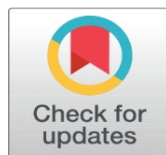


SANTHALS: THE CHILD OF MOTHER NATURE AND MUSIC

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DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.icetda24.2024.1340](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.icetda24.2024.1340)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the cosmic relation between the Santhals and Music. Santhal people consider the nature as their god and they believe in nature worship. The cultural and religious aspects of Santhals are very close to the nature. They celebrate all the seasons through festivals with pomp and grandeur. Music and dance are an integral part of these festivals. Music of the Santhals offers vibrancy and splendour. Men and women, old and young all of Santhali rejoice in their music. It shows their integrity and communal bonding. Their music is associated with their festivals and celebrations. Each and every festival has their own specific music and songs. These festivals demonstrate the rich and vibrant quality of the music and culture of the Santhal community. Their traditions and customs are orally passed from one generation to the next generation which is an ancient system that has existed for centuries.

Through this paper I attempt to draw my audience attention to the primitive culture and music of an ethnic people of our country. Santhals are very keen about their art and culture. It was an eye opener and amazed me to see the charm and depth of their music and culture. They are very skilled in the performance, which is an integral part of Santhals culture and it is like a bridge between the nature and culture.

Keywords: Santhal, Tribes, Music, Culture, village, Songs, Festivals, Baha Festival, Sohrae Festival, Rituals, Instruments, Traditions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Santhals are an indigenous and aboriginal people of our country. From ancient times, India has been the home land for indigenous people, who are strongly rooted to our Mother Nature. They consider themselves children of Mother Nature and worship nature as their god. In different seasons they have various festivals to celebrate nature. Their traditional beliefs are deeply rooted with their religious practices. They are animist and they used to worship nature, hills, mountains, animals, rivers and agricultural fields as their god. They believe their god protects them from evil spirits, diseases and natural explosions.

Santhals live in the Eastern region of India. The larger portion of Santhal population is found in Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal. Among all the tribes they are 3rd largest tribal groups of India. Santhals are mainly live in and around Middle-East region of our country. They belong to the Austro-Asiatic Language group of the Munda branch and they speak the Santhali Language.

Santhal people believe in living together in communal groups. They have their own villages, communities and societies. In each community have their own *Panchayat* and they placed a village Head called '*Manjhi*'.

Each member of the Santhal community has an individual role to play in their community. In Santhal communities they have their district socio-economic, cultural political and religious institutions which are belongs to the ancient history and culture of India.

Santhal people have been involved in different kinds of occupations for a living. Previously they were mainly hunter gathers, later they got involved with many different kinds of occupations like agriculture, fishing, basket-making, weaving etc.

Santhals are divided in twelve clans and they have a few sub clans. The clans are divided according to their occupations and the twelve clans have their respective totems.

2. RITUALS, FESTIVALS AND MUSIC

Most of the rituals and festivals of the Santhal tribe is associated with music and dance. Music is an integral part of Santhals life. In the evening when they came back from their work, they sit together for relaxation they drink rice-beer and they perform music together. They have various kinds of musical instruments, which they play during performance. Here few instrument descriptions are given bellow:

DHODRO BANAM: Dhodro Banam is a hollow musical string instrument of Santhal tribal community of the Eastern India. This instrument is one string bowed fiddle and the body and neck of the instrument are made of black wood with carved human figures. This instrument use to play during Sohrae festival.

TAMAK: Tamak is very popular stick-struck instrument among the Santhals. This instrument is a drum instrument and the body of the drum is made of metal Shaped like a big bowl. This instrument used to play during religious ceremonies and Santhal Festivals.

TUMDAK: Tamak is also very popular 'membranophone'¹ Instrument among Santhals. This is a double-headed hand struck instrument. The body of them drum is made from clay and this instrument looking like a frustum. It is also use during festivals.

BANAM: Banam is an ancient instrument among the Santhals. This is a single-string instrument, which is made of wood. This instrument use to play during festivals like Sohrae, Karam etc.

SINGA: Singa is a traditional wind instrument of Santhal tribe. This instrument is an ancient instrument, which is a type of horn instrument. It is use to play during religious festivals in Santhal community.



In Santhal community we can find music and festivals are related close nature. Among the Santhals there are various types of festivals. Among those festivals there are two major festivals Baha and Sohrae.

BAHA FESTIVAL

In Santhal community Baha festival is the second large festival after the Sohrae festival. It is spring festival of Santhal tribe to welcome the spring season when sal trees are going to blooms. Baha means flower, this festival is also called

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/membranophone>

flower festival. In the month of Feb-March every year they celebrated this festival. Through this festival Santhals express their gratitude and respect to the Mother Nature.

The festival celebrates for three days and with pomp and joy. This whole festival is associated with music and dance. There are lots of songs of Baha festival. one song is given bellow:

**Sing chan dui raka ben
Atma digir digir digir hale
shirma barang barang
Jag gosai..
notma digir digir hale
shirma barang barang**

**raka teroy raka ben
bihur teroy bihuren
jag gosai notma digir digir hale
shirma baran barang**

This song specially sung during 'Baha' festival. In this song a Santhali women is expressing her feeling about nature during 'Baha' festival. The song says that due to sun rises, her heart is touched and the sky is brightening up but the earth is still sandy.



Baha Festival

SOHRAE FESTIVAL

Sohrae festival is the grand festival among the Santhals. This festival is called harvest festival and cattle festival which celebrates in the month of January. During this festival People pray for their cattle and they worship cattles as their god. This festivals celebrates five to six days, which is fully loded with music and dance. Men and women, old and young all of Santhali wear new clothes and beautiful ornaments, then go around to the village singing and dancing. One Sohrae song is given below:

**Seday leka tumda ruime
Seday leka tiriyo juri
Juri arong me
Seday leka sajdo udung me
E juri....**

**Akoy yelte tumda rui ya
Akoy yelte tiriyo juri arong aa
Akoy yelte sajdongyo udung ya..
Ing yelte tumda rui me
Ing yelte tiriyo juri arong me
Ing yelte sajdo udung me...**

This is the one of popular Sohrae song among the Santhals. During this festival men and women enjoyed together through their performance.



Sohrae Festival

3. CONCLUSION

Finally, it can be concluded that they remain rooted in Mother Nature. The oral tradition of the Santhals, such as songs, poems and folktales pass from one generation to next generation through their community activities. Here we can sum up that the relationship between Santhals and nature and music is very unique and significant.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None

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