A study on Santali rhymes: collection and discussion

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Abstract - The ancestors of the Santals are the largest ethnic community in India. Santali is their mother tongue, is origin from an Austro-Asiatic language family. Santali is the rich heritage of folk rhymes. In Santali folk literature, however, rhyme holds a place of equal importance to these other forms. The aims of the study mainly focused on Santali rhymes that were intimately related to the social and cultural life of the Santal community. In this view, to obtain a profile of the culture-related folklore, the study was done on the qualitative linguistic approach. The result showed that the theoretical perspective of cultural materialism, the argument of Santali folk rhyme is created in the Santali language based on orality laid the conservation of the Santal-socio-cultural system. Santali folk rhymes are set in the context of Santal tradition, culture, behavior, social status, and identity construction within the community.

Keywords: santali rhyme, santali language, tradition, culture
1. INTRODUCTION

Rhyme is a form of verbal art in which the sound of the words is used to create a pattern. This pattern can be created by using words that have the same sound at the end, or by using words that have the same sound in the middle. Rhyme can also be created by using words that have the same sound at the beginning (Teruggi, 2017). Rhyme is the most important folk culture which is based on orality. Folk culture is the traditional culture that is passed down from one generation to the next within a community. It includes the traditions, customs, and beliefs of a group of people. Folk culture is often passed down through oral tradition, and it can be seen in the way people dress, the food they eat, the music they listen to, and the way they celebrate their festivals (Lim Jae-Hae, 2008). Rhyme is an important part of folk culture because it helps to keep traditions alive. Also, the Rhyme is an orality of the people. The orality meaning is that it is a way of using words that are spoken aloud. It is a way of using oral words (McQueen, 1993). This means that it is a way of using words that are spoken aloud. Rhyme is also a way for people to express their feelings and thoughts about the world around them. When people use rhyme, they can communicate their ideas and feelings creatively and uniquely (Qian, 2022). Rhyme is one of the most basic and important tools which helps to create both a musical and a visual element in a poem. It can also be a helpful tool in creating a sense of unity in a rhyme (Strumpf et al, 1970).

The Santal people are the indigenous tribal group in India. They have a rich oral tradition which has long been an integral part of their culture (Sundaram et al, 2019). The rich oral traditions of many cultures are a vital source of history, mythology, and identity. In an increasingly globalized and digitized world, the oral tradition is more important than ever. It is a powerful tool for preserving culture and transmitting knowledge. It is also a source of enjoyment and creative expression. The oral tradition is a vital part of the human experience, and it is worth preserving and celebrating. So, therefore numerous rhymes have been composed in Santali since ancient times. 'Primarily, the rhymes are bringing joy to the child's heart, which is very short type and consists of disjointed pictures, composed orally and mostly used by women' (Chakrabarty, 1999). These rhymes have become a part of oral literature, and the origin of the rhyme cannot be precisely stated. Since oral literature is composed in groups, so that the original creator of the rhyme is unknown to us, and the trace of whose name is not available. In the view of Rabindranath Tagore has mentioned, 'In which time and case, there was not any identity of the author and which date and years the rhyme has created, no such question has arisen' (Bhumika Eksho Bacharer Chara, 1997). Such rhymes have been practiced orally in Santal society from generation to generation.

Santals are the biggest native Indian tribes. According to the 1991 Census, they are approximately 6.8% of all the tribal people in the country (Census of India, 1991). They work in agriculture and rely on gathering, hunting, and fishing for a living. Additionally, they actively engage in animal husbandry (Soren, 2020). They have a rich history that dates back thousands of years, and their contributions to Indian society are significant. The Santals have faced various struggles throughout history, but their strong sense of community and cultural heritage has helped them overcome adversity and maintain their unique identity. They are very much skilled to create different types of rhymes. These tools play a vital role in children's life when the children practice rhymes; it is working to develop children's knowledge. Their rhymes often reflect their deep connection to nature and their daily lives, encompassing themes of love, spirituality, and social issues. These rhymes serve as a powerful tool for storytelling and preserving their cultural traditions, allowing the Santals to pass down their history and values from one generation to the next. Santals are backward to acquiring formal education, so, in this situation, Rhymes play an important role in children's life to achieve moral education in society. Moral education is acquiring the ability to make moral judgments.

The less educated simple village people tried to orally capture the life they saw around them consciously or unconsciously in the form of rhymes. Everything of this nature is the subject
matter to describe rhymes (Mitra, 2021). So, Santali rhymes are an exception from it. These rhymes could also treat as a knowledge domain through which children could develop their knowledge. We don’t know when the Santali rhymes were created because it was created verbally. It is the foundation of Santali folk literature. Rhyme is often used in poetry and songs because it can add a beautiful and melodic quality to the words. It is created when two words share the same sound, usually at the end of the word. Rhyme can be used to create a humorous effect, or to make a poem or song more memorable. It can also be used to create a sense of rhythm, which can make the words flow more smoothly. The purpose of this study is to explore the traditional rhymes which are created by the Santal tribe to determine the social and cultural life.

2. METHOD

The study was conducted using the methodology where the Santali rhymes were analyzed through the qualitative linguistic approach, which finds either support or no support for every in this claim. The main focus of this paper is to explore the identity of the Santal community as a unifying community as well as the practice of Santal culture, which is reflected in Santal rhymes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Collection and explanation

The ancestors of the Santals are the largest ethnic minority in India. I make a discussion of Santali folk rhymes to obtain a profile of the culture-related rhyme contained within. Rhymes are the tools that express the Santal culture whereas the Culture is the matrix in which mindsets are formed, and we can be influenced by it in ways that we are unaware of, because its leading perceptions, assumptions, and priorities are taken for granted as both obvious and invisible (Sullivan, 2021, in Evans, 2023). The Santal people have a rich heritage of folk rhymes that are passed down from generation to generation. All of these rhyming words in Santali are derived from the language of the speaker's ancestors, making these rhymes a valuable part of the Santali language.

The investigation and compilation of Santali folk rhymes was started by christen missionaries in the 19th century. There are many compilations of Santali folk rhymes. Such as the compilation is the Santal poetry - Hor Soren and Don Soren (1943). Hor serene comprises 1676 songs which are sung at festivals and dances. Don Seren (love songs) include 1824 songs which are sung at weddings, as well as 129 cultivation songs (Soren, 1943). These collecting are done by Sir. W.G. Archer. He was associated with the Santals who provided the material for the Hill of the Flutes: Life, Love, and Poetry in Tribal India, A Portrait of the Santals (1974). This compilation contains many folk rhymes, which were collected from various parts of the Santal tribal area (Shahed, 1993). The growth of literacy and the expansion of printing press accessibility also helped with the collection of folk materials. Reverent Jirimiya Phillips founded the American Foreign Baptist Mission at Jaleswar (1836). It was from this mission that the first collection of Santali rhymes has begun (Hembram, 2007). At the same time, Santal cultural and literary heritage emerged during the past several centuries. The Santal people have a rich cultural and literary heritage that has developed over the past several centuries. Their literature, including folk tales, poems, and songs, often reflects their deep connection to nature and their spiritual beliefs. This cultural heritage plays a vital role in preserving their traditions and passing down their ancestral knowledge to future generations. It serves as a source of pride and identity for the Santal community, fostering a sense of unity and resilience in the face of modern challenges.

Some of the most popular Santali folk rhymes are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Santali</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Den Dada Paisha</td>
<td>Give me Brother’s money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dampara neneling chalak</td>
<td>I will go to fair at Dampara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladu ho bang jomaing</td>
<td>I don't eat sweet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mithai ho bang jomaing</td>
<td>I don't eat sweet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jawai lagid Tumdak ing kiring (Murmu M. A., 2022)</td>
<td>I will buy Tumdak for my husband</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above-mentioned rhyme has described that a woman from a poor family is highly encouraged to visit the fair at Dampara. She does not have even a penny to eat sweets, so she asks her elder brother to give her some money. She will not eat sweets with that money; instead, she will buy a Tumdak (Musical instrument in Santali) for her husband. This demonstrates the selflessness and resourcefulness of the Santal woman, as she prioritizes her husband's passion for music over her desire for sweets. The act of purchasing a Tumdak not only showcases her love and support for her spouse but also highlights the significance of music in Santal culture, further emphasizing the importance of preserving their cultural traditions. I can say in this context, The Santals have their traditional musical instruments, which are played at celebrations, nuptials, and other events. They have a common musical style known as Rar, which includes the tunes Dasai, Don, Lagre, Sohrae, Gilwari, Danta, and Baha. Santhals are inherently musical and dancers. One of the key components of their fairs and festivals is dance. They would dance and listen to soft music to unwind. They sing along and dance in a line (Eco India, Indian Tribes: Santhals Tribe, 2020). Rhyme has been a popular way to picture the culture whereas, Santal culture has been described in this rhyme. It is the commonly used device in rhyme and has been used to convey a wide range of messages and feelings.

The Santals consider themselves a distinct caste, even though they are an indigenous tribe. Their rich culture and tradition have made them different from others. They have marriage customs which is highly sophisticated. All the rituals, customs related to marriage are described in the form of songs. Santal marriage tradition is to be noticed highly that, on the one hand, it can be said that there is no dowry system in their marriage customs, so it can also be said that widow marriage is prevalent among them. The below mentioned Santali rhyme depicts marriage and family life:

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<tr>
<td>Mithai ho bang jomaing</td>
<td>I don’t eat sweet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahu lagid Panjon ing kiring</td>
<td>I will buy Panjon for my husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Murmu M. D., 2022)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above-mentioned rhyme has described a man from a poor family is decided to go to the fair at Dampara. He does not have even a single coinage to eat sweets, so he asks his elder brother to give him some money. She will not eat sweets with that money, instead, he will buy a Panjon (Panjon is a one type of ornament in Santali) for his wife. This rhyme may be consciously or unconsciously depicting the emotion and love of family life towards men and women orally. As in the rhyme the dress and ornaments of the Santal women were described, the subject of this rhyme will be the costume and decoration of the women.

Santal people have rich rituals for welcoming their guests and relatives. Whenever they meet a person they address each other as Johar. Johar is called Nomoskar in Bengali and Hi or Hello is called in English. When a guest comes into a Santal family, he is given Parkom to sit on. Parkom is not a chair but one type of bed where we can sit and lie. The water of the Lota Dak is placed in front of the guest and he is bowed down which has a Santali terminology, which is called God-Johar. Guests are served chicken and rice, The Santal people have a unique way of welcoming their guests and relatives, using the term "Johar" to address each other. When a guest arrives at a Santal family's home, they are offered a special type of bed called "Parkom" to sit and lie on, instead of a chair. Additionally, as a sign of respect, a Lota Dak filled with water is placed in front of the guest and they are bowed down to, which is referred to as "God, It has described in below rhyme:

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Teheng pera taken mese</td>
<td>Oh my dear guest stay my home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: No-2
Teheng towa daka
Gapa pera tahen mese
Gapa jill daka
Din ge pera tahen pese
Din ge jill daka (Murmu M. M., Santali Rhyme, 2022)

Example: No-3

The Santal culture is beautifully depicted in this rhyme. When any will come into the Santal family, he will be welcome according to Santal culture. The Santal is economically very poor, in spite of this, they are very careful about their guest that there is no fault in hospitality. This rhyme illustrated beautifully about the Santal family, relatives, serving and feeding relatives, etc. The liberal mentality of the Santal people is identified in this rhyme. The Santal people's generosity and hospitality are further highlighted in this rhyme, emphasizing their selflessness and willingness to serve others. This cultural trait of the Santal community showcases their strong values and sense of community, despite their economic hardships.

Santals have been living in harmony with nature since ancient times, so that, they have been enriched with different types of experiences about nature. They respect nature as a god. Their deep connection to the natural world is reflected in their rituals, dances, and songs, which often celebrate the beauty and power of the environment. This reverence for nature not only sustains their cultural identity but also serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving and protecting the environment for future generations. The Picture of nature has been described in some rhymes. For example:

Santali
Du dak chalak ma
Lukuy bari te
Note situng hijuk ma
Khartar bari te

English
Rain please go
Go in Lukuy bari
Sun light, please come here
Sun light, please come at Khantar bari

(Murmu M. M., Santali Rhyme, 2022)

Example: No-4

The nature images have depicted beautifully in this rhyme. The use of nature imagery in these rhyming poems further enhances their artistic appeal and deepens the connection between the Santal people and their natural surroundings. Through vivid descriptions of landscapes, flora, and fauna, these poems not only showcase the beauty of nature but also reinforce the Santal community's reverence for their environment and their harmonious coexistence with it. This incorporation of nature imagery adds depth and richness to the overall artistic experience, making these rhyming poems truly remarkable expressions of Santal culture. When people get tired of heavy rain, they don't want rain anymore. Two places are mentioned here, one is 'Lukuy Bari' where the rain is sent, and another place is 'Khartar Bari' where the sunlight is welcoming. This rhyme has described the pure aesthetic consciousness and romantic spirit about nature. The contrast between Lukuy Bari and Khantar Bari symbolizes the cyclical nature of life, where the rain brings both relief and weariness, while the sun's light represents warmth and rejuvenation. This poetic depiction showcases the Santal people's deep connection with the natural world and their ability to find beauty in its ever-changing elements.

The trend of Santali folk culture and folk literature is also flowing in Santal life in this modern age. Although the influence of folk culture has shrunk somewhat due to the dominance of urban culture and modern culture, it has not completely disappeared. Rather, the Santali folk culture and literature have maintained their existence even in the Santal life of the modern age by following the innate nature of folk culture and literature to keep with the times. The Santali people have embraced the ever-changing elements of modern life while still preserving their traditional folk culture and literature. This resilience is evident in their ability to adapt and incorporate new influences, ensuring the continued relevance and significance of Santali folk culture in the present day.
3.2 Language identity

The Santali language is an indigenous tribal language. It is spoken by the Santal people, who have a rich oral tradition and use the language to pass down their history, myths, and customs from one generation to another. The Santali language is not only a means of communication but also a symbol of their cultural identity and heritage. 

Sound is an important part of composing rhyme because it allows for exploration and novelty (Chattopadhyay, 2012). Santal people can utilize homographs to express ambiguous meanings in rhyme, which necessitates assessing both their lexical and oral features. By incorporating homographs into their rhymes, the Santal people not only showcase their linguistic prowess but also add layers of complexity and depth to their artistic expressions.

This unique use of sound adds an element of intrigue and creativity to their rhyme, further highlighting the richness of the Santal culture. Language is being used to express Santal culture. Through the utilization of homographs, the Santal people ingeniously leverage language as a medium to convey and preserve their rich cultural heritage. By carefully selecting words with multiple meanings, they intricately weave different aspects of their identity, traditions, and beliefs into their artistic expressions. This profound connection between language and culture exemplifies the profound significance of communication in Santal society, where every word holds a deeper significance beyond its surface-level interpretation. Here, we present two contributions from our work on analyzing the sound of rhyme.

This formalism allows us to examine the intricate ways in which different aspects of language and culture intersect within the artistic expressions of the Santal people. Additionally, our work sheds light on the underlying meanings and symbolism embedded within the rhymes, providing a deeper understanding of the profound significance of communication in Santal society. This is an important consideration in the rhyming poem, which is notable for its extraordinary sustained use of rhyme. The rhyming poem is not only significant for its extraordinary sustained rhyme, but it also serves as a powerful tool for preserving and transmitting Santal traditions and values across generations. Furthermore, the intricate rhyme scheme in these poems adds a layer of complexity and beauty to the overall artistic experience, captivating listeners and fostering a sense of unity within the community (Gibson, 1944).

4. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that Santali rhymes are a valuable part of the oral tradition of the Santal people. The rhymes are an important part of the identity and are a significant part of the cultural heritage of Santal. The rhymes are a valuable part of the oral tradition of the world and their rhymes are an important part of that heritage. It is introducing valuable Santal culture and Santal rituals. Nowadays, the Santali rhymes are disappearing in this globalization era. So, this easy is emphasizing to meet the immediate crisis that Santali rhymes need to collection and preserve.

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