

## **LIVELIHOOD AND VULNERABILITY OF THE SANTALS COMMUNITY IN BANGLADESH**

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### **Abstract**

This study is about the livelihood of one of the Bangladesh ethnic tribal communities, the Santals. Being the minority, the Santals faces some challenges to adjust to political, social, economic and natural changes that came in their way during the last three hundred years. Due to multi-sectoral industrial development, the natural resources which are the primary sources of livelihood for the tribal communities are being depleted. This study aims to find the impacts on the livelihood pattern of the Santals due to the depletion of the common pool resources and how they are coping with this situation. This study identifies that pragmatic and comprehensive arrangements for the Santals is necessary so that they can continue living by preserving their ethnicity and cultural diversity.

**Keywords:** Santals, tribal community, livelihood, vulnerability

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## **Introduction**

The Santals represent one of the oldest indigenous groups in Bangladesh. The tribes concentrated in the districts of Rajshahi, Naogaon, Nawabganj, Dinajpur and Rangpur. Their habitat is close to forests, jungles and areas accessible to nature, in following a symbiotic relationship. They are mainly hunters and gatherers, depending on the proximity to the common pool resources (CPR). They also depend on the agriculture-based economy for their livelihood.

Technical and industrial development in Bangladesh is of the immense magnitude. Due to the rapid demographic pressure, the Santals have to face multidimensional changes in the economic, financial, religious and cultural facets of their lives. They get limited access to the common pool resources as the *'beels'*, and *'haors'* are leased out for commercial aquaculture. Many of the natural habitats for the insects and animals like crab, tortoise and snail are gradually being depleted due to mass use of insecticide. Frequent political changes, malpractices of politics, and bustle of land grabbers compel the Santals to lose their property. The Christianization process brings changes in their religious beliefs, traditions and lifestyles. As a consequence, the Santals are gradually losing their religious and cultural entity; as well as the areas of livelihood.

The Santals has always been an important part of Bangladesh population. During the past, the plain land Bengalis could improve their social and economic status remarkably, whereas the tribal community continued to suffer from a scarcity of resources and was forced to dispose of their moveable and immovable properties gradually. There is hardly any recorded evidence which suggests that a considerable number of people from the Santals community were able to improve their economic, social and financial conditions.

Community development literature proposes that any development without including the ethnic inhabitants is not likely to be sustainable and holistic. Thus, to ensure the existence of the Santals community in such a rapidly evolving scenario, they should be given the favourable area of income generation with appropriate training and motivation. Also, special measures are also needed to be made to preserve their culture as well as our national cultural heritage.

In this backdrop, the present study is significant. The Santals deserves more attention due to their status as one of the most disadvantaged citizens of Bangladesh. Social scientist, in particular, who involves with the community development programmes, should conduct more research on the life and culture of the Santals community in the present context to find out the problems they face, and also the opportunities they can avail to overcome the problems. Inputs from this study are critical for the government and the other concerned authorities to formulate appropriate policy regarding the common pool resources and the indigenous communities.

## The Santals Community

### Origin and culture

The Santals also spelt as *Santhal*/belonging to the Proto-Australoid group. They are short in stature, having a broad flat nose with a sunken nose ridge, wavy and curly hair. The issue of the Santals' historical origin and settlement is a controversial one (Bleie, 2005). The community has been given such name because they live and move from one place to another altogether (Barakat, Hoque, Halim & Osman, 2008). On the other hand, some of the anthropologists think that they are from *Saoot* or *Samantoral* (plain land) (Adibasi Janogoshti, Bangladesh Asiatic Society, 2007). Their language *Santalsi* is a part of the Austro-Asiatic family. The Santals worships *Marangburu* (big hill) or *Bonga* as the supreme deity. They believe that *Marangburu* first looked after them, feed them, clothed them, gave them sex and taught them brewing of rice beer.

The Santals celebrate loads of festivals on different occasions. They celebrate festivals like *Sohorai*, *Karam*, *Disumsendra*, *Ero*, *Jamtala Bonga*, and *Makar Parva*. The Santals follow the cycle of nature and agricultural term to celebrate festivals. They celebrate these festivals to invoke the nature for the increase of their wealth and free them from all the enemies. The Santalsi system of governance known as *Manjhi-Paragana* is led by *Manjhi Hadam* (headman of a village) who is the chief of the executive, judicial and all other functions within the society. The Santals tribe is divided into 12 clans or parish. They are *Kisku* (rulers), *Hasda*, *Murmu* (priest), *Hambrom* (judges), *Mardi* (businessman), *Sauren* (soldiers), *Tudu* (musician), *Baski*, *Besra*, *Pauria*, *Gua Soren*, and *Chaure* (Adibasi Janogoshti, Bangladesh Asiatic Society, 2007).

## **Livelihood capitals of the Santals community**

### ***Human capital***

Because of their lack of higher education, the Santals hardly get any employment opportunity. Illiteracy, an absence of organisational setup and lack of genuine leadership, have kept the Santals far from achieving any achievement. Most of the Santals are not aware of the means which they can save their belongings. They even do not know how to protect their properties. Though the literacy rate among the Santals is minuscule, some changes are becoming apparent in the recent days. Christian missionaries have established schools in and around the Santals villages, which are providing immense motivation to the Santals children to go to schools and get illuminated with the universal torch of knowledge.

The Santals who are adopted and educated by the Christian missionaries were in a better position. The converted Santals attracted towards the prospect of social advancement and political protection than the promise of spiritual salvation (Anwar, 1984). The age-old traditions and culture of the Santals changes due to the intervention of Christianization. The financial need forced them to be converted into Christian. The Christian missionaries in Bangladesh have been assisting them by offering material help. They also provided them with shelters. Their cooperating and supporting attitudes motivated the non-Christian Santals to get converted to Christianity. In other words, prospective material benefits; rather than lofty considerations of spiritual and enlightenment remained a primary driver in the religious conversion processes.

### ***Natural capital***

The Santals community is comfortable with nature, collecting food from the nearby pool of resources or CPR. The vast *Shai* dominated forests have provided various generations of the Santals with an abundance of wild foods and medical remedies, grazing grounds, recreational areas that were available without significant labour inputs. They collected flowers, fruits, leafy vegetables, roots, fungi and honey from the forest. The many varieties of wild potatoes substituted rice in situations of severe crop failure. They hunted reptiles and animals (i.e., birds, rats, rattles) as their primary source of protein. The Santals possess the unique skills of making musical equipment, mats and baskets out of the plants and bamboo. The vast, open forests also provided nutritious food for the domestic animals of the Santals. The awe, fear and general fascination, experiences from the woods were sources of inspiration

and motivation for collective cultural expressions in the religious and social life of the Santals. The *beels* and marshlands provided them with various kinds of natural food all the year round. They catch fish, shellfish, crab, snail and other insects using indigenous nets and traps. Fruits and leaves like *shapla*, *shaluk*, *Padma* and *panifal* that grown in water are important sources of food for the Santals.

### **Financial capital**

The economic condition of the plain land Santals is significantly worse. 59.9 percent of the plain land *Adibasi* people in Bangladesh are poor, compare to only 39.9 percent of people in rural Bangladesh. Hardcore poverty is also more pronounced among the plain land *Adibasi* than that of the rural Bangladeshis (Barakat et al. 2008). Studies show that Santals community possess fewer household assets than the other plain land *Adibasi* communities (Barakat et al., 2008).

### **Physical capital**

The physical capital which includes infrastructure, tools and equipment used for productivity is fewer among the Santals community. In the past, the majority of the Santals were landowners, but due to various causes, they become the poorest of the poor. At present, nearly 80 percent of the Santals are landless, being forced earn their livelihood relying on the mercy and availability of work in the fields of their Muslim or Hindu neighbours for their mere subsistence (Barakat et al., 2008). The Santals community cannot avail the opportunity of getting loans from different banks and financial institutions for failing to fulfil the condition for getting loans.

### **Social capital**

Nowadays, the mobility and interaction of the Santals with the mainstream population have increased due to the expansion of market mechanism and employment opportunities outside their villages. The government and non-government organisation rarely have undertaken different development programs (i.e., education, infrastructural development, rural electrification, and health facilities) in most of the populated tribal areas of Bangladesh (Shelly, 1992).

## The Vulnerability Context

The life of the Santals in Bangladesh has not been easy. Natural and manmade vulnerability has made their living highly challenging. They cannot make efficient use of their physical assets due to various problems they face. Over the years, they can hardly exercise their political rights as a citizen of this country or even voice their opinions. Because of their lack of higher education, they cannot compete in the job market with the Bengalis. On top of all that, they are prone to disasters which makes them very vulnerable and puts their livelihood at stake. In the following paragraphs, the authors discussed their vulnerability.

### Decrease in common pool resources

The resources used by the Santals community is either shared by others or decreased due to humanmade or natural change. As the Santals are agro-based society, technological progress in agriculture has also pushed them into the vulnerability margin. The biodiversity of the forest has been severely reduced in the last 20 to 25 years. Many species of trees, bushes, creepers, tubers, birds and carnivores disappeared. Wild honey and edible flowers are no longer available. Fungi have become a rarity due to the deforestation. The flora and faunas are depleting due to the development of the technology-based method that replacing human labour (Bleie, 2005).

### Unfavourable government policy

Numerous land laws were enacted over the time keeping special provisions for the protection of the tribal land. But the individual provisions in these statutes never secured the interest of the ethnic communities and the indigenous people. The Santals lost their land due to the operation of the Enemy Property Act 1965 and the Vested Property Act 1974, as they were deliberately categorised as Hindus. The *Krishi Khas Jomi Bondobostho Nitimala*, 1995 provided little scope for the Santals to receive free land. The influential people evicted the Santals from their heritage lands. The *Sarkari Jalmahal Babosthyapona Nity*, 2009, The Acquisition of Immoveable Property Act, 1982, The Wildlife (Preservation and Security) Act 2012, Settlement of 'reserve forest', 'Eco Park' added hindrance to the progress of the Santals. The legislation also created a large number of obstacles to the use of CPR by the Santals.

## Hostile social and political power

The Santals people have to face confrontation with the local population involving the use of shared resources. The immediate causes are merely triggering incidents which force themselves into violent battle, arduous litigations or a never-ending cycle of possession and repossession of land. The influential and interested local groups dispossessed the Santals from their land using undue political influence. The land dispossession phenomenon among the Santals community started basically in 1947. Most cases of land dispossession among the plain land *Adibasi* people took place in 1964/65 when a riot broke out between the Hindus and Muslims. Around 23 percent of all dispossessions took place between 1961 and 1970. After the 1980s, this rate of land dispossession decreased (Barakat et al., 2008).

## Unfavourable legal framework

Although the Santals have been living in Bangladesh in specific areas and lands for generations, many of them do not possess valid documents for their land heritage. The government did not acknowledge the traditional land right system of the *Adibasi* communities. Access to local courts is expensive and arduous. The wetland management system also promotes land dispossession and conflicts between the Santals and the influential local plain land peoples.

## Methods and Analytical Framework

A survey has been carried out to answer these questions: (1) what are the impacts on the livelihood pattern of the Santals community due to the decline in common pool resources? and (2) how is the Santals community develop their capability to cope with these changes? The study, thus, pursues the following objectives:

- 1) To find out the scale and manifestation of changes in the life of the Santals community due to the decline in common pool resources.
- 2) To identify how the Santals is adapting to the changing situation.
- 3) To furnish recommendations towards improving the situation.

## Research approach, design and data gathering technique

The study used both qualitative and quantitative research method to collect it's primary and secondary data. Techniques for primary data gathering

involved a usage of a set of questionnaire to collect the primary data, Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and personal interviews with the key informants. Secondary data (i.e., previous research works by various scholars, books, journals, periodicals, magazines, newspaper, articles collected from websites) were used to understand the Santals, in particular, to know their history, culture, livelihood and economic condition.

### **Sampling and sample of the study**

The respondents were selected randomly from four Upazilas of Dinajpur district. 100 respondents of different age and sex had been asked 45 questions to acquire the data in the respective study area. The study categorised the age of the respondents into five groups (20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59 and above 60). Their age distribution pattern was quite diverse and pragmatic as 19 people were between 20 to 29 years, 34 people between 30 to 39 years, 28 people between 40 to 49 years, 15 people between 50 to 59 years and 4 people were 60 and above. Out of 100 respondents, 59 were male, and 41 were female.

### **Analytical framework**

The study attempts to measure the livelihood outcomes (dependent variables) such as higher income, health security, social security, food safety and self-esteem due to the decrease in common pool resource. Physical assets such as human capital, financial capital, natural capital, physical capital and social capital are used as indicators to measure the manifestation of the change in profession, financial capability, food habit, and household assets, land asset, access to health, education, nature and building self-awareness. Independent variable is less in common-pool resources. The following analytical framework illustrated the variables and measurement indicators of the study.

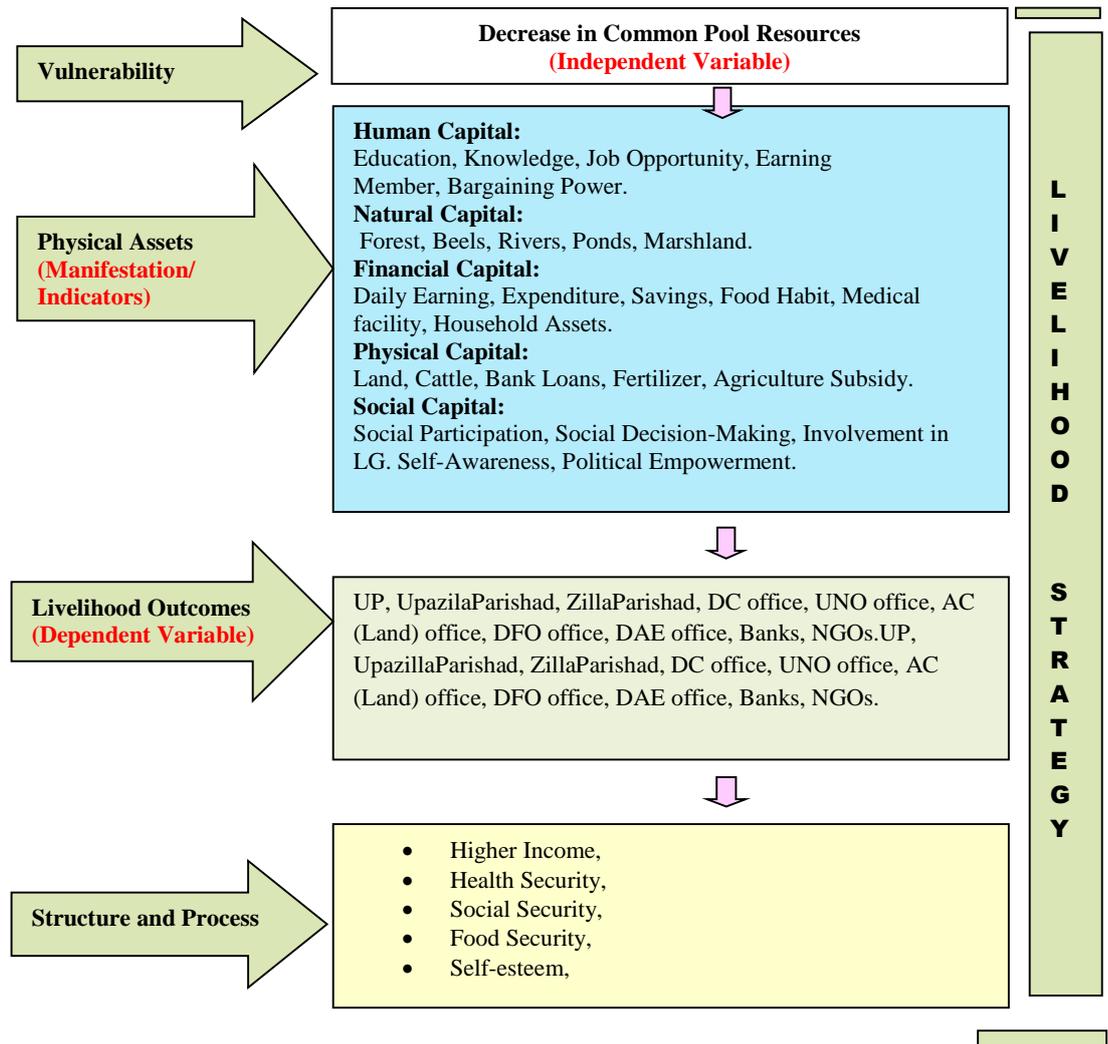


Figure 1: Analytical Framework of the Study

## Findings

### Changes in human capital

To know the quality and capacity regarding income generating activities, the researchers asked the respondents about their education, profession and future human resource potentials and prospects. 56% respondents replied that they went to school. The Christian missionaries are persuading them for education with some incentives. In response to the question of how long they can continue their studies, 56% respondents stated that they had to end their

academic life at different level tragically. Close observation and discussion reveal that financial crisis leads them to leave school for earning a livelihood. Out of 56 respondents, 33 (60% of school goers) have primary school education. 19 respondents (34% of school goers) have been able to attain education up to high school level and only 4 respondents (6% of school goers) has been able to get the opportunity to avail upper secondary education. Therefore, only 6% students have been able to get admission in the college.

The study also found that there is a remarkable change in the pattern of occupation among the Santals. 97% respondents work as a day labour. Only 3% engaged in a proper job. They are mostly employed in an agro-based business, and very fewer numbers among them are getting employment in a proper job, though not in higher rank. None of the respondents claimed that they are a hunter in term of a profession. It is remarkable that no female respondents claim themselves to be a housewife. 87% respondents stated that they come from a dual-earner household. When was asked whether they are satisfied with their changed profession, 81% of the respondents replied that they are pleased with the changing.

This study also saw a definite trend about the awareness for children education. 76% of the interviewees allow their children to attend school. The recognition resulted from the changes in the surrounding atmosphere. Due to that, the rate and the tendency of school going population are increasing. However, in term of gender, the rate of female education level is higher than the male. Higher education rate is distinctly lower (7%) than that of the primary school education. The study concluded that future human capital potential of the Santals is developing with improvement in the education sector.

### **Changes in natural capital**

The natural capital includes the natural resources like water, *beels*, forest and marshland; the community pool resource (CPR). The natural capital affects the life of the Santals community substantially. 89% of the respondents reported that they used to go to the CPR for collecting food. Among the respondents who goes to the CPR, 63% of the respondents used to go to CPR once a day for food, 5% go to CPR twice a day, and 32% used to go twice a week. The data depict that frequency of using CPR is decreasing gradually.

In answering the question about decreasing usage of the CPR, 79% of the respondents think that the resource of CPR has dropped. After the massive depletion of CPR, 62% of the respondents still can fulfil their need with

alternative options. However, 48% of the respondents replied that they cannot afford alternative items. More than 50% of the participants believed that they have restrictions to access the CPR. Among the interviewed people, 54% of them said they cannot easily use forest, beels, marshlands, and ponds nowadays.

In using the CPR, 16% of the respondents think different rules and regulations of the government such as the *Sarkari Jalmahal Babosthyapona Nity of 2009*, the *Krishi Khas Jomi Bondobostho Nitimala of 1995*, the Acquisition of Immoveable Property Act, 1982, and the Wildlife (Preservation and Security) Act 2012, have created obstacle to using the CPR. 13% complained that they are politically barred from using the CPR. Then, 71% of the respondents said that they have to lessen the frequency of using CPR as the resources of the CPR is decreasing.

### Changes in financial capital

The financial capital of the Santals are their daily earnings. 33% of them have assets amounting approximately 10,000 to 20,000 Taka. Both male and female members earn equally in the Santals community. 72% of the respondents meet their basic need with their present income level, though the earning is very low (150-200 Taka/day). Around one-third of the respondents can meet their need for this small income as almost every family has more than one earning members, and their living standard and expectation is lower.

53% of the respondents who failed to meet their basic need with their earnings has to depend on CPR. On the other hand, 10% of the interviewees overcome their financial crisis by taking loans from others, and 37% of the respondents have to triumph over the situation through self-adjustment. The Santals cannot work seven days a week always because jobs in the rural area are not always available. During the critical months of the year (i.e., Arshin-kartic/ September-October), 76% of the respondents had to starve as they do not have a job or additional financial resources.

In term of health care, the Santals visit a doctor less frequently, sometimes never. Only 19% of the respondents can afford to see a doctor once a month, 16% of the respondents meets a doctor quarterly, 33% of the respondents meets a doctor only once a year, and 32% of the respondents have never met a doctor. Health workers' service to the Santals community was found to be remarkable. But it is heartening to record that 77% of the respondents have said that they are regularly visited by the government health

workers. A notable result is seen about the maternal health among the Santals community. Pregnant women are accessible to a medical facility. Because of the regular visit of the government health workers' awareness of maternal health is improving among the Santals community. However, this study found that the sanitation coverage is not satisfactory. Only 61% of the respondents use the sanitary latrine.

### **Changes in physical assets**

The study assessed the infrastructure and equipment for productivity owned by the Santals to ascertain their physical assets. Only 9% of the respondents own a land. 44% of the land owner have sold their land within the last 15 years. Unfortunately, no respondents were able to buy any form of property within the past fifteen years. The finding indicates that the community could not increase their physical assets through saving. The number of landless population in the Santals community is comparatively higher than the plain land Bengalis. The Santals community is not prioritised for the *Khas Land* distribution. Only 5% of the respondents are the recipients of the government's *Khas Land*.

Previously there was sufficient unused area where everybody could rear livestock. That area has become much more limited nowadays. 19% of the respondents stated that they could manage some free space for breeding their cattle. 81% of the respondents commented that there is no such open area available now.

To create some form of income generating activities, only 58% of the respondents could manage credit support from bank/NGOs. The government's social safety net programs (i.e., Gratuitous Relief, Test Relief, Vulnerable Group Feeding, Vulnerable Group Development, Old Allowance, Widow Allowance, and Disable Allowance) cover only a few sections of the Santals community. Sadly enough, the existing social safety-net programmes do not cover 90% of the community members.

### **Changes in social capital**

The social capital of the Santals has been explored by focusing on the group's participation in selected political, social and official activities; as well as their involvement in the awareness program. 93% of the respondents do exercise their voting rights; whereas 3% do not take part in voting in any election.

However, no respondents had made an attempt to compete in the election to serve as the public representative for their community. They do not think themselves to be competent enough and naturally empowered to compete in the local election. Their participation in the local government bodies is also subtle. They have negligible participation in social and official gatherings. Only 2% of the respondents reported that they had attended *Union Parishad* meetings. The Santals have little access to media. None of them realises that active involvement with media would have endowed them with greater social and political awareness; as well as social empowerment.

### The coping and adaptation strategy of the Santals Community

Despite being faced with the enormous amount of practical challenges and ever-mounting pressure of daunting magnitude in the context of dwindling CPR, the Santals community is found to be resilient and innovative. They are regularly trying to adopt several indigenous strategies to surmount these challenges and improve their capitals. The researchers discussed some of the indigenous coping and adaptation strategies practised by the Santals community in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### *Adaptation in Human Capital*

The human capital is the main strength to combat any crisis related to livelihood. The Santals people are seen to change their profession to meet the decreasing of their natural resources. Previously, they were engaged in hunting and gathering from nature. They were also unemployed. At present, no respondents involved in hunting and gathering, or who is unemployed. They are coping with the changed situation by choosing a suitable profession. 76% of the respondents are sending their children to school. In future, these human resources will be able to accommodate themselves in any adverse situation easily.

Table 1: The Santals' Professions of Past and Present

Profession	Past	Present
<b>Day labourer</b>	89%	97%
<b>Hunting</b>	6%	0
<b>Official Job</b>	2%	3%
<b>Unemployed</b>	3%	0

### ***Adaptation in natural capital***

The study found that the Santals has successfully managed to adapt to the precarious situation resulting from ever depleting natural resources due to physical and human-made reasons. The Santals collecting their required commodities from the natural source much less frequently than they used to do earlier. The products also can be bought from a nearby market.

### ***Adaptation in financial capital***

The financial condition of the Santals community is markedly lower than the average of the Bengalis. The decrease of CPR which is a major source of food has put them in a more critical condition. They try to address the crisis of financial vulnerability through self-adjustment. 34% of the respondents reported that they could save a lump sum amount from their earning to overcome the unexpected situation.

### ***Adaptation in physical capital***

The Santals are well equipped and competent enough to combat the vulnerability context as their physical assets are gradually increasing. They are getting support from outside agencies in building their capacity. They still rear cattle and livestock which also help them to adapt to the odd situations.

### ***Adaptation in Social capital***

The social capital of the Santals is not sufficiently high. However, it is encouraging to note that there are signs of positive development and increasing trend in enhancing their social capital. Very few of them watch and listen to the social media, and take part in the election. Although very negligible, some of them have started to attend political and official gatherings. It is well understood that they will be able to cope with any unfavourable situation more confidently and aptly if their social awareness is increased.

Overall, the study can conclude that social change is remarkable among the Santals community, and it increases their social empowerment potentials to cope with the future adverse position. The Santals are gradually coping with the changing livelihood surroundings due to the decline of CPR. The adapting strategies are switched their professions to a modern form of agro-based activities, developing their human resource capacity through education for better coping with any adverse situation in future, lessening their dependency on the CPR by choosing alternative resources for the CPR, developing an alternative financial capability (i.e., collective credit scheme), changing their

traditional habit of food, and developing the habit of saving for future critical moment.

## Discussion and Recommendations

The Santals community is a vital member of Bangladesh, who differs from the mainstream population regarding origin, culture, food habit and financial capability. They depend on the agro-based professions and the nearby CPR for livelihood. The common pool resources have got the characterization of private goods. For various reasons the moving space of the Santals community decreases.

During the past decades, the Bengalis could improve their financial condition remarkably, but there is a rare example where the Santals have improved their financial solvency. Thus, it is crucial to support the Santals as they need more extensive cooperation for them to be able to reintegrate into the mainstream people. Social inclusion policies are necessary as the measures can eliminate social discrimination and provide equal opportunity for the Santals to avail all the benefits the state offers.

To ensure the future existence of the Santals community, they should be given the favourable area of income generation with appropriate training and motivation, and special measures need to be taken to preserve their culture as well as our national cultural heritage.

Based on the field observations and findings, the following recommendations are submitted so that the Santals community can easily accommodate themselves combating the adverse impacts of declining CPR.

### Policy level recommendations

- 1) *Amendment in Existing Law.* There are some laws which hamper the right of the ethnic community. The laws such as the *Sarkari Jalmahal Babosthyapona Nity, 2009*, the *Krishi Khas Jomi Bondobostho Nitimala, 1995*, the Acquisition of Immoveable Property Act, 1982, and the Wildlife (Preservation and Security) Act 2012 should be amended to ensuring the right of the ethnic community.
- 2) *CPR Reservation.* The common pool resources should be reserved for future use. The CPR is necessary not only for the Santals community but

also for the balance of the eco system. The reservation of CPR will ensure the rest of the ecosystem and the easy access to the dependent people to CPR. Policies to prevent the transformation of the CPR and the commercial use of CPR are to be enacted. No development projects diminishing the CPR should be taken.

- 3) *Maintain quota in local government.* Local government is a vital organisation for social empowerment. Local government institutions ensure local development. But the local administration systems do not reach the ethnic community. The ethnic groups in the plain land cannot represent in the local body through the election and also competition. For this reason, a quota for the ethnic people as a public representative in the rural local government institutions should be introduced for the development of the ethnic community.

### **Implementation level recommendations**

- 1) *Provide Subsidy.* The Santals should be provided with alternative professions so that they become less dependent on CPR as the excess use of CPR may disrupt the balance of the eco system. During the period of transition to a new profession, special subsidy programs are needed to be introduced to them. It will lessen the frequency of CPR use and provide adequate space and opportunity to be competent in their new profession.
- 2) *Provide Training:* The Santals community should be able to engage themselves with a modern and mainstream business as early as possible, as their traditional area of movements is continuously being squeezed. They should be given proper training in suitable income generating activities. Besides collateral free credit, some arrangements for them by both the government and non-government organisations is necessary.
- 3) *Maintain quota in Social Safety Program (SSP):* The Santals community is still financially insolvent. Extra care and attention are essential to ensure that they can survive and progress in their lives. The government has different social safety net programs where the Santals are seldom considered. The public representatives are also most of the time ignorant and callous about the SSP need of this community. There should be a quota system in SSP for the Santals until they are adequately developed.
- 4) *Promote Education:* Education is the basic platform of all developments. The Santals community is already on the track of spreading education in their society. However, owing to the financial

crisis, they cannot continue their education up to the desired level. Thus, there should be special assistance programs in the upbringing for the Santals community or the ethnic groups.

## Conclusion

The findings presented in the previous section conspicuously highlights the very fact that the CPR plays an important role on the livelihood of the Santals community. The decline in the CPR has compelled the Santals to search for and find out alternative resources for sustenance. Being hard working, they are capable to cope with the changing situation. There is also an increasing trend of pursuing different levels of education among the Santals; which will help them to survive and sustain in the vulnerable situations. The CPR on which the Santals community depends is declining, and correspondingly the access to the CPR by the Santals is also getting limited.

Dependency on the CPR is decreasing, but when the people cannot manage to find any other substantial means of livelihood, they still resort to the local CPR. Although the process and pace are slow, there is evident for the gradual shift of the Santals community to an alternative profession. No remarkable development is observed in the financial and social aspects of the Santals community because still, they have to depend on nature when they are unable to manage any job. The government's support in health and education sector for this community is worth mentioning. Economic rehabilitation either by credit or social safety net program is inadequate. There is a positive change in human resource development as the community shows an increasing tendency and interest to invest in their children education. The capability of the Santals community people to cope with the change is gradually developing.

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