Journal of Adivasi and Indigenous Studies (JAIS)
(A bi-annual peer-reviewed online journal posted on Academia.edu)
Vol. XIV, No. 1, February 2024: 20-38
©2024 JAIS, ISSN (online) 2394-5524

Santal Hul: A Historiographical Overview

Ravi Shankar Shukla, IAS[1]
Deputy Commissioner-cum-District Magistrate
Seraikella-Kharsawan, Jharkhand
Email: ravi500501@gmail.com

> “*Everything's already been said, but since nobody was listening, we have to start again.'*
>
> *Andre Gide (1891)*[2]

Abstract

This essay aims to highlight the nuances of the Santal Hul (rebellion) by characterizing them primarily as social, political, economic, and religious. Such classification of the Hul, despite seemingly endless, assists in bringing indigenous perspectives into the mainstream and navigating the subtleties of the historical analyses of an event through the twin lens of culture and ethnocentrism. The essay also attempts to highlight the historical particularity of a ‘longing for security’, community solidarity, ceremonial and religious dimensions, and economic conditions leading to the demands of self-governance, which, when juxtaposed, help identify the blind spots of the rebellion. A felt lack of efforts to bring indigenous voices into the primary discourses correlates with a proportionate lack of recognition that the event warranted. This study identifies the temporal and causal characteristics of the Hul and, in the process, aims to reaffirm its significance.

Introduction

The Santal[3] tribe, one of the largest indigenous groups in India[4], exhibits rich cultural traditions, folklore, and beliefs (Biswas 1935: 1, Chaudhary 2001: 1, Hembrom 1996: 7). Located amidst the dense forests and hilly terrains of eastern India —particularly in Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, and Odisha, the Santals have engaged historians, anthropologists, and administrators alike on account of their personal, social, religious, cultural, and political perspectives rather a mere ‘primitive otherness’ (Ghosh 2006:

---

[1] The views expressed are personal.

[2] For details see (Gide: 1891).

[3] For this essay, the term ‘Santal’ has been used for the sake of consistency, as it has been used in most of the earlier writings, instead of various other terminologies such as ‘Santhal’, ‘Sonthal’, ‘Sonthalia’, or ‘Soantar’, except in the works referred to. John Shore is credited with the first official account of Santals where he referred to them as ‘Soontars’. It is pertinent to mention that the Santals identify themselves as *Hor Hopon*, meaning children of human beings; for details, see (Hembrom: 1996).

[4] There exists a debate as to whether to refer to the members of various tribes in India as ‘*Adivasi*’ (original inhabitant), the term used in the census of India in 1931, or as indigenous in tune with the prevailing international discourse or simply as Scheduled Tribes. For this article, the term ‘tribe’ has been preferred as the Constitution of India identifies them as such through Articles 342 & 366 (25) to ensure social justice and protect their rights. For details see (Andersen: 2023), (Sen: 2018), (Devalle: 1992), and (Karlsson: 2003).

507). It is well established now that the Santals had migrated to the Santhal Paragana (Kisku 2017: 535) from various parts of the erstwhile West Bengal and that these regions are now identified as the Chotanagpur Division of Jharkhand and Bankura, Purulia, and Midnapur districts of West Bengal (Man 1989: 3). This immigration mainly happened during the latter part of the 18th century and the initial years of the 19th century. According to Kalikinkar Datta, 'Through their industry, and also under encouragement from Lord William Bentinck's government, they cleared the forests, covering the plains extending from the base of the Rajmahal Hills, and brought large tracts of land under cultivation'[5] (Datta 2017: 2). However, 'extortions, oppressive exactions, forcible dispossession of property, abuse and personal violence and a variety of petty tyrannies upon the timid and yielding Santals' resulted in a rebellion —well before the first freedom struggle of India in 1857— that lasted for approximately nine months and led to widespread changes in the existing administration (Datta 2017: 8).

The distinctiveness of the tribe awakened a significant transnational curiosity about them[6] and the onset of the Hul manifested a 'new dimension of identity assertion' (Chattopadhyay 2014: 57). The insurrection marked a place for itself in history and the study of culture and society (Stanley 2022: 11-14). However, the reasons behind the Hul, and the story of their actors—despite being subjected to an intense gaze—did not receive the desired traction in historiography. Their diminution in historical debates can be attributed to two causes. Most of the historiographers could not appropriately notice the nuances of their 'ordinary' culture and the 'semantic of Santal identity', nor could they reconcile with their contumacious stance and, consequently, failed to appreciate the force of the rebellion (Williams 1993: 1, Carrin & Tambs-Lyche 2008: 63). Mainstream public perception and discourse have also remained indifferent to its occasion, which takes us back to the assertion by Gide referred to at the start of this essay. It justifies the necessity to *begin again* by identifying the peculiarities of the Hul.

The essay is premised upon this necessity to understand and distinguish the Santal resistance, led by Sido, Kanhu, Chand, Bhairav, Phulo, and Jhano, among others, in its specific historical and cultural setting. It addresses various contradictions in the existing literature and reviews, wherein the warriors of the Hul have been described, on the one hand, as cunning on account of their practice of '*salam* dodge (salute dodge)'[7] (Pankaj 2021: 132) and, on the other, as 'unacquainted with conventionalities and trickeries' (Datta 2017: 2). The Santals were described, in the same breath, as timorous as well as 'bloodthirsty savages'[8] (Friend of India: 1855). Doubts also exist regarding the rebellion's nature, cause, and methodology[9]. It is still debated whether the uprising was directed against the government or the intermediaries, and if it was intended to be violent from the beginning or gradually turned into one[10]. There is a further lack of consensus on the exact role of religion and exploitation of the Santals led by a market economy[11] in shaping the conflict. Questions regarding the ways and means adopted by the rebels have also not been answered satisfactorily. These answers are to be found by linking the distinctiveness[12] of their religiosity with an enabling identity. A progressive temporal pattern of responses to the unilateral imposition of market economy and colonial administration, among others, also offers possible explanations.

---

[5] Colonial economic practices, during Bentick's time, were influenced by liberal beliefs and utilitarianism. To an extent, they were also guided by the philosophies of Mills and Bentham (Carrin & Tambs-Lyche 2008: 38).

[6] Joseph Troisi had identified 57 books and 226 articles on the Santal tribe till 1976 alone. For details see (Troisi: 1976)

[7] Refers to a practice among the Santals, suspected of pillaging, wherein they will say, '*Bahut Bahut Salam'* (a greeting of reverence) to the Commanding Officer of the troop on an expedition to catch them. In this way, they were pronounced peaceful even if they had hidden their arms for the moment.

[8] In the wake of the outbreak of violence Ashley Eden, Assistant-in-Charge of the sub-division at Aurangabad, reported in July 1855 that 'I am confident that all this is the instigation of someone else….as the Santhals are generally the most timed in the world and dreadfully afraid of the police.' (Rottger-Hogan 1982: 89).

Methodology

The problem lies not only in disagreements about the findings but also in the unenlivening colonial methodologies. For example, postcolonial studies have presented the Hul as a class struggle and a not-so-special rebellion[13]. On the contrary, it has also been described as having 'raised a panic even amongst the residents of Calcutta' (Man 1989: 110). Categorizing the Hul as any other class struggle is an oversimplification of an otherwise intricate and multilayered effort for truth and justice[14]. Despite the plethora of writings on the Hul, the inertness of methodology warrants a reconstruction of the narrative. This is primarily because the historiographers, of different varieties, failed to take adequate cognizance of the ethnocentric aspect of the Hul in an attempt to provide an objective account. It led to a diminution of collective consciousness due to the artificial constraints of historiography. As Ranajit Guha explained in his highly influential *The Prose of Counter-Insurgency*, historians who have written about subaltern movements in India have seldom accounted for the rebels' consciousness and projected their consciousness onto the subject they are investigating (Guha 2002: 233). Thus, 'blind spots' mark different historical and dominant discourses around the Hul that appear to be based upon, what Raymond Williams has identified in a different context[15] as, an 'exclusionary notion of culture' (Williams 1993: 1). Anthropological discernment of historical facts presents a unique potential in historiography, even in a phenomenological sense[16].

---

[9] It has been said that 'no adequate cause for the rising has been assigned, and probably none exists'. See (Clossey et al: 2016), which quotes the testimonial of Ashley Eden, Assistant Special Commissioner for suppressing the rebellion.

[10] As noted by P.B. Andersen, K.K. Datta, and S. Fuchs have asserted that the rebellion was not violent from the very beginning. However, such a view was discredited by W.G. Archer, W. J. Culshaw, R. Guha, and L.S.S. O'Malley.

[11] Zamindars, moneylenders, merchants, traders, and the colonial government.

[12] As Marine Carrin & Harald Tambs-Lyche have noted, 'Skrefsrud viewed the Santals as a nation with a distinct culture to be respected' (Carrin & Tambs-Lyche 2008: 13).

[13] For details see the critique of Ranajit Guha's *The Prose of Counter-insurgency and Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* by Peter B. Andersen (2015) in his work *Interpreting the Santal Rebellion. From 1855 till the end of the Nineteenth century* available at http://www.serena.unina.it/index.php/anglistica-aion/article/view/8511

[14] P.B. Andersen has criticized the categorization of Santal Hul by subaltern historians such as Ranajit Guha, developed on the premises of Gramsci's theories, by explaining various aspects of religion and culture in the rebellion.

[15] In this article Raymond Williams has written against 'an exclusionary notion of culture as a body of works that is only meaningful to a highly educated minority.'

In reconstructing an event, like in account-taking of a past event, we look for references and draw inferences that may align with our beliefs. In the process, we may gloss over information or evidence that does not conform to the pre-existing intellectual ideas or their projections. Guha has distinguished the 'corpus of historical writings on peasant insurgency in colonial India' as primary, secondary, and tertiary (Guha 2002: 196). 'Primary discourses' comprise official and unofficial communications of soldiers and magistrates, which refer to the actors of Hul in fairly adversarial terms. 'Secondary discourses', largely from British missionaries and administrators cast them into deliberate oblivion, glorifying instead the British efforts to mainstream or 'domesticate' the 'savage' Santals. 'Tertiary discourses' comprising works of non-officials or former officials also fail to 'make up for the absence'. The documentation on Santal Hul is replete with such practices. For example, various instances of assigning a 'manipulative design' on the leaders of Hul (Sido and Kanhu, among others) establish the tendency in colonial as well as some non-colonial writings to oversimplify the actions and motivations of the subjects at the margin (Guha 2002: 230-32). Such discourses have been rightly flagged by later historians and writers such as Kalikinkar Datta (2017), Ranajit Guha (1999, 2002), Narhari Kaviraj (2001), Marine Carrin (2008, 2022), Dipesh Chakrabarty (2007), Peter Andersen (2023), and Peter Stanley (2022) among others, for their condescending or paternalistic character.

Adopting an anthropological notion of culture in historical studies may help counter the elitist writings on the Hul. Efforts to 'give the subaltern a voice in history', considering its actors as true subalterns, may help to understand the character and relevance of the Hul (Spivak 2010: 92). Following them up with a discussion of various sources is also essential for an effective reconstruction. It should take into account the 'prehistory' (Guha 1999: 3-4) of the 'national and socialist-communist movements' (Sen 2011: 82), 'post-nationalism' (Appadurai 1996:158), and provincial writings apart from considering the lived experiences and the oral history (Sen 2018). In its process of reconstruction, this essay has benefitted from previous works of scholars—apart from those already mentioned above—such as Datta-Majumder (1956), Raymond Williams (1958), Stephen Fuchs (1965), Elizabeth Rottger-Hogan (1982), Edward Duykers (1987), Digambar Chakrabortti (1989), W.J. Culshaw (2004), Daniel Rycroft (2006), Asoka Kumar Sen (2011, 2018), Luke Clossey et al (2016), and Roland Clark (2017). The native voices of Jugia Haram, Chotrae Desmanjhi, Durga Tudu, and the Kolean guru in the works of Culshaw and Archer (1945), and Skrefsrud (1887) and Bodding (1940, 1942) among others, have been of immense help. Access to documents in the record room[17] of Dumka district and a rich oral history derived from various folklore and constant interaction, mostly in the past three years, with friends from the

---

[16] Levi-Strauss described anthropologists as the 'ragpickers of history' (Bucher & Lévi-Strauss: 1985). In a way, the enterprise of anthropologists extracts much meaning out of what the historians reject as inconsequential.

[17] Tone Bleie (2024) discusses the disorganized archives and public blind zones in A *New Testament: Scandinavian Missionaries and Santal Chiefs from Company and British Crown Rule to Independence*. The troubles in accessing documents in Government Record Rooms have also been narrated by Sen (2018).

Santal community provide distinct perspectives as sources for approximation and key to understanding the existing sources.[18]

The distinctiveness of the Hul

Like any other rebellion or movement, the Hul also had distinguishing characteristics, which were not strictly different from its causes. While there are similar features in other uprisings, especially in those led by the indigenous communities, the Santal view of time and causality has been considered to be unique for their 'enduring legacy of resistance' (Dasgupta 2013: 74) to external pressures, and its 'epochal imperative' of 'infinite recurrence' (Banerjee 1999: 218). For instance, the courage and resilience of leaders and participants of the Hul are celebrated affirmatively in Santal folklore, despite the ultimate suppression of the rebellion. It has been described as an execution rather than a war (Hunter 1868: 248).

The distinct features may be classified primarily as social, cultural, economic, political, and religious, which overlap. These categories may be broken down further to analyse the essence of the distinguishing features. While these classifications and sub-classifications may seem never-ending, their proportionate instructive utility in examining the subtle aspects of areas falling in the 'blind spot of historiography' makes such efforts worthy. For example, a longing for security, belongingness, and an attachment to 'land and forest' can be identified as the distinct social characteristics leading to the rebellion. While they are not exclusive of economic or cultural considerations, they appear to be guided by an innate social contract for a safe existence. Further, the vitality of any culture has often been proportional to its ordinariness, despite its repeated trivialization by the educated class (Williams 1993: 1-4). The elements of 'solidarity' and 'purity'—as parts of the 'ordinary' Santal culture—had a significant role in the approach of the Santals towards the rebellion. Awareness of such ethnographic and anthropological notions of culture challenges the stereotypes and misinterpretations of the actors of Hul. The economic aspects of exploitation, on account of market economy, consumerism, usury, and forced labor present themselves as another set of such attributes. They juxtapose the ideas of economic freedom and political justice. The desire for self-governance among the Santals —due to a sense of injustice at the hands of the British, the moneylenders, and the Zamindars— represents political aspirations arising from their collective experiences and administrative failures, among others.

Religiosity is considered another inalienable aspect of the Hul.[19] It was derived from various rituals and practices of the Santals. While the ontological and existential status of Santal spiritual entities has been undervalued in historical interpretations (Clossey et al 2016: 595)[20], the ‘call of the Thakur (Supreme God)’, in the context of the Hul, has also been recognized as its ultimate manifestation (Andersen 2023: 8). Debates exist as to whether it can be considered the ‘tinder’ or the ‘spark’ that caused the rebellion, and whether it was a cause or a method to effectuate the insurrection (Clossey et al 2016: 595). Religiosity has been described as a community belief in eventual justice[21] and a ‘massive demonstration of self-estrangement’ (Guha 2002: 230). However, these elements need a detailed and separate analysis to discern the social, political, economic, cultural, and religious underpinnings legitimizing the Hul (Fuchs 1965: 27-29). For example, the order or *perwannah* of the Thakur is regarded by some historians as a formal directive or a source of legitimation (Andersen 2023). In contrast, other historians have identified it as an effort to maintain unity and counter opposition within the group (Roy 1961: 71). These distinct features of the Hul have been discussed under different categories.

---

[18] For approaches regarding deeper identification and ideological solidarity with the tribal community in the context of the Santal temporal imperatives and the communist ideology in the 1950's, see (Panjabi 2010: 53 to 59).

[19] Ranajit Guha (2002: 229) has pointed out, 'Religiosity was, by all accounts, central to the hool.' Its role in mass movements, on account of a perceived existential crisis among the underprivileged, has also been recognized by Worsley (1970: xi) and Hobsbawm (1963).

The pursuit of security

Traditionally the Santals resolved their state of conflict through migration. However, in the times preceding the Hul, it was disrupted by colonial and economic pressures. If we track the history of Santals, an established pattern of migration exists that was traced by Skrefsrud[22] in *Hapram Puthi* (1878). The migration was primarily due to a growing sense of insecurity and to escape struggles and unwanted interferences from people outside the tribe. However, they developed an affinity towards the land and the forests in and around the modern-day Santal Paragana. This attachment stemmed from their efforts and labor in clearing the forest and the flourishing practice of agriculture. Apart from the material ties, there was also an affective aspect of attachment precisely due to the labor that went into their enterprise. The colonial policy of facilitating the Santal occupation of lands and forests to set an example for the highlanders (Pahariyas) and expand revenue collection might also have played a role. For instance, in 1835, John Petty Ward, assigned to demarcate Damin-I-Koh with surveyor Captain Tanner, wrote about the grant of land rights by 49 Santal headmen (McPherson 1909: 35). Collectively they led to a sense of security for a sustainable period, which was otherwise missing in their life and traditional narrative (Hunter 1868: 214-219).

Life at relative ease—on account of changes in agricultural practices leading to economic security and opportunities for cultural growth—was accompanied by a significant and ‘dramatic’ population growth in the area (Rottger-Hogan 1982: 84). The colonial commentaries have also documented the ‘overflowing’ Santal population. (Hunter 1868: 224). When faced with an existential crisis due to excessive usury, exploitation by the Zamindars, denial of justice at the hands of the court, and continued ignorance of their grievances by the administrators, the Santals had to make a difficult choice. The feeling may be compared to the ‘adrenaline rush’ leading to a sense of

---

[20] Some writers have claimed that the brothers (Sido and Kanhu) made such assertion simply because it allowed them ‘to transcend local rivalries and unite previously fragmented communities.’ (Duyker 1987: 110-111). Also see (Bradley-Birt & Risley 1905: 198).

[21] It was described to act as a justification for their violence and psychological support in their confrontation with outside authorities.

[22] A Norwegian Missionary and linguist who was instrumental in the documentation and understanding of Santal culture. For details see (Skrefsrud: 1887). Also see (Hodne: 1966).

'flight or fight'. This choice can be viewed as a repercussion of the need to cope with the gradual increase in their numbers. A famous couplet from the days of the rebellion where the Santals discuss the available choice in the form of a folk song meaning 'Shall we go or shall we stay?'[23] represents the dilemma faced by the Santals regarding their future amidst the looming uncertainties (Culshaw & Archer 1945: 1). It indicates indecision among them about their response to the new circumstances. Having lived in a sustained atmosphere of security with material and affective investments in the land, migration was no longer easily viable. Thus, the prevailing rage was directed against the contemporary social and political situation. This response was not singular; it was informed by a secure past and further driven by a desire to consolidate. The distinction around the narrative of '*hul pahil* (the time before the rebellion) and *hul tayom* (the time impregnated by the idea of resistance)' as 'economic and social revendication' is also significant here as the rebellion took place amidst a definite and imminent predicament[24] (Carrin 2022: 1446). A vivid description of various events, of cultural and religious significance by Jugia Haram, as noted by Skrefsrud, such as the sighting of *lag-lagin* (snakes), movement of buffalo cow, and rumours about the killing of *Dikus* (outsiders) and villagers fleeing to the forest or absconding in groups, are significant depictions of the prevailing insecurities[25]. These narratives, along with Chotrae Desmanjhi's account of events leading to the public thrashing of Bir Singh[26] and other groups of robbers, followed by unjust harassment of Gocho Manjhi at the hands of Daroga Mahesh Lal Dutta, 'represented the lull before a great storm, which soon appeared in the shape of a formidable insurrection' (Datta 2017: 13).

Bond of solidarity and quest for purity

A Santal proverb says, 'a million Santals have a single voice'[27] (Archer 1974: 48). Community solidarity has remained an essential feature of homogenous societies, indigenous communities, and pastoralists. Such solidarity was abundant among the members of the Santal community[28]. For example, in traditional Santal land tenure practices, the land belongs to the community. It is a *res communis*. In the context of the Hul, unbridled community solidarity was a defence mechanism activated by an unconditional union against a system perceived as unjust, antagonistic, and exploitative. The Santals could not fail but notice that their fellow tribesmen were discriminated against and treated in an undignified manner for their relatively petty crimes. In contrast, their persecutors enjoyed impunity despite repeated misdeeds[29]. It wouldn't be a stretch to say that this stark difference consolidated their solidarity and compelled them to rebel.

---

[23] The song is 'Saheb rule is trouble full, shall we go or shall we stay? Eating, drinking, clothing, for everything we are troubled, shall we go or shall we stay?'

[24] 'During the cold weather of 1854 and 1855, the Santals, appeared to be in a strange, restless state'. See (Dasgupta 2013: 71); originally in Hunter (1868) at 236.

[25] Rumours regarding the movement of *lag lagin* snakes who were swallowing men and the movement of buffalo cows causing the death of members of households who had grass at their outer doors and another rumour that 'people are coming to kill the Dikus and hence bullock skin and flute should be hanged up at the end of the village street to distinguish one as a Santal' were common, as reported.

[26] Bir Singh Parganait of Sasan in Luchimpur has been reported as a leader of Santals who proclaimed to have learned magic from Chando Bonga, whereby he could put anyone to sleep and rob such person. He led a gang and indulged in suspicious activities.

[27] '*Hod aale gail say, Mid katha ge le lay'* is its near approximation in Santali.

[28] Community solidarity and cooperation are regarded as core values in Santal society. For details see (Kisku: 2017).

This community solidarity found its way among other communities who identified with the cause of the Santals[30]. For example, the working communities[31] supported the Hul, and as historian Peter Stanley has observed in his book, *Hul! Hul! The Suppression of the Santal Rebellion in Bengal,1855*, 'Santal metal tools and weapons were made by Bengali smiths living in their villages' (Stanley 2022: 309). They had a vibrant social relationship with the so-called 'low-castes' or 'service castes' who provided unwavering support to the Santals through indispensable services in intelligence and supplies[32] (Roy 1961: 69-71).

Various community-centric cultural practices such as hunting, singing, dancing, clearing of forests, rituals and worship, etc. played a significant role in uniting the community[33]. Their collectiveness, shared observation, and solidarity stood out in such activities. *Lagre* (songs covering a wide range of expressions), *Porob* (describing pathos of life), and *Jhika* (a men's dance song) were examples of some songs recited collectively (Culshaw 2004: 45-46). *Hadun* dance was also a collective experience of rituals and solidarity[34]. The use of kettle drums and *Chorchori*[35] during the hunt was a part of the Santal culture as a shared 'phonetic connotation' in their life[36] (Hembram 1976: 38). Even the violence associated with the rebellion is considered a ritualistic or culturally sanctioned form of resistance. It has been noted that the Santals would fight, even at the cost of death, 'till their national drums beat'[37] (Hunter 1868: 248). The movement of the Sal tree leaf[38], 'like the old fiery cross of the Scots' (Man 1989: 116), and the implantation of the Sal tree branch[39] also represent ritualistic acts in the context of the rebellion (Andersen 2023: 157, 198).

---

[29] From the Commissioner of Bhagalpur to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated 9 July 1855.

[30] Bodding's examples of groups of people, who were not considered Diku include the Doms, Bauris, and Hadis.

[31] Like the blacksmiths and the agrarian communities.

[32] This view has also been supported by Digambar Chakrabortty.

[33] Vijay Kochar, in one of the post-independence field accounts of the village organizations among the santals, distinguished Santal identity with their common sense of integrity and group awareness of customs. (Kochar: 1970)

[34] Sherwill had sketched and described the 'Sonthal dance by moonlight', which he perhaps witnessed himself. It was reproduced in the Illustrated London News on 7th June 1851. The beats of the drummers guide this dance through a change in rhythm.

[35] Specially prepared for the hunting ceremony or *Sendra Ru*.

[36] *Sar-tam kapi tam, Sar-tam kapitam sabtam* is an example of such integral phonetic expression. It means, 'Prepare the arrows and battle axes, hold the arrows and battle axes.'

[37] W. W. Hunter (1868) reproduced the communications of the British commanding officer Major Jervis in his book *Annals of Rural Bengal*, where he observes that 'it was not war; they did not understand yielding. As long as their national drum beat, the whole party would stand, and allow themselves to be shot down.'

[38] Emissaries, bearing the national *sal* branch, were dispatched to every mountain valley; and the people, obedient to the signal, gathered together in vast masses, not knowing for what object, but with their expectation excited by the slips of paper, and carrying the invariable bow and arrows in their hands.

[39] Apparently to identify a witch.

Further, *Bitlaha*, or tribal ostracism, was a traditional practice of social exclusion used as a punishment within the Santal community[40]. In Santal society, defiance of 'rules of social interaction, to avoid breaking any taboos and having sexual intercourse with certain Santals or any non-Santals' were considered violative of purity and led to ostracism (Andersen 2023: 78). References to incidents of sexual abuse of Santal women by the officials of the East Indian Railway suggest perception of violation of purity, something culturally sacrosanct, which might have provided an additional cause for the rebellion (Stanley 2022: 317). The author of the *Sonthal rebellion* (Calcutta review 1856: 241) played them down as minor acts of oppression. Perhaps the author used their moral standard in deciding so. However, these incidents could have been considered catastrophic by the Santals. The correlation between a felt and enduring sense of purity to desired orderliness in society is not entirely distinct. The symbolic construction of purity with order by Mary Douglas (1969) in *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Politics and Taboo* is relevant here. She identified dirt as 'simply matter out of place' and observed that, 'as we know it, dirt is essentially a disorder. Dirt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organize the environment.' (Douglas 1969: 2). Rottger-Hogan has also drawn a parallel from this as it resonated with the Santal view of impurity leading to a feared or anticipated disorder and the efforts of the community to restore its socio-cultural order (Rottger-Hogan 1982: 95). In fact, it is interesting and relevant to understand how Santals defined dirt, or 'matter out of place' for them.

Ostracism, in this sense, might have been a familiar and well-thought-out choice to bring order through systematic classification by the accepted socio-cultural norms. This thought may reasonably explain the violence associated with the Hul. For example, the mutilation of the opponents might have been guided by a fierce rage; it also represents the 'structured nature of the violence'[41] similar to the practice of Bitlaha[42] (Rottger-Hogan 1982: 95). *Bitlaha*, as a practice to maintain internal order, was practiced to deprive the target of their dignity or the ability to return to their previous status in society by bringing public disgrace upon them.

W.G. Archer (2016: 58-64) has explained various stages of the requirement and the mandate of purity among the Santals. Drawing on its relationship with the Bongas, he has highlighted the distinct sense of 'tribal discipline' during adolescence (Archer 2016: 58). Observation of the ceremony of *Caco Chatiar* —a ceremony when a child is eight to ten years old, in remembrance of the Santal tradition and the role of the midwife in parturition— is also an example of such quest for purity. The myth of the bastard — where the first ancestors refused to give a Hembrom girl to Madho Singh (Mandhwa) as he was not of pure blood —that led to the fleeing of the first ancestors to escape defilement is also noteworthy. Further, references to the 'land of the Turuks'—when the Turuk Raja (Muslim tyrant) had captured the first ancestors —as corrupt land and an imperative to avoid the same further signifies the aspects of purity.[43]

---

[40] Even today, it is considered the most feared punishment in the Santal society.

[41] For example, chopping off the head of a moneylender was accompanied by a shout of 'paid in full'. (Macphail 1922: 56).

[42] Elizabeth Rottger-Hogan has referred to the work of Natalie Zemon Davis and observed that their victims were not only to be killed but 'to be weakened and humiliated further'.

Market economy and exploitation

The Santal society lived in a pre-monetary state characterized by a barter economy, redistribution, subsistence living[44], and other reciprocal relationships. Reference of a 'worn-out winnowing fan, a wooden cow-bell, and an old broom' in the discourse of the rebellion symbolizes the traditional agrarian lifestyle of the Santals (Archer & Culshaw 1945: 231). Their conversion from 'shifting cultivators into sedentary peasants' led to the exploitation of their traditional ways of life by the market economy imposed by colonial forces (Rottger-Hogan 1982: 80). For example, products such as mustard were exported from the local *haats* of Berhait and Hiranpur to England via Murshidabad and Calcutta (Datta 2017: 4). While it led to an integration of Santals into the global market system, they were overwhelmed by this rapid transition. The volatilities of the market destabilized the subsistence guarantees in their drive for revenue by disregarding Santal practices and control over resources. Historian C.A. Bayly offered insights into the Santal experience through these socio-economic changes as a 'fragile expansion of cash-cropping' (Bayly 1988:174). E. G. Mann[45] (1989), a colonial administrator, also identified economic exploitation as a prominent characteristic of colonial administration before the Hul.

The colonial mandate of maximizing revenue and squeezing profit out of anything and everything resulted in the commercialization and commodification of land and labor. It 'ignored the tribe's nomadic, legendary past as hunters and slash-and-burn cultivators' (Rottger-Hogan 1982: 86). While James Pontent, who was in charge of Damin-I-Koh area for administrative purposes as the superintendent since 1837, may be considered an efficient administrator by some on account of more than ten times rise in revenue under his supervision within thirteen years, his inability to address the grievances of the Santal and an absolute lack of sense for the brooding rebellion might also have contributed to the cause[46]. Pontent was required 'to guard the interest of the Government by making favorable land settlements with the Santals and to collect the rent' (Datta 2017: 3). He raised the annual rent from 2,000 rupees in 1838 to approximately 44000[47] by 1851 (Datta 2017: 3). Arguably, his singular pursuit of revenue blinded him to the sufferings of the subjects, where no ears were lent to their voices. The transition of Santals from rulers to farmers to renters to laborers on account of various changes in revenue administration is a testimonial of their hardships. These hardships awakened the instincts to counteract for survival, and considering the natural tendency of humans to resist acts of injustice, the consequences were obvious. When perceived as a threat to the community, it caused an ‘outburst of smoldering discontent’ (Datta 2017: 9).

---

[43] It is mentioned, 'The land of the Turuks is a corrupt land. If at any later time we cannot feed ourselves and cross the Ojoe (river), may our children be defiled even in the womb' (Archer 2016: 61).

[44] Rottger-Hogan has characterized it as 'feeding like silkworms', considering the scrupulous consumption of resources (Rottger-Hogan 1982: 80).

[45] Assistant Commissioner in Santal Pargana and an author.

[46] Pontent's inability to foresee and prevent the insurrection led to charges of insensitivity on his part towards the Santals. However, the Commissioner of Bhagalpur, G.F. Brown, presented a strong defence in his favour in a letter to the Special Commissioner, A.C. Bidwell, dated 1October 1855.

[47] Which amounts to an astonishing 2200% increase.

The usurpation of the native lands to form a reserved area of Damin where the Santals toiled as laborers —contributing to the money and market economy of weekly *haats* in service of the colonial interests and at the cost of their subsistence— evokes a palpable sense of suppression. Pontent, in one of the letters written to the Collector of Bhagalpur in 1837, which is preserved in the District Record Room at Dumka, has referred to his efforts in the enlargement of the total area under cultivation for the profit of the colonial government by introducing new migrants. To aggravate the agony, the system of *naib sazawals* (intermediaries responsible for tax collection) for the annual revenue collection often resulted in over-taxation and extortion. A.C. Bidwell, Special Commissioner for the Suppression of the Rebellion, lamented the same in his report in December 1855, available in the District Record Room at Dumka[48] Rev. E. Droese, a missionary of the Church Missionary Society, also recounted such complaints of the Santals. In this way, the ‘commercialization of agriculture’ and the ‘pressure of taxation’ prepared the premise for the rebellion (Andersen 2023: 5 & 63-64).

Political freedom for truth and justice

English novelist Charles Dickens (2010) points out in his book *Great Expectations* that ‘there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice’. Santals also believed in living ‘simple lives’ and were noted for their ‘happy disposition’ (Hunter 1868: 216). Sherwill, who was entrusted with the survey of Damin-I-Koh in 1851, has recounted that the Santals were ‘in general an orderly race of people, their rulers have little more to do than bear their honors and collect the rent’ (Sherwill 1851: 548-551). However, they remained at the margins of the socio-cultural, political, and economic system. Their long-drawn-out subjugation had led to migrations and further oppression at the hands of the dominant groups. The growing exploitation, as discussed above, had accentuated the desire for independence and a dignified existence among the Santals, for which they needed to be recognized as the rulers of their land (Manuel Raj 1990: 56). Colonial governance, through its system of rent-seeking intermediaries, disturbed the fabric of the tribe’s autonomy and independence. It resulted in the forfeiture of Santal self-governance and led to a call for ‘true justice’ and a desire to lead the ‘reign of truth’ as a repeated theme in the context of the rebellion[49] (Guha 2002: 236-237, Roy 1960: 182).

While the discontent might have been initially towards the representatives of the government, ultimately the change in ‘Santal consciousness’ cascaded against the colonial administration (Guha 1999: 106). For example, the court was considered the abode of justice and the last resort for the common man. However, in their mechanical adherence to the black letter of the common law, the courts miserably failed to identify and address the genuine grievances of the ‘illiterate and naïve’ Santals. Indiscriminate execution of bonds to keep security, passing orders in favor of the moneylenders without considering their 'real or apparent authority' or 'position of dominance', and ignorance of equity worsened the situation gradually. Uninformed of the law, the procedure, and the facts[50] the Santals had to undertake wasteful expenditures in attending the courts. It consequently made them 'sick at heart' (Man 1989: 115-116). The legal injustices faced by the Santals under colonial rule exacerbated their grievances[51].

---

[48] See Letter of Bidwell in the Letters section of the District Record Room of Dumka against the year 1855.

[49] For details see Judicial proceedings, 19 July 1855, 4 October 1855 (*The Thacoor’s Perwannah*), 8 November 1855 (*Examination of Sedoo Sonthal late Thacoor*), and 20 December 1855 (*Examination of Kanoo Sonthal*) reproduced in (Guha 2002: 236-38).

Other reasons also caused brooding discontent among the Santals. They included the 'mercantile undertaking of administration' (Dasgupta 2013: 71) leading to excessive taxation, encroachment of Santal lands and forests by zamindar officials, the persistence of inequality, and undeterred and unchecked abuse by the money-lenders[52] on account of their practices of usury[53]. In this way, the actions of the Santal community were a response to their rational grievances and 'aimed at the restoration of the pre-British order' (Sharma 1976: 38) in tune with their inherent democratic participation[54]. The only way they could see out for themselves was through self-governance, where they established order themselves. This could have happened only by way of political freedom with the right to decide the rates of taxes along with the right to collect them (Guha 2002: 237). Various communications in the District Records Room[55] and survey reports of McPherson (1909) —whereby certain rights of *Mulraiyat* and village headmen were recognized— further establish such aspirations[56]. They were also evident in the assertions of the leaders of the Hul. There are instances where important events during the rebellion were accompanied by apolitical will (Chakrabortti 1989: 27-30). For example, announcements regarding new rates of revenues and instances where the leaders of the Hul were carried in palanquin show the symbolic and ceremonial aspects of Santal leadership aspiring for political freedom[57] (Guha 1999: 125). The leaders of the Hul, in an attempt to negate the political will of the other, wore and also conferred *Pagri* 'as a matter of prestige'. The *Pagri* or turban 'came thus to stand for a historic inversion' (Guha 1999: 66) and symbolized distributive justice.

Manifestation of religiosity

Religiosity was the most intriguing yet 'central' theme in the Hul, represented by the 'call of the Thakur' (Guha 2002: 229, Andersen 2023: xiii). A collective study into the available resources, oral histories, past practices, and even contemporary activities bears testimony to the claims that the Santals have historically woven their worldview around *Bongas* (spirits) and their religious and cultural rituals (Culshaw 2004: 81-87). The relationship between the Santal religious universe and social structure is thus very close. For the Santals, the *Bongas* must constantly be kept satisfied or they would meddle harmfully in the pattern of these daily events (Duyker 1987: 187). Among these religious and cultural threads are mythical rumors, stories often passed down orally, reflecting their fears, hopes, and beliefs (Biswas 1956: 135-137). However, as observed in contemporary Santal practices, such rituals and beliefs don't necessarily mean an environment of constant insecurity.

---

[50] For example, multiple dates were given to hear their cases and they had to incur heavy expenditure to attend to the court.

[51] For details see (Man 1989: 113 to 118).

[52] Not only did the santal rapidly lose all his lands to pay off the Mahajan's debts, but they also had to pledge their person to work off the debt. What is most strange 'this condition of rank slavery' was tolerated, nay sanctioned, by the courts of law. *Ibid.*

[53] 'The fortunes made by traffic in produce were augmented by usury'. See Hunter (1868) at 229.

[54] See (Singh: 2006).

[55]The District Record Room at Dumka hosts most of the official communications including various volumes of letters written by Pontent, Officers from Bhagalpur, and Judicial Records. Some of these important documents/letters have been reproduced by Aswini Pankaj in his book 1855 HUL Documents.

[56]For details see (Roy & Swamy 2016: 74).

[57] See Bengal Judicial Proceeding, 19 July 1855. Guha, referring to Lefebvre (1973), compares it with the French and the English rebels of 1789 and 1830 respectively.

Over time, these mythical rumors shaped their communal life, influencing the social structure and resistance to outside forces. For example, one of the most enduring mythical rumours in Santal folklore is the existence of shape-shifting sorcerers. According to the legends, certain individuals could transform into animals like tigers, leopards, or snakes. These individuals believed to wield dark powers were suspected of bringing misfortune, like crop failures or sudden deaths. Regarding the pervasiveness of witches and witchcraft, P. O. Bodding noted, 'In this country, there are a good many witches, and in all races, there are witches' (Bodding 1940: 259). Stories exist that those who disrespected the sacred groves and hunted animals without permission, or failed to perform the necessary rituals risked the retributions of these spirits. This perceived wrath manifested in various ways: sudden illness, disappearance of livestock, or mysterious deaths within the community (Fuchs 1965: 27). The Santals believed that to lift the curse, the village would need to perform elaborate purification rituals, often involving animal sacrifices and communal prayers. The *Orak* (household) *Bonga*, the *Abge* (family) *Bonga*, and other *Bongas* are believed to be a source of solidarity and uninterrupted cultural connection that may lead to peace, prosperity, and security in life events (Duyker 1987: 187). They are sources of apprehension also in cases of non-adherence to the prescribed rituals. To illustrate it further, we may consider the concept of *Jeewid Bonga,* one among the several concepts related to belief or faith among the Santals. *Jeewid* is the Santali word for alive, while *'bonga'* is God. *Jeewid bonga* means a 'live God' or a 'God who is alive'.

Similarly, in the Santal belief system, 'Thakur' has been considered a deity or a superior power that can create and destroy life. In the versions of the leaders of the Hul, Thakur was presented as an inspiration and an immediate instigator of the rebellion. Despite the realities of the uprising, the elusiveness of the Thakur —considering him to be physically existent— raises doubt among historians regarding his status as a key figure. In this way, the historical and scholarly discourses have been extensively polemic in attributing actions and agency to Thakur. The proponents of a culturally sensitive and indigenous perspective suggest that the rebellion was truly inspired by the '*call of the Thakur'* and that the other leaders or figures acted only to materialize the perceived will of the Thakur. Apart from various rituals and cultural practices, they also rely upon the legal or judicial documents of the rebellion such as testimonies during the summary trials in referring to the involvement of the Thakur.

However, the detractors have outrightly denied Thakur's role or influence in the events discussed. Such reluctance to extend agency to Thakur in the Hul is derived from the lack of proof or a reasonable possibility of his existence as such. References regarding the use of Christian scripture by the Thakur in communication, especially given the context of 'illiteracy' and indigenous beliefs, have fortified such suspicions (Duyker 1987: 33-34). For example, Burton Stein's interpretation suggests that their religious and cultural practices were an amalgamation of Hinduism and Christianity with 'pre-existing beliefs in magic and myth into an ideology of mobilization' (Stein 1998: 280). Such views subordinate Santal beliefs and practices by relying upon the pre-existing frameworks. In their efforts to embrace reason and objective evidence, contemporary scholars have rejected the agency of a supernatural power like Thakur and, in the process, practiced a 'dogmatic secularism' (Clossey et al 2016: 596 & 598).

The proponents have deplored such a narrative for its stark opposition to well-established belief systems emerging from rituals and cultural practices. They have attributed such ignorance to a doubtful attitude, building upon Max Weber's ideas of modernity, rationalization, and disenchantment, where the world is seen as increasingly secular and devoid of supernatural elements as it fails to engage with the complexities of historical knowledge (Weber 1991: 55-61, Clossey et al 2016: 595). This view has been challenged by historian Dipesh Chakrabarty in *Provincializing Europe*, by contrasting the dominant Eurocentric perspectives and emphasizing local contexts and histories. He calls upon the need to 'anthropologize'[58] rather than read the agency of Thakur through historical lenses of evidence alone (Chakrabarty 2007: 106).

While pigeonholing the existence of the supernatural solely in the belief system, historians depict their glaring reluctance to attribute real historical agency to supernatural figures for want of objective evidence. Thus, it has been noted that 'Thakur and his kind became *personae non gratae* in historical scholarship' (Clossey et al 2016: 595). Concerns regarding the certainty of historical knowledge have led the detractors to find a motive behind claims of involvement of the Thakur as a way to rationalize and legitimize the rebellion (Fuchs 1965:29). They have noted the role of religion in mobilizing and energizing ordinary people. However, in emphasizing the functionality of religion, they have glossed over the idea of Thakur as a real construct psychologized by the Santal belief and customary practices (Clossey et al 2016: 594-597). The continuity and prevalence of *Bonga* worship and adherence to rituals related to various deities such as '*Marang Buru'* (The biggest mountain or God) exemplifies the same. Elements of such continuity are visible in the annual conduct of the *Hijla Mela* (Hijla fair), founded by R. Carstairs (the then Deputy Commissioner of Santhal Paragana) in 1890 to understand local traditions, customs and practices. However, these seemingly mundane yet passionate practices have not been duly considered. It has resulted in an extreme opinion to deny the unknown altogether due to inconsistencies. For example, the description of Thakur and his appearance as 'white man in native costume' (Hunter 1868: 237), as recorded in the testimony of Kanhu during the Judicial proceedings, has been considered a case of overdetermination' (Guha 1999: 55). However, Kanhu's remarkable honesty[59] (Sherwill 1854: 32, Guha 1999: 80-81), in his testimonies, suggests that such depiction might have been founded upon superimposition of his belief in various established sources of power such as colonial and bureaucratic rather than an afterthought.Cognition by a sighting of Thakur, as referred to by Kanhu during the judicial proceedings, might have a 'psychic relatedness' or a 'referential opacity' (Spiegelberg:1936, Mohanty: 1970). The 'Thakur' that Sido and Kanhu mentioned when they called for the Hul could be an entity, a belief, or an idea. 'Thakur' might have been a 'categorical intuition' (Lohmar 2002: 125-145) as the 'mental phenomena' (Mohanty: 1970) of the call of the Thakur and its intentionality cannot be denied in the light of the existing evidence and the current practices. To an *outsider*, it may all seem imaginary or non-existent (Durkheim1995: 425-426); but who knows what Sido and Kanhu actually saw or felt consciously or subconsciously? In Hul, Thakur appears as an epitome of trust. For example, the Santals view their failure in the conflict as a failure to uphold their spiritual responsibilities, rather than an instance of the 'Thakur failing them' (Clossey et al 2016: 598).

---

[58] While referring to Ranajit Guha's subaltern approach towards Hul, Chakrabarty suggests the use of anthropological approaches to understand historical contexts more fully.

[59] The leaders of the rebellion, Sidhu and Kanhu, said that Thakur had assured them that British bullets would not harm the devotee rebels. Ranajit Guha writes in this context that 'These were not public pronouncements meant to impress their followers. These were words of captives facing execution. Addressed to hostile interrogators in military encampments they could have little use as propaganda.

Conclusion

The efforts for freedom from the shackles of colonialism in present-day Jharkhand present a tale defining the destiny of millions of people. The records of the interrogation of Kanhu established that it was the call of the Thakur in the attendant difficulties of oppression of Zamindars, intolerable rapacity of Mahajans, and neglect of administrators that inspired them to strive for self-rule or Santal Raj. It was believed and acted upon swiftly by the community as *Bonga* (God) possession and reporting through godheads was considered common among the Santhals. The growing exploitation accentuated the yearning of the Santhals for independence, identity, and existence through recognition as the rulers of their land. It is well established that Sido, Kanhu, Chand, Bhairav, Phulo, and Jhano lead the struggle on behalf of the oppressed masses. Their fight was for a political self-rule and they represented the aspirations of the marginalized. Their rebellion was founded upon the need to address economic, political, and cultural distress in their lives.

However, the 'idiosyncratic blind spots' have kept their voices suppressed in the primary discourses (Andersen 2023: 24). The 'specificity of rebel consciousness' and 'rural insurrection' ignored by the 'immaculate consciousness' of the historiographers, define the praxis of the Hul (Guha 2002: 235-236). Realizing the role of ordinary cultures and considering the social, economic, political, and ritual or religious aspects of Santal life and reliance upon 'informal sources' of history may provide alternate and distinct characteristics of the Hul. Communal solidarity, stress upon purity, a recurrence of the theme of security, and aspirations of true and real justice were manifested through the ritualistic beliefs of the community. While surveying the merits and methods of existing literature on the Santal Hul, the study establishes a need to include indigenous perspectives and sources in historical analysis. Considering their oft-ignored and overridden status in historical scholarship leading to a discipline-wide blind spot, such study shall enable a much-needed holistic awareness of the event.

Uttered by men of a tribe which, according to all accounts, had not yet learned to lie, these represented the truth and nothing but the truth for their speakers'.

References

Archival Documents

Letters and Correspondences of Pontent in Letters section of the Record Room at Dumka.

Letters of Bildwell in the Letters section of the Record Room at Dumka.

Judicial proceedings 4 October 1855 (The Thacoor's Perwannah). Reproduced in Guha, R. 2002. The Small Voice of History Collected Essays, Delhi: Permanent Black from 236-238.

Judicial proceedings 8 November 1855(Examination of Sedoo Sonthal late Thacoor). Reproduced in Guha, R. 2002. The Small Voice of History Collected Essays, Delhi: Permanent Black from 236-238.

Judicial proceedings 20 December 1855 (Examination of Kanoo Sonthal). Reproduced in Guha, R. 2002. The Small Voice of History Collected Essays, Delhi: Permanent Black from 236-238.

Newspaper and Journal

Calcutta Review, 1856.

Friend of India, 1855.

Books

Andersen, P.B. 2023. *The Santal Rebellion 1855–1856: The Call of Thakur (1st ed.)*. London: Routledge India.

Appadurai, A. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Archer, W.G. 1974. *The Hill on the Flutes: Love and Poetry in Tribal India, a Portrait of the Santals*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Bayly, C. A. 1988. *The New Cambridge History of India (Vol. II)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biswas, P. C. 1956. *Santals of the Santal Parganas*. Delhi. Bharatiya Adimjati Sewak Sangh.

Bleie, T., 2023. *A New Testament.* Latvia (Riga): Solum Bokvennen AS Livonia Print.

Bodding, P.O. 1940, *Witchcraft among the Santals*, Oslo: A.W. Broggers.

Bodding, P.O. (Trans.). 1942. *Traditions and Institutions of the Santals*. Oslo: A.W. Broggers.

Carrin, M., & Tambs-Lyche, H. 2008. *An Encounter of Peripheries: Santals, Missionaries, and their Changing Worlds; 1867 - 1900* (1. publ.). Delhi: Manohar Publ. & Distributors.

Carstairs, R. 1912. *The Little World of an Indian District Officer*. London: Macmillan & Co.

Chakrabarty, D. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Chakrabortti, D. 1989. Ed. by Arun Chowdhury, *History of the Santal Hool of 1855*. Calcutta: National Book Agency.

Chattopadhyay 2014, *Redefining Tribal Identity: The Changing Identity of the Santhals of South-West Bengal*, Delhi: Primus Books.

Chaudhuri, A.B. 2013. *State Formation Among Tribals: A Quest for Santal Identity*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.

Culshaw, W. J. 1949. *Tribal Heritage. A Study of the Santals*. London: Lutterworth Press.

Datta, K. 2017. *The Santal Insurrection of 1855-57*. New Delhi: Gyan Publication.

Datta-Majumder, N. 1956. *The Santal. A Study in Culture Change. Memoirs of the Department of Anthropology*, Delhi: Government of India.

Devalle, S. B. C. 1992. *Discourses of Ethnicity: Culture and Protest in Jharkhand*. New Delhi: Sage.

Dickens, C. 2012. *Great Expectations*, New Delhi: Penguin Classics.

Douglas, M. 1969. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger.

Durkheim, E. 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (K. E. Fields, Trans. New York: Free Press.

Duykers, E., 1987, *Tribal Guerrillas: The Santals of West Bengal and the Naxalite Movement*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Gide, A. 1891. reprint in 1978. *Le traité du Narcisse: Theorie du symbole – (The Treatise of Narcissus: Theory of the Symbol)*. Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa.

Guha, R. 1999. *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Guha, R. 2002. *The Small Voice of History Collected Essays*, Delhi: Permanent Black.

Hembrom, T. 1996. *The Santals: Anthropological-Theological Reflections on Santali & Biblical Creation Traditions.* Calcutta: Publication Division, Government of India.

Hobsbawm, E.J. 1963. *Primitive Rebels, Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries.* New York: Norton.

Hodne, O. 1966. L. O. Skrefsrud, *Missionary and Social Reformer among the Santals of Santal Parganas*. Oslo: Egede Instituttet.

Hunter, W. W. 1868. *Annals of Rural Bengal*. London: Smith Elder and Co.

Kaviraj, N. 2001. *Santal Village Community and the Santal Rebellion of 1855*. Calcutta: Subarnrekha.

Kochar, V. 1970. *Social Organization among the Santal*. Calcutta: Editions.

Kisku, D.B. 2017. *The Santals and Their Ancestors.* Kolkata: Kranti Press.

Lohmar, D. 2002. *Husserl's Concept of Categorial Intuition*. In: Zahavi, D., Stjernfelt, F.(eds) One Hundred Years of Phenomenology. Phenomenological, vol 164. Denmark: Springer, Dordrecht from 125 to 145.

MacPhail James M. 1922 *The Story of the Santal: with an Account of the Santal Rebellion*, Berkeley: Thacker Spink & Co.

Man, E.G. 1989, (1st edn). 1867, *Sonthalia and The Sonthals*, New Delhi: Mittal Publication.

Manuel Raj, V. 1990. *A Santal Theology of Liberations*. New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House.

McPherson, H. 1909. *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Sonthal Parganas 1898-1907*. Calcutta: Bengal Book Depot.

Mukherjea, C. 1962. *The Santals*. Calcutta: A. Mukherjea & Co. Pr. Ltd.

O'Malley, L.S.S. 1910. *Bengal District Gazetteers*, vol. 22. Santal Parganas. Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot..

Pankaj, A. 2021. *1855 HUL Documents*, Chennai: Notion Press.

Roy, T. & Swamy A.V. 2016. *Law and the Economy in Colonial India*. London: University of Chicago Press.

Rycroft, D.J. 2006. Representing Rebellion: Visual Aspects of Counter-Insurgency in Colonial India. New Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rycroft, D.J., & Dasgupta, S. (Eds.). 2011. *The Politics of Belonging in India: Becoming Adivasi (1st ed.*). London and New York: Routledge.

Sen, A.K., 2011, *Reconstructing an Event: The Great Rebellion of 1857–8 and Singhbhum* in Rycroft, D.J., & Dasgupta, S. (Eds.). 2011. *The Politics of Belonging in India: Becoming Adivasi (1st ed.).* London and New York: Routledge.

Sen, A. K. 2018. *Indigeneity, Landscape, and History: Adivasi self-fashioning in India*, London and New York, Routledge.

Sherwill, W.S., 1855. *Geographical and Statistical Report of the District of Birbhum.* Calcutta: 'Calcutta Gazette' Office.

Sherwill, W. S. 1854. *Geographical and Statistical Report of the District of Bhaugulpoor*. Calcutta: Thos. Jones, 'Calcutta Gazette' Office.

Singh, K.S. 2006. *Tribal Movements in India, Volume 2*, Delhi: Manohar publication.

Skrefsrud, L., 1887. *Horkoren Mare Hapramko Reak Katha, 1951, (1st edition 1887),* Oslo*: The Santal mission of the Northern Churches, Benagaria.*

Spivak, G. C. 2010*. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" revised edition, from the "History" chapter of Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. In R. C. Morris (Ed.), *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea* (pp. 21–78). New York: Columbia University Press.

Stanley, P. 2022. *Hul! Hul! The Suppression of the Santal Rebellion in Bengal, 1855*. New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt. Ltd.

Stein, B. 1998. *A History of India*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Troisi, J. 1976. *The Santals: A Classified and Annotated Bibliography*. New Delhi: Manohar Book Service.

Weber, M. 1991. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology.* (H. H. Gerth & W. Mills, Eds. & Trans.). New York: Routledge.

Williams, R. 1993. *(1st Edn. 1958) Culture is Ordinary*. In A. Gray & J. McGuigan (Eds.), *Culture: An Introductory Reader*. London, UK: Edward Arnold. Web.

Worsley, P. 1970. *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of Cargo Cults in Melanesia*. New York: Schocken Books.

Articles

Andersen, P.B. 2015. Interpreting the Santal Rebellion. From 1855 till the end of the nineteenth century. *Anglistica AION.* 19.1 at 121-132 available at

http://www.serena.unina.it/index.php/anglistica-aion/article/

Banerjee, P. 1999. 'Historic Acts? Santal Rebellion and the Temporality of Practice*. Studies in History, 15, 209–246.*

Banerjee, P. 2000. 'Debt, Time and Extravagance: Money and the Making of "Primitives" in Colonial Bengal'. *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 37(4): 423–445.

Biswas, P.C. 1935. Primitive Religions, Social Organization Law and Government among the Santal. *Anthropological Papers New Series.* No. 4. Reprint from the *Journal of the Department of Letters*. Vol.21, Calcutta, Calcutta University Press at page 135-137.

Bucher, B., & Lévi-Strauss, C. 1985. An Interview with Claude Lévi-Strauss, 30 June 1982. *American Ethnologist*, *12*(2), 360–368. http://www.jstor.org/stable/644225

Carrin, M. 2022. Santal Indigenous Knowledge, Cultural Heritage, and the Politics of Representation. *Modern Asian Studies,* 56, 1438 - 1463.

Clark, R., Clossey, L., Ditchfield, S., Gordon, D., Wiesenthal, A., & Zaman, T.R. 2017. The Unbelieved and Historians, part III: Responses and Elaborations. *History Compass.* John Wiley and Sons Ltd. Available at wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/hic3

Clossey, L., Jackson, K., Marriott, B., Redden, A., & Vélez, K. (2016). The Unbelieved and Historians, Part I: A challenge. *History Compass*, 14: 594–602. Available at https://compass.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/hic3.12370

Culshaw, W. J. & W. G. Archer. 1945. The Santal Rebellion*. Man in India* 25. 223-239.

Dasgupta, A. 2013. Some Aspects of the Santal Rebellion of 1855-56. *Social Scientist*, *41*(9/10), 69-74 at 71.

Davis, N. Z. 1973. The Rites of Violence: Religious Riots in Sixteenth-Century France. Past and present. *A Journal of Historical Studies* 51-135 at 59.

Desmanjhi, C. 1945. Chotrae Desmanjhi Reak Katha*. Man in India*, 25(4), 232–239.

Fuchs S. 1965. Messianic Movements in Primitive India. *Asian Folklore Studies*. Vol. 24. No.1 at 11-62.

Ghosh, K. 2006. Between Global Flows and Local Dams: Indigenousness, Locality, and the Transnational Sphere in Jharkhand, India. *Cultural Anthropology, 21:* at 501-534.

Hembram, P. C. 1976. The Drum-Beat in Santhal Culture. *Sangeet Natak*. New Delhi: Sangeet Natak Academy from 38-45.

Karlsson, B. 2003. Anthropology and the “Indigenous Slot”: Claims to and Debates about Indigenous Peoples’ Status in India. *Critique of Anthropology* 23(4): 403–423.

Mohanty, J.N. 1970. Husserl’s Concept of Intentionality. In: Tymieniecka, AT. (eds) *Analecta Husserliana*. Vol 1. Springer, Dordrecht from 100-132.

Panjabi, K. 2010. Otiter Jed or Times of Revolution: Ila Mitra, the Santals and Tebhaga Movement. *Economic and Political Weekly.* August 14, 2010, Vol XLV NO 33 at 53 to 59.

Rottger-Hogan, E. 1982. ‘Insurrection... or Ostracism: A Study of the Santal Rebellion of 1855’. *Contributions to Indian Sociology, 16(1), 79-96.*

Roy, N.B. 1961. More Light on the Santal Insurrection. *Indian Historical Records Commission* 36, 2: 61-81.

Sharma, K.L, 1976. Jharkhand Movement in Bihar. *Economic and Political Weekly. Vol.11, Issue No.1-2*, 10 Jan 1976: 37 to 43 at 38

Sherwill, W.S. 1851. Notes upon a Tour through the Rajmahal Hills. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.* Vol. VII, 544-606.

Spiegelberg, H. 1936. Der Begriff der Intentionalitat in der Scholastik, bei Brentano und bei Husserl*, Philosophische Hefte (ed. by M. Beck)* 5 from 72–91 in Mohanty, J.N. 1970. Husserl’s Concept of Intentionality. In: Tymieniecka, AT. (eds) *Analecta Husserliana*. Vol 1. Springer, Dordrecht at 104 of 100-132.