



Santal Majhi System: An Evolutionary Review

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Abstract:- One of the indigenous peoples living in India is the Santal. In addition to Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Assam and West Bengal in India, this community lives in Nepal and Bangladesh. Every indigenous person has their own way of life, rules, which govern their lives. Like other indigenous people, the Santals also have their own traditions, customs, and norms on the basis of which they live their lives. Not only that, there is the traditional Majhi system to guide the social system and the people of the community in the right direction. Through which autonomy has been established and it is considered a symbol of democracy. Although different autonomous systems are observed in different states in India, after the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution, a three-tier Panchayat system has been formed everywhere. Through which the marginalized people can participate in the governance system. Therefore, it can be seen that two types of systems are seen in the areas inhabited by the Santals. That is, the Panchayat system and the Majhi system. Therefore, the main topic of discussion is which system the Santal community will adopt or which system will prevail in all regions. Although in recent times, emphasis has been placed on achieving harmony between the two.

Key word :- Santal, Panchayat, More hor , Manjhi, Godet, Jaher than

Introduction:- The Main features of a democratic political system is the decentralization of power. The natural consequence of the combination of democracy and decentralization of power is self-government. Gandhiji said that India lives in the villages, he was enthusiastic about re-establishing the Panchayat system on a democratic basis and also believed that Swaraj can be established only when the villages are self-sufficient.

Background:- Since ancient times, a type of self-government system existed in India. The smallest political unit of the Indian state was the village. In ancient India too, various self-government institutions such as Sabha, Samiti, Panchayat existed. We find references to this in the Vedic era and in various Puranas, besides the Ramayana and Mahabharata. These Panchayats were governed by various customary practices and social laws. This type of self-government system was abolished in British India. Article 40 of the Directive Policy in independent India talks about the establishment of a self-government system. By 1957, in addition to the Balwant Mehta Roy Committee, various committees were formed and made various recommendations to strengthen self-government. The most groundbreaking event in the local self-government system was the 73rd constitutional amendment of 1992, which brought a major change in the local self-government system, in this way the Panchayat system was established on a constitutional and political basis. This Panchayat system has gained public support and the people's enthusiastic participation is seen. But in several places where there is a parallel social organization of this political institution,

there is a relationship of mutual interference, conflict and hostility between the two. Since ancient times, a kind of social system existed among various tribal groups. Through which they managed and controlled their society. Currently, most of the tribal communities and their culture are facing extinction, and many have lost their own identity, culture and merged with the mainstream of society, so their social organizations are facing extinction. But in recent times, various tribal organizations are working independently and impartially. We will discuss that lively organization. There is a type of social organization among the Santal community. Which is known as the Majhi system. The Santal community is a community belonging to the Austric language group. Linguist Paul Sidwell believes that they started living in India around 4000-3500 BC. People of this community live in various states of India, especially Jharkhand, Bihar, Assam, Orissa, and West Bengal, Tripura, as well as Bangladesh and Nepal. I do not know how lively and independent this social organization is outside India. However, the active form of this Majhi system can be observed in the areas inhabited by the Santal community in India. A democratic system has been established in modern India. There is an attempt to enforce the same law and rule throughout India. After the amendment of the Constitution in 1993, a three-tier Panchayat system has been established. So that the marginalized people can participate in the governance system from the grassroots level. It has been said to make it legal and compulsory. The legal recognition of the Panchayat system is present. On the other hand, although there is no legal recognition of the Majhi system, there is a traditional or traditional recognition. Which has made it a strong traditional organization, i.e. in the Santal-dominated areas, there are two types of organizations, firstly, the political organization called the three-tier Panchayat system. On the other hand, the traditional social organization is the Majhi system. Our topic of discussion is the evolution of the Majhi system as a parallel organization to the Gram Panchayat system, i.e., the traditional organization that has been going on since ancient times, how much has it changed or is it happening over time and is there a conflict with this three-tier Panchayat? Or is it walking on the path of mutual cooperation?

Majhi system and its structure: - Since ancient times, a kind of well-organized and well-developed Majhi system can be observed in the Santal villages. Through this system, the people of the Santal community have maintained their culture and economic and social system for ages. Since the time the people of the Santal community have been living in India, they have introduced this system to maintain unity, solidarity and social order among themselves and to lead a better life. The village-centered Majhi system was independent and self-sufficient. In the Majhi system, 5 people play a key role. They are known as 'Mare Hor'. The specialization of each person's work can be seen. There is also At 'Mare Hor' which we can also call 'Village Council'. Here all the people of the village become its members. These 5 members who are engaged in the management of the society are directly nominated or elected by the 'Ato Mare Hor' or Village Council. Their opinion is sought in the month of Magh of the year, whether they agree to the work or not, then they are given the responsibility of governance. In this village-centered Majhi system, the main responsibility is entrusted to 5 people. Generally, there is no specific retirement age and although the responsibility is assigned through generations, more importance is given to specific qualifications and age limits. Who will be entrusted with which responsibility at a particular time of the year and whether he is willing and capable of taking on the responsibility is discussed at the 'Jaher Than'. Where they welcome the new year in the month of Magh and perform puja. There they take oath. In this village-centric Majhi system, those who are responsible persons are not paid, that is, they do not receive any salary or allowance for this work. In the village-centered Majhi system, one of the responsible persons is the Majhi Baba. He is the main person in charge of the village administration and judicial system. In case of any kind of internal dispute, he is the one who takes important decisions. In the event of any kind of important problem, he is the one who orders to call a meeting. In Santal society, be it a puja-parvan, birth, death or marriage, or ritual, the advice and permission of the Majhi is taken in every case. Even when a plan is made to expand the village to a new area, the village boundaries are determined and the village is established on the instructions of the Majhi. He is like the guardian of the village. In the event of the death of the Majhi Baba or in his absence, the Paranik performs his duties. He is known as the assistant of the boatman, in the absence of the boatman, all the work is entrusted to him. In addition, the Jagmaji stays to help the boatman father.

He keeps an eye on whether the people of the village are able to live a comfortable life. He especially takes the responsibility of seeing and hearing the unmarried young men and women of the village, so that each one can have good qualities and good minds. A few decades ago, if the unmarried young men and women went out of the village, they had to take the permission of the Jagmaji. Although today it is not given that much importance. On the other hand, when the boatman father calls a meeting, the one who invites the members of the 'Mare Haar' to gather is the Godet. He works according to their advice. During any conference or various events, Godet goes to every house and invites them. Apart from this, he tells the happiness and sorrow of the people of the village to the Jagmaji. The pujas that the Santal people perform are usually seasonal. The one who performs the puja in all these pujas is the hero. He performs the puja in any puja within the village. In the absence of this, he performs the Paranik puja.

This is a hierarchical system. Like the village-centered Majhi system, 5 people are in charge at each level. This system extends from the rural level to the national level, if the problem of the village fails to be solved, it gradually rises to the upper level. Although everyone is independent in the governance system, if a problem is not solved at any level, it is finally tried in the highest court where the chief judge is in charge of the trial. This is where all the problems are solved. Be it at the personal level or problems between different villages. Since ancient times, the Santal social system was a social center. The role of society behind every work was important. This social system guided every person to be disciplined, well-intentioned and guided on the right path.

Evaluation :-For a long time, the Majhi system was able to work independently as it was outside the influence and interference of politics. Currently, this system is facing problems due to its influence, which has made its existence uncertain. First, political interference, secondly, the strong Panchayat system along with modern civilization. In the previous century, the Santals lived in the jungle, the villages were far from the locality, as a result of which they were out of the mainstream and could live a very independent life. But now they are living together with the original inhabitants and are attracted to them and are giving their loyalty to the government instead of this Majhi system. Thus, a section of the Santal society feels that the people of the Santal community are losing faith in this traditional system. In recent times, politics is gradually getting involved in this social organization and trying to influence as well as interfere, as a result, it has become increasingly difficult to work impartially and independently. Many times, political parties and leaders are trying to use this organizational system for their own interests, and have even succeeded in various cases. Which shook the foundation of this system. Santal social life was very simple. But gradually social life is evolving. The social system is becoming increasingly complex and the crime rate is increasing. For this reason, an independent, impartial and strong judicial system has been established in India. On the other hand, the main authorities of this Majhi Pargana, such as the village Majhi Baba and in higher cases, the Pargana Judge, are in charge of the main justice. In that case, the punishment given by this system is naturally contrary to the Indian judicial system, as a result, it is seen that the punishment given by the Majhi system is not enforced in this case. In this case, if various punishments are failed, most people will naturally lose faith in this system. Which has gradually brought the structure of this system into question. Today, this Majhi system is facing crises from various aspects, as a result of which its existence has become uncertain. But it is still committed to maintaining this system. To ensure that this system can survive, tribal organizations like Adibasi Social Educational & Culture Association (ASECA) and Bharat Zakat Majhi Pargana Mahal or Bharat Disham Majhi Madwa are taking various measures. Various training sessions and discussion meetings are being held so that the Majhi Babas can become skilled. In addition, various demands are also being presented to the government so that the power of Majhi Babas and Pargana Babas gets legal recognition from customary recognition. has done. Various demands have even been made for the right to autonomy in the Santal-dominated areas. Besides, a review meeting is organized at the Muluk level at the end of every year, where the Majhi Babagans of Ato, Muluk and Allat and their colleagues go and see samples of their work. Sometimes, government officials from the adjacent areas are invited to these meetings.

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