

SANTALS: THEIR LEVEL OF SELF-PERCEPTION AND DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTATION

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150 Santal, and an equal number of non-Santal college students selected randomly were compared in terms of the level of their private and social self-perceptions, and development-orientation measured by a 28-item Semantic Differential Scale of Self-Evaluation (Singh, 1995) and a 4-point Development-Oriented Scale (Nasar, Rani & Singh, 1995). The Santals, as compared to their non-Santal counterparts, were markedly found to have a lower level, though very much moderate in amount, of both the private and social self-perceptions with the clear mark of vulnerability to social conflict. Similar was the story exhibited by them in terms of the level of their development-orientation and its dimensions. They were found to possess a lower, albeit altogether moderate, level of development-orientation, and its dimensions as compared to their non-Santal counterparts, who also were not very dissimilar to the former on this count. Further, an analysis of both the kinds of self-perception as well as development-orientation at micro level indicated the Santals as possessing a number of desirable traits like intent to carry out responsibility, agility, gentility, honesty, frankness, self-assertion, etc., to a fairly greater degree. The non-Santals, on the other hand, were typically blessed with the qualities of sociability, enthusiasm, optimism, cheerfulness, risk-taking, concern for time and future, and so on to a larger extent. In sum, both the groups of Santals and non-Santals were distinctly imbued with a blend of different positive traits.

Introduction

The Santals are one of the largest homogeneous tribes of India who are recognized for their unique psychophysical characteristics and also for their distinct socio-cultural background. They are, however, still at lower rung of social progress and development, despite various well-intentioned steps initiated by the Government for their upliftment since the very dawn of independence. Undeniably, the Santals, destitute and forlorn, grovel, as a result, in the lowly dust of want and poverty in the richest segment of the country even after more than six decades of its independence. They have, one would vouchsafe, unconcernedly dissolved their worldly cares, destitution and despair in the draughts of the home-brew simple and unostentatious as they are. The study of Santals from a psychological perspective, however, has attracted quite a few investigators for more than three decades. Their findings, too, have not been all-inclusive; they are sparse and quite inadequate to acquaint us with the basic frame of their in-built psychic dispositions. Some basic realities as to the typical behaviour pattern of the Santals need to be systematically revealed. Level of self-perceptions and development-orientation are, for the purpose, two important psychological dimensions which warrant our

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attention. These two, if extensively analyzed, could lead to a better understanding of their predicament of being unable to enjoy the full benefits of the scheme meant to bring out a positive change in their life and keep them apace with the nation's development and progress. Unfortunately, neither of these two has been fully analyzed, nor have these been properly understood. Hence the present investigation.

Self-concept or perception is the sum total of the individual's thoughts and feelings with reference to himself/herself as an object (Rosenberg, 1979). It has been widely accepted that self-perception plays an important role in every sphere of life and determines one's behaviour pattern to a large extent (Wylie, 1979). Studies to find out the level of self-perceptions in tribals, especially Santals, are painfully insufficient, and thus restrict the scope for a well-meaning and dependable conclusion. However, there are some studies, which do help define their self-perceptions. One such study has been conducted by Sharaf & Singh (1977), who have shown the tribals, compared to the non-tribals, as generally rating themselves low at the scale of self-image. The inherent traits of the Santals, however, may, on the surface, seem to stand on a different footing altogether.

The Santals, as it appears from a close analysis of their general characteristics and temperament (Singh & Singh, 1982), feel themselves proud of being sociable, peace-loving, hard-working, frank, open, honest, and gentle. This indicates that they enjoy high self-esteem. Singh (1984) in his study has also arrived at a similar conclusion. In a similar vein, Singh (1988) has also shown that both the Santals and non-Santals possess high private and social self-concepts, with no evidence of significant differences between them. Yet, the study conducted by Singh (1998) has revealed that though the Santals possess a fairly moderate amount of both private and social self-concepts, they significantly stand behind their non-Santals counterparts. A more recent investigation by Singh & Singh (2005) purports to augment the findings of Singh (1998) in clear terms the presence of moderate level among Santals of both the concepts. They have, however, the report says, yet to reach a higher level of the two concepts to come at par with the non-Santals who are better placed to register their superiority in private as well as social life. In spite of the fact, a number of studies carried out by Saksena (1976), Seth & Srivastava (1979) and Srivastava & Saxena (1978) have shown that the tribals, particularly the Santals, have high positive regards for themselves. Thus, it appears that though the findings in respect of the self-perception of Santals are not in convergence with each other, studies, except a few, have, on the whole, indicated that the Santals have high self-perceptions for themselves. This may apparently limit the scope for further researches in this field. But, the research findings available so far on the level of self-perceptions of the Santals are scant, even unsystematic. Thus, the present investigation has been once again designed to find out the level of self-perceptions (private and social) including social conflict in the Santal college students as against their non-Santal counterparts.

The term, 'development-orientation', denotes a state of mental preparedness for higher achievement in life through progressive changes. An individual's commitment to meet challenges in life is the essence of development-orientation. More specifically, it subsumes dimensions like achievement-orientation, egalitarianism, internal-orientation, concern for time and future, liberal and progressive views, proclivity to constructive changes, work-orientation, risk-taking, self-control, and so on (Singh & Singh, 1993; Singh, Kumari, & Kumari, 2000; Singh, Singh & Kumari, 1998). These are all independent, fairly ensuring both internal consistency and validity—the construct validity—of the measure of development-orientation (Nasar, Rani & Singh 1995; Singh, Rani & Singh, 1999).

The study of the level of development-orientation in Santals has also not attracted the desired attention of the investigators in India and abroad, it is apparently least investigated and little discussed less so any scientific enquiry which would lead to identify the reasons for non-adoption of the programmes meant for their all-round development and prosperity. However, an analysis of their basic characteristics and psychological frame of mind may certainly offer genuine ground, though not very direct, to surmise their level of development-orientation in comparison to their non-Santal counterparts. Santals, as mentioned above (Singh & Singh, 1982), are frank, open, honest and gentle, and have a natural urge to lead a calm, conscientious and happy life. They, according to Sah (2003), Singh & Sinha (1991) and Singh (1998), believe in social justice and no immoral or licentious acts go unpunished. The Santals, as Roy Chaudhury (1961) holds, have a simple but high-ordered social code of morality which helps them maintain their social solidarity, integrity and inherent identity.

The Santals, according to Soren (1979), always put more value to their society. Their community life is well-organized and structured, and may be called a '*model of corporate living*'. The principle of equality, fraternity and social justice—the significant components of an ideal society, as also for democracy—is highly valued by the Santals (Sinha, 1972). Indeed, a very high level of social cohesion and social identity nurtured by the innate urge to keep up togetherness and the spirit of brotherhood, it is found (Sah, 2003; Singh & Sinha, 1991; Singh, 1998), very much weave the fabrics of their social life. In addition, by analyzing the level of *sankalpa* and its dimensions among the Santals, Singh (1998) has indicated that the traits like self-assertion, commitment, self-determination, keeping promises, task-involvement, self-confidence, and above all the zeal to stand by the *sankalpa* are sufficiently ingrained in their psychic scheme of mind. To be precise, the Santals may be characterized as having a preponderance of numerous traits such as frankness, self-assertion, self-determination, egalitarianism, etc., and this may form the discreet basis to signify them as blessed with an appreciable amount of development-orientation and its dimensions.

But, this does not present the full view of the singular life pattern and worldview of the Santals; this is only limited to projecting the promising and blissful aspect of their temperament. Santals, despite a considerable impact of frequent socio-ecopolitical changes and modernization on them, are still traditional and orthodox in their attitudes and behaviour pattern (Singh, 1988; Singh & Sinha, 1982; Soren, 1983), which considerably impedes the zest for discovery and innovation—the scientific pursuit (Singh, Singh & Rani, 1988). They are markedly inferior to non-Santals in their levels of intellectual ability, achievement tendency, and scientific and numerical aptitudes, but have apparently a good blending of these potentialities to a moderate level (Singh, 1988; Singh, Singh & Rani, 1988; Singh & Sinha, 1983). Further, a number of investigators (Sah, 2003; Singh & Sinha, 1991; Singh 1990., Singh, 1998) subscribe to the views that the educated Santals, in particular, have become politically more conscious and aware than they were ever before with a vehement urge to attain economic affluence, but the levels, however, are still moderate and do not extend further. Added to above, they are well known for their trait of inflexibility and easy-going temperament born of their basic life-philosophy.

To conclude, the Santals possess a blend of different characteristics, quite distinct and varied in their essence. Interestingly, some of them include traits of development-orientation in them, while others go just the opposite way. Thus, predictions regarding the level of development-orientation and its various dimensions in Santals, if solely based on the analysis of their racial characteristics and singular behavior pattern, would be nothing more than a mere conjecture with no discreet rationale or vindication. This investigation, therefore, has been primarily designed to determine the level of development-orientation and its dimensions in Santals as against their non-Santal counterparts.

Method and Procedure

Subjects: The study was conducted in different colleges located in and around Dumka—the divisional headquarters of Santal Parganas (Jharkhand). It has the largest concentration of Santals if compared to the numbers of non-Santals in other districts. It has rich ingredients of their socio-cultural heritage—customs, mores, rituals, superstitions, idiosyncratic norms and behavior pattern of Santals are easily catchable in this region. Hence, Dumka was selected as the venue for the present investigation. The college students are supposed to be the enlightened generation—the efflorescent elite of their community, and hence they are considered to be worthy representatives of the thought and behavior patterns of their community. In view of the above pertinent consideration, out of 571 Santal and 537 non-Santal—*Dikus*—male college students, 150 Santal and 150 non-Santal students were selected randomly by employing the procedure of sampling with replacement. All of them were between 18 and 22 years of age and belonged

to lower middle-class families earning Rs. 5,700 to Rs. 7,100 per month. They were also comparable in terms of educational and occupational status of their parents.

Measures: Semantic Differential Scale of Self-Evaluation and a 4-point Development-Orientation Scale were devised to measure the dimensions being investigated. There follows a short description of both of them.

A modified Version of Semantic Differential Scale of Self-Evaluation

A 28-item Semantic Differential Scale of Self-Evaluation developed by Singh (1995) in Hindi was devised to measure the level of private and social self-perceptions in the subjects. The scale consisted of two separate forms—one measured private self-perception (the most accurate estimate of oneself as one really believed it to be), while the other measured social self-perception (the most accurate estimate of oneself as one really believed other people in the group estimate one). The subject was advised to select one of each pair of attributes as applicable to oneself, and to rate the extent of the possession of that attribute in oneself on the seven-point scale. The nearer in evaluation the respondents were to the more desirable attributes, the greater the score they were awarded. The total score on each of the forms could range between 28 and 196 with higher scores denoting higher levels of the two kinds of perception. The Cronbach alpha coefficients with \bar{r}_{ij} for private and social self-perception measures were found to be 0.84 (0.16) and 0.80 (0.13) for the Santals, and 0.82 (0.14) and 0.77 (0.11) for the non-Santals respectively. Following Brownfain (1952), discrepancy between mean scores of private and social self-perceptions of each of the groups of the respondents was taken as the index of social conflict experienced by them.

Development-Orientation Scale

The Development-orientation Scale (Nasar, Rani & Singh, 1995) in Hindi was devised to measure the extent of development-orientation and its dimensions in the subjects. The scale comprised 41 items—06 items for achievement-orientation, 06 for egalitarianism, 03 for internal-orientation, 03 for concern for time and future, 02 for self-assertion, 03 for work-orientation, 02 for frankness, 10 for liberal and progressive views, 01 for risk-taking, 01 for self-control and 04 for proclivity to constructive changes—with four response alternatives of fully agree (04), agree (03), disagree (02) and fully disagree (01). The possible score on the scale, thus, could range between 41 and 164 with higher scores denoting greater amount of development-orientation. The reliability coefficient estimated through Hoyt's (1941) formula for the total scale of development-orientation was found to be 0.82 and the average item-total correlations (\bar{r}_{ij}) 0.10 for the Santals, 0.79 and 0.08 for the non-Santals.

Procedure

The scales were administered to the subjects mostly in individual setting in the winter of 2012. Although they had to complete the scales within a time limit, a very few (hardly 0.5%) of them were provided with discretion in completing the scales when it was found that they really needed more time for them. In order to ensure the elicitation of sincere and candid responses, a rapport was first established with them by acquainting them with the importance of the programme, though in a concealed manner, as well as assuring them of the anonymity of their answers. They were allowed to take up the tests only when they appeared to be conversant with every item of the testing programme.

Results

Table 1 summarizes the results of a statistical comparison between Santal and non-Santal students in terms of their levels of private and social self-perceptions.

TABLE 1: STATISTICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SANTAL AND NON-SANTAL STUDENTS IN TERMS OF THE LEVEL OF THEIR PRIVATE AND SOCIAL SELF-PERCEPTIONS

<i>Forms of Self-Perception</i>	<i>Santals (N = 150)</i>		<i>Non-Santals (N = 150)</i>		<i>t</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Private Self-Perception	121.83	17.05	144.48	20.87	10.29
Social Self-Perception	113.19	18.36	143.33	19.72	13.70

Note. $df = 298$; $p < 0.05 = 1.97$; $p < 0.01 = 2.59$.

The Santal and non-Santal students were found to differ significantly in terms of the level of both their private ($p < 0.01$) and social [$t(298) = 13.70$; $p < 0.01$] self-perceptions. Further, it was revealed that the Santals, as compared to the non-Santals, had considerably lower levels, though moderate in amount, of private ($Mean = 121.83$; $SD = 17.05$) and social ($Mean = 113.19$; $SD = 18.36$) self-perceptions, and were relatively vulnerable to social conflict (the difference between the mean scores of their two kinds of perception being 4.24 was significant at 0.01 level).

The above comparison, however, did not provide micro-reflection of the distribution of the two types of perception between the Santal and non-Santal students. Hence, to ensure greater precision in prediction, they were further compared in terms of each of the attributes devised to measure their two types of perception. Table 2 and 3 present the summary of the findings.

Except selfish-unselfish [$t(298) = 0.99$; $p > 0.05$], responsible-irresponsible ($p > 0.05$) and enterprising-escapism ($t = 1.59$), the Santals and non-Santals were found to differ significantly in all the attributes devised to measure private self-perception. Further, with a few exceptions, the Santals, compared to their non-

TABLE 2: STATISTICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SANTAL AND NON-SANTAL STUDENTS AND THEIR RELATIVE STANDING IN TERMS OF THE ATTRIBUTES MEASURING PRIVATE SELF-PERCEPTION

Attributes	Santals (N= 150)			Non-Santals (N = 150)			t
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	
Social – Unsocial	4.34	1.72	14	5.36	1.55	08	5.40
Cruel – Kind	3.54	1.69	28	5.13	1.58	18.5	8.42
Gentle – Harsh	4.82	1.63	03	5.43	1.52	06	3.35
Honest – Dishonest	4.77	1.73	04	5.42	1.49	07	3.49
Obedience – Disobedience	4.36	1.68	12.5	5.45	1.54	05	5.86
Anxious – Relaxed	3.78	1.70	27	4.75	1.57	24	5.13
Religious – Irreligious	4.08	1.66	22	5.30	1.48	10	6.72
Benevolent – Malevolent	3.97	1.61	24	5.27	1.53	12	7.17
Conservative – Progressive	4.27	1.64	16	4.69	1.56	25	2.27
Optimist – Pessimist	4.41	1.59	10	5.53	1.61	04	6.06
Sociable – Unsociable	4.22	1.62	17	5.61	1.59	01	7.50
Selfish – Unselfish	4.19	1.67	18	4.37	1.49	28	0.99
Popular – Unpopular	4.11	1.65	21	5.09	1.54	20	5.32
Responsible – Irresponsible	5.59	1.74	01	5.28	1.47	11	1.67
Courageous – Cowardly	4.57	1.63	06	5.13	1.51	18.5	3.09
Rational – Irrational	4.39	1.69	11	5.14	1.53	17	4.03
Impatient – Patient	3.87	1.66	26	4.97	1.63	21	5.79
Delicate – Rugged	4.36	1.58	12.5	5.24	1.59	13	4.80
Bright – Dull	4.02	1.62	23	4.87	1.55	23	4.61
Calm – Eccentric	4.53	1.67	07	5.34	1.58	09	4.32
Shirking – Hard-Working	4.31	1.73	15	4.94	1.56	22	3.31
Enthusiastic – Perfunctory	4.14	1.61	20	5.58	1.64	02	7.68
Active – Passive	3.93	1.72	30	5.21	1.49	14	6.89
Lazy – Agile	5.47	1.71	02	4.64	1.54	26	4.42
Enterprising – Escapist	4.16	1.65	19	4.86	1.62	27	1.59
Cooperative – Non-Cooperative	4.68	1.66	05	5.17	1.51	15	2.67
Clever – Foolish	4.49	1.69	08	5.16	1.48	16	3.65
Cheerful – Depressed	4.46	1.64	09	5.55	1.57	03	5.88

Note. *df* = 298; $p < 0.05 = 1.97$; $p < 0.01 = 2.59$.

Santal counterparts, rated themselves low, but not less than the mark of moderate levels, on all the attributes. The attributes which were more pronounced in the case of Santals were responsibility-irresponsibility, lazy-agile, gentle-harsh, honesty-dishonesty, and cooperative-non-cooperative. Those which were more striking in the case of the non-Santals were sociable-unsociable, enthusiastic-perfunctory, cheerful-depressed, optimism-pessimism, and obedience-disobedience.

The two groups were also found to differ significantly in terms of all the attributes involved in the measure of social self-perception, only with an exception of non-significant difference in them in terms of enterprising-escapism ($t = 1.54$; $p > 0.05$). However, here too, with a few exceptions, the Santals, as against their non-Santal counterparts, showed a clear tendency to rate themselves low.

Nonetheless, as with private self-perception, the Santals reported moderate levels of all the attributes of social self-perception. The attributes on which the Santals rated themselves high were related to courageous-cowardly, honesty-dishonesty, enthusiastic-perfunctory, cooperative-non-cooperative, and cheerful-depressed. On the other hand, the attributes which were highly rated by the non-Santals were optimism-pessimism, cheerful-depressed, enthusiastic-perfunctory, calm-eccentric, and social-unsocial. Thus, the non-Santals rated themselves more favourably on the attributes which they judged to be more positive in connection with private self-perception.

TABLE 3: STATISTICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SANTAL AND NON-SANTAL STUDENTS AND THEIR RELATIVE STANDING IN TERMS OF THE ATTRIBUTES MEASURING SOCIAL SELF-PERCEPTION

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Santals (N = 150)</i>			<i>Non-santals (N = 150)</i>			<i>t</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>	
Social – Unsocial	3.91	1.58	18	5.47	1.47	05	8.85
Cruel – Kind	3.87	1.63	19	4.94	1.52	21	5.88
Gentle – Harsh	4.09	1.57	13	5.27	1.59	09	6.47
Honest – Dishonest	4.53	1.62	02	5.42	1.49	06	4.95
Obedience – Disobedience	4.31	1.66	07	5.34	1.44	08	5.74
Anxious – Relaxed	4.35	1.65	06	4.71	1.51	26	1.97
Religious – Irreligious	3.67	1.55	24	5.13	1.54	13	8.19
Benevolent – Malevolent	3.65	1.53	25	5.15	1.46	12	8.69
Conservative – Progressive	4.19	1.59	11	5.07	1.53	16	4.88
Optimist – Pessimist	4.07	1.56	14	5.58	1.57	01	8.36
Sociable – Unsociable	3.79	1.61	21	5.19	1.48	11	7.84
Selfish – Unselfish	3.98	1.67	16	4.59	1.45	27	3.38
Popular – Unpopular	4.03	1.64	15	4.89	1.55	23	4.67
Responsible – Irresponsible	3.54	1.60	28	4.98	1.50	19	8.04
Courageous – Cowardly	4.57	1.59	01	5.06	1.43	17	2.81
Rational – Irrational	3.71	1.61	23	5.03	1.49	18	7.37
Impatient – Patient	3.84	1.54	20	4.91	1.52	22	6.06
Delicate – Rugged	4.21	1.57	10	5.22	1.48	10	5.74
Bright – Dull	3.62	1.54	26	4.86	1.42	24	7.25
Calm – Eccentric	4.25	1.62	09	5.51	1.53	04	6.93
Shirking – Hard-Working	3.59	1.55	27	4.96	1.47	20	7.86
Enthusiastic – Perfunctory	4.48	1.64	03	5.53	1.51	03	5.77
Active – Passive	3.95	1.59	17	5.09	1.45	15	6.49
Lazy – Agile	4.14	1.68	12	4.82	1.49	25	3.71
Enterprising – Escapist	4.28	1.57	08	4.55	1.46	28	1.54
Cooperative – Non-Cooperative	4.44	1.63	04	5.39	1.41	07	5.40
Clever – Foolish	3.74	1.56	22	5.11	1.52	14	7.70
Cheerful – Depressed	4.39	1.61	05	5.56	1.48	02	6.55

Note. $df = 298$; $p < 0.05 = 1.97$; $p < 0.01 = 2.59$.

Like their levels of self-perceptions, both the groups of Santals and non-Santals were found to differ significantly between themselves in term of their level of development-orientation ($t = 3.06$; $df = 298$; $p < 0.01$) and its dimensions (t -values ranged between 2.20 to 9.86), except internal-orientation ($t = 0.79$; $p > 0.05$), and risk-taking ($p > 0.05$). It was further revealed that the Santals had a lower, albeit altogether moderate, level of development-orientation and its dimensions as compared to their non-Santal counterparts who also were not very dissimilar to the former on this count. Moreover, the Santals, for their varied basic psychic frame and temperament, were distinctly imbued with the qualities of frankness and self-assertion with a scarcely embedded feature of liberal and progressive views, and work-orientation to quite a discernible scale. The non-Santals, on the other hand, were relatively blessed with the qualities of risk-taking and concern for time and future along with the record of lower level of the traits of egalitarianism and frankness in the basic frame of their disposition.

TABLE 4: STATISTICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SANTAL AND NON-SANTAL STUDENTS AND THEIR RELATIVE STANDING IN TERMS OF DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTATION AND ITS DIMENSIONS

<i>Dimensions of Development-Orientation</i>	<i>Santals (N = 150)</i>			<i>Non-Santals (N = 150)</i>			<i>t</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rank</i>	
Achievement-Orientation	9.95	3.62	07	12.77	4.29	04	6.13
Egalitarianism	13.57	4.34	05	10.49	3.67	11	6.70
Internal-Orientation	5.23	2.04	06	5.42	2.11	07	0.79
Concern for Time and Future	4.97	2.19	08	6.58	2.35	02	6.19
Self-Assertion	5.67	1.85	02	3.82	1.72	06	9.25
Work-Orientation	4.61	1.79	10	5.37	2.06	09	3.45
Frankness	5.73	2.11	01	3.56	1.43	10	9.86
Liberal and Progressive Views	14.56	5.22	11	18.02	5.84	08	5.41
Risk-Taking	2.27	1.03	04	2.41	1.08	01	1.17
Self-Control	2.29	0.92	03	2.07	0.88	05	2.20
Proclivity for Constructive Changes	6.42	2.33	09	8.52	2.79	03	7.00
Development-Orientation	75.27	9.87		79.03	11.43	3.06	

Note. $df = 298$; $p < 0.05 = 1.97$; $p < 0.01 = 2.59$.

Discussion

The results of this study, on the whole, indicated that the Santals, as compared to their non-Santal counterparts, had lower levels of both the private and social self-perceptions, but that the levels they reported were still moderate. However, they also showed a clear tendency to rate themselves more favourably on certain attributes measuring the two types of perception. Further, the Santals were greatly tormented by the pangs of social conflict. The lower levels of both kinds of self-perception in the Santals agree fairly well with the findings of the earlier studies

conducted by Sharaf & Singh (1977), Singh & Singh (2005) and Singh (1998). These studies have shown that the Santals have lower self-perceptions than those of their non-Santal counterparts.

The principles of 'reflected appraisal' and 'social comparison' proposed by Rosenberg (1979) may provide a reasonable ground to understand the moderate level of private and social self-perceptions in the Santals. According to the principle of 'reflected appraisal' we develop self-perceptions on the basis of perceived attitudes of others, while the principle of 'social comparison' states that we judge and evaluate ourselves by comparing ourselves with other people, groups or social categories. In the light of these two principles, the low literacy rate manifestly accounts for the moderate levels of both kinds of self-perception in them. It is bare 25% (see Census Report, 2001) despite governmental and non-governmental efforts. Natural it is for a person getting higher education to have a sense of elation and higher self-esteem over the less fortunates. To be precise, education helps promote self-perceptions, and this may profitably be accounted for moderate levels of two kinds of perception in the Santal college students. The argument is well supported by views held by Pani & Waraich (1971). They, too, maintain that higher education leads to the development of high self-perception in individuals. Of course, higher education, as Sinha (1986) holds, leads to the development of inner strength, and enables an individual to face calamities and misfortunes by his/her own grit and gumption and, thus, helps maintain his/her psychological balance and equipoise so essential for the development of positive self-perceptions. To summarize, higher education conferring social prestige and recognition does positively influence the development of self-perceptions in Santals.

It was further revealed that the Santal college students were greatly vulnerable to social conflict—the problems which they generally face while in making a decision. The findings seem reasonably well-grounded. Not imprudent, education often facilitates in students the development of a new belief pattern and values, and, more obviously, encourages them to imbibe a new life pattern—distinct from the orthodox and traditional one—fully impregnated with the value of pragmatism. Santal university students are conceived as the efflorescent elite of their community. A growing self, social, political, economic, and religious awareness has developed in them an indifference, even aversion to their traditional and conservative lifestyle which has shown little signs of change despite their encounters with sources of social change and modernization. They want to be the harbingers of a new era in their civilization marked by prosperity and pride. In short, they are eager to bring about considerable changes in the life pattern of their community fellowmen who still prefer to adhere to their traditional norms and values and are relatively less inclined to change or to new adoption and adaptation. Virtually, the Santal college students are apprehending to face an ordeal in their future course of action

oriented to instil in their community new value patterns based on the principle of pragmatism, and this more likely exposes them to a high risk of social conflict.

In describing the findings it seems also prudent to note that the educated Santals, too, today are torn between two contending passions—whether they should keep themselves tied to the traditional norms and values and inexplicable ritualistic mores of yore or they should embrace new beliefs and convictions born of the new scientific education imparted to them. This is quite natural in phases of transition which makes it very difficult for the persons to take a strong decision this way or that. Fortunately, the educated Santals have, to a large extent, inculcated the habit of judging things on pragmatic efficacies. This has given birth to a tendency in them to bring their entire society into the fold of new ideas and developments in different walks of life to make them fully conversant with the modern trends in life. Stubborn preferences for and irrational fidelity to traditionalism and conservatism of the less-educated Santals impede the smooth path and affect the progress desired by the educated and the emerging Santal elite of new society. They, however, have come to believe in the '*Law of Nature*' which unequivocally operates through universe to bring out changes invariably for the better.

An analysis of the level of development-orientation and its dimensions in Santals vis-a-vis non-Santals also, in brief, indicated the former to have a lower level of development-orientation and its dimensions, save and except self-assertion, frankness, risk-taking, and self-control. However, they were not far below from the latter in the possession of the trait. They, too, enjoyed appreciably a moderate level of the trait though. This is an encouraging, though still not much propitious, trend.

Interestingly, development-orientation and self-perception, as it appears from the characteristic manifestations of both traits, are inalienably linked together. That is to say, the factors leading to the high or low level of self-perceptions may irrevocably be responsible for the high or low level of development-orientation also. Likewise, education may be reasonably taken as responsible for a moderate level of development-orientation in both the groups of Santals and non-Santals. Education unmistakably facilitates the development of desirable traits (Schaufeli, 1988; Singh, 1992; Singh, Singh & Rani, 1996) but also provides, especially the higher education, an opportunity for the development of high growth-need strength (Hackman & Oldham, 1975)—a higher-order need strength (Warr, Cook & Wall, 1979) which usually arouses one to realize the importance of creativity, persistence, independence, self-confidence, industriousness, and commitment—the significant ingredients of development-orientation—in making one's life useful and applicable to meet the challenges coming in one's way of personal development with pride and prosperity. To be precise, it is the level of education of the Santals and the non-Santals that accounts for their moderate, though not much palpable, level of development-orientation. Indeed, social acceptance and recognition—the by-

product of education, especially the higher one—as Chakrapani (1996) has asserted, serve as succour for the maintenance of one's psychological poise and equanimity, purported to be essential for the development of the trait of development-orientation.

However, the Santals, compared to their non-Santal counterparts, had lower level of development-orientation and its dimensions, except a few such as self-assertion, frankness, risk-taking, and self-control. It is noteworthy that the Santals have not yet been able to bid complete good-bye to their traditional norms and values despite the openings made by education (Das Gupta, 1991; Singh *et al.*, 1987). Full acceptance of modern ways of life for general socio-eco-political upliftment still eludes them mainly because of their innate and impetuous desire not to part with their idiosyncratic social identity. In other words, they who advocate change are but few and far-between and still ill-at-ease with the predominant dogmas of the masses. And in the light of the assertions made by McClelland (1961) such of their states may not be accepted as conducive to the development of the trait of development-orientation in them. These inhibit their potentiality for discovery and invention, and above all the zeal for building a fully-functioning society—the society with an idealized mission to provide its each and every member an opportunity to project himself/herself as an all-integrating individual with an unique assimilation of qualities like self-dependence, and self-directedness, realistic outlook, innate constructive zest, self-assertion, feeling of independence and equanimity, fearlessness, faith in humanistic approach to life, etc.—some of the significant elements of development-orientation. Thus, a lower level of development-orientation in Santals may clearly be understood in the backdrop of their deep-seated singular traditional mores and beliefs that still govern their attitude and behaviour pattern to a large extent.

Another possible way to focus on the lower level of development-orientation in the Santals relates to their typical life philosophy solely based on the principle of “eat, drink and be merry and care naught for the morrow”—very closed to the principle propounded by Charvaka, the great Indian philosopher and code-framer of his time, who preached, “*yawat jivet sukham jivet, rinan kritwa ghritam pibet*” (so long as you live, live with happiness up to the brim even if forced to run in debt). The hedonistic life-philosophy, as it may commonly be seen, leads to the development of lack of seriousness in their attitude and behaviour, which, in all likelihood, makes them less aware of the importance of the qualities like initiation, independence, involvement, persistence, work-orientation, risk-taking and excellence in their life by taking pride in their accomplishments. To be precise, such a hedonistic approach to life does not have a facilitating effect on the development of the trait of development-orientation in them.

A higher level of frankness and self-assertion in the Santals is not surprising; it is rather a characteristic manifestation of their basic temperament. In fact, their inherent traits lend a distinct identity to them which one may unfailingly perceive in their behavior pattern.

Conclusion

The study, as it is, is not based on the cross-section of the tribal population, nor does it extensively cover even the Santals—illiterate and literate—of other districts of Santal Parganas. It, therefore, restricts the scope for generalizations, if any. However, the moderate levels of both types of perception, private and social, as well as development-orientation and its dimensions, may go a long way to bring them to the national mainstream and also enthuse them to partake of the usufructs of development in Indian polity. Besides, the presence of other traits of self-assertion which determine their separate identity, if put to good use, may also help alleviate their general plight and link them with the progress of the nation. Most importantly, the fast-changing outlook of the Santal college students may be a lot helpful in effecting a change in the life-style of their community still stuck up with their traditional norms and values, pitifully oblivious as they are, of the revolutionary changes taking place as well as the modern ways of life. However, the deepening social conflict stealthily brewing among the Santal college students—an unfortunate development painfully inimical to their psychological poise—needs to be hit hard at the root to attach more meaning and edge to their role for building a prosperous and opulent society. There is, virtually, a need to manage them properly in order to exploit their inherent energy and endowment for the sake of prosperity and development of their lot faced with numerous daunting problems at various levels. Understandably, all eyes are set on those enlightened few with their new-found vision and indubitable urge and on them depends how and when the realization of the Utopian dream dawns upon the mineral-rich hilly tracts dotted with thatched hovels of human habitation from time immemorial.

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