



Research Paper

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJSHAHI

Rahul Kumar Dutta Pinku

(English Discipline, Khulna University, Bangladesh)

ABSTRACT

Culture is the instrument of gaining identity that reflects the overall life-style including both material and non-material elements. This study shows the subsidence and the problems of the preservation of Santal culture. Through a questionnaire survey on 100 randomly selected respondents in Rajshahi, this research tries to focus on the present situation of Santal culture and the reasons behind the cultural subsidence. Help has been from different scholarly books, journals, newspapers, and so on to gather relevant information on this topic. However, the collected data are analyzed and presented in the form of tables and discussed methodologically to find out the problems of preservation of the Santal culture and to give recommendations. The study discovers that the Santal culture is changing and not having enough land of their own to practice their culture, Bangla-based education system, negligence among the young Santals in practicing their own culture, the dominance of Bangla culture, proselytism or Christianization, and the impact of the fast development of technology that includes internet system, television, radio programs; are the prominent reasons behind this change.

Key Words: Santal, Culture, Santal social system, Cultural subsidence, Change in culture, Cultural dominansce.

Received 28 November, 2020; Accepted 14 December, 2020 © The author(s) 2020.

Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Bangladesh is an ethnically branched out state. Over forty-five tribal groups are living in this land (World Bank, 2008). The Santal community is one of the most prevalent and most ancient tribes in Bangladesh. Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Bogra, and Rangpur districts are their general living areas. As Hossain and Sadeque (1984) say, "The Santals of Bangladesh are mostly found in the north-western part of the country. They are largely concentrated in Rajshahi, and Dinajpur districts of Bangladesh. They have migrated to these areas mostly during the British period when they acquired agricultural occupation. Before that, they were mainly hunters". Santals have descended from Proto-Australoid race. "The Santals are usually short/medium in structure and dark to dark brown complexioned. Their noses are flat, lips being thick. They are pretty robust in the structure having a wide chest. Their hairs are mixed from kinky/wavy to straight and black color" (Hossain and Sadeque, 1984). 'Santali' is the language of the Santals, which has its place in the family of Austric languages (Toru, 2008). Through the assessment which is done by the Christian Missionaries in 1980, it can be said that the population of Santals in the northern part of Bangladesh was above 100,000. According to the official census of 1991, "The total number of Santals in Bangladesh is 2, 02,744 but the Santal leaders claim that this figure is a gross underestimation" (Samad, 2006). Like many other indigenous communities in Bangladesh, Santals have their own community life, language, and culture. They have their folklore, riddle, music, creeds, religious view, and history. Toru (2008) cites Sir Edward Galt in his book to prove Santal's origin and also cites Sir William Hunter to claim Santals as the oldest tribe of the Indian subcontinent.

1.1.1 Santal Culture

Here, some main facets of the Santal culture are being discussed.

1.1.1.1 Language

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJ SHAHI

The language spoken by the Santals is Santali. The Santali language is a member of the Austro-Asiatic family. The Santali script is a comparatively recent innovation. According to Md. A. Razzaque Sarker (2014) "The Santals did not have a written language until the twentieth century and it used Latin/Roman, Devnagri, Oriya and Bangla writing systems. Paul Olaf Bodding, (born at Gjøvik, Norway on 2 November 1865, died Odense, Denmark on 25 September 1938) who was a Norwegian missionary, linguist, and folklorist serving in India for 44 years (1889–1933), created the first alphabet of Santali language and wrote the first grammar for the Santali-speaking native people in eastern India (*Adibasi Janogoshti, Bangladesh Asiatic Society, 2007*).” In Santal occupied areas, they speak to each other in the Santali language. But when they speak to others, they have to use the Bangla language. Their children generally learn both Bangla and Santali languages at their early age. But, the scope of using the Santali language is getting lower day by day.

1.1.1.2 Religion

The Santal people believe in the immortality of the soul as well as the immortality of God. According to Sarker (2014) "The Santals worship *Marang Buru* (big hill) or *Bonga* as the supreme deity. The weight of belief falls on a court of spirits (*Bonga*), who handles different aspects of the world and who must be placated with prayers and offerings in order to ward off all evil influences. They believe that *Marang Buru* first looked after them, feed them, clothed them, gave them sex, and taught them brewing of rice beer.” Rituals linked with the farming succession are celebrated all the year round, beside life-cycle rituals for birth, marriage and burial, are also celebrated. Generally, birds and other animals are offered to their Gods in different adorations. "Religious leaders are male specialists in medical cures who practice divination and witchcraft" (Sarker, 2014 cites *Adibasi Janogoshti, Bangladesh Asiatic Society, 2007*).

1.1.1.3 The Santal Festival and Amusement

The Santals prefer group performance to solo. Group dancing and singing is the chief standard to state their pleasure and glee. "The *Dasai* dance is performed only by males of the community on festive occasions. *Langre*, *Guluri*, and *Humti* are danced all the year round, whereas *Baha* and *Sohorai* are only for festive seasons. In social ceremonies like marriage, *Dong* is danced" (Sarker, 2014). The Santali songs also have variety. The Santali word for song is "*Sereng*". The Santali culture is portrayed in the images and in the artworks at their walls. Santal people commemorate many festivals in different occasions. Dr. Mazharul Islam Toru (2008) describes that The Santals follow the cycle of nature and agricultural terms to celebrate festivals accordingly. They celebrate these festivals to invoke nature to increase their wealth and free them from all the enemies. According to Toru (2008), they celebrate festivals like *Sohorai*- from the end of *Paush* up to the entire month of *Magh*, *Karam*- in *Aswin* to have amplified prosperity and offspring and to get rid of the wicked spirits, *Disumsendra*- to celebrate hunting on the eve of *Baishakhi Purnima*, *Ero*- Paddy implantation festival, *Jamtala Bonga*- a festival to celebrate when the ear of paddy hangs downward exclusively in the year when the crop is destroyed due to scanty rainfall, *Makar Parva*- the major festival of the Santal, celebrated with spectacle and grandeur in the month of *Paush* when the paddy reaping is half done and the mind is free from all tempts and anxieties.

1.1.1.4 Judicial System

The Santal had an organized and traditional judicial system for the supervision and clarification of various tribulations inside their society. They generally try to solve the communal problems taking place within their community by themselves. From the book *Bangladesher Adibasi: tritio khondo* (in Bangla, 2010), we come to know that The Santali system of governance is known as *Manjhi- Paragana* which may be compared to Local Self Governance. This governing body is liable for making decisions to reorganize the village's socio-economic situation. The head of the body is called *Manjhi Haram* (headman of the village). He is the chief of the administrative, legal, and all other functions within the society. He is assisted by *Paranik*, *Jagmanjhi*, *Jagparanik*, *Naike*, *Gudit*, and etcetera.

1.1.1.5 The Customs of the Santals

Birth is considered as a very festive event among the Santals. The naming of the child is done on the day of the birth or on any odd-numbered day following birth. The first-born son usually gets his grandfather's name; and the second male child gets it from the motherly side. Santals are a patriarchal indigenous community where plunge is considered through male lines. They have a patriarchal society where the father is generally the head of the household. Moreover, females are important as they too serve economically in the household. Monogamy is the usual form of marriage among the Santals but bigamy is also allowed. Premarital relation is not allowed among Santals. "The death during old age is taken good because it brings occasion of

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJ SHAHI

transformation of body and soul of a person. The dead body is buried or cremated. Only male members participate in death rituals. The dead are cremated as well as buried. The entire village has to mourn the death. After seven days the Santals purify themselves by bathing in a river” (Sarker 2014). Family like the mainstream society is the minimum unit of social organization in the Santal society. Family is usually nuclear. Married son established their own family and married daughter leave the house to lead a family with their husband. The Santal tribe is divided into 12 clans or Parish. They are (1) *Kisku* (rulers) (2) *Hasda*, (3) *Murmu* (priest)) (4) *Hambrom* (judges) (5) *Mardi* (businessman) (6) *Sauren* (soldiers) (7) *Tudu* (musician) (8) *Baski* (9) *Besra* (10) *Pauria* (11) *Gua Soren* (12) *Chaure* (Sarker, 2014 cites *Adibasi Janogoshti, Bangladesh Asiatic Society, 2007*).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Culture, as Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2010) defines is “the customs and belief, arts, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group”. It is the overall lifestyle of people of a particular reign or group. Culture is the center of identity of a nation and it regulates the creeds, beliefs, morality, ideology, and injunction of a group of a specific zone. According to Dr. Muhammad Samad (2006), the Santals are one of the most deprived and helpless indigenous communities in Bangladesh. They are deprived as well as are dominated both culturally and linguistically. By the name of education or modernization many activities are being done which are actually marginalizing the Santals in various ways. Dr. Muhammad Samad (2006) says, “Promoting education among the Santals is very important, but providing livelihood based on traditional skill, such as agriculture is similarly required.” He tries to focus through this statement, on the cultural dominance by the mainstream people on the Santals. The Santal culture is being subsided for various reasons; like Christianization, modernization, Bangla based education policy, the fast going technological development, financial crisis, and so on. Besides, “there is a rare example where the Santal community people have improved their financial conditions. There is provision for a quota system in recruitment to take the backward section of the society on the main track but the Santals are not qualified enough to reach the level of getting quota facilities. That is why the Santals including some other tribals need more extended cooperation to walk together with the mainstream population” (Sarker, 2014). Therefore, the culture of the Santal people of Bangladesh is really in danger and this subsidence of culture leads the Santal people of Rajshahi in specific, of Bangladesh in general to an identity crisis.

1.3 Research Questions:

- What is the condition of Santal culture among the Santal people of Rajshahi?
- What are the problems in the preservation of Santal culture among the Santal people of Rajshahi?
- What can be the probable solutions to this cultural subsidence?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are divided into two categories---

1.4.1 General Objective:

- To find out the actual reasons which are responsible for the subsidence of the Santal people of Bangladesh
- To find out the solutions to preserve the Santal culture in Bangladesh

1.4.2 Specific Objectives:

- To trace the condition of Santal culture in Rajshahi
- To clarify the necessity of preservation of the culture of the Santal community of Rajshahi
- To verify the role of the Bangladesh government in this respect
- To analyze the role of Christianization, modernization, Bangla based education policy, the fast going technological development, financial crisis on this very cultural subsidence

1.5 Hypothesis

Like many other indigenous communities in Bangladesh, Santals have their own community life, language, and culture. Despite being a rich culture, Santal culture is being forced in several ways to be mixed with the dominating Bangla culture. It can be assumed that the lack of scope to practice own culture, Christianization, modernization, Bangla based education policy, the fast going technological development, financial crisis, and so on are the main reasons behind the cultural subsidence of the Santals of Rajshahi, in specific and Bangladesh, in general. Through the Mother-tongue-based education system, consciousness about

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJ SHAHI

self-identity and culture, proper supervision by the government, the establishment of different Santal cultural academies, and financial strength; this cultural subsidence may be controlled.

1.6 Literature Review

A literature review is a body of the text that aims to review significant issues of existing information counting substantial findings as well as theoretical and methodological contributions of a particular topic. A literature review is a secondary source of data collection also. Literature review works as a floor to announce the genuineness of research work. A researcher should have a sound acquaintance about the preceding works allied to his/her work.

1.6.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects an amalgamation of the previous related studies. Existing literature on the Santals, who are at the center of this study is reviewed and analyzed in this chapter. The literature reviewed provides insights into the experiences of the Santals in the Bangladeshi context. A number of resources, including scholarly books, journal articles, newspaper reports, curricular textbooks from schools, and previous thesis papers that document the Santal life and struggle in the sub-continental context have been consulted. Due to the insufficiency of relevant literature on the Bangladeshi context, researches on various indigenous peoples from the neighboring country, India, are also consulted.

1.6.2 The Santals in Scholarly Books

Books are the most authentic and organized source of knowledge. Though the number is very limited, some well-known books, based on anthropological research findings, on the Santals are available. Sitakant Mahapatra's (1986) *Modernization and Ritual Identity and Change in Santal Society*, explains the dilemma of the Santals in the sub-continental context. Mohapatra demonstrates how the "tradition bound, ritual based Santals negotiate degradation and poverty and redefine themselves in the emerging modernization". Mohapatra recognizes the glorious past of the Santals and attempts to find a balance between "two sets of symbols, between technology and ritual, between politics and culture". *Bangladesher Adibasi Sanskriti*, written by Dr. Mazharul Islam Toru (in Bangla, 2008) provides a vivid picture of Santal culture, education, and social structure. According to Toru, "Christianization has increased the literacy rate among the Santals. Therefore, their dress pattern, language, exchanges etcetera are being affected". Ali Ahsan's (1998) *Santals of Bangladesh* (in Bangla) allows knowing about the whole Santal lifestyle and culture. In *Ethnic Minorities of Bangladesh: Some Reflections, the Santals and the Rakhaines*, Amena Mohsin (2002) has recommended prevailing people to "practice a culture of tolerance and respect towards the minority communities". *In Search of a Withering Community: the Santals of Bangladesh* (Rahman, 2004) addresses the problems regarding land rights and the relationship between land and tribal culture.

1.6.3 The Santals in Major Journal Articles

The Santals of Rajshahi: A Study in Social and Cultural Change written by Kazi Tobarak Hossain and Syed Zahir Sadeque (1984) discusses the social and cultural change of the Santals of Rajshahi, who are the center of this study. Kazi Tobarak Hossain's (2000) paper, *The Santals of Bangladesh: An Ethnic Minority in Transition*, discovers the negative impact of Christianization on the social unity, religion, and traditions of the Santals in Northern Bangladesh. Mrinal Kanti Debnath (2010) in his thesis paper, *Living on the Edge: The Predicament of a Rural Indigenous Santal Community in Bangladesh* states "(his) thesis explores the ways in which the legacy of colonialism continues to shape the material and non-material conditions of rural indigenous communities in Bangladesh" and also "examines the complex confluence of power, politics, economics, and identities in rural Bangladesh; it explores the web of local, national, and global mechanisms that (re)create and maintain oppressive systems and structures." Muhammad Samad's (2006) article, *The Santals in Bangladesh: Problems, Needs, and Development Potentials* defines the tight spot of the Santals in Bangladesh. He discovers their economic conditions, education, language, land rights, injustice, and employment. Here, in this article, Samad is desperate to "initiate an intervention for improving their situation". Md. Emaj Uddin (2008) compares in his article *Family Communication Patterns between Muslim and Santal Communities in Rural Bangladesh: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, family communication patterns among Muslim and Santal communities in Bangladesh. According to Uddin, "Muslim families prefer more autocratic modes of communication than the Santal families, which prefer democratic or egalitarian communication approaches."

1.6.4 The Santals in Non-traditional Resources in Bangladesh

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJ SHAHI

A few other articles, such as *Indigenous People Still Neglected in all Sectors* (*The Daily Star*, August 8, 2007), Jakib Talukder's article (*Daily Bhorer Kagoj* February 21, 2007), following International Mother Language Day, *Adivasibhabna Akueshlaghata (Thoughts on Indigenous Identity in Light of the Celebration of the Mother Language Day)*, *Without Saving the Adivasi Communities, the Environment Cannot Be Saved* (*Prothom Alo*, Dec. 7, 2007), *Protikul Adivasira (Marginalized Indigenous Peoples)* (*The Daily Jugantor*, August 9, 2008), are cited in Debnath's paper (2010). Besides that, on the occasion of 'World Indigenous Day-2017' different newspapers, like *Prothom Alo*, *Kaler Kontho*, *The Daily Star*, *Bangladesh Observer* etcetera published some special editorial articles on 09 August, 2017. Television channels, like: News 24, telecast programs on that very day on the indigenous issue. Some other published materials in daily newspapers document the stories of Adivasi marginalization in Bangladesh.

1.6.5 Conclusion

Colonialism is an endless process. Somewhere in the world, some particular group is victim to colonialism. This system is vividly described in *Subaltern Studies*, by G. C. Spivak and some other scholars. "In the West, there is a tendency to justify or suppress the aftermath of colonialism. Similarly, there is a discourse of denial regarding the phenomenon of ongoing colonialism in southern countries, such as Bangladesh, where indigenous peoples suffer material, cultural, linguistic, and spiritual subjugation" (Debnath, 2010). This covered colonialism is very rarely discovered by scholars. That is why very little works are done on the issue of indigenous cultural crisis or identity crisis. In this circumstance, this study might be helpful for the next researchers.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is a guideline for a research study. A theoretical framework is a set of amalgamated notions like a theory but not necessarily so well worked-out. It helps the researchers to determine what facts are to be measured and how. It also serves as structure and support for the rationale of the study, the statement of the problem, finding out the scope and limitation of the research in different ways. A theoretical framework is a must to fix the nature of the study whether it is qualitative or quantitative research. It also serves to frame the methodology.

Mrinal Kanti Debnath (2010) asserts that employing a post-colonial framework to research on the indigenous Santals, who are physically and culturally on the verge of extinction, is antithetical as the "mega intellectualizing of the personal in postcolonialism has resulted in the displacement of indigeneity, denigration of community, and the polarization of the material and spiritual world (Spencer, 2006, p. 115)". "An anti-colonial discursive framework recognizes the importance of locally produced knowledge emanating from cultural histories and daily human experiences and social interactions" (Dei, 2002, p. 7). This is, therefore, a feasible approach for this research project.

An anti-colonial discursive framework is used for this study as a "theoretical tool for practical purposes" (Dei, 1999) to explain issues of power, domination, racism, and injustice in the lives of Santal people of Rajshahi. "The anti-colonial discursive framework addresses and explores issues that traditional Western model tends to undermine or question" (Debnath, 2010). It spreads a critical look, presenting an alternative model embodied in indigenous knowledge. The anti-colonial discursive framework "offer(s) both theoretical and practical responses" (Dei, 2000) to the colonial condition that the Santals negotiate and refuse to accept. The anti-colonial discursive framework can find out and describe the covered facet of hegemonic relationships between the nation and marginalized communities, such as the Santals in Bangladesh. In this context "the focus is shifted to the complexity of lived experience; rather than searching for broad generalizations, we must look for local, specific and historically informed analyses grounded in spatial and cultural context" (Dei, 2002). In addition, the anti-colonial framework digs into the "history from above, which configures as well as disfigures colonial relations between the indigenous peoples and the dominant Bangladeshis, who are in the privileged position through the emergence of the nation-state in 1971" (Debnath, 2010). The anti-colonial discursive framework "emphasizes the [epistemic] saliency of colonialism and imperialism and their continuing aftermaths on marginalized communities, for example in the form of reproduction of imperial relations, economic poverty" (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2000), and the deformation of the indigenous culture. It thus enables to explore the societal structure that affects the construction and reconstruction of the Santal community's sense of self, their position in society, and their struggle for preserving their traditions, culture, and spirituality. This framework enables too to "question, interrogate, and challenge the foundation of institutionalized power and privilege and the accompanying rationale for dominance in social relations" (Dei, 2000) that shapes the colonial experience of the Santals.

This very anti-colonial discursive framework previously has been taken by Mrinal Kanti Debnath for his thesis paper, *Living on the Edge: The Predicament of a Rural Indigenous Santal Community in*

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJSHAH SHAHI

Bangladesh (2010). To explore cultural dominance by the powerful Bangladeshi community over that of the minority tribal Santal community, this anti-colonial discursive framework will be apt and suitable.

1.8 Rationale of the Study

Santal is one of the most unfortunate indigenous communities. Santal culture is being marginalized by the mainstream Bangla culture. The Santal children are forced to use Bangla in the schools; Santal people having no other option have to work with the mainstream people, forgetting their own traditional occupation. Nelson Mandela once has said, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart." Keeping harmony at Mandela's words, it can be said that a man breathes when he is in a foreign culture, with which he has an acquaintance, but he leads the life when he is in his own culture. This paper aims to show that the cultural dominance by the mainstream Bangla culture on the vulnerable Santal culture. It will go for identifying the problems of preservation of the Santal culture and for suggesting how to control this cultural subsidence. The findings of the study will help the concerned authority to take necessary steps to solve this problem. The findings might be generalized and applicable after some modifications to this sort of problem of some other tribes. This research will be a milestone for future researchers. Above all, this research will help for the betterment of the condition of endangered Santal culture which will be beneficial for Bangladesh as a country.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The research methodology is an organized framework of researching to address several issues and to solve problems rationally and scientifically. The methodology is a proper layout of the research. This research is a survey-based and its purpose is to find out the condition of Santal culture at Rajshahi in specific and in Bangladesh in general. An interview checklist or questionnaire has been built as the primary instrument of collecting primary data. When the data are collected they are analyzed with the use of Microsoft Word.

2.2 Setting of the Study

Rajshahi District of Bangladesh is the area of study for this research because of its convenience to the researcher. According to Population Census 2011, BBS, 26469 Santal people live in Rajshahi and it is the second-largest district in Bangladesh after Dinazpur, on basis of the Santal population. Data have been collected from Horgram, Purbo-Bagan Para, Rajpara Police Station, Rajshahi City Corporation. As Father of a local church, Patrick says "around 450 Santals live here".

2.3 Target Population and Sample Size

The population of this research encompasses all the Santal people of Rajshahi district. According to Population Census 2011, BBS, 26469 Santal people live in Rajshahi. That means the total population is 26469. Among this universe, this study determines a sample of 100 respondents. The culture of a particular community depends upon the activities, life-style, creeds, and beliefs of all the people of that community. That is why everyone, who has a minimum level of intellectuality, can be selected as a respondent. Therefore, a simple random sampling process has been used for primary data collection.

2.4 Instrumentation

For this research, a solid, well-structured questionnaire was prepared. The questionnaire was prepared after consulting with the supervisor. Open-ended and multiple-choice questions were set regarding the purpose of the study so that the necessary data could be collected precisely as well as effectively. Consciousness was maintained about the reliability, clarity, quality, and validity of the instrument. The respondents were guaranteed their privacy. The questionnaire used in this study includes 20 multiple choice questions and two open-ended questions in it. The questionnaire also has a part where the participants are asked for their personal information, like age, sex, education level etcetera. However, some situation-based unorganized questions have been also asked for better understanding.

2.5 Data Collection

There are different methods of data collection, like observation, questionnaire survey, interview etcetera. This study, being social research is done with the help of a questionnaire survey method to collect the primary data. Questionnaires are given to the available respondents and then the questions are explained, even filled up as per their answers by the researcher, in some cases, as the respondents are not much educated or are children. Their observations on the present situation of their culture are the primary data of this research.

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJ SHAHI

For the collection of secondary data, various scholarly books, journals, research papers, articles, newspapers, and websites are dealt with.

2.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Collected data have been analyzed, interpreted, and analyzed based on the hypothesis of the research. The analyzed data have been presented with the help of Microsoft Word in tables.

2.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research has made the Santal people aware of the importance of their own culture which is a must for their identity. Besides, the related authority has got some guidelines to move on with to solve the cultural subsidence. This study also has found the issues that are responsible for the cultural subsidence of the Santal community of Rajshahi, which can be easily generalized for the whole Santals of Bangladesh.

This research was a small scale study. This study is quantitative, but it deals with qualitative skills. Though the problem is solved with the use of five points Likert scale, it is found that the exact position cannot be determined as there may be some positions between 'strongly agree' and 'agree' or 'neutral' and 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. Another problem is the unavailability of the interested participants. It would be very effective if data could be collected from more samples of the Santal community. Most of the participants are not much efficient in English. Being a student researcher has to face money and time limitations on the way of doing the research.

2.8 Conclusion

Methodological progression is described in this chapter including study area, sample size, sampling process, data collection and analysis process, and the instruments that are used to complete the research.

III. Table Analysis and Result

3.1 Introduction

To obtain the desired result the collected data are analyzed in this chapter and presented in the below tables. The tables are also explained and discussed methodologically to find out the actual situation of the Santal culture, the reasons behind it, and the recommendations.

3.2 Table Analysis and Result

3.2.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

3.2.1.1 Age

Age of the respondents is categorized into five categories. The ranges are: 5-18, 19-30, 31-45, 46-55, and 56-72.

Table 1: Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
5-18	24	24%
19-30	19	19%
31-45	31	31%
46-55	14	14%
56-72	12	12%
Total	100	100%

This survey is done comprising samples from all possible ages, from child to old in a quite logical ratio.

3.2.1.2 Sex

Table 2: Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	71	71%
Female	29	29%
Total	100	100%

The survey includes both 71% male and 29% female.

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJ SHAHI

3.2.1.3 Education Level of the Respondents

Table 3: Education Level of Respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	10	10%
Primary (1-5)	18	18%
Secondary (6-10)	54	54%
Higher Stage (11- Bachelor degree)	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Santal education is not in a good position but certainly progressive. That is why 10% percent of people are illiterate, and most of them, 54% cannot cross HSC level.

3.2.1.4 Occupation of the Respondents

Table 4: Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Agriculture/Hunting	20	20%
Day Labor	52	52%
Others	28	28%
Total	100	100%

The Santals are not getting the land right properly which leads both males and females to work as day laborers in others' land. 52% are doing this, where only 20% are staying in their forefathers' work.

3.2.2 Respondents' Observation of Their Culture

Santal people's thinking, observation, attitude, foretelling are the main focuses here.

3.2.2.1 Santal Culture Is a Rich Culture

Table 5: Santal Culture Is a Rich Culture

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	57	57%
Agree	23	23%
Neutral	12	12%
Disagree	7	7%
Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Total	100	100%

80% of respondents believe that Santal culture is a rich culture either strongly or simply and only 8% disagree. That certainly proves the richness of the Santal culture.

3.2.2.2 Culture Provides Identity

Table 6: Culture provides identity to the Santals

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	78	78%
Agree	20	20%
Neutral	2	2%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

The Santals know that their indigenous identity depends on their culture as 98% agree on the point written in the questionnaire, "Culture is a must for the identity of the Santals".

3.2.2.3 Santal Culture Is Changing

Table 7: Santal Culture Is Changing

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	82	82%

SUBSIDIENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJ SHAHI

Agree	18	18%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Cent percent of the sample are in the same opinion either strongly or simply that their culture is changing.

3.2.2.4 Change in Food Habit, Housing, and Dress Code

Table 8: Change of Food habit, Housing, and Dress Pattern (Respectively)

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	25, 80, 27	25%, 80%, 27%
Agree	28, 17, 26	28%, 17%, 26%
Neutral	24, 3, 13	24%, 3%, 13%
Disagree	22, 0, 24	22%, 0%, 24%
Strongly Disagree	1, 0, 10	1%, 0%, 10%
Total	100	100%

According to the respondents Santal dress pattern, their housing style and food habit are changed or being changed.

3.2.2.5 Language Change

Table 9: Language Change

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	26	26%
Agree	29	29%
Neutral	27	27%
Disagree	18	18%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

The Santals use their own language “Hor” in their daily life and family. Maybe that is why 27% is neutral in the decision. Still, 55% think that language is also changing.

3.2.2.6 Change in Religious Practice and Different Celebrations

Table 10: Change in Religion and in Different Celebrations

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	94	94%
Agree	6%	6%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

3.2.2.7 The Reasons behind the Cultural Change:

An open-ended question has been asked to the respondents why their culture is changing. In answer, various reasons have come out. They are:

1. Not having enough land of their own to practice their culture (88%)
2. Bangla-based education system (73%)
3. Negligence of the young Santals in practicing their own culture (54%)

Table 11: Dominance of Bangla Culture and Proselytism Hamper Santal Culture

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	64, 55	64%, 55%
Agree	11, 32	11%, 32%
Neutral	14, 0	14%, 0%
Disagree	11, 9	11%, 9%
Strongly Disagree	0, 4	0%, 4%
Total	100	100%

Though The Santals in the open-ended question cannot find out these two reasons, as they are given as a statement 75%, 87% of respondents agree on this point of which 64%, 55% do strongly.

3.2.2.9 Internet, Television, Radio Programs Have Deeply Affected Santal Culture

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJ SHAHI

This is another reason which is not at first recognized by the Santal respondents but is agreed strongly by 67% of them when it is given as a statement. 12% again agrees in a usual manner. However, it is denied by 18% of respondents, of which 5% was strong.

Table 12: Impact of Internet, Television, Radio Programs

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	67	67%
Agree	12	12%
Neutral	3	3%
Disagree	13	13%
Strongly Disagree	5	5%
Total	100	100%

3.2.2.10 Possible Solutions as Respondents Suggest

The respondents are asked to speak freely about how the eradication of cultural subsidence is possible. They have found:

1. Primary education is to be done in the mother language (88%).
2. Rights of the indigenous Santals must be established (76%).
3. Land rights must be preserved for the Santals (64%).
4. Young generation is concerned about its own culture (94%).

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter is a presentation of collected primary data in the form of tables. All the information that supports this study and gathered through the survey is analyzed and presented in percentage.

IV. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This study aims at finding out the problems of preservation of the Santal culture and tries to identify the solutions of the cultural subsidence. The present condition of Santal culture is surveyed from Rajshahi area to complete the study. This study cares for the present circumstance of both material and non-material culture of the Santals and the reasons behind it.

4.2 Present Condition of Santal Culture

Culture can be divided into two main sections, one is material culture another is non-material culture. According to the survey, 82% strongly agree that culture is changing among the Santals. Even the remaining 18% also agree on the point. Not a single man denies that the Santal culture is changing.

4.2.1 Change in Material Culture

Material culture refers to physical objects such as home, dress, food habit, institution etcetera. From the survey, it is found that food habits, housing, occupation, dress patterns are being changed among the Santals. 25% strongly and 28% simply agree that their food habit is changing. 97% (strongly 80%, simply 17%) of respondents believe that their house pattern is changing. Again the survey shows that more than 50% is thinking that their dress code is changing. Besides, in the demographic profile of the respondents, it is surveyed that only 20% is still conveying their forefathers' occupation such as farming or hunting and 52% of them are day workers. Therefore it can be easily perceived that the material culture is changing.

4.2.2 Change in Non-material Culture:

Non-material culture means nonphysical ideas of people about their culture. It includes religion, creeds, norms, beliefs, language etcetera. 94% of Santals believe strongly and the remaining 6% simply that their religion and ancient beliefs are changed now. Again, 26% strongly, and 29% simply agree that their language is also changing. It is a matter of joy that they are using their 'Hor' language among their community. Therefore it can be stated that the Santal non-material culture is losing its grandeur, because of the decline of language, creeds, beliefs, and religious functions or celebrations.

4.3 Reasons for Cultural Subsidence:

From an open-ended question, various reasons behind the cultural subsidence of the Santals are discovered. Not having enough land of their own to practice their culture (88%), Bangla-based education system (73%), negligence among the young Santals in practicing their own culture (54%) are the reasons according to participants' observation. Later three more reasons are raised by the researcher and all of them are agreed by the

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJ SHAHI

respondents. The dominance of Bangla culture is recognized strongly by 64% and simply by 11% as well as proselytism or Christianization is also recognized by 55% strongly and 32% simply as the reasons for cultural subsidence. The impact of the fast development of technology that includes internet systems, television, radio programs, and so on is also recognized as a threat to the preservation of Santal culture strongly by 67% and simply by 12%.

4.4 Recommendations

The recommendations are based on the viewpoints of the Santals who have participated in this research. Through an open-ended question incorporated in the questionnaire, some significant solutions are discovered. However, those observations are given below, in a systematic and organized way, including some other related information that can help to erase the cultural subsidence and to preserve the Santal culture:

1. The indigenous identity of the Santals must be recognized. It can be done through an amendment to the constitution.
2. Primary education is to be done in the mother language (suggested by 88% of the respondents). That means the "Mother Tongue Based Education" system which is proposed in the Education Policy of Bangladesh-2010 has to be implemented.
3. The rights of the indigenous Santals must be established (stated by 76% of the respondents) by the *United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* (1993-94).
4. State functionaries, civil society, the judiciary, and other concerned agencies have to stop land-grabbing, deportation, nuisance, systemic unfairness, and trickery.
5. Land rights must be preserved for the Santals (64% suggests this point).
6. Intra-cultural academies should be increased for 'making the young generation concerned about their own culture as well as practicing their culture' (proposed by 94% respondents).
7. "The Santal community, the various NGOs, and the government must build a participatory relationship to foster co-operation, not confrontation, in the community's education and development, and to foster public awareness, empathy, and respect for the indigenous community" (Debnath 2010).
8. NGOs must work with responsibility for the Santal community, and preservation of their culture and tradition. They should not find only financial advantages on this occasion.

4.5 Conclusion

Through proper discussion, the situation and reasons of subsidence, or problems of preservation of Santal culture and its probable solutions are traced out in the chapter.

V. CONCLUSION

It is the civilization that comes and goes with time. Every civilization starts with a new dimension, new outlook, new life-style, new rule, and morality, which can be considered as its culture. It is a matter of regret that those cultures once die with the death of those civilizations. History asserts such specimens of Mesopotamian, Maya, or Mohenjo-Daro. The very cultures perished with the death of civility. However, if this death happens in this modern era, it will be certainly a disgraceful fact.

'The Santal culture is being subsided' is told strongly by 90% of the respondents of this study. This subsidence happens because of the low scope of exercise, aggressiveness of mainstream Bangla culture, poor facilities in the land right, proselytism, Bangla-based education system, and so on. All these reasons are agreed by above 80% of the respondents either simply or strongly. 74% of respondents are very confused about the future of their culture, and 48% strongly thinks that the young Santals are more interested in modern culture rather than their own one.

In this circumstance, to preserve the Santal culture, a determined endeavor must be implemented, based on the genuine requirements of the group of people, incorporating the Santals' ethics, beliefs, and tradition.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Ali, A. (1998.) 'Santals of Bangladesh', Mindnapur (India): Institute of Social Research and Applied Anthropology. (<http://anthropology-bd.blogspot.com/2008/07/santals-of-bangladesh-ethnic-minority.html> viewed on: 03 September 2013).
- [2]. Debnath, K.M. (2010). Living on the Edge: The Predicament of a Rural Indigenous Santal Community in Bangladesh (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/26415>
- [3]. Dei, G. J. S. (2002). Rethinking of the Indigenous Knowledge in the Academy. NALL Working Paper # 58.
- [4]. Dei, G. J. S. and Asgharzadeh, A. (2000). The Power of social theory: Anti-colonial discursive framework: Journal of Educational Thought, 35(3), 297-323.
- [5]. Ensure Indigenous Children's Education through Mother Tongue. (2007, August 20). The Daily Star, Retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=801>

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJ SHAHI

- [6]. Hossain K. T. (2000). The Santals of Bangladesh. An Ethnic Minority in Transition. Paper Presented at the Sixth Workshop of the European Network of Bangladesh Studies (ENBS), Oslo, May.
- [7]. Mahapatra, S. (1986) Modernization and ritual: Identity and Change in Santal Society. Oxford University Press.
- [8]. Mohsin, A. (2002). Ethnic Minorities of Bangladesh: Some Reflections, the Saontals and the Rakhaines. Dhaka: Grameen Trust
- [9]. Partha, P. (2007, Sept. 2). Adivasi Jonogoner Barnomalar Adhikar (Indigenous Peoples' Rightsto Have the Alphabet. Doinik Prothom Alo, Retrieved from www.prothom-alo.com
- [10]. Protikul Adivasira (Marginalized Indigenous Peoples) (2008, August 9). Doinik Jugantor, Retrieved from <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/26415>
- [11]. Qureshi, M. (1984). 'Tribal Cultures in Bangladesh' Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University. Rajshahi.
- [12]. Rahman, M. (2004). In Search of a Withering Community: The Santals of Bangladesh. Dhaka: Empowerment through Law of the Common People (ELCOP).
- [13]. Samad, M. (2006). The Santals in Bangladesh: Problems, Needs, and Development Potentials.
- [14]. Ethnic Community Development Organization. Journal of Ethnic Affairs Vol. II, 9-12. August 9.
- [15]. Uddin, Md. E. (2008). Family Communication Patterns between Muslim and Santal Communities in Rural Bangladesh: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology 44. pp. 675- 687.
- [16]. Document retrieved from <http://www.waset.org/journals/ijhss/v3/v3-2-17.pdf> on March 20, 2009.

Appendix Questionnaire

Personal Information of the Respondents:

- Name:
- Age:
- Sex:
- Level of Education:
- Occupation:

Observation of the Respondents about Santal Culture:

Please put tick mark in the box that indicates your attitude towards the given statements according to the given scale: 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5= strongly disagree.

Serial	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Santal culture is a rich culture					
2.	Culture gives indigenous identity to the Santals					
3.	Santal culture is changing.					
4.	Santal food habit is changing					
5.	Santal house pattern is changing					

SUBSIDENCE OF THE SANTAL CULTURE: PERSPECTIVE RAJ SHAHI

6.	Santal language is changing					
7.	Santal religious rituals and celebrations are losing their loftiness.					

What can be the reasons behind this cultural subsidence, in your opinion?

.....
 A) What do you think about the future of Santal culture?

.....
 B) What can be the ways to eradicate the problems of preservation of Santal culture?

Please, put tick mark again in the box that indicates your attitude towards the given statements according to the previous scale.

Serial	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Dominance of Bangla culture is a threat for Santal culture.					
2.	Proselytism/Christianization is subsiding the Santal culture.					
3.	Fast development of technology and different television or radio programs are also threats for Santal culture.					

Thanks for your cooperation