problems. The tribes residing in India are the most victimized classes in the whole country in terms of education and promotion of their own independent languages. It is because these different tribes speak different languages and most of the State Governments of India have no provision and infrastructure for teaching them in their mother tongues. Many languages have succumbed to death and a number of languages are in the verge of extinction. The picture is equally disturbing when the Santhali language is concerned, the language of the one of the most dominant tribes in India i.e. the Santhals. Keeping this in mind, we have tried to discuss about the origin of the Santhali language, rising of Ol Chiki (writing script for Santhali) and the evolution of the language and how it is struggling every moment for its existence, fearing extinction.*

KEY WORDS: Evolution, Language, Mother Tongue, Ol Chiki, Santhals, Santhali.

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INTRODUCTION:

Santhals are one of the most dominant tribes in India to retain an aboriginal language to the present day. They spread out over a vast area of the country, mainly in the states of West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand and Assam. Some migrated in the neighboring countries like Bangladesh and Nepal. They have been described as the “most integrated and possibly the most resilient tribe in eastern India”. The origin of the Santhals has been remained mystery, till date, the mystery is unsolved. According to the Santhal legend, the original home of the Santhals is called “*Hihiri Pipiri*” and from there they migrated to various other places like, “*Hohoro Bomboro*”, “*Ayaro Payaro*”, “*Dudumul*”, “*Ajodana*”, “*Jhal Dak*”, “*Aere Kaende*”, “*Haradata*”, “*Khoj Kaman*”, “*Sasang Beda*” and through “*Tore Pokhori*”, “*Baha Bandela*” to “*Chae Champa*”. These are all some mythological places whose connection to the reality is somewhat unknown. Guha (1944) said in this context that there is no precise information as to when the Santhals first came into India. The Santhals belong to the Proto-Australoid group of people and they came into India soon after the Negritos. They are named so because of the similarity of the racial type with that of the Australian tribes. Apart from the unsolved mystery of their origin and when and from where they came from, the other aspects such as their religion, their culture are very rich than that of many other tribes in India. In spite of various obstacles, Santhals are tremendous anxious to retain their tribal identity as various social transformations are making serious damage and causing de-tribalization. Whether it is culture or language, there have been infiltrations from various dominant social groups such as Hindus and Christians.

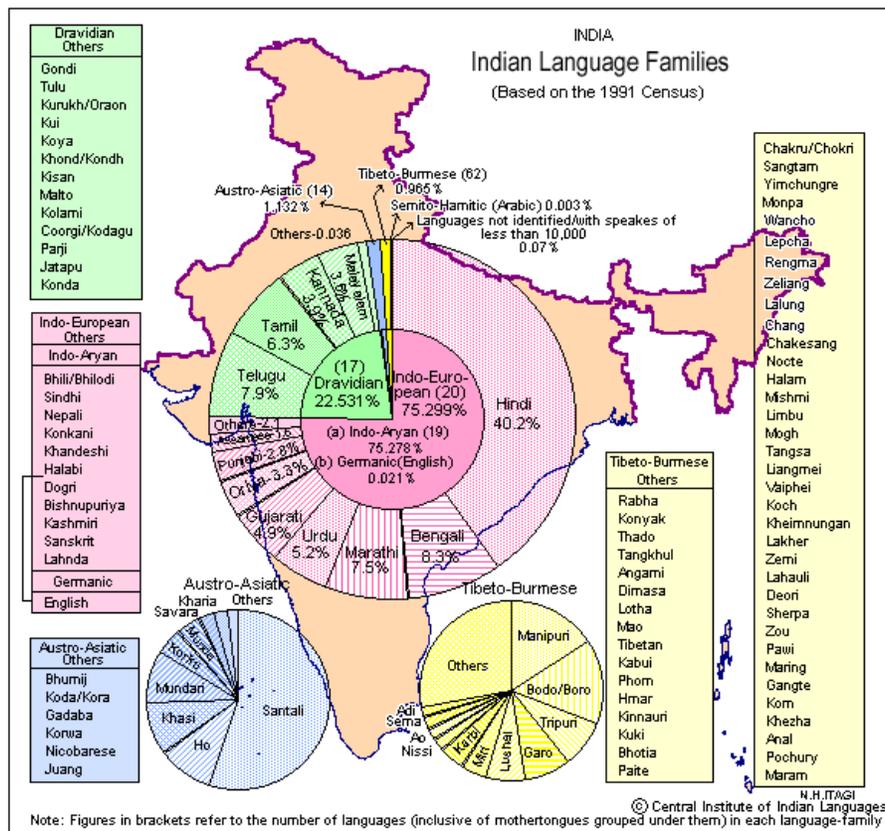
Like any other social groups, the Santhals have their own language. They speak Santhali which is an independent language itself. The name of the language i.e. Santhali is derived from the ethnic name, Santhal. According to Culshaw (1949), “By the test of language the Santals reveal a high degree of social cohesion”. Santhali belongs to the Kherwari group of the North Munda sub-family of the Munda group of languages. Again, while citing from Pater W. Schmidt’s (1906) *Die Mon Khmer Volker, ein Bindeglied Zwischen Volkern Zentralasiens und Austronesiens*, Troisi (1979) said that Schmidt classified this Munda group of languages as the Austro-Asiatic language group. The language is also closely related to Ho, Korku, Savara and

Gadaba which is spoken by other smaller tribes. Among the Austro-Asiatic languages, Santhali is spoken by a large number of populations.

While concentrating on the development scale of the language, it is certain that Santhali ranges among the best documented tribal languages of India (Lotz, 2004). That is mainly because of the Christian Missionaries who came in contact with the Santhals. Santhali, drew tremendous attention of the researchers and scholars to study on, as more than 6.5 million (Census of India 2001) people in India speak this language i.e. more than the total population of many European, American, African as well as Asian countries, according to the World Bank data.

Figure: 1

Austro-Asiatic languages in Indian Language Families



(Source: www.saarcculture.org/old-site/portal/countries/index.php)

Picture Courtesy: Central Institute of Indian Languages

The Santhals are more conscious and determined to protect their language than many of the other tribes in India. Santhals call themselves 'Hor' i.e. 'Man' and call their language Santhali as 'Hor-Ror' where 'Ror' means speech or language. Therefore, it is the 'Language of Man', the 'Language of Santhals'. Despite the anxiety of losing the tribal identity, Santhals somewhat managed to keep their language intact from the foreign influences, be it the grammar or other principles of the language are concerned. But, as far as vocabulary is concerned, nothing can be said like that as a lot of words from different languages have been adopted as well as adapted to the Santhal ideas and linguistic rules (Troisi, 1979).

SCRIPT AS A MEANS TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE:

Although the Santhals have their own distinctive and independent language, they did not have their own script to express their thoughts and feelings in written form. Till the nineteenth century Santhali remained an oral language and all the traditional knowledge, history, stories, songs, folk tales, legends etc. were transmitted orally from generation to generation. Before the independence the Christian Missionaries whose only aim was to promote Christianity among the native Indians, came in contact with the Santhals. Needless to say, when they came in contact with one of the primitive aborigines of India i.e. the Santhals, they tried to baptize them. But the language barrier became the most challenging task to be done. The missionaries accepted the challenge and began to learn their language and their culture by living their life with them in the dense forests. After learning the language, these missionaries wrote many valuable dictionaries, documented different aspects on Santhals, translated the collected folk tales using Bengali and Roman scripts before 1860s by European anthropologists, folklorists and missionaries like Philips, Campbell, Skrefsrud and Bodding. They also studied the basic morphology, syntax and phonetic structure of the language and many more. Gradually, Devnagari and Oriya had been introduced to Santhali as writing scripts.

As Roman, Bengali, Devnagari, Oriya were being used extensively for writing Santhali, some eminent Santhals felt the need of a new script which might represent themselves independently, not by using foreign or some dominant language scripts of the country but the script of their own for which they would be proud of. There was a huge gap in between the dreams dreamt and the

reality. But a man from Rairangpur of Odisha, Pandit Raghunath Murmu made the dream come true. He wanted to do something for the development of the Santhal society and started planning to create a new script to promote Santhali language. He intensely wanted a uniformity in the language as authors from Bengal were using Bengali script, authors from Odisha were using Oriya script, authors from Bihar (Jharkhand State was not built then) were using Devnagari script, and they were also using Roman script as well, which, definitely was causing serious damage and creating confusion between the Santhals of these different regions. Moreover he also felt that by using those different dominating Indian and foreign language scripts, many infiltrations were in the rise in the Santhali language unknowingly. Pandit Raghunath Murmu's utmost Endeavour for better manifestation of his mother tongue and his zest for excellence paved the way for the evolution of Santhal peoples' own script known as "OL CHIKI" in 1925. This historic path breaking invention gave the whole Santhal community a much higher confidence and also facilitated proper expression of their words while writing. And, Ol Chiki emerged as a savior of the language to inspire and instill a sense of immense confidence, endless pride, rejuvenation and solidarity among Santhals residing all over the world. The Santhali alphabet consists of six "Raha Arang" (vowels) and twenty four "Kecheth Arang" (consonants). To be acquainted with the alphabet, the letters are given below in Table: 1. where characters are arranged in a five by six matrix in a conventional way. The first characters in each row (A, AA, I, U, E, O) are the Raha Arang and remaining are the Kecheth Arang. Ol Chiki is written from left to right.

Table: 1

The 'Ol Chiki' Alphabet

ᱠ _A	ᱡ _{AT}	ᱢ _{AK}	ᱣ _{ANG}	ᱤ _{AL}
ᱥ _{AA}	ᱦ _{AAK}	ᱧ _{AAJ}	ᱨ _{AAM}	ᱩ _{AAW}
ᱪ _I	ᱫ _{IS}	ᱬ _{IH}	ᱭ _{INJ}	ᱮ _{IR}
ᱯ _U	ᱰ _{UC}	ᱱ _{UD}	ᱲ _{UNN}	ᱳ _{UY}
ᱴ _E	ᱵ _{EP}	ᱶ _{ED}	ᱷ _{EN}	ᱸ _{ER}
ᱹ _O	ᱺ _{OT}	ᱻ _{OB}	ᱼ _{ONG}	ᱽ _{OH}

Moreover, a number of modifier letters are used to indicate tone, nasalization, length, and deglottalization.

Table: 2

Modifier letters

•[MU TUDAAG] •[GAHLA TUDAAG] ~[RELA] ─[PHARKA] Ɔ[AHAD]
•[MU-GAHLA TUDAAG]

MU TUDAAG is the nasalization mark which follows any vowel whether it is long or short. GAHLA TUDAAG is the vowel modifier. When MU TUDAAG and GAHLA TUDAAG used together, they form MU-GAHLA TUDAAG. RELA is the length mark that combines with any oral or nasal vowel. PHARKA is the glottal protector and the deglottalizing AHAD can follow only four consonants Ɔ, ɖ, ɣ, and ɗ.

Table: 3

Numbers or digits in Ol Chiki

Ɔ_[1], ɗ_[2], ɣ_[3], ɖ_[4], ɣ_[5], ɗ_[6], ɗ_[7], ɣ_[8], ɣ_[9], 0_[0].

As far as the punctuation are concerned, the comma (,), exclamatory mark (!), and question mark (?) and quotation marks (“-”) are used in the writings while using the Ol Chiki script. But the full stop (.) is not used. Instead of full stop (.) the punctuation Muchad (I) and Double Muchad (II) are used.

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE LANGUAGE:

The first and the most basic problem of the Santhali language to become one of the dominant languages in India is, in India, a significant proportion of children enter school not speaking the language of the classroom. Our education system favours using national or ‘global’ languages instead of mother-tongue teaching. Education is often carried out in the old colonial language, or an international language, such as English or in the dominant state languages. This is based on the belief that certain internationally ‘important’ languages give children a competitive advantage in later life. In our country, the educational basics like textbooks, learning materials and the language of instruction are primarily or entirely available only in different dominant state languages or in English language rather than Santhali. In multilingual country like ours with many local languages, teachers themselves do not speak the Santhali language which children learn at home. They speak the dominant state language. On the other hand, where the teachers

teach by Santhali, they may not be fully proficient in the language of instruction. Children in remote rural areas, who speak Santhali at home and have no contact with the school language outside of the classroom, often have the biggest problems in understanding the lessons taught at school. This is a significant factor contributing to poor quality education and continuing low literacy. Without the use of mother-tongue, children drop out from schools and their potential is often wasted resulting in educational failure and a lack of development. As one World Bank study has clearly pointed out: *“Fifty percent of the world’s out of school children live in communities where the language of the schooling is rarely, if ever, used at home. This underscores the biggest challenge to achieving Education for All (EFA): a legacy of non-productive practices that lead to low levels of learning and high levels of dropout and repetition”*.

The second problem of the language is its regional disparity. Santhals are scattered among a number of political units, mainly belonging to West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha and Assam. The Santhals of these regions in most of the cases are bilinguals. *“Being a minority speech community, they cannot help speaking the dominant language of the region where they stay. In everyday interaction, they have to come across a group of people who belong to a different speech community”* (Ghosh, 2010). Santhals of West Bengal speak Bengali, in Jharkhand they speak Hindi, in Odisha they speak Oriya and in Assam they speak Assamese along with their mother tongue. There is naturally strong impacts have been identified in Santhali phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary. Santhals started adopting various Aryan terms like trade-terms ‘mal’ (goods), ‘asbab’ (furniture), ‘bajar’ (market); terms ‘gadvan’ (carter), ‘muchhi’ (cobbler), ‘kamar’ (blacksmith) which are the specialized crafts that do not originally belong to the Santhal community; the village administrative terms ‘manjhi’ or ‘majhi’ (headman), ‘panchayat’ (panchayat); time calculating terms ‘ghari’ (a while), ‘din’ (day); feelings ‘daya’ (pity), ‘maya’ (affection), ‘laj’ (shame) and many more borrowed from Aryan either through Hindi or Bengali. There is also a huge variation in pronunciation in different regions. Murmu (2008) has divided the Santhali speaking people into three different regions:

- 1) Northern: Birbhum, Murshidabad, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Coochbihar of West Bengal; Assam and northern part of Jharkhand.
- 2) Central: Purulia, Bankura, western part of Burdwan district of West Bengal and some part of Jharkhand adjacent to Purulia.

3) Southern: Southern part of Bankura, Midnapore (East and West) of West Bengal and Odisha.

But the regions are mainly divided into Northern and Southern according to the language and culture disparities. According to him the Northern Santhals speak using simple sentences whereas the Southern Santhals use complex sentences. While pronunciation, there is always a sense of roughness or hardness is felt. For example: ‘Coming under a tree, we sat.’- this sentence will be translated by the Northern Santhals as ‘**ଡ଼ାରେ ବୁତାରେ ହେଜ କାଟେଲେ ଦୁରୁବ ଏନା**’ (DARE BUTARE HEJ KATELE DURUB ENA) whereas the Southern Santhals will translate the sentence as ‘**ଡ଼ାରେ ବୁତାରେ ଏନାରେ ଦୁରୁବ ହେଜ କାଟେଲେ ଦୁରୁବ ଏନା**’ (DARE BUTARE HEJ ENTELE DURUB ENA). Here ‘ente’ stands for a ‘cause’ and so, in the Southern dialect there is an adverbial clause is used making the sentence complex.

Table: 4

Santhali words and their pronunciation in Northern and Southern dialect

NORTHERN	SOUTHERN
ଓଡ଼ାଡ଼ା (Hodo)	ଓଡ଼ାଡ଼ା (Hudu) [Paddy]
ଓଡ଼ାକା (Hako)	ଓଡ଼ାକା (Haku) [Fish]
ଓଡ଼ାଗା (Godo)	ଓଡ଼ାଗା (Gudu) [Mouse]
ତାଣ୍ଡି (Tandi)	ତାଣ୍ଡି (Dahi) [Field]
ଡ଼ାକେ (Teke)	ଡ଼ାକେ (Tiki) [Boil]

In this context Campbell (1953), in his preface to *Santali-English Dictionary* (3rd Edn) said, “Northern Santali or that spoken in Bhagalpur, Munghyrs, the Santal Parganas, Birbhum, Bankura, Hazaribagh and Manbhum is the language of the overwhelming majority of the tribe and is more polished than Southern Santali. The former is, therefore regarded as the standard and Southern Santali or that spoken in the remaining districts as a dialect, or possibly a group of dialects of it”. The differences between these two making serious confusion among the Santhals of new generation. The lack of Standard Santhali Language is prohibiting this language to be fully flourished in the Indian Language scenario.

Regarding the various infiltrations in Santhali language, the use of words without etymological meanings is on the rise. In Santhali, ‘magazine’ is being termed as **ପୁଥାରି ଲେଖା** (PUTHI

SAKAM) or ପତାକା (PATAK). Here Puthi Sakam is a pure Santhali word but the etymological meaning of Patak is difficult to get. Therefore without etymological meaning of the words create confusion and are difficult to understand and thus the progress of the language in educational sectors is somewhat facing obstacles. Not only that but also inclusion of these kind of words resulting the extinction of many old Santhali words like ଦେଲଙ୍ଗ (DELANG) means ‘Let’s go’, ଜହଙ୍ଗା (JHANGA) means ‘trousers’, ସନାଫନା (SANAPHANA) means ‘instruments’, ଉରମାଲ (URMAL) means ‘certain ornament of ball-shaped brass bells’ used by male dancers and so on. Besides this some people though acquainted with Santhali and Ol Chiki, while writing with Hindi or Bengali or Oriya script, are making serious mistakes and make a pure Santhali word into something else. For example, ଦାନ୍ଦା meaning ‘waist’, has become ଦାନ୍ଦା (DANDA) where ‘danda’ means ‘stick’ in Hindi or in Bengali. ଲଗିନା meaning ‘far’ has become ଲଗିନା (SAGIN) while using Bengali script, where ‘Sagin’ (Sagen?) means ‘freshly or newly grown’ leaves, the list is endless. Apart from these, the use of Santhali in the people belong to the community itself, is decreasing, especially those who are educated and reside in urban areas. They do not feel the urge of learning Santhali. In rural areas, though they speak Santhali but they are unable to develop the language. Those who can do it have become inactive. A very little number of people who are trying to enrich and develop the language, feel helpless as there is no state of the art facilities that is required for language development. The present Santhal generation is also somewhat inactive and they do not feel the need of the Santhali language development as they lack appropriate knowledge.

STRUGGLE FOR REGOGNITION OF THE LANGUAGE:

After the invention of Ol Chiki, the writing script for Santhali, people from the Santhal community enjoyed a sense of solidarity and immense pride. They thought that now their long struggle for language identity has made a huge leap towards a new era of tribal rejuvenation. But it was not an easy task to deal with. Being a tribal language and as it was tagged as a linguistic minority, no one paid a heed towards Santhali. But the people from the community did not give up hope. To save the language from extinction and then to develop the language in a regular basis, governmental assistance is needed. This was the utmost truth that the people from the community had realized and according to that, they started to take necessary steps to draw the attention of the Central Government and the State Governments also. Some associations like

'Aboah Gaonta', 'Santali Literary and Cultural Society', 'Adibasi Socio Educational and Cultural Association' took major role in the struggle for the existence of the Santhali language in the Indian Language Family. It is to be noted that in any kind of language movement there are two different aspects: one is the movement's inner aspect and the other is the movement's outer aspect. Regarding inner aspect, the experts and the linguists would develop and modify and extract or subtract unwanted elements and give the language a standard form where on the other hand the outer aspect stands upon the organizing meetings, processions, agitations to draw attention of the higher authorities. In the earlier point we have discussed about some problems that the language is facing. It is evident that for the Santhali language the inner aspect has not yet been chalked out as Santhali language has not yet been standardized. Though, in this regard the state of West Bengal has shown some resilience. For the development of Santhali language West Bengal may be termed as the pioneer of the development of the Santhali language. To save the language from the various infiltrations 'Aboah Gaonta' first emerged in Calcutta (Kolkata) in around 1952. In 1964 'Adibasi Socio Educational and Cultural Association' (ASECA) was established in Orissa (Odisha) and the branch of ASECA was formed in West Bengal in 1967-68. It is to be noted that from 'Aboah Gaonta', ASECA was formed as there had been difference in their view on which script should be used to write Santhali. The members of 'Aboah Gaonta' had their opinion of using Bengali script whereas members of ASECA stand for Ol Chiki. On the other hand the members of 'Santali Literary and Cultural Society' wanted Santhali should be written in Roman script. Despite the scriptural differences, all these associations wanted the development of the language and the proper recognition in the Indian Constitution. Their rigorous movements and agitations showed them at last the ray of hope when the Santhali Language made its place in the Eighth Scheduled in the Indian Language Family on 22nd December, 2003. Languages that are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India are entitled to state support in various fields such as subsidies for printing books, preparation of text books for schools and many more. According to Brandt (2014), India hosts the majority of the scripts which play an outstanding socio-linguistic role. There are 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule in the Constitution of India and these are Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. From the 22 languages above, the following scripts of the Indian languages are not yet represented on the Indian

Currency Note: Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Manipuri, Santhali, and Sindhi. After the inclusion of the language in the Eight Schedule in the Constitution of India, Government of West Bengal established 'Paschim Banga Santali Academy' for the betterment and the development of the language. In West Bengal, according to Census of India 2001, total numbers of Scheduled Tribes is 4406794 and among them 2280540 Santhals reside in the state. Santhals are the most dominant tribe in West Bengal and comprising almost 52% of the total ST population in the state. A huge number of populations speak Santhali in West Bengal. The Government of West Bengal has taken various steps for the Santhali and Santhali speaking people of the state in respect of the other Indian states like Odisha, Jharkhand and Assam where the Santhal population is quite high. After West Bengal, the other states have also started working on the development of the language as well.

OI Chiki was first approved in 1979 as the official script of the Santhali language and took necessary steps for educating Santhal children with the help of their mother tongue at the primary stage by the Government of West Bengal. Many Santhali medium schools in primary level in different districts of West Bengal, such as, Purulia, Bankura, Birbhum, Paschim Medinipur and Coochbehar have been set up. The schools have been operational from 2008-2009 academic years. Text books have been drafted accordingly. There is flexibility for the learners in switching the medium from Santhali to Bengali, if they wanted so. The Government of West Bengal has already trained some teachers to teach in OI Chiki. The teacher recruitment norm is similar to other institutions i.e. the schools have to recruit teachers through Primary TET for teaching in Primary schools and through School Service Commission for teaching in high/higher secondary schools. In West Bengal OI Chiki is also taught in informal centers and schools taught by the LAMPS organization. Moreover, there are universities like University of Burdwan, Vidyasagar University, Rabindra Bharati University, Sido Kanhu Birsa University, Visva-Bharati University offer certificate and degree courses in Santhali.

SOME IMPORTANT DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL MOVEMENTS OF THE LANGUAGE:

- 1) 1952: '*Aboah Gaonta*' was established in Kolkata.
- 2) 1964: '*Adibasi Socio Educational and Cultural Association*' (ASECA) was established in Odisha.

- 3) 1967-68: ASECA established its branch in West Bengal. Tribal Language Committee was also formed.
- 4) 1973: A conference held in Pakur, Bihar (now in Jharkhand), for the development of Santhali language and to eliminate the problems of using various scripts in writing Santhali. But no such positive decision was taken by the Santhal associations.
- 5) 1975: From 15th August radio transmission started in Santhali in Kolkata 'ka' everyday at 6.05 to 6.35 in the evening. News in Santhali was also broadcasted for the first time.
- 6) 1977: In Visva-Bharati university for the first time arrangement had been done for learning Santhali.
- 7) 1978: A huge rally took place in Kolkata for the recognition of Ol Chiki.
- 8) 1979: Government of West Bengal made Ol Chiki as the official writing script for Santhali.
- 9) 1983: In Ranchi University's Regional Language Department made arrangements for learning Santhali.
- 10) 1992: '*Santali Bhasa Morcha*' was established in Mayurbhanj, Odisha. Demand had been made in the Lok Sabha for the inclusion of Santhali in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
- 11) 1997: Santhali programme was first aired in Kolkata Duradarshan channel.
- 12) 1999: '*Santali Bhasa Morcha*' and its alliances presented a memorandum to the then Prime Minister of India, Shree Atal Bihari Bajpayee for the inclusion of Santhali language in the Eight Schedule of Constitution of India.
- 13) 2000: A huge rally took place in Ranchi for the inclusion of Santhali language in the Eight Schedule of Constitution of India and for making Santhali as the 'Raj-Bhasa' in Jharkhand.
- 14) 2001: "All Santhal Students' Association of West Bengal" called for 12 hours 'bandh' in 21st February on the eve of International Mother Language Day for Santhali should be taught from primary to university level by using Ol Chiki script. In the same year Committee on Santali Language was made by the Government of West Bengal.
- 15) 2001: First Santhali Feature Film "*Chando Likhan*" was released.

- 16) 2003: Petition was made to the then President of India, Mr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam for the inclusion of Santhali language in the Eight Schedule of Constitution of India.
- 17) 2003: 22nd December, after long and tiresome struggles at last Santhali made its place among the other 21 scheduled languages of India. Santhali finally secured a place in the Eight Schedule of Constitution of India.

CONCLUSION: Although the Central Government and the State Governments have taken some steps for the development of the language but these are not enough. The struggle has not yet been finished. The problem of regional disparities should be abolished by making the language standardized. Use of mother tongue in the teaching-learning process should be encouraged. The picture of teaching Santhali in Ol Chiki in rural areas is not at all satisfying as teachers are not willing to go to the remote areas (though this is true to all the subjects). There is a huge gap between demand and supply i.e. though there is a huge demand in learning Santhali and learning in Santhali but the scarcity of properly trained teachers jeopardizing the whole process. Although in some of the schools medium of instruction is Santhali but the students have to switch their medium over to Bengali as there is no provision in taking classes in Santhali in the secondary/higher secondary level. Therefore the students from Santhali medium schools lagged behind from other students. In some of the cases they even drop out. Though Government of West Bengal has made various steps to promote Santhali as well as Ol Chiki, these are not enough as there is no state of the art infrastructure to teach and develop the language in Ol Chiki. As far as the economy is concern, the job opportunity by learning Santhali and Ol Chiki is too low to be discussed. That is why the educated Santhals, though they have immense respect and pride for their language and script, they prefer to educate their children in Bengali, Hindi or English medium schools.

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