

# Santhals

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**In news**– Droupadi Murmu has become 15th President of India. She has made history as India's first tribal woman President(Santhal) & 2nd woman President.

## About Santhal tribes-

- **The name "Santhal," which means quiet and serene, is derived from two words: "santha," which means calm, and "ala," which means man.** The Santal, or Santhal, are a Munda ethnic group **native to South Asia.**
- However, the **exact date of the origin of the Santhal community is not known** due to the paucity of written records. But **it is believed that their origin was from the Champa kingdom of North Cambodia.**
- According to Bhubaneswar-based Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), Santhals were a nomadic stock before they chose to settle in the Chotanagpur plateau.
- Santhals are the **third largest scheduled tribe community in India after Gonds and Bhils.**
- Their **population is mostly distributed in Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.**
- They are nature worshippers and could be seen paying obeisance at **Jaher (sacred groves) in their villages.**
- Various **forms of marriage** are accepted in the Santhal society – including elopement, widow remarriage, levirate, forced (rare) and the one in which **a man is made to marry the woman he has impregnated.**
- **The Santhal have 12 clans,** each divided into a number of subdivisions also based on descent, which is patrilineal. Traditionally, members of the same clan do not marry each other.
- Divorce is not a taboo in the Santhal society. **Either of the couple could divorce the other.**

- There are certain **unique rules that expecting Santhal parents have to follow**. The husband does not kill an animal or takes part in a funeral when the wife is pregnant.
- The wife does not go out into the forest unaided by somebody, and does not mourn or weep the death of anybody during her pregnancy.
- During festivals, Santhals play musical instruments like kamak, dhol, sarangi and flutes.
- Most Santhals are agriculturists, depending on their farmlands or forests. **Their homes, called Olah, have a particular three-colour pattern on the outer walls**. The bottom portion is painted with black soil, the middle with white and the upper with red.
- **River Damodar holds a special place in the religious life cycle of a Santhal**. When a Santhal dies, his or her ashes and bones are immersed in the Damodar for a peaceful afterlife.
- **Their tribal language is called Santhali**, which is written in **a script called Ol chiki**, developed by Santhal scholar Pandit Raghunath Murmu.
- **Santhali language belongs to the Munda group**. Santhali written in Ol-Chiki script is recognised as **one of the scheduled languages in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution**.

### **Santhal Uprising-**

- The **community had revolted against British rule in 1855**, two years **before the far more famous uprising of 1857**.
- **In 1855–1856, the Santhal Revolt took place. Jharkhand is home to a large population of the Santhal tribe**. This was India's first major peasant uprising.
- **The implementation of the Permanent Land Settlement in 1793 was responsible for the uprising**.
- The British seized territories that the Santhals had been cultivating for ages through the aforementioned

settlement pattern.

- Farmers were taken advantage of by zamindars (land-owning communities), lenders, Europeans, and British government officials, who also increased the land tax.
- The Santhals then revolted against the British government and landlords because they felt oppressed.
- The Santhals took part in **guerrilla conflict**. For Bihar, this was an unusual occurrence.
- In order to fight their oppressors, **the Santhals organised their own army of peasants**. The rail and postal networks were destroyed by the Santhal army.
- The Santhal insurrection was undoubtedly highly successful for a while, but it was crushed because it was unable to overthrow the government's absolute power.