

Implementation of Governmental Policy and Cultural Transformation: A Case Study on Birhor Tribe in Bagmundi Block Under the District of Purulia of West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

It is very difficult to define the term "Culture", however simply it denotes the tastes, traditions, beliefs, rituals, values, thoughts, knowledge, behavior and after all social learning of one or a group of people. Since the beginning of human civilization, each and every community has been bearing its distinctive cultural identity and trying to save it as a matter of sentiment. In this way, diversities are found among heterogeneous group of people worldwide in the form of cultural variation. But due to Modernization, Globalization lead to rapid changes of traditional indigenous culture. Among the 698 Scheduled tribes in India, Birhoris one of them. Birhor are traditionally hunter and gatherer and live in the forest of Chota Nagpur plateau. Birhor were indigenous practices of culture but due to governmental forest law and wildlife protection act force to shift Birhor habitation in plain area under rehabilitation programmed. Afterword in contacts with neighbor modern people Birhor culture gradually changes. In this paper highlighted the nature of change within Birhor culture.

1. Introduction

India, being a country of heterogeneous group of people has always reflected cultural tradition of its inhabitants within space-time lattice since time immemorial. One of the indigenous cultural heritages lies in the sphere of tribal society has been living in the forest endowed hills and foothills of Chota Nagpur plateau in the name of *Adibasi* or first settler who have maintained their customs, rules and rituals forming a socio-cultural distinctive community as compared to their neighbours (Roy and Das, 2011). Traditionally Birhors were hunter and gatherer thus forest is the backbone of Birhor economy and without forest they cannot think of living. It seems to the Birhors as the gift of nature. They feel secured in the area of the forest like a fish in water (Sahay A.K,2009). During the last century it is noticed that rapid deforestation and huge loss of Biodiversity is found in every part of India and in this context Indian government taken step to protect forest and animals that is why a huge numbers of forest dweller inhabitation forcefully shifted from the forest to the nearby agricultural areas. In this Governmental rehabilitation programme Birhors tribe also forcefully shifted in the nearby unfertile agricultural land with far away from forest area. In coming with new areas Birhor cannot adopt with the new sphere of life because of unavailability of agricultural land, agricultural equipment's, knowledge make their lifestyle engenders. After course of time Birhors in comes to the contact of modern people in nearby area and gradually lost their traditional cultural practices.

2. Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this paper are the following-

1. To represent traditional boundaries inherited tribal life of Birhor tribe.
2. To highlight the changing scenario of societal landscape of Birhor in the study area.
3. To investigate the impact of modernity upon the Birhor tribe.

3. Methodology

The present research is purely based on Primary data that has been gathered through direct field observation and use questionnaires and face to face interviews with Birhor village head man, students, women and other Birhors. After collecting data, changes have been identified in the perspective of man and environmental relationship. To analyse the changing life style of Birhor tribe, with the help of tabulation and graphical representation.

4. About the study area

The study area Bagmundi Block is located in the southern part of Purulia district. The Block is bounded by Jhalda I, Jhalda II and Arsha Block on the north, Balarampur Block on the east, Kukru Block, in Seraikela Kharsawan district of Jharkhand, on the south, and Jhalda I Block on the west and the total area of this block is 427.95 km².