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Santali Storytelling and Folklore as Tools for Peace Education in the Society

Hirendra Mandi

Post-graduate Student,
Department of Education,
Vinaya Bhavana, Visva-Bharati,
Santiniketan (West Bengal, India)

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Abstract:

This article aims to explore Santali storytelling and folklore in the context of fostering peace education within the Santal community and society. This paper is based on a qualitative approach, uses secondary data. The article points out Santali traditions and culture through storytelling and folklore that help to foster peace education. It highlights how folk dance, folk song, folktales and proverbs address the values like empathy, love, moral thinking and discipline, etc. By analysing various Santali storytelling and folklore, the article illustrates how indigenous traditions fertilise harmony, preserve cultural heritage and narratives as contemporary tools for spreading peace.

The article suggests that Santali culture, tradition, and various cultural festivals help to make a strong connection among people. The biggest festivals of the Santal community, Baha and Sohorai, bring people together and contribute to reconnecting any broken relationships with harmony. Santali storytelling and folklore are crucial in preserving its identity through Santali literature, and Santali storytelling and folklore preserve Santali culture by practising at the grassroots level. All the factors of this assist in fostering peace within the community. It examines various folk songs that carry a good message for the whole community and broader society. Santali traditions and indigenous literature have an impact on peace-building. The findings suggest that Santali oral practices or traditions are not only culturally valuable, but they are essential for the safe existence of peace.

Keywords: Santali storytelling, Folklore, Indigenous knowledge, Peace Education, Tribal pedagogy, Santali Culture

1. Introduction:

In India, there are over 700 tribes. One of the major tribes in India is the Santal tribe. The Santal (also spelled as 'Santhal', 'Santar', Santal and formerly also spelt as 'Sonthal' or Sontal) is one of the Munda ethnic groups who live in various states of India, mainly they belong to the north-eastern states like Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Assam, and Tripura. Besides that, the Santal people live in Bangladesh (especially in Rajshahi Division and Rangpur Division), Nepal and Bhutan. The language of the Santal community is the Santali language (also

spelt as 'Santhali', 'Santari', and 'Saotali'). The Santali language is an ancient language of the Mundari language group. The well-known Santal people of eastern India speak their mother tongue, Santali, in their daily lives. Therefore, it suggests that this language has not yet become extinct. Besides that, the people of the vast community of tribal peoples, such as the Munda, Ho, Mahali, Bhumij, and Virhar, also speak Santali, although they have their languages. This suggests that most tribal people of the Munda sect, except Santal, have forgotten their mother tongue, particularly in West Bengal. The Santal community has their own culture, traditions, and judicial system. The Santali literature is a very rich literature, although various Santali songs, disciplines and rules of different rituals, judicial system, folktales, and folk poetry, etc., were all passed on verbally, but now all of this has been put into written form. Research about Santal and their language is underway to uncover many unknown facts. Various things of Santali literature, traditions, and rules of rituals have been digitized. The culture and traditions of this community are purely scientific. The Binti (folktales) of this community are based on scientific importance.

The Santali Storytelling is an art of transforming knowledge through story; it may be folk tales, real stories, and current stories. It is a part of their life. The children listen to these stories from their grandfather, grandmother, father and mother or any person. Although these are rarely seen nowadays. Storytelling sessions would start, especially at night before dinner. At that time, after the elders returned from field work, the elders of the house would tell stories to the little children in the courtyard of the house. This scene was seen in almost all Santal villages. In this way, the children could learn a lot. It is safe to say that this scene is not seen like that anymore. But it may be limited. The Santali folklore defines the Santali traditions, culture, folktales, and folk songs etc. It includes many tales and poems that carry a good message or some unknown facts. It refers to the rich traditional stories, practices, songs and beliefs of the Santal people. The Santali people have a tradition of singing in all their rituals, whether happy or sad. They are very fond of singing. The musical instruments they use to play their songs are also different from others. Their traditional costumes are very different, which makes them unique. All these can be said to have come through oral literature, which is part of folklore. This article explores how Santali storytelling and folklore play a role in promoting peace education in society.

2. Aim for the study:

The goal of this research article is to study the Santali storytelling and folklore as tools for fostering peace education within the Santal community.

3. Methodology of the Study:

The basis of this research article is secondary data. The secondary data was collected from various sources, including books, articles, journals, and the internet. But most of the secondary material was collected from multiple Santali books.

4. Discussion:

4.1 Santali Storytelling for Peace Education:

Santali Storytelling is a traditional way the Santal people share their stories, history, myths, beliefs, and wisdom orally. It is a part of their culture. In this way, the Santal people preserved their cultural and ritual system. It helps to share knowledge and values from one generation to the next. In their storytelling, they sometimes sing a song when it is necessary. The song is not out of the box of the story, but is related, which carries a meaningful message. Santali Storytelling and peace education are inextricably linked. We can get it from their story and system of delivery. All the stories told by them carry some values that indirectly or directly promote peace. Santali Storytelling teaches peace education by spreading messages of harmony, love for nature, community engagement, living within the system, and non-violence. The following points demonstrate the concept:

4.1.1 Good behaviour: Santali story highlights the characteristics which is important and not important for a society. It shapes the behaviour of the individuals that is necessary for a peaceful environment.

4.1.2 Respect for all things: Santali stories highlight respect for not only elders but also good people, whether they are elders or not. Besides that, there are many stories that talk about respect for nature and different opinions.

4.1.3 Building empathy: There are many stories of a combination of animal and human characters that help listeners to understand others' emotions and feelings. In this way, empathy is built among people. For example, Tuyu ar Sim hopon ko reyag katha (The matter of fox and chick), Tuyu ar Kog ko reyag katha (The matter of fox and Egretta garzetta) etc.

4.1.4 Build love for animals: Some Santali folktales teach to build a relationship between an animal and a human being and how it is important for balancing the environment and creating a peaceful nature.

4.1.5 Promoting cooperation: Many stories show how people survive and succeed by working together, which promotes collaboration among people, which is an important characteristic of peace. For example, Rengenj Horag Katha (The story of an impoverished person), Midtang Raj ar Yugi reyag (The story of a King and a Beggar), etc.

4.1.6 Resolving Conflict: The characters of some folktales show that they solve problems without violence, through wisdom and dialogue. It indirectly promotes peace education in society.

Example: A story of Pilchu Haram and Pilchu budhi:

In Santal traditions, Pilchu Haram (the first man) and Pilchu Budhi (the first woman) lived peacefully, worked together to build a home, and lived in harmony. They both respected the

earth and Bonga (spirits). The story teaches the importance of living in harmony with each other, promoting values of respect, love and cooperation. From the story, we can learn that life is not about selfishness, but about sharing, respecting nature, and spreading love.

4.2 Santali Folklore for Peace Education:

The folklore of the tribals is the storehouse of oral literature, which covers folktales, myths, legends, folk songs, riddles, proverbs, folk speeches and stories. It also includes folk art of both graphic and plastic arts and folk dance (Patnaik, 2002). Santali folklore has many aspects or parts, such as folktales, folk songs, folk dances, folk arts, myths and beliefs, riddles, proverbs, and legends. These are all parts of the Santali folklore that teach or promote peace in society. This suggests that the Santali folklore helps directly or indirectly to spread peace education in the community or that society. The following points illustrate this concept:

4.2.1 Respect for nature and spirits: The Santali folk beliefs teach that harming the environment and disrespecting spirits brings trouble. So, it promotes peace education indirectly. For example, nature worship in the name of Marang Buru (the God of the Santal community) and Jaher Ayo (the Goddess of the Santal community).

4.2.2 Folk songs and dances: The Santali folk songs and dances carry a message in the lyrics of the songs and the steps of the dances. These often carry messages for love, respect, kindness, forgiveness, helping each other and staying connected. The Santali folk songs are generally categorised into three parts such as religious folk songs, social folk songs, and love folk songs. These all have different messages in the words.

Religious Folk Songs

Religious folk songs refer to those folk songs that are based on religious beliefs. A large part of the Santali folk songs consists of religious folk songs. One of them is given below -

Moreko do more boyha–

Turui ko do turui boyha

Jarge dah ma halai halai

Sita nala poroi poroi

Chete teko gugurija?

Chete teko lamaga?

Towa teko gugurija

Dahe teko lamaga.

Ne tape sunum sindur

Ne tape naynom rora,

Atang tape sunum sindur

Telai tape nainom rora.

It means —

The Moreko are five brothers, the Turuiko are six brothers. The Sitanala is covered in a torrential downpour. What will you give the cow dung with? What will you wash it with? You will wash it with milk; you will wash it with curd. Here, takes your oil vermilion, here, take your kajalalata; take your oil vermilion, you will apply oil on the kajalalata.

Peace education —

These few points promote peace education in society indirectly:

- It explores the harmonious relationship among brothers.
- Natural phenomenon (Sitanala, Heavy rain).
- Cleanness of an environment.
- Symbols of peace - vermilion and kajal.
- Devotion to God.
- Discipline and morality.

Social Folk Songs

Social folk songs refer to those songs that are sung based on various social occasions. There are many social folk songs. A Santali wedding (one kind of social occasion) song is mentioned here:

*Sanginj dishom miru sanginj naihar
Jonomer jug miru gate apat
Gujug buru miru khobor seterama
Amonama miru dhubi ghas do!*

It means —

My mother, my in-laws are far away. I have lost you as if you were born. By the time the news of my death reaches you, the durba grass will have grown on my grave.

Peace education —

These few points promote peace education in society indirectly:

- Bonding between mother and daughter.
- Deep emotions and the relationship between mother and daughter.

Love Folk Songs

The love folk songs can be mentioned after the social level folk songs. Santali love folk songs are very popular and famous among various folk songs. A Santali love folk song is mentioned here:

*Daya dular nel te,
Kuli mege sanja,
Moner bhabna bachom lai
Mon tinj ma chutchut, koram tinj ma dhak dhak
Am tuluj ror gecho bachunj dila.*

It means —

Seeing the depth of your love, I want to ask you. I cannot say my inner words; my chest is trembling. I feel I have lost my courage to talk to you. Alas! Alas! How can I talk about love?

Peace education —

These few points promote peace education in society:

- Love is necessary for creating a peaceful environment.
- This song promotes love, and that is spreading in the Santal society.
- Politeness of talking to anyone.

4.2.3 Community Festivals: Community festival refers to those festivals that are observed in a particular community or society. There are many festivals in the Santal society, but the most famous and the biggest festivals are ‘Baha’ and ‘Sohorai.’ These festivals bring people together and teach unity and sharing. For example, in Baha Parab, villagers worship flowers in nature and pray for peace, happiness, and a good harvest at Jaher Than (a holy place). After ritual works, people sing and dance together to honour their God and Goddess. The celebration teaches peaceful coexistence, equality, and respect for all living things, which are important lessons in peace education.

4.2.4 Proverbs and Sayings: There are many proverbs and sayings in Santali. These were not created overnight; it is an experience of a long time. These proverbs and sayings teach patience, kindness and peaceful behaviour. Here are some examples:

- *Eken thili do sade geya* (Empty vessels make the most noise)
- *Chetan rong chong vitit vondor vong* (Just grinding doesn't make gold)
- *Midh dharete pitha do bang isinog-aa* (It takes two to tango)
- *Sahao khanem lahag-aa* (You will only move forward if you suffer)

5. Impact on the Santal Society in the Context of Peace Education:

Santali Storytelling and Folklore have a deep and lasting impact on society, especially in the context of promoting peace. Through Santali folktales, poems, folk songs, riddles, proverbs and sayings, peace is promoted in a way to achieve unity, living in harmony, love for nature, and resolving conflict peacefully. The following points explore:

- Discovering a peaceful mindset
- Strengthen the bonding of community members
- Flourishing love for the own root
- Increasing respect for nature and culture
- Developing various values that are important to build an environment of peace

6. Conclusion:

The storytelling and folklore work as tools for peace education in any society. Santali

storytelling and folklore are a very rich literature that contains all the characteristics of peace and value. It helps to promote peace among individuals in society. The present scenario is fading somewhere, but the root behaviour of the Santal people reflects peace in nature. In that sense, it suggests that storytelling and folklore are the core of spreading peace. Peace depends on the environment and situation, and handling the situation and environment depends on education, which is called Peace Education. Gradually, Santali literature is improving a lot in line with the times. As a result, many changes can be seen in the type of storytelling or in the dance and song. Not only Santali boys and girls, but also other boys and girls should also know about Santali folk tales, folk songs, and Santali culture so that they can develop those values that will help create peace. Not only that, Santal boys and girls should also know about other literature and cultures.

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