



Journal Homepage: -[www.journalijar.com](http://www.journalijar.com)  
**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
 ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)**

Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/7322  
 DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/7322>



### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### MODERNIZATION AND THE SANTALS OF JHARGRAM: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY.

Nizamuddin Ahmed<sup>1</sup> and Swami Tattwasarananda<sup>2</sup>.

1. Ph.D. Research Scholar, Swami Vivekananda Centre for Multidisciplinary Research in Educational Studies (SVCMMRES), under the University of Calcutta.
2. Principal, Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, Belur math.

#### Manuscript Info

##### Manuscript History

Received: 19 April 2018  
 Final Accepted: 21 May 2018  
 Published: June 2018

##### Keywords:-

Santal, Modernization, Jhargram.

#### Abstract

This study is confined among the Santals residing in Jhargram Block of Jhargram district in the Indian state of West Bengal. A major issue that the study deals with is the wide range of modernization and their day to day life. Participatory rural appraisal (PRA), participant observation, focus group discussions (FGD), household surveys and informal and semi-structured interviews were used to collect information. Modernization has affected this community immensely especially with respect to health practices, agriculture, communication, dress pattern, utensils, drinking water, lightning at house.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2018., All rights reserved.

#### Introduction:-

The present study is about the impact of modernization on the livelihood of one of the most distinctive tribe i.e., the Santals in eastern India. The Santals were earlier known as 'Kherwals'. But how they got the name 'Santals' is not clear. Different persons have different views. But most of them have opined that 'Kherwals' were named as 'SANTALS' by the Britishers. D. Barka Kisku(2000) in his book, "The Santals and their Ancestors" wrote that, 'The Santals themselves state that they got this name through foreigners commencing to call them so whilst and because they were living in Saont (Sant as they pronounce the name of the country), which has been identified with the modern Silda Pargana in Midnapore District'. According to this principle D. Barka Kisku has come to a conclusion that, 'The name (Santal) was given to them by the Britishers. Thus the Santals admit to have received their name from Britishers when they entered the Damin-i-Koh in the last phase of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century'. According to Mr. W.B. Oldham, the name Santal, is an abbreviation of 'Samantawala'. 'Samanta' is another name given to Silda Pargana where the immigrant Santals had come. In the article "Some Extraordinary Facts, Customs and Practices of the Hindoos", published in The Asiatic Researches of 1975, Sir John Shore designated them as 'Soontars' and described them as 'a rude unlettered tribe'. The Santal community share more than 50 % ( 51.80%) of the total Scheduled Tribe population, which clearly shows their strong dominance among the tribal community in the state of West Bengal. Santals have their habitats in all over West Bengal especially in Paschim Medinipur, Jhargram, Bankura, Purulia, Birbhum and Burdwan districts. Besides West Bengal, Santal tribe is located strongly in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam and in foreign countries like Bangladesh and Nepal also. The study is mainly going to give focus upon how far modernization changes or not at all changes this particular tribal community's views towards their culture, their social status, their day to day life. The study intends to focus upon the effects of modernization on the livelihood of Santal community of Jhargram Block under Jhargram district in the Indian state of West Bengal.

**Corresponding Author:-Nizamuddin Ahmed**

Address: - Ph.D. Research Scholar, Swami Vivekananda Centre for Multidisciplinary Research in Educational Studies (SVCMMRES), under the University of Calcutta.

**Objectives Of The Study:-**

To enquire into how far the process of modernization has affected the Santal community in Jhargram block of Jhargram district in the Indian state of West Bengal.

**Study Area:-**

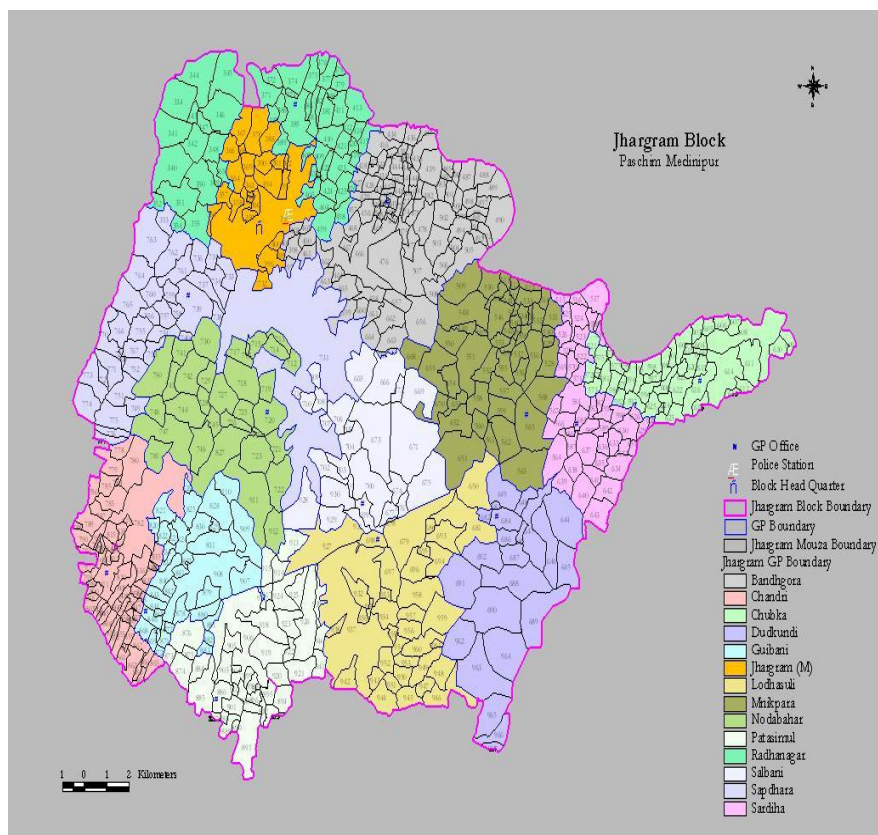
The present researcher selected Jhargram Community Development Block in Jhargram Subdivision of Jhargram district (erstwhile Paschim Medinipur district) in the Indian State of West Bengal. Jhargram Police Station serves this block. Headquarters of this block is at Jhargram. Jhargram is located at 22.27°N 86.59°E. Jhargram Community Development Block has an area of 539.64 km<sup>2</sup> (208.36 square miles). Altitude is 81 meters above sea level. As per Census 2011 population density is 330/km<sup>2</sup> (860/square miles). As per census 2011, Jhargram block had a total population of 170,097 out of which 85,970 were males and 84,127 were females. Jhargram block registered population growth of 10.90% during the 2001-2011 decade. Scheduled tribes population were 22.7% of total population in this block. Jhargram CD Block has 1 Panchayat-samity, 13 gram panchayats, (namely Aguiboni, Bundhgora, Chandri, Chubka, Dudhkundi, Lodhasuli, Manikpara, Nedabahara, Patasimul, Radhanagar, Salboni, Sapdhara and Sardiha), 604 mouzas and 489 inhabited villages. Among these 13 gram- panchayats, the researcher selects 4 gram panchayats where the Santal population density is very high. Among this 4 gram-panchayats, the researcher selects ten villages where the Santal population have 100%. An overview of selected ten villages from four gram-panchayats has given below:

**Table 1:-Selected Village List:**

Name of Gram-Panchayat	Village name	Percentage of santal population
Bundhgora	ANTAPATI	100%
	CHANDRA	100%
Nedabahara	KAJLA	100%
	BRINDABANPUR	100%
	GAJIPUR	100%
	KALABANI	100%
Radhanagar	PANCHAKHALI	100%
	TALMETAL	100%
	KUTUSGERIYA	100%
Sapdhara	KASHIA	100%

A purposive sampling technique has been used to select gram-panchayats and as well as villages from the study area. Certain criteria have been adopted for selecting gram-panchayats and villages, this includes:

1. Easy access of location and density of the Santal population was the utmost criteria to select gram-panchayats.
2. Those villages were selected where the percentage of the Santal population is 100% and then easy access of location got priority.



MAP:-JHARGRAM BLOCK, Source: [www.jhargram.org](http://www.jhargram.org)

### Methods:-

The primary data were collected by (1) participatory rural appraisal (PRA), (2) participant observation, (3) focus group discussions (FGD) (3) informal and semi-structured interviews and (4) household surveys. Total one hundred household surveys, which covered 496 Santals people from selected ten Santal villages conducted as well as the researcher also covered in-depth interview of 40 villagers whom the researcher would be able to rapport building. A purposive sampling technique has been used to select the household, parents, villagers and students. Certain criteria have been adopted for selecting household, villagers, parents and students, this includes:

1. For selecting household easy access of location in the selected villages.
2. For selecting villager criteria was openness, very frank to talk.

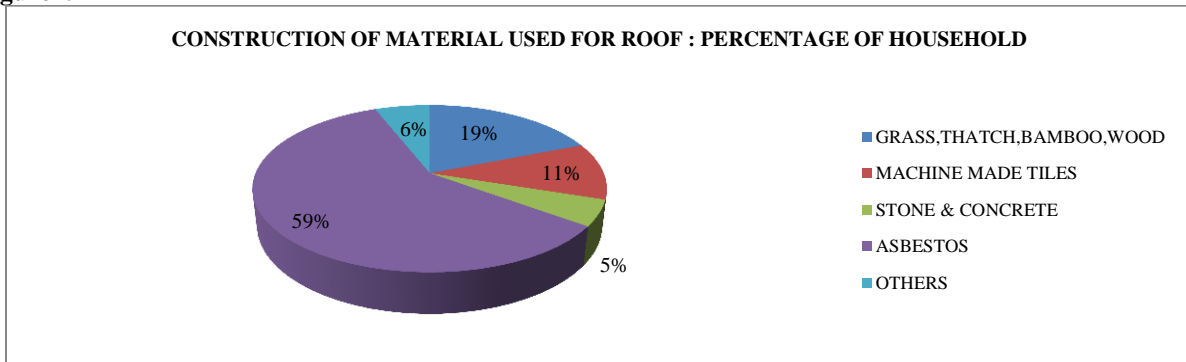
The household heads provided household information and in case of their absence the senior and /or responsible adult members have replaced them. The data collected by interviews were cross- checked with people of diverse strata of the society. At the stage of data analysis, qualitative and semi-quantitative analysis methods were carried out.

### Results And Discussion:-

#### House Construction Type:-

Different parts of house like roof, wall, floor etc. along with the availability of sanitary toilet, separate kitchen room and using of dining table were observed and the findings are given below:

Figure1:-



Source: Field Work

About 59% Santal hoses' roof were made by asbestos, 19% of Santal used grass,thatch, bamboo and wood, 11% used machine made tiles for the roof of their houses. About 5% Santal houses' roof in the studied area are made by stone and concrete and 6% Santal household in the studied area used different material for roof like corrugated tin etc. About 75% Santal houses' wall were made by mud, 13% of Santal used burnt brick, 7% used grass, thatch and bamboo and 5% Santal used wood for the construction of wall of their houses(Figure:2).About 91% Floor of Santal houses made by cement and 9% made by mud which is shown in Figure: 3.

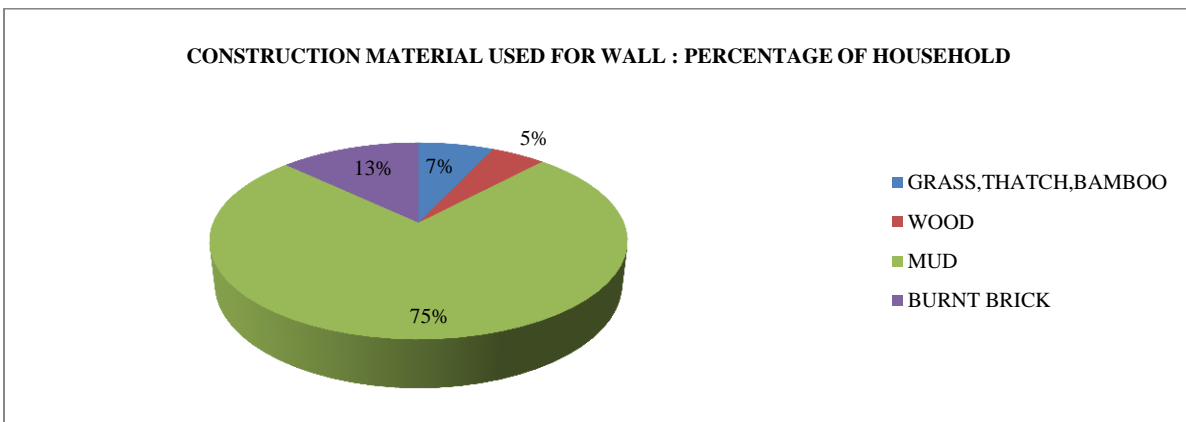


Figure 2:-Source: Field Work

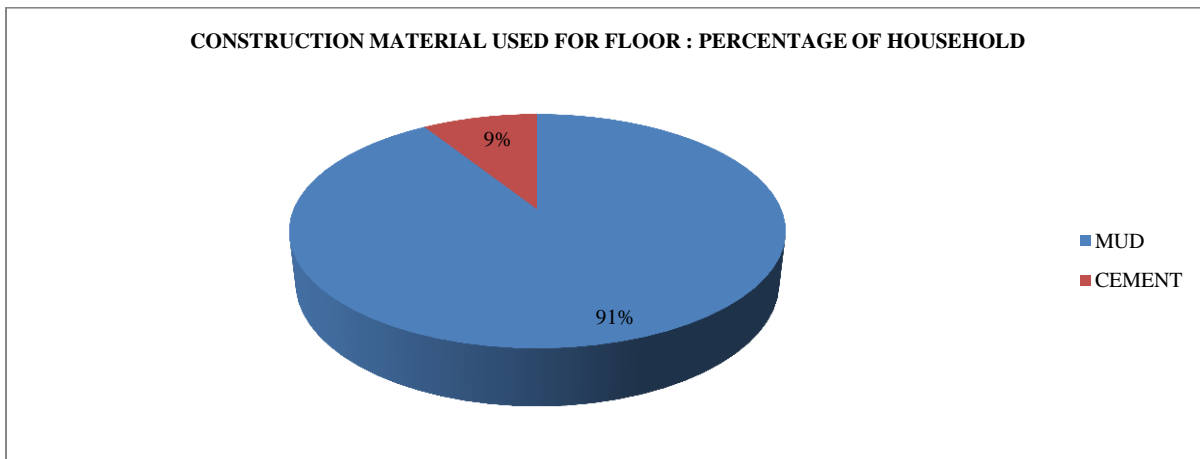
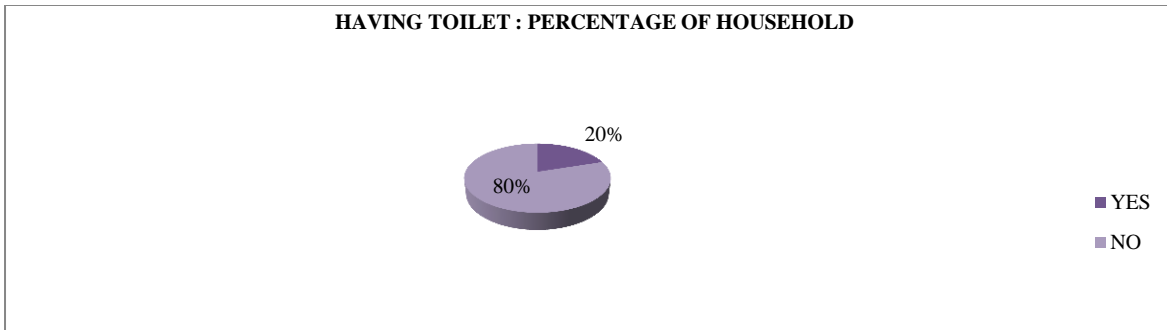
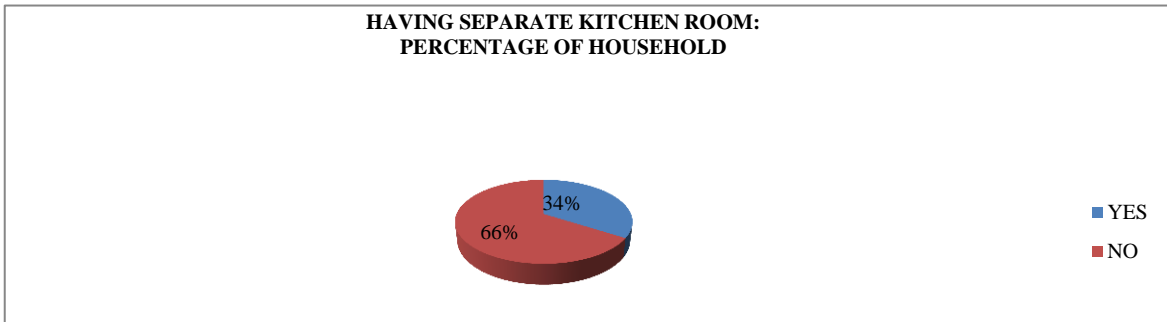


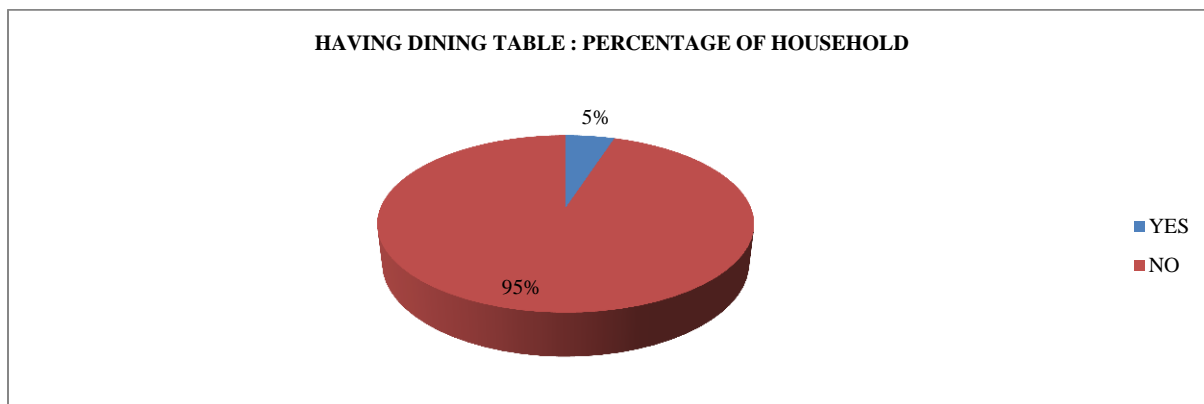
Figure 3:-Source: Field Work



**Figure: 4**, Source: Field Work



**Figure: 5**, Source: Field Work



**Figure: 6**, Source: Field Work

From the above figures it is found that only 34% Santal household have separate kitchen room in their house and 66% have no kitchen room. Only 20% Santal houses have sanitary toilet facility and 80% household members use open –air and 5% Santal household members used dining table in their house in the studied area.

#### **Source Of Drinking Water, Lightning, Fuel Of Cooking, Using Of Mobile & Internet:-**

During field work it is seen that Jhargram Panchayat-samity provided tap water from treated source to every houses situated under Nedabahara and Sapdhara gram-panchayat. Villagers under this two gram-panchayat use this water as their drinking water. Villagers said that they got this facility since 2015. Before that they suffered lot for drinking water. About 59% Santal household members' source of drinking water is tap water provided by Jhargram panchayat-samity, 20% household members uses uncovered well water as their drinking water, 13% household have covered well, 5% household uses tube well and only 3% household have submersible in their own(Figure:7). About 32% Santal household have their drinking water source within their premises and 68% have near premises (Figure: 8).

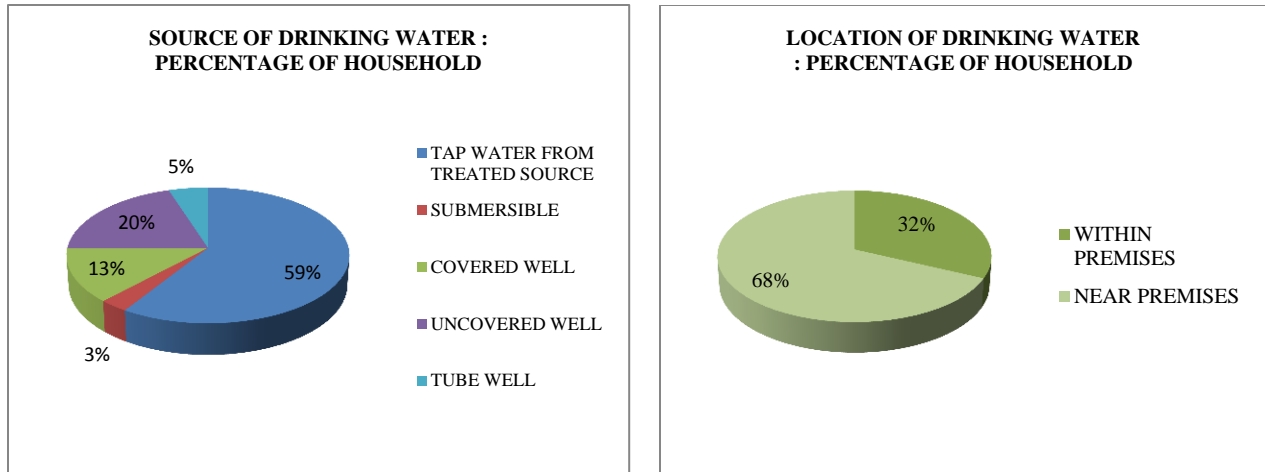


Figure: 8

Figure 7:-  
Source: Field Work

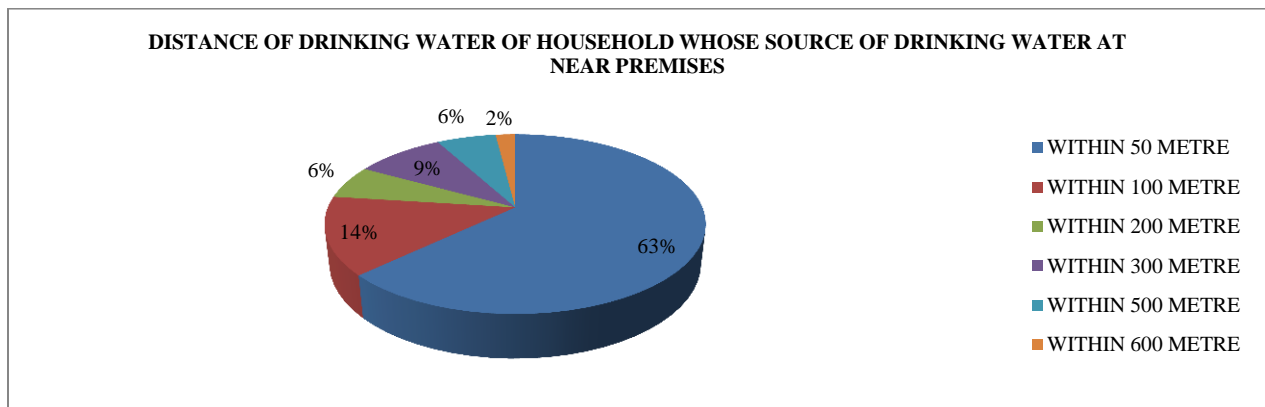


Figure 9:-Source: Field Work

About 63% Santal household have their source of drinking water within 50 metre, 14% have within 100 metre, 6% have 200 metre, 9% have 300 metre, and 6% have 500 metre and only 2% household have their source of drinking water within 600 metre. About 84% household use electricity and 16% use kerosene as their source of lighting. 63% household used fire wood as their fuel for cooking, 6% used crop residue, 9% used cow-dung cake, 6% used LPG and 16% household used both fire wood and LPG as their fuel for cooking. About 85% household members used mobile phone among them 81% used normal mobile phone, 13% used both normal and smart/android mobile and only 6% used android/smart phone. About 15% household members do not use any type of mobile phone. About 85% household members in the studied area do not use internet. Only 15% household members access internet in their day to day life in the studied area.

**Using Of Modern Materials, Devices & Vehicles In Daily Life:**

Table 2:-Using different modern electronic devices in daily life by household members:

Modern electronic devices	Percentage of user household
TV	26
Cable/DTH	25
Radio	19
Freeze	4
Wall watch	45

Wrist watch by male	29
Wrist watch by female	22
Iron	15
Calculator	21
Computer	3
Tab	3
Laptop	0

Source: Field Work

About 26% household of Santal have television among them 25% have cable/DTH connection. About 19%, 4%, 45% households have radio, freeze and wall watch respectively. It is found that about 29% Santal male household members use wrist watch and among female members it is 22% in the studied area. About 15%, 21%, 3% each Santal household member used iron, calculator, computer and tab respectively. There is no house where member has laptop in the studied area. About 98% Santal household members used modern utensils like steel, aluminium made utensils in daily life. About 9% Santal household have pressure cooker and 5% have mixer machine. About 98% Santal household have bicycle and in the studied villages there have no public vehicle seen during field visit, bicycle is their only vehicle to go to town. About 16% household have motor bike and 1% i.e., a single house at Kashia village under Sapdhara gram-panchayat has four-wheeler. During participant observation the researcher saw that most of the Santal in the studied area used *Sal (Shorea robusta)* or *neem (Azadiracta Indica)* tree's branch for tooth cleaning in the morning. Educated younger generation used brush and toothpaste. Some modern materials like brush, toothpaste, soap, detergent, shampoo, cosmetics, modern cloths of male and female, ornament user household percentage is given in table: 3 among the Santal in the studied area.

**Table 3:-Using Modern Materials In Daily Life By Household:**

Modern materials	Percentage of user household
Brush	44
Toothpaste	44
Soap	96
Detergent	95
Shampoo	58
Cosmetics	43
Modern cloth by male	94
Modern cloth by female	91
Modern ornament by female	55

Source: Field Work

#### **Some Aspects Of Modernization And The Santal In The Studied Area:-**

In agricultural processes the Santal in the studied area almost adopt modern method, they used tractor, fertilizers, and pesticides now a days (Table: 4). The researcher interviewed 40 senior villagers among them 77.5% respondents said that they used modern method in their agricultural process, only 22.5% said they partially used modern method along with their traditional method. But every villager said that they have faced serious problem regarding irrigation, they mainly depends upon rain water and cannel water but during summer season and winter season there is severe scarcity of water for agriculture.

**Table 4:-Using Modern Technology In Agriculture:**

Modern Technology used in Agriculture	% of respondents
Tractor	5
Fertilizers	5
Pesticides	1
Fertilizers & pesticides	43
Tractor, fertilizers & pesticides	20
All	15
None	11

Source: Field Work

The tendency of using modern materials in their daily life instead of locally produced products of their own community was observed in the studied area. Figure 10 is the indicative of that scenario in this regard. It is found that 54% household members did not use any locally produced products in their daily life.

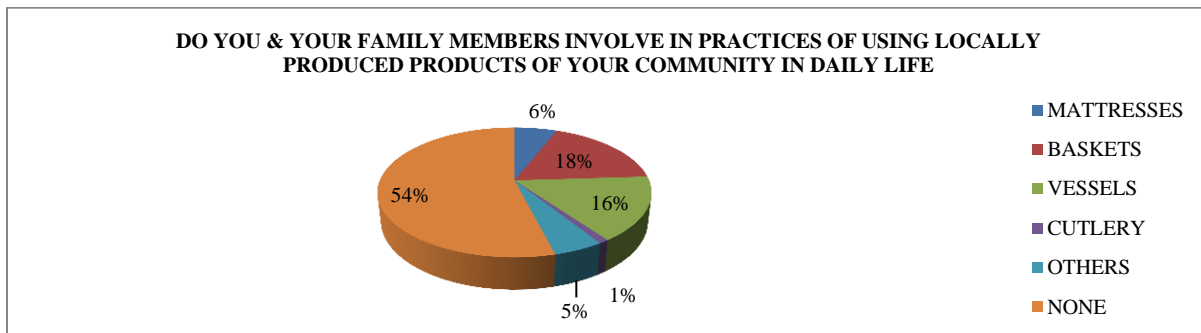


Figure 10:-Source: Field Work

The Santal in this area follow the modern treatment method they first consult with doctors then if not treat well a very few of them go to *ojha*. The details findings is given in table 5. This practice of exorcism exists in this community, after analysis of villager’s interview the details findings in this regard is given in table 6.

Table 5:-Practices Followed By the Santal For The Treatment Of Diseases:

Practices Followed	% of respondents
Traditional herbs	2
Exorcism( <i>ojha</i> )	5
Medicine -man( <i>baid/hakim</i> )	1
Consulting doctors	84
All	8

(Source: Field Work)

Table 6:-Do You Believe *Ojha* (Exorcist) At Present?

Opinion of studied villagers	% of respondents
Yes	27.5
No	57.5
Partly believe	10
First consult any doctor if not heal then go to <i>ojha</i> ( exorcist)	5

Source: Field Work

About 82% household members said that there is a strong control of traditional village administration of Santal in their life even on today, if any one offences or breaks any rule of their community, they impose penalty upon them. Though their attitude towards modernization is almost positive, in response to the question ‘what are your views on modernization in relation to your tribe?’ their response is given in the following table: 7.

Table 7:-What Are Your Views On Modernization In Relation To Your Tribe:

Views on modernization	% of respondents
Helps in development (economic, social etc.)	28
Diminishing/extinction of culture	11
Better scope for education	37
Positive impact of technology	17
Negative impact of technology	7

(Source: Field Work)

Through literature review and different books on the Santal the researcher knows that the Santal sleep at night outside of their room, and they use their room for storing of their furniture and other important household articles.



The researcher asks every member of household that 'where they sleep at night?', in response every member of 100 household from ten selected Santal villages said that they now sleep inside of their room.

#### **Some Case Studies Of Villagers:-**

During the journey of my ethnographic research on the Santal community some case studies were taken from villagers, this is given below:

##### **Case 1:-**

Tulsi Soren, age of 34, a married female, passed higher secondary resides at Brindabanpur village under Nedabahara Gram Panchayet of Jhargram block. She worked as SSK Samprasarak(Teacher). She said that most students in this area do not go to school regularly, very few student go to their school regularly. She expressed that educated santal kept their culture and after getting job they shifted from village to town and does not help to their community students. She expressed that age during marriage of male and female are 20-25 and 18-21 on average respectively and the marriage ceremony is unaltered and fully followed by the customs and traditions of the Santal. She expressed that in this area a Santal girl married to a non-santal boy. She said that in this area they go to doctor first after suffering from any illness and baby delivery were carried out in hospital and regular immunization has been done. She also said that they observe various Santali festivals throughout the year and there are no effects of any religious culture or tradition upon their festivals and she does not go to observe to other religious' people festival. She said that enormous changes were happened to their dress pattern and they are now fully used modernized dress and she only wears their traditional dress during their festival only. She believe on *Ojha*(exorcist) and go to them when she does not heal by the doctor and she said that once her mother felt pain in chest and she had been treated by so many registered doctor but not healed and then she went her mother to a *ojha* and then her mother got rid from her chest pain.

##### **Case 2:-**

Laxmi Rani Hansda, age of 40,a married illiterate woman and age her marriage was 14 only resides at Brindabanpur village said that students in this village do not go to school regularly and educated men and female are unemployed. She also said that educated people do not forget their age-old customs and tradition. She expressed that after getting job most santal people left their village and go to town and do not help who are presently studying. She said that their marriage ceremony is performed according to their age-old customs and traditions. She said that a santal girl from her village marry to a non-santal boy. She goes to doctor when feels ill and village baby delivery are carried out in hospital and regular immunization is done. She said that there is no effect of any other religious' custom and tradition upon their ancestral religion, i.e., *Sari* but She worshiped *Swaraswati puja* according to the norms of Hindus but she does not take part or celebrate any other pujas of Hindus. She said that agricultural procedures are fully modernized in this area and enormous changes happened their dress-pattern and she liked to wear their traditional dress only during their festival. She does not believe on *ojha*.

##### **Case 3:-**

Jughal Soren, age of 20, an unmarried Santal man who passed class IX and now unemployed resides at Gajipur village. He said that students in this village go to their school regularly and also said that educated santal in this area got job in different post like teaching, police and some are unemployed and they do not forget their ancestral culture and traditions. After getting job the santal in this area shifted them to town and don't help who are presently studying. He said that average age during marriage of santal boy and girl are 20-21 and 18-19 respectively and their marriage ceremony are according to their culture and traditions. He said that a santal girl from her village marry to a non-santal boy. He has friendship to non-santal but he does not imbibe any portion of their culture. He said that santal people go to doctor after getting ill but also go to *ojha* in some particular disease like jaundice and baby delivery are mostly carried out in hospital but some even on today are performed at home but all are have done regular immunization. The Santal in this area observed many festivals of their own throughout the year and there is no effect of any other communities' culture or traditions. He takes part in *Durga Puja*, *Kali Puja* and *Swaraswati Puja* and he collects money for these Hindus' festivals. He said that agricultural methods in this area are fully modernized and in dress-pattern of them there is enormous changes and he like to wear their traditional dress only during their festivals. He partly believes on *Ojha* and he went them when he suffered from jaundice.

##### **Case 4:-**

Ajoy Kisku, age of 53, a married illiterate person resides at Chandra and his occupation is cultivation. He said that students in this area go to school regularly and educated santal are unemployed and they do not forget their ancestral

culture. He said that their marriage ceremony is performed according to their age-old customs and traditions and in this an incident of love-marriage was happened between a santal-girl with a non-santal boy. He consults with doctor when gets ill and he said that baby delivery are performed in hospital and regular immunization are done and they celebrate various festivals of their own throughout the year according to their age-old customs, norms and traditions. He goes to observe *Durga Puja*, *Kali puja*. He always wears modern dress and he does not believe on *ojha*.

#### Case 5:-

Sona Hansda, age of 45, a married male resides at Chandra village, who passed Class V and his occupation is cultivation. He said that students in this area go to school regularly and educated santal are mostly unemployed, some work as day-labour and educated santal do not forget their ancestral culture and traditions. He said that average age during marriage of santal boy and girl are 18-20 and 15-18 respectively and their marriage ceremony are according to their culture and traditions. He said that an incident of love-marriage was happened with a santal girl to a non-santal boy. He consults with doctor when gets ill and he said that baby delivery are performed in hospital and regular immunization are done and they celebrate various festivals of their own throughout the year according to their age-old customs, norms and traditions. He goes to observe *Durga Puja*, *Kali puja*. He used modernized method in agriculture. He likes to wear traditional dress only during their festivals otherwise he wears modern dresses and he believes on *ojha* and go to them when he suffers any illness during prolong period and for snake-bite.

From the above case studies it is found that the Santal in this area are very much conscious to keep their culture and customs and as well as they welcoming modernization in their society. They now like to wear modern dress like shirt, pant, jeans and women wear sallower, modern-shares and wear modern ornament instead of their traditional dress. The Santal in this area wear their traditional dress only during their festivals. The Santal in this area go to observe the various pujas of Hindus. The Santal youth celebrate *Swaraswati puja* in their area. After getting any illness they first go to hospital or consult with registered doctor if not heal then some of them go to *ojha*. Some villagers shared their experience that they got rid from jaundice like disease from *ojha* instead of doctor. In agriculture they almost follow and adopt modern technologies and means like using of pesticides, fertilizers, tractors etc.

#### Conclusion:-

Thus it is evident that modernization has affected this community immensely especially with respect to health practices, agriculture, communication, dress pattern, utensils, drinking water, lightning at house. But most houses in the studied area have no sanitary toilet facility. There is still the tendency among the Santal to go to *ojha* (exorcists) especially when they do not heal by registered doctor and some cases like jaundice and snake-bite. Most of the Santal in the studied area are working in the Primary sector i.e., cultivation and day-labour in different works like wood work, work related with agriculture etc. With the passage of time the Santals would shape themselves to adopt and fit in with the present trend of modernization and technological advancement in this area of study and they will have a secured economic benefit and a higher social status through education.

**References:-**

1. Akan et al (2015). An Ethnographic Investigation on Land and Life of Santal Community in Barind Tract, Bangladesh, *American Journal of Social Science Research*,1(2),90-95.
2. Ambasht, K. N. (1970). *A Critical Study of Tribal Education (With Special Reference to Ranchi District)*. S. Chand & Co. New Delhi.
3. Baskey,D.N. (1987). *Paschim Banger AdibasiSamaj*(4<sup>th</sup>Rev.Ed.),Calcutta.
4. Behura, N.K. (1995).*Tribes in India: Planned development*. In Singh, A.K. and Jabbi, M.K. (Eds) *Tribals in India: Development, deprivation and discontent*, HarAnand, New Delhi.
5. Begum,S (2015) . Impact of Agricultural Modernization of Sustainable livelihood among the Tribal.*International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature*, 3(5), 55-66.
6. Das,A.K. &Basu,S.K. (1991). An Overview of Santals-Their Past, Present and Future. In Das,A.K.,Saha,R.N.,Gupta,R&Chakraborty,S.M. (Eds) *West Bengal Tribes Socio-Economic and Cultural Life*. Cultural Research Institute, Govt. of West Bengal, 194-203.
7. Dey,A (2015).Globalization and Change in Santal Tribes at Paschim Medinipur (West Bengal, India).*International Journal of Scientific Research*,4(6),37-41.
8. Dey,A (2015) .An Ancient History: Ethnographic Study of the Santhal. *International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences*, 2(4), 31-38.
9. Ghosh,P (2015). Impact of Globalization on Tribal World of West Bengal.*Arts and Social Sciences Journal*, 6(2).
10. Mehta (2000).*Dynamics of tribal development*.Anmol Publication.
11. Tamslyche,M.C. (2013). The Impact of Cultural Diversity and Globalization in developing a Santal Peer Culture in Middle India. Centre d'Anthropologie, *LISST*,Toulouse.France.
12. Tylor, E. 1958[1871].*Primitive Culture*. New York: Harper & Row.
13. Verma,R.C. (1990). *Indian tribes through the Ages*. New Delhi:PublicationDivision, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. Of India.
14. Vidyarthi,L.P. &Rai,B.K.(1976).*The Tribal Culture of India*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.