



Research Paper

## The Socio-cultural Dynamics of the Sora Tribe: A Linguistic Perspective

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**Abstract:**

The Sora (or Soura) tribe, renowned for its Idtal art and rich cultural heritage, presents a fascinating case study of socio-cultural transformation amidst modernization and religious shifts. This research delves into the complexities of the Sora tribe's linguistic landscape, examining the impact of historical events, religious affiliations, and government policies on the preservation of their mother tongue, Soura language. Through an analysis of census data, historical records, and contemporary observations, this study highlights the challenges faced by the Sora community in maintaining linguistic and cultural integrity. It also explores the role of religion, particularly Christianity and Hinduism, in shaping language usage patterns and cultural practices among the Sora people. Additionally, the research investigates government initiatives and international collaborations aimed at safeguarding tribal languages and promoting socio-cultural development. The findings underscore the urgent need for concerted efforts at multiple levels to protect the linguistic heritage of the Sora tribe and ensure the vitality of their cultural traditions in the face of modernization and globalization.

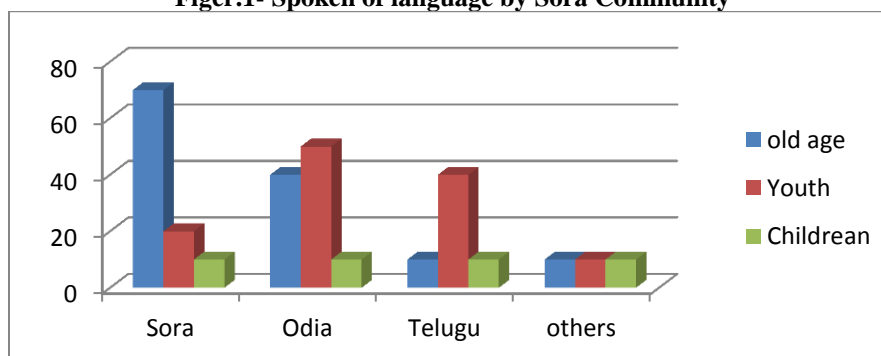
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### I. Introduction:

The Sora tribe, numbering over seven lakh individuals according to the 2011 census, resides predominantly in Odisha, India. Historically renowned for their Idtal art and ancient customs, the Sora people have witnessed significant changes in their lifestyle and cultural practices over the past seven decades since India gained independence. One notable aspect of this transformation is the evolving linguistic landscape of the Sora community, particularly concerning the usage and preservation of their native language, Soura. This research aims to explore the intricate relationship between socio-cultural dynamics, religious affiliations, and language usage patterns within the Sora tribe, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities for preserving their linguistic heritage and cultural identity.

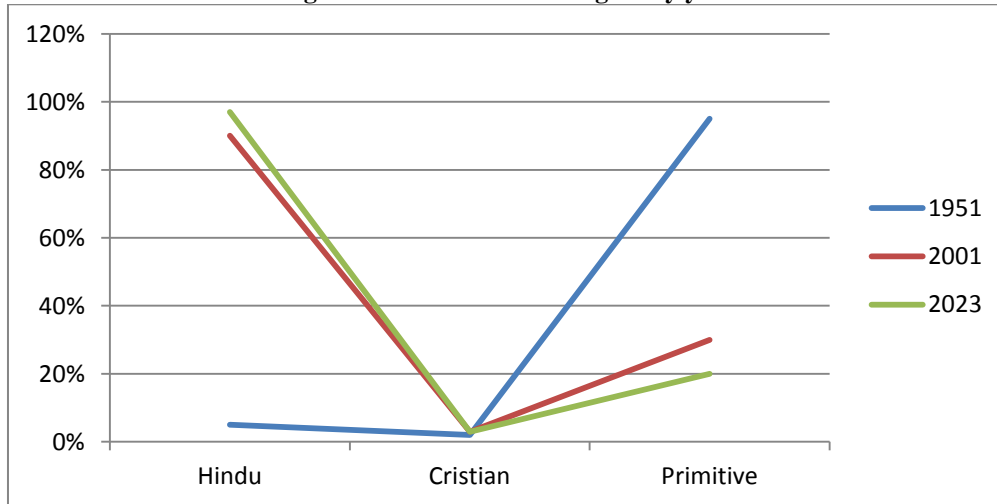
Fig.1- Spoken of language by Sora Community



## II. Historical Context:

The Sora tribe's history is marked by encounters with colonialism, missionary activities, and socio-political changes that have influenced their cultural identity and linguistic practices. The advent of Christianity among certain segments of the Sora community, beginning in the 19th century, led to a divergence in religious affiliations and linguistic preferences. While some Sora groups embraced Christianity and adopted the Sora language for religious purposes, others remained steadfast in their adherence to Hinduism and preferred alternative languages for communication and religious rituals.

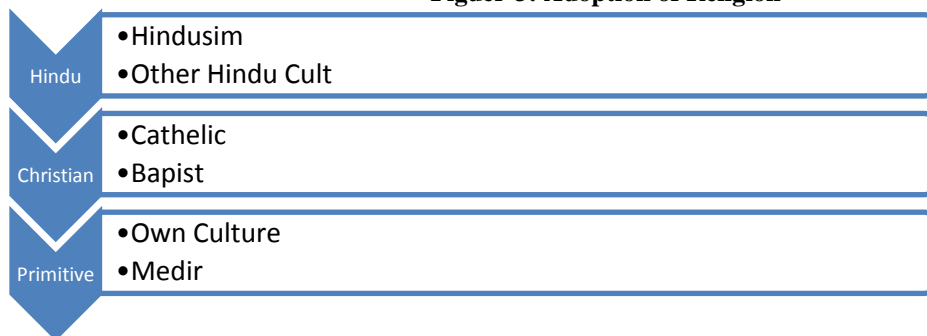
Figuer-2: Converted of Religion by year



## III. Religious Influence on Language Usage:

The intersection of religion and language within the Sora tribe has had profound implications for their cultural cohesion and linguistic vitality. The spread of Christianity among a significant portion of the Sora population has contributed to the revitalization of the Sora language in religious contexts, particularly through the translation of religious texts such as the Bible. In contrast, Hindu Sora communities have experienced a decline in the usage of the Sora language, opting instead for alternative languages such as Odia or Telugu for everyday communication.

Figuer-3: Adoption of Religion



## IV. Government Policies and Initiatives:

Recognizing the importance of preserving tribal languages and cultural heritage, the Odisha government has implemented various initiatives to support mother tongue-centric education and language revitalization efforts among indigenous communities. However, challenges persist, including a shortage of qualified Sora language teachers and the encroachment of dominant languages such as Telugu in tribal regions.

## V. Conclusion:

In conclusion, the linguistic landscape of the Sora tribe reflects a complex interplay of historical legacies, religious dynamics, and socio-economic factors. While the Sora language remains a vital component of cultural identity for certain segments of the community, concerted efforts are needed to ensure its continued survival and transmission to future generations. By fostering collaboration between government agencies,

international organizations, and local communities, it is possible to safeguard the linguistic heritage of the Sora tribe and promote their socio-cultural development in the 21st century.

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