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## **Tribal Communication Then and Now: A Study of Gond Tribe of Chhattisgarh**

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### **ORIGINAL ARTICLE**



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### **Abstract :-**

The present research paper deals with tribal communication then and now with a special reference to Gond tribe of Chhattisgarh. It has been said by James Humes that the Art of Communication is the language of Leadership. Communication has been an important source of livelihood since the early days. Constant communication brings change in the mindset of the people, their ideas of living and their principles upon which they walk on. People communicate to live and this gives them a fair chance to express themselves. The people of Gonds live in the Deccan peninsula of India known as Gondwana. Their language 'Gondi' is extended to the parts of Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha. The Gondi language can be considered as one of the oldest language that had its existence in the time of Harappan Civilisation. In this paper, the researchers have focussed on the Gonds of Chhattisgarh. The study aims to understand the tribal communication of Gonds, the development and changes that are occurring then and now. The culture and beliefs vary from state to state and even region to region, for Instance, the dialect of Gondi in South Bastar is different from the North Bastar. A recent survey has been

conducted to analyse the changes that are taking place in their communication. In this era of globalisation they have some innovative ways to keep their language preserved amongst their youth and striving hard to retain it forever. They also have their own unique mode of communication with God. They pay tribute to their beloved ones by carving beautiful paintings on the pillars of their houses. All these cultures would be vanished within the next few years if no concerns and precautionary steps are taken to preserve this tribe. In the present research paper the researchers have tried to understand the communication of Gonds for which they have undertaken a survey.

### **Keywords :-**

Tribal Communication, Gond, Gondwana, Globalisation etc.

### **Introduction :-**

The Gonds are among the largest tribal groups in South Asia and perhaps in the world. The term Gond refers to tribal peoples who live all over India's Deccan Peninsula. Most describe themselves as Gonds (hill people) or as Koi or Koitur. Research Scholars believe Gonds settled in Gondwana, now known as eastern Madhya Pradesh, between the ninth and thirteenth centuries AD. Muslim writers describe a rise of Gond states after the fourteenth century. Gond dynasties ruled in four kingdoms (Garha-Mandla, Deogarh, Chanda, and Kherla) in central India between the sixteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries.

Gonds live all over central India, and in the states of Maharashtra and Odisha. As "hill people," they traditionally have been associated with hills and uplands in the Deccan Peninsula. Many Gonds live around the Satpura Hills, Maikala Range and Son-Deogarh uplands, and on the Bastar plateau. Many Gond tribes also live in the Garhjat Hills of northern Orissa. The upland areas generally lie between 2,000 to 3,000 feet (600 to 900 meters), with isolated peaks occasionally exceeding approximately 4,000 feet (1,200 meters). The region is drained by the head-waters of many of India's major rivers (such as the Narmada, Tapti, Son, Mahanadi, and Godavari). Forest cover is dense in places, and communications are generally difficult. February sees the start of the hot season, with temperatures rising to over 40° C (104° F) in early June. The summer brings the monsoon rains, with precipitation amounts varying from 47 inches (120 centimeters) to over 63 inches (160 centimeters) in the more southeasterly locations. Late September marks the return of the cool, dry weather of winter.

Chhattisgarh is one the states with richness in mineral resources along with the highest population of tribes. As per the Education Development Index, the State is placed at a rank that is lower than the national level average, and much lower than the ranks of educationally developed States. 'Gond' is the largest tribe in the state of Chhattisgarh. Around 56% of tribal people belong to Gond community. The word 'Gond' is derived from 'Konda' which is meant as 'Hill' in Telegu. The concentration of Gond community is mainly present in the central state of Madhya Pradesh and the southern part of Chhattisgarh. However, there are other states with the presence of Gond Community such as Bihar, Andhra Pradesh Telangana and Odisha but they are not

found in the larger extent. They refer themselves as 'Kolatkari' which means 'the people residing on mountains'. There are 41 sub tribes of Gond Community in Chhattisgarh. They are mainly found in Bastar. The Gond tribe is divided into many sub tribes such as the Mura, the Abhuj Maria, the Bison Horn Maria, the Halba, the Bhatra and so on. These sub tribes can be found in the various districts of Chhattisgarh such as, the tribe of Abhuj Maria is settled in the North-western part whereas, the tribe of Bison Horn Maria is settle in the Dantewada region. The tribe of Muria is widely spread in North and North-west. Similarly, other sub tribes of Gond community are settled in various regions. The 'Gondi' is widely spoken in various dialect depending upon the regions. They draw various shapes and patterns on the walls of their houses. The Gond of Chhattisgarh worship Pharsa Pen as their main god, apart from this they also worship several other gods such as Babadev, Nagadev, Narayandev, Mariai, the goddess of plague and other diseases; Bhimsen, the Hindu god and others. Also, they are great worshipper of nature such as lakes, rivers and so on. The agricultural festival of Gond community is 'Navakhani'. Most of the gond people are farmer. They earn their livelihood through agriculture. Additionally, they are great artists and engage themselves in various small scale businesses of artefacts, handicrafts and small paintings.

### **Objectives :-**

- To understand the basic relationship between culture and language.
- To understand the various steps toward preservation of language.
- Changes regarding the source of livelihood.

**Methodology :-** The researcher carries out the survey method to understand better the communication pattern and language and culture of Gonds.

**Procedure :-** The researcher conducts the survey in the various localities of Chhattisgarh.

The participants in the survey are men, women and children. Numerically, there are 30 participants. At the beginning of each Q/A the motive of the survey is entirely educational. We analysed the role of Gondi language creating an unity in the tribe; how language detaches them from the outsiders and how this detachment affects them.

### **Hypothesis :-**

- To understand the changing trends in their communication skills.
- To bring forth their problems in communication with the Government.
- To understand how they are being neglected due to the language barrier.
- Psychological effects upon them due to the recent changes in their communication.
- To analyse the partiality faced by them due to language barrier. and steps towards preservation of Gondi language

### **Literature review :-**

Chhattisgarh Project Report 2018

Blog 'A bridge to Maoist Heartland' by Odisha Sun Time Bureau

Deccan Herald: Language route to tackle Maoist issue in tribal areas by Kalyan Ray, DH News Service, New Delhi

Samagrah Chhattisgarh by Chhattisgarh Rajya Hindi Granth Academy

### Data Analysis :-

Number of Participants = 30

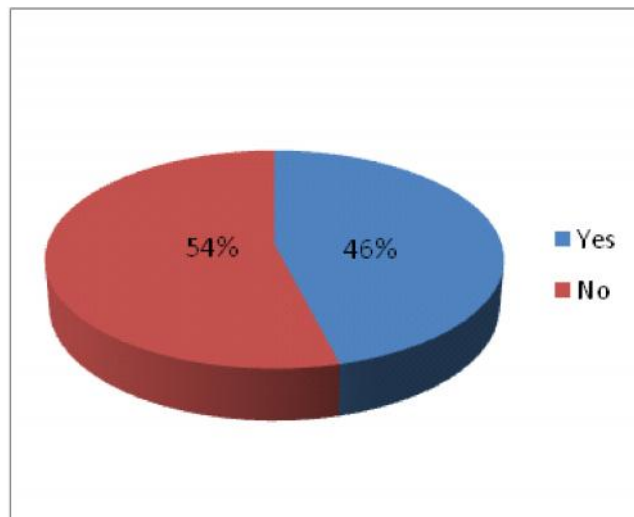
Number of responses = 22

The participants in the survey are men, women and children of all ages. Out of 30 participants, 22 amongst them understood and responded the questions properly. Additionally the analysis of the vulnerable situation of the tribe is studied and how this exclusion affect them psychologically.

According to the survey, the participants responded the question in the following ways.

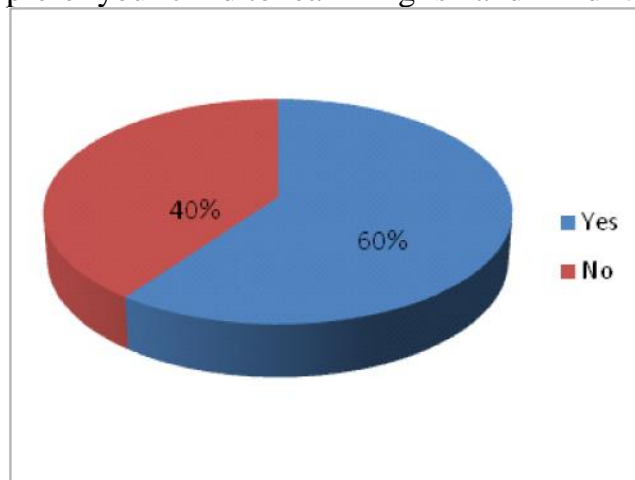
### QUESTIONS :-

1. Are the children facing problem in the school ?



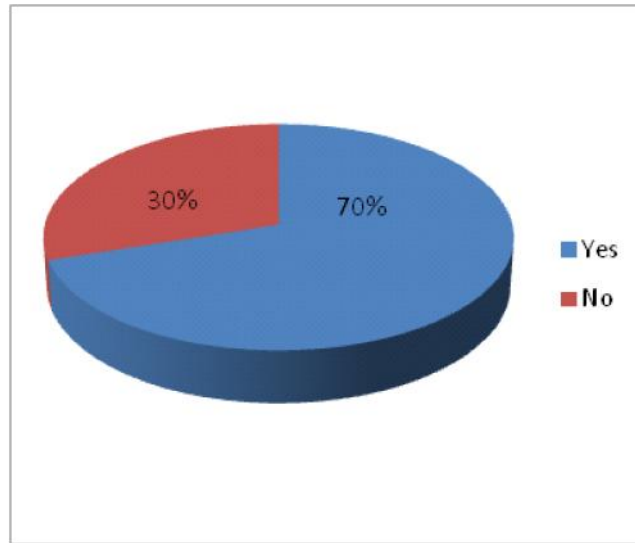
Around 46% of the children face problems, whereas, 54% of the children do not face any issue in the school.

2. Do you prefer your child to learn English and Hindi ?



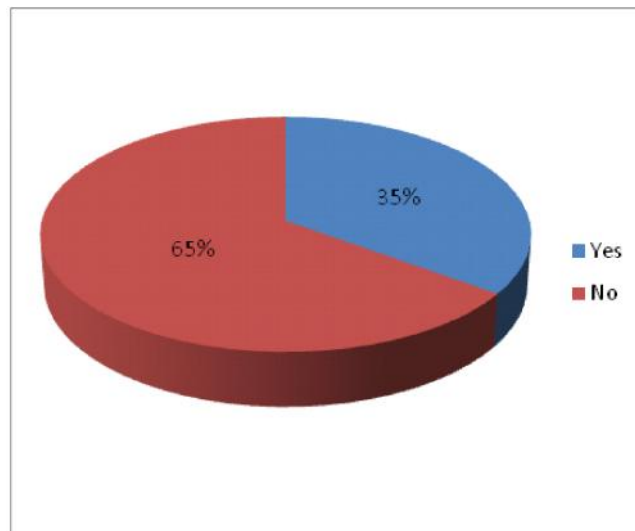
In response to this question maximum participants said that they will love to learn both English and Hindi language in order to communicate properly.

3. Since, the teachers are not well versed in Gondi, do your children face difficulty in understanding the lesson ?



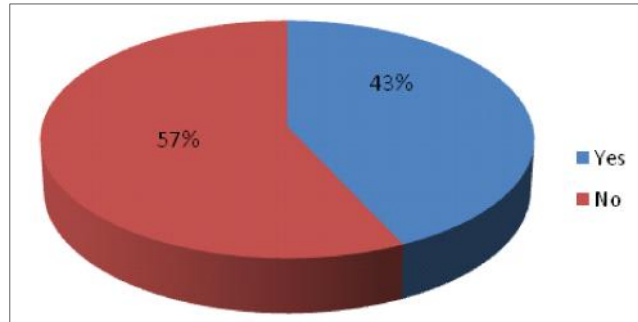
To this question, majority of the participants accepted their children are struggling to catch up the lessons in their books.

4. Since, various regions have different dialect do you difficulty in understanding the language of others ?



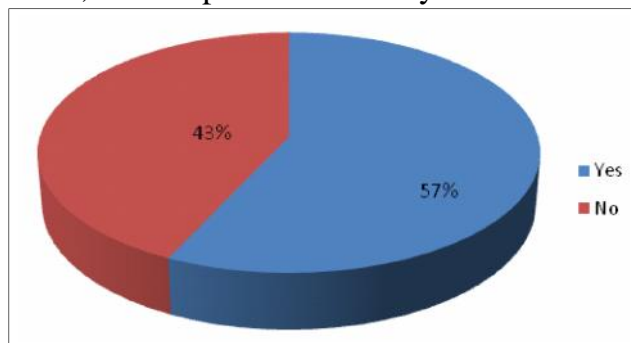
In this context, more than half of the participants have accepted that they don't face any issue in understanding the dialect of other region.

5. Since, the children don't speak proper Hindi and English, do you feel that your child will lack behind in future ?



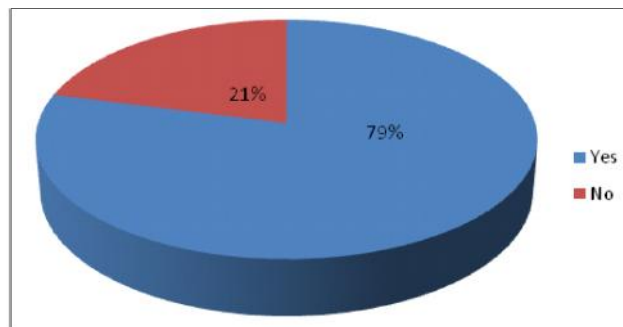
In this case, 57% of the participants believe that their children will excel in the future without the proper command over Hindi and English language.

6. Does the standardised dictionary by Shubhranshu Choudhury, founder of CGNet Swara, will help the community to communicate effectively ?



Here, most of the participants agree that the introduction of standardised dictionary will help them to communicate effectively.

Do you believe that this standardised dictionary will encourage people to learn Gondi?



With a response to this question, majority of the participants have believed that this standardised dictionary will encourage the people to learn Gondi.

### Conclusion :-

Majority of the tribal people are aware of the difficulty faced by them. They want to fit in the society. Few amongst them are concerned about their children whom they believe are competent enough to face the modern world. The absence of the proper knowledge of Hindi and English will not affect them anyhow. But the children of Gond community are struggling to understand the lesson thoroughly as their teachers are fluent in Hindi. Majority of the people in their community believe that the Standardised dictionary introduced by Shubhranshu Choudhury, the founder of CGNet Swara, will

help to resolve the communication gap. In the era of globalisation things are changing so fast that the tribal people are also trying to cope up with the existing scenario. No doubt, it will take some time to make fit themselves in the present era but with the due course of time they will certainly adjust themselves with the support of both the govt. and local people.

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