



THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE TRIBE HILL KORWA AND BIRHOR OF CHHATTISGARH

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ABSTRACT:

This research paper investigates the economic conditions of the Hill Korwa and Birhor PVTGs (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups). They are described in terms of their behavior, living standards, and thought patterns, as improved conditions in these areas can lead to substantial enhancements in education, vocational skills, health, and overall well-being. The alternative—lower living conditions and a greater number of thought patterns (as in better or worse activities)—perpetuates poverty. It was found that the Birhor and Hill Korwa tribes face significant socio-economic challenges due to their remote living conditions, low literacy rates, and inadequate access to education and formal employment. Gender inequality in education, reliance on traditional occupations, and poor household facilities further enhance their plight. Women play crucial economic roles alongside their household duties. Their monthly income is being very low, reflects their economic struggles. An integrated intervention is essential to improve their socio-economic status, ensuring access to education, healthcare, and better living conditions. It was also found that the Birhor and Hill Korwa tribes face significant socio-economic challenges, as they stay in poorly constructed kaccha houses. Though Government support through Indra Awas Yojna has provided some housing, but many lack proper facilities. Access to electricity and safe drinking water is limited. Agriculture being the primary occupation of the tribals, many families' permanent ownership of land is missing as there is an absence of land documents among tribals and they also face low productivity. Tribal educational levels are also low, especially among women, leading to limited employment opportunities. Secondary occupations and borrowing are common to meet financial needs. The types of interventions needed are pointed out: the tribes require an urgent assistance and an integrated approach to uplift them economically. Tribal education levels—particularly among women—are abysmally low. The types of assistance needed—methods of improving their living conditions, education, and economic situation—are pointed to in the research paper.

KEYWORDS:

BIRHOR AND HILL KORWA TRIBES, SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES, LITERACY RATES, EDUCATION, GENDER INEQUALITY, OCCUPATIONS, PRIMITIVE ACCOMMODATION, ELECTRICITY, DRINKING WATER, AGRICULTURE, FINANCIAL NEEDS, INTEGRATED INTERVENTIONS, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to examine the impact of economic status on an individual as determines his or her behavior, way of living and thinking pattern. It is related to the basic human needs; education, shelter, health care, electricity and shelter, as well as access to clean water. Social class not only determines material outlook of life but also largely controls social interactions and many cultural traits and activities such as birth, marriage and burial. For example, persons with improved economical standing most often have improved standards of living through well-education, affordable health, steady income, and leisure facilities, all of which contributes positively to their well-being. On the other hand, people with low class struggles like dwelling, health care, poor education and unemployment, which ensures a cycle of poverty. Economic injustice is also prominent in the tribal group in India and as pointed out by Nayak (2004) since these group of people have for one

reason or the other been enclosed from the mainstream economy, they fall foul to one of the most pronounced forms of economic injustice. This isolation for social and economic practices hampers their assimilation into new economy prospects, reducing them to conventional economic activities that offer little room for monetary improvements. The economic status also determines one's capacity to conform and/or react to culture and/or society standards, because those with fewer means are limited in their ability to meet cultural or social responsibilities. Last of all, it correlates with economic power as not only a collective feature of people, but major factor defining opportunities and choices of every person, outlining disparities of society. Even the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) living in some extent isolated zones of the country are in troubles as their living standard in terms of economical status is low. These communities like

Birhor and Hill Korwa tribes are backward even in crucial sectors like occupation, education, health, awareness, life style and agriculture. Consequently, they lack basic amenities necessities such as foods, clothes, drugs and other basic necessities. They also announced that most of the health care facilities in these areas are grossly inadequate; adequate safe drinking water and nutritious foods are scarce. Pani and Sahoo (2008) emphasized various problems that hamper PVTGs rights, such as, problem in food security, hunger, poverty, absence of health care center, illiteracy, exploitation through the moneylender, and deforestation. The housing conditions of these tribes are also terrible because the majority of them live in poor ventilated, electricity-less huts built by temporary materials. Most of the "kaccha" houses therefore have a single room where tools for the kitchen, farming and other necessities are separated by a divider while the cooking and sleeping facilities are combined. Most homes are unsanitary, and possessions are scarce, at best consisting of several utensils, bicycles or radios. The monetary position is equally poor where most families earn less than 500 rupees in a one month which is quite inadequate to feed such large families. Most children go even bare footed during winter and do not have proper clothes and use the dried crops as the blanket. Kujur (2011) opined that grave ostensible expenses of marriage and biologically related rite of passage necessitate borrowing among the Hill Korwa. Kumari (2001) observed that Birhor are archaelical forest dependent foragers mainly depend on hunting and gathering for meager livelihood. There is food scarcity and the HHI has to depend on wild yams and nuts, boiled leaves and fruits. A big percentage of the people cannot read and write or have only basic education since school education is still low among them. These challenges call for an integrated intervention in the lives of the PVTGs with regard to their socio-economic Status.

METHODOLOGY

The study is Descriptive in nature and for data collection interview schedule has been used. A few case studies were also carried out for a more thorough investigation. In the relevant study region, interviews were also conducted with Sarpanch, school teachers, and health professionals. The regions chosen for the study are the districts of Jashpur and Raigarh in the state of Chhattisgarh. The respondents for this study are the families of Hill Korwa and Birhor. The sample size of 240 was chosen using the Krejcie and Morgan method, and the lottery method of simple random sampling was employed to choose the respondents.

OBJECTIVES

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

1. To find the educational and economical status of the respondents.
2. To explore the household facilities of the respondents.

3. To know the agricultural and other economic activities of the respondents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

EDUCATIONAL STATUS:

Education is one of the most important requisites of developmental advancement; however, the Birhor and Hill Korwa tribes are primitive, and are living in remote areas and they do not have adequate education awareness. Xaxa (2012) described that the education scenario among the tribal groups in India is quite dismal, which marks gender inequality too because the tribal women are far behind the men in education. Concerning the literacy status of the two selected tribes, respondents demonstrated very poor literacy enlightenment where 80% of respondents were illiterate and only 20% literate. Out of these universities, 15.8% of them had completed primary education, 3.8% had passed middle school and only 0.4% had finished high school. Education to these tribes' continues to be an unseen dream because of language barriers, as they are unable to understand Hindi and feel awkward to learn with language that they rarely speak. In addition, middle and higher secondary schools are very distant from their residential areas and there are no proper vehicles and road transports, and no proper transport means during rainy season. The worse is the fate of women because girl children are considered as baby sitters of their young brothers and sisters and are over burdened with house hold activities. Early marriages also deny them their chance to education Early marriages also compromise on their education. Another factor related to educational levels is that many students are shy and from low-income families or from culturally strict families. Tiwari (2001) identified that the overall literacy in the Hill Korwa community was a dismal 2.9%, and more study done by Kujur (2012), noted that 79.6% of the total Hill Korwa population was illiterate the remaining 20.4% were literate of which majority among them where illiterate at primary level. Goel (2005) observed higher drop out rate among Birhor children, boys have better enrollment than girl child due to domestic chores. All these factors point to a very poor educational status of these tribes.

OCCUPATION:

Employment is a necessity in life and although among the few small scale tribal groups such as the Hill Korwa and Birhor occupational activities are a means of survival and consist of products from the forests, hunting, fishing, farming, firewood vending, basketry, and wage employment. Due to low education, there is poor formal employment opportunities' understanding hence traditional employment is the only option for these people. The woman is equally involved in providing household products' necessities besides contributing to economic activities including rope making and cultivating. While some of them have got involved in local jobs, majority of them are still engaged in marginal activities. This is due to their reliance on natural resources and the difficulties of enhancing the economic situation because of low literacy

levels and a lack of development. The interview findings show that as many as 73.3 per cent of the respondents are involved in the collection of 'minor forest produce and cultivation'. According to the activities of the Hill Korwa, 92.0% were depend on the above activity and 42.9% respondents were depend on the activity of Birhor. The employment in labor work is listed by 34.0% of Birhor respondents and only 6.0% Hill Korwa respondents, the main reason behind it is geographical condition – Birhor inhabits in plain land near to towns have better options for labor work whereas, Hill Korwa inhabits in hilly and plateau area having less town access. The labor work comprises government schemes such as MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Act), agricultural labor and other employment in organized private sector. Because most of them are illiterate, they cannot get better jobs in future and the chances remain slim. Out of the total respondents of Hill Korwa, only 7 per cent respondent is having job, likewise 66 per cent Birhor respondents are having job mostly they are working as ASHA worker (Mitanin) or cook (Bavarchis) in respective government establishments. Inclusive, 3.0% of respondents are working in both tribes. The critical event organisation functions like cooking, childcare and cleaning are done by particular individuals and this shows the economic disabilities of these societies because of geographical, educational and traditional problems.

MONTHLY INCOME:

Women are playing equally important role as their male counterparts in the primitive tribal community, which means that women are not only playing their duty in household activities but also they are taking part in cultivation and collection of forest produce. Thus they also earn some money for their family. The monthly income of the respondents as on the table above shows that there is a majority of income groups of less than one thousand rupees which occurs 52.1 percent and 41.7 percent respondents are having the income of 1000-2000 rupees per month. Kerketta (2007)²² was also mentioned in her study that the mean monthly income of Hill Korwa was 1141.70 rupees.

HOUSE HOLD FACILITIES.

FORM OF THE HOUSE:

During the study it was found that all the respondents are having their own house and the form of the house was generally found mostly Kaccha or fewer have pakka house. The description about form of houses is given in the table below. From the above table it was found that 100 percent Hill Korwa respondent's houses and 90.1 percent Birhor houses are Kaccha, only 9.9 percent respondents are having pakka house which are provided by the government and there is found a very interesting thing is that Birhor people are not living in these kind of pakka house as they are not properly ventilated and they felt uncomfortable in it so they prefer their mud houses which are located nearby. From the above finding it can be said

that 96.3 percent respondents are living in kaccha houses.

CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSE:

The construction of house is on kind of challenge among primitive tribe since their economic status is very poor and they are not able to by construction material from the market. Indra awas yojna is help full for their requirement. The dicription about the construction of their house is given in the table below From the above table it was found that 89.9 percent Hill Korwa and 71.4 percent Birhor are having houses by the government support which was given under Indra awas yojna and 10.1 percent Hill Korwa and 28.6 Birhor are living in their self constructed houses. The majority of government provided houses are higher in both the tribes which are foud 82.9 percent and only 17.1 percent houses are self constructed in both the tribes.

FACILITIES IN THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDED HOUSE:

From the above table it can be said that there is not any Hill Korwa respondent found which are having sufficient room with electricity and separate kitchen and 26.2 percent Birhor respondents are found having sufficient rooms with electricity and separate kitchen in their houses. The majority of respondents is found about insufficient rooms without electricity which is 76.9 percent Hill Korwa and 44.6 percent Birhor are found agreed that their houses are having insufficient rooms and are not electrified. The electricity facility is found only as aekal batti connection which is the state government program in which 40 unit electricity supplies is free for the people which are living below the poverty line in which only one light bulb is provided. 66.3 percent respondents are found with insufficient rooms and without electrified houses and only 8.5 percent respondents (only Birhor) are found having sufficient rooms and electrified houses.

ELECTRIFICATION OF OWN HOUSE:

It is found that maximum 70.7 percent respondent are yet not having the electricity facility in their house and only 29.3 percent respondents (only Birhor) houses are electrified.

AVAILABILITY AND SOURCES OF DRINKING WATER:

It is found that maximum 40.8 percent respondents are getting drinking water from the hand pumps in which maximum 69.2 percent Birhor respondents and only 23.5 percent Hill Korwa respondents are getting water from the hand pumps. As Hill Korwas are living in hilly areas they are dependent upon various water sources like well, jharna, nala, river, turra and dhodhi as compare to Birhors they are living in the plains so the hand pump facility is the successful option for fulfillment of their requirement.

AVAILABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND:

Agriculture is the most primary occupation of Hill Korwa and presently Birhor are also found doing agriculture or agriculture labour. It was found from the present study that (104) 69.8 percent Hill Korwa and (64) 70.3 percent

Birhor respondents primary occupation is agriculture. The description about the agriculture land is found that 83.7 percent Hill Korwa and 64 percent (64 percent) Birhor respondents are having their own agricultural land and 16.3 percent Hill Korwa respondents said that they don't have their own land they work as an agriculture labour or adhiya in others land.

SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND:

The description about the agricultural land of the respondent's family is found that maximum 57.6 percent respondents are having 1-2 Acres agriculture land and 27.8 percent respondents are having 2-5 Acres land. 1.3 percent respondents are found having 10-15 acre land which are Hill Korwa. 5.3 percent Birhors are found having less than one acre land. it is found during the study that most of the respondents are not having their land document. In Hill Korwa out of 87 land holders only 35.6 percent respondents are having rin pustika and in Birhor there are 64 land holders out of which only 53.8 percent respondents are having rin pustika.

VARIETY OF CROPS:

Generally they are growing Rice, Pulses, Makai, Potato, Tomato, Chillies, Mustard, Tauo and Bede. According to the climate of Jaspur district the productivity of Potato and Makai is beneficial and it was found in the study that Hill Korwa generally give their fields for adhiya to yadavs for 'Adhiya' in which they grow large quantity of Potato and Chille, and give some amount of money to the the land owner. There are some village in Bagicha block the few Hill Korwa families have been started Banana cultivation and the profit of yields is sufficient for them for atleast six months. The description about the variety of crops. Maximum 24.5 percent respondent's are found growing crops like rice, pulses and maze. There is similarity between Hill Korwa and Birhor regarding their variety of crops in case of rice, pulses and Makai but there is found difference between them in case of growing vegetables, 19.5 percent Hill Korwa respondents growing vegetables like tomato, potato and chilli while the Bihors are not .there is found some other cases are also found where Hill Korwa grows Banana., During an interview the respondent said that they earn money by selling banana, tomatoes and chilli but they need some finance to grow vegetables for that they generally take credits from the local investors called Ahir.

AGRICULTURE PRODUCE PER ACRE:

The description about the production of farming is also an important part of economy Less than one acer farming production of Hill Korwa and Birhor family are 69.0% and 86.0 % respectively followed by 1-2 quintal of production is 25.3 % in Hill Korwa and 14.0% in Birhor respectively. More than 2 quintal production is found only among Hill Korwa which is 5.7 percent.

AGRICULTURE PRODUCE FULFILL ALL REQUIREMENTS:

Since agriculture plays an important role in economy and it fulfill the requirements of family but the production is not at that level by which it is found difficult to fulfill all the daily requirement family. It is found from the above table that 84 percent Hill Korwa and 98.4 percent Birhor respondents are not satisfied by agriculture produce since it is not sufficient to fulfill their family's requirements. Only ten percent respondents are satisfied with agriculture produce. The reason for un satisfaction is may be the large number of family members and extreme poverty.

OTHER OCCUPATIONS OF RESPONDENT:

Since it is found that most of the respondents are not satisfied by the agriculture so they are doing some other secondary occupations which may helpful to them for the survival and fulfilment of the daily requirements. Labor, collection and selling of forest produces, rope making, are the secondary occupations of those respondents family who are farmers but not satisfied by agriculture. 49.3 percent respondents family are found doing labour work as their secondary occupation in which they are doing work in MANREGA as well as in private sectors also. 36.5 percent Birhor are also found doing labour work and one thing is found very unique among Birhors was that they are the rope makers and bird catchers and this job plays a very important role in their economic life, as during the interview it was found that an average one Birhor family earns minimum one to two thousand rupees per month by rope making, but it is depending upon the markets requirements it not beneficial for the whole year. Gathering and selling of forest produce is also a good kind of option as secondary occupation for both the tribes as they are living in the forest regions. fire wood selling is again a very good source of income for Hill Korwas, they earn maximum 1000-2000 thousand rupees per month by it but again it is not benefited hole year.

MONEY BORROWING:

As both the tribes are primitive tribes and their economic status is not enough to fulfill all requirements there is some other financial requirements other than daily household needs these are different kinds of rituals like birth, marriage, festivals and funeral. The agriculture also needs some investments to grow vegetables for economic purposes, all these requirements led them to take credit and borrow some money to done these kind of things. Following are the description about the status of money borrowing of respondents. It is found that 30.9 percent Hill Korwa and 7.7 percent Birhor respondents borrowed money for their different needs. It is found during the observation that the Hill Korwa respondents are generally take credits from local Ahir people and Birhor take it from relatives as Birhors are generally living in those village where, their relatives are living and it will become easy for them to take credit of small amounts .it also found during the study that most of them returned their money back and they don't have any dues left.

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