Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND

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The two studies in the present research have analyzed historical understanding (HU) in children for two cultural groups and Santali adults. The study on children sought to trace the developmental pattern of HU in children and examine the cultural difference on the development of HU. The study on Santali adults sought to locate the culture specific notions of HU among them. This Chapter will analyze and relate the findings of both the studies.

The first study aimed at finding the age at which children develop appreciation of different dimensions of HU. As described in Chapter 1, HU has various dimensions, which are construed as necessary in order to appreciate different dimensions of history. These abilities for appreciating history were assessed by the Historical Understanding Test. The psychological processes involved in appreciating history were explored through children’s explanations for their performance on test items as well as the interview that followed the test administration. The results showed that the different dimensions of HU have different pace of development in children. It was found that among the various sub-dimensions of HU some of them appear early by 9-10- years age while others appear late by 13-14- years of age. The ANOVA test results and content of the responses showed that that the responses, across two cultures were overlapping as well as
different from each other. The following sections will summarize the dimensions which develop early and the dimensions which develop later in children.

5.1. Development Pattern for the Dimensions of HU

5.1.1. Dimensions Showing Early Development (Between 9-12-Years of Age): The results showed that basic appreciation of a number of dimensions of history develops by 9-10-years of age. Analysis of the findings shows that the following dimensions of HU appear early in children:

**Awareness of difference between present and past:** Children of 9-10- years show an understanding of—**Awareness of difference between present and past.** Children have the basic understanding that past is bygone. Children in this study could demonstrate an understanding of old and/or new. They could also show categorization of time in sequence from older to newer. It was seen that on picture arrangement task, even the youngest children scored close to maximum. This shows that children’s ability to discriminate between present and past develops even before 7-8-years. Studies done by Barton and Levstik (1996) and Blyth (1978) found similar results with children below the 9 years of age. They gave pictures sorting task to children and asked them to categorize pictures on the basis on their oldness. They found that even the youngest children (ones in kindergarten) showed discretion of ‘old’ and ‘very old’. Thus, the present study as well as the earlier studies substantiate that the appreciation of the temporal aspect of history starts even before the age of 8-9- years in children.
linking history to chronology: This sub-dimension of HU is about understanding time distances and time gaps. It involves understanding of different subdivisions of time and its estimates. On this dimension it was observed that 9-10-year-old children start showing understanding of different sub divisions of time, but have some difficulty in relating numerical dates to the time periods. This difficulty was more prominent in tribal children till the age of 11-12 years. The non-tribal children in age group of 11-12 could fairly do the task of relating time periods to dates. However, the items on which the use of numerical dates was not involved, the tribal children in 11-12-years age, showed a better performance than the non-tribal children. It was thus, concluded that the children in the age group of 9-10 are capable of understanding the time periods and their distances.

Causality

Relating social forces to an event: This dimension is related to the basic understanding that some cause/actions/events may lead to another. This sort of understanding starts with the basic understanding of the cause effect relationship between a pair of events. A child is supposed to reflect that events do not occur in isolation rather, they have a cause behind it. The performance of the children showed that this understanding is well reflected by the 9-10-year-old children. This finding suggests that understanding such a simple causation might start developing even before the age of 9-10. It then further grows into sophisticated understanding of multiple cause effect understanding.
Methodology

**Perspective taking:** This dimension is related to understanding the multiple view points on a single issue. The youngest age group (9-10-year-old children) could not show this understanding. On being prompted and explained about the two view points together the children in 11-12-year-olds could exhibit such an understanding. It was seen that by the age of 11-12 children can be made to understand the multiplicity of the perspectives through explaining both the views. By the age of 13-14 however, children have developed an ability of doing so by themselves. They did not require any assistance to make them understand so. It implies that by the age of 11-12 years, children can understand availability of more than one perspective to view an event. Nevertheless, age and maturity renders children with more sophisticated understanding of different perspectives.

**Search for patterns and regularities:** This dimension requires observing a series of events and finding the communality and discreteness across events over a period of time. The 9-10-year olds could trace the patterns in the narrated story, but that was limited to the explicitly mentioned habits of people. For example, saying that ‘people used to fight’ or ‘people used to obey their kings’ were the kinds of patterns that they were able to trace. These patterns were the part of the story narration. The ability to infer pattern in the events which were not directly mentioned to the children appears by 11-12 in Santali children, while the non-tribal children show this cognitive process only by 13-14 years of age. Thus, the performance of children on this dimension shows a
slightly different rate of development in the two cultural groups. This issue will be further discussed in the section on 'Cultural differences on dimensions of HU'.

**Understanding the Historian's Job**

**Analyzing sources used in Historical Analysis:** On this dimension children are expected to understand the relevance of first-hand information. Children need to reflect an understanding that the authenticity of any information is affected by the sources through which it is attained. All the children, including the youngest ones showed this understanding. It was clear that the *ability to analyze sources used in historical analysis* is present in age 9-10 children. However, the content of the responses of the children showed that as the children grow up they gave more sophisticated and conceptual understanding of the importance of a first hand information.

**Understanding History as an interaction between Historian and his/her Facts:** This dimension is about appreciating the correspondence between a person’s disposition and his interpretation of facts or simply his perception. The responses show that all the children (including the youngest ones) had an understanding that a person with a particular disposition will interpret facts in a corresponding way. When these children were asked to explain 'why such differences come?', the younger children (age 9-10) were not very articulate in explaining the sources of differences in the dispositions of people, which was expected. It is difficult for a child of 9-10-year-old to understand the psychosocial dynamics behind a person’s disposition. They, however, understood that people respond to situations based on their own judgments. The children from 11-
14-years of age were aware and informed about the sources of difference between two people. They used terms such as ‘thinking’, ‘mind’ and ‘heart’ etc to describe difference between the opinions of any two people.

5.1.2. Dimensions Showing Late Development (Appearing by 13-14-years of age):

There were three sub-dimensions of HU which appeared slowly and late in children of both the cultural groups. These dimensions are as follows:

Critical and comparative analysis: The scores of children on the items assessing this sub-dimension are very low for the children between 9 to 12 years of age. On both of the items assessing this dimension, only the age group of 13-14 has shown some attempt for critical analysis of causes and situations provided to them. On item 6.3 in children had to judge three important causes for a revolt, and score 3 maximum points. No child of 9-12-years could list more than one correct cause. In the age group of 13-14 years 2-3 children have scored 2 points. Even in this age group a majority of students have not achieved more than 1. It shows that it is only by the age of 13-14 that children start to appreciate the relative importance of various factors in causing any event/ action. Similarly on item 7, the 9-10-years-old children could not give much insight into critically comparing the lives of two communities. The 13-14 age groups showed more insight about the life conditions of the two different communities and about what might happen when people go to a new place. They showed an awareness of the conditional nature of human behavior and its outcomes. It can be concluded that the ability for
critical and comparative analysis starts developing after the age of 11-12-years, and matures only after the age of 13-14.

**Methodology:**

**Imagination:** This dimension requires imagining the past setting, lives of people and their psychological states. It was seen that when children were asked to imagine the feelings of a character, the children between 9-12-years of age could not reflect upon the feelings of another person. They just repeated what was narrated in the question to them. The 13-14 age group non-tribal children start appraising and attributing the situation and psychological state of the farmer, while the tribal children show the same response as the children of 11-12 age group. Also, the scores show a great deal of individual variation in the eldest age group (13-14). It was also seen that this dimension develops even more slowly in the tribal children. There is a very minor increase in the quality of their response from 9 through 14 years of age. It can be concluded from the responses that the ability to empathize develops slow in children. This dimension requires children to envisage the psychological and social conditions of people in far remote time. Children in this item were asked to empathize with an adult and that too far remote in time, it was difficult for them to connect to that. Such a task is difficult for adults, leave aside children. Also, the result of 13-14 age show a lot of individual difference which makes it plausible to assume that the ability to empathize is not same in everybody.
Responses on Item 8, where children had to imagine the life conditions and past situation showed that the 9-10-year-old children could do so efficiently. They did mention many things that might happen back then, but most of them were about present. In their answers they used to switch back and forth between past and present. They mentioned many things done in past but talked about many other things which are done only now. For example, many of them mentioned games which were not played in past. Children of 11-12-years situated their answers in the past. Although, many children performed same as their lower age group (9-10), most of them could still not give an elaborative account of different aspects of life in past. By the age of 13-14-years children could give more elaborative account of past. They brought in more social and psychological factors to narrate a life in past.

Thus, it can be concluded the imaginative ability for historical actions and human behavior starts developing only after the age of 13-14 years. It is known through the developmental literature that imagination itself starts developing very early in concrete operational stage. However, when it comes to implying it constructively in empathizing or mentally travelling to past, it probably takes 13-14 years to appear in children.

**Drawing abstract concepts and information from objects:** Three items assessed this dimension- item 3, item 7 and item 10. Item 3 and 10 were simple task based on sorting pictures on the basis of their belongingness to a person. The responses show that even
the youngest age group could do the task, as it required concrete understanding of the belongingness by observing the materials shown in the pictures. Item 7, on the other hand, required drawing information about the similarities and connection among pictures. On this item children had a scope of drawing abstract information about pictures. The results showed that younger children could not perform as good as the older children. They could draw only visible similarities in the pictures, while the elder children (age 13-14) could go beyond the pictures and infer implicit connectedness among the pictures.

Thus, the children in the age of 9-10 years do show an ability to draw information from objects and things, nevertheless that is limited to the concrete aspects of things and activities. By the age of 11-12 years children show an increased ability to derive such information and connect different information together. In this age group children oscillate between concrete and a less abstract level of thinking about the things and activities. Children in age 13-14 however, can show a much analytical approach while drawing information about things. They can draw much more quality and relevant information about objects and assimilate different information to form a coherent picture about things. It can be concluded that drawing information about the object can be seen in children of 9-10- year- old. However, it is only by the age of 13-14- years of age that children start seeing implicit connection among objects/things/ activities.

These responses on the above described three dimensions support the earlier studies which substantiate late development of HU (Booth, 1966; Hallam, 1966, 1967, 1970, 207
1997; Jahoda 1963; Stuart & Oakden, 1922). These studies reason that appreciation of history requires higher order mental processes. Therefore, it is not easy for a child below the age of 15-16 to appreciate such concepts. The logic behind such propositions is that the abstraction of the historical material stops students from gaining its full appreciation at early age. The present study partially confirms the proposition of these earlier studies. It can, thus, be said that not all the dimension of HU but some aspects of it can be seen appearing in the adolescent age in children.

5.1.3. Dimensions Showing Cultural Differences on Test Performance:

The content of responses of children indicated few dimensions on which there was considerable difference in the performance of children.

**Linking History to chronology:** Understanding of chronology was assessed by items 2, 4 and 5. Among these items, 2 and 4 required using and understanding implications of years and numbers. It was found that 9-12-year-old tribal children had difficulty in dealing with dates. The 13-14 years age groups did as good as their non-tribal counterparts. Such difficulty with dates can be attributed to the cultural context of these children where the representation of history is much in the form of stories and folk tales. The study 2 of the research showed that Santali adults do not refer to dates of years while talking about their past. The male and females both were found to be using autobiographical memory to recall their past events. The society also has a different number system but most of the youngsters do not use even that system. It is
only the elderly people who are familiar with this system and are found to be using it. Thus, the low literacy rates of Santali society along with the lesser use of number system by the Santali adults have resulted in younger children’s difficulty with dates. The schooling experiences of children can be seen to have influenced their familiarity with number system and consequently increasing the performance of older children on the items related to numbers.

Critical and comparative analysis: This dimension was assessed by Items 6.3 and 7. On both the items the Santali age groups of 11-12 and 13-14 years have performed better than the non-tribal children of the same age group. The performances of children on these items show that ability for critical and comparative analysis develops comparatively slower in non-tribal children.

Item 6.3 was specifically linked to appreciating the relative role of different causes in leading to an event. This understanding of stories in Santali children is clearly a reflection of the folk culture of the Santali community. People in this society are accustomed of narrating and listening to stories. This mental structuring has led Santali children to appreciate stories in a better way than the non-tribal children. Item 7 required critically comparing two different communities. The narration in this item reflected the dichotomy between the rich and the poor. This dichotomy is more vividly faced by the tribal children. Also the story asked to imagine a life of these people when they go to a new place. Santali being a nomadic community, they have more stories about moving from places to places. They have folk stories depicting the
struggle and problems related to going to new places. Tribal children’ answer thoroughly articulated the problems poor people face when travelling to new places, while the non-tribal children did not elaborate more upon such issue. Thus, in both the items children had to respond to a story like situation which was facilitated by their contextual experience.

Imagination: It was found that children in both the cultural group start showing this ability by the age of 11-12, but the tribal children develop slowly. The 13-14- year-old non-tribal children score and respond much better than their non tribal counterparts. When the responses are analyzed it is found that empathetic understanding is more a matter of language and its articulation. The tribal children, were not seen to be much articulate as their non-tribal counterparts. Their context requires them to handle more than one language. At home they speak Santali, in school they speak both Santali and Hindi, and in their community they might speak in Oriya or Bengali or both. They are not as versed in Hindi as their non-tribal counterparts. Even the non-tribal children speak more than one language, but students speak primarily Hindi at school and in the neighborhood. Thus, a better fluency over the language has probably led the non-tribal children to perform better than the Santali children narrating the experiences of the character in the past.

Another form of imagination was required by Item 7, asking children to describe a life in past. The content of children’s responses show that the Santali children gave more
varied and heterogeneous responses. Overall they talked more about things being done in past. They grow up listening to the stories about the nomadic and rough lifestyle of just one or two generations ago. On the other hand the non-tribal community’s life style was not much different before 2-3 generations; at least not as much as it was for the tribal people. Consequently while talking about distant past the tribal children bring in more details of past life. There were visible cross cultural differences in the answers of the children about the daily chorus and activities in past. In general, the tribal children had more to talk about the things to being done in past, while the non-tribal children were brief and repetitive in their answers.

The above three dimensions show the difference in children's performance on the test item. The content of children’s responses varied on the many other aspects of their HU. On many test items it was found that children scored equal but the content of their answers varied. These variations will be summarizes in the following section on children’s notion and process of understanding past:

5.2. Children’s Notion of Past: Informed by its Cultural representation

The responses of children in both the groups show that they are informed about history/past through various sources including home and school. All the children in both the cultural group said that their information about past primarily comes from the school curriculum. It seemed that children come to know about past through school and through their elders as well. However, since, they receive formal knowledge about
history in school, that is the source which they more often report. Children also mentioned that they are told about past and history at home by their parents and grandparents. They talked about 'old days' and talk about how things have changed. The tribal children however, expressed that their elders ask them not to pay much attention to such stories about past. The children have come to learn that past, especially stories related to the tribal community is of no use, and they reflect that in their answers. The non-tribal children on the other hand, did not give any such impression.

The Santali children talked more about the ancient times, early men and their lifestyle, which for them was their near past. They reflected upon lack of resources and the hardship that their community has been facing. For them, their near past consists of these episodes only. The non-tribal children portrayed a more diverse picture about past. They talked about Kings, palaces and British rule. Even the older tribal children, who have studied history for more than 2 years, did not talk much about the other eras of the mainstream history, as past. On the other hand the non-tribal children talked about all the different times form the mainstream history.

The Santali children had a little different answer to the question that whether all past can become history. All of them reflected a sort of disbelief in “Past”. The non-tribal children viewed that history is true for sure. The Santali children explained that many a times past might not be true. 'It holds true only for those who believe in it.' This discrepancy in the responses of children was result of the experience of the tribal
children with history. Children from the tribal community read about national history in their text books, which is different from the history they learn in their community. In their responses about the difference between present and past they were clear that events that are important become history. However, when they talk about ‘past’ they talk about ancient lifestyle, while when they talk about history they reflect their school learning about history. Thus, they have come to infer that past that they heard about is probably unimportant, or it is just story. Such a view was also reflected by the Santali adults who had schooling Grade 6th to 12th.

The notion of social change is also different in the children of the two cultural groups. Santali children emphasized on learning life-skills such as, building house, cooking food and wearing clothes, as a major developmental change. While non-tribal children think of change, as change in technology, models of vehicles, dressing and invention of equipments. The elder children in non-tribal group used more sophisticated words than their tribal counterparts. Santali children had lesser mentioning to abstract aspects of changes in the society. Their responses reflect predominant concern with infrastructure and resources.

This emphasis upon the basic infrastructural changes in the society by the tribal children does not come as a surprise. That is the form of change that they have listened about and experienced. The major change in any tribal community, in past few decades has been their lifestyle changes. Their feeding, housing, clothing, and education have been the major transformations in their society. The non-tribal society on the other hand, is
not much deprived from the basic amenities as compared to the tribal societies. Although, such infrastructural changes do take place in the non-tribal communities also, but the basic resources have been met by the society in general. The developmental changes that occur in a non-tribal society are very subtle and less profound than the same in a tribal society. Rather, the changes which are more visible in the urban society are technology, machinery and fashion etc. Thus, different indicators in society have led to their appraisal as indicators of change by the children.

Children’s responses on the interview and on test items show that their understanding of historical forces and the content of past is reflective of the representation of history in their social context. The Santali community has maintained its cultural homogeneity to a large extent, despite their long interaction with other civilizations. They have a strong oral tradition which includes, story telling, folk tales and songs. Children come to know about the lives of their ancestors and 'stories of past' through the elders and through community participations during festivals and mass worships. The non-tribal children on the other hand reflect the notion of past which they encounter in their text books and which also is represented in their community. They affiliate to the narrative of Indian History. Thus, the notion of history and past in the two different cultural group has some overlapping features and many exclusive features as observed in children.

The Santali children’s notion of past was neither the mainstream history nor the tribal past exclusively. The children did relate to the textbook information about past, but
they chose to remember those information which were closer to their community experiences. They talked more about the early men, Stone Age and the pre-literate society. When asked about what have they learned about past from their home or elders, they switch to their folk image of history i.e. stories and narrations. It was evident by the responses of Santali adults, with schooling of grade 6\textsuperscript{th} to 12\textsuperscript{th} (10+2) that they consider the ‘stories of past’ unimportant. This sort of opinion was reflected by the tribal children also. Clearly they have come to learn it from their elders and their experiences that they do not study ‘their stories’ in their curriculum.

5.3. Adults’ Notion of Past: Culture Specific features mediated by levels of schooling

The responses of Santali adults revealed prototypical features of their HU, common across all the participants. All the Santali adults, whether educated or uneducated, are driven by a strong faith in their traditions and cultural beliefs. The beliefs such as that of, witchcraft, the essentiality of rituals, and the belief in the souls of their ancestors are very much a part of their HU. All the respondents voiced faith in the stories of past and their acceptance. The sole justification for their strong faith in the stories of past was the endurance of these stories and the traditions related to them. Past, for Santali people is a part of their life style and culture. The folklores that they sing and the stories that they share for amusement are all immersed in past. Black magic and the witchcraft form very essential component in the mental frame of any Santali adult. They particularly showed a lot of magical belief and immense faith in the magical powers.
They also believe that if something went wrong these supernatural powers will control it. Santali adults expressed a sense of belonging to a tradition of history from which people of other sections of society are separate. They expressed belief in a ‘community history.’ This kind of thought was more pronounced in the answers of educated people. All Santalis with a college or above level of education said ‘their’ community history is not known or acknowledged by the members of the other community. Interestingly, people who had schooling experience for 6 to 12 years discounted their traditions, as they did not find it useful in their day to day life. Still they believe in their folk stories and follow them. However, people with 0 – 5 years of schooling and high educated people do show a strong inclination and trust towards their customs and belief systems. The level of education seems to have influenced the way Santali people perceive history. All the participants with 0-5 years of schooling, which means they had no exposure to history lessons, showed all the culture specific features of HU and high level of trust in their cultural stories. They reported that they came to know about these stories through word of mouth. They expressed a fear that if they show mistrust or do not follow them they might have to face punishments by the supernatural forces. Respondents who had received a college level education also believed that the stories of past are all correct. Interestingly these educated adults also showed all the features of Santali’s historical understanding. They also showed belief in magical things and witchcraft. They took pride that their community is gifted by such skills. They argued in favor of the authenticity of their knowledge of history. They claimed that since people in
earlier days did not have script, they composed stories and songs that people sing during festivals and rituals. They suggested that their folk tales and songs hold clues to know about their past. Thus, the adults with no exposure to textbook history and with a college level of education, both showed same degree of affiliation to ‘their’ past. They had the same level of belief about the authenticity of the stories. Both groups believed that some stories might be framed but most of others are correct. The only difference was the confidence with which the highly educated participants argued. They could provide more argumentative facts about ‘their’ past and history. These highly educated participants showed a stronger sense of community history.

People with the education of grade 6th to 12th however, showed lesser awareness and lesser interest in the stories of past. The respondents in this group have had an exposure of history for 3 to 7 years. They have probably learned the content of the mainstream history but could not get to understand the relevance of history for an individual and his/her community. Also, they had not found any mentioning of a Santali cultural community and its history in their school curriculum leading to a belief that probably Santali ‘stories’ are no more than story. Further, their history has never got them marks in school neither have they fetch money out of it. They probably wanted to give an impression that they are progressive people who are much like any other urban person. All these reason might be the propelling factor behind their projecting unfamiliarity with their history. This study corroborates earlier study by Jervis et al (2006), which documented a curvilinear relationship between the Historical
Consciousness and education in American Indian tribes. Among the respondents of 7 to 17 years of schooling, they found the historical consciousness to be highest among the highest educated people. The design of this study being different from the present study a complete analogy can not be drawn between the two studies. However, the general findings of the study by Jervis et.al are very much similar to the present study. They found the historical consciousness in tribes of America which was enhanced by higher education. This study also reports similar findings that the Santali adults who have received a graduate or post graduate degree are more inclined and attached to their history. They glorify their past including its myths and superstitions. Thus education has an impact on the HU of Santali adults but it has not erased their cultural HU.

Thus, the major themes running across the responses of all the respondents is their immense faith in their past, incorporation of past stories in their life style and magical belief. The stories of past are passed onto them during the process of socialization and day to day activities. Santali adults' belief system is deeply intertwined with their historical belief and stories. They justify most of their practices by saying that they have been done since long. Irrespective of their levels of education all the Santali adults show immense faith in their past. Santali adults, especially ones with college level education showed a sense of community history. They have artifacts which are historically modified and have symbolic value for their culture. They have various traditions and customs, involving practices which transfer their historical knowledge system to its members. Apart from all these community experiences children learn from their elders.
and community members. These experiences design children's and adults' learning about their society and its past. The structure of these experiences and the content that is transferred to the members of this community, together with their own memory, has led their knowledge system to be in its present form. The Santali's notion of history is, thus, a product of their socio-historically evolved belief system.

5.4. Factors Influencing Historical Understanding:

Cognitive Development, Classroom Teaching and Social Representation of History:

The findings of this study imply that HU and its correlates are not as simple as they are for any other school subject. Just like the subject matter of history the explanations of its understanding in children take an intricate form. History is an area of knowledge which is not just a school subject, it is very much available and represented in the society, in the opinion of its members and in our ecology. Therefore, when we seek to understand its psychological processing we need to consider the forces outside the classroom that shape our HU. Our earlier study (Dixit & Mohanty, 2009) and the present study shows that the multidimensional nature of HU makes it a continuous process of development in children. The relatively concrete dimensions of it start developing early and continue developing till late adolescent age. The cognitive development of children renders more maturity and sophistication to their HU.

The results in this study have also shown cultural differences on the different dimensions of HU. The Santali children have performed better on the cognitive modules
which are practiced more in the Santali culture. They have responded better on the tasks related to stories and their analysis. While the non-tribal children have performed better on empathy specially the articulation of feelings and the chronology. However, tribal children not performing well on tasks related to dates and empathy does not mean that they lack that functioning. It only means that they have not practiced dates and probably are not enough versed with language to articulate somebody’s complex feelings. Thus, it shows that the cultural context have influenced children’s performance on the test of HU. However their performance also showed that the cultural influences are mediated by schooling to a large extent. It was seen on the items requiring use of dates, that children showed difference till grade 6 (11-12-years). This difference disappeared in the older children due to the schooling experience that provided them familiarity with numbers. Children’s answers on the content of history showed an assorted effect of schooling and socio-cultural factors. The Santali children talked mostly about the ancient past and early age men. This information about history was although gathered from their classroom experiences however there were many other eras and kingdoms in their curriculum which they did not recall. On the other hand the non-tribal children did talk about all the eras from middle and medieval history. They, however, talked least about the ancient past. The tribal children chose to talk about the ancient past with which they affiliated more.

The tribal children’s notion of past reflected the opinions expressed by the adults of their community. The adults who had only 6 to 12 years of formal schooling expressed
the view that ‘stories of past’ holds no value today. The expression of such notions by adults was due to their experience that they have not witnessed ‘their history’ in their textbooks and have inferred that since they are only stories, they are of no use. This sort of opinion was seen in children also.

**Summing up: The Developmental Pattern of Historical Understanding across Two Cultural Groups**

The results of the present study show that historical understanding is a composite ability which requires different domains of mental functioning. Based on our earlier findings (Dixit & Mohanty, 2009) and it is concluded that different domains of HU show different patterns of development. Most of the dimensions appear in children between of 9-12-years of age; among these dimensions are- understanding of the temporal aspect of history, understanding simple cause affect connection, drawing concrete information about artifacts, and understanding the relativity of historical explanations. In fact many dimensions such as, awareness of past, cause effect connection, drawing simple concrete information from objects and the relativity of historical interpretation can be observed even in a 9- year- old child. Off course, it is not to overestimate the historical concepts of young children. They are still in elementary form and need adults support to understand historical information. It is just to say that these concepts are seen to be present in 9-10- year- old children. The age and maturity however, renders more sophistication to these concepts. With the help of these elementary concepts children can be made to understand events of past but, that do not guarantee that children will
readily understand these concepts. Many earlier studies (Barton & Levstik, 1996; Blyth, 1978; Culpin, 1984; Hall, 1980; VanSledgrieth & Brophy, 1992) have demonstrated children’s understanding of history is helped by the concrete experiences and adult support.

There are some dimensions of HU which are seen to be developing at a later stage. These dimensions are—historical Imagination, Critical and comparative analysis and Drawing abstract information about objects. These psychological processes are employed in appreciating the complex dynamics of human interactions in the society.

Imagination is required to envisage the whole social-psychological situation in past. However, it has to be rooted in historical context and has to be constructive. It should not be a free floating imagination. Such a complex understanding is difficult for children.

Similarly critical and comparative analysis requires being able to engage in a divergent thinking, keeping the various propositions at the back of one’s mind, trying out new alternative and reaching to the conclusion. This sort of a mental exercise is not possible for children below 13- years of age. In the similar way the abstraction of the information drawn from objects is a difficult task for children below this age. The younger children (9-12-year-olds) can derive simple and concrete information from the objects; for example, uses of an object, its belongingness and all other visible aspects of the objects. However, it is difficult for them to draw inferences about the significance, and socio-political implications of such information. However, they do possess an ability to understand history and the social dynamics in past, to a large extent.
Looking at the cultural differences in the performance of the children in two cultural groups, the Santali children do better on the dimension of critical analysis and finding patterns and regularities in events. It shows that the Santali children have understood the stories better. Probably the strong oral tradition in their cultural context explains this. People in Santali society narrate and listen to stories. Also, they responded better when they were asked to imagine and compare two communities, rich and poor, when these people go to a new situation. This can also be traced back to their context where tribal children come to learn about their poverty and other rich people. Therefore, they could give a better comparison and analyze the situations of these two communities better than the non-tribal children. On the other hand, the non-tribal children perform better on items related to chronology (specifically dates) and on Imagination (Experiential perspective). On the items of chronology the younger tribal children had problem. The tribal children in the age group of 13-14 did not have such problem. The Santali community, has a low literacy rate. It results in making less use of calculations and numbers. The Santali community also has a different number system, as mentioned earlier. Thus, all these factors lead to lesser familiarity of younger children with dates and numbers. The elder children however perform better because the schooling experience has provided them more familiarity with numbers. Undoubtedly, the younger children are more under influence of their cultural context and as they continue their schooling these differences are leveled. The non-tribal children performing better on the dimension of empathy shows their ability to articulate feelings.
of others and command over language. For empathizing with someone and describing their feelings, children need vocabulary which was richer among the non-tribal children. The mode of conversation during the test was Hindi and the non-tribal children were better versed with that.

The two cultural groups performing differently on different dimensions can be a product of the domain specific processing, which means that people show difference on different domains of cognitive functioning. It can be explained by the concept of “modularity” proposed by Cole (1992). The performance of children on the HU test, particularly Santali children is linked with their socio-cultural context. Santali children have experiences which require them to practice on domains on which they have shown better performance i.e. understanding and analyzing stories. Thus, when it comes to performing on familiar cognitive modules, they perform better than the non familiar modules.

Conclusion

The present study reveals that historical understanding is a continuous process which starts before the age of 9-10 and goes on developing after the age of 14 also. The dimensions which are relatively abstract in nature, such as chronology, simple causality, imagination, perspective taking, and Understanding a historian’s job, develop early by 9-10-years of age. It is important to mention here that by appreciating these dimensions of HU a child can easily understand the basic aspects of history. Although,
understanding of the other abstract aspects of HU such as, empathy, critical and comparative analysis, historical imagination and drawing abstract information from artifacts, are crucial element of history, they are required to appreciate history with a more analytical approach. They are the aspects which are requires for a more mature and academic practicing of history. Hence, it can be concluded that children between the age of 9-10 have developed adequate psychological processes to appreciate historical information. Definitely, the different dimensions of HU develop at different age and stage in children, there is continuity from the ‘basic understanding of past aspect of things’ to the more sophisticated understanding of societal and psychological dynamics. It has also been seen that the information about history is influenced by the form in which is received. By it nature history can be presented in an abstract or a concrete manner. As discussed in the beginning there are various forms in which it is presented; it can be made heavy by collection of socioeconomic facts or can be made fanciful by a story-like narration. The stories can also be added by pictures, artifacts and other experiences with history. Presenting historical information with concrete additions makes it comprehensible for a young child. Thus, teaching history in elementary classes can be made fun and enriching through such an approach to history.

There were three dimensions of HU showing cultural difference. These dimensions are, Ability to link History to chronology, Ability for critical and comparative analysis, and Imagination. Among these dimensions the tribal children perform better on Critical and comparative analysis, and the non tribal children perform better on the
items related to Chronology and Imagination. Different sort of psychological processes are reinforced by different cultural context. It implies that different ecologies and cultures require different sort of mental exercise to be performed by its members. These exercises lead individual to develop the respective cognitive modules better than other cognitive modules for unfamiliar tasks.

The children's approach towards history is also reflective of the social representation of history. The Santali children have come to learn that the history that they get to know in 'their community' is all stories only. Since these children are still at the elementary level of schooling their approach towards 'their community history' can not be counted upon. They however reflected the beliefs that most of the Santali adults showed. The maximum number of Santali respondents had an education between 6 to 12 years. And as mentioned earlier they did not give much value to their history. Other Santali adults showed a strong adherence to their history. The socio-cultural together with level of schooling has given rise to the cultural memory (Jervis et. al. 2006) in sathl adults. This cultural memory was evident among all the respondents, irrespective of their level of schooling. It is thus, concluded that Santalis' understanding of history portray certain culture specific features which are slightly affected by the years of schooling. Interestingly the level of education seems to have influenced people's attitude about the history, however the most prototypical features of Santalis' HU such as, witch craft and magical thinking continues to influence the HU of all the Santali adults, irrespective of their education.
The Santali adults’ and Children’s responses showed culture specific features in their HU. Also, when it came to processing and reflecting historical information the Santali children performed better on the familiar cognitive modules. They performed better on items narrating stories and past lifestyle. They also showed difficulty in dealing with dates, but showed an understanding of chronology. The implications of these findings are very crucial for classroom teaching. Based on the findings, it can be suggested that teachers should try to bring in the folk knowledge about history of different cultural groups in the classroom. Also knowledge about the cultural history of the communities represented in the class can help teacher to understand the cognitive domain on which children from those communities can perform well. By knowing the familiar cognitive modules of children, teacher can also help them improve on the modules on which they might have difficulty. Thus, the findings and implications of the present study can be crucial in designing and implementing history curriculum in schools.