CHAPTER 2

THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE OF JHARKHAND

2.1: Jharkhand - The Tribal Land

Rich cultural heritage, immense geographical variations, the newly formed 28th state of India, Jharkhand, got its independent status on 15th Nov 2000. The name Jharkhand means "The region of bushes or forests." It shares border with Bihar in the North, Orissa in South, West Bengal in the East and Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh in the west, the state languages are Hindi, Santhali, Mundari and Ho. Bangla and Orissa are also used.

The state has 22 districts (Sahebganj, Pakur, Dumka, Devghar, Godda, Kodarma, Hazaribagh, Chatra, Bokaro, Dhanbad, East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, Ranchi, Gumla, Lohardaga, Palamu, Garhwa, Latehar, Jamtara, Simdega, Saraikela) with its Capital at Ranchi. The population of the state is around 2.7 crores, while the Tribal population is 10.7 lakh which is 26% of the total population of the state.

Jharkhand is the richest state of India in terms of its mineral resources. It's Damodar valley region is called the Ruhr of India. About 30% of the total mineral resources of the country lies in this
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states. Iron ore Manganese, chromite, Gold, Berite, Bauxite, Gold, Dolomite, Lime stone, Quartz etc. It has huge stores of Coal, Uranium. Many industrial units like Tata Iron and Steel Company (Jamshedpur), Bokaro Steel Plant (Bokaro), Heavy Engineering Corporation (Ranchi), Hindustan Copper Ltd (E. Singhbhum), Bihar Spange Iron (E. Singhbhum), Indian Aluminium (Ranchi) Sindri Fertilizers (Sindri, Dhanbad) make this state rich.

When we look into the history of Jharkhand we find that it had been a home to the aboriginal men from more than 10 thousand years ago. The drawings founds in the caves in the District of Hazaribagh assert to this fact. Out of the Major races had come for settlement, the Austro Asiatics, the Dravidian and the Aryans.

Many events took place especially in the Chotanagpur region which are important in the making of Jharkhand. In 1585, the king of Chotanagpur was directed to pay taxes to the Mughal King Akbar. After the death of Akbar is 1605, Chotanagpur once again become free. In 1616 in the reign of Jahangir, the Governor of Bihar Ibrahim Khan, defeated the 16th king Durjansal who was imprisoned for 12 years in Gwalior. After 12 years he was freed, who when returned to Chotanagpur, invited people from other parts of India in his court. During this time Rajputs, Muslims, Hindus come in large number and settled here.
In 1765 the Mughal emperor Shah Alam gave the responsibility of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa to the East India Company of collecting taxes and in this way Jharkhand come under the English rule.

The company, the Landlords, the people from outside started dominating the Local tribal and compelled them to a life of deprivation, hunger and nakedness. The situation gathered momentum for a number of revolts that finally led to the creation of a free Jharkhand. Bhumij Revolt in 1832, Tamar revolt in 1789 by the Oraons, the HO Revolt in 1820-21, Santhali Revolt in 1855-56, the Kol Revolt in 1895-1900 started by Birsa Munda etc. In 1920, for the first time demand for the Jharkhand state was made by the Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj. In the 1970's the demand was reiterated in stronger voice and finally 15th Nov 2000, the Jharkhand state came into existence.

2.2 The People

Jharkhand which is peopled, by and large, by about 30 different tribal communities could be divided into two parts, on the basis of the population with Santhal tribe being the largest tribe, followed by Oraon (Kurukh) the second largest and Munda tribe the third largest tribe. Besides these there are the tribes of HO, Kharia, Paharia, Asur, Birhor, Lohra, Machlíchǐk, Barik, Korba etc. One for
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major Tribes have been taken into consideration for the purpose of this study. These four tribes are Oraon (Kurukh), Munda, Santhal and HO.

The tribal of this state generally belong to the proto-Australoid stock though traces of Mongoloid strain have been found in parts of Santhal parganas. They are of average height, dark brown in colour and generally healthy. Each community has its distinctive culture and institutions. Although the social intercourse between the tribals and non-tribal in the region has not been unrestricted, the acculturation on the linguistic level is as remarkable as the extent of Miscegenation on the ethnic level.

The tribals differ widely among themselves in the level of socio-economic development. The number of people living entirely by hunting and food gathering is very small, there are, however, a few tribal communities still devoted to shifting cultivation. These are Asur, Birjia, still Kharia and Sauria Paharia. The rest of the tribals who form 95% of the tribal population are settled agriculturists engaged in plough, cultivation.

As in their economic organization, so also in their world-view, tradition orientation and commitment to their past, the tribals differ among themselves. In some cases their level of socio-cultural
integration is low, in others it is vigorous and potent. Among some, their cultural institutions are extremely simple, among others they are highly complex and elaborate. Some have very simple religious beliefs and rituals, while others have a plethora of gods and goddesses. Most of them subscribe to belief in witchcraft and sorcery. Severe penalty is prescribed in tribal social code for persons found guilty of these offences.

Now we take a close look on the different-tribes taken into consideration for the purpose of study.

2.2A: The Oraon

The Oraon tribe is one of the major tribes of Jharkhand. The people of this tribe are settled in large numbers mainly in Ranchi, Gumla, Palamau, Singhbhum and Dhanbad while several thousands found in Purnea, Hazaribagh, champaran, Sahabad districts.

In their own language, the Oraon call themselves Kurukh. Their language Kurukh belongs to the Intermediate group of the Dravidian language family. Like most other aboriginal tribal names, 'Kurukh' is derived from a root meaning 'man', Roy connects the term to 'krisan' on 'kurkhar', a tribe of agriculturist (1915:7) as the Oraon are far famed as diligent agriculturists. Traditions of the Oraon point to the Dean as their original home. They are said to have learnt the
The Oraon live in large settled villages with a large number of houses. Their homes are built of mud and roofed with brick tiles. The most important occupation of the Oraon is agriculture. Rice is the chief crop. The Oraon are a patrilineal and patrilocal people. They are divided into a number of exogamous clans called Gotar.

A number of reform movements like the Bhagat movement have stirred the Oraon. They have also been deeply influenced by Hinduism. The number of converts to Christianity is not very large.

2.2B: Santhali

The Sathals are the largest of the tribes of eastern India besides Jharkhand and Bihar, a sizable number of Santhals are found in the adjoining districts of Bangal and Orissa. In Jharkhand they are concentrated in a large number in the districts of Santhal pargama, Dhanbad, Hazaribagh, Sighbhum, Ranchi, and Palomu where as in Bihar, they are found in the district of Monghyre, Bhagalpur and Purnea.
The traditions of the Santhals represent them as a race wandering from one land to another until they found their present homeland in Chotanagpur and the adjacent districts. On the bases of these traditions several theories have been put forward to count for their origin. One authority traces their origin in control Asia Holding that they entered India from the north-east (Dalton, 1872).

A third theory regards them as being pushed from central alluvial valley of the Ganges to the Hills of Chotanagpur under pressure of the Aryans. A fourth theory credits them with having settled near Mirzapur after coming from the north-east and then being dispersed to Chotanagpur. Whether the Santhals came to the Chotanagpur plateau, from the west, north-east on north-east, cannot however, be conclusively proved on the basis of legend alone (Dutta-Majumdar, 1956:23). About the middle of the 18th century Chotanagpur was the chief habitant of the Santhals. At the end of the center as the jungles were being cleared and the pressure of populations was keenly felt they moved up towards the virgin forest in and around the Raj Mahal Hills. The introduction of Permanent settlement in 1790 in that area inducted the landlords to pay more attention to land improvement and reclamation for which the Santhals were increasingly used.
In 1832 the government set apart a total area of 1366 square miles in the Santhal pargana for the settlement of the paharia, another hill tribe of the area. The Santhals, however, settled in this area known as Daman-i-Koh, skirts of the hills. The number of people increased in this tract from 3,000 in 1838 to 82,795 in 1851, thus from the middle of the last century Daman-i-Koh became the main concentration of the Santhals.

In the work of reclaiming land and clearing new jungles the Santhals have very few equals in India. The mainstay of the Santhal is agriculture. The Santhals are divided into twelve patrilineal exogamous groups called *Paris*. Of these, one is supposed to have disappeared long ago. Each group is known after some *totem* and is exogamous. Every part is divided into sub-group called *Khut*. The number of *Khut* in various *paris* varies between thirteen and twenty-eight. Santhal kinship terminology is more descriptive than that of other tribes of Jharkhand.

2.2C: The Munda

The Munda people occupy an important place in Jharkhand. They mostly live in the Chotanagpur, their distribution extends over the adjacent hilly tracts of Orissa and Chhattisgarh also. Their population scattered mainly in the district of Ranchi, Singhbum,
Dhanbad, Hazaribagh and Palamu, however some of them are found in Shahabad and Purnea.

It is fact that a thick curtain of mystery hangs over the antiquity of the Munda and their origin. About their real origin and primitive abode, we are in the utter darkness. Of their successive migrations in ancient times through different parts of India, we have till now no written record. Sarat Chandra Roy (1912: 42-113) who was probably the first anthropologist to study them, has given a rough outline of how they come to settle in the land they now inhabit based on references found in Vedic, Epic and later Hindu literature as well as in their own traditions. In the absence of reliable historical sources, however, the reconstruction of Munda history is little more than a series of conjectures and has a very little bearing on the understanding of present day Munda culture and tradition. The Mundas have lived in the Chotanagpur for two thousand years.

Another possible and important direction of the inquiry for their origin may be made through finding out their linguistic affiliations. Mundari belongs to the Austric language family, whose speakers in India include the Karku of Makardeo Hills of the Satpura Range, many tribes in Bihar and Orissa as well as the Khasi of Assam the one cultural tract common to all of them is the prevalence of the Megalithic cult.
The Mundas have long been settled agriculturists practicing both dry and wet cultivation and living is permanent villages. The fields are situated round about the village site itself. Same villages have a clearly defined village site, which is often marked by such permanent features as boundaries. The layout of the village does not conform to any pattern. A village is a collection of above fifty to a hundred homesteads fuddled together with one – any arrangement. In the heart of the village is the dancing ground called Akhara and on its outskirts is the bone-burial ground called Sasan. In some villages we find the Gitoria or the sleeping house for the youth.

The staple food of the Mundas consists of boiled rice. For a side dish they take pulse or some vegetable. Fowl and goat meat are occasionally taken. Except among Hinduised Munda, beef and pork are eaten with relish. Their favourite drink is the home-brewed rice beer called Hanria. Munda economy is largely self-sufficient.

They are largely subsistence cultivators and whatever little surplus they have they sell in the weekly markets and buy such necessary articles as salt, kerosene oil, clothes, etc circulation of money in the village is restricted.
The Munda family is generally nuclear in character, though the well-to-do among them may have collateral and affinal relations living under the same roof. The authority of the father is supreme. Women cannot hold or inherit real property, though a daughter is entitled to maintenance and her marriage expenses from the heirs of father. A Munda woman takes her full share in the economic activities of the family. A munda woman takes her full share in the economic activities of the family.

In the changing Munda society in Jharkand, the power structure has evolved in its form and function suited to the changing situation. It has resulted in the emergence of a new elite among them. They are the persons who are most influential and reputed, who hold positions of eminence in field of activity. The Munda elite has played a significant role in the social transformation of their society.

Munda culture is fast changing due to contact with outside people and way of life. The process has been continuing for a very long time and as facilities for communication have increased, the isolation of tribal villages has broken. Constant living with non-tribal castes in the villages, growth of education, growth of township in the region increasing industrialisation of the area have changed tribal life to a great deal.
The Munda response to the cumulative effect of these forces of change is observed in their changing life style, material culture, social and economic relations, political organisation, beliefs and rituals etc. The Munda like other small communities living is a multi-ethnic society, are approximating the life style of the dominant communities (Sachchidananda).

2.2D: HO

The Ho speakers form a very important tribe in Jharkhand found in large numbers in Orissa as well. The habitat of Ho is confined to Singhbhum, Seraikala, Manoharpur, and Kharswan in Jharkhand.

The Ho speakers are not the earliest settlers in Kolhan. They are closely akin to the Munda in language and culture. It may be because they branched off from the Munda fold only a few centuries back. They Ho tribes are believed to have migrated from Chotanagpur Plateau to their present abode. The genealogical tables of important families do not show them as being settled long in those tracts. The story of the origin of different clans is also the same as that of many Munda clans.

The Ho tribes live in a permanently settled villages build on high level ground with clearly defined boundary lines marked by
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Stone slabs at the end of the village is the bone burial ground as among the Munda. Every village has a number of satellite settlements called Tola. In most villages we find a Akhara, the village dancing ground and the Giti-ora, the sleeping house for the youths. On the outskirts of the village is situated the sacred grove called Johira.

The houses are build on the support of wooden pillars with wooden planks filling the wooden walls and plastered with cow-dung and roofed with grass thatch. Ancestral worship is strictly observed and every year after harvest, huge stone slabs are ceremonially erected on the graves of the dead ancestors. Hatu is the name by which Ho people call their village.

The main occupation of the Ho is agriculture. Hunting and fishing are important only as diversions. Their agricultural technique is the same as that of the Munda.

The religion of the Ho has been termed as 'Bongaism' (Mahumdar 1950: 264).

2.3A: Family Classification of the above tribal languages

The tribes of Jharkand have a number of languages of their own. Most of the tribal languages fall into the Austric family of languages and the Dravidian family of languages, Mundari, Santhali,
Ho, Kharia, Birhori etc belong to the Austric family while Kurukh, the language of the Oraon and Malto, the language of the Maler of Santhal Parganas belong to the Dravidian group.

Mundari, Santhali, Ho and Oraon are well-developed languages and have their own literatures also. For a long time their folklore was communicated through the oral tradition but they have now been written down and fresh works are also appearing either in the Devnagri or Roman script. However, large number of tribals speak Hindi or one of its dialects like Magadhi, Bhojpuri, Gwari or Sadani and have returned there as their mother tongue is the census. 17.64% of the tribes speak Hindi as their mother tongue. Another 17% are bilingual and besides their mother tongue, they speak Hindi or one of its dialects as a second language. 34% or more are well conversant with the regional language. On Bengal and Orissa borders they speak Bengali and Oriya as secondary languages. In Chotanagpur the language of the of weekly markets and the small town is Sadani on Gawari whose scripture is like Hindi but the vocabulary contains a large number of tribal words.

Among all the tribals, the Oraon is most areas have lost their language and adopted Mundari or Sadani, but the Munda Ho and Santhal cling to their language tenaciously.
2.3B: Scripts of Tribal Language

Santali has Devanagri and Roman scripts in Jharkhand, Bengali (Bangla) script in West Bengal and Oriya in Orissa. Santhals have also a new script called olcemet or Olchiki and the same is in use in the Santhali literature in some places. The Olcemet or Olchiki script invented by Shri Raghunath Murmu is 1905 was first introduced in Santhali writings. But somehow it could not be popular, as Santhals spread over Jharkhand, West Bengal and Orissa adopted scripts like Devanagri, Bengali and Oriya in the respective states. The Ho tribals in Singhbhum district of Jharkhand adopted Devanagri and Roman scripts. Kurukh (Oraon) has both Roman and Devanagri for its script.

2.4 The Sociolinguistic Situation

The tribes of Jharkhand have their habitation generally in remote and isolated areas mostly in the forests and the hilly terrain away from the sophisticated and dominant society, living in a close community, they have a distinct culture, customs, beliefs and languages which are unique in themselves. They have been described as the happiest people so long they are left undisturbed by the external social force. They live a life simple, pure and pristine.
Literacy among the tribals in Jharkhand ever after 56 years of Indian Independence is extremely poor and pathetic. The literacy rate in 1981 was 17% and 1991 rate improved to 26.8%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Literacy rate (1981)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oraon (Kurukh)</td>
<td>23.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munda</td>
<td>22.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho</td>
<td>17.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santhal</td>
<td>12.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When we speak about the unwritten literatures of tribes, it is with reference to this vast majority of the tribes who do not know how to read and write. However they keep up their unwritten literature orally from generation to generation. The same may no longer be possible under the impact of modern industrial development, which causes mass displacement of tribals and disintegration of the tribal to be recorded in black and white for want of enough literacy among the tribals. Those few literate and educated tribals who have managed to come out of their forefather's primitive way of life through modern education are in search of jobs and modern life style away from their villages. Their tribal language and literature written or unwritten do not attract them any more. It cannot provide them bread and butter. The unwritten tribal literature is gradually falling into oblivion as the tribal villages are being
uprooted and tribal are displaced from their habitat when man is in pains and struggle for survival, even the Muse of his creativity is mum and the literature is allowed to die a natural death.

The tribal population in recent past has been ruthlessly displaced, dispersed and depleted for the sake of making space for mining explorations, industrial projects and construction of huge dams and water reservoirs for producing hydro-electricity. The statistics in tribal belt of Chotanagpur and the adjacent regions present an alarming picture. The coal companies are acquiring extensive areas and displacing large number of families. According to an estimate between 1981 and 1985, the central coalfields Ltd has acquired 1,20,300 acres of land, and caused displacement of 32,751 families. Only 11,901 families were provided employment for one member each family in the coal companies (Aree Parampil p.22 in Fernandes and Thukral 1989).

Later reports on Hatia HEC (Heavy Electrical Corporation), Bokaro steel Project and Rourkela Steel Plant along with its mines and dams show that by 1985 a total of 72,751 acres of lands have been acquired and 18,936 families displaced. A large no of these poor displaced people go jobless, landless and homeless. Under pretext of economic development innumerable explorations by contractors in almost every hill and the mushroom growth of
industries all over the beautiful mountainous region, are causing uninhibited ecological and environmental Vandalism.

As the projects of economic developments are reaching even the far flung regions of the tribal belt, there is an influx of more sophisticated non-tribals like the project staff, contractors and the businessmen who have no love or desire to understand and appreciate the tribal values. The tribals in Jharkhand calls these people "Dikus" which in real sense means the outsiders who are non-tribals.

Literacy is a recent phenomenon among the tribals. Almost 73% of the tribal population still remain illiterate, they are deprived of the elementary education at the primary level. The overwhelming influence of external society, their culture and language is one of the reasons why the tribals are unable to hold firm to their traditional culture and language.

For the majority of tribals in India, language other than their own mother tongue is Greek to them, the medium of instruction in the primary school in the tribal village in the strange language naturally causes many dropouts. There is no harmony between the language tribal child speaks at home and the language spoken in the school. The tribal boy faces multiple problems initially, he has to
learn the script, language and the lessons in it. Used to running around freely in the fields and forests often his cattle or on hunting trip, the tribal boy feels that sitting in the classroom to face the roughs and quivering rod of the school master is an unnatural phenomenon. This is the reason why the tribal language should be the medium of education at the Nursery and Primary levels. Once the tribal students settle down in the school for same years, at later stage, preferably at fourth or fifth standards Hindi or other regional language may be gradually introduced.

The tribal languages are irresistibly shifting to languages of dominating communities with whom the tribals are coming in contact for example Hindi has a tremendous impact. 70% tribals like the Oraon, Mundas, Hos and Santhals, speak their tribal languages, 39% of the tribals have already left their tribal languages, in favour of Sadani, a Hindi Bhojpuri mixed dialect as lingam franca, this tendency of digression from their own mother language still spoken in the rural areas is noticed particularly among the educated and semi-educated tribals.

Prof. Roy Burman notes that the intellectual elites belonging to the post primitive communities are vaguely conscious of the malaises of high technology of civilization (Roy Burman, p 105,
UNESCO). The educated tribals, are rushing headlong to language shift and social and cultural changes.

The other side of the story presents a different picture. Major tribes and their languages are able to overcome the obstacles in their way to development. But Prof. Dube fears that the smaller groups of tribes and their languages are under constant danger of suppression.

In the modern world the contact of tribals with the advanced and dynamic population is inevitable. Unless the tribal community is consolidated and it is conscious of the values of its language, literature and culture, it is going to face a serious danger of total assimilation and extinction, such contacts of tribal language with the advanced language may have multiple consequences. It has been observed writes Imtiaz Husain, that depending on the focus of social mobilization i.e. ethnicity and nationalism, the linguistic consequences for social groups in language contact situation varies ranging from language death, language spread, language shift, and language maintenance (Husnain p.520, cited in Mriuarl Miri 1993).

In the present context, one is not expected to appreciate the beauty and values of the tribal language and literature, unless he knows them, or at least he has a positive approach to them for
learning and understanding them. Devalle wonders as to why is sometimes such a strong positive attitude towards tribal languages. But she finds an answer in the great potential a language has for practical purposes, and for maintaining a people's identity. Language is a people's particular code, a field where collective identity and the perception of reality are constantly reformulated, hence a terrain difficult to conquer by those external to it. (Devalle 1992, p.17).

Otto Von Bismark (Kumar, 1984), the German dictator invaded Poland and immediately banned the polish language is all the schools, colleges and Universities, German language was imposed in place of polish. He seemed to know well that language and literature of the conquered enemy are too dangerous weapons to be ignored.

Mankind is proceeding towards greater and greater homogeneity-racially, culturally and linguistically. Oldest cultures are either dying or being exterminated. In such a board category came a great segment of humanity known by a bewildering variety of names such as primitive, Tribal, indigenous, aboriginal, native and so on. Some major characteristics of these groups have been single pre-machine economy, unsophisticated rituals and social customs.
lack of a script for their speech, small local community organization and homogeneity, (Husnain, Tribal India Today).

These tribals have come into contact with their non-tribal neighbours and are coming to lose their 'tribal' character. Industrial civilization is now completing its destruction of technologically simple tribal cultures. This disappearance or drastic modification of these cultures reflected in their linguistic atmosphere, is considered by many to be inevitable, natural and in the long run, beneficial for the peoples involved" (John M. Bodley, 1982).

The study of tribal interaction in the country is important because the tribal communities in India are no longer in a state of isolation and gradually they are coming in contact with the other communities living in the neighbouring areas as a result of which interaction between different groups of people is imperative. Even if some of the tribes are marked by their ecological isolation and backwardness in respect of their autonomous techno-economic existence having strong in-group feeling in their socio-religious life, a study of such tribal communities in isolation may give a convincing picture of an unacculturated tribe. But when the tribal communities are not living in isolation a realistic picture can only be obtained when they are studied in relation to the other communities of the region with whom they interact. Hence a study of tribal interaction
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will provide a wholistic picture of the interacting groups. The interaction, when studied at intra-tribal, inter-tribal and also at tribal and non-tribal levels projects a better picture of the communities involved because they are studied in relationship to the demands made by one community on another and thus it gives an opportunity to know the processes through which a society undergoes to adjust it self to varied situations. The tribes of Jharkhand have a number of language of their own most of the tribal languages fall into two categories, the Austric and the Dravidian.

Mundari, Ho, Santhali etc. belong to the Austric family while Kurukh, the language of the oraon belong to the Dravidian group. Mandari, ho, Santhali, Ho and Oraon are well-developed languages and have their own literature also. For a long time their folklore was communicated through the oral tradition but they have now been written down and fresh works are also appearing either in the Devnagri or in Roman Script. (Singh, K.S, Tribal Movement in India)

However, large number of tribals speak Hindi or one of its dialects like Magadhi, Bhojpuri Gawari or Sadani and returned them as their Mother tongue in the census. 17.64% of the tribes speak Hindi as their Mother tongue. On Bengal and Orissa borders they speak Bengali and Orisa as secondary language. The language of the weakly markets and the small town is Sadani or Gawari whose
scripture in like Hindi but the vocabulary contains a large number of tribal words.

The medium of instruction at all levels in Hindi. According to government instructions, the medium at the primary level should be the mother tongue but up till now this is not so either because of the paucity of teachers or a good text book. Demands are made by certain sections of tribals for the introduction of tribal language as their medium of instruction but it is more or less political. It cannot however, be denied the primary education can spread faster in the Tribal areas with the mother tongue as the medium a section of the tribals do not like the tribal language as the medium as they suppose that they would not take to Hindi as easily as now, if this were so. If they are taught everything through Hindi, they would be in a better position to compete with other at their own terms.

Jharkhand contains 55 percent of tribal population of the country, on areas that symbolizes the ancient heritage of India a centre for cultural and linguistic convergence as it is interwoven by Austor-Asiatic (Munda), Dravidian, and Indo-Aryan speech communities, various dialects of Hindi, Bengali and Oriya dominate the indigenous Munda languages and those of the North Dravidian families such as Kurukh (also known as Oraon) and Malto.
The dynamics of language contact is such that the dominant language of the Indo-Aryan family or their dialects (non-scheduled) while the dominated ones are those of the Munda and the Dravidian families. Communication within this complex linguistic network has generated bi-/multilingual peoples, with interaction between various indigenous groups such in Kharia, Munda and Oraon as well as between those of various dominant languages and their dialects such as Hindi and Sadani/Sadri. The resultant scheme is of a unique nature where minority community is on higher level at the 'scale of bilingual proficiency' than its dominant majority community/ies. (Abbi, languages of Tribal and Indigenous People of India).

The contact induced changes in languages such as Kurux and Kharia have led to linguistic typological homogeneity on the one hand and to a tendency to languages attrition, on the other. We must remember that societal bilingualism is frequently mentioned as a prerequisite for language shift. (Fasold 1984; 216-17)

Bilingualism prevails between intra-tribal and inter-tribal communities. Hence a typical Mundari speaker might have a working knowledge of Mundari and Sadari or Mundari and Hindi. Fluent monolingual speaker are declining, instead Hindi/Sadari bilingualism has became the rule rather than an exception, among
the younger generation. Average bilingual intensity in the Jharkhand area runs around 47 percent. (This is an official figure; in realities the urban Jharkhand area has a bilingual intensity of nearly 85 percent.

Various mother tongues in an intense language contact situation enjoy the features of the periphery and thus run the risk of resulting in a pidgin-like situation. Fortunately, none of the tribal language of the area has reached this extreme. However danger signs of language attrition are visible in the loss of basic vocabulary, borrowings of Indo-Aryan lexicon and morphological processes, as well as in change in word order.

Pandit (1972 p.2) observed in his Saurashtri study:

One of the significant features of multilingualism in India is the existence of stable bilingual or multilingual communities. People in large metropolitan centres or district towns maintain their languages for generations, despite 'majority' status. They speak their own language in their domestic settings and such other dealings where the speakers of 'minority' language came in contact with each other and they speak the majority languages in other contexts.

In order to settle down among other language speakers, an Indian does not have to give up his language. He is welcomed
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despite his different language; speaking a different language does not make him alien. The underlying acceptability of any Indian in any Indian cultural setting is symptomatic of a cultural identity and homogeneity at a deeper level; it permits retention of identity markers- whether it is language or religion, food habits or dress habits continuous language contact in such multi-lingual communities results in a set of rules shared by diverse languages, at the same time retaining identity markers, namely at morphophonemic and lexical levels.

The compulsion of having to acquire non-tribal language in order to participate in the new politico-economic situation is influencing the perception of the tribal speakers and their attitude towards their own language. In addition to this economic impulse to learn another languages there are other socio-psychological factors. For instance a feeling of backwardness. Also, by and large, an exploited mass. While the adults among the tribal population found ways and means of acquiring a nont-tribal language, the adolescent tribals naturally took to the task of acquiring the languages, the adolescent tribals naturally took to the task of acquiring the languages in their schools. The young tribal children are picking up the additional language as they grow up in a bilingual environment. What is happening to the tribal language, culture and the tribal
psyche is a complex. Mix of socio-linguistic acculturation, crisis of identity and total in comprehension of their role in linguistically and pluralistic atmosphere.

The tribal language today is spoken in small pockets of tribals settlements on a relatively wide scale in the periphery of urban location. Elsewhere, in the heart of cities and towns, where the tribals are not concentrated in a single locality, the tribal language is used as a code language spoken within the intimate family circles and in reference groups that are essentially socio-cultural. It is used on ritual occasions and cultural gatherings.

In areas where a large number of tribal adherents live in close proximity and regularly communicate with each other, the tribal language is acquired naturally by children like in any other language acquisition situation. The strategic which these tribal children on their own land, may adopt to create new patterns of social and linguistic behaviour in an alien environment created by the influx of non-tribals will depend, apart from the possibility of differences of individual genetic inheritance, on their proceeding and concurrent social, psychological, cultural and religious experience on the one hand and the pressure exercised by the foreign community like the non tribal community on the other.
Although these tribals, too, acquire a second language for their communicative needs outside their immediate reference groups, the tribals languages is their primary language particularly in rural areas. It is in these pockets alone that the language is maintained in its natural form.

However, it has been observed that the linguistic competence of these tribal speakers is highly restricted. Even in these areas the language is used in finite contexts. It has also been observed that in most pockets of homogeneous tribal settlements the socio-economic factor plays a significant role. Once the members of these in-groups achieve a certain amount of economic ascendancy, they tend to move away from these settlements and identify with more cosmopolitan sections of the Indian society.

Wherever the tribal speakers are sparsely settled they tend to identify with the local language and reserve tribal for a very limited functions. In such areas, the children influence the linguistic practices within the family, with the parents choosing the language preferred by the children. In such cases the older generation tribals may continue to use tribal language for inter-personal communication in small groups but the local language like Hindi is spoken as demanded by their reference groups.
The affluent and educated elite among the tribal prefer to communicate primarily in Hindi, few in English. They do not identify with the language as with the tribal culture in same meaningful way. In case of Kannadigas in Delhi the language of the host society i.e. Hindi is introducing even in the home domain (Satyanath, 1982). Friedrich (1962), Cohen (1967), Neale (1971) and plank (1978) have shown the significance of political, religious cultural factors in the processes of language maintenance and shift resulting in same sort of negotiation. It is not necessary that linguistic assimilation should always imply complete loss of identify (Agnihotri, 1987).

As Fishman (1966a) point out in his preface to language Loyalty in the united states, deethnisation and assimilation on the one hand and cultural and linguistic maintenance an the other, are essentially 'ubiquitous processes'. They are, he says,

"neither necessarily opposite side of the same coin nor ubiquitous processes. Frequently the same individual and groups have been simultaneously devoted to both in different domains of behaviour (Fishman ,1966 a: 15)."

Yet maintenance of language considerably helps to maintain several other forms of native behaviour. A group which loses its language also loses contact with its literature and folk lore, with its people back home and with so many objects and concepts which
lose at least part of their unique value when handled in other language. Lieberson (1970) point out that where as migrant groups may retain their identity without maintaining a unique tongue, it is difficult to visualize complete assimilation if the native language is maintained.

Children are in fact encouraged to learn non-tribal like Hindi to maximize their opportunities for employment. At the conversational level, moreover, most villagers fluently control the non-standard Hindi and shifts of language in the course of a single conversation are a common occurrence. Because of the history of prejudice and discrimination, villagers regard it as crude to use tribal language in the presence of non-tribal outsiders. In fact in the younger generation tribal speakers, so strong is the injunction against speaking tribal language in mixed company, that non-tribal speaker can never notice that any language except non-tribal like Hindi is spoken. At the level of discourse and of the conversational principles which govern judgement of communicative effectives in any one situation, other abilities are involved. Situational norms, which associate a variety or mode of speaking with particular types of activities. Included here are the preference for tribal language in family and informed local friendship circles, the prohibition of tribal in mixed company, the tendency to use non-tribal like Hindi for
official business. Within the village system such code switching strategies take on such essential discourse functions of distinguishing the new from old information, marking the degree of emphasis etc. the shift from tribal to non-tribal language like Hindi as a metaphoric extension which builds on the out group association of the non-tribal language to lend a tone of seriousness. Villagers generally agreed that things said in tribal language has less of a connotation of seriousness.

Brief interviews of the informants, in the eighteen to thirty four year age range, provided furthers documentation of the ongoing language shift with a higher degree of negotiation on the part of the tribal speakers. These informants from rural surrounding control key standard and village Hindi variables. They understand short sentences when addressed in tribal tongue but respond in Hindi. Their productive control of the tribal language is limited to just a few stock of phrases. Several young informants used Hindi terms in citing tribal words such as the Hindi word/ sunder/ (beautiful) instead of Mundari word / Sugra/ (beautiful), Hindi word / naya/ (new) in place of Mundari / nawa/ (new). Clearly village Hindi is the first language for these youngsters and standard Hindi the second. They do learn same tribal through contacts with adults, but the language no longer plays an important part in their verbal repertoire.
An impression was created that these speakers with tribal mother tongue negotiated their identity with the non-tribal language to a great extent and maintenance of tribal language and identification of the tribal population with their language had declined greatly. There were many socio-psycho-linguistic indicators that the young tribals were looking for an identity. At the same time, these young people were reluctant to adhere to their tribal language.

But it is essential to understand this urge for a tribal identity today in the newly independent tribal state. Language is not the major issue. Yet they are in search of a cultural identity. Since they are identified by their peers as tribals, they are in search of the meaning of being tribal. For the present, they are satisfied to discover this identity through their independent tribal state. It is of course, natural to except that they will eventually turn to except that they will eventually turn to their language for complete tribal identity. They are willing to let the culture convey language, rather than insist on the language carrying the culture.