

# The Birhors Struggle to Preserve Tradition in a Changing World

**Dr. Jagdeep Oraon**

Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology and Tribal Studies, Sidho Kanho Birsha University, Purulia, West Bengal, India-723104.

## **Abstract:**

Tribals are an integral part of our country, India. According to the 2011 census, the percentage of tribal people is 8.6% of the total population of India. In the present context, while came to talking about the tribal people, “The vulnerability of the tribal people” is a burning issue. Tribes are not only deprived in the present day, but they also were deprived during the British colonial period. According to the Ministry of tribal affairs Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) is categorized as the most vulnerable tribal group among all Scheduled Tribes of India. A total of 75 PVTGs are identified and listed in India. Mainly, those tribes that are numerically declining day by day, economically backward, with a low literacy rate, and practice a pre-agricultural level of technology, are listed as PVTGs. Among them, Birhors are recorded as one of the PVTGs. The Birhor are known as nomadic, hunter-gatherer, and rope-making people. These tribal groups are found in the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and West Bengal. The present study was carried out in Jehangutwa and Beti Village of Bishunpur CD Block of the Gumla district of Jharkhand, where the researcher tries to explore the present status of their traditional life. Different conventional anthropological tools and techniques were employed for the collection of both primary and Secondary data to find out how they are changing their lives and struggling for identity after connecting with the modern world.

**Keywords:** PVTG, Birhor, Nomadic, Tradition, Change, modern world

## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

Tribal communities have developed from the primitive stage to the present civilized stage in the development. Tribals are an integral part of the Indian civilization. Various elements in the ancient civilization of India were contributed by the tribes. It is believed they were the earliest among the present inhabitants of the country” (Vidyarthi, L.P. & Rai, B.K.,1985). Present-day India is home to more than 705 Adivasi communities, as mentioned in different literature and genetic traces. The 67.7 million people belonging to ‘scheduled Tribes’ in India are generally considered to be ‘Adivasi’, literally meaning ‘indigenous people’ or ‘original inhabitant’ although the term; Scheduled Tribes; (STs) is not coterminous with the term ‘Adivasis’ (Bijoy.CR, PUCL Bulletin,1-7, 2003). They were recognised as a Scheduled Tribe as per the Schedule Caste and Scheduled Tribe Order 1950 by the President of India and mentioned in Article 342 of the Constitution of India. Time to time, in the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Order 1950, was amended, and tribals were included in the list. The President of India, after every 10 years, took a report on the tribal development. Mr. U.N.Dheber submitted a report in 1961, where he highlighted that the few tribal groups were still most backward in terms of socio-economic condition. This reiterated the

view of the Dhebar Commission by the P. Shilu Ao Committee in 1969. The Fifth Five-Year plan in 1974-79, Planning Commission of India started the tribal development policy, where they introduced the Tribal Sub Plan for the tribal area. But in the year 1975, after the implementation of various tribal development schemes and assessments, it was found that still a few tribal groups are in their primitive stage of life, like hunting and food gathering. So they were identified more backward community among the tribals and termed them Primitive Tribal Groups by the working group for the development of the Scheduled Tribe in 1975. The first 52 tribal groups were identified as PTGs, and in the Sixth Five-Year Planning, 20 were included; later, 3 tribal groups were added as PTGs. The criteria for identifying the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group are: - 1. Pre-agricultural level of technology, 2. Low level of literacy, 3. Economic backwardness, 3. A declining or stagnant population (Ministry of Tribal Affairs-2019). Presently, as per the census 2011 total of 75 PTGs are found in 14 states and 1 Union Territory in India. In the year 2006 Government of India changed the nomenclature from Primitive Tribal Groups to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

Jharkhand's Chhotanagpur Plateau has ancient origins dating back to Gondwanaland (Anurudh K Singh, 2012; Eric Wikramanayake, 2020). Geologically, the plateau is composed of Precambrian rocks more than 5.4 billion years ago (Eric Wikramanayake, 2020), which is not only rich in minerals as well as rich in tribal cultures too. Chhotanagpur and Santhal Pargana are separated from the Bihar state in 15 November, 2000 and formed a separate state Jharkhand. Jharkhand is the home of 32 tribal groups as per census 2011, among main tribes, 8 were identified as PVTGs. Birhor tribe is one of the PVTGs of Jharkhand states, who mainly found in the Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra etc. Birhor is mainly known for their nomadism, monkey hunter as well as Rope making community of India. In the Year 1975 planning commission launched the special assistance through Tribal Sub Plan for their development. Then Bihar Government primarily identifies them as PTGs and started to settle them in the colonies in their respective place near to the forests.

Major population of Birhor tribe is resides in Jharkhand and there adjoining area. According to the 2011 census, their total numbers in India are 17,241. In Jharkhand, there are 10,726 in numbers. Their name itself comes from "Bir," meaning forest, and "Hor," meaning man, signifying their deep connection to nature (Manna, Sarkar, & Ghosh, 2013) in totality it means that man of Jungle. They generally speak the Birhor language of the Munda sub-group language community, which is under Austro Asiatic linguistic family. Birhors were basically found into two classes Uthlus and Janghis (Jha, Ashrafi and Bharti, 2016). One side Uthlu Birhors were mostly nomadic in nature and other side Janghis were settled in place. Before settlement in the colonies they reside in the tanda by making small Kumba (Hut). Forest was everything for them, which provide them shelter, food, medicine, and all those things which required for living. They are protector of forest and the ecology, they only dependent on the forest for their subsistence. Birhor and Forest embedded to each other for many ways. Their whole traditional life, culture, belief system were centered towards the forest which are their worldview. They were natural worshiper because they get everything from there. The Birhor tribe traditionally followed animism, worshipping nature, hills, and waterfalls with deep belief in spirits (Oraon, 2020). Their God and Goddess are totally related to forest and nature. But our policy makers only think one side of the coin and try to develop them by providing different development schemes, plans and programs. They were starting to settle in the year of 1976 and after the years but till now only one girl is graduated from their community with the help of Tata Steel Group. It means we not seen the other side of the coin, what they want? The policy makers never ask properly to them. Only Etic views were implemented for their development, that's why still they are

becoming poorer and poorer. Present study was conducted in the western part of the state of Jharkhand like Gumla District to understand their traditional life, culture and belief system.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

1. The Birhor tribe is one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India, mostly living in the forests of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and parts of West Bengal. Their name itself comes from "Bir," meaning forest, and "Hor," meaning man, signifying their deep connection to nature (Manna, Sarkar, & Ghosh, 2013).
2. Traditionally, the Bihors were nomadic, depending on hunting, gathering, and rope making for their livelihood (Jha et al., n.d., 2016; Thakur & Sharma, 2012).
3. Over time, due to government policies and environmental changes, many Bihors have been forced to settle in permanent houses and adapt to modern lifestyles (Sarkar, 2016).
4. Rope making has long been an important skill for the Birhor, especially using fibres like *mohlan* or *chop chal* from local trees (Jha et al., n.d.). However, deforestation and forest laws have restricted their access to natural resources, which has reduced opportunities for their traditional livelihoods (Thakur & Sharma, 2012). As a result, their economic stability has become uncertain, and many have turned to labor work or seasonal migration (Ghosh & Chatterjee, 2024). Despite attempts to support them with housing and training programs, many government schemes like MNREGA or public food supply systems remain non-functional in several Birhor villages (Sarkar, 2016).
5. Culturally, the Birhor have a strong sense of community. They live in small settlements called *tandas*, often with huts made from leaves and bamboo (Manna et al., 2013). They speak the Birhor language, part of the Austro-Asiatic family, though most now also speak Hindi or other regional languages due to increased contact with mainstream society (Oraon, 2024a). Their social structure is clan-based, with local leaders (*mukhia*) playing a role in conflict resolution (Oraon, 2024b).
6. The Birhor belief system is deeply rooted in nature. They worship forest deities and spirits, such as Bada Deo or Jangli Baba, and their religion is a mix of animism and ancestor worship (Oraon, 2024a). However, their traditional knowledge and spiritual beliefs are slowly fading due to formal education systems that do not integrate their worldview. Teachers often ignore the indigenous knowledge of Birhor children, creating a gap between classroom learning and real-life experiences (Kumari, 2023).
7. Educational levels among the Birhor are still very low, with many being first-generation learners (Manna et al., 2013). Girls especially drop out early, often due to child marriage and lack of access to nearby schools. Early marriage is still common, with many girls marrying between ages 12 and 14 (Manna et al., 2013). These factors limit their ability to participate in modern economic activities and decision-making.
8. In Chhattisgarh and Bilaspur districts, similar patterns are observed. The Birhor also face poverty, limited health services, and poor infrastructure (Oraon, 2024b). Access to education and healthcare is low, and many still depend on forest produce or low-paying jobs for survival. Suggested solutions include mobile clinics, culturally relevant schooling, skill training, and eco-tourism projects to support their livelihood while preserving their culture (Oraon, 2024b).
9. Despite these challenges, the Birhor continue to maintain aspects of their traditional identity. Their crafts, knowledge of plants, and community systems remain valuable. But unless their traditions are integrated into development policies, they risk losing their unique cultural identity under the pressure of modernization and neglect (Ghosh & Chatterjee, 2024; Kumari, 2023).

10. Ahmad, S. Ejaz (2023) also works in Jharkhand and has written an article titled “The Birhor: An Overview of Their Society.” Here, he traces the socio-cultural status of the Birhor tribe and also describes them as a traditionally forest-dependent community. They also engaged in rope-making and hunting–gathering activities. The author discusses their kinship system, marriage practices, and family organization. Here he also highlights that the Bihors also follow monogamy in the marriage type, and their family type is Patrilineal. The study emphasizes the impact of modernization and deforestation on their livelihood and cultural identity. It underlines issues such as land alienation, displacement, and poverty, which is harm their traditional way of life. The author also explores their belief systems, including animism and nature worship.
11. Kujur, J. M., & Topno, M. (1996) wrote "*Birhors and Their Dances*". The authors talk about the traditional dances of the Birhor tribe, who mostly live in Jharkhand. The authors explain that dance is an important part of Birhor life. It is used during festivals, marriages, and other community events. Through dance, the Bihors express their feelings, beliefs, and connection to nature. The dances are usually performed in groups, with simple steps and folk songs. The dancers do not wear fancy clothes or use special props. This shows their close relationship with the forest and their simple way of living. This work is useful because it records and protects the culture of a PVTG. However, it gives only a basic description and does not go into much detail. Still, it helps us understand how tribal dances are not just entertainment, but a way to keep traditions and identity alive.
12. Ghosh D, Chatterjee D (2024) work in Jharkhand and wrote a paper named *Birhor Society and Culture: A Study on Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups of Jharkhand, India*". Here, the authors highlight their nomadic lifestyle, rope making, hunting, and forest-based economy of the Birhor tribes. It discusses their clan-based social structure, animistic beliefs, and rituals, along with the challenges of deforestation, poverty, and cultural erosion.

### 3. OBJECTIVES:

We know that Bihors lived in very simple life, and their tradition and Indigenous knowledge were very rich. But due to various anthropogenic pressures, they are facing several problems in protecting their traditional identity. The present study intends to focus on the present status of Bihors who resided in Bishunpur CD Block in Gumla District, as well as how they are struggling and changing their tradition, due to the modern changing world.

### 4. METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based on an empirical study. Extensive field work was done in 2021-2022 in the Gumla district, which is situated in the western part of the Jharkhand state in India. In the Gumla District under the Bishunpur CD Block, two villages, Jehangutwa and Beti, were taken for investigation. These villages are situated on the Ghaghra-Netarhat road in the foothills of the Netarhat range. Here, a total of 90 households were covered for data collection by using research scheduled to understand the current status of population, education, and traditional occupational status, and focus Group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted to understand the traditional life, practices, beliefs and etc. Educations, occupation, socio-economic and socio-cultural, and religious aspects are considered for analysis. Pie-chart, bar-chart, and Microsoft Excel were used for data entry and analysis.

The Jehangutwa consists of 34 households with a population of 143 people, including 75 males and 68 females. Beti has 56 households with a total population of 217, comprising 107 males and 110 females.

Together, these two villages have 90 households and a combined total population of 360 individuals. This information highlights the household numbers and gender distribution in both villages, giving a clear picture of their population size and composition in simple numerical terms. Secondary data was also used for the present research, like various online journals, eBooks, government reports, etc.

## 5. MAJOR FINDING AND DISCUSSION

**Birhor of Gumla district:** Gumla district is divided into 3 subdivisions and 12 CD Blocks. Gumla district is tribal populated district where Oraon, Khadia, Munda, Asur, Birhor, Lohra, Kisan, Chick Baraik, Mahli, etc reside. The Present Study was conducted in the villages of Jehangutwa and Beti of Bishunpur CD Block.

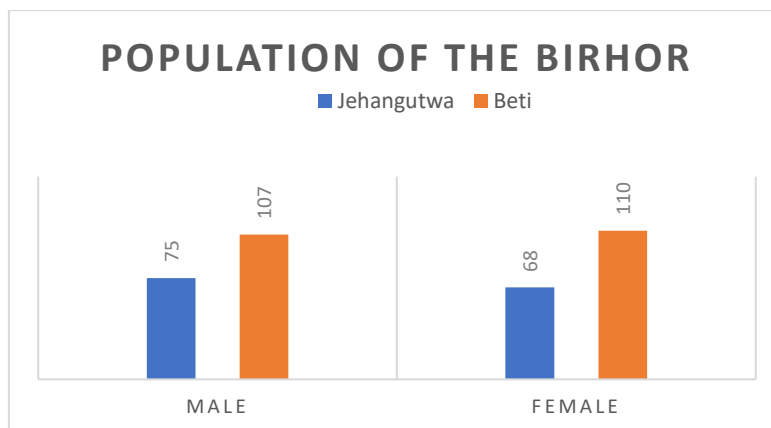
Jehangutwa Birhor colony was established by the government to settle the nomadic tribal people and give them permanent settlement around the year 1976. Jehangutwa. The village is surrounded by forest and a River. Hill is in the north of the village and thus has Panchayat Helta in the west. On the east side of Bishunpur village, named Ulidih, and toward the south is Chappatoli village, and on the north side North Koyal River. This is near the Gumla - Netarhat Road, which is the entrance of the village Amanburu. Here, 32 Birhor households were found during the research period. Where the total population is 143, among them 75 are male and 68 are female members.

Whereas the Beti village is under Narma Gram Panchayat in the Bishunpur CD Block in Gumla District. This village is further subdivided into the three hamlets, Beti, Birhor Colony, and Birjia tola. Birhor colony is situated on the right side of the Ghagra- Netarhat road on the bank of the North Koyal River. Beti has 56 households with a total population of 217, comprising 107 males and 110 females.

**Table 5.1 Population of the Birhor**

Name of the village	No. of household	Male	Female	Total population
Jehangutwa	34	75	68	143
Beti	56	107	110	217
Total	90	182	178	360

Source: Field Data



**Fig. 5.1**

Education status of Birhors: PVTGs have a lower educational status, which is one of the criteria of identification. So here tried to show the present status of the Birhors in the two villages of Bishunpur CD Block.

**Table 5.2: Age-sex-wise distribution of the Birhor population in Jehangutwa and Beti village**

Village Name	Age-Group	0-7	8-14	15-21	22-28	29-35	36-42	43-49	50-56	57-63	64+	Total
Jehangutwa	Male	12	15	14	8	8	3	3	3	6	3	75
	Female	10	12	16	10	6	4	4	2	2	2	68
	Total	21	26	30	17	14	7	7	5	8	5	143
Beti	Male	19	23	16	21	8	5	2	7	5	1	107
	Female	23	26	14	16	7	4	2	8	6	4	110
	Total	42	49	30	37	15	9	4	15	11	5	217

Source: Field Survey

Analysis: The combined population of the two settlements, Jehangutwa and Beti, is 360, with 143 residents in Jehangutwa and 217 in Beti. The overall gender distribution in the community is about even, with 182 males and 178 females. A significant portion of the population (ages 0-14) comprises children and adolescents. This indicates they possess a robust foundation for future growth. The working-age demographic (15-49) is a significant segment of the population, whilst persons aged 50 and above represent a somewhat smaller cohort. The demographic structure is primarily youthful. In terms of gender distribution, Beti village has a slightly greater number of females than males, whereas Jehangutwa village exhibits the other trend, with a higher male population compared to females. The population of both communities predominantly consists of young individuals and adults.

**Table 5.3 Education of the Birhors**

Village	Gender	pre-school	Primary (I-IV)	Upper Primary (V-VIII)	Secondary (IX-X)	Higher Secondary (XI-XII)	UG/PG	Illiterate	Total
Jehangutwa	Male	4	20	13	6	1	0	31	75
	Female	6	22	17	7	-	0	16	68
	Total	10	42	30	13	1	0	47	143
Beti	Male	6	23	15	5	2	0	56	107
	Female	10	33	21	6	2	0	38	110



Total	16	56	36	11	4	0	94	217
Source : Fieldwork data								

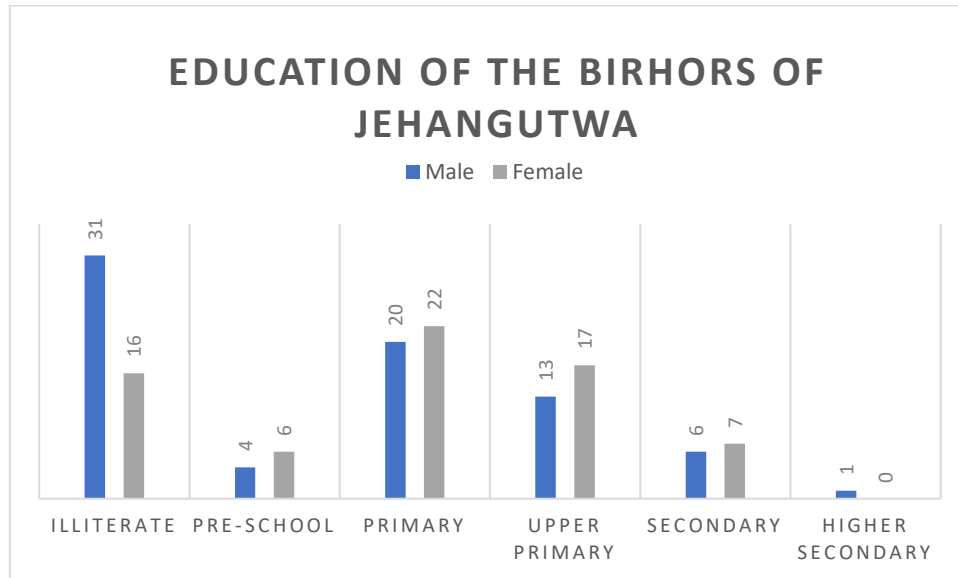


Fig. 5.2

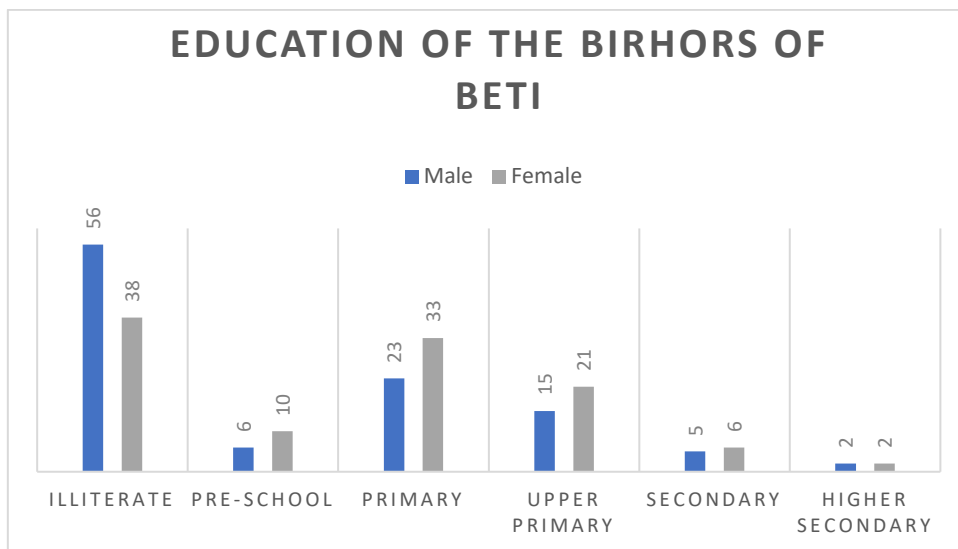


Fig. 5.3

**Analysis:** the educational status of the two villages, Jehangutwa and Beti, reflects the level of schooling and literacy. In Jehangutwa, the total population is 143 people. There are also high numbers of illiterate individuals. There are 10 children (4 males and 6 females) who are in preschools, 42 are in primary, 30 in upper primary, 13 in secondary, and 1 student in higher secondary. No individuals have reached the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. On the other side, in Beti village, which has a higher population of 217, there are 16 children in pre-school, 56 in primary, and 36 in upper primary, 11 in secondary, and 4 in higher secondary, with no students in UG and PG levels. Also, there are 94 individuals who are illiterate in the village. This data shows that while primary and upper primary have average enrolment and higher education remains very low, illiteracy continues to be a major concern in both of the villages.

### 5.1: Traditional Life, Social and Cultural Life, and Changes

Human Birth is a very happy and joyful moment, which is celebrated as a ceremony in different societies. Birth is a very enjoyable and happy moment, whereas death is a moment full of sadness or sorrow in life. Death is a universal truth; those who take birth have to go one day from this world. Human life has certain stages like Birth, death, and marriage; these three stages are a very important part of every human being's life. S.C.Roy (1925) in his book stated that the Birhor's idea of life is one of continuous progress from stage to stage. At each successive stage - from birth and infancy through adolescence, youth and married stage, and old age. The traditional birth ceremony is now changing; now the birth takes place in the institution, not the hut. The birth of a child is an enjoyable occasion for the couple-family of Tanda and the community. The marriage is considered successful when the couple is blessed with a child. (Manna.S, Sarkar . R, 2013).

Marriage is clan exogamy, still followed by them. Marriage is one of the important social institutions in their community and it is a means of establishing a new family through which the community perpetuates (Manna.S; Sarkar.R, 2013). As marriage is regulated on the basis of relationship, an account of Birhor marriage custom appropriately follows the account of their kinship system (Roy. S.C, 1925), When Birhor boy or girl becomes adult their parents take responsibility for their marriage. "In a regular marriage (Sadar Bapla), it is the parents of the bride and bridegroom who select a partner for their boy or girl and conduct all negotiations for the marriage." Bride price is paid during the marriage ceremony. As per the S.C.Roy's "The father of the bridegroom pays three rupees to the father of the bride." although other type of marriage is also found in their society except arrange or regular marriage system (Sadar bapla), like Udra-udri bapla (Purely elopement marriage), Bolo Bapla (Intrusion marriage), Sipundur bapla (the converse of the Bolo-bapla), Hirim bapla (Second marriage), Sangha bapla (If second wife is a widow), Kiring-jawae baola (Boughat son-in-law marriage), Golhat bapla (Marriage by exchange of betel-nuts), Beng-karhi bapla (In this marriage the bride owing to her parents' poverty is taken to the bridegroom's house to be married). The Bihors follow the rule of tribe-endogamy and clan exogamy (Manna.S & Sarkar.S, 2015). Marriage or sexual intercourse between persons of the same totemic clan is forbidden, but after the adoption of Christianity, the traditional rules have changed. Now, all the rituals of marriage were performed by the Christian father of that area. Also, modernity and cross-cultural interaction with the outer world influence them to make the changes.

Clan is the base of kinship by which all tribal behaviour is established. The kinship system influences their consanguinity (Blood relation) as well as their marital life. Basically, their kinship is based on a totemic clan. Minz, Gidh, Kher, and Indwar totems are mainly found in these two villages. The kinship system of Birhor follows patrilineal descent, which means their lineage and inheritance of property, surname are traced through the male line. Manly Classificatory kinship terminology is used in the Birhor community, where a person of the same generation and sex is addressed in the same term. Kinship bonds are breaking with time, and monetization is also impacted by them.

Death rituals are also followed by the Christian rules and regulations. The traditional priest only performed a few traditional rituals, and others are performed by Christian priests. A few inter-tribal marriage is also found, due to Christianisation.

### 5.2: Traditional Occupation and Changes:

**Hunting and food Gathering:** Bihors are very good hunters once in a while. Their whole life centred around hunting and food gathering, but at a subsistence level. Bihors has developed into a keen hunter with strong powers of scent, sight, and hearing, and has acquired an intimate knowledge of the haunt and



habits of different birds and animals and the medicinal properties of various roots and herbs. (S.C. Roy, 1925). Work division is identified among them; male members always go for hunting the small birds and animals, whereas the females are busy collecting minor forest products like yams, roots, shoots, and other edible food materials from the jungle. But as per table 5.3, we find that in Jehangutwa village, only 7 male members go for hunting and 10 females are collecting food material from the forest where whereas from the Beti, 10 males go for hunting but not regularly, and 20 females are going for food gathering. The government has given them a few agricultural plots, but few of them engage the agricultural activity.

**Rope Making:** Birhors has a unique culture of rope making, which helps the neighbouring villagers who are engaged in agricultural activity. In Gumla, Oraon is the major tribal community that depends on agriculture. Birhors mainly make the rope for tying the animals and for agricultural work. Rope making has long been an important skill for the Birhor, especially using fibres like *mohlan* or *chop chal* from local trees (Jha et al., n.d., 2016). However, deforestation and forest laws have restricted their access to natural resources, which has reduced opportunities for their traditional livelihoods (Thakur & Sharma, 2012). As a result, their economic stability has become uncertain, and many have turned to labor work or seasonal migration (Ghosh & Chatterjee, 2024). Despite attempts to support them with housing and training programs, many government schemes like MNREGA or public food supply systems remain non-functional in several Birhor villages (Sarkar, 2016). But in the study area, they have the most vulnerable economy. Different companies make cheap ropes and more durable so the demand for their rope has decreased, now a day they make rope from sacks of cement and plastic bags.

## 5.2.1: Occupational activities of the Birhor

Occupation	Jehangutwa		Beti	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Hunting-Food Gathering	7	10	10	20
Rope Making	0	4	2	10
Agriculture	3	2	5	0
Day Labourer	5	2	12	0
Govt./Non Govt. Service	12	0	0	0
Others	0	2	5	3
Total	27	20	34	33
Source: Field work Data				

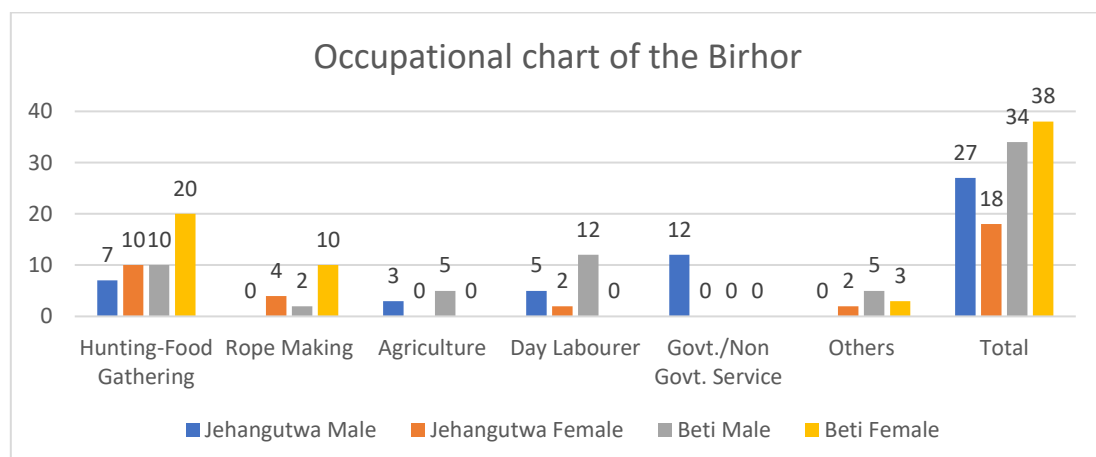


Fig.5.2.1

The Birhor communities are traditionally known as forest dwellers and hunter-gatherers. In the modern era, they have experienced significant changes in their livelihood patterns due to modern influences and limited access to forests. The study shows that in Jehangutwa, Male members are more engaged in formal and non-traditional jobs. A significant number (12 males) are employed in the government or private services, which marks a notable departure from their traditional livelihood. Hunting and gathering, once staples of Birhors' life. Nowadays, 14 males and 30 females are involved in hunting and gathering. Rope making is a traditional skill of the Birhors. Only 14 females and 2 males mainly carry the tradition in these villages. There are also 7 males with 2 females involved with agriculture. Day labour is carried out by 2 females and 17 males, while other occupations are carried out by 5 females and 5 males.

### 5.3: Changes in Religious Beliefs:

Risley stated in the Tribes and Castes of Bengal, that their religion is said to be a mixture of Animism and Hinduism, and they said to seek to harmonize the two systems by assigning to Devi the chief place in their Pantheon, and making out the animistic godlings to be her daughters and granddaughters (S.C.Roy, 1925). The Birhor tribe traditionally followed animism, worshipping nature, hills, and waterfalls with deep belief in spirits (Oraon, 2020). Here we find that before 1980, they believed in Sarnaism or the natural worshiper mainly centred on Sing Bonga (Sun God) and beliefs on various Bonga (Spirit) mentioned like Jilu-Jayer (Sacred Grove), Sendra Bonga, Chandi Bonga, and sangi bonga (S.C.Roy, 1925). They also practiced ancestor worship and shamanism, in which spiritual healers treated illnesses through rituals (Oraon, 2020). Pahan is the priest of Birhors who performs all the religious rituals. Still, rituals often included rice beer and animal sacrifices (Singha & Murmu, 2020). As we know that they were living in a hut at that time, they made a bonga Kumba (spirit hut). The festivals they were celebrated like Magh parab in January, phagun hunting festival in February, Sarhul in March, Karam and Jittia in September, Dasai and Sohrai in October (1925, S.C.Roy). Definitely, Birhors came into contact with various castes and tribes for many reasons, like selling the ropes and the MFP in the markets, as well as for labour work in the rainy season in the neighbouring villages. These interactions made friendship with the men of the other castes and tribes inhabiting the neighbouring villages, too.

Initially, Christianity faced very strong resistance from both the people and the state machinery, and there were a larger number of cases where such resistance led to violence. The agenda of conversion and the complete negation of indigenous religious faith and practices, and the creation of negative stereotyped notions about indigenous or traditional ways of tribal life, created a huge culture shock that culminated in violent acts of resistance, where other missionaries tried to introduce Christianity. (Chudhuri, S. K, 2013). But in the case of Birhor's conversion, nobody opposed because they are a very little population. The whole scenario started to change after the year 1980. As per the statement of Chatrapal Birhor, Jhon Hemrom (Munda) Christian priest, came from Bano, Khunti district, to Jehangutwa village and convinced him and started prayers every Sunday at their village. Their family started to participate in the prayer. At that time, he was sick, so after doing a prayer, he got good health, as well as he was in some trouble that also came out from there. So he started to believe in Christianity and adopted it. Gradually whole of Jehangutwa, as well as the Beti village Birhors, adopted Christianity, and neighbouring Birhors settlements (Colonies) were adopted the Christianity in Gumla, Lohardaga, and Simdega districts of Jharkhand. the inevitable influence of Christianity shows that their physical or social environment may have influenced Birhor life, the vital elements of their customs, beliefs, and practices, folklore lore, and songs too. Religious change also changes their lifestyle and traditional customs. Christians believe prayer is enough, unlike traditional worship that demands costly offerings (Singha & Murmu, 2020). This shift weakened

shamans' roles and split the community, causing tensions between converts and non-converts (Singha & Murmu, 2020; Oraon, 2020). Nowadays, they are following all the rules and regulations of Christian missionaries, so impact is seen in their tradition, customs, marriage, fare, and festivals etc. They celebrate mostly Christian festivals, such as 25 December, the Birthday of Jesus Christ, with great zeal and joy.

## 6. CONCLUSION:

Birhors are one of the PVTGs of India residing in the Indian state of majorly in Jharkhand and the adjoining states like West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Birhors are known for their nomadic, monkey-hunting, and food-gathering tribe. After the implementation of various tribal development schemes of the fifth five-year plans among the tribals, but found that the PVTGs still do not get enough profit. After that Government started to settle them into the colonies in a particular area where they had previously in temporarily. This is the turning point of their life because they lost everything after settling in colonies. Gradually, their Indigenous Knowledge of living, collection of medicine, sustainable forest management, sustainable hunting, their rope-making raw materials, traditional life, culture, and belief system are decreasing day by day. Birhors are now like those fish that are living without water. We had closed the gate of the forest for them by imposing different forest laws and wildlife protection acts. We also find that when they come into cross-cultural interactions with their neighbouring communities or the outer world. And they started to adopt or copy their lifestyle; thereafter, they also lost their traditional traits, and various changes have been seen. Here also found another major reason was found that the Birhors are religiously converted themselves from Animism. Sarnasim to Christianity, which is also a vital reason for the changes in their traditional life. Now they are on the verge of extinction.

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