



Study on Women Costume of Santhal Tribe of Jharkhand

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Santhals belong to the Pre-Aryan period. They were the great fighters during the British regime in India. They waged war against the permanent settlement of Lord Cornwallis in 1855. During the late 1850s Santhal hero, Sidhu Murmu and Kanhu Murmu (related as brother) had accumulated around 10 thousand Santhals to run parallel government against the British government. Baba Tilka Majhi was the first Santhal leader who raised weapons against the Britishers in 1789 (Chaudhuri, 1985). The Santhals are non-idol worshippers they have no temple, no images, no holy books, no official founder of their religion and no regular worship. Santhal religion worships *Marangburu* or *Bonga* as supreme deity. Santhali is the prime language spoken by the Santhal tribe. Apart from Santhali they also speak Bengali, Oriya and Hindi.

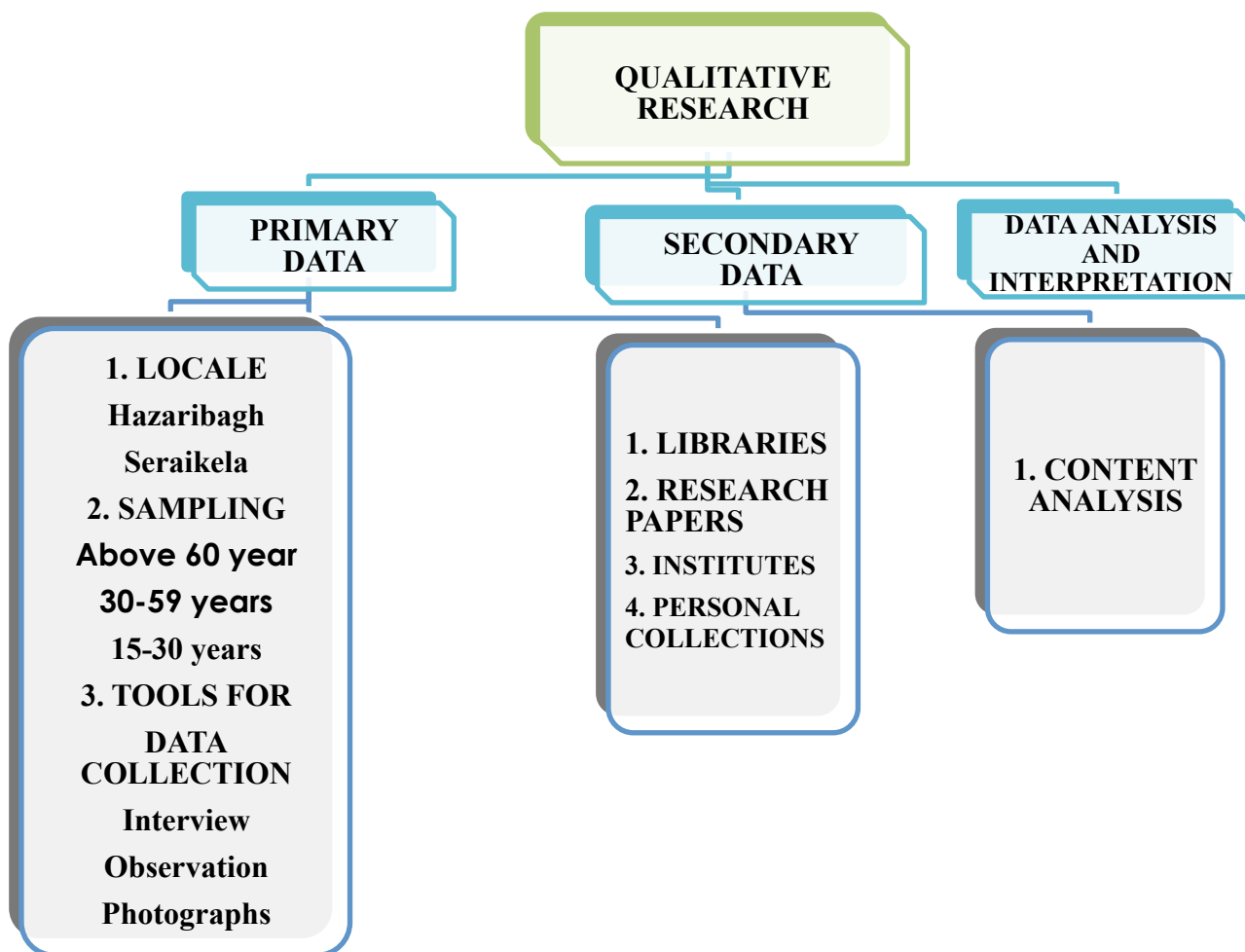
Santhal has been selected for study for its range of decorative traditional textiles and costumes. Through the study of the costumes and textiles of a community, it is possible to gain meaningful insights into the customs of the cultural group who inhabit the region. Santhal women still wear their traditional dresses on special occasions, though the original designs, motifs, colours, fibres used and the way of wearing keeps changing. Therefore, there is a need for documenting the traditional costume so that the information on rich cultural heritage, of which costume is an integral part, is not lost with time. Study of traditional costume also helps in its revival amongst the youth. These studies can also form the basis of inspiration for the fashion designers.

The objective of the present research was to study in detail the costume of Santhal women of Jharkhand with respect to fabric, colour, design and embellishment

Methodology

- **Study Design:** The present study was a Field study. In order to fulfil the objectives of the study, the research was carried out as discussed below:
- Collection of primary data
- **Locale of study:** The areas in Jharkhand where majority of Santhal tribe resides were identified.

The research design used for this study is given below:



They were found in Dumka, Godda, Deoghar, Hazaribagh, Seraikela and Pakur. Hazaribagh and Seraikela were selected for studying of Santhal tribal costume because these two places were closer to Ranchi and therefore more accessible.

Selection of Samples

Purposive Sampling technique was used for sampling.

Sample Size: The sample size selected included 3 age based categories among women from Santhal tribe of Jharkhand:

The sample of women selected included the following:

- Senior age (above 60 years) = 8-10 female from each locale
- Middle age (30-59 years) = 8-10 female from each locale
- Young age (15-30 years) = 8-10 female from each locale

The senior age group was taken because of their experience and knowledge of traditional costume, fabric, color, motifs. The middle and younger age group can show the reflection of current trends and the reasons for change in costume if any.

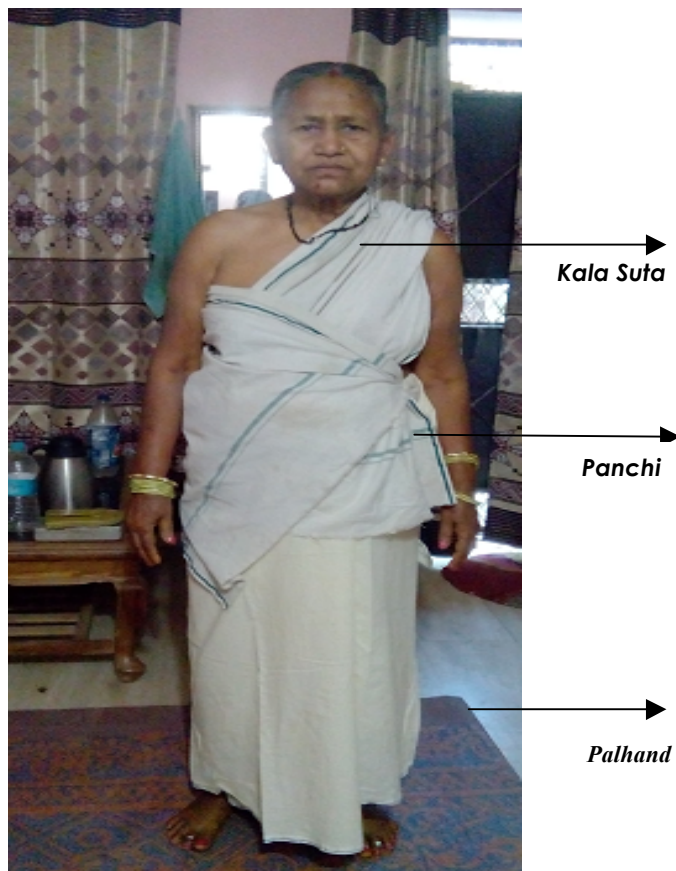


Figure 1: Traditional costume of Santhal women,
Photo Courtesy: Author



Figure 2: Palhand, lower garment, Photo
Courtesy: Author

Tools for Data Collections

Semi-structured interview schedules were formulated to find out the design, color, motifs of the costume of women of Santhal tribe of Jharkhand. Interview schedule was prepared in Hindi to get an in-depth understanding about the costume. The consent of the respondents was taken before conducting the interview and taking the photographs.

The interview schedule had questions related to the following broad categories:

- Socio demographic profile of the respondents: it was essential to elicit information on the following: Name of the respondent, age, religion, educational qualification, occupation, address and contact number.
- The traditional costume of Santhal tribe-married and unmarried women, widows, etc.
- Costumes worn on special occasions, such as, weddings, festivals, etc.
- The fabric, designs, colours and motifs with their significance.

Observation Technique included the study of the fabric used, motifs, designs and colours of costume, jewellery, head wear.

Photographs of the costume were clicked to know the details of design, costumes and motifs etc. Old photographs possessed by the locals were observed to know the changes that have taken place over the period of time.

Collection of Secondary Data

Secondary information was collected from the following sources:

- Jharkhand State Museum, Ranchi
- Jharkhand State Library, Ranchi
- District Museum, Murshidabad
- National Museum, New Delhi
- Craft Museum, New Delhi
- National Institute Of Fashion Technology, Delhi
- Central Jharkhand University Library, Ranchi
- Jharkhand Emporium, Delhi

Results and Discussions

SANTHAL WOMEN'S DAILY WEAR COSTUME						
Costume Name	Costume Category	Fabric Used	Colour	Pattern	Measurement	Draping Pattern
Panchi	Upper Garment	'Taant' Hand woven hand spun cotton	White	No motif	4ft long and 2 ½ ft wide	The <i>panchi</i> was tucked on the waist inside the bottom wear in the front then moved around back and put on the left shoulder. The extra fabric was again pulled to the front and tucked on the left side waist.
Palhand	Lower garment	'Taant' Hand woven hand spun cotton	White with red bordered selvedge on both edges	No motif	width of 3ft just to wear below the knee and length of 5ft	The <i>Palhand</i> was wrapped on the waist tightly and folded from one side of the waist to another in the front with the excess length
Gamcha	Headwear	Cotton	No fixed colour	Either checks or stripes	rectangular piece (No specified measurement)	Santhal women mostly used <i>Gamcha</i> as headgear when they went for agriculture, fishing etc. Santhal women refrain from covering their faces.



Figure 3: Taant Saree, Photo Courtesy: Author



Figure 4: Taant Saree worn in same manner as Palhand and Panchi with Blouse, Photo Courtesy: Author

White red bordered saree was worn by all other tribes like Munda, Oraon etc. Santhal women, just to distinguish them from all other tribes, have started wearing green coloured *taant* saree (khadi cotton) which has some animal and plant motifs. Green *taant* saree is now the symbol of Santhal community. Santhal women still wear this white with red bordered saree in many functions.

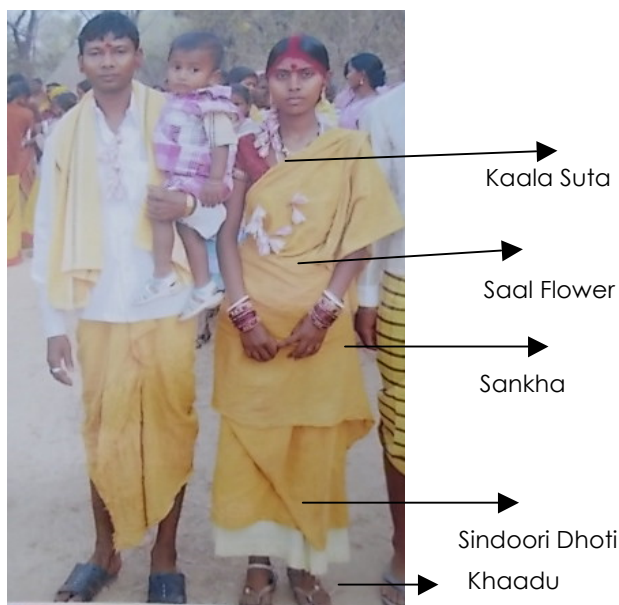


Figure 6: Bride in traditional wedding attire, Photo Courtesy: Author



Figure 7: Khanda lungi, Photo Courtesy: Author



Figure 8: Jhalah, saree offered to the wife of the match maker and female members of the bride side, Photo Courtesy: Author

WOMEN'S COSTUME ASSOCIATED WITH WEDDING						
Marriages in Santhal are known as Bapla						
Costume Name	Costume Category	Fabric Used	Colour & Pattern	Costume Offered To	Measurements	Draping Pattern
Sindoor lungi	Plain dhoti and saree	Cotton	Turmeric yellow	Worn by bride & groom	Width 3 ½ feet and length 9 feet	Santhal women drape their body by binding a wide cloth once round their waist and cover their right shoulder. This covers them from their knees to their neck, and the end of the cloth hangs down behind.
Kanda lungi	Dhoti and Saree	Cotton(Khadi)	Turmeric yellow with red bordered selvedge on both edges	Mother of the bride	Width 3 ½ feet and length 16-18feet	
Gagla Lungi	Dhoti and Saree	Cotton	No specified colour & pattern	Bride's aunt (father's sister)	Width 3 ½ feet and length 17-18feet	
Hele Lungi	Dhoti and Saree	Cotton	Turmeric with red bordered	Mother's mother of the bride	Width 3 ½ feet and length 11-12feet	
SadaKacha	Dhoti and Saree	Cotton	No specified colour & pattern	Village head man	Width 3 ½ feet and length 6 feet	
Jhalah	Dhoti and Saree	Cotton	Checks with small plant & animal motif	Match maker of the marriage	Width 3 ½ feet and length 15feet	



Figure 9: Girls Wearing Jalah in wedding function ,Photo Courtesy: Author

SANTHAL WOMEN'S ORNAMENTS	
Name	Wear on
Pagra	Ear
Phuli	Nose
Baju	Arm
Khadu	Anklet with solid structure
Paina	Anklet without Ghungaroo
Pajeb	Anklet with Ghungaroo
Dhadajhinjri	Waist
Hasa mala, chandharmala	Neck
*Melhedsakom	In left hand, made of iron
*Sankha	In both hands, made of sankh (conch shell)



Figure 10: Armlets

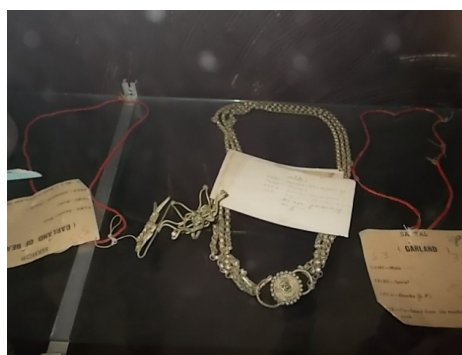


Figure 11: DandaJhinjri for waist



Figure 12: Other ornaments

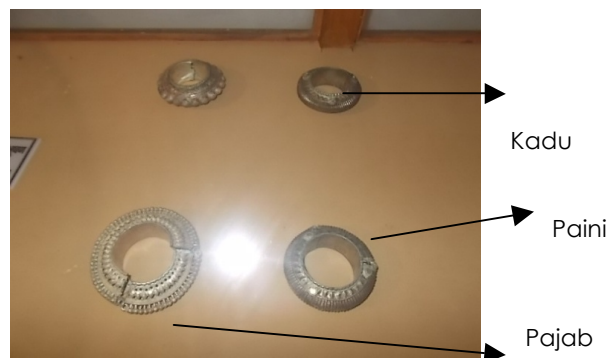


Figure 13: Anklets

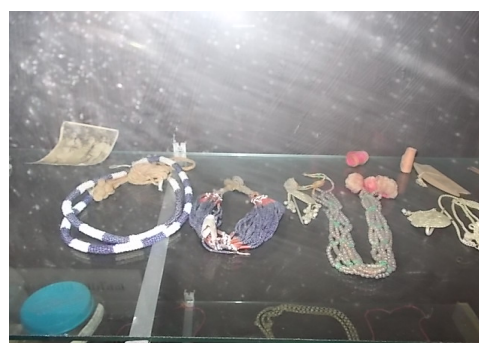


Figure 14: Hansa Mala of beads



Figure 15: MelhedSakom



Figure 16: Sankha



Figure 17: Chandharamala

MelhedSakom and *Sankha* are bangles which has very significant role in the Santhal community. It is worn by married women. In usual days, women do not put vermilion on their partition of head and so it becomes difficult to find out whether she is married or not. But seeing '*MerhedSakom*' and *Sankha* one can easily find out that she is married. The materials used for preparing ornaments are brass, bronze, silver, nickel and gold.

Folk Dance Costume

The women wear their traditional costumes and headgear made of colourful flowers and leaves. The Santhal women use artificial flowers for ornamentation

Conclusion

Study on women's costume of Santhal tribe of Jharkhand was conducted to understand and study the traditional costume of Santhal tribe in relation to the significance of motifs, design and colour. Through this study it is concluded that Santhal tribe is still maintained their tradition costume, culture and rituals. However some changes has been taken place over a year and the reason for that are modernization, urban influences etc. So it is very important to document Santhal tribe traditional costume and culture before it totally gets vanished, not only for future generation but also for present.

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