



Research Paper

## “Sora Sopeng”: The Saura Tribe and New Identity Issue in the process of Sanskritization

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**Abstract:**

Tribal identity basis on culture, languages and religion. The Saura is one of the oldest tribes in Odisha. Saura people are divided into many parts as per region and by religion. Every tribal community has its dialect. Sauras uses the Saura dialect and also has its own script for writing. This script, Sora Sopeng was invented in 1936. The Script is working as a religious aspect as compared to the text and creates another religious group among the Saura Tribe. Because of Sopeng the community was divided into three groups. The letter practiced by Sauras from different religious background (Hindu, Christian and Sarna). In Sarnareligion, Saura do not practice and accepted the script. This is the big challenged for Saura Community to keep its own identity with the Saura language and script. The Sanskritization theory explained how one lower group wants upward mobility with changes in some practices. This process is ongoing among the Saura community. Half of the community now a dayshas already changed its original identity. The Christian Community is very well known for its language practice but do not practice Saura Sopeng. The Hindu Sauras practices Saura Sopeng (script) but do not use the Saura dialect. Another group of Sarna Saura practices own Saura tradition but language and script they don't use. This study finds the reason and the contradictory among the Saura Community and tries to locate the new identity.

**Keyword-** Saura, Sopeng, Sanskritization, Identity

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### I. Introduction

A tribal or indigenous person has known their specific characteristics, such as common geographical area dialect, cultures, and rituals. The Saura tribe has one of the oldest tribes in the Indian continent. The Saura tribes' History has been seen in Indian mythology like Mahabharata, Ramayana and other old testimony. Saura people live in the mountain part of eastern Ghat Odisha and the Andhra Pradesh region. The Saura is also known as sora, sabar, Shaara etc. As per the 2011 census Saura Tribe population is around 10 lakh Plus. Rayagada has around 9 per cent of the Saura population. Elwin mentioned in the preface of this work in January 1952 John Campbell British officer persuaded the Kondha Tribe to abound human sacrifice at the Gudari block of Rayagada District. That time he was first interacting with the Saura Tribe. Elwin was the first researcher who worked on the Saura Tribe and regularly visited for field study for around 15 years. He briefly detailed the Saura tribe religions practices in 1955 his book 'The Religion of an Indian Tribe'. He especially focused on the religious aspect of the Saura community. He found around 174 types of gods and goddesses Sauras are worshipped on different occasions. Prof. MN Srinivasan defines in his ethnographic study 'Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India' 1952. How lower community transform became a higher statues in a society. It is the process of upward mobility of lower caste, which causes positional change in the system not the structural cahne. The Study finding is how the Rayagada District Sauras change their religious identity through the following Sankritilization Process.

#### Methodology

The study conduct at Lauguda Village under the Gogupadu Gram panchayat of Ramnaguda Block Rayagada District, Odisha. The Paper present to specific Tribal group of Saura from Jananidhi Village. Therefore, for the collection of data has been using of interview technique with the help of unstructured questionnaires schedule. However, observation; case study; focused group discussion; case history method were also be taken.

### The Sora Sopeng

Saura Sopeng is the alphabet of the Saura people. They believed an “Akhsrya Bramha”. In 1936 Sora sopeng was invented by Saura Pandit Mangei Gomango. Mangei Gomang was said to be the Saura Sopeng rebirth of Lord Jaganatha in a 24 alphabet form. Each alphabet represents one god or goddess. They worshipped Matarvanam (god name) and followed Medir (Priest) instructions. It is also called Medir Religion. It is part of Hinduism. Pandit Mangei gomango was try to all the bramincal activity in Saura form. He was written around 38 books in use of saura sopeng. Some books name *Sabaram Klainama* (Class 1 Book), *Marang Jugnum*( Pancham Juga), *istaran*(History), *Matarbanam damdri sorajanjatadang*. His writing pointed. How Saura people live, practices principle of life and create Specific identity in society. The saura people are every Thursday worshipped Sora Sopeng.

**Figer -1: Sora Sopeng**



**Figer -2:Sora Alphabet**

୯	୧	୩	୧	୩	୧
sa	ta	ba	ca	da	ga
Suidan	Taod	Babu	Candi	Danki	Gada
୧	୩	୧	୩	୧	୩
ma	na	la	na	va	pa
Mundaxra	Nal	Labo	Naa	Varox	Patta
୧	୩	୧	୩	୧	୩
ya	ra	ha	ka	ja	na
Yuyu	Rangi	Haro	Ketuñ	Jannilo	Narana
୧	୩	୧	୩	୧	୩
a	e	i	u	o	e
Ange	Elda	Ida	Uyun	Onal	Emanda

**Figer-3: Matarbanam Temple**



### Saura Religious Beliefs

Saura religious beliefs are absolutely influenced of Hindu religion whereas; Saura is one of the tribal groups in India. However, during studied times it found that the Saura people had been simultaneously beliefs Hindu god and goddess and natural worships. Though, the sacred spot of Saura are conspicuously absent. Moreover, Elwin 1956 pointed that Saura people beliefs Ancestors, Supernatural power, Soul and evil. The other hand, saura people keep the figures or pictures “Idtal” Which is painted in their house. They also believed in “Miyampur” which animal sacrifices during the Festival. Therefore, Saura peoples religious beliefs divided into three types.

Traditional Religion	Hindu Religion	Medir Religion
Meria( Kandula Nua)	Ganesh	Gayepur (Ganesh )
Jodapur ( Nala Puja)	Shiva	Iranpur (Shiva)
Idaipur ( Pitru Karjya)	Thakurani goddess	Yuyuboypur (Thakurani maa)
Kundmadir (Nua Khai)	Laxmi Goddess	Datarpur (Laxmi Maa)

## II. Conclusion

Sankritlization is important to every society. But instead of advancing Sanskritization in Sora society, it has bound them to religious rituals. Which is a perfect cross for Sora society. As a result, they followed the customs of the upper castes and moved away from their own culture. Apart from language and religious mindset. The study try to elaborate how the Sora people of Lahguda village have neither education nor progress. Religion keeps them hidden within limited boundaries. According to Karl Marx “religion is the ophimo of the masses”. While congregating his culture Soras. Sanskritization is moving them in a different direction. The Sora society, which believes in Sora Sapeng, abandons education and indulges in religious ideas that hinder the progress of Sora society.

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