



Birhor Tribe Joins Movement Against Child Marriage | Jharkhand | 17 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Recently, people belonging to [the Birhor tribe](#), a [particularly vulnerable tribal group](#) in Jharkhand, have [joined a movement against child marriage](#) for the first time.

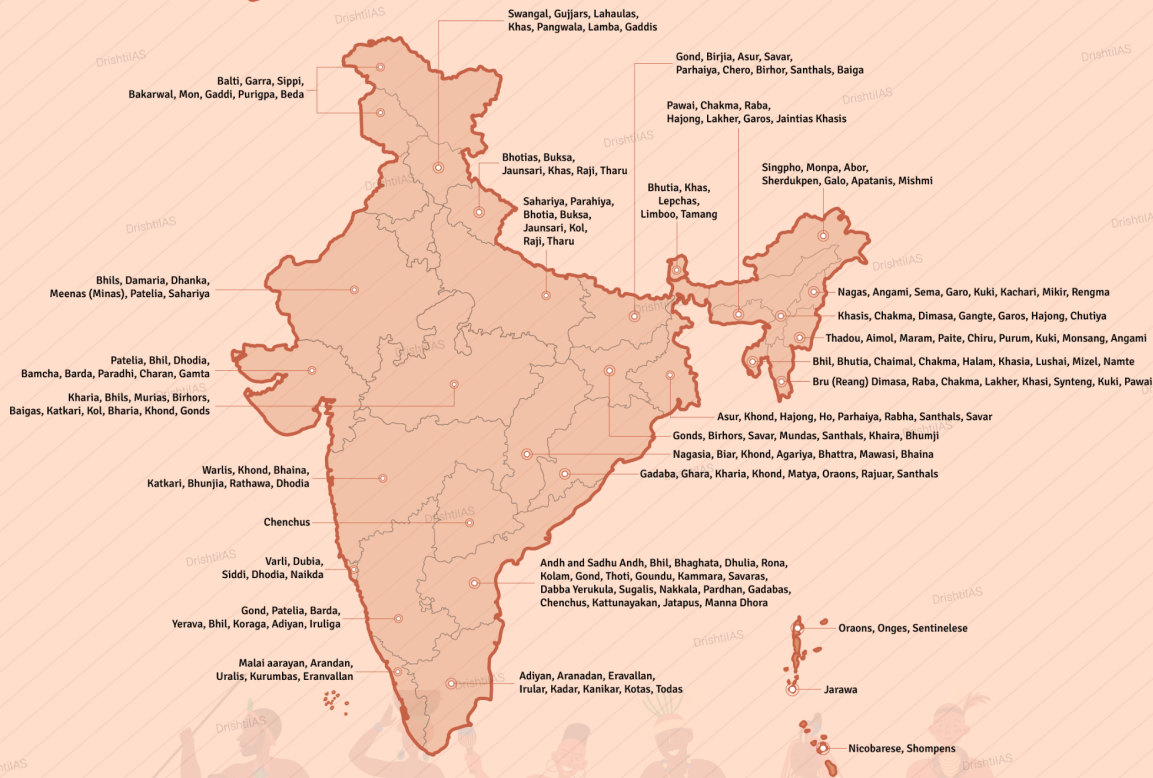
Key Points

- **Birhor Community:**
 - The **Birhor people** are a [semi-nomadic tribal community](#), heavily forest-dependent, and economically and socially marginalized.
 - For the first time, hundreds of Birhor community members in Jharkhand's Giridih district joined a movement against child marriage, a rampant practice within their community.
- **Awareness on Child Marriage Consequences:**
 - The **Just Rights for Children Alliance (JRC)** highlighted that the event marked the first awareness drive where the community was informed about the legalities and consequences of child marriage.
 - Youth, children, women, and elders gathered under the glow of candles, taking a collective pledge to end child marriage and to report any such cases.
- **Support for Government Campaign:**
 - The marches were organized by Banvasi Vikas Ashram as part of the ['Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat'](#) campaign, launched by the [Union Ministry of Women and Child Development](#).
 - Banvasi Vikas Ashram is one of 250 partner [Non-governmental Organizations \(NGOs\)](#) under the JRC alliance.
 - The **ill effects of child marriage on children's health, education, and overall well-being were discussed** to make the Birhor tribe aware of the social evil.
 - JRC claimed to have **stopped over 7,000 child marriages in Jharkhand between April and December 2024** through events in blocks, villages, and schools across all 24 districts.
- **High-Prevalence Districts:**
 - **Jamtara, Deoghar, Godda, Giridih, Koderma, and Dumka** were identified as districts with a higher prevalence of child marriage cases.

Birhor Tribe

- **Physical appearance:** They are **short, with long heads, wavy hair, and broad noses**.
- **Language:** Their language is similar to **Santali, Mundari, and Ho**.
- **Religion:** They practice a **combination of animism and Hinduism**. The Sun God is their supreme deity, along with Lugu Buru and Budhimai.
- **Economy:** The Birhor have a "primitive subsistence economy" based on **hunting and gathering**, but some have settled into agriculture. They **make ropes from vine fibers to sell to nearby agricultural people**.
- **Socioeconomic status:** The Birhor are **divided into two groups** based on their socioeconomic status: the **wandering Uthlus and the settled Janghis**.

Major Tribes in India



- STs constitute 8.6% of the population of India (Census 2011). Draft National Tribal Policy, 2006 records 698 STs in India.
- Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) are more vulnerable among the tribal groups. Among the 75 listed PVTGs, the highest number is found in Odisha.
- Bhil is the largest tribal group (38% of the total scheduled tribal population of India) followed by the Gonds.
- Madhya Pradesh has the highest tribal population in India (Census 2011).
- The Santhal are the oldest tribes in India. The Santhal system of governance, known as Manjhi-Paragana, can be compared to local self-governance.
- According to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes list (modification orders), 1956, the inhabitants of Lakshadweep who and both of whose parents were born in these islands are treated as STs.
- Article 342 of the Constitution prescribes procedure to be followed for specification of STs.
- Article 275 provides for the grant of special funds by the Union Government to the State Government for promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes and providing them with a better administration.