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Contents

S. No.	Title	Author(S)	Pages
1	Core and Periphery of Major Tribal Languages A Case of the Chotanagpur and Its Surrounding Region	Dr. Krishna Nandan Prasad	1 - 15
2	Resource Convergence in Mgnrega and Its Perspectives : A Critical Analysis Since 2009	Dr Neeraj Kumar Jain And Dr. Gyan Prakash	16 - 27
3	Development of Institutional Repository (IR) for the Dept. of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara: A Pilot Study.	Dr.Ranjita N Dash	28 - 54
4	Indian Disinvestment Journey: Trends and its Budgetary Perspectives	Dr. Anand Kumar Shrivastava, And Dr. Neeraj Kumar Jain	55 - 66
5	Assessment of Livelihood Status of the Shrimp Farmers A Case Study of Coastal Rural Area, Purba Medinipur District, West Bengal	Brihaspati Mondal And Moatula Ao	67 - 83
6	Tiger Roaming for Survival : A Case Study of Rajnandgaon District, Chhattisgarh (India)	Dr. Sanjay Thiske And Dr. Pramod Kumar Mahish	84 - 94

From the Desk of Chief Editor . . .

I feel a sense of relief with the publication of **Research Fronts** (A Peer Reviewed Journal of Multiple Sciences, Arts and Commerce) **Vol. X 2020** in this Covid-19 Pandemic situation world-wide. As usual, a few notable features of this volume are as follows. **One**, it has maintained the diversity of research papers encompassing the disciplines of economics, geography, business management, library science and zoology. **Two**, Inclusion of research papers from Gujarat (Western India), Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh (Central India) and West Bengal (Eastern India) amply demonstrates a wide spatial coverage that gives it status of national journal. **Three**, the issue of core and periphery, though applied for the major tribal languages by taking up the Chotanagpur and Its surrounding region, would attract researchers from other disciplines to venture in this direction. **Four**, Man-wild life interaction, or conflict, or co-existence is a very pertinent issue addressed in a research paper entitled Tiger Roaming for Survival – A case study of Rajnandgaon district, Chhattisgarh, India.

I take an opportunity to appreciate the authors who have made invaluable contributions not only for sending their original research papers, but also for directly helping the regular publication of this journal since 2011.

- Dr. Krishna Nandan Prasad

Core and Periphery of Major Tribal Languages A Case of the Chotanagpur and Its Surrounding Region

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Abstract

The Chotanagpur region has been a witness to **squeezing process** of numerous minority linguistic groups for thousands of years. On the other hand, the surrounding region has been a witness to diffusion process of the dominant linguistic groups. These two opposite processes of out-migration and in-migration have taken place due to operation of **centrifugal** and **centripetal forces** simultaneously in the Chotanagpur region. The former acted against the tribals, while latter worked in favour of the major linguistic groups surrounding the minority tribal groups. The resultant effect may be seen in the formation of linguistic regions in terms of core and periphery of tribal languages which are of greater concern. This is the sole objective and the study is based on secondary data drawn from the Census of India, 1971. The methodology of core and periphery developed by Professor Moonis Raza and Professor Aijazuddin Ahmad has been used in this study.

The **Santhals** are numerically the largest tribes in the region. They speak **Santali** language. They present a case of **Fragmented Core and Compact Periphery** that covers almost whole eastern part of the region. Mundari displays a new formation from that of the Santhali as discussed above. The **Mundari** presents a case of **Fragmented Core and Fragmented Periphery**. Main core of Mundari extends over a much larger area around Ranchi (13 blocks) by covering a total of 28 blocks almost in the central part of the region, while a minor core is seen in the south-eastern part in Singhbhum district, quite far from the main core.

The **Hos** displays an example of **Compact Core and Compact Periphery** over a small area in the south-central part of the region. There is a noticeable difference between the two; its core is highly localized, whereas its periphery has a wider expansion, mostly in the southern part of the core.

The **Oraons** speaking Kurukh language present an example of **Compact Core and Fragmented Periphery** which are located in the western part of the Chotanagpur region. It is pertinent to note that the **Kharias** who speak Kharia language also form **compact core and Fragmented Periphery** like its brother –the Oraons. This distribution is noticed in the west of the Mundari Core in the region.

Key Words: Core and Periphery, dominant and minority linguistic groups, centrifugal and force, squeezing process, distribution, compact, dispersed, contiguous, fragmented, narrow, wide, language regions, language sub-area, language islands, areas of language shift (zone of language collapse), Pidgin Language, Creole Language. area of isolation.

Introduction

Language is one of the most fundamental attributes of human culture. It occupies the key position amongst the **mentifacts**, and hence is the most central and durable element of culture. **S. K. Chaterji** (1969:13) rightly views that “It is the language which, in the first instance, along with his two hands with ten fingers, has given men the power to translate the thought in his brain into action, and thus, has enabled him to become the supreme in **mundane** creation.” Language being a powerful means of communication, not only helps in communicating within or outside groups, but also enables him in preserving social, cultural and traditional values of a social group, either in a written form or in the form of legends and folklores. That is why, **Alexander Spirkin** (1983:183) opines, “Language is the highest form of thought-expression, the basic means of controlling, of knowing reality, and knowing oneself and the existence of culture.”

Linguistic Geography is a nascent field of the geographical science. A number of expressions like, geography of language, linguistic geography, geolinguistics, etc. are used to define this newer sub-branch. A great need of linguistic geography lies in the study of language relationship, as “any group of related language implies the former existence of a single language, which by an accumulation of changes in different areas has diverged into distinct languages, conventionally spoken of as daughter-languages. This amoeba like generation of new languages cannot be said to be complete, until a language boundary or its equivalent has developed to mark off the different daughter languages from one another.”(**Mentosh**, 1961:5).

It is extremely difficult to draw a boundary between the two or more contiguous languages. In most of the cases, there is a transitional zone where the characteristics of both

the languages are observed. Similarly, there seems to be no unanimity amongst the scholars on the problem of differentiating language from dialect. Even within a language/dialect, there are considerable variations, not only in terms of space and time, but also due to age, sex, occupation, education, caste and religion. But a composite picture of the structure and form of language/dialect is considered in the linguistic geography.

A language, like any other phenomenon, originates at a particular place which is known as the '**homeland**', or '**area of origin**'. It is also called '**historical centre of distribution**', or '**historical centre of gravity**'. These all refer to the distribution of a language at a particular space in the remote past. **Kumaran** (1987:3) remarks , "The pattern of Language distribution in the country is closely tied with the internal migration, more especially that part of the internal migration which is termed as inter-state... largely the manpower stream flowing between the states consisting of both skilled and unskilled manpower." Thus, its distribution is affected by internal, or external forces that cause distinct nature or form of distribution of language, e.g., **compact** or **dispersed**, **contiguous** or **fragmented**, **narrow** or **wide**, etc. In other words, migration of speakers of a language results in the formation of **language regions**, **language sub-area**, **language islands**, **areas of language shift (or, zone of language collapse.)** **regions of Pidgin**, or **regions of Creole language**.

The Chotanagpur region has been a witness to **squeezing process** of numerous minority linguistic groups that continued for thousands of years. On the other hand, the surrounding region has been a witness to diffusion process of the dominant linguistic groups. The former consist of tribal groups which adopted the habit of migration by adjusting themselves in an **area of difficult survival**. In this situation, they also moved out in large numbers in recent years. Opposed to it, fertile plain in the surrounding region when got over-populated, a sizable section of this population migrated into the tribal land to exploit of forests and mineral resources. Thus, it is interesting to note two opposite processes of out-migration and in-migration due to operation of **centrifugal** and **centripetal forces** simultaneously in the Chotanagpur region. The former acted against the tribals, while latter worked in favour of the major linguistic groups surrounding the minority tribal groups.

A massive arrangement of language distribution in the study area is the outcome of these forces or processes. But the presence of dominant linguistic groups in close range is not always harmful, as **Neethivanan** (1987;3) notes that "Sometimes, the geographical proximity of the dominant community acts as a model for the minorities who are keenly observing it

from close proximity. When the dominant groups literally worship its mother tongue and assign a sacred status to it in order to maintain the purity, the keenly observing minority also tries to act in the same way. This model is more successfully applied in case of narrow distribution rather than widespread distribution of a community.”

Objective

The squeezing process of minority linguistic groups in the Chotanagpur region, the diffusion process of dominant Indo-Aryan Languages in the surrounding areas, traditions of migration of the minority tribal linguistic groups for their survival in the area of isolation, and then, the process of in- migration of the regionally dominant language groups into the plateau region and side by side the process of out-migration of the minority linguistic groups into the surrounding area have led to a drastic change during the course of a long history. In the whole process the tribal languages were the first victim. The sole objective of this paper is -

- 1. ‘to demarcate core and periphery of numerically dominant tribal linguistic groups namely Santhali, Kurukh, Ho, Mundari and Kharia spoken by the Santhals, the Oraons, the Hos, the Mundas and the Kharias respectively’.**

Data base

This study draws its data from the secondary source. It is the Language Tables, Census of India, 1971, Office of the Registrar General. The data have been taken at the block/taluk/police station level of the study area.

Methodological Aspect

The method of delineating core and periphery has been taken from the exemplary work of Moonis Raza and Aijazuddin Ahmad (1990) – *An Atlas of Tribal India*. The method is based on composite index values of the following three variables:-

- % -age of the X language speakers in a block/taluk/police station to the to total speakers of the X language in the country as a whole,
- % -age of the X language speakers in a block/taluk/police station to the to total population of that block/taluk/police station ,
- % -age of the X language speakers in a block/taluk/police station to the to total speakers of the language family, they belong, in that block/taluk/police station.

These variables have been chosen on the basis of the following assumptions;

1. If speakers of X language have a high proportion of their total population concentrated in a certain block/taluk/police station, that unit would certainly make the core of the X language,
2. A high proportion of the X language speakers to the total population of a block/taluk/police station clearly shows their predominance. It, thus, reveals that the in-migration of speakers of other languages, particularly, Hindi, Bengali, and Oriya has been very weak, and
3. %age of the X speakers to the total speakers of the Austro-Asiatic or Dravidian languages in the block/taluk/police station is an indication of the spatial association pattern of the speakers of these languages in the unit of study. In view of this associational character, the third assumption is – a high proportion of third variable does point out about the traditional monolithic nature of the X language.

A composite index (C_i) has been worked out for delimiting core and periphery of the X language speakers. The composite index may be symbolically expressed as follows;

$$C_i = \sum_{j=1}^{i=3} W_j X_{ij}$$

Here, $j = 1$

i = number of variables (i_1, i_2, i_3)

j = number of block/taluk/police station (j_1, j_2, j_3)

x_{1j} = ratio of the %age of the X speakers in the j^{th} unit to its population to its mean

x_{2j} = ratio of the %age of the X speakers in the j^{th} unit to the total population of the j^{th} unit to its mean, and

x_{3j} = ratio of the %age of the X speakers in the j^{th} unit to the total speakers of the Austro-Asiatic or Dravidian Language Family of the j^{th} unit to its mean.

W = weightage given to the variables in the following way;

$$W_1 = 1$$

$$W_2 = 1$$

$$W_3 = 1.5$$

The allotment of weightages to the variables has been done on the basis of their importance in terms of their role in the process of concentration of the Austro-Asiatic or Dravidian Language speakers in the area, as they have distinct social, cultural and economic pursuits in

their daily lives. The third variable has been assigned a higher weightage in view of the infiltration of the other language groups into the area of the Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian speakers.

The composite index has been classified into two categories – core and periphery. The categorization is based on the standard deviation (**S.D.**) of the composite index (**Ci**). It reads as -

Core = Ci + 2 S.D. and above

Periphery = Ci to Ci + 2 S.D.

The methods used for this exercise have been mentioned in the following table.

Area	Total population of block/ taluk/ police station	Total Austro-Asiatic or Dravidian Language speakers in block/taluk/police station	Total speakers of X language in block/taluk/police station	Total population of speakers of X language in India
1	2	3	4	5
Statistical Technique	A	B	C	D
%-age	3 as % of 4	3 as 5 of 1	3 as 5 of 2	
Normalization value of ith Spatial unit	$A' = A_i / A$	$B' = B_i / B$	$C' = C_i / C$	
weightage	1	1	1.5	
Composite Index	$C_i = A_{1'} + B_{1'} + C_{1'}$			
Core	Core = Ci + 2 S. D.			
Periphery	Periphery = Ci to Ci + 2 S.D.			

There will be 4 combination of core and periphery –

1. Compact Core and Compact Periphery
2. Compact Core and Fragmented Periphery
3. Fragmented Core and Compact Periphery
4. Fragmented Core and Fragmented Periphery

Limitation of the Study

Data on languages have not been published in later censuses of India. It, therefore, seems to be irrelevant after a lapse of 50 years from the point of changes that might have taken place.

Relevance of the Study

Each study has its own relevance from a number of points of views. This study is also a relevant one in the following ways.

- 1 It is an invaluable contribution in the field of linguistic geography, as spatial dimension in terms of concentration and dispersion of an important phenomenon like language has been depicted in the form of core and periphery.
- 2 People know that there are a few numerically dominant tribal groups who speak their own languages and inhabit a particular area in the Chotanagpur Plateau. But they do not know the precise location in lack of geographical knowledge. This work would bring greater awareness in the masses.
- 3 Although the study is based on old secondary data, it pin points about the core and periphery of dominant tribal linguistic groups, and therefore, some language development programmes can be easily carried out especially in the core of each tribal language for the enhancement of primary education which is sought to be given in their mother tongues.
- 4 It is relevant for the researchers in the area of spatial distribution of any such phenomena having local, regional and national characteristics.

Study Area

The study area – The Chotanagpur region – has been considered on the main rivers flowing in all the major directions, i.e. the Ganga in north, the Mahanadi in south, the Bhagirathi and Hooghly in east and Rihand and Hasdo in west, as this consideration provides a viable region. It lies between 20° 10' N and 25° 57' N , and 82° 33' E and 88° 55' E of longitude (**Fig.1**). It extends over south Bihar, West Bengal Orisha and Eastern M.P., and covers 2,48,306.6

km² of area. It includes 352, 164, 158 and 8 blocks/taluks/police stations (a total of 677) distributed over the mentioned states in respective order (**Fig.2**).

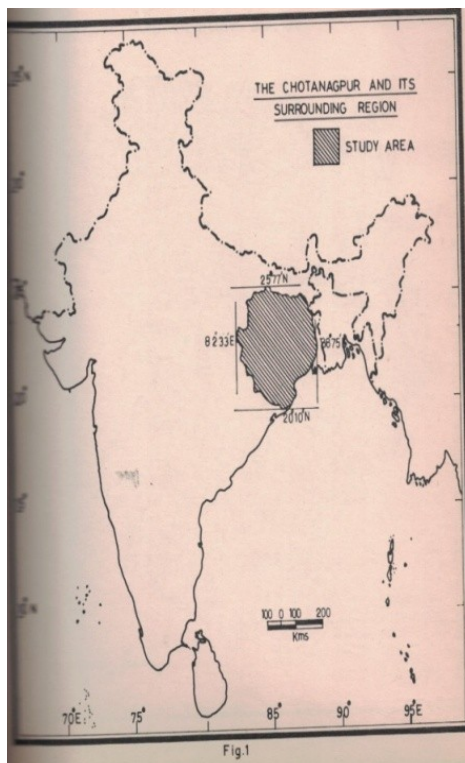


Fig.1

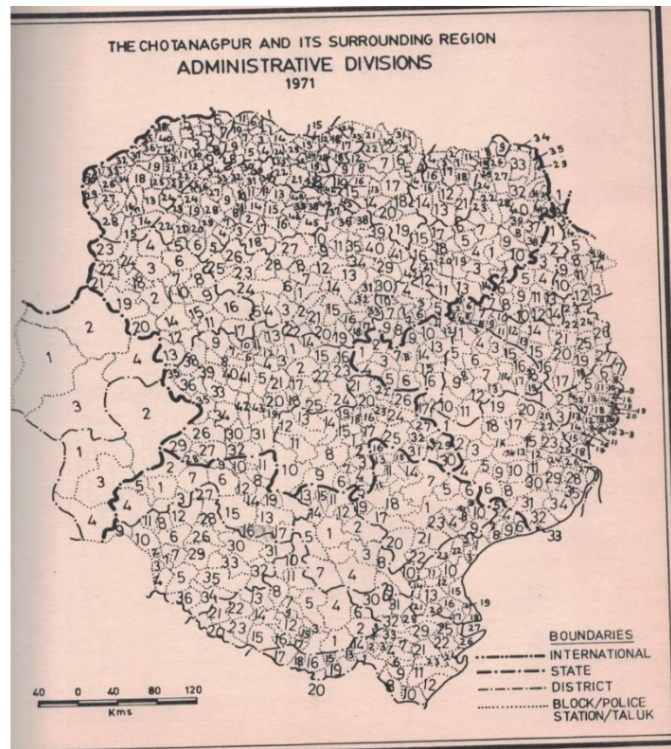


Fig.2

The area is physically divided into two distinct sub-regions – the alluvial plain and the plateau. The plain area is dominated by Hindi, Bengali, Oriya and Urdu whereas Santhali, Mundari, Kurukh, Ho and Kharia dominate in separate pockets in the plateau area.

Survey of Literature

An extensive survey has been carried out on language distribution in case of India. Here, a few have been presented. Bhaduri (1937) worked on Korku language of the Central Province, based on 1931 census. It covers Surguja, Jashpur and Udaipur feudatory states, present North-eastern M.P.

Hadson and Majumdar (1932) attempted distribution of tribal languages of Chotanagpur and Bastar and found small language islands in there. Dhall (1957) gives an account of languages and dialects spoken in Orissa and finds concentration of tribal languages in small areas in the inner plateau while Oriya in the eastern plain of the state.

Chatterji (1963) presents patterns of spatial distribution of Indo-Aryan languages and its diffusion process. Majumdar (1970) has worked on spatial distribution of different languages found in India.

Nigam (1971) in his work on Handbook on Mother-tongue, Census of India, 1971 has discussed languages of all four linguistic family at macro and meso levels. He has also classified all the languages of India in terms of its numerical strength.

Peter Haggett (1972) presents distribution of major languages and dialects spoken in India and identifies linguistic regions of Indo-Aryan and Dravidian Language Family.

Sakharov (1973) has attempted cultural regionalization of India on the basis of languages.

Kailash Chandra Bhatia (1973) significant work on Bhasha-Bhoogol as a text book encompasses history of linguistic geography, classification of languages and dialects in India.

Moonis Raza and Aijazuddin Ahmad (1978) worked on classification and distribution of four language families of India and found their role in region formation and an important factor in unity in diversity.

Zograph (1980) gives a historical background of Indo-Aryan languages and its Classification, its demographic characteristics and area of concentration. Mohd. Ishtiaque (1980) has worked on Language Change and Continuity among the Asiatic speaking tribes in India. Aditi Sengupta (1980) has done a micro level study at police station of linguistic groups in Calcutta Metropolitan District and found a different linguistic groups forming separate locality in the process of immigration in the city. Sapiro (1981) work on Language and Society in South Asia presents taxonomy and typological classification of south Asian languages. Sudhir Malakar (1985) carried out a district level study of ethno-lingual composition of population in north-eastern India from 1901 to 1971.

It is quite clear from the above literatures that there is a gap in the study of language distribution in terms of identification of core and periphery of major tribal languages spoken in the Chotanagpur region. Thus, this study makes an attempt to fulfill this gap.

Analysis

It is significant to note that core represents a monolithic character and hence continuity of a language. Opposed to it, periphery indicated an area of transition where speakers of a language gradually lose grounds either to other tribal language or to a regionally dominant language as would be found out in a study of language continuity and change (shift). Here, spatial pattern core and periphery of Santhali, Mundari, Kurukh, Ho and Kharia are presented for understanding the ground reality.

Core and Periphery of Santali

The Santhals are numerically the largest tribes in the region. They speak Santhali language. They present a case of **Fragmented Core and Compact Periphery (Fig. 3)** that covers almost whole eastern part of the region. Their core covers 36 blocks/police stations (**Table 1**), while their periphery extends over as many as 128 blocks/police stations. The major core of Santhali lies in the Santhal Parganas District (22 blocks) of Bihar corresponding to the Rajmahal Hills, a north-eastern part (Fig.3)

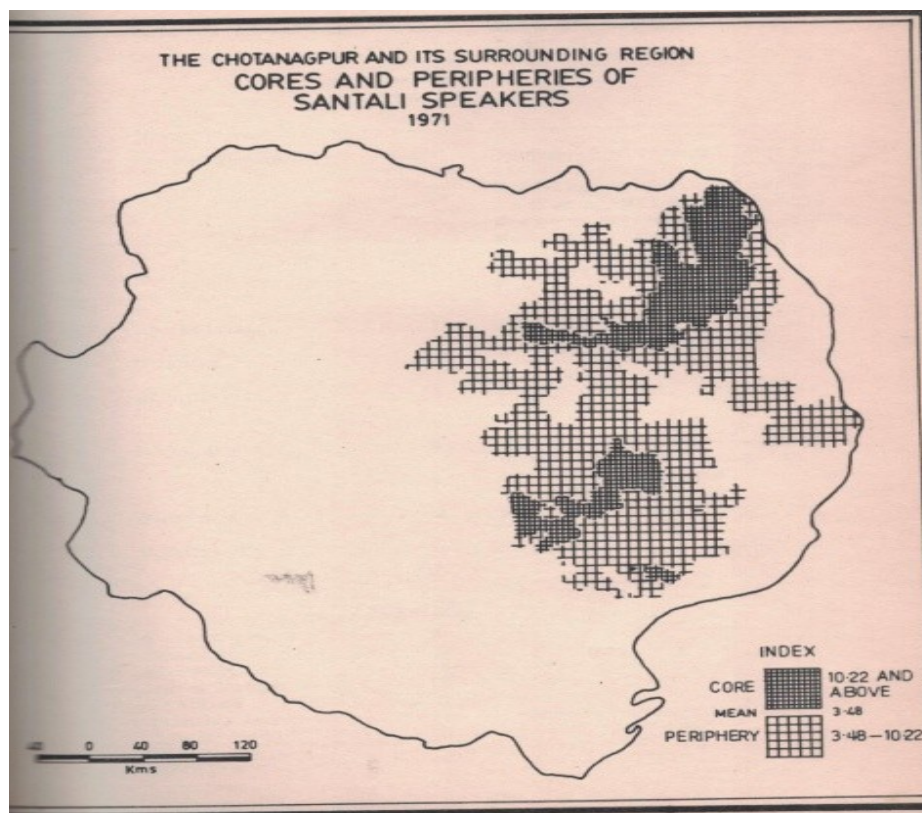


Fig.3

of the Deccan Plateau, while 9 police stations of Mayurbhanj, Bankura and Midnapore districts form its small core in southern part far from the main core.

Table 1 Blocks/Taluks/Police Stations Forming Core of Santali Language, 1971

S. No.	District	Blocks/Taluks/Police Stations	
		Nos.	Name
1	Santhal Parganas	22	Dumka, Ranishwar, Masalia, jama, Ramgarh, Gopikandar, Kathikund, Shikaripara, Jamtara, Nala, Kundahit, Poreyahat, Boarigor, Sundar Pahari, Pathna, Barhati, Borio, Taljhari, Maheshpur, Pakauria, Amrapara and Litipara.
2	Hazaribagh	1	Pirtanr

3	Dhanbad	1	Tundi
4	Singhbhum	3	Dalbhumgarh, Chakulia, Dumaria.
5	Mayurbhanj	6	Betnoti, Muruda, Rairanagar, Bahalda, Bisoi, Tiring.
6	Bankura	2	Ranibandh and Raipur
7	Midnapore	1	Sinpur
Total		36	

Source: Language Tables, Census of India, 1971.

Compact Periphery of Santhali language spreads over a large number of blocks/taluks/police stations (128). It almost surrounds the core from three sides and forms a corridor that extends from north to south by covering almost all the police stations of West Bengal due to a complete absence of its sister language groups.

Core and Periphery of Mundari

Mundari displays a new formation from that of the Santhali as discussed above. The Mundari presents a case of **Fragmented Core and Fragmented Periphery (Fig.4)**. It is noticed that main core of Mundari extends over a much larger area around Ranchi (13 blocks) by covering a total of 19 blocks (**Table 2**) almost in the central part of the region, while a minor core is seen in the south-eastern part in Singhbhum district, quite far from the main core.

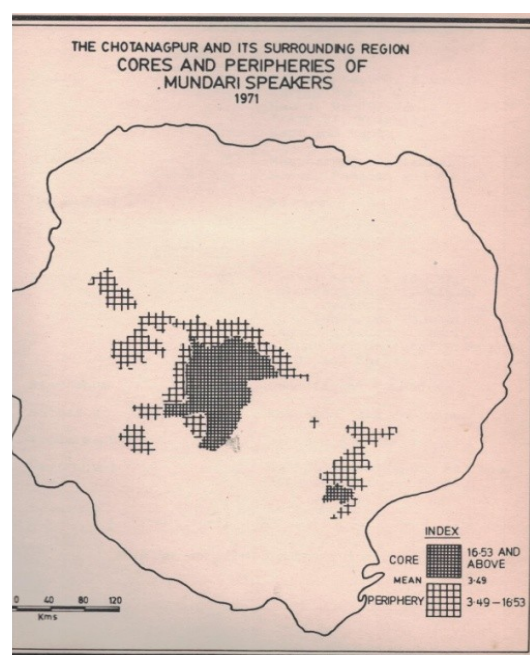


Fig.4

Table 2 Blocks Forming Core of Mundari Language, 1971

S.No.	District	Blocks	
		Nos.	Name
1	Ranchi	13	Namkum, Lapung, Khunti, Murhu, Ranja, Torpa, Karra, Bundu, Tamar I, Tamar II, Kolebira, Bano and Bapia.
2	Singhbhum	5	Manoharpur, Goilker, Sonua, Bongaon and Kuchai.
5	Mayurbhanj	1	Raoruan
Total		19	

Source: Language Tables, Census of India, 1971.

Mundari core which is also fragmented largely extends over the western part of the main core in Ranchi district (16 blocks). A small periphery of Mundari is formed in 9 police stations mainly north of minor core in the Chotanagpur region.

Core and Periphery of Ho

The Ho displays an example of Compact Core and Compact Periphery in the southern part of the region (**Fig.5**). Its core covers only one dozen blocks and that lie in Singhbhum district (**Table 3**). But its periphery extends over 41 blocks/police stations. That is why; there is a noticeable difference between the two; its core is highly localized, whereas its periphery has a wider expansion, mostly in the southern part of the core. The periphery is little fragmented

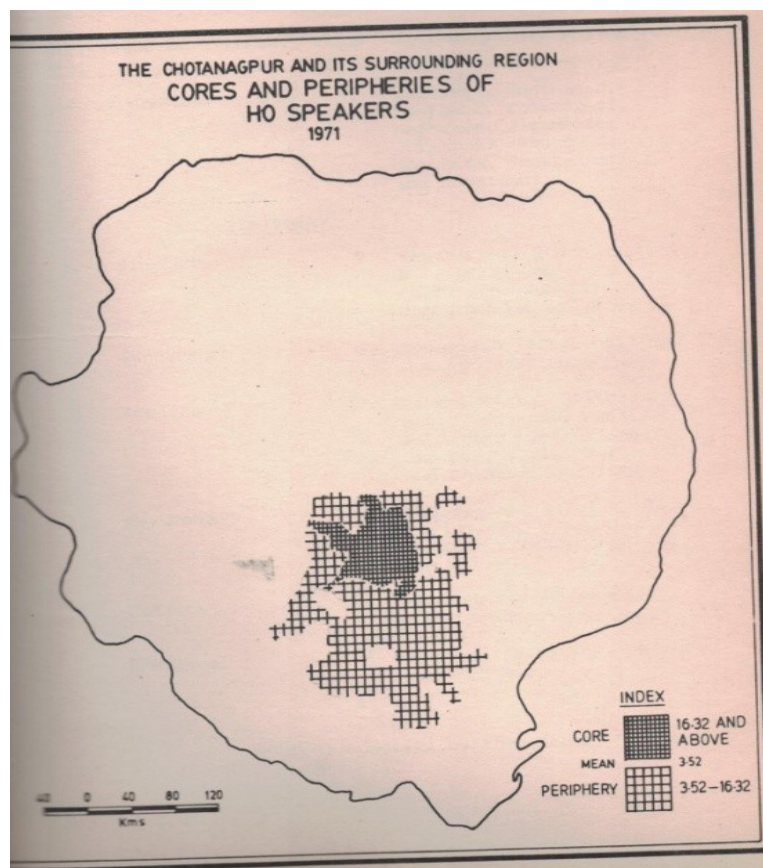


Fig.5

in the north-eastern part, but is more or less compact in nature.

Table 3 Blocks Forming Core of Ho Language, 1971

S.No.	District	Blocks Nos. and Name	
1	Singhbhum	13	Chaibasa, Tatanagar, Manjhari, Kumerdungi, Majhgaon, Jagannathpur, Jhinpani, Tonto, Noamundi, Goilker, Chakradharpur, Khuntpani, Kalebira, Bano and Bapia.
Total		13	

Source: Language Tables, Census of India, 1971.

Core and Periphery of Kurukh

Kurukh is spoken by the Oraon tribes inhabiting western part of the Chotanagpur region covering three districts of eastern M.P. – Surguja and Raigarh and its blocks (Table 4). Its speakers also present an example of Compact Core and Fragmented Periphery which are located in the western part of the Chotanagpur region (Fig. 6).

Table 4 Blocks Forming Core of Ho Language, 1971

S.No.	District	Blocks	
		Nos.	Name
1	Surguja	1	Ambikapur
2	Raigarh	2	Udaipur and Jashpur
Total		3	

Source: Language Tables, Census of India, 1971.

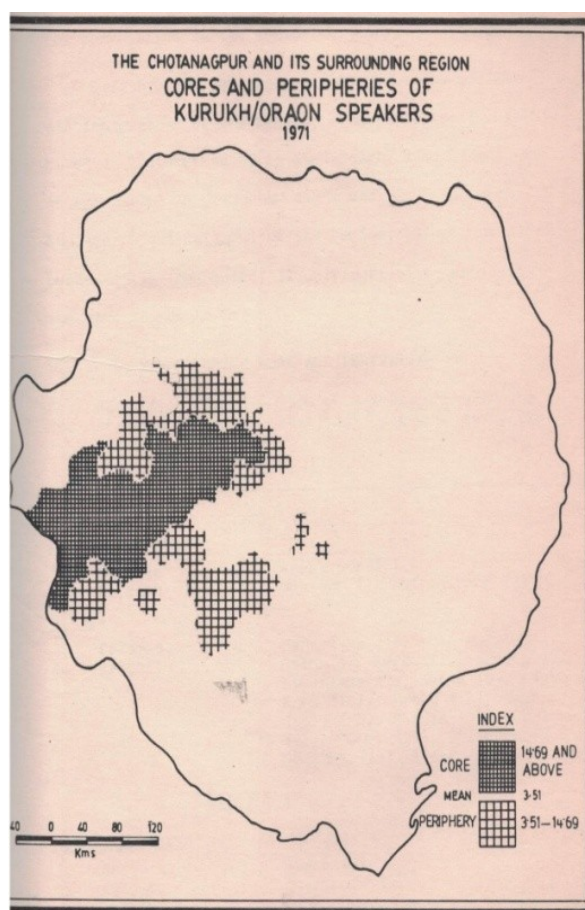


Fig.6

Core and Periphery of Kharia

It is pertinent to note that Kharia speakers form compact core and Fragmented Periphery. This distribution is noticed in the west of the Mundari Core in the region. This ostensibly exhibits spatial concentration of these numerically dominant linguistic groups away from each other in this plateau and hilly areas. In the south-western part of the Chotanagpur region (Fig.7).

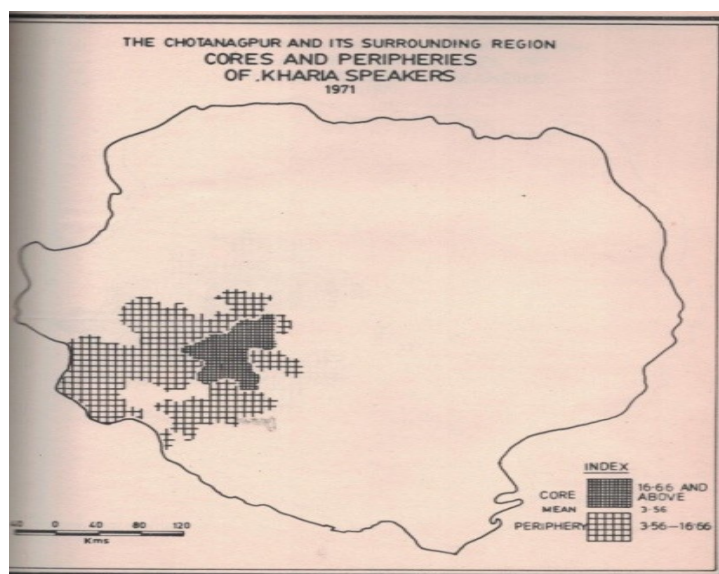


Fig.7

Table 5 gives details of districts and blocks.

Table 5 Core of Kharia Language, 1971

S. No	District	Blocks	
1	Ranchi	7	Simdega, Thethaitnagar, Bolba, Kurdej, Kalebira, Palkot and Basia.
2	Sundergarh	3	Rajgangpur, Bargaon and Raiboga.
Total		10	

Source: Language Tables, Census of India, 1971.

Discussion

Analysis of the spatial distribution pattern of numerically dominant tribal languages in the Chotanagpur region demonstrates that the combination of core and periphery exhibits a noticeable picture in the region so far as their concentration and dispersion is concerned. It also becomes quite obvious from the theoretical combinations and field data based combinations of core and periphery given in **Table 6**. It is significant to note that Ho speakers display the best combination of compactness of both - core and periphery. Opposed to it, Mundari speakers present a very fragmented distribution of its core and periphery. Santali speakers who constitute a lion's share in the all tribal languages, show the case of fragmented core and compact periphery, although they cover a much larger areal expansion as compared to all other tribal languages in the region. The last two languages i.e. Kurukh and Kharia both exhibit compact core and fragmented periphery.

It is also found from the analysis that all these tribal languages have separate homeland from each other. This isolation seems to have helped them in maintaining their linguistic and therefore, cultural identity for centuries, and thus has created a situation of easy pursuit of living free from any cultural confrontation.

Table 6 Core and Periphery: Theoretical and Field Observation

S. No.	Theoretical Combination		Field Observation of Numerically Dominant Tribal Language, 1971
	Core	Periphery	
1	Compact	Compact	Ho
2	Compact	Fragmented	Kurukh and Kharia
3	Fragmented	Compact	Santali
4	Fragmented	Fragmented	Mundari

Conclusion

The **Santhals** are numerically the largest tribes in the region. They speak **Santali** language. They present a case of **Fragmented Core and Compact Periphery** that covers almost whole eastern part of the region. Mundari displays a new formation from that of the Santhali as discussed above.

The **Mundari** presents a case of **Fragmented Core and Fragmented Periphery**. Main core of Mundari extends over a much larger area around Ranchi (13 blocks) by covering a total of 28 blocks almost in the central part of the region, while a minor core is seen in the south-eastern part in Singhbhum district, quite far from the main core.

The **Hos** displays an example of **Compact Core and Compact Periphery** over a small area in the south-central part of the region. There is a noticeable difference between the two; its core is highly localized, whereas its periphery has a wider expansion, mostly in the southern part of the core.

The **Oraons** speaking Kurukh language present an example of **Compact Core and Fragmented Periphery** which are located in the western part of the Chotanagpur region. It is pertinent to note that the **Kharias** who speak Kharia language also form **compact core and Fragmented Periphery** like its brother –the Oraons. This distribution is noticed in the west of the Mundari Core in the region.

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