

## Bharias of Pataalkot : Status and Trends of Development

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*Despite the research by many researchers due attention has not been paid in studying the status, growth, development and nutritional status of the Bharia tribal community in India. In fact, most of the works carried out in India mainly on growth and nutritional status deal with urban and in rural populations of Scheduled Tribes. Among the tribal population the studies about Bharias are limited. In the present study we examine the status and trend of development of Bharias of Pataalkot.*

**Key Words:** Bharia, Pataalkot, PVTGs

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**Introduction:** Human resource development is fundamental to the development process, contributing to poverty eradication and long-term economic growth through improved health, education, and human capacity-building. Ensuring the full integration of health and education into poverty eradication strategies is essential. It is essential we understand the relationship between health and education and its effects on economic development in the developing world. Human Capital in its broadest sense encompasses the levels of education, health, and nutrition of the population. Few processes are as intertwined with development as human capital accumulation. Education increases productivity, speeds technological advancements, and increases the probability of more healthy productive children, all of which promotes economic development<sup>1</sup>. Growth, in turn, incentivizes investment in human capital. A country cannot claim to be on the right path of development if it leaves some sections of society undeveloped.

The Scheduled Tribes are notified in 30 States/UTs and the number of Scheduled Tribes is 705. The tribal population constitutes 8.6 % of the country's total Population and 11.3 percent of the total rural population. The tribal population is characterized by widespread poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, lack of safe drinking water and hygienic conditions. The population of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the country, as per Census 2011 is 10.45 crore. Population of ST males is 5.25 crore and ST females is 5.20 crore. 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.03% in urban areas<sup>2</sup>. The decadal population growth of the tribals from Census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66% against the 17.69% of the entire population. Broadly the STs inhabit two distinct geographical area – the Central India and the North-Eastern Area. More than half of the Scheduled Tribe population is concentrated in Central India, i.e., Madhya Pradesh (14.69%), Chhattisgarh (7.5%), Jharkhand (8.29%), Andhra Pradesh (5.7%), Maharashtra (10.08%), Orissa (9.2%),

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Gujarat (8.55%) and Rajasthan (8.86%). The other distinct area is the North East (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh)<sup>3</sup>.

Bharia is one of the three Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), found in Madhya Pradesh. Three PVTGs living in Madhya Pradesh, viz. Baiga, Bharia and Saharia comprises respectively about 2.7%, 1.3% and 4.0% of total tribal population 14.69% of the state<sup>4</sup>. They are widely distributed in some of the districts of Madhya Pradesh. District Chhindwara is one of them. There are 803 Gram Panchayats and 2011 villages in the Chhindwara district. Tamia block has 53 Gram Panchayats and 191 villages. Further among Bharia, the residents of Pataalkot region in Tamia block of district Chhindwara are known as Bharia of *Pataalkot*. It is one of the most secluded land-locked regions. The Pataalkot valley is spread over an area of 79 km<sup>2</sup> at an average height of 2750 -3250 feet above Mean Sea Level from 22.24 to 22.29° North and 78.43 to 78.50° East. Pataalkot is located at a distance of 78 Km. from district headquarter Chhindwara in the North-West direction and 20 Km from Tamia in the North – East direction<sup>5</sup>. In Tamia block more than 50% population is schedule tribe.

Bharia is more susceptible group of population. As they have to live in isolation, they have wide spread poverty, illiteracy, pre-agricultural state of technology and stagnant population. In Pataalkot, there is a group of 12 villages within 3 Gram Panchayats, which include 25 settlements. These settlements are located in a deep gorge at origination of river *Dudhi* and *Gayan*. This horse-shoe shaped valley is surrounded by giant hills and there are several pathways to reach the villages located inside the valley. Previously Pataalkot was totally inaccessible by road and one could enter along a foot-path only But recently the Madhya Pradesh Government con-

structed good road inside the Pataalkot valley. Only four villages of *Pataalkot* viz. *Ghatlinga*, *Gudhichhatari*, *Harrakachhar* and *Geldubba* can be reached by road. There is no road for remaining of settlements. Some of the settlements are in extremely remote area where no vehicle can reach namely: *Rated*, *Kaream*, *chimtipur*, *Ghana (Kodiya)*, *Sopatiya* and *Harmau*. Still there are some settlements which do not have electricity.

**Methods:** This paper is mainly based on secondary sources, focusing on qualitative studies as well as quantitative data on intra-household dynamics with a gender lens. For the present study the data of twelve main villages of Pataalkot Valley were collected from Census Report, other sources and field visit also. These villages are Gudhichhatari, Ghatlinga, Bijori, Karrapani, Palanigel Dubba, Dhurni Malani Domni Sehrapachgol, Jadmadal Harra Kachhar, Chintipur, Sukhabhand Harmau, Ghogharigunja Dongri, Kare Amrated and Sidauli.

**Result and Discussion: Tribal Population in Madhya Pradesh state:** Total scheduled tribe population of M.P. contribute to about 20% (1981-19.2%; 1991- 19.9%; 2001-20.3% and 2011- 21.1%) of total population and most of tribal people are living in rural area of M.P. They occupy about 25% (1971-19.8%, 1981-23.8%, 1991- 25.3%, 2001-25.8% and 2011-27.2%) of the rural population of the state. Decadal growth rate of population of Madhya Pradesh showed a continuing decreasing trend in overall population (1981 to 1991- 27.2%, 1991 to 2001- 24.3%, 2001 to 2011-20.3%) as well as among tribal population (1981 to 1991- 31.8%, 1991 to 2001- 26.4%, 2001 to 2011-25.2%). Even with the decreasing growth rates, growth of tribal population has been higher than the non-ST population in the matching census years. Decadal growth rate of ST population was maximum (48.7%) in 1971-1981 with gradual decrease over the decades. Growth rate of tribal popula-

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tion was 31.8%, 26.4%, and 25.2% during 1991-99, 1991-01, 2001-11 as compared to respectively 27.2%, 24.3%, and 20.3% in total population<sup>6</sup>.

**Population of Bharia in Madhya Pradesh:** According to 2011 census, Bharia tribe includes Bhumia, Bhuinhar Bhumia, Bhumiya, Bharia, Paliha, and Pando sub-groups and now exclusive figures for Bharia tribe are available. According to Census 2011, the population of Bharias (including all sub-groups) is 1,93,230, and they are mainly inhabit in Katni (64,363.), Panna (38,465), Chhindwara (31,847) and Jabalpur 12 (23,875) districts . The share of Bharias in total ST population declined to 1.3% in 2011 from 1.7% in 1981. As per the recent decadal growth (2001-2011), growth of all the three PVTGs of M.P. were more or at same rate than the correspond-

ing figures of total population of Madhya Pradesh (20.3%) and total ST population (25.2%). But the growth of Bharia population was much lesser during 1981-91 (10.2%) and 1991-01 (10.4%), which increased considerably in 2001-2011 (26.7%)<sup>7</sup>.

**Population of Bharia in Patalkot:** In 2011, the villages of Patalkot had a total population of 4824 persons out of this 2458 were males and 2366 were females. Scheduled Tribe population was 4496 which comes to be 93.20% of the total population. *Gudhichhatari, Jadmadal Harra Kachhar, Chintipur, Sukhabhand Harmau, Ghogharigunja Dongri* have 100% ST population. In *kare Amrated* out of total population of 539 only one person is Non ST.

**Table 1**  
**Number of Households in Villages of Patalkot**

S. No.	Village	Number of Household
1	Gudhichhatari	69
2	Ghatlinga	133
3	Bijori	228
4	Karrapani	33
5	Palanigel Dubba	65
6	Dhurni Malani Domni Sehrapachgol	41
7	Jadmadal Harra Kachhar	68
8	Chintipur	49
9	Sukhabhand Harmau	34
10	Ghogharigunja Dongri	15
11	Kare Amrated	110
12	Sidauli	145

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**Sex Ratio :** Population enumeration in terms of gender composition is a key indicator to monitor the development pulse of a country. According to Census 2011, The sex ratio for the overall population of India is 943 females per 1000 males and that of Scheduled Tribes 990 females per thousand males. For rural India this ratio comes at 949 and for urban areas this is 929 females per 1000 males. Madhya Pradesh has sex ratio of 931. In rural areas of the state it is 936 while for urban areas it is much lower at 918 females per 1000 males. Trend in sex ratios reveals that sex ratio has increased over the period in almost all the population groups of Madhya Pradesh. In

total population it increased from 919 in 2001 to 931 in 2011 and similarly in non-tribal population (906 to 917), tribal population (975 to 984) during 2001 and 2011 census, which is an encouraging finding. Sex ratio in respect of STs is 984, which is higher than national average of 943. Also, ST sex ratio has improved from 978 females per 1000 males in 2001 to 984 in 2011 in Madhya Pradesh<sup>8</sup>. Our study reveals that sex ratio in Bharia of Patalkot is 960 which is higher than the national average of total population but lower than the sex ratio of tribal population of Madhya Pradesh and India also.

**Table 2.**  
**Sex Ratio of Bharia Tribe in Patalkot**

S. No.	Sex	Number	Percentage	Sex Ratio
1	Male	2294	51.02	960 females per 1000 male
2	Female	2202	48.98	

**Child Sex Ratio:** Tribal population in the state has relatively much higher child sex ratio (0-6 years) as compared to child sex ratio in total population and non-ST population. As per 2011 census, the child sex ratio was 952 in tribal population as compared to 906 in non tribal population and 918 the state average. The proportion of child population in the age group of 0-6 years reflects a fertility trend in a population. More than 18% of the tribal population was recorded in the 0-6 years as compared to about 14% in non-tribal population and 15% overall in the state. This reflects higher fertility rates among tribal population as compared to non-tribal population in the state. The proportion of children in this age group among three PVTGs is higher than

the total population, non tribal population and ST tribal population of the state reflecting higher fertility.

**Table 2.**  
**Child Sex Ratio in Patalkot**

S. No.	Sex	Number	Percentage
1	Male	383	51.75
2	Female	357	48.25

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**Education:** Education forms an important component in the overall development of individuals, enabling them to greater awareness, better comprehension of their social, political and cultural environment and also facilitating the improvement of their socio-economic conditions. These hold true in the case of the Scheduled Tribes in India. The tribal development department is paying attention for the development of Bharia tribe. One of the most commendable works being done by the department is boarding schools in the *Pataalkot*, where the children are being provided residential facilities and education at the cost of government expenditure. Although, there are many drawback in this effort, including lack of motivation/commitment of staff

and corruption, which are great obstacle and need proper monitoring and further strengthening of these boarding schools. There are five schools including a high school and a middle school in Pataalkot.

**Literacy Status:** As per Census figures, literacy rate for STs in India improved from 47.1% in 2001 to 58.96% in 2011. Among ST males, literacy rate increased from 59.2% to 68.5% and among ST females, literacy rate increased from 34.8% to 49.4% during the same period. Literacy rate for the total population has increased from 64.8% in 2001 to 73% in 2011. There is a gap of C 14 percentage points in literacy rate of STs as compared to the all India literacy rate<sup>9</sup>.

**Table 3**  
**Comparative Literacy Rates of STs and Total Population (in per cent)**

Category / Census Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total Population	28.3	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.84	72.99
Scheduled Tribes	8.53	11.30	16.35	29.60	47.10	58.96
Gap	19.77	18.15	19.88	22.61	18.28	14.03

*Source: Registrar General of India*

The information on literacy was collected in all censuses and a steady increase has been observed in overall (total) literacy over the decades among total population in the state. As per census 2011, total literacy rate is 69.3% in Madhya Pradesh, whereas it is 74.1% in non-tribal population, 50.6% in state tribal population<sup>10</sup>. In

Pataalkot literacy rate is 58.14%. Male literacy rate is 65.12% and female literacy rate is 50.86%. It shows that more attention was paid to Bharias of Pataalkot therefore their literacy rate is higher than the state tribal population. But about half of the women are still illiterate.

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**Table 4**  
**Literacy Status of Bharia in Patakot**

S.No.	Sex	Number	Percentage
1	Male	1494	65.12
2	Female	1120	50.86

**Health Status:** Better health is central to human happiness and well-being. It also makes an important contribution to economic progress, as healthy population live longer, is more productive, and save more. Many factors influence health status and a country's ability to provide quality health services for its people. Ministries of health are important actors, but so are other government departments, donor organizations, civil society groups and communities themselves. For example: investments in roads can improve access to health services; inflation targets can constrain health spending; and civil service reform can create opportunities - or limits - to hiring more health workers<sup>11</sup>. In Rated, there is a primary health centre and a veterinary hospital.

The findings of a study done in Patakot clearly indicate that the problem of under nutrition is still prevalent as almost one third of boys and girls of 5-17 years of age were found underweight, stunted and wasted. Here, three types of departures were observed viz. underweight (bodyweight for age), stunting (height for age) and wasting (bodyweight for height)<sup>12</sup>. A study has found that 11% samples of Bharia Tribe of Patakot were Sick Cell Carriers<sup>13</sup>.

**Occupation:** A recent survey in Patakot has thrown some light on the variety of occupation i.e. about 38.7 percent of the people are farmers, agriculture labour comprises 37 percent. The rest around 24.3 percent work as forest labourers<sup>14</sup>. The landholding of the tribal families varies from less than an acre to not more

than 10 acres. Agriculture is rainfed and maize is the major crop. Local crops like *Kodo* (niger), *kutki* and jowar are also cultivated for consumption. The tribes mainly depend upon what they grow in their fields or on the hill slopes. The yields chiefly comprise maize (*Zea Mays*), jowar (*Sorgham Vulgare*), urad (*Phaseolus Mungo*), millets (*Picorrhiza Kurrova*), beans, wheat etc. The cropping pattern is changing with time as some of the farmers have started cultivating wheat and gram varieties given by KVK with the support of JNKVV, Jabalpur.

Patakot is almost cut off from development due to its physical location. Bharias make a living by cultivation of small millet called Kodo-Kutki, collecting forest produce and hunting. Most of the households in Patakot have Back Yard Poultry(BYP). Tamia block has the maximum number of poultry birds in the entire district. 10 villages from Patakot and surrounding areas were identified at random and 100 respondents selected at random as a representative sample for the study. This study<sup>15</sup> has found that 95% of the respondents have BYP as a source of supplementary income though 65% depend on agriculture and construction labor work. 80% get their livelihood from agriculture. More than 80% earned up to Rs 300-800 annually from poultry whereas a similar percentage earn about Rs 1000-6000 annually from agriculture. Agricultural earning being many times more, poultry is an important supplementary source of income, but for the landless laborers, poultry is an important source of income.

**Conclusion:** We recognize that better health and education go hand in hand, with progress in one area reinforcing progress in the other. To take advantage of that synergy, a multi-sectoral approach is needed in the planning of Patakot. The mutually beneficial effects of health, education and other capacity-building approaches for development outcomes should be explicitly considered in the actual design and

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implementation of development strategies. There are other plans also for rural and agriculture development. Still, economy of Bharia tribe is mainly based on forest and forestry products; therefore there is great need of proper research and implementation of policy. Exploitation of tribes with neighboring population, politician, tribal

leaders, bureaucrats and academicians are other darker aspect of tribal development and Bharia are also sufferers of all these drawbacks. We also recognize that human resources development must begin with an investment in children and women.

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