

Birhor Tribe and Their Health Status

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Abstract: The present research paper is on Birhor tribe and their health status (with special reference to Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh state). Birhor tribe is one of the 75 primitive tribes. This tribe has been suffering from many problems since the beginning. Due to living in forests and mountains, this tribe has been living in poverty, this tribe is a very backward and endangered tribe living in small groups in the mountains and mountains. The presented research study discusses the health development of backward tribe Birhor, focusing on the social, cultural dimensions affecting their health status, highlighting the impact of social and health factors responsible for their poor health outcome and declining population due to neglect. The study emphasizes on nutritional deficiencies, health problems and lack of availment of government health schemes, which shows the need to improve their health and well-being.

Keywords- Birhor tribe, health behaviour, causes of disease, treatment.

Introduction of Birhor tribe: Regarding the origin of Birhor tribe, there is an ancient belief that seven brothers were dropped on the earth by the Sun who came to this country from Kaimur Hills. Out of these, four brothers went to the east (Jharkhand) and three brothers stayed in Raigarh district. Birhor is derived from the Mundari word Bir means forest and Hor means man. In Chhattisgarh state, this tribe is found in Jashpur, Raigarh, Korba and Bilaspur districts. The total number of their families in the state is 689.

The present research paper is on Birhor tribe and their health status (with special reference to Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh state). Birhor tribe is one of the 75 primitive tribes. This tribe has been suffering from many problems since the beginning. Due to living in forests and mountains, this tribe has been living in poverty, this tribe is a very backward and extinct tribe living in small groups in mountains and mountains. In the presented research study, an attempt has been made to focus on the dimensions affecting the health status of the Birhor tribe and to improve their health, which is based on primary data.

Sociological importance of the study: The Birhor tribe is one of the 75 primitive tribes. Due to living in the jungles and mountains, this tribe has been living in poverty. In such a situation, studying the health status and development projects of the Birhor tribe shows the importance of research. The importance of the presented research is as follows.

1. The government has implemented many schemes for the development of the Birhor tribe. To find out to what extent the scheme has been successful in their health treatment shows not only the importance but also the need for the study.

Objectives of the study:

1. To know the health status of the people of Birhor tribe.
2. To know about the diseases of Birhor women and their perception.
3. To know the methods of treatment.

Research study methodology: The present study is based on Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh state. Jashpur is one of the 27 districts of Chhattisgarh. Initially it was included in Raigarh district, later it came into existence as a new district on 25.05.98. Which is spread over an area of 5,838 sq. km. The total population here as per 2011 is 8,52,048 in which male population is 4,25,085 and female population is 4,26,958. Jashpur has a literacy rate of 68.60 percent in which male literacy rate is 78.24 percent and female literacy rate is 59.05 percent. Units like Collectorate, Session Court, District Hospital, District Jail, District Panchayat etc. are operated in the headquarters.

The tribe under study lives in 11 villages of Duldula, Kasambel, Pathalgao, Bagicha and Kunkuri development blocks of Jashpur district, whose total number of families is 131. For the research study, about 90 percent of the total Birhor families i.e. 119 families have been selected through the lottery system of divine direction. The head of the family has been selected as the study unit.

Health status of Birhor tribe: Health is a condition in which the physical and mental conditions are able to maintain adjustment with the physical world. The state of balance of the body with its organs is healthy. Health plays an important role in determining all the activities of a person. This is the basis on which the happiness of a person depends. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of hygiene and ignorance are widely prevalent

among the people of the endangered Birhor tribe. Sharma and Ahiwar's (1992) study of backward tribe shows that on malaria eradication, 25% of the tribal families used mosquito nets to avoid malaria while 75% of the families did not even know about it. Similarly, Vasu and Sharma (1992) have suggested in their study that it would be important to determine the outline of health policies for backward tribes on the basis of their problems in different tribes. In the previous studies related to health of tribes, it is clear from the studies of Burman (1990), Haque (1990), Rizvi (1986) that the health of tribes has not been satisfactory. In the present study, an attempt has been made to find out whether the tribes have the facility of a health center in their village or not. The details of the collected facts are shown in Table No. 1.1

Table no. 1.1: Availability of health center in the village

S.	Health center	Frequency	Per.
1.	Yes	46	38.7
2.	No	73	61.3
	Total	119	100

From the above table regarding the presence of health centres in the village, it is clear that maximum 61.3 percent of the respondents do not have health centres in their villages and 38.7 percent of the respondents have health centres in their villages.

During the survey in the research study, it was observed that most of the Birhors have to travel 15-20 kilometres and sometimes even more from the village for treatment.

If yes, should the health centre be open every day: An attempt has also been made to find out from the respondents whose villages have health centres whether the health centre is open every day or not. The facts are shown in the table below-

Table No. 1.2: If yes, should the health centre be open every day

S.	Health centre be open every day	Frequency N= 46	Per.
1.	Yes	32	69.6
2.	No	14	30.4
	Total	46	100

It is clear from the above table that maximum 69.6 percent health centres are open daily and 30.4 percent health centres are not open daily.

Having sufficient staff in health centre: An attempt has been made to find out from the respondents whether there are sufficient staff in the health centre-

Table No. 1.3: Having sufficient staff in health centre

S.	Sufficient staff in health centre	Frequency N= 46	Per.
1.	Yes	36	78.3
2.	No	10	21.7
	Total	46	100

It is clear from the table regarding availability of sufficient staff in health centres that maximum 78.3% health centres do not have staff and 21.7% health centres have sufficient

staff.

How do respondents get their illness treated: It has been observed in many studies regarding Birhor tribe that this tribal group lives in remote areas and due to lack of education and traditional thinking, in case of any illness or disease, they assume that some divine soul is angry or other similar assessments are made due to which when any member of the family falls ill, they get the illness treated by domestic and BaigaGuniya, and due to this traditional treatment, the illness increases a lot, sometimes a life threatening situation is created due to the illness. In the research study, an attempt has been made to find out how the respondents get their illness treated. The details of the collected facts are shown in Table No. 1.4.

Table No. 1.4: How to treat disease

S.	How to treat disease	Frequency	Per.
1.	Doctor	46	38.7
2.	Home remedies	12	10.1
	Brushwood	48	40.3
	Home remedies and exorcism	13	10.9
	Total	119	100

From the above table regarding how to get the disease treated, it is clear that maximum 38.7 percent of the respondents get treatment done both by home and exorcism, 38.7 percent in hospital, 40.3 percent of the respondents get treatment done only by exorcism, and 10.9 percent get treatment done at home.

The table presented shows that most of the Birhor families get their disease treated by home and exorcism. There is a belief behind getting treatment from exorcism or Baiga.

An attempt has been made to find out from the respondents of the study what is their belief behind getting exorcism done by Baiga, in which 100 percent of the respondents said that they have faith in exorcism.

The above analysis shows that the respondents have more faith in exorcism, this was also observed by the researcher during the study.

Where should women deliver their babies: The structural background of human health and social welfare is comprised of various aspects of the health of pregnant women and newborn babies. Reproduction is a natural physiological process and it is essential for pregnant women to remain healthy during this period. 35 Valentin Tine (1902) was the first to present a scientific basis for the need for care of pregnant women. Most women die during pregnancy due to infectious diseases, accidents and other diseases as well as various social reasons such as the age of the woman at the time of childbirth, poor economic status, illiteracy, lack of reproductive services, poor environmental conditions, social customs and illiteracy. As a result of the increasing mortality rate of pregnant women in developed, developing and underdeveloped nations, a planned strategy regarding maternal and child welfare was introduced by the World Health Organization in 1948. 37 The present

condition of education in tribal areas is very pathetic. Important guidelines can be provided to women through education towards safe pregnancy and the health condition of the entire family can be improved. In most societies, only a few parents send their girls to school. They give more importance to the education of boys. Girls are kept at home to take care of the children in the household. Most girls have to leave school due to early marriage or pregnancy. 39 Generally, very few girls go back to school after having a child. In fact, education affects women in various ways. Educated women marry and conceive late and adopt the desired means of family planning and take proper care during pregnancy. Their maternal mortality rate is one-fourth that of women who have received formal education. 41 In tribal areas, most deliveries are done through traditional means of delivery, in which the role of old women of the Chamin house and women of the neighbourhood is prominent. Even in the availability of trained midwives and doctors, women find it appropriate to deliver through traditional delivery workers. Apart from this, traditional delivery workers are less expensive than modern doctors and money is also spent on delivery. An important contribution can be made in this direction by training the women who give birth. Delivery workers can arouse faith in the community towards new methods of treatment by receiving modern training, and can help women in getting rid of diseases occurring during pregnancy and after delivery. Information regarding where the pregnant woman of the family should deliver is shown in the following table-1.5

Table No. 1.5: Where should women deliver their babies

S.	Deliver their babies	Frequency	Per.
1.	Gharmein	89	74.8
2.	Health center	30	25.2
	Total	119	100

The table related to the delivery of women shows that maximum 74.7 percent women deliver at home, 25.2 percent deliver in health center. The findings of Sharma and Wali (1989) confirm our figures.

In the Birhor tribe, to avoid infectious diseases or contagious diseases at the time of delivery, a delivery room is made outside the house, which is called Saur and it is demolished after delivery.

Conclusion: It is clear that the Birhors are dependent on traditional healers or exorcists and diseases like malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea are common among them. These government health services do not reach remote areas and there is also a great lack of awareness in them. The health condition of the Birhor tribe is worrisome, and a multi-pronged strategy is required for this. Along with implementing government schemes at the ground level, respect and inclusion of traditional medical practices is necessary.

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