

## Chapter I

### Introduction

#### Santhal as People

Santhals are tribal people living in eastern region of Nepal. The larger portion of santhal population is found in Jhapa and Morang districts of Nepal. The Government of Nepal has enlisted Santhal as indigenous and aboriginal people (*National Indigenous Peoples' Development Committee*). Santhals are the old inhabitants and ancient ethnic people of eastern Terai of Nepal. Santhals call themselves 'Hor' meaning 'man'. They call 'Pahadiya,' people migrated from the hills, 'Munda' in general and the upper class Brahmins 'Diku' in particular. In India, the term 'Diku' represents those people who are cruel to Santhals.

The term Santhal is a derivation of 'Saontar,' a place name in India, where they are known as Santhal (Ghimire 9). But, in Nepal, they are called 'Satar,' which is often taken as pejorative term reflecting hegemonic attitude and disrespect to the tribe as well as a form of domination by 'Pahadiya' people of Nepal. According to some Santhals, the term 'Satar' also means people living in neat and clean place. The other opinion regarding the term 'Satar' is that they are the people who have crossed seven oceans.

Santhals are dark in complexion with curly thick and short hair, flat nose like those of Negro and the size and shape of skull is like those of Aryans. Santhals look Dravidian in their physical appearance. Santhals, who have their own traditional culture, are the oldest immigrants of the eastern Terai region. They were strong to fight against the hostile climatic condition of the Terai regions. They survived there because of their strong physical strength and their capacity to adapt in dense forest areas of eastern Terai.

## **Historico-anthropological Introduction**

Santhals are the largest Adivasi community in India. They have settled mostly in the states of Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Tripura and Orissa. Santhals can be also found in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar, especially in their boarder areas.

According to some anthropomorphic description, the species known as Ramapithecus was found in the Siwalik foothills of the northwestern Himalayas. This species, who was believed to be the first in the line of hominids, lived some fourteen million years ago. Researchers have found that a species resembling the Australopithecus lived in India some two million years ago. However, scientists have so far not been able to account for an evolutionary gap of as much as twelve million years since the appearance of Ramapithecus.

It is assumed that "Proto-Austroloids" or "Austrics" group was next to come to India after the Negritos. They represented a race of people, with wavy hair plentifully distributed over their brown bodies, long heads with low foreheads and prominent eye ridges, noses with low and broad roots, thick jaws, large palates and teeth and small chins. "Proto-Austroloids," which are spread all over India, Myanmar and the islands of South East Asia, are said to "form the bedrock of the people". It is believed that the "Proto-Austroloids" were the main builders of the Indus Valley Civilization. They cultivated rice and vegetables and made sugar from sugarcane. Their language has survived in the 'Kol' or Munda (Mundari) or Santhali language in Eastern and Central India.

There are many assumptions regarding the history of origin of Santhali people in Nepal. It is found that Santhals immigrated to the eastern plain region of Nepal from Dumka district of Santhals paragana, sub-division of Bihar states (Nearly 6/7

decades ago). They are also seen to have migrated to Nepal from the Indian states like west Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa.

Daulat Bikram Bista writes that name 'Satar' is derived from their earlier ancestral place 'Sount' that lies in Midnapur, India (31). It is widely believed that majority of them emigrated from Dumka district of Jharkhand, Bihar. They are also believed to emigrate also from Bengal, Orissa, and Bhagalpur. Some elderly Santhals from Jhapa believe that their migration to Nepal from India and Bangladesh was due to their low economic condition as a push factor causing them settle in the dense forest areas of Jhapa and Morang districts. Accordingly, some percentage of Santhals immigrated to Nepal from Maldaha village of west Bengal province of India about 50/55 years ago. As per the verbal information, seven percent Santhals immigrated to Nepal to settle permanently from Bangladesh.

There is also a widespread belief that these people were brought to Terai region of Nepal as per the contract made by Rana rulers of Nepal with the Government of India. They were called for the deforestation of dense forest area of eastern Terai region of Nepal so that there would be new settlement and cultivation. But, these people never returned but rather spread over three districts: Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari in small groups. In these three districts, they settled on the coast of small rivers and rivulets. In Jhapa and Morang districts their population is spread around some rivers like Ratuwa, Kankai, Mai Khola, Sunga, Lohandra, Sindhiya, etc.

There are also some other believes about the origin of Santhals in Nepal. One among them is that Santhals immigrated to Nepal to escape the massive starvation once aroused in the Jharkhand State of India. They deforested the dense forest area of eastern Terai region of Nepal and started settling there permanently.

### **Location and Settlement Areas**

Population of Santhals is the largest in Jhapa district than in Morang and Sunsari. All Village Development Committees (V.D.C.) and metropolis of Jhapa district contain a remarkable proportion of Santhali population. In Morang, they are found only in some of the V.D.Cs like Bardanga, Rajghat, Hoklabari, Bisanpur and Darbesa etc. According to Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal, total population of Santhal was 42,698 in 2058 B.S.

Santhals are mostly found in the previously dense forest areas of Morang and Jhapa. But they prefer to live on the bank of rivers and rivulets. Only after their settlement in the dense forest of Terai region, other ethnic groups such as Brahamins, Chhetri, Gurung, Dhital, Rajbhanshi, Rai, Limbu etc. immigrated to the Terai areas. However most of the sociologist/ anthropologists argue that Santhals people are not the aboriginal people of Terai, but Poffenberger argues that Santhals are the aboriginals of malaria forest of Nepal (9).

### **Society and Social/Political Practices**

Santhals have wonderful social-cultural mosaic. They have interesting social characteristics and it wouldn't be wrong to say that it contains flexibility in rigidity.

Santhals favour patriarchal family system and in the absent of male member, lead role is transferred to female member too. Basically, they have joint family, but due to intensifying poverty among this tribe nowadays, they are living in nuclear family. All the family members cook, eat, and sleep together in a cozy but small house.

They have separate religion, which is called 'Sarna.' Image of idol worship is absent, and no traditional temples that exist in Santhal society. Both burial and cremation are practiced and chicken is dedicated to the dead body in their burial rites.

Though there is a mythic hierarchy. As a result, the Santhal society in recent ages is devoid of caste hierarchy. As a result, the Santhal society is a casteless society, which is a unique characteristic of the community. By birth, no person, family, clan group is superior or inferior. It is said that Santhali women enjoy much more freedom than their counterparts in the society do. Blood offering is prevalent in the community. Earlier practice of cow sacrifice is now restricted. Priesthood is not appropriated by a particular clan group but is owned by the family members of the first settlers of the village. Occasionally selection of successors of the old priest is held if he leaves no issue. Mainly a divinized person makes such a selection and it is undisputed.

Santhals are mostly agricultural people. Their villages are found in the open space in the middle of their agricultural land. They prefer to live with the group of community and so the number of house ranges mostly from ten to twelve. Their dwellings are very close to each other. Most of them are very poor and so they are dependent on the labor of the landlords' land. Their houses are made up bamboo, paddy straw, wood, and mud. They keep their house neat and clean. Most of them smear the floor daily.

Santhals follow their own customs regarding birth, death, and marriage. Santhals celebrate their biggest festivals 'Sohorai' from the end of Poush and for the entire Magh month. Santhals traditionally have an organized system for the management of social and judicial system to solve the various problems within the community by themselves. The head of the Santhal community is called 'Majhi Hadam' who is the chief of the executive, judicial and all other functions within society. He is assisted by other office bearers like 'Paranik,' 'Jag Majhi,' 'Jagparanik,' 'Nike,' 'Gudit,' etc, who work in their respective field to solve various kinds of community problems.

## **Village Administration**

The Santhal society is democratic society that believes in equality. The Santhal villages are social and political entities with great cohesion and continuity. Wealth matters less in the day-to-day life than their attachment to the social organization and harmonious relationship. The clans are regarded as equal to other clans and there is no class distinction in either status or occupation as that is a curse in the mainstream 'Pahadiya' culture in Nepal. The Santhal village is generally multi-clans and each clan has sub number. Each village has well established political organization (Punchayati) with a secular headman called 'Majhi' who is a man of great prestige. The village council controls the entire social system of Santhals. The village council or 'Atu Mone Hor' (Punchayati) is consisted of 'Majhi' (village headman), 'Jag Majhi' (Deputy Village Headman), 'Paranik' (Assistant to village Headman), 'Gudit' (secretary to village Headman), 'Jag Paranik' (deputy 'Paranik'), 'Naike' (head village priest), and 'Kudam Naike' (Assistant to village priest). All the villagers, one from each family, are member of the village council. Village council is the institution that settles all the disputes of the villages. Santhal community as a whole maintains certain uniform customs and laws with relation to marriage, divorce, birth etc. 'Majhi' presides over the village council meetings when they are held to discuss the matters related to village. In the event of disputes arises with different village, he acts as representative of village. 'Paranik' is the principal assistant to 'Majhi' and representative of 'Majhi'. If a 'Majhi' dies without any brothers, then 'Paranik' will get the office and 'Gudit'. No public sacrifice, no festival, no ceremony such as marriage can be done without 'Majhi' taking initiative. 'Jag Majhi' serves as the supernatant of the youth of the village and he is one the link between younger generations to older generation. He generally passes all the secrets to younger ones. In

the absent of 'Jag Majhi,' the 'Jag Parani' officiates, equally important is the religious headman called 'Naik' and his assistant 'Kudam Naik'.

### **Judicial System**

Santhals traditionally have an organized judicial system. It is very important for the management and solution of the various problems that arise within the community at different times. The most important features of Santhal community as often found in Adivasi Janajati are that they make every effort to solve the social problems arising within their community by themselves. The Santhal system of governance - 'Majhi Parganna' is synonymous to Local Self Governance. This body is also responsible for making decisions to restructure the village's socioeconomic condition.

'Majhi Hadam,' who is the headman of village, is the chief of the executive, judicial and all other functions within society. He is assisted by other office bearers like Parani, 'Jag Majhi,' 'Jagparani,' 'Naik,' 'Gudit,' etc. These people work in their respective fields to solve various kinds of problems. After the birth of a child, 'Jag Majhi' and following the death of a person, 'Gudit' and others are present. 'Majhi Hadam' undertakes the looking into judicial cases and the dispensing of justice and above 'Majhi Hadam' is 'Disham Majhi,' and above both is 'Diheri'. 'Diheri' is the highest judicial office bearer of Santhals.

Santhals, who generally like to live in concentrated settlements near rivers and forests, are divided into twelve 'Thars' or groups. As the groups are in accordance with professional specialization, this appears as a form of social system. The 'Murmu' are the priests of Santhals and Mardi the businessmen, while 'Kisku' are the rulers and Hemram judges. Similarly, the 'Tudu' are musicians and 'Soren' soldiers. The

organizations of Santhals are village council ('Majhibaisi), Parganna Council (Pramatrabaisi) and the highest council (Labirbaisi).

### **Language**

Santhals have their own language called Santhali in Nepal, which is different from the Nepali language. But, Santhali language far belongs to the Indo-Aryan family. They do not have their own scripts. In Nepal 0.18 percent of people speak Santhali language (CBS 2058 B.S.). Santhali language is an Austro- Asiatic language spoken in the Terai district of Nepal, mainly in the Santhal community. This language is one of the dialects of the Munda language. Six million people has been estimated to speak the Santhali language in Indian states like Jharkhanda, Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Tripura, and West Bengal. But in Nepal, though it is spoken in Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari districts, its speakers are seemed to have missed its originality. In Nepal, Santhali language seems to get huge influence from languages of some ethnic groups like 'Teli,' 'Thakur,' etc., who are their neighbour and who can speak and understand Santhali language.

### **Origin Myth: Nature at Supreme**

Santhal society possesses a unique and mysterious myth about the history of creation of world and creation of human beings. There are many assumptions about the history of origin. According to Santhal myth, once there was no land but there water everywhere. There were no living creatures but only "Thakur Jee" (main god of Santhals) and his slaves. For the creation of man, he ordered "Malin Budhi" (who lived in water) to make two sculptures of man and woman. When 'Malin Budhi' led the sculpture to dry to sun, Singsadomp (sky living horse) came and spoiled it, and then she made other sculpture. 'Thakur Jee' sent 'Malin Budhi' to bring man's soul from definite spot. But 'Malin Budhi' did not get man's soul there. But, she brought



bird's soul and pours it in the sculpture. After that, sculpture of the man began to fly in the sky. 'Thakur Jee' named them 'Hans' and 'Hasin' and they fled to the sky. When they did not get land to live, they went to their creator and prayed to make the land for them. 'Thakur Jee' ordered 'Soleha' (fish), 'Katkomb' (crabs), 'lenden' (earthworm) and tortoise to make land in earth. All creatures began to collect soil on the scale of the tortoise. After some years, there originated an island on the ocean and these 'Hans' and 'Hasin' began to live in the island. These 'Hans' and 'Hasin' laid two eggs. From which a pair of male and female children were born. 'Hans' and 'Hasin' named them 'Pilchuhadam' and 'Pilchubudi'. 'Thakur Jee' taught them agriculture and hunting technology. He also taught them to make rice, rice pudding, and liquor. One day, 'Pilchuhadam' and 'pilchubudi' drank the liquor and they forget that they were brother and sister. Finally, from them seven son and seven daughters were born. Once they quarreled, the wife with her seven daughters and husband with seven sons lived separately in different parts. These seven brothers and seven sisters usually went for hunting and in search of wild flowers and fruits. One day, they met each other and began to dance and sing. They forgot their relations and made physical relation. As a result, they became seven ancestors of Santhals, named as 'Soren,' 'Hemrung,' 'Murmu,' 'Tudu,' 'Hasda,' 'Maram,' and 'Kisku'. Later, they realized a need to make up a society. When society was made 'Kisku' became king, 'Murmu' were minister, 'Hemrung,' 'Soren,' and 'Maram' were made policy makers, and finally the task of entertaining such as dancing and singing were allowed to 'Tudu'. Since the clans are so divided and graded, the marriage is not performed in between the same clans.

## **Life-Cycle Ceremonies**

### **Birth Ceremony**

When a Santhal child is born, the mother of the baby is considered as impure. Also the parents of newborn baby observe first five days of birth to be impure. On the fifth day, a special food is prepared (made with leaves of Nim plant with rice grains) and offer it to 'Marang Buru,' the main God of Santhals community. The food is later distributed to the mother, other members of family and relatives. The eldest son is always named after his grandfather and other child according to their birthday.

### **Marriage**

As Santhals Community is divided into twelve different clans, they do not marry with people of their own clan. 'Bapla' in Santhali language means marriage. Arranged marriage is pre-dominated mode of marriage in Santhal community though different types of marriages exist in Santhal society. The book 'Mechi Dekhi Mahakali' mentions eight different types of marriages in Santhal community. These are: (1) Golat Bapla, (2) Ghar di Jawai, (3) Apang gir Bapla, (4) Kirin Bahu Bapla, (5) Jawai Kirinok Bapla, (6) Mirbolak Bapla, (7) Tunki Dipal Bapla, and (8) Itut Bapla.

### **Death Rituals**

When a Santhal dies, body is wrapped in white cloths and tied on to a 'khapiya' (bed) in which he has slept. The corpse is carried first by the son followed by other relatives. After it is taken to a cross road, some people throw and spray unhusked rice and cotton seeds to please the evil spirits that might cause obstacles on the way. The dead body is buried near some rivulet or any other particular place, which is pre-determined by the society. Son of the dead person gets his haircut. Santhals observe funeral rituals only for a day. On the ninth to thirteenth day, they have to feed those people who had attended funerals. After the completion of this

ritual, they are eligible to return to their previous state in the society.

### **Religion**

Santhals worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses since a long time. During my research work, it is found that Santhals are Hindus. But, they have their one priest. They do not invite the 'Brahmin' priest. Nowadays, Santhals are facing the twin problems of maintaining a separate cultural identity as well as establishing their place within the surrounding Hindu culture. The God and Goddess they worship and the rituals they perform are similar to the Hindu god and goddess and Hindu rituals. Major threat to disappearance of their culture is the adoption of the Christianity. These innocent and naïve people are economically tempted to change their religion.

But, God and Goddesses worshipped by Santhals are 'Marang Buru' (the main god), 'Bhitri' (family God), 'Ato Bango,' 'Thakur Jee,' 'Jaher Ada,' 'Moreko Turai' and 'Gosai Ara'. They believe that 'Thakur Jee' was the god, who created the earth.

### **Proximity to Nature**

From their settlement areas to their major resources and social practices, Santhals are found in close proximity to nature. Santhal ethnic communities in Nepal prefer to live in the peripheries of forests and rivers. They have their own unique religion, tradition and culture. Amateur in hunting and fishing as their favorite occupation, they are animist with unparalleled devotion to god and are best in performing the rites and rituals. Santhal is a committed race that keeps bows and arrows as their traditional weapons. Pork is their favorite meat in food. Both bows and arrows are important weapons needed in different rituals: in naming ceremony, marriage and others. Their selection of locations for dwelling places to materials used to make house (hut) keep them close to nature. They love to go to hunting which is their instinct. Even today, young Santhali lads go out for hunting with bow and arrow

as a symbol of maturity. This process is necessary to establish them as responsible member of community.

Santhali attitude and social practices also express their closeness to nature. As described by Schechner about primordial rituals, Santhali festivals are also based on time and seasons. Their greatest festival “Sohorai” begins each year in Poush (January) and lasts till Magh. ‘Karam’ Festival is celebrated each year in Asoj (September). Even, Santhal’s traditional marriages are only held in Chaitra and Baishakh (April-May) following the “Shivaratri” (a festival to worship lord Shiva). They believe that they should marry only after the wedding of Lord ‘Shiva’ and Goddess ‘Parvati’ is celebrated in ‘Shivaratri.’

Santhali myth is nature story rather than an expression of god’s valor. Their myth is the story of ‘Hans’ and ‘Hansin’ (a pair of Ducks), horses, crabs, earthworms, tortoise, fish, and ocean and their efforts to create first human species.

Santhals’ some practices are very unique. They celebrate different festivals as their responses to the changes in nature. ‘Jatala Bonga’ is a festival they celebrate to cheer the growth of paddy when it hangs downward becoming heavy with grains.

Santhals express their deep love for plants by planting ‘Karam’ plant in the altar in the middle of village. Even, each house should have at least one Karam plant. Plantation of Karam is known as ‘Karam’ festival, which they celebrate every year with due reverence.

Santhals are attuned with nature, agricultural term, and seasons. They enjoy nature and celebrate nature in each and every cultural and ritual act, which always keep them in close proximity to nature. These celebrations of nature, in long run, have left a great legacy of performances in Santhal community.

## Chapter 2

### Santhals and Nature: Proximity and Distance

Nature and culture are inherently entangled and inseparable. It is a universal fact that human beings constitute an integral part of nature. Human beings adopt nature and celebrate its rhythm in their language, rituals, beliefs and other dimensions of culture. The degree may vary but every civilization displays a bond between nature and culture. Charles Darwin's assumption shows the basics of interrelationship between nature and culture. According to him, all organisms evolve from adaptive process of natural selection, reiterates human beings' course of action through the natural process. This reinforces the fact that human beings and their social institutions evolve from natural process that has been in existence since early 'bands.' The process of adaptation itself treats all the organisms: both human beings and non-human species equally. Nature is the house to all the organisms. Human beings and their culture also evolve through this process of adaptation. It might be the reason why cultures from different regions are different. It might be the impact of their different experiences of adaptation.

Since modern civilization began, people, instead of filling up the gap between culture and nature, are prone to widen the fissure because of their feeling to overcome it. Different civilizations have different attitudes towards the nature. "Hindu and American Indian cultures hold biocentric stance and prioritize organic unity between earth/environment and human beings as opposed to anthropocentric importance given to human culture by the Christian world" (Joshi 34). Some cultures sustain in the close proximity with nature, while some others maintain a distance.

Specifically, the term nature is taken relatively in relation to culture. Culture is kept superior to nature. The term nature is often associated with animals and tribes.

Culture is often times, is associated with the urban people and their so-called civilized activities. Van Plumwood argues, “historically-traceable distortions of reason and culture have resulted in dangerous forms of ecological denial. They have had a widespread effect in areas as diverse as economics, politics, science, ethics, and spirituality, and appear in the currently dominant form of globalization”

(Introduction).

My focus is to emphasize the cultural practices including hunting, naming ceremony, marriage and death rituals of Santhals, and their performance acts that are carried away through attending both materiality and performativity. In this regard, interrelationship between nature and culture is more strong in santhal community, “which thrive in the niche of nature” (Mathur IX) because nature is suffused in their life.

Santhals are in a close proximity with nature because they do not just generate life from nature but live inside it. People from civilized and scientific societies take nature with a sense of detachment. Whereas, Santhals spare their life in the lap of nature, within it, with utmost possible approximity. It is often said that status of Santhal people is low because of their strong attachment with nature. As they are close to nature they have a unique culutre that is inherently close to it.



**Figure 1: Santhal with cock feathers in the traditional dance costume**

Nature and natural components are essential for them to perform their rites and rituals and other religious and cultural functions. Since birth to funeral rites, they keep nature at a close distance. Even their dancing costumes are accompanied with animal furs and birds feathers. In the figure 1, one ritual dancer is decorated himself with peacock feather.

In fact, they have sacrificed concrete or modern facilities or modern system of governance or social administration to keep and maintain their love and passion for nature. As a result, Santhals in Nepal are just paid agricultural laborers and their most important economic activity is the cultivation of rice. As shown in the figure 2, Santhal are heavily engaged in traditional form of income generation. They make baskets of bamboos of different size that are popular in throughout the country.



**Figure 2: Santhals making traditional baskets**

Santhals receive nature and its products with care and reverence. They show their gratitude in using natural products. Their thanks emerge in the form of performance. Let me put a unique practice of Santhals' community; a newly born animal is ceremonially incorporated into family and looked after with much care. According to Nita Mathur, "ranging from reverence and worship to hunting and from hunting to making artistic depiction, Santhals affirm their relationship (to nature) at many levels and in many ways" (Mathur x).

Culture, “the total range of activities and ideas of a group of people with shared traditions, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group” (*World English Dictionary*) is thus possible by means of performances. Thus, performance is in the centre of santhal community. In fact, performance is only way that let them link nature to culture. Their attachment to nature can be explored if closely examined to the cultivation and growth of plants.

They even perform the act of sowing, transplanting and harvesting. For them, seedlings are associated with prosperity and happiness. They treat seedlings like their own children and express both joy and excitement for it.

For them, sky is male and earth is female and water is semen that come in the form of rain. The act of transplantation is performed with extreme passion because transplanting rice plants is changing their residence. For them, it is a kind of wedding. They sing songs addressing the plant as their own child. One of the songs goes like this:

The paddy is weeping

The paddy is asking

When will be my wedding?

When the water of the sky

Drenches the earth,

then will be your wedding. (Tudu Interview Trans.)

Santhals are found to be deriving their design of life from the process and phenomena of nature itself. Their intimacy to nature can further be explored if we observe their relationship to animal. Santhals believe that the priests of all creatures were born before the human beings. Man lives on the Earth in the company of animals and spirits. Natural elements are under the control of spirits and spirits are



everywhere. Rituals are performed in the sacred grove, near the source of water, on hilltops and in mountain caves and help humans to experience the rhythm of life.

Elements of nature have a vital role in the making of a cultural person.

Deriving a large number of words in Santhali language from the natural sounds; resembling lifestyles of Santhali people to the web of relationships between human beings and physical environment; accepting both inanimate things and phenomena as sacred are some instances that convince everybody on an assumptions that santhali people live and die on the lap of nature, probably very close in comparison to others community.

However, same proximity to nature is difficult to maintain in due course to time as peoples' beliefs and their social practices change according to changing time. Due to heavy influence of other dominant cultures, and declining forest and other forms of nature, Santhals are forced to realize a sense of distance with nature. What happens if the traditional practices are difficult to continue? As often happens in other cultures, a symbolic representation of nature prevails as newer initiation. By nature, they are hunters but they are forced to change their forms of living engaging on agriculture. Remarkably, Santhals, even today keep the bows and arrows in their house as sacred weapons. Though it is difficult to go for hunting these days because the areas where Santhals dwell are cultivated areas with no more animals and birds to hunt. Young Santhali lads are interestingly found with bow and arrow at least for birds. Culturally, carrying bow and arrow, and going for hunting is the symbol of getting maturity in Santhal community. They make the bows and arrow themselves because these are of prime importance in the Santhal community. Figure 3 depicts a Santhal man making bows and arrows.



**Figure 3: A Santhal making bows and arrows out of bamboos**

In such difficulty, distance with nature is mitigated by symbolic representation of worshipping nature. For an instance, in their marriage ceremonies, after the groom approaches the bride's house, both bride and groom are taken to field. Traditionally, both the bride and groom should be taken to a pond or river so that they can worship there. But, rivers and pond are very scarce these days, as a result, they bring water with them from house and make a small pit over there. They pour water they have brought from house and worship there. Both bride and groom move round the symbolic pond and other people accompany them with bows and arrow in their hands.

Santhals feel uncomfortable in the populated areas. So, they like to live in rural areas. Though they live in the some of the highly populated districts of Nepal- Morang and Jhapa, they are not found in the market areas (Hat Bazaar). It is extremely difficult to maintain their closeness with nature but they have been trying their best to adapt to changing scenario.

### Chapter 3

#### Santhals and Performance

Santhali people are by nature performers. Their concept of decorating house where they make beautiful artworks in the walls of their houses and their love for dancing and singing in every ritual display of importance of performance in their community. Their rites and rituals include performance as their fundamental cultural feature. Performance is their natural quality. Unlike other performers like, a street performer and an actor performing with mask, Santhali practices display a great deal of performativity as an intrinsic quality.

#### Dancing and Singing

Santhals are born dancers and singers. Their love for music and dance is noticeable performance act in their community. Their songs and music are joyous and depict the festive spirit that prevails whenever there is an occasion for people to get together. The indigenous musical instruments and the traditional tribal costumes and jewellery worn by the dancers, add to the beauty of the dance. Basically, Santhals dance in the music of two drums: 'Tamak' and 'Tumdak'. Flute (Tiriao) is more important than other instrument. Santhali dance and music traditionally revolves around Santhal religious celebrations and rituals are mainly comprised of sacrificial offerings and invocations to the spirits. However, Santhal music and dance both retain connections to traditional celebrations. The names of many Santhali tunes are derived from traditional rituals with which they were once associated. 'Sohorai' tunes, for example, are the songs sung at the 'Sohorai' festival. One of the famous song of Santhal goes like this:

*Oh flower friend*

*I am thirsty*

*And I am hungry*

*But hearing the sound*

*Of the drums under the canopy*

*My thirst and hunger are banished*



**Figure 4: Santhali women dancing in a group**

Santhals are excellent musicians and dancers. The dances performed in wedding, named ‘Golwari’ and ‘Paikha’ are full of energy with a lot of jumping and leaping in the air. They carry bow and arrows while doing such dances, perform mock fights, and attack too. Their courtship and wedding dances are typical which are performed on full moon nights. The loud drumming resembles thunder, calls the belles of the community and they come dressed in their fineries, along with flowers, feathers and they get assembled under a large banyan tree. The young Santhals come forward taking strides with drums and lilting songs on their lips, and then the dance commences in two rows, their arms interlinking in pairs (figure 4 & 5). The rows surge forward like rhythmic waves and then recede with supple footwork and swaying heads and bodies. The boys in the row opposite play on flutes, drums, and large cymbals and sing songs in perfect harmony. The drummers remain at centre so that everyone hears them.



**Figure 5: a group dance with arms interlocking in pairs**



**Figure 6: a group dance creating wave like movement**

Besides marital dances, they also have dances for hunting and sowing occasions. On Dashain festival- a greatest Hindu festival, they dance from one locality to another. There are also other types of dances in which men and women dance together. Men form the outer ring and women inner circle. All these dances reflect their collective nature, cohesion, community feeling, and social awareness. They are great spontaneous collective singers and dancers and these public reflections form the basis of performances in Santhal community.

The Santhal women and girls can be seen singing and dancing while engaged in their daily chore like sowing, plantation, journeying to and from the forest. They work and sing simultaneously and in between pause for a round of dance. They use song and music as a convenient tool of dancing. Dance is a super-ordinate and all the rest is subordinate.

### **Religious Belief: Sun is father and Earth is mother**

'Jaher' and 'Gosade' are two places where Santhals carry out religious activities. Santhals do not have any iconographically represented shape of God and do not believe in idol worship. They follow the Sarna religion. The common God and Goddess of Santhal are Marangburu, 'Jaher-era'. Santhals pay respect to the ghosts and spirits like 'Kal Sing,' 'Lakchera,' and 'Beudarang' etc. They have village priests known as the 'Naike' and 'Ujha'. Animal sacrifices to the God are common practices among Santhals to appease the God and Goddess.

Santhals do believe in many Gods and Goddesses except common God and patrimonial one. According to them, the Sun is omnipotent. He is the creator and father. The earth is believed to be their mother. She brings up all. Mother earth is the female and the Sun God is the male and all other are their offsprings.

Different clans of Santhals worship same God with different names and followed by same rituals in regular interval of time. Santhals worship the powerful Sun God as 'Singabonga' (also spelled as Singhbonga) in common.

### **Festivals**

Santhals observe many feasts and festivals. They celebrate almost all the Hindu festivals as well as their own traditional festivals. Different writers describe the festivals of Santhals in different ways, on the basis of the variation of Geographical setting, socio-economic status, and period of time.

The most important festivals of Santhals are celebrated in December (Poush) after the paddy is harvested which is called ‘‘Sohorai’’ in Santhals language. Goats, pigs, chickens, and Pigeons are sacrificed in the festival. Several deities are worshipped including ‘Thakur Jee,’ ‘Bhitri’ (family god), ‘Ato Bango,’ ‘Marang Buru’ (Great god), ‘Gosai Ara’ and ‘Moreko Turai’.

According to Ms. Premlata L. Ghimire, the festivals of ‘Sohorai’ and ‘Patamala’ are highlights of Santali’s traditions (9). Delton elaborated that ‘Sohorai’ is the festival of cattle (267). ‘Sohorai,’ ‘Yorok’ (Dashain or Durga Puja) and ‘Waha’ (the spring festival) are the most important festivals of Santhals people.

These festivals include singing, dancing and feasting. They also celebrate ‘Dashain,’ ‘Tihar,’ ‘Maghe Sankranti,’ and ‘Purnima’ as the greatest festivals like Brahmins and Chhetries.

Santhals follow different phases of cycle of nature and agricultural terms to celebrate festivals accordingly. They celebrate a festival for the invocations of nature for helping them in getting wherever they are. They also wish to increase their wealth and to free them from all the enemies. As a result of their respect for nature as something like god, it is the tradition among Santhals to plant outside their house after the purification process i.e. birth, death, etc.

Santhals celebrate ‘Sohorai’ from the end of Poush (January) and for the entire month of Magh. "Karam" festival is celebrated in the month of Asoj (September- October) in order to have increased wealth and progeny and to get rid of the evil spirits. During this festival, two young boys after being purified, fetch two branches of Karam tree from the forest and plant them just outside the house. Other festivals of the Santhal community include ‘Maghe Sankranti,’ ‘Baba Bonga,’

‘Sohorai,’ ‘Ero,’ ‘Asaria,’ and ‘Namah’. They also celebrate haunting festival called ‘Disum Sendra’ on the eve of Baishakh ‘Purnima’ (Full moon night).

### **Ero (Paddy sowing festival)**

The Santhals celebrate this festival on the day of 'Akshatritiya' to worship mother earth with religious flavor and enthusiasm. The black cock is offered as sacrifice with non-boiled rice, flower, vermilion and incense sticks to propitiate mother earth for bumper harvest, prosperity peaceful and disease free life. Dance amidst traditional tribal songs and beating of drums rent the air, which makes the festival quite enjoyable.

### **Jamtala Bonga (Jantal Festival):**

This festival is celebrated when the ear of paddy hangs downward exclusively in the year when crop is destroyed due to scanty rainfall. They believe that all these happen due to their ill treatment to God. So, they offer he-goat as a sacrifice with a belief that propitiation of God will return bumper crops. The flesh goat is distributed among the villagers.

### **Karam Festival:**

This festival is celebrated in the month of 'Asoj' or 'Kartik' and the auspicious day is fixed in the village meeting. A 'Karam Bough' is planted on the altar of the middle of the village. The village maids offer molasses, non-boiled rice, flower, and vermilion then story of 'Karamdharan,' the God of fate, is recited, which continues amidst dances, songs and beating of drums till morning. Immersion of 'Karam Bough' is solemnised with the blessings of God of fate. Life will be enriched with sound health, this is their sincere belief.



**Makar Festival:**

'Adivasi' celebrates the prime festival of Santhals with pomp and grandeur in the month of 'Poush' (January) when the paddy reaping is half done and the mind is free from all lures and anxieties. Irrespective of color, crew, and age, all partake in religious joviality and fervor.

This festival lasts three days and celebration primarily starts night before 'Makar Sankranti'. First day is celebrated since morning by the burning of log of woods in the bank of river or near any water reservoir. It is told as 'Kumbha,' done mostly by the children and teens. The process is done in the early morning. In the day of Sankranti, everyone in the family will take bath as early as possible and wear new cloths. In every household, 'Makar Chaula' and delicious cakes are prepared. After that, head of the family offers food and drinks to ancestors and Ora Bongs (house God) in the inner most (Bhitar orah) part of the house. After having food, which includes mutton curry, chicken, pork, lamb, sheep, palatable cakes and country liquor 'Handia,' male members participate in archery competition and female come to witness. First village priest 'Naike' purifies the target and set the distance for competitors. Three chances are provided until someone hit the target. If someone hits the target, he is the winner and is also awarded with garland of flowers. Then he is taken on shoulder by a person, assigned by headman of village, till 'Gosande.'

'Majhi'/'Naike' worship following by singing, dancing and playing of instrumental music. All those present are given rice-beer. Winner will be accompanied by Santhali traditional dance, song, and music. In such occasion, men and women dance in the 'Gosande' till late night with boisterous music, songs, drums and the traditional dress of Santhali women, called 'Pandhat,' which covers their body from chest to the foot.

Second and third day is for the occasion of special 'Monkey Dance,' named as 'Gari-aseen.' The tribal folks adorning their bodies in many forms roam door to door asking for paddy, rice and cakes, which becomes quite enjoyable. Also female makes-up by men and dance with tradition songs and drums called 'Budhi-Gari'.

Finally, all the collected items are disclosed in a village meeting. Villagers fix a date for grand village party. Rice is distributed to different household to brew rice whisky or rice beer and collected on the day of grand village party. Relatives are also invited to join in the party.

By nature, Santhals love Dance, Music and wine. There cannot be a festival without these. Their fairs and festivals are very colorful and full of energy. There is tendency of showing doing, which, according to Krishenblatt is the gist of performance.

## Chapter 4

### Nature, Culture and Performance

#### Nature and Culture: Interconnectedness

There is always a close connection between humanity and nature.. Nature is given respectable position in every society. She is observed differently as the Holy Spirit, great soul, super power and the God. The mighty nature is full of mystery, which makes people show their respect and gratitude in return to life giving and sustaining kindness of nature. Human's relation with nature is intense and complicated because "Culture is inextricably interwoven with the threads produced by our secular relations with nature. Nature and its phenomena have not merely shaped us and sharpened our reflexes; we could not live without maintaining a very close link with the natural element" (Denmark 4).

Nature is vital and it is nature that creates culture because "This culture has grown up in the free hotel that nature offers" (Serres 6). We need to remember that an environment is not only as an object to human beings but it is an active agent (process) that shapes our perceptions and ultimately lives. "There is existential relation between nature and culture. Man cannot live without nature..." (Mathur 1). The relationship between nature and culture is very intense because every civilization is rooted from primordial form of life that was not different from the activities of wild animals, which are believed to be nature. But "Tribal myths deny the uniqueness of man in so far as his origin is concerned. Man is not unique even in the possession of knowledge" (Ibid). Before the modern civilization began human society either small or large was part of nature. Culture was mere construction of people as they felt a sense of creating demarcation between human being from other animals. "Culture,

according to Freud and Philosophical anthropology, is the attempt to overcome nature” (Diogenes and Philosophical Anthropology 42).

Even today rituals, significant part of culture, are performed in the sacred places (nature) including the under groves, at some sources of water, on top of hills, caves, etc. And time for celebration of such rituals is based on seasons, day and night, time of harvest, etc. People take themselves to primordial forms of life through such performances- rituals, singing, dancing, worshipping, etc. Any performer of rituals returns to such primordial state to reunite with primal elements and assert themselves as integral part of nature and the earth as a whole. Rituals involve different activities like rolling in dust, burying self under the soil, basking in the Sun, walking on the burning embers, taking bath in the river, etc. affirm their closeness to nature. Such rituals also confirm the universal belief in the supernatural order that prevail in nature.

Culture began with man’s interaction with nature marked by man’s desire to be secured and superior being. It could be understood as limitation of activities put upon by them. But, it took years to give shape to culture. To create a cultural person, elements of nature play very significant role. Men are made of elements (Pancha Tatwa), earth, water, fire, air, and space. Human body is associated with these five elements of nature.

Even human personality and their behavior are determined by these five elements of nature. However, men unlike other animals are superior beings because of their ritual process of socialization. It is ritual that helps human beings stabilize the importance of their earthly life and organize a different but important coherent cultural pattern. Thus culture is something formed by manipulation of nature. The inner world of human beings merges into outer world through these five elements of nature.

Man seems to have a pursuit to overcome nature. In that due course, men forget that they are natural being and what nature is for them. Regarding this forgetfulness of mankind and re-forcing the nature and culture interdependence, Rousseau diagnosed a deep alienation and estrangement within the process of human civilization and for him man is alienating from his own origin, nature. Rousseau, dealing with the inclination of mankind in respect to its own nature as well as in respect to its inclusion into nature in general says, "Every attempt to overcome this distinction leads man more and more into his own destruction" (44). In fact, it is tribal people who maintain their unshaken reverence to nature. Contrary, civilized people think nature in terms of benefits. It is interesting to cite a quotation from Jean-Pierre Ribaut's article in which Indian of the Amazonian jungle in Brazil expresses his opinion regarding nature is:

A self-proclaimed civilised society is guided only by market values. It considers the Earth as a means of production, or even an object of speculation, a commodity to be bought and sold. For native peoples, on the other hand, the Earth is neither a trading item or an instrument for profit, or even just their means of subsistence. The Earth is the basis of their culture, the root of their families and social organization and the source of their relationship with the supernatural. The Earth is the cultural soil in which their ancestors live and rest." (7)

On this ground, the early people had built culture entirely around the nature. Their way of life is shaped around this deeply rooted interrelationship between nature and culture. Regarding the interrelationship between nature and Mankind (culture) Kant says that the civilization must be conceived as a process or a movement of human beings from nature to culture. According to Sue Rechter, Nature is

transformed: our experience of nature is culturally mediated, but at the same time, “we sense its presence behind, around, and before us at the limits of our historical field” (Merleau-Ponty 110). ‘Nature’ is contained within each cultural horizon and at the same time exceeds that horizon as another ‘total part’ of the World.

### **Nature and Culture in *Cultural Ecology***

Anthropology defines, “culture is a set of tried and proven answers which have been balanced against environmental incitements. It is the functional equivalent to instinct” (Lamo de Espinosa). This material dimension of culture is made up with those things that allow human beings to satisfy their needs and find fulfillment.

Whereas, there is other dimension called *symbolic* dimension which covers up both the spiritual and the symbolic parts consisting of the norms that rule each social group, ideas, interpretations, beliefs, traditions, etc. Thus, culture is not only a set of monuments or natural reserves; it also refers to spiritual legacy, beliefs and traditions. Cultural ecology is constituted by the set of both material and symbolic aspects. We can consider physical and social facts and their interpretation.

Culture and nature are interdependent to each other. Cultural activities or components are shaped by bigger environment. Structure and location of settlement, clothing, pattern of foods and drinks, pattern and timing of feasts, rites and rituals are deeply influenced by the ecology. Whereas, culture, largely constituting human behaviors, affects ecology. Thus, the relationship between human and environment is acute and intense. The study of such a relationship has been the area of study of cultural ecology.

We can see series of ideas that create huge fissure between nature and culture. An unnecessary hierarchy has been created between nature and culture. Some says that culture is a man’s construct developed with a year’s long man’s psychology to

overcome the mystery of nature. In such a state of confusion, Cultural ecology was developed in 1950s by Julian Steward in 1955 in a book *The Theory of Culture Change* though the early concept was initiated in 1930s by some American Anthropologists. Steward defined cultural ecology as the study of the processes by which a society adapts to its environment (Steward 4). Cultural ecology is quite a useful concept with an emphasis on environmental determinism that has been softened by succeeding applications of anthropological theory.

In other words, cultural ecology studies the relationship between a given society and its natural environment as well as the life forms and ecosystems that support its life ways. The central argument is that the natural environment, in small scale or subsistence society's dependent in part upon it - is a major contributor to social organization and other human institutions.

It is this assertion that the physical and biological environment affects culture - that had proved controversial, because it implies an element of environmental determinism over human actions, which some social scientists find problematic, particularly those writing from a Marxist perspective.

Cultural ecology considers the sphere of human culture not as separate from but as interdependent with and transfused by ecological processes and natural energy cycles. At the same time, it recognizes the relative independence and self-reflexive dynamics of cultural processes. As the dependency of culture on nature, and the ineradicable presence of nature in culture, is gaining interdisciplinary attention, the difference between cultural evolution and natural evolution is increasingly acknowledged by cultural ecologists. Rather than genetic laws, information and communication have become major driving forces of cultural evolution. Thus, causal

deterministic laws do not apply to culture in a strict sense, but there are nevertheless productive analogies that can be drawn between ecological and cultural processes.

Gregory Bateson was the first to draw such analogies in his project of an Ecology of Mind. Bateson thinks of the mind neither as an autonomous metaphysical force nor as a mere neurological function of the brain. He writes:

dehierarchized concept of a mutual dependency between the (human) organism and its (natural) environment, subject and object, culture and nature," and thus as "a synonym for a cybernetic system of information circuits that are relevant for the survival of the species. (Gersdorf/Mayer 9)

Finke fuses these ideas with concepts from systems theory. He describes the various sections and subsystems of society as 'cultural ecosystems' with their own processes of production, consumption, and reduction of energy (physical as well as psychic energy). This also applies to the cultural ecosystems of art and of literature, which follow their own internal forces of selection and self-renewal, but also have an important function within the cultural system as a whole.

Bertalanffy says that human nature has two sides: the physical or material side in which each human being lives "with a biological body, physically equipped with impulses, instincts and limitations on each species." The other side is broader in which each person "creates, uses, dominates, and is dominated by a universe of symbols" (Citation by Juan Carlos Miguel de Bustos of Bertalanffy 54). Ecology refers to the physical or material world, which is interrelated with human being (culture). Along the same lines, Babe remarks, "when we give meaning to the objects of these interactions, people act on them, which affects them." that is why "ecology blends environmental sciences with human culture" (Babe 1-2).



Integrating these ideas, a conclusion can be drawn; culture necessarily includes natural dimensions of the material along with some objective, symbolic and subjective dimensions.

## Chapter 5

### Performance

#### What is Performance?

It is not easy to claim what performance is. A single search will generate many ideas and opinions about performance. Few make us happy but many confuse us.

Marvin Carlson writes:

so much has been written by experts from such a wide range of disciplines, and such a complex web of specialized critical vocabulary has been developed . . . that a newcomer seeking a way into the discussion [about performance] may feel confused and overwhelmed.

(1)

Henry Bial writes, “performance studies [is] unique [that] shares the characteristics of its object: performance” (1). He expresses his difficulty of defining performance in the following words, “just as performance is contingent, contested, hard to pin down, so too its study” (Ibid). He makes similar opinion as that of Diana Talyor who admits performance’s indefinability. However, his conclusion “performance studies is what performance studies people do” (Ibid) resembles ideas of Carlson.

In course of defining performance, Henry Bial cites Shannon Jackson who labels theatre, speech and performance studies as “less as stably referential terms than as discursive sites on which a number of agendas, alliances and anxieties collect” (1). He further says that his study for about a dozen years has proved performance studies exciting but confusing. He claims, “To be performance studies reader is to work without net, to walk on hot coals, to search in dark alley at midnight for a black cat that isn’t there” (2). In an effort of pinpointing the orientation of performance he says,

“(performance studies) is the final boarding call for cultural studies making all local stops including Women’s studies, African Studies, Asian Studies, Queer Theory and Cultural Studies” (Ibid). According to Henry Bial, Richard Schechner, one of the pioneers of performance studies, has presented the graphical presentation of the development of performance studies. According to him, performance studies has developed “from its intellectual roots in theatre, anthropology, and other disciplines through fundamental concept such as rituals, play and performativity, to comprehensive discussion of the act of performing, of performance processes, and global and intercultural performances” (Bial 2).

According to Barbara Kirshenblatt Gimblett, “The field of Performance Studies takes performance as an organizing concept for the study of wide range of behaviors” (43). For her, Performance Studies’ focus is the behavioral aspects, which cannot be limited to a particular event, time and space. It cannot be limited to its medium and culture but it “is more than the sum of its inclusions” (Ibid). Making an argument that performance is not theatre, she claims, “Performance Studies encompasses not only the most valorized, but also the least valued, cultural forms within these hierarchy” (Ibid).

Performance has been developed to having multiple dimensions. It is difficult to limit disciplines under its scope. Therefore, it is commonly found that performance has been really a tough subject to deal with. It is multidimensional. More importantly, it has extended its scope from ritual, theatre to everyday activities.

In recent years, there is complex body of writings about performance and a person beginning to trace out performance may be more confused than be clear because those chainless and dispersed ideas might work as obstacles than help the reader.

Marvin Carlson in her essay 'What is Performance?' takes the reference of Mary Strine, Beverly Long and Mary Hopkins arguing that performance has been developed in an atmosphere of 'sophisticated disagreement' by participants who "don't expect to defeat or silence opposing positions". So, performance is not closed discipline but uniquely open for all kind of interpretation or criticism. "Performance art has opened hitherto unnoticed spaces" (Carlson 9). Carlson says "Public display of technical skills" is traditional concept of performance. Human agency is essential to performance but Carlson shows doubts in reference to performing dogs, elephants, horses, and bears.

The term performance can be traced down in Aristotelian concept too. Mimetic behavior is performance in the conventional Aristotelian sense. An imitation of an action as defined by Aristotle carries the notion of performance. "Tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude (Aristotle 61). Schechner adds something similar to such a view. He says that performance is imitation of actions. "Making art is the process of transforming raw experience into palatable forms. This transformation is a mimesis, a representation," Schechner adds (38).

Likewise, performance is presented as "cooked" in the Levi-Straussian sense, meaning it to be an action that is transformed through culture into a conventionally understandable symbolic product. His emphasis lies on culturally transformed symbolic social and cultural activities.

Schechner believes that performance is 'restored behavior' in which one pretends to be someone. Schechner believes no performance is new. Every performance is repetition of previous activities. His hints express basic tenet of performance in which performer is conscious of double beings and act of imitation.

Citing Schechner, Carlson writes, “Schechner’s useful concept of ‘restored behavior’ points to a quality of performance not involved with display of skills but rather with a certain distance between ‘self’ and behavior analogous to that between an actor and the role the actor plays on stage” (72). Schechner also gives framing of performance, that performance is “Ritualized behaviour conditioned/permeated by play” (99). In this sense, performance could also be considered as a general animal phenomenon. However, Schechner argues that self-awareness and cultural transmission are necessary for performance.

In fact, performance is an inherently human activity. It is presented as having origins in pre-historic behavior and having functional value in the evolution of human cognitive functions. In linguistic terms, performance is also seen an essential aspect of human communicative capacity that cannot be completely understood without a full appreciation of the roles of language and other semiotic behavior in human life. In cultural terms, performance is seen as pervading virtually all institutions of public expressive behavior. Quite normally, performance can be defined as an event in which one group of people (the performer or performers) behaves in a particular way for another group of people (the audience).

Performance has been defined differently by different theorists. For example; Performance or performing is ‘doing’ (Carlson); it is ‘re-doing’ (Butler); and it is also ‘showing doing’ (Schechner). Performance as ‘doing’ emphasizes the importance of the primacy of action and acting. It may highlight someone-a performer or a group of performers, who in some context engage(s) in activities associated with some endeavor for some purpose(s). According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “[I]t is about getting something done” (19).

Like Butler, Performance can also be analyzed as a re-doing. According to Butler, a performer engaged in particular activities never does so apart from a history of like activities. Rather that history and conventions certainly provide a conceptual framework that suggests which are appropriate, effective, and even efficacious. For Schechner re-doing is “restored behaviour” (13). He writes, “For me, performance is ... more consciously ‘chosen’ on a case-by-case basis and transmitted culturally not genetically” (94). Restored behaviour are “routines, habits, and rituals; the recombination of already behaved behaviours” (Schechner 13). For him, there are no *new* or *original* performances. There is never a “first time” (Ibid). However, because the activities that make up a performance are never new or original, they can be “worked on . . . played with, made into something else . . . [even] transformed” (Ibid). Re-doing is acting with an appreciation of the history of past action and of the conventions that direct current action and the understanding that made that history formed those conventions. Re-doing both allows the rituals of the past and the routines of the present to direct, and yet, allows for variation as well – wandering in doing.

Performance is showing doing. Showing doing is a kind of display of our awareness (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 19). Showing doing is a display of our awareness of our own distinctive agency – that certain activities constitute a particular way of doing. It is also a display of our awareness that doing is a re-doing. Showing doing approves the understanding, reveals an appreciation of the history and the conventions related to doing – that certain activities have preceded ours, that certain other practices and activities surround and are contemporary with and influence ours. Similarly, showing doing is a display of our awareness of ourselves as actors, or better, performers engaged in doing and re-doing. It is a display of our awareness that

our identity as a particular kind of performer is constructed and represented through those very activities. Underlying the notion of display is the presumption of an audience for that display, someone else who attends, who through attending to that display in some way participates. However, the nature of that participation can be various: observational (spectator), experiential (participant), evaluative (critic), and so on. So, while showing doing is a display of our awareness of doing, re-doing, and through doing and re-doing our identity; it is always a display for someone else.

According to Victor Turner, performance is subjunctive. Turner has used the terms 'liminality' and the phenomenon of liminality extensively in his discussions of ritual and performance. Liminal states dissolve all factual and commonsense systems into their components and "play" with them in ways never found in nature or in custom, at least at the level of direct perception (Turner 25). Victor Turner finds performances in every society: primordial or modern, civilized or uncivilized. He uses the term 'social drama' to which he finds performative in qualities. He analyzes such social dramas using theatrical elements. Turner writes:

Social dramas are units of aharmonic process, arising in conflict situations. Typically, they have four main phases of public action.... These are: 1. Breach of regular, non-governed social relations.... 2. Crisis during which...there is a tendency for the breach to widen.... Each a public crisis has what I now call liminal characteristics, since it is a threshold between more or less stable phases of social process, but it is not a sacred limen, hedged around by taboos and thrust away from the centers of public life. On the contrary, it takes up menacing stance in the forum itself and, as it were, dares [ranging] from personal advice and informal meditation or arbitration to formal judicial and legal

machinery and, to resolve certain kinds of crisis or legitimate other modes or resolution, to the performances of public ritual.... Redress, too, has its liminal features, its being 'betwixt and between,' and, as such, furnishes a distanced replication and critique of the events leading up to and composing the 'crisis.' This replication may be in the rational idiom of a judicial process, or in the metaphorical and symbolic idiom of a ritual process.... 4. The final phase ....consists either of reintegration of the disturbed social group or of the social recognition and legitimization of irreparable schism between contesting parties. (qtd. In Schechner 187)

As Schechner finds performances in aesthetic dramas, Turner in social dramas, Erving Goffman finds performances in everyday life. The summary of his book- 'The Presentation of Self in everyday Life' is almost equivalent to its title: everyday life is a performance. Performance is the matter of interaction, which presupposes an audience. At extreme, he argues that when alone, an individual still performs for his or her own sake.

### **Origin of Performance:**

### **Origin and Development of Performance studies (As an Academic Discipline)**

Performance study, which has been an academic discipline since the 1970s, has created diverse perspectives, and integrated into a number of social sciences. Regarding its origin, there comes two big names: Richard Schechner and Victor Turner. They are the founding fathers of performance studies who were influenced by Avant Garde theatre. Turner was an avid viewer of such theater, and Schechner was a theater director and participant. Fluid spectrum of theatrical activity reflecting the tendency of these art movements to blur or breach the boundaries



separating 'art' from 'life,' as well as art genres from each other, 'Happenings' and other experimental performance acts of the 1960s rejecting the rigid artifices of modern theater, are some influences they got as an insight from Avant Garde theatre.

The development of Performance Studies as an academic field is difficult to pin down. However, numerous degree-granting programmes are growing in number every year. Some have referred to it as an "interdisciplinary." The process of defining it becomes a practice in performance studies itself. "Performance studies is interdisciplinary: The primary fundamental of performance studies is that there is no fixed canon of works, ideas, practices or anything else that defines or limits the field" (Schechner, 6).

The origin of performance studies is widely believed to originate from rituals to theatre studies. But the term performance seems to originate not just from single discipline. Its origin could be traced down in the pre-historic time, more obviously since Greek time. Philip Auslander in his book *Theory for Performance Studies: A student's Guide* recognizes Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Ferdinand de Saussure as predecessors of performance studies. He discusses the various relationships: a list of twenty-nine canonical modern and postmodern thinkers with the performance studies.

Wallace Bacon, was considered by many as father of Performance theory who taught performance of literature as the ultimate act of humility. In his defining statement of performance theory, Bacon writes "Our center is in the interaction between readers and texts which enriches , extends, clarifies, and (yes) alters the interior and even the exterior lives of students [and performers and audiences] through the power of texts" (Bacon 8).

The second generation of performance scholars developed performance studies with a degree of academic credibility and also as a discipline of humanity. Beverly Whitaker-Long, Mary Francis Hopkins, Ted Colson, Isabel Crouch, Dwight Conquergood, Lilla Heston, Marion Kleinau, Paul Gray, Lee Hudson, Mary Strine, Francine Merritt, Thomas Sloane, etc. built the discipline for the decades of the 1970s, 80s, and 90s.

However, researches of Schechner and Turner helped to develop performance as discipline. It was Schechner who helped found the Department of Performance Studies at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where he has been a professor since 1967. Schechner has promoted numerous international projects in performance history, theory and theatrical production. Performance studies at NYU now embraces work in anthropology, sociology, psychology, folklore, popular culture, theater and dance, feminist and queer theory, post-colonial studies and cultural studies. For Schechner, performance is broad and inclusive that includes much more than theatre and may range from everyday life to rituals and art. Presenting models of web and fan he gives two different perspectives on performance. For Turner, performance is different. According to Turner, in performance, imaginary becomes real. Influenced heavily by Turner's theories on social drama and liminality and Erving Goffman's everyday performances, Schechner tried to unite all applications of performance under one theory.

Some early definitions of performance were either "between theatre and anthropology" or cultural study. The development of performance studies depends on the contributions of many. For example, Dwight Conquergood developed a branch of performance ethnography focused on the political nature of the practice and advocated for methodological dialogism from the point of encounter to the practices

of research reporting; Bryan Reynolds has developed a combined performance theory and critical methodology known as “transversal poetics” to bring historical analysis in conversation with current research in a number of fields, from social semiotics to cognitive neuroscience, the effect of which has been to expand the relevancy of performance studies across academic disciplines; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has contributed to an interest in tourist productions and ethnographic showmanship to the field; and Diana Taylor has brought a hemispheric perspective on Latin American performance and theorized the relationship between the archive and the performance repertoire. So, performance studies was developed by many intellectuals of different generations but with multiple and varied flavors.

Schechner's book: *Performance Studies: An Introduction* or in D. Soyini Madison and Judith Hamera's *The Sage Handbook for Performance Studies* explored on the link between performance studies and other disciplines. Because it has link with theories of drama, dance, art, anthropology, folkloristic, philosophy, cultural studies, sociology, comparative literature, and more and more music performance.

### **Origin of Performance: From Ritual to Theater to Performance (As Theory)**

Theatre is one of the reliable ancestors of the performance. Theatre is basically believed to be originated from ritual, but it will be immaturity to guarantee it. Victor Turner and Richard Schechner, considered the ‘fathers’ of the field of Performance Studies, developed the theory ‘performance’ from their study of the theatre studies.

Simon Shepherd and Mick Wallis in their book *Drama/Theatre/Performance* cite McKenzie’s critical distinction between theatre and performance:

On the one hand, theatre became a *formal* model through which anthropologists and ethnographers might ‘see’ performance; it provided ‘metaphors and tropes’. On the other, when ethnographic

studies of performance, and in particular Turner's work on liminal rites of passage, were used by theatre scholars to theorise 'the social dimensions of theater and other emerging forms of performance,' they performed as a *functional* model, by which the emergent Performance Studies would come to insist on 'the *transformational* potential of theater and other performative genres'. (110)

They also argue that the root of performance is theatre but the true root was avant garde theater that was practised in 1960s:

'Performance art' emerged out of 1960s avant-garde theatre practices that opposed dominant text-based theatre. The aim was to be reflexive, presentational rather than representational, and to situate the audience as participants rather than as spectators. The focus was on the 'performative' of theatre, in the sense of its being here and now. (83)

Richard Schechner in his book *Performance Theory* writes on the interrelationship between drama, script, theatre, and performance. Believing about their origin to be in the early civilizations, he writes drama, theatre, and performance occur everywhere with people of every corner of the world and its origin "date[s] back as far as historians, archeologists and anthropologists can go" (68). He further mentions that:

... dancing, singing, wearing masks and/or costumes, impersonating other humans, animals, or supernatural's, acting out stories, presenting time 1 at time 2, isolating and preparing special places and /or times for these presentations, individual or group preparations or rehearsals are coexistent with the human condition. (Ibid)

He assumed that caves are early theatres, which are “hidden in earth, lit by torch, and the ceremonies enacted therein...” (68). Cave, assumed to be ‘pre-historic ritual theatre,’ is different in a sense that it did not have availability of written script as practiced today at theatre. But, there were ‘codes for transmission of action’ or ‘pattern of doing’. Later, in the time of Renaissance, previous codes for transmission of action were displaced by drama.

Victor Turner also found theatrical elements in every ritual performance. According to Komitee, Victor Turner saw a universal theatrical language at play in the various cultural rituals he studied. Komitee writes:

(Turner) determined that all groups—be it the Ndembu people of north-western Zambia or tree-painters in Medieval China—perform rituals that dramatize and communicate stories about themselves. They all, for example, engage in some form of coming-of-age ceremonies, exorcism rites, or warfare, behaviors which contain a theatrical component and which enable the actor(s) to achieve a change in stature, manage crisis or give birth to a new state of affairs. (5)

Turner noted that such rites tend to occur in a ‘liminal’ space of heightened intensity separate from routine life, much like a dramatic theater performance. Since ritual acts exhibit many of the same means of expression employed on a theater stage, Turner termed all the ritual acts as ‘social *dramas*’ because they exhibit many of the theatrical qualities including means of expression such as, manual gesticulations, facial expressions, bodily postures, rapid, heavy or light breathing, tears, at the individual level and stylized gestures, dance patterns, prescribed silences, synchronized movements such as marching, the moves and ‘plays’ of games, sports and rituals, at the cultural level (Komitee).

According to Komitee, "... (Schechner) noted that ritual and theater performances share many common features: they both enact a transformation in being or consciousness, occur in a state of intensity, enable interactions between audience and performer, and consist of a whole sequence of behaviors prior to and after the main event on display" (5).

Exploring the influence of theatre, Turner and Schechner argued that a vast array of human activity— theater, dance, music, games, sports, rituals, and more—is composed of theatrical elements.

According to Barbara Gimblett, theatre was inadequate term to include the different performative aspects "wide range of theatrical aspects" (45). Theatre could not cover the multiple dimensions of performance. As a result, performance was coined to fill the void of the term theater (Broad Spectrum Approach). In that sense too, theatre can be called ancestor to performance.

Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins in their essay *Traditional enactments: Ritual and Carnival* cites Victor Turner's statement that "rituals form the basis of all theatre activity" (55). Similarly, they quotes Turner's claim "...Contemporary drama grew out of rituals" (56). Though there are counter arguments that rituals, theatre and performances "developed simultaneously" (Ibid), it can be claimed that performance to theatre and theatre to rituals are inheritor to later.

### **Performance: Modes and Dimensions**

Before daring outlining modes of performance, let me begin with an extract:

The interdisciplinary, even antidisciplinary study of performance draws on theoretical and practical research in communication (including linguistics and ethno-linguistics), the social sciences (sociology, anthropology, and ethnography), and the performing arts

(theatre, dance, and performance art). It has recently connected with powerful theoretical approaches to gender and sexuality, including psychoanalysis, as well as with concepts of “high performance” from business and technology. If *performance* is a fundamentally contested term, then it is also an extraordinarily opportunistic one, skating rings around other, more rigid concepts as they take their spills on the slippery surfaces of postmodern culture. (Roach 50)

The term performance is not easy to limit and it is tough task to limit its dimensions. It is definitely an interdisciplinary term with almost every field in touch and influence. Theorists often apologize to define it and decode its clear history and framed outlines. There is open-endedness almost in dimensions of performance. It is, in fact a postmodern concept, with clear open-ended nature. Elin Diamond, in her Introduction to book- ‘Performance and Cultural Politics,’ writes about the modes of performance and its open-ended nature. She writes:

[Performance] can refer to popular entertainments, speech acts, folklore, political demonstrations, conference behavior, rituals, medical and religious healing, and aspects of everyday life. This terminological expansion has been produced and abetted by a variety of theorists whose critique of the Enlightenment cogito as fully self-present cause them to view their own critical acts as performative - as indeterminate signifying "play" or as self-reflexive, non-referential "scenes" of writing. Moreover, because it appears to cut across and renegotiate institutional boundaries, as well as, those of race, gender, class, and national identity, performance has become a convenient concept for postmodernism. It has also become a way for skeptics of

postmodernism to excoriate what Raymond Williams has called our "dramatized" society, in which the world, via electronics, is recreated as a seamlessly produced performance. (2-3)

Performance could be of multiple types. It is difficult to limit what activity is performance and what is not. There are contrasting ideas regarding the performance, rituals, and theater too. Some treat them to be separate genres and some find them overlapping to each other. In his book, 'Performance Theory' Schechner's perspective on performance is broad and inclusive. He finds it as including much more than theatre, but along an entire spectrum, which ranges from everyday life to rituals and art. He unites several groups of performances under the same heading: play, games, sports, theatre, and rituals. Two perspectives on performance are the models of the web and the fan. Schechner unites all applications of performance under one theory, which is inclusive of its many applications.

The well acknowledged types of performance are presented by Richard Bauman who suggests two general kinds of performances: "aesthetically marked" and "aesthetically neutral" (11). According to him, aesthetically marked performances are heightened modes of action, which are "set up and prepared for in advance" (Ibid). They are temporally and spatially bounded. They include a structured sequencing of actions or an established process. And finally they have the feel of an occasion, an event that is "open to view by an audience and to collective participation" (Ibid). Aesthetically marked performances are also called "cultural performances" (20). Aesthetically neutral performances most surely involve actions, but unlike an occasion or event, they are not nearly as scheduled, bounded, or programmed. And, if they have a feel, it is that of the mundane. An aesthetically neutral performance is "all



the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants” (Bauman 3).

### **Performance and Nature**

The concept performance and performativity emphasizes ephemerality, contingency, adaptation. Such qualities are seen in the ‘doing’ of an everyday action and also in the creation of an aesthetic event. These qualities of ephemerality and contingency can be seen to inhere in the processes of nature, the continual change of environments and in the actions of the beings and entities, which are more-than-human. In some cases ‘nature’ has worked as a background to human performance and in many cases it is a subject for representation. The processes of human performance can be seen as continuous with those of nature – sometimes resonant together, sometimes not.

Performance, conscious/repeated/ritualized human activities has been in close proximity to nature since ancient human societies and their ritual acts have been performed in the services of nature. Schechner writes about relationship between performance and nature in terms of human movement and activities and its relation to ecology. He writes, “... humans occupied an ecological niche that kept bands [societies] on the move in regular, repetitious patterns following game, adjusting to the seasons, creating art/rituals (153). Basically, the relationship between performance and nature can be explicitly identified on two bases: time (season) and space. Let me consider ritual as one kind of performance. Ritual acts were/are not day-to-day events. It has fixed space and time. Caves, temples, riversides, under grove, some fixed routes, and some sacred places are considered proper places for ritual performances. Such rituals are conducted not everywhere. They are usually performed in those places, which are ‘not houses’ (Schechner 155). In similar line,

Turner by the term “liminal” expresses much about the space of performances. He observed accounts of rites of passage within a variety of cultures, and saw these transitional rituals in the life cycle as occurring in an “in-between” or liminal space. In reference to carnivals, Schechner writes about the places of performance. He writes, “Cave, hill, waterhole, etc.... [are] ceremonial centres” where carnivalistic performances took place (Ibid). Performances (whatever: religious rituals, theatre and ceremonies), take place in special kind of space. Such special places are sacred places that are also the public places. Their locations are middle of the village or some sacred places little away from residential areas, or temples and man-made structures (theatre, football ground, etc.) Such specially marked performance space begins to take on sacred or magical qualities later.

Schechner writes about the idea of liminal *cultural* space as a quality of the actual *physical* spaces where performances are enacted:

A limen is a threshold or sill, a thin strip neither inside nor outside a building or room linking one space to another, a passageway between places rather than a place in itself. In ritual and aesthetic performances, the thin space of the limen is expanded into a wide space both actually and conceptually. What usually is just a “go between” becomes the site of the action. And yet this action remains, to use Turner’s phrase, “betwixt and between.” It is enlarged in time and space yet retains its peculiar quality of passageway or temporariness ... An empty theatre space is liminal, open to all kinds of possibilities – that space by means of performing could become anywhere... The spaces of film, television, and computer monitors ... apparently full of real things and

people are actually empty screens, populated by shadows or pixels.

(Schechner 58 – 61)

Performances are events that are set in accordance to the seasons.

Performances take place basically in the festivals, which are kept in the better and pleasant seasons. For example, Hindu celebrated their greatest festivals; 'Dashain' and 'Dipawali' in the month of October and November in which they are free from agricultural activities because it is the time paddy growth and celebration of the completion of their works. Performances events are of different nature. Some performances have limited and set time period and some do not. Schechner finds three variations of time for performance acts: Event time, event itself is important which sets events sequence. Time period for event does not matter much; Set time, an arbitrary time pattern is imposed on events in which beginning and ending takes at certain moments; and Symbolic time, when the span of the activity represents another (longer or shorter) span of clock time. Examples: theatre, rituals that reactivate events or abolish time, make-believe play and games (Schechner 8). But tribal and aboriginals performances take place in accordance to seasons.

## Chapter 6

### Life Rituals Performance

As explained earlier, performance could not just be iteration and repetition, but is creativity and manifestation of agency. Further than that, performance can refer to attend to both alterity and stability. However, it does not simply relate to creativity and play, it refers “to a life which encompasses the human and the non-human, then many things we think of as human activities...” (Szerszynski 4 ). Santhals do not just jump and hunt to be performative. Their respect for nature, their assumptions of spirits, taking the seedlings like their children, and performing in the time of harvest make their living performative. They worship their ancestors, and maintain continuity through giving same names to new generations. Their reverence for water and worshipping in the open space make their rituals performative because it entails creative process of giving a living to the abstract and inanimate.

#### **Chhatiyar: Space Performed with Sacred Bow and Arrow**

Chhatiyar (ritual performed after the birth of baby) is one of the most important life cycle rituals of Santhal community. The basic purpose of Chhatiyar is to purify the baby and accept him as the responsible member of the society. In Santhal tribe, there are two different types of Chhatiyar: ‘Janam Chhatiyar’ and ‘Chachu Chhatiyar’.

Chhatiyar, like other life rituals, is performed in special locations- from house to pond. ‘Chhatiyar,’ a ritual with repeated/ritualized human activities, has been performed in close proximity to nature. After the birth of baby, house is considered untouchable (chhuta). There should not be any religious functions. Even people do not enter such houses. So, it is important to perform Chhatiyar to purify both house and baby. It is performed after three days if the newly born baby is daughter or after five

days if the baby is son. Basically, Santhali people like to deliver the baby at house. There is rare occasion that Santhals visit or invite doctors. This is primarily due to their own belief system or lack of belief in modern form of medical treatment. They need to call Dargin Budi (local nurse) who belongs to their own caste. Santhals have different practices for son and daughter baby. They use traditional agricultural tools even when cutting umbilical cord of baby instead of using modern form of equipments though they are familiar with them because of their social relation with other 'Pahadiya' people in the society. They use arrow to cut the umbilical cord of son baby whereas they use small digging tool (pasni) to cut the umbilical cord of daughter. They keep it bellow the pillow showing their respect to it.

Chhatiyar is part of social drama. It is a redressive action of a breach caused by birth of a baby inducing a form of crisis in the family and community. Chhatiyar, one of the "crisis situations" as termed by Victor Turner "... are inherently dramatic because participants not only do things, they show themselves and others what they are doing or have done; actions take on a reflexive and performed-for-an-audience aspect" (Schechner 186). When a child is born it causes a breach in the stability of society. Things turn into untouchability, even family members. This can be called crisis in "the group's unity and its very continuity..." (Turner 8), which should be "sealed off by redressive public action, consensually undertaken by the group's leaders, elders, or guardians" (Ibid). In Santhal society, the redressive action is led by Dargin Budi (local nurse) under the surveillance of 'Majhi Hadam' and 'Naike'. In Santhal community, either mother or Dargin Budi is allowed to cut the umbilical cord of the baby. After they cut the umbilical cord it should be buried inside the house.

There are "doing," "re-doing" and "showing doing" in the Chhatiyar. Attendees are villagers who have certain roles to play. They do something as the

villagers and participants. They follow the rituals as re-doing and parents, ‘Dargin Budi’ and attendees consciously carry out an activity, which is definitely showing doing. In the very day of Janam Chhatiyar, head of the family should manage to villager (neighbors) to have their haircut, which is an element of doing, a form of performance. Every invitee should be fed ‘Nimda Mandi’ (Rice made with Nim leaves). Dargin Budi informs about the birth of newly born baby and invite all for its redressive action. She calls all the villagers for their performance at Janam Chhatiyar. The invitee should either have their hair and beard cut or trim their nails.

In the beginning they sing an invocation songs like this:

*Salutation to you, Marang Buru.*

*On the occasion of the naming of this newborn baby*

*We offer to you handia(pots) and neem water.*

*Kindly accept it with pleasure.*

*We pray: let this child be healthy and strong.*

*Let him grow well and live long.*

*Let him also be blessed with true knowledge and wisdom.*

Singing this song is the beginning of the redressive action that takes almost a whole day. After cutting the umbilical cord, Dargin Budi takes the baby in her lap. She should sit near the main door of the house. ‘Majhi Hadam,’ who is the headman, also plays his part of redressive action. He gets the some hairs form the newly born baby and gives it to Dargin Budi. She receives it and keeps it on ‘Tapari’ (plate made of Sal leaves). Dargin Budi along with other female members of the villages goes to nearby river or pond (not houses), a sacred and natural place, a performance space, with hair of baby, and the arrow and ‘pasni’ (a digging tool) used to cut the umbilical cord. They make a symbolic pond nearby real pond or river and ‘Dargin Budi’ offers

five or ten paisa as a symbol of buying space (Ghat kinne). It is believed that offering money would please God and God would let them use both water and cross the river. Both the arrow and 'pasni' are buried in the dig. But they should be covered with white cotton thread before they were buried.

Later, in the name of Santhal God 'Marang Buru' and their ancestry, they offer vermilion and Kajal in the pond. They should offer these things five times if they have son baby and three times if they have daughter. During this offering, they pray for long life, prosperity and good health of baby. They keep the hair of newly born baby on a leaf and let it float on water. Dargin Budi and other female members return with water from pond and cotton thread used to cover arrow and 'Pasni.'

After returning house, cotton thread is colored yellow with turmeric and is tied around waist of baby. After this, mother with baby on her lap has to sit under the edge of roof. Dargin Budi pours the water brought from pond through the roof so that drops fall on the mother's head. Mother should bathe on that water. She receives some water on mango leaves and pours it over her own body. She is, now, taken inside house and Dargin Budi receives water on Sal leaves and drinks it. Dargin Budi prepares two bowls and a plate with mixture of water and rice flour. She sprinkles it over 'Naike,' and other heads according to their positions including 'Majhi,' 'Paranik,' 'Jag Majhi,' 'Jag Paranik,' 'Gudit,' and finally to other attending male members. They use one bowl for male member and other for female members. Dargin also has to cook bread (Lutur Pitho) of the size of baby's ear. She cooks five breads if the baby is son and three breads if the baby is daughter and throws it over the roof. Now, it is time to name the child.

### **Naming Process: Repetition of Ancestral Names**

Remarkably, Santhal has unique naming process. First child should have the name of their grandparents from father's side and second child should have name for grandparents for mother's side. Son baby gets the name of his grandfather and daughter gets name of her grandmother. If there is birth of some number of babies, they get the names of uncle and aunt too. It is believed that this practice would keep their tradition alive. However, Santhal are clever to keep two names. Traditional name, as mentioned above is formal name (Bhitri nutum) and day-to-day used name (Cetam nutum). Dagrini Budi bows down in front of everyone and communicates the name of baby to each and everyone. After this, rice cooked with Nim Patti, and some pieces of it is taken out on yard. Such rice is called Nim Dak Mandi, which is sacred food for Santhali people. They offer some Nim Dak Mandi to 'Marang Buru' and other ancestors to make the child happy and prosperous. 'Naike' is offered Nim Dak Mandi first and it is shared with others according to their social status. In first round, male members get their share again in the second round, beginning with 'Naike' it is distributed to female members.

Janam Chhatiyar has the huge significance in the Santhal community, which manages the space for the newly born baby and establishes his/her link with society but also God ancestors and other supernatural powers.

This day-to-day used name is often taken from the birthday. Baby born on 'Aitabar' (Sunday) is called Aite. Som, Mangal, Budha, Lukhi, Sukhul, Santa born on Monday (Som bar), Tuesday (Mangal bar), Wednesday (Budha bar), Thursday (Lukhu bar), Friday (Sukhul bar) and Saturday (Rani bar). It is believed that these two names keep the safe from evil spirits.



Chachu Chhatiyar is also important purifying process. Like the Janam Chhatiyar, it has no age restriction. But, this rite has to be preferred before the marriage. .If the Santhal dies without 'Chachu Chhatiyar,' his corpse is not buried but burnt. Remarkably, this rite is not preferred for female because they are not socially accepted to worship ancestral God. After performing Chachu Chhatiyar, child is considered responsible member of society and gets social legitimacy to offer the blood of animals for God.

For the Chachu Chhatiyar Santhal people manage turmeric, oil and wine (raksi). After the management of these things, all the heads and seniors of community are invited and fed with wine .Before they drink, they ask for the reason and head of family reveal the purpose and say that they prefer Chachu Chhatiyar. Then 'Majhi' instructs the Gudit to call other villagers. After all gather two girls put a mixture of oil and turmeric on the body of Nike and his wife. 'Naike' makes paste of cow dung, puts, and spreads it on some part of Yard. He keeps little cow dung in five small bowels made of leaves .Some verity of wine is also pour on each bowel.

Later, villagers are fed with beater rice, fried rice, and wine. Nowadays, Chachu Chhatiyar is also performed after having two /three babies.

### **Marriage in Santhal Community**

Marriage, called 'Bapla' is Santhali language, has some varieties that are practiced in Santhal community. Basically marriages are not made between people of same caste and with relatives of mother. But marriages are possible between the people of same clan. If somebody weds in blood relations they are expelled from community. The most beautiful thing of Santhal community is that there is no practice of early marriage. If married elder brother died, than younger should adopt brother's wife as his wife. Similarly, if wife dies than sister of wife should be adopted as new

wife. In general, Santhals do not have more than one wife. As often found in people of other communities, bride should sacrifice her maternal identities and should adopt her identity through husband's family.

Considering Turner's concept of liminal and liminality, When a marriage proposal in Santhal community is initiated, there arouse a liminal stage. It can be located between the question and the answer during which the social arrangements of both parties involved are subject to transformation and inversion; a sort of "life stage limbo" so to speak in that the affirmation or denial can result in multiple and diverse outcomes in the lives of both parties. During wedding, bride and groom are 'liminal personae' (Turner 89) whereas the wedding is liminal phase according to Turner because there is "change of place, state, social position and age" (Ibid). Liminal phase is "expressed by a rich variety of symbolism in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions" (Turner 89/90). Wedding is the celebration of transitions in the life of boys and girls. But this celebration of transition is carried out with ritualized activities that are repeated and reiterated. Bride, groom, guardians, 'Raibare' (matchmaker), 'Janti' (People attending wedding), and relatives are assigned with roles. They should perform a set of activities and play a conscious role of somebody who is different from day-to-day person. Basically, these ritualized practices can be seen in Sagun Bapla (Arranged Marriage), a traditional type of marriage that is often favored in Santhal community. In such arranged marriage, these practices should be strictly followed. Many of them are symbolic. For the arrangement of marriage, from very early to completing marriage, Raibare (matchmaker) is required. Parent of would-be-groom enquire the lady, if possible, indirectly. If they like the girl, they suggest Raibare to initiate matchmaking. Raibare should fix a day (tithi) taking the consent of both sides. He takes the boy and some of

his friends to the girl's house. In some situations, the meeting place could also be the 'Majhi's house. This process is called 'Neppel'. If the boy likes the girl than girls parents go to observe boy's house and his belongings. As they agree upon the marriage, they offer some amount of money and a pair of cloths. Same process should also be followed by boy's parents (Bhau Banda). In the evening they have gathering and have songs:

*Toki hore emkada puti lekan taka ho*

*Hako mayam sinduri ho*

*Toki hore Aatan keda puti lekan taka ho*

*Hako mayam sinduri ho?*

*Tudu hore ek keda puti lekan taka ho*

*Hako mayam sinduri ho*

(Who, among the gentlemen, gave small fish shaped money and fish's blood like red colored vermilion? Tudu is the gentleman who gave small fish shaped money and fish's blood like red colored vermilion)

This is the songs in which they echo important ritual of wedding, in which giving money conforms the date and putting vermilion is the ultimate act of wedding. They question who gave ganag taka and sindur (Vermilion) and answered it is the Tudu gentle man (would-be-groom) who gave it. Money and vermilion are passed to 'Jagmajhi' and 'Majhi Hadam' and finally it is handed over to girl's side.

After these songs, Raibare hands over the 'Ganang Taka' also called Chumna (a fixed amount of money) to girl's father that he has received from boy's side. This amount symbolically works as booking of girl. 'Ganang Taka' is set as standard applicable to all community members. In past, it was about five rupees and five paisa but now it has been one hundred five rupees and fifty-five paisa. 'Raibare' does not

give right amount. He keeps fifty paisa and hands it over after the wedding is over.

‘Ganang Taka’ should be divided among girl’s grandmothers (both mother’s mother and father’s mother) her father and mother. The father’s share is the largest. After receiving ‘Ganang Taka,’ girl’s parents should prepare ‘Giro’ under the surveillance of ‘Majhi Hadam’. ‘Giro’ is a thread with some number of knots in it. This is Santhal’s natural calendar that reminds upcoming wedding date. Number of knots in the thread represents the number of days left for wedding. Weddings are not held at the boy or girl’s birthdays. Girl’s side usually makes ‘Giro’ of four and five knots only.

‘Raibare’ takes it to boy’s house. Boy’s parents, taking the consent of ‘Majhi Hadam’ and other heads of the society, confirm the date of wedding. They should also prepare the ‘Giro’ and return it to girl’s parents.

### **Space Performed with Symbols and Natural Colors**

In the very day of sending ‘Giro,’ groom is colored yellow with turmeric mixed with oil. Along with ‘Giro,’ female members of village, send the symbol tool they would take in the wedding day. The symbolic tools are made of leaves (Sakhuwa). They also send oil in two pots (chuk). They also prepare a bag of leaves in which they put one rupee one paisa, ‘Dubo’ (Durva) grass, some rice and small piece of turmeric. They tie it on both pots. Such pots are called ‘Sunum Tel’ (Sunum oil), when Girls parents receive ‘Sunum Tel’. They exhibit it among the heads of village.

In the evening, they perform communal type of singing and dancing:

*Toki hore atan keda puti lekan taka ho*

*Hako mayam sundure ho*

*Tudu hore em keda puti lekan taka ho*

*Hako mayam sundure ho”*

(Who received small fish shaped money and fish’s blood like red colored vermilion?)

*Ape disom mirui dak keda re*

*Ale disom mirui aakal keda*

*Ko tare ho bajara gadar*

*Hanam joma se miru noaam joma?*

(Oh my relatives, there rained in your country, we had famine, we have only lemon but you have millet, what to eat?)

Before three to five days of wedding, boy's side prepares 'Mandap' (stage for prime functioning of wedding). In bride's 'Mandap,' groom's symbolic model made of straw should be kept in the bamboo erected in the northern side of 'Mandap.' Similarly, in the groom's 'Mandap' symbolic bride should be kept in the same direction. Parents of both bride and groom invite all the villagers and give them wine. 'Majhi Hadam' inquires for the reason of calling him. Parents inform him about 'Maduwa.' Later, 'Jag Majhi' with help of Paranik prepares three to five bowels (made from Saal leaves) and put some wine in each of them. Finally, they offer these bowels in 'Majhithan' (a sacred place made in the open space little away from residential area). 'Jag Majhi' invites all the villagers. Young Santhals then prepare Mandap (stage) using nine bamboos. In the southern part of Mandap, just beside the bamboos, three mango leaves with rice, 'Dubo,' turmeric, one rupees and fifty paisa are buried. This is done to avoid the evil spirit around the wedding space.

In the evening, three unmarried girls (Titari Kudi) put a paste of turmeric and oil on the body of 'Majhi Hadam' and his wife. Putting paste continues according to social status of attendees. Finally, both bride and groom are put the paste. This process is called 'Sunum Sasang Aaj'. 'Dabapla' is performed one day before the wedding. For the Dabapla, 'Jag Majhi' invites all to gather in groom's house. People

to play music instrument are hired for the day. Female members of village dance in the rhythm of music.



**Figure 7: dance in Dbapla**

Some hold bows as shown in figure 7 and some other garlands and axes on their hand. In the dancing moment, they circle the Mandap three times. They keep 'Dhol' (musical instrument) in the western side of Mandap and cover it with thin cotton. They put vermilion on 'Dhol' and kiss it. This process is initiated first by 'Naike'.



**Figure 8: Dance carrying bows and arrows**

Worshipping nature is essential in Santhal's wedding. In the leadership of 'Jag Majhi,' Santhali women in dancing moments move towards nearest pond or river. If

there are no rivers and ponds, they go to an open field. This trip is featured with Titari Kudi (three unmarried girls) carrying two pots (Sagun Kudi) kept in 'Mandap'. Pots are covered by 'Sari' that was given to bride. 'Titari Kudi' and 'Jag Majhi' lead the dancing mass to the destination. Their dances feature rows of men and women and they move forward with back and front motion (figure 6). If they have no water resource near around, they dig out a pit as symbol of natural pond and perform their rites around it. Senior Santhali women move around the pond three times. They keep three arrows in triangular angle around the pond and circle them with a thread. They worship pond and offer vermilion, 'Kajal,' small pot (Handi) and one Rupee and fifty paisa. This is called 'Dhak Bapla,' which is also known as wedding with water. This asserts Santhal's love and reverence for nature. Then women dance around the pond. Before they return they carry water in 'Sagun Theli' because such water is considered to be sacred. Finally, they return to 'Mandap'.



**Figure 9: bride and groom in wedding**

In the same day, they dig out a small pit in front of the main door of the house and keep two ploughs supporting beams in east-west direction, where would-be-bride is told to seat on that place. Groom's parents are invited for this process known as 'Tarbari Sunum Jar'. While groom's parents stand facing the east and bride's mother

should stand facing west and father west. Groom's father should keep a sword in such a way its tip approaches to the head of seated groom. 'Jag Majhi' pours water and oil separately on his head through the sword. Groom's mother also receives some drops on her head and puts it on her hair. She puts some drops in her mouth. Such water is considered sacred in Santhal community. This process is called 'Tarbai Dhak'. Then groom's sisters pour the water brought earlier by 'Titari Kudi' from field. Groom is now taken in the western side of 'Mandap'. In his right arm, a small bag of mango leaves is tied with thread. In the bag, they put uncooked turmeric, rice and Dubo.



**Figure 10: Majhithan**

In the same day, which is usually a day before the wedding, two or three people (messengers) are sent to bride's house. They are sent with wine pots, pulse, some vegetable, salt, oil, turmeric, spice, and lamps. They go to Jag Majhi's house and inform about the coming groom and following mass (Janti). They also request him to manage things for them. Next day, is the wedding day. In wedding day, 'Janti' should carry 'Dholak' (a musical instrument) as shown in figure 10, 'Palki,' 'Rahi' and 'Doli' (Bridegroom carrying carriage).





**Figure 11: janti carrying and playing Dholak**

They keep saris, rings, gold or silver ornaments and some number of cloths for bride. After they depart from house, they approach to 'Majhithan'. 'Jag Majhi' worships 'Majhithan' (figure 8) and offers wine. All the friends of groom's are fed sweets. Groom, then, takes out money he has kept in his mouth little earlier, known as 'Nun Taka,' which is given to mother only. This is paying tribute to Mother and her milk. Generally, groom's sister's husband plays crucial role. In fact, he is the leader of 'Janti'. Both groom and Janti worship the 'Majhithans' that are found of their ways.

#### **'Janti' Playing Roles of both Audience and Actors**

'Janti' are basically performative in their activities. On the way to bride's house, they dance in the rhythm of music. They also follow a set of ritualized activities. Each member of Janti plays a role that is given to him or her for the wedding day only. It is interesting that 'Janti' are audiences of the bride and groom's performance and they are themselves performers for the non-participant villagers.

#### **Wedding Dance**

Dance is an integral part of wedding of the Santhal community. Wedding dance is also performed in groups, accompanied by traditional songs in an open-air performance manner. Usually, women take part in Santhal dance and men provide the

musical accompaniment. But, in wedding male show their valor by energetic participation. Dressed in white *dhotis* and colourful turbans, the well-built dancers showcased the strength of unity. With peacock feathers and instruments like ‘*madal*,’ flute, ‘*dhamasa*,’ ‘*jhanj*’ and ‘*kartal*,’ this turned out to be an elaborate and excellent performance. Adorned with flowers and leaves, Santhal women entered the dancing space in a line, holding one another’s hands, and danced with clapping and swinging movements to express the joy and ecstasy of marriage ceremony. In the frontline there are some men carrying swords. They move forward dancing and showing their valor with swords as shown in figure 9.



**Figure 12: Janti in frontline carrying swords**

When ‘Janti’ approaches near about bride’s house, they stop somewhere on the way nearby the bride’s house. Raibare informs the bride’s relatives about the arrival of ‘Janti’. ‘Jag Majhi’ and other senior women including bride’s mother and aunts approach ‘Janti’ with water on ‘lohota’ (small pot made of metal), fire, and ‘Khaini’ (tobacco).

They check whether ‘Janti’ has brought enough goods as indicated in ‘Giro.’ If the ‘Janti’ has missed things, groom is fined for that. However, ‘Janti,’ basically,

carries all the required items. If things are properly brought, they are given proper place to seat. After their arrival in bride's house, all 'Janti' turn to be audiences, who observe ritualized activities of bride and groom.

Dabapla, in bride's house, is basically performed in the wedding day. They use materials brought by 'Janti'. 'Jag Majhi' (from girl's village) carries water on 'lohota' and approaches 'Janti'. He bows down in respect of 'Janti' and invites them at house and 'Mandap'. 'Janti' accepts the invitation and they approach 'Mandap' in dancing movement.

There are songs and dances throughout the night.

*Ale boiha do aadile sangiya*

*Joto boiha ge gamachha lade*

*Tala rachare galouj waha dare*

*Gamchha lade tele lade keda*

(We are many. If all we are kept in tree in yard, tree will be bent)

*Bhalari do Majhi babu do Paranik*

*Jawai do paragana*

*Malaria banij kowa babu bhaiya*

*Babui bhanij kowa aamin sahib*

*Khil bai har re jimiko sosari kowa*

*Lekha edako dona, mona tona*

*Koi hoi bis bigha ko*

*Sori keda jamako tol keda baro taka*

(We, two 'Majhihadas,' eldest son 'Jag Majhi,' Brother 'paragana' invite groom, and call son Amil. We make daughter measure the uncultivated field. We will fix the

broader line with noise and publicity. We measured twenty 'bigha' (five hector) and counted twelve taka (Now it has become one hundred five rupees and fifty-five paisa)

Bride's sisters pour sacred water on groom. They also offer new clothes to groom. In the same day, bride's younger brother is carried on shoulder by her sister's husband and groom is carried on shoulder by his brother in law. Bride's brother is kept in eastern side of 'Mandap' and groom is kept on western side. Both of them are separated by a thin cloth. 'Jag Majhi' from both girl and boy's side sprinkle water with help of mango leaves. Mango leaves are essential in wedding. Groom, then, puts a colored cloth on head of bride's brother. He puts rice grains around the throat of bride's brother he has kept in his mouth. Bride's brother repeats same process. Cloth is now removed. This is known as 'Sada Dahari'. Later, 'Jag Majhi,' 'Raibare' and three/four men from 'Janti' enter bride's house with 'Dahlia' (round carrier made from bamboo). Such 'Dhakiya' are full of items bought for bride. Bride is beautified with things brought by groom. She is now kept in 'Doli' and is brought out side on yard. Groom is also brought closer to bride. In the Mandap, groom is kept in the eastern side and bride in western side of Mandap. They are separated by a thin cloth. Both bride and groom are given one 'Lohota' water from 'Jag Majhi' of their respective village. Both sprinkle water on each other three to five times. Groom's father gives a packet of vermilion to groom. Such vermilion should be kept in a Saal leaf, which should have three parallel nerves. Groom drops some vermilion on ground three or five times. He should dip his thumb to pick up the vermilion. After dropping it on ground, he, now, put it on bride's 'Siudo' (middle hairline made on the head of women). Everybody cheers and utters 'Sindradhan'. Both bride and groom are taken to visit village and family they are brought back to bride's house. They are fed sweets.

After this process, bride's mother, aunty and some other female relatives put burning wood on grinding wood (Okhkhal) and strike it with long wooden hammer producing a form of music. Both 'Okhkhal' and music producing wooden hammer are sent to groom's house. Both bride and groom are let to enter house with a sort of worshipping (Aarati). They should jump over fire kept in leaves before entering the house. As they enter house, they are given curd and beater rice.

Now, Raibare organizes a meeting between 'Majhi' Hadam of both girl's and boy's village. 'Janti' should offer money, wine, rice and goat to 'Majhi Hadam' of girl's village.

Next day, girl and boy's parents get introduced to each other in humorous way. Mothers mask themselves in male look and father play the musical instruments. Finally, they all gather for snacks. In the second day, bride's parents worship in 'Majhithan' and let the 'Janti' returns with bride. Bride by her brother in law and groom by his brother in law are carried to 'Gramthan' (a common space of villagers). Both bride and groom are offered sweets and other items. When they reach to 'Majhithan,' they bid adieu to Janti. In the time of departure, they sing songs like this:

*Kahase ayelai hati re ghoda*

*Kahase ayelai log jun barato ho?*

*Purbase ayelai hati re ghoda*

*purba se ayelai log jun barati*

*Kin kin ayete hati re ghoda*

*Kin kin khayete log jun barati?*

*Pata lota khayete hati rre ghod*

*Mod mosa khayete log barati*

*Kin kichu payete log janu barati?*

*Baki diki payete log janu barati*

(Where do Janti come from riding on elephants and horses?)

Janti came from east riding on elephants and horses

What do Janti, elephants and horses eat?

Elephants and horses eat plants leaves

Janti eat wine and food

What will they get?

Janti will get everything remaining.)

*Sanse dhuti tem dhuti ena, ale chatka teme paromena*

*Hape tingan me khulimiya, inak maya dom chadau keda?*

(you are going through my yard in yellow dhoti, wait, let me ask you, have forgotten me?)

*Hola tikin baro baja gatenak nebeta kithin nam kedare*

*Kali kolam bagi kate behala banam, gug kate gatenak mandawa souhanataiya*

(I got call from my beloved in the last night

I will go to his Mandap with Sarangi(musical instrument) leaving paper and pen)

These songs carry theme of tragedy between bride and her parents. Her parents ask, why is she leaving them and whether she has forgotten everything? Her answer is that she has met her dear one and she has to go.

After Janti's departure, girl's relatives and villagers cook food. Specially, they cut a goat and keep a quarter in house and others parts are cooked with rice (Sude). All enjoy Sude. It is also the practices in Santhal community that bride's sister and brother are also sent as companions of bride to groom's house. They are called 'Lamti Baret'.

When 'Janti' reaches near about village, they stop. Other villagers as a form of welcoming, feed them snacks, especially sweets (Ghudi Janawadi Daka). Villagers dance and sing and enter village. Both bride and groom are told to jump over the fire. When bride and groom enter house they are given the beaten rice and curd, which is known as 'Sagun' (believe to bring good luck).

In the groom's village, there is merry making. For that, they cut a goat and enjoy eating tasty foods. Some flesh of goat is basically offered to 'Jag Majhi'. This is known as 'Santhal Fadi Meram.'



**Figure 13: bride and groom in groom's house**

Next day or third day after wedding, bride's brother is given a calf (Bari Itoto Dangra). According to Santhal Myth, brother is given calf in return to his efforts to save his sister from crocodile. Bride should bow down in front of senior members of her new house and touch their foot. This process is called 'Abuk Ganga'. Bride should bathe her husband.

Finally she is given new ornaments and other cloths by her seniors. Bride has to build her relationship with groom's elder brother. They pour water on each other's shoulder as in figure 12.



**Figure 14: Bride and groom's elder brother pouring water on each other**

From that very day, they should maintain respectable relationship. After this practice, all other family members and 'Lamti Baret' should be offered food. 'Lamti Baret' now returns house taking both the bride and groom with them. When they depart from groom's house, 'Bhatkam Khutti' from 'Mandap' is removed.

When bride and groom reach bride's house, groom's foot is watered and cleaned. Bride's sister and groom pour water on each other to build their respectable relationship.

### **Marriage as a Play**

In fact, marriage is like a play performed in modern realistic theatre that is experimental in nature as Bertolt Brecht has already envisioned in his experimental plays. The lead roles are played by bride and groom, whereas family members play the supportive roles. Whole village turns to be a stage. There is no clear demarcation between audience and performers. It "is constituted as a spectacle that denies its audience the ability either to look away from it or equally to intervene in it" (Parker and Sedgwick 11).



### **Some other Varieties of Marriages in Santhal Community**

Santhal community has some other forms of marriages but these are miniature form of 'Sagun Bapla' (Arranged Marriage). Every type is performative but the degree of performance may vary differently.

'Tunki Dipi Bapla' is another and modified type of marriage practiced much by poor Santhal. This marriage is almost like 'Sagun Bapla'. However, all the rituals in 'Mandap' are neglected. If economic condition of girl is poor, then this marriage is preferred. In the first day of 'Dabapla,' girl's relative come to boy's house and perform 'Jamai Dhoti'. 'Sindrada' is also performed at boy's house.

There is also marriage between widow and widower or divorced man and woman called 'Sangha Bapla'. In this type of marriage, matchmaker takes girl, her relatives, and 'Majhi Hadam' to boy's house. When they reach there, boy also invites his relatives and villagers. They have round table talk but both boy and girl are kept at middle facing eastern direction. They are put paste of turmeric and oil. Boy's father gives him vermilion. He first puts vermilion on a flower and put that flower on her left ear. Now, she becomes her wife.

'Jabaya kiriyok Bapla' is a marriage of unmarried pregnant girl. If an unmarried girl is pregnant, she is enquired by her parents. Then, there is village council meeting, 'Majhi' enquires about the pre-marriage affair. As her information, boy who had physical relationship with girl is brought there. If the boy feels guilty, he should marry the girl. If he denies marrying the girl, another boy should be managed to marry. But, the whole expenditure should be borne by the guilty boy. Now, boy who marries the girl should be given one pair of oxen and twelve 'man' rice (40 kg makes one man). Until she gives birth, marriage is not held. After she gives birth to baby, they engage in merry making and they marry.

‘Hiram Chetan Bapla’ (Multiple Marriages) is marrying with other women having already one wife at house. There could some reasons to marry more than one. If first wife is infertile and suffering from chronic disease, if elder brother dies and husband and wife don’t have better understanding, husband can marry again but he should take the consent of first wife. If the new bride is unmarried and first wife has given consent, the marriage is as same as ‘Sagun Bapla’ is. But, if new bride is already married, they cannot marry in traditional way.

The most interesting marriage type is ‘Nir Bolok Bapla’. In this marriage, girl enters the house of a boy by whom she is impressed with. As she enters, she gets some social rights over there. Boy’s parents suggest her to return. If she denies returning, they burn chilly in a hope of forcing her out of house. If she persists to remain inside house, she is believed to be victorious and they have to marry her with their son. Unfortunately, this is not in practice these days.

‘Itut Bapla’ (putting vermilion by force) was also in practice. In this type of marriage, a Santhal boy puts vermilion in forehead of any girl he likes. However, this type of marriage causes serious conflict in community. Girl’s relatives do not accept this but ‘Majhi Hadam’ advises both parties to come to a mutual agreement. If they reach to an agreement, they hold wedding. If they do not reach to an agreement, girls are considered as like divorced women. Such a practice is very rare these days.

‘Agir Bapla’ (Love marriage) is another type of marriage. ‘Agir’ means running away from house. If a boy and girl runs away and get married without consent of family, such a marriage is called ‘Agir Bapla’. When they return house, boy’s parents inform ‘Majhi Hadam’. If they do not inform in time, they would be fined. When ‘Majhi Hadam’ and other senior community members gather at boy’s house, he is inquired about girl’s consent, and other basic information like, whether

she was married before or not? If she was married before, boy's father should cut at least three goats.

Basically, 'Jag Majhi' and 'Jag Parani' may arrive at boy's house to see the girl. Both of them should be cordially welcomed 'Jag Majhis' of both sides reach to an agreement about the wedding. If economically feasible, they decide for 'Sagun Bapla'. But, if their economic condition is not so good, 'Jag Majhi' may complete the wedding in that same day. Such marriage is called 'Dudduk Nipam'. In such a wedding, a wedding, girl is told to sit on bronze plate. Girl should sit facing eastern side and boy western. Boy's father gives him a packet of vermilion. Boy puts vermilion on ground first and then put it on girl's forehead. They decide a deadline for boy to give one of oxen to his brother in law. Marriage wouldn't be complete until he gives one pair of oxen.

If a family doesn't have son or if they are young and if they are no men to help them in their works, 'Jwai Bapla' is arranged. After this marriage, boy should stay in his wife's house at least for five years. However, after five years, he may leave the house but he should take divorce from his wife in such a case. In this type of marriage, whole expenditure should be borne by girl's father. He should also promise to give one pair of oxen and ten 'man' rice (40 kg makes one man). Even after five years, boy may stay there. If he remains there, he has right to get proper share of property but he cannot claim in his original house.

Marriage between a widower and an unmarried girl or widow or an unmarried boy is called 'Randi Chhahwi Bapla'. If a boy marries a widow, he should pay half Ganang. Out of half Ganang, 'Jag Majhi' gets eight Aana (paisa). In this type of wedding, boy doesn't keep vermilion on girl's forehead. Instead, he touches vermilion with a flower and put the flower on her heads.

### **Death Ritual (Bhandan): Repetition and Reiteration of Ritualized Behavior**

It is assumed that reflection is the basis of performance. More clearly, public reflexivity is well understood to be performance. Turner writes: “The languages through which a group communicates itself to itself are not, of course, confined to talking codes: they include gestures, music, dancing, graphic representation, painting, sculpture, and the fashioning of symbolic objects. They are dramatic, that is literally "doing" codes. (465)

Similarly, for Schechner performance is re-doing that is “restored behaviour” (13). He writes, “For me, performance is ... more consciously ‘chosen’ on a case-by-case basis and transmitted culturally not genetically” (94). Restored behaviour are “routines, habits, and rituals; the recombination of already behaved behaviours” (13). According to Schechner, there are no *new* or *original* performances. There is never a “first time” (Ibid). However, because the activities that make up a performance are never new or original, they can be “worked on . . . played with, made into something else . . . [even] transformed” (Ibid). Re-doing is acting with an appreciation of the history of past action and of the conventions that direct current action and the understanding that made that history formed those conventions. When somebody dies in Santhal community, they need to repeat traditional ritual. It has a set of codes of conduct and pattern of activities. If somebody violates it, he or she is considered social outcast. In Schechnerian terms, ‘Bhandan’ (Death rites) is re-doing of what earlier generations did. If a man in Santhal community dies, ‘Majhi’ is first informed. ‘Majhi’ instructs ‘Gudit’ to inform other villagers. ‘Gudit’ visits every house and tells villagers to come with some woods. Some villagers are sent to call the distant relatives. Corpse is brought on yard. Corpse is washed and is taken inside. This process is called ‘Um Dmbara.’ Female members of family and other women from

village wash the corpse, its foot and hands. They also keep water in dead person's mouth and also put oil. Corpse is covered with white cloth. They keep the corpse on wooden box. If they own field, they perform the cremation on their own field but if they don't own such space, they take it on common cremation area (Ghat). Gudit leads the mass in funeral rites. The corpse should basically be carried by son, and close the relatives. Gudit throws fried rice on way to 'Ghat'. Gudit should also carry a chicken (Kulla Sim). Some straws from dead person's roof, an axe, digging instrument, fire, pot with water should also be carried by people.

As Re-doing is acting with an appreciation of the history of past action and of the conventions that direct current action, new practices have been developed in Santhal community. Basically, the corpse is burnt but, nowadays, Santhals also bury corpse due to scarcity of woods. Corpse is kept in North-South direction before burning. First, son keeps on piece of wood and other also cover the corpse by putting piece of wood. Before burning, the corpse is rotated three times in anti-clock direction and should be kept in such way that head lies southern direction. Eldest son puts water on hand, foot, and mouth. All the attendees repeat same process.

Gudit takes a heavy knife, an axe and chicken on hands and move around the corpse three times. He should also take anti-clockwise direction facing north. He pierces chicken neck with an iron wire and keeps it close to corpse. Eldest son brings Sododari (kind of plant found on the side of river and rivulet). He takes some threads from corpse covering cloth. He ties it on Sododari. Eldest son facing Southern direction lit fire on corpse. He should use his left hand for that. Then 'Gudit' cares for complete burning of corpse. One piece of flesh (Aasthu) is taken from the corpse and is covered in small portion of corpse covering cloth. They also put oil, turmeric, milk, and water on 'Aasthu'.

Funeral rite should be done on first day or third day. All the people go to nearby river or pond for taking bath. They put vermilion before they start bathing. They also put one Rupee twenty-five paisa. This process is called buying of space (Ghat Kinne). It is believed that offering that money will please god (God of water) who would lead the dead man's spirit. They also put turmeric and some medicinal herbs. Now, they began to worship. They pray for fearlessness of spirit and well-being of his relatives. All the people who attended funeral rites get bathed in the river and hair trimmed by professional barber. Later, they break 'pinda'. Eldest son has to go to the river and has to stand facing Eastern direction. He also performs some traditional rites in water and gets drowned two or three times and throws the Astu above from the head. This process is called Tel Khadi Puja (worshipping in river).

Now, they prepare some rice balls (pinda) and keep them on three to five leaves of Sal tree. In their worshipping, they use right hand. They put beaten rice, fried rice, some sweets, rice flower, etc. They recall the names of their ancestors. At last they break the rice balls (pinda). Eldest son and all other people get bathed in the nearby river. Eldest daughter in law should follow their husband. When they return house, they are told to touch the flame before they enter house. To make the fire they burn dried branches or leaves of Sal tree. This is basically done so that spirit of dead man doesn't return house with them. Either the dead man's wife or eldest daughter in law enter the house and squeeze their clothes in the same place where dead man's was kept before taking him to river. For this process, they come back with wet clothes. All the people gather in the yard. Dead man's wife or his eldest daughter in law brings water from inside, put it in front of eldest son, and bow down in front of him. This is called Dhug Zaher. 'Majhi' Hadam consoles the family members and other relatives. Then eldest son paste a mixture of cow dung and water in the centre of front yard. He

also makes a round ball of cow dung. He puts the boiled rice grains, cow dung balls, oils, water and a hen and a plate made of Sal leaves.

They also burn some scented Agarbatti (incense Stick). Hen is killed by hitting on its head by axe. In hitting head of hen back part of axe is used. The blood is mixed with rice. This is called Katum. That rice should be cooked with chicken flesh. The cooked item is called 'Sodthe'. 'Sodthe' should be offered with rice balls (pinda). Finally, all the people are also given 'Sodthe'. They pray that dead man has not come house along with them.

If the funeral rite is not at same day, they should keep the 'Asthu' (Jangwah) in the main supportive vertical beam of house. And the above-mentioned process should be performed.

In the buried space, they dig out a pit reciprocal to the height of corpse. Pit should be made in the direction of North to South. A hair and piece of nail is taken cut of corpse and mixed it in a kind of mud (Narkasa). Before covering the corpse by mud, at it is protected by some bamboos. First, eldest son throws mud by using the thumb index finger of left hand. He should throw the mud just three times. Then all the people follow that process. The round ball made earlier is burnt by 'Gudit'. Basically, they burn in the southern side of burial space.

Bandhan is the essential rite of funeral. It doesn't have a fixed date. People can perform it in their favorable time. But, Bhandan is compulsory for them because it makes their house acceptably to others. Until they don't perform the Bhandan, they almost become untouchable. Before Bhandan, they cannot organize any religious performances including worship of Gods. Women shouldn't put on bracelets and vermilion. Marriage cannot occur in this period.

For the Bhandan, they prepare one pot of wine and juice the village headmen. They decide a date for Bhandan. They prepare all the materials needed for Bhandan and invite the relatives and villagers. They especially invite the people who accompanied in funeral rites. In the evening, men and women make two different groups and go to hear by river for bath. Close relatives get the hair cut when they return house, eldest son put the paste of cow dung and water somewhere around the centre of yard. He also makes a round ball of dung. That round ball is surrounded by the 'Majhi' Hadam and other headmen. In that round ball, one 'Lohota' water, rice on Tapari (plate made of leaves), vermilion, oil, 'Diyo' (metallic tiny plate used to worship God) and incense sticks are also kept. One hen is also put there. It is made holy, by sprinkling water from 'Lohota'. That hen is killed by 'Gudit' by hitting with that back of axe. Its blood is received in rice. Similarly, one small lamb is also scarified and its blood is mixed with rice. Some flesh of it is kept inside house. Whatever, hens, lamb or goat, people have brought there, are also cut and one of the three parts of them is cooked and two parts are returned to them.

When the 'Khichadi' (mixed of rice and blood) is ready, it is also offered in rice ball (Pinda). Then three headmen of village enter the house and bring out wine, rice, salt, oil, turmeric, spice and some dry wood for fire. They all gather in the Yard and sit in a circle.

Eldest son should stand and one of the attendants acts as storyteller. He recites the name of the dead man's ancestors and finally he declares purity of the house and family members. Then, with the materials taken from house, they cook 'Khichadi' again outside the house. This is the ending of first day.

In the next day, other people who were unable to come previous day attend the Bhandan. Same process is repeated for the things they have brought. All the people



sing and dance with Dhol. While singing they pay condolence to family and pay for the solace of deceased spirit.

In the evening, family members bring utensils, clothes, animals etc for the dead man and these things are kept in the center of yard. Other people (villagers) also keep the thing they have brought. They sell the thing in cheapest price. However, price is lessened if not sold in high price. Whatever is earned, they use it to buy beaten rice, wine and enjoy together.

All the people led by 'Jag Majhi' go to nearby river and take bath. After taking bath, they return house. They all dance and sing on their way to house. Finally, all the people are fed delicious food. This is how funeral rite in Santhal community is over.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

It is challenging to bring nature, culture and performance together for the following reasons. Nature, if looked superficially, is materiality relating to both living being and non-living objects like rock, river, jungle, atmosphere etc but, in depth, it can be the process including evolution, changing seasons or the regeneration of life. Considering the process and its dynamism, nature embodies performative quality. “It is in this sense of nature that comes closest to the meaning of our term performance” (Szerszynski 2). The process of nature and human interaction come across in due course of the evolution. In the primordial times too, it was found that people performed to celebrate the changes in nature and showed their gratitude to nature’s bounteousness. It was by means of performance that natural spaces were turned into cultural places; a process that has been in practice since the primordial times. Human activities in the process of forming culture used abundance of natural spaces and products. In fact, performance is seen as pervading all human activities. Performance is intrinsically attached to their culture, which plays the role of a bridge between nature and culture. Nature and culture are brought together to Santhals’ villages, houses and yards by means of performance. They have a belief system that nature which is resided by holy spirit should be used by making the holy spirit happy. For them, they can make the holy spirit happy by following a set of practices in the forms of rituals. Thus, that set of practices (performance) can make the nature accessible to them. Whatever, the relationship between nature and culture is, the special ties which man must preserve with nature have only recently been genuinely highlighted, even though they are enshrined in the very first chapter of the Bible. This special tie with nature becomes manifest in Santhal community.

Santhals' life rituals are performative and performances get engaged with both culture and nature. They perform over space specially in naming ceremony, wedding and death rites. An open space, not house, is their performance location. If they perform at house it is the yard that is made special by coloring and forming human circles. Most of the Santhal rites take place in yards, 'Majhithan' (little away from residential area), river, pond, etc.

Santhals decorate houses by making beautiful artworks on the walls of their houses, and the pictures they paint are the components of nature including flowers, some animals and some patterns. They draw dancing postures to celebrate the growth of paddy and birth of a calf. This forms the very spirit of the performance ethics.

Santhals are by nature performers. It is seen through their love for dancing and singing. They accompany their dances with two drums and flute (Tiriao). Because of this, they are also known as excellent musicians and dancers. The dances performed in weddings are not only full of energy as seen in jumping and leaping in the air but also highlighted with colorful costumes decorated with colorful feathers. Their dances include mock fights and attacks. They produce loud drumming sounds resembling thunder.

Santhals celebrate festivals in cyclic patterns that are based on seasons. They follow cycle of nature and agricultural term to celebrate festivals accordingly. Santhals celebrate "Sohorai" from the end of Poush (January) and for the entire month of Magh. "Karam" festival is celebrated by Santhals in the month of 'Aswin' (September- October). They celebrate festivals to pay invocations to Nature. 'Karam Parva' is celebrated with a belief that it might help them to increase wealth and bring prosperity to progeny and to get rid of the evil spirits. 'Akshatrutiya' is celebrated to worship mother earth with religious flavor and enthusiasm. A black cock

is offered for sacrifice together with non-boiled rice, flower, vermilion and incense sticks to propitiate mother earth for bumper harvest, prosperity peaceful and disease free life. 'Jamtala Bonga' (Jantal Festival) is celebrated when the ear of paddy hangs downward. A 'Karam Bough' is planted in the middle of the village to celebrate 'Karam' festival.

The dramaturgical model which adopts the roles, principles, and terminology of theatrical performance in order to explain human communication and activities such as setting/context equivalent to stage, active agent equivalent to actor, passive agent equivalent to audience, and objects equivalent to props are also applicable to the life rituals performance of tribes. Goffman's everyday life as performances also comes to be relevant because everyone in life rituals plays his or her roles.

The dramaturgical model and Turner's social dramas both are well articulated in Santhals' life rituals. For example, in the wedding 'Majhi,' 'Gudit,' bride, and groom and other attendants play their parts in performance and also play the roles of audiences. Bride and groom along with other actors consciously play the roles, which are the repeated and ritualized behaviors. Death of a man is breach according to Turner, which creates crisis, and cremation is the redressive action leading to reintegration or schism in the community. The dramaturgical model, which also has scripts (or frames) as essential guidelines for interaction, is also found in the life ritual performances because these are already scripted. Every rite and festival, of whatever generations, that may be performed without written script.

Santhals' life rituals are performative not simply because of the presence of theatricality but because of the fact that they are playful and lively that blend the highly performative activities with the living forms of nature realized through the close proximity.

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