



MAPPING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SANTALI LITERATURE

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.70096/tssr.250303061>

Abstract

Tribal literature has a long history in India. A tribal literature gives an insight on the beliefs, practices, cultures, and way of life of members of an ethnic society. On the broader note Tribal literature or folklore describes the indigenous knowledge cultural and literary knowledge of these communities that comprise archaic customs, narratives about their simple life, the impact of divine forces on their lives etc. The Santali literature and its folklore do play a significant role in representing the identity of the Santali community and also reviving the indigenous knowledge of these communities. Over the years, Santali literature has undergone significant transformation. Initially Santali literature focused on oral traditions which emphasized customs, myths, and the community's relationship with nature. So, the main objective of this study is to map the progress of the Santali community by mapping the development of Santali literature. In doing so, the study has undergone Bibliometrics analysis from different databases of Santali literature from 1867-2021. The study finds an increasing trend of research in Santali literature mainly after 2000 with 60 percent of literature published in that phase.

Keywords: *Santali, Santali Literature, Santali Folklore, Mapping, Bibliometrics*

1. Introduction

Tribal literature has a long history in India, with origins in the Enlightenment, Romanticism, and Philological studies. A tribal literature is the result of cultures and their voices; it comes from a community that has its own identity in terms of things like agriculture, health, beliefs, and social standards (Ramakrishnan 2023). In other words tribal literature gives an insight on the beliefs, practices, cultures, and way of life of members of an ethnic society. Tribal literature or folklore or folktales has often been considered as an old age text as this form of the literature is being oral narratives along with the element of folklore, oral narratives are more popular in the rural and less developed regions (Xaxa 2008). With literacy level being low oral narratives serves as a medium for the transmission of folklore with the help of mediums like songs, recitals, dance, paintings and puppet shows presented to the audiences (Handoo 1989). In other words, folklore describes the indigenous knowledge cultural and literary knowledge of these communities that comprise archaic customs, narratives about their simple life, the impact of divine forces on their lives etc. Oral narratives created by the indigenous population, which apart from narrating fictitious simplistic stories revolving around their rustic lives, also relies significantly on elements like myth, religious rituals and ancient texts to create depth to the texts (Carine 2020). In other words, these indigenous literature become a window of expression for a community to prove their progressive and creative thoughts to transmit and preserve a group's cultural values, such as tradition, culture, identity, language, and many other priceless things that are thought to be lost if not passed down from generation to generation (Bourdieu, & Nice 1980). The Santali literature and its folklore do play a significant role in representing the identity of the Santali community and also reviving the indigenous knowledge of these communities (Carine 2022).

Santali literature is a vibrant testament to the cultural heritage of the Santali community, tracing its evolution from rich oral traditions to contemporary written forms. This transition has been pivotal in documenting indigenous narratives and cultural expressions, which are vital for understanding the community's identity. Early works, by missionaries capture the essence of Santali oral traditions, showcasing a range of stories that reflect the community's values, beliefs, and social norms. Over the years, Santali literature has undergone significant transformation. Initially focused on oral traditions that emphasized customs, myths, and the community's relationship with nature, it has gradually broadened to address contemporary developmental issues. This evolution reflects the changing circumstances of the Santals and their aspirations for empowerment and recognition within a larger societal framework. So, the main objective of this study is to map the progress of the Santali community by mapping the development of Santali literature.

2. Objective of the Study

The paper has been structure to explore the Santali literature by addressing the following objectives

- To explore the development of the Santali literature by mapping its development across various themes.

3. Methodology

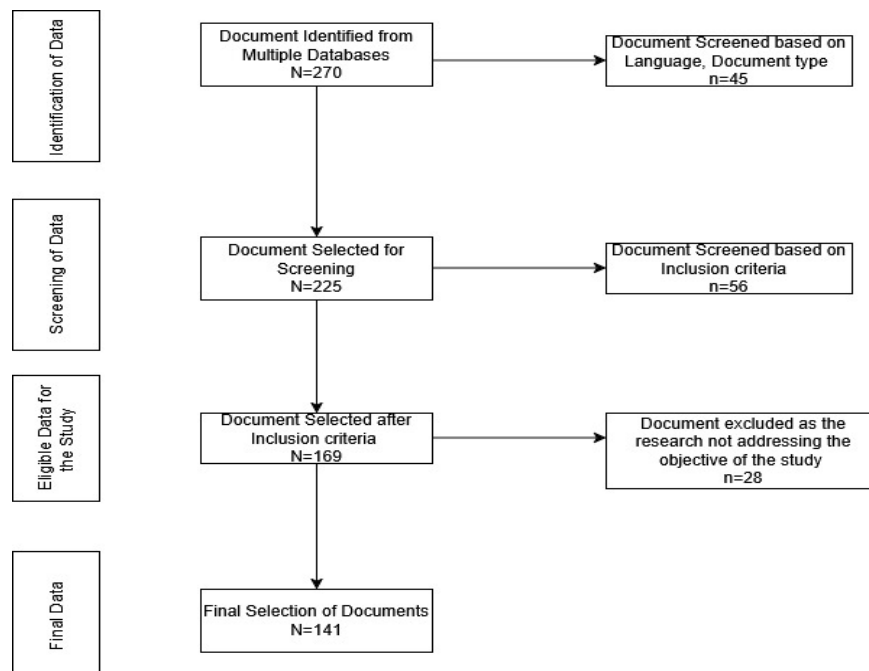
The study with the objective to explore the progress of Santali literature has chosen to undergo bibliometrics analysis of the document published in various databases. The data for the study have been collected from multiple databases which include Google Scholar, the library collection at Bankura University, and international journal repositories such as SAGE, Taylor & Francis, Science-Direct, JSTOR, and Wiley using the keyword “Santali, Santali Literature, Santali Language, Santali Traditional Knowledge, Santali Culture, Santali Indigenous knowledge” to trace the maximum literature which focuses on the development of Santali literature from its origin to present day. Accordingly, the study has included data pre-independence era to the present era i.e. from 1867 to 2021. Further, the study initiated with the initial document verification by going through the title, abstract, and keywords to filter out the irrelevant studies which are not aligned with the objective of the study. In doing the so, a total of 270 documents were included in the study, these documents were further filtered based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria which include (1) the document must focus on Santali community (2) The research must be on Santali community located in India (3) the document includes journal article, conference paper, book chapter, books, book review. (4) The chosen language includes English, Hindi, Bangla, and Ol-chiki. On undergoing these criteria 169 documents remained for further scrutiny. Finally after the last round of evaluation by undergoing the full paper analysis (in some cases), abstract, keywords 141 documents were finally included for the study.

Table 1: Overview of Bibliometric Data

Attributes	Search Content/Results
Database	Multiple Database includes Google Scholar, Libraries, Online database of Journals.
Search Keyword	Santali, Santali Literature, Santali Language, Santali Traditional Knowledge, Santali Culture, Santali Indigenous Knowledge
Time Span	1867-2021
Number of Documents Retrieve	270
Number of Documents included for the Study (after sorting)	141
Document type	Article, Book, Book Review, Conference Paper
Language	English, Hindi

Source: Authors own compilation

Figure 1: Research Data Method



Source: Authors own compilation

3.1. Data Analysis

The bibliometrics data obtained from the multiple databases and screened using the inclusion criteria is further tabulated and analysed using Microsoft Excel 2010 software in the two category which include (1) Analysing the publication trend of the retrieved data, (2) Thematic progress of the Santali literature. This approach will help to explore the development of the Santali literature and will list the major themes that have emerged from 1867-2021.

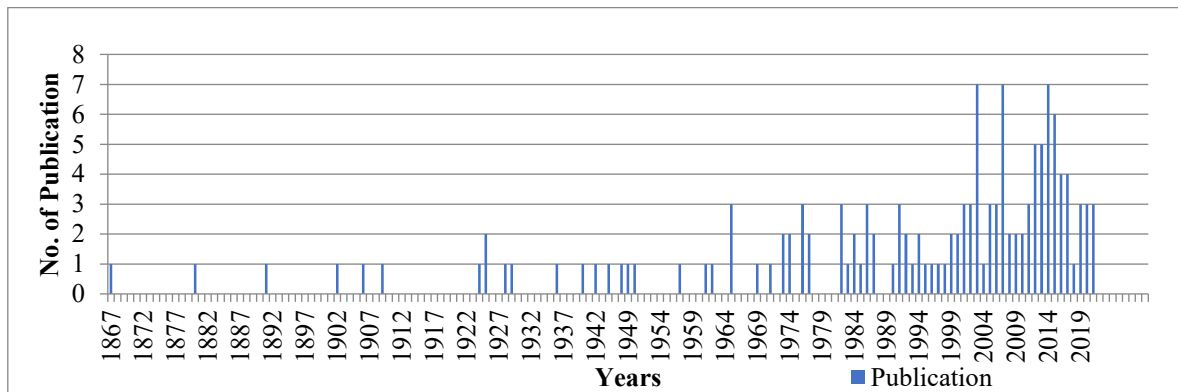
4. Results

This section of the paper describes the results on Santali literature and its development since 1867 to 2021.

4.1. Publication Trend

The publication trend of Santali literature shows a complex inter-linkage between the historical and cultural context, and the documentation and publication of the research document is based on the influences of these forces. Moreover, the publication trend projected in the figure 2 provides a positive and increasing trend of research in Santali literature. However, in the initial phase i.e. 1867-1944 (pre-independent phase) only 10 percent of publication were done but the most interesting thing is that all these publication were under the influence of Christian missionaries who were considered to be the pioneer in documenting the oral narratives of Santali community. Further after independence i.e. 1945-2021, 90 percent of publications were published with the Indian author dominating the number of publication on Santali community. Notably, 60 percent of these post-independence publications emerged after the year 2000, focusing primarily on themes related to cultural identity and developmental issues.

Figure 2: Publication Trend



Source: Authors own compilation

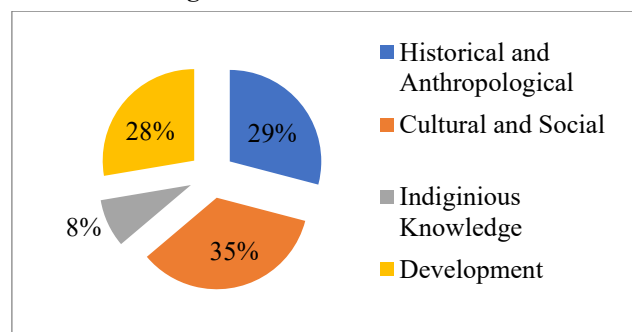
4.2. Publication Pattern

The publication pattern figure projected in figure 3 shows the emergence of 4 dominant themes in the Santali literature those themes are

- Historical and Anthropological Theme
- Social and Cultural Theme
- Indigenous/ Traditional Knowledge Theme, and
- Developmental Theme

The research publication trend projected in Figure 3 can be summarized in these four themes which represents the literature of Santali community. Moreover, out of these four themes cultural and social theme has marked the maximum attention from the scholar with 35 percent of publication dedicated to this theme, whereas the developmental and historical and anthropological themes mark 28 and 29 percent of publication. However, the data on research papers on Indigenous knowledge remains significantly under-represented, contributing only 8 percent of the total scholarly output.

Figure 3: Publication Pattern

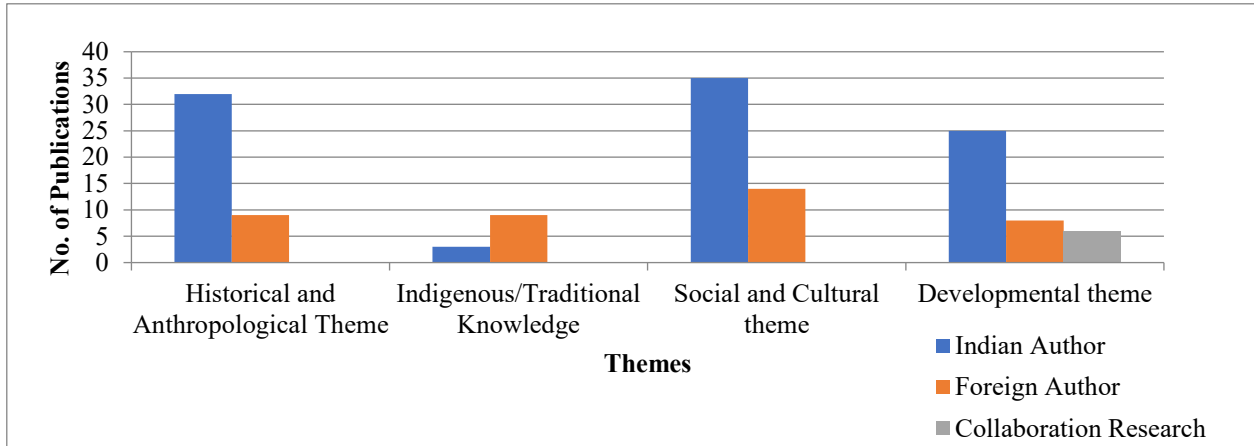


Source: Authors own compilation

4.3. Authorship Pattern and Research Dissemination

The authorship pattern represents the contribution of researcher in the development of Santali literature. The data projected in figure 4 shows the dominance of Indian researcher in publishing research on Santali literature. The data shows 78 percent, 71 percent and 64 percent of publication in the domain of historical and anthropological theme, Social and cultural theme and Developmental theme respectively.

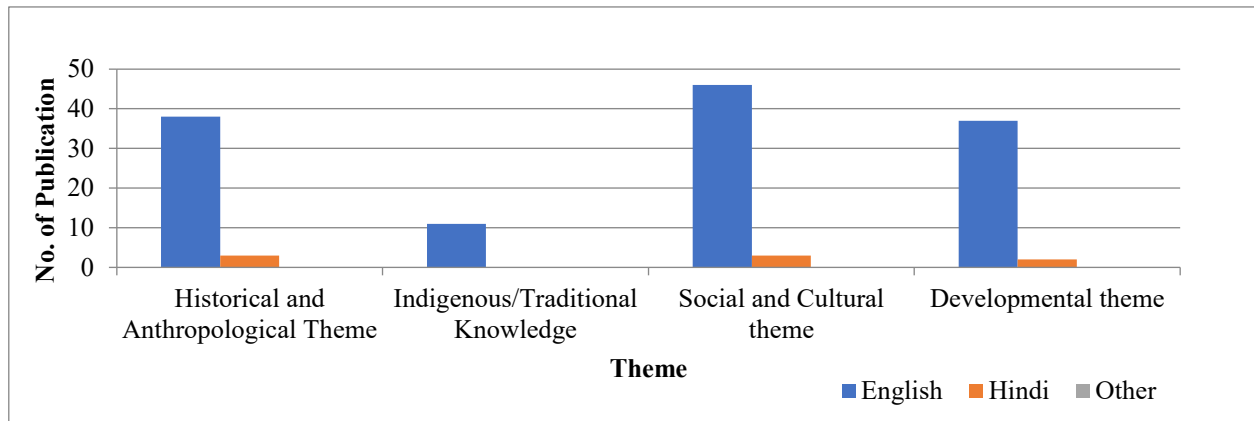
Figure 4: Author(s) contribution



Source: Authors own compilation

The growth of literature is closely tied to the dissemination of research findings, which in turn is influenced by the language in which the research is published. The study reveals a clear dominance of English, with over 90 percent of authors opting to publish in this language, indicating it as the most preferred medium for scholarly communication.

Figure 5: Publication Language



Source: Authors own compilation

5. Conclusion

The study with an objective to map the progress of Santali literature has conducted a thorough assessment of the academic literature available in multiple databases from 1867-2021. The study finds that literature has a positive and increasing trend of research in Santali literature with the dominance of Christian missionaries in documenting the oral narratives of Santali community followed by dominance of Indian authors during 1945-2021. The study also highlights the emergence of four dominant themes of publication from 1867-2021 which includes Historical and Anthropological Theme, Social and Cultural Theme, Indigenous/ Traditional Knowledge Theme, and Developmental Theme. The study also highlights the research concentration on the historical and anthropological, Social and cultural and developmental aspects of the Santali community whereas attention have been paid in exploring the indigenous and traditional knowledge of these communities. In addition to this the paper highlights the dominance of English, with over 90 percent of authors opting to publish in this language, indicating it as the most preferred medium for scholarly communication.

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the development and thematic progression of Santali literature over time. It reveals a significant gap in the early academic exploration of Santali literature, and research on Indigenous Knowledge. Moreover, this paper will help researcher in understanding the research theme on Santali literature, its content and its progress since its documentation. However, this study is not exhaustive but still it provides a useful insight into the development of Santali literature.

Acknowledgment: The authors acknowledges Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi for providing funds to undergo this research.

Author's Contribution: *Dr. Toposhree Taraphdar:* Data Collection, Literature Review, Methodology, Analysis, Drafting, Referencing and *Prof. Tripti Dhar:* Drafting

Funding: ICSSR, New Delhi

Declaration: All the authors have given consent for the publication.

Competing Interest: No

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