

Changing Lives of Birhor in Jharkhand

Introduction:

In Jharkhand, there are no. of tribes in Jharkhand, Birhor one of them in Jharkhand some tribe are settled in majority and some are minority and primitive state of jharkhand belongs to Birhor tribe is one of the primitive tribes. The tribal people are semi-nomadic or nomadic people. The Word Birhor etymologically signifies the dweller of Jungle. The name of this tribal group has been derived from two words namely 'bir' which stands for jungle and also 'hor' which signifies man. The birhor tribes are part of Austro- Asiatic group. Tanda is the name of the group which they form to live together in their society. These tribal people speak Birhori language belonging to the Mundrai group of languages.

According to Article – 342 in Jharkhand 32 tribal groups are schedule tribe . Eight Tribal group are called Particularly vulnerable tribal groups like Asur, Birhor, Birjia, Korwa, Mal-Paharia, sauria- Paharia, sabar, parahiya (baiga) etc.

Birhor tribe is one of them primitive tribal group. Now- a- days also called particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PTVG).

Key words: *Particular vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) Birhor, Primitive Tribal Group (PTGs), Tribal*

Location of Birhor Tribe :

Birhor tribes are mostly concerted around Hazaribagh, Bokaro, Ranchi, Giridih, and Simbhum , Gardwa, Lohardaga district . they were broken down into several smallar unit in the entire region. Birhore tribes are also found in the States of Orissa, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal.

Origin of Birhor Tribe :

They belong to the Proto-Australoid Sock. Linguishtically, they originate from the Austro-Asiatic groups. The people of this tribe community are thought to be the descendants of the Sun. Moreover, Birhor tribe has a close affinity with the Munda tribe. The social structure of the Birhor tribe includes two groups namely Uthalus-Birhor and Janghis-Birhors are nomadic people and both of the sub tribes have agrarian -socio-economic structure.

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Physical Features and Dialect:

The Birhor are racially proto-Austroloid having black complexion, medium height, long shaped and curly hairs. Birhor belong to Austo-Asiatic Munda group. Birhor of Jharkhand use Mundari, and Santhali but in now-a-days they uses 'khortha' and 'Hindi' to communicate with people with outside their community.

Clan Organization:

Each clan has a specific totem related to various flora and fauna. Marriage within one and same clan is prohibited.

Birhor originally have two sections. One is Uthlus and another is Janghis. Now -a -days Birhors of Jharkhand mainly belong to the Janghi section.

Economy and Livelihood:

The traditional occupation of the Birhor in Jharkhand is rope making from the (Chaop) Cherherlata bark. They also hunt monkey, pigs, jungle foods and collecting bee-wax and forest wood. Some of them have also engaged themselves as daily labour, drives; servant etc. one and two from Birhor community might be found as government job holders.

Amongst the changes in occupation patterns, they work as a collection of roots and tubers in gradually decreasing in their day-to-day activities.

Population and Education:

As per 2011, census the total population of Birhor in India is 17,211 out of which about 62% Jharkhand but the figure is thoughtful as their total population 10,726 in Jharkhand. 10,726 male population is 5472 and female population is 6,000.

Habitation and Domicile:

Birhor settlement is known as Tanda, having conical shape leaf huts, Government has constructed many mainstream houses for them but they are not very much entrusted in staying in that saying their deity will Stay in this type of house and the concrete slab may fall on their head while sleeping, they have a custom during birth that the expecting lady goes in the hut and close the entrance. She has to come out with new born on sixth day from opening a new exit and that is not possible in the brick-cement house. One may absorb that they have made hole in the new houses to exit out after child birth.

Now a days, the Birhor settlement as brick-built dwelling with rectangular ground place and file thatched roof are common and granted by Government and NGOs.

Political Organization:

The Birhor Tanda is a collection of different families of different Clans for the purposes of good collection, hunting, rope making etc. Each Birhor Tanda has a head. The head of the Tanda is known as Naya. He is social, political and religious head of that Tanda. He has an assistant called Kotwar or Diguar.

The Uthalu Birhor are not conscious towards their political rights and reservations. They do not participate in the election of Mukhia, MLA and MP. Many of them are not voters due to their wandering nature. The Janghi Birhor is voters and they exercise their franchise at the time of election. The Birhor are neither supporters nor members of any political parties many of them do not remember do not know the names and symbols of different political parties.

The establishment of Modern gram Panchayat, thana, police, court and church has lessened the importance of tanda and village Panchayat. The Birhor who are not educated therefore the benefits of reservation availed by those tribes who are well educated.

Dress and Ornament:

Birhor people use a piece of cloth as casual wear for male and 'Saree' for female. However, presently, males wear shirt and pant, children till the age of four to six stay naked most of the time. Females also use ornaments such as bangles, earrings, necklaces etc.

Super Natural Beliefs:

Various magical rites are performed in order to protect themselves from evil spirits such as Kudra-Churu and Dalcin. The Charmer is a specialist who identifies the spirits that afflict diseases (Chaudury, 2004. Pp. 58-59)

Death Rituals:

Birhor normally bury dead body. They perform 10 days ritual activities after death. Sarddha ceremony is conducted by sacrificing a hen with due respect to the dead man's soul.

Birth Pollution:

Birhor women maintain certain rules and regulations at the time of pregnancy. They perform birth pollution for 21 days. On the sixth day of the child birth, they perform sathiari. They sacrifice three cocks to the goddess Churari and Hatu Bonga. They do not celebrate any rice giving ceremony.

Conclusion:

The Birhor's entire life revolves and the forest and most of the rituals are associated with forest (Sahu, ;2009) but now a day. The culture and morphology (i.e. ethnicity) of Birhor is rapidly changing because of their contact with other tribal and also non-tribal (rural urban) groups in uninterrupted circumstances along with globalization factors that are imposed upon them by the market forces. As a result of all the facts the Birhor tribal group is placed in list of endangered human groups before they vanish. It is utmost urgent to conserve their ethnographical characteristics and their indigenous knowledge. It will be a need to attempt to documentation and conservation of vanishing intangible cultural birhor. Under the influence of other culture, the Birhor community is leaving their cultural traits. The Birhor is one of the primitive tribal groups (PTG) Particular venerable groups) out of 75 PTGs of India.

The Birhor tribe has been facing cultivation and acculturation problem as they live together with various tribal and non-tribal communities. They are highly influenced with their culture and the Birhor had left their own cultural characteristics. Birhor's ethnic characteristics are vanishing as now the Birhor's ethnic characteristics are vanishing as well as they are losing their identity. In the light of alive it is suggesting that it is urgent need to document the extinct characteristic of Primitive tribe and to consume their culture.

Notes:

1. Data collected from filed work in Hazaribag kandsar ;2015
2. Data Collected from the Birhor. Of Demotand, Hazaribagh, 2014

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