



Birhor Tribe Joins Movement Against Child Marriage

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.

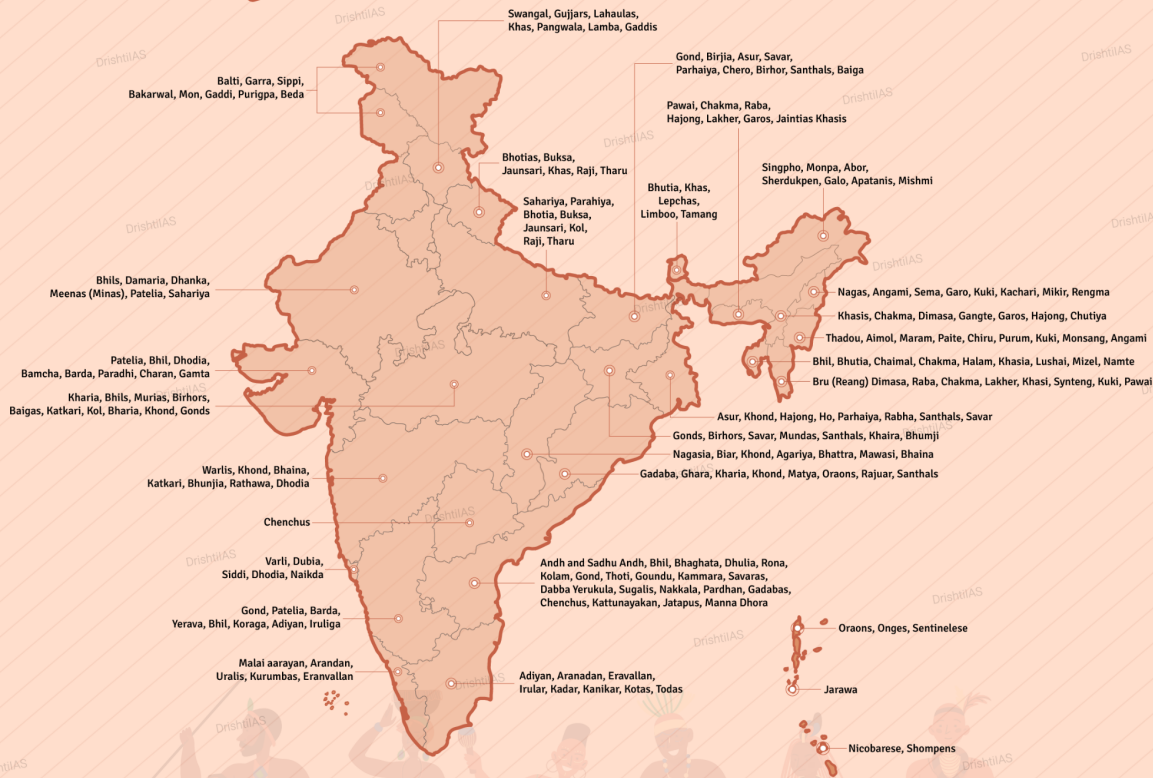
Key Points

- **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 Mukh 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.