



## SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF BIRHOR AND HILL KORWA OF CHHATTISGARH

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### ABSTRACT:

Consequently, this paper explores the SEDC of the Birhor & Hill Korwa – two Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Chhattisgarh, India. The study specifically covered Jashpur and Raigarh operational area in terms of issues such as social and economic characteristics, family size and structure, literacy level, language spoken, marriage patterns, religion, and cultural taboos. Having chosen descriptive research design, data was collected through interviews, case studies and even participant observation. To obtain the sample, 240 questionnaires were administered and Krejcie and Morgan's determinant was adopted to choose the sample and simple random sampling was used to make the sample representativeness. Evident also poor socio-economic statuses, high prevalence of illiteracy 80%, health and education facilities are inadequate, early marriage prevalent. Sadri is used as the working language while the other traditional languages of the community include Dalang Dabu and Birhor. Other practices include the clan system, totem as an identity marker, and a synthesis of animist religious practises with Hinduism. The investigation also underscores culturally specific barriers which include those concerning childbirth and breastfeeding. Part of method of fieldwork was to carry out interviews with the village heads, school teachers and health care givers in the villages under study with provided immense resource for grounding of local conditions. The specific research questions of the study were; To gather primary data on respondents, to identify the family type and to evaluate the socio-economic and cultural aspect of Birhor and Hill Korwa women. This information shows that there is dire need for intervention especially on issues to do with poverty, illiteracy, health and education facilities, and cultural conservation. This work stresses the need to design the relevant developmental programs that will enhance the status of these indigenous tribes' living standards but will not at the same time alter their cultural values and norms.

### KEYWORDS:

**BIRHOR, HILL KORWA, PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS (PVTGS), SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS, CULTURAL PATTERN, FAMILY SYSTEM, LITERACY RATES, MEDICAL FACILITIES, TABOO, ANIMISTIC RELIGION, CHHATTISGARH, TRIBAL UPLIFTMENT, AMENITIES TO THE BACKWARD COMMUNITIES, EXPLANATORY RESEARCH, TRIBAL MOTIFS.**

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### INTRODUCTION

Even the rights of a person social stratification has a significant effect on his or her life changes in the behavior, beliefs as well as practices with regard to birth, marriage, funeral rites, curing, and schooling. Nayak (2004), has compared the tribal people of India to indigenous people with different forms of economy and social life due to which they desired to remain separated and thus they remained isolated in a relatively low level interaction. Tribal people know their roles, status and position, in every sphere of their life; from belief systems to value systems. The Birhor and Hill Korwa belong to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) experiencing isolation and low status because of their limited contact with mainstream society and restricted access to important development amenities like education, medical facilities, and transport. Their houses are small, poorly ventilated and they lack electric power most of them live in kaccha houses having one or two room predominantly used for various purposes. This feature presents a major

contradiction because clothes and tools are often suspended from hooks in the same area where foods are prepared. They socially lack adequate resource; children for instance inadequately dressed; especially during winters. We have big families but have small income hence they cannot afford to make basic requirements in their lives. They also find it difficult to repay the loans borrowed for other costly rituals such as marriage and birth (Kujur, 2011). According to Pani and Sahoo (2008) some of main concerns are, hunger, poverty, illiteracy and violation of rights among the tribal communities. Kumari in 2001 analyzed that the Birhor tribe has a traditional economy and depends on the forest produce Call us at +0710302024. Primaries such as demand for food and clean-burning energy are not met, and people have resorted to consuming vegetables from the forest and boiled leaves respectively. Members are very illiterate or have a basic education level whereby a majority of them dropped out of school during their primary school

education. All the above factors compile the list of social ineptitude of these tribes hailing from isolation, minimal contact, and absence of social capital.

### METHODOLOGY

The study is Descriptive in nature and for data collection interview schedule has been used. Some case studies also conducted for in-depth study. Sarpanch, School Teachers, Health workers were also interviewed of the respective study area. Jashpur and Raigarh districts of Chhattisgarh state are the areas selected for the study. Hill Korwa and Birhor families are the respondents for present study. Krejcie and Morgan method has been used to select sample size which is 91 and for the selection of respondent's lottery method of simple random sampling has been used.

### OBJECTIVES

In the present study to evaluate the sociological status of Birhor and Hill Korwa the study has following objectives:-

1. To know the Primary information of respondents.
2. To find out Family background of respondents.
3. The know the social status respondents.

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION ABOUT RESPONDENT:

The Birhor and Hill Korwa are the particularly vulnerable tribal groups of Chhattisgarh state. They are living in hilly and remote areas of Jashpur and Raigarh districts of the state. As both the tribes are primitive tribe and their socio-economic status is not in satisfactory level, they are living in poor condition. They are having a pre-agriculture level of technology, declining population, extremely low level of literacy and a subsistence level of economy. Following are the general description such as age, educational status, marital status, religion, clan, totem, type of the family, etc. about the studying primitive tribe Birhor and Hill Korwa women.

### LANGUAGE:

The 45.6 percent Hill Korwa speak sadri and 32.9 percent Hill Korwa respondents are found to speak only Dalang dabu (korwa language) and 21.5 percent Hill Korwa women both sadri and Hindi language. 47.2 percent Birhor prefers sadri language and 28.6 percent are found speaking birhor language, 24.2 percent Birhor respondents speak sadri along with Hindi. Kujur (2012) also mentioned that 65.6 percent Hill Korwa people speaks sadri and 8.0 percent are using both Sadri and Hindi language to speak. From the above mentioned it is clear that both of the studying tribes are mostly comfortable with Sadri language which is the most common language of Jashpur and Raigarh district. Along with that it is also noticeable that both the tribes are equally giving importance to their native languages. It is also mark able that since both the tribe are PVTG living in isolation so they are least interested with Hindi but as the modern education system is based upon Hindi language, some who are educated are speaking Hindi along with Sadri language

### EDUCATIONAL STATUS:

Education plays an important role to gain the developmental status in individual's life. As Birhor and Hill Korwa are the primitive tribes of the nation and they are found in isolated areas and less interaction with other community and lack of awareness the educational status of both the tribes is very low. The primitive tribes are still far away from the profits of educational development. Xaxa (2012) in his study found that the general status of education among tribal communities is poor and the differences in educational status are highly marked across gender, the educational status of women in tribal society falls far short of educational status of men. Following are the description about the educational status of the respondent. the educational status of both the primitive tribes is very poor, 80 percent respondents are illiterate and 20 percent are literate in which 15.8 percent are just primary level educated and only 3.8percent are middle school passed and only 0.4 percent respondents are high school passed. The condition of modern education among these two primitive tribes is seen very poor as they are less interested to take modern education because they don't know the Hindi language very well and they felt uncomfortable learning with the language which they don't speak frequently. It was also observed that middle and higher secondary level schools are far away from their surrounding and they don't have proper vehicle facilities reach to the school and it is also noticed that there is no proper road to reach the school, in rainy days the condition is more crucial. Tiwari (2001) found in his study that the literacy rate of Hill Korwa was 2.9 percent in the state and Kujur (2012) found that 79.6 percent Hill Korwa are illiterate and only 20.4 percent are found literate in which most of them are primary level educated. Goel (2005) found that Birhor tribe of the Raigarh district that the drop outs are higher among Birhor, the enrolment is far better among boys as compared to girls and the elder girls are seems burdened with sibling care and household works. All these conditions are showing that the educational status of both the tribes is not in satisfactory level and education has not made any significant impact among both the primitive tribes.

As the educational status is very poor among both the PVTGs but according to the findings it can be said that the younger generation is showing little improvement while the drop out from school is higher.

### CLAN:

Clan is the important factor in tribal social organization. Clan is the group of consanguine people. Clan starts with important religious ancestor, as it is important and famous it becomes the unique identity of a particular group of families and they adopted the name of this ancestor. Hill Korwa 1.Hasdwar 2.Ginuwar 3.Adigwar 4.Mudiyar 5.Singalwar 6.Harma Birhor 1. Kariyari 2.Baghel 3.Kosandi 4. Bandi 5. Sonwani. Clan of respondents shown on the table above describes that 38.9 percent respondents belongs to the hasdwar clan (Hill Korwa) and 52.7 percent

respondents belongs to sonwani clan (Birhor). Kujur (2012) found in the study that majority of hasdwar clan is most common among Hill Korwa of Jashpur district which is found 49.2 percent.

#### **TOTEM:**

Totem consists in the fact that a tribe is supposed to be related to an object mainly animal or plant towards which they behave in a reverent manner by adopting its name and offering sacrifices or adoring it, Srivastav (2008). Totem is can be define as an association between human and specific animal or plant or may be other natural things which entailed ritualized observances and also sometimes may be eating avoidances. James Frazer argued that totem existed where savages had no knowledge of the role of the human male in conception; also, Emile Durkhim took totem as the most elementary form of the religious life and suggested that it was the clan worshiping itself and Meyer Fortes linked the perceived relations between humans and animals to those between living men and their ancestors, (Dictionary of Sociology). Totem of hill korwa is Bamboo (Hasadwar) Ants' Barrow Mud (Ginuwar) Kachmi Plant (Adigwar) Dog's Head (Mudiyar) Sindoor Box (Singalwar) and Hunting Tool (Harma) and Birhor (Clan) totem is Fox(Kariyari), Lion(Baghael),Tasar tree(Kosandi), Bam fish(Bandi) and Sawan(Sonwani)

#### **MARITAL STATUS:**

Marriage is an important institution of the society and without it the society can't be easily sustained. Taking consideration about marriage in primitive tribes it is found that marriage is one of the most important ritual in their life, after marriage the person get introduced in the new way of life and in the Hill Korwa and Birhor it is found that after marriage they were get separated from their existing family and build a procreation family and starts creating new phases in their life. Sharma (2004) found that the age of marriage in Hill Korwa for male and female are 16 and 15 years respectively and polygamy is found among them. Kerketta (2002) also mentioned that the mean age of marriage in Hill Korwa women was 13.45 year. Sharma and Tiwari (2002) mentioned the mean age at marriage of Birhor female was 14.8 years. On the basis of the above the marital status of Birhor and Hill Korwa women The marital status of the respondents shows that the 98 percent of Hill Korwa women and 95.6 percent Birhor women are married. It is found in the present study that Hill Korwa boys and girls arrange their own marriage. Divorce, remarriage and levorate marriage of widows are permitted and also polygamy is permissible among Hill Korwa. The system of paying bride price is prevalent among Hill Korwa and Birhor. Scanning through the data of the present study it is also found that early marriage is common among both PVTG. it is found that maximum Hill Korwa respondents have got married at 10-12 year of age and maximum Birhor respondent's age of marriage is 12-16 years. This shows that early marriage is prevalent among both PVTG and earlier research shows that early marriage causes high birth rate and makes their health

status more critical.

#### **RELIGION:**

Religion seeks to interpret and control man's relations to the forces of this physical and social environment. These forces are thought to be under the control of some supernatural power. The attempt to interpret mans relations to these led to several forms of religion like superstition, animism, totems, magic, ceremonialism and fetishism, Srivastav (2008)<sup>18</sup>. When we talk about the religion of primitive tribes it is found that they have faith upon super natural power and animism, totem and magical practices are also found among them. Animism is the existence of some supra physical beings within the body of every living being. This supra physical being is believed to survive the death of the person it is being freed from the body, so the animism is a belief in the soul of the dead and it is found that the both Hill Korwa and Birhor have faith upon animism. The totem is also an important factor of religion among them as we are discussed it in the topic above. In Hill Korwa and Birhor it is also found that they are having faith on Hindu religion and both PVTGs are celebrating Hindu festivals such as Holi as Fag and Dusshera.

Mohanty (2004) found that the Korwa worship Dulha Deo and the principal deity is Khuria Rani, the tutelary goddess of the Khuria plateau. Crookcs (1975) found that the Korwa do not pretend to be Hindu, and have no connections with the Brahmans, they have faith upon animism and magical practices. Russell (1975) found that the Birhor religion is as might be expected a mixture of Animism and Hinduism. Tacking all these in consideration, in the present study it is found that most of the respondents are following their primitive religion but there is some findings of their Hindu beliefs too.it was found in the research that Hill Korwa worships Khuria Rani and Asura which are related to their primitive religion.

#### **FAMILY BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENT:**

Family is the first institution in the history of man and basically the family is consists of husband, wife and their children. Family is the fundamental unit of human society and its foundation is based upon mans biological, economical and psychological needs. According to Burges and Locke "Family is a group of persons united by the ties of marriage blood or adoption, consisting of a single household, respective social role of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister creating a common culture" (Srivastava).<sup>23</sup> In primitive societies the hole organization is based upon family , when the boy or girl reach to the age of marriage it become's important to get them married and start a new family this is the natural life cycle in primitive tribal communities. While talking about the Birhor and Hill Korwa women the situation is same among them, both the PVTG needs family and it takes an important position in their life. The family not only provides the physical needs of a mankind but it also carries the culture and tradition from one generation

to other, it binds people with emotions. some variations are found in the family and this depends upon the ways of marriage and economic system these are nuclear or joint family. In the studying PVTG both kinds of families are found but the percentage of nuclear family is higher among them. Since the family pose an important role in the society it is important to know about the family background of the respondent. The information about the family background of the respondents is as follows in the headings bellow-

#### **SIZE OF FAMILY:**

It is found in the study that 55.8 percent families of both the tribes are medium in which 4-6 members are living together husband, wife and their more than two unmarried children because most of the families are nuclear . The occurrence of small family in both the tribes is 29.2 percent. Kerketta (2002) and Kujur (2011) found in their studies that about 40 to 50 percent families are medium sized family among Hill Korwa consists of husband , wife and their unmarried children. age group and family size of respondent represents that maximum medium family is lays in those respondents which are belongs to the 20 to 25 years age group . The small family is found mostly in less than 20 years of age groups as the group belongs to the maximum numbers of newlyweds or get married in between 2-3 year. Maximum large family is found in 35-40 years age groups.

#### **TYPE OF FAMILY:**

There is found two kinds of family in Birhor and Hill Korwa one is nuclear or procreation family and other is joint family or orientation family. The nuclear or procreation family is common among both the PVTG and mostly they will make procreation family after marriage, as these kinds of families are formed to make balance with the economic status. Nuclear families are having less numbers of family members as compared to the joint family and so the requirement of food, medicine and other expences get smallerS than the joint families requirement, mostly they prefer nuclear family. Sharma and other (2007) observed that among Hill Korwas nuclear family is higher with a frequency of 96.25 percent and joint family occur with a frequency of 3.75 percent. Maximum 92.5 percent respondent belongs to nuclear family and 7.5 percent are belonged to joint family. From the present study and other previous studies shows that the Hill Korwa and Birhor primitive tribes are prefer nuclear family concept, as a part of their life cycle the parents were allow the newlywed couple to start their married life in new separate house. The reason for preferring nuclear family was found during research observation was that most of the Birhor and Hill Korwa families are found living below the poverty line and the house structure is also very small in size with only one room, so they will prefer nuclear family instead of joint family as it is difficult to maintain 50.8 percent are male and 49.2 percent are female members in the respondent's family. Talking about the gender distribution in the primitive tribal society it

found that the male and female both are important in these kinds of societies and both of them play an important role in their society and division of labor and economic activities are mostly done by male person and household works are performed by women, women also assist their husband in their works were needed. Vaishnav(2012) mentioned that the Sex ratio of Hill Korwa is 962 and of Birhor is 980, while the sex ratio of Chhattisgarh state is 989.

#### **MARITAL STATUS OF FAMILY MEMBERS:**

In the present research work the attempt has been taken to know the marital status of family members, maximum 56.9 percent are married and 42.1 percent are unmarried and only 1.0 percent are found widow. The description about the marital status shows that most of the Birhor and Hill Korwa family members are married and the reason for this condition is found that they marry at very early age.

#### **RESPONDENT'S SOCIAL STATUS:**

Social status is the position of an individual in the society. The status of an individual in a society determined mainly by the educational status, health status, living standards, life style, awareness and decision making ability. Primitive tribe Birhor and Hill Korwa women are found les educated and mostly illiterate, very low level of lifestyle, decision making ability is also not found very strong and also a lack of awareness towards education and health related issues . The social status of women in both studying primitive tribe Birhor and Hill Korwa is not found satisfactory as compared to their male counterparts, as both the primitive tribes are patriarchal and male person plays a dominant role in the family although women also pose a strong position in the family but most of the decisions are taken by the male counterparts. The work participation rate among primitive tribal women is very high in percentage as compared to others and they work equally with their male counterparts. The house structure is found very simple among Birhor and Hill Korwa women. Basically, they are living in small hamlets with very few utensils and clothes. The facilities like water, electricity, sanitation are lacking in their house and there is not found any impact of swach bharat abiyan of central government among them as they are still doing open defecation drinking water facilities are also not found satisfactory among them as they are still depending upon natural resources of water such as turra, nala and dhodhi and fewer have the facilities of hand pumps of drinking water. The description about the social status of Birhor and Hill Korwa respondents.

#### **TABOO:**

The term taboo derives from the Tongan 'tabu', meaning 'sacred' or 'inviolable'. However, its contemporary use is broader, most generally meaning a social and often sacred prohibition put upon certain things, people or acts, which render them untouchable or unmentionable. The most famous taboo is the incest taboo, prohibiting sexual or marriage relations between particular categories of kin. According to both Sigmund Fried (Totem and Taboo, 1938) and Claude Levi-Strauss (The Elementary Structure

of Kinship, 1969), society itself originated with the incest taboo. Other authors have stressed the function performed by taboo as a mechanism of social control. In purity and danger Mary Douglas (1966), drew attention to the way in which the taboo serves as a social marker, creating and maintain social classifications. Thus it can be said that taboo is sociocultural prohibition on some act, person, place, animal or plant, in the present study some taboos are observed among both the PVTG, which are as follows-

1. Among Hill Korwa there is a Taboo for performing delivery, it is restricted for them to perform delivery other than 'Kumba'. 'Kumba' is the place which is situated in all Hill Korwa residence; it is a small door which opens inside the house it is formed to differentiate between main entrance door and place of delivery. As in front of the main entrance door there are few drawings of their Gods and Goddess and they believe it is a holy place, so performing delivery is restricted by entering from front door which pollute the holy place according to their tradition, that's why 'Kumba' is used to perform delivery and woman stays inside the 'Kumba' from delivery till the day of purification (7-10 days) and after that she is allowed to enter from the front main door. After that woman husband cooks and serves food for 1.5 months or 2 months if the female or male child is born respectively.
2. There is one another Taboo of Hill Korwa is that Lactating mother is restricted to enter in the cattle house and throughing cows faces(Gobar) is also restricted (Taboo) for Hill Korwa women during the lactating period.
3. There is a Taboo among Birhor also that women should perform her delivery beneath the tree, and instead of that any other place is restrict

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