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## “THE MAHLI TRIBES OF JHARKHAND”

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The state of Jharkhand is famous for the mineral material in the world map as well as the ancient inhabitants of India, it is called the tribal region. Among the thirty-two tribes of Jharkhand, The Mahli Tribes or bamboo-craftsman is a subject which did not gain much attention or attraction. In recent times few attempts have been made to unfold the mystery regarding their origin. Though the tribes remain endangered. Each of the tribal groups are culturally different and having their own identities, the problems faced by them are more or less same. It makes us believe that probably at the level of understanding the tribal and social culture, and also at the level of making intervention while implementing the development programs for the tribal. In this paper few attempts have been made to uncover the mystery of Mahli Society in the Land of Tribes “Jharkhand”.

**Keywords: Mahli Tribes, Bamboo Craftsman, Tribes of Jharkhand, Mahli Culture**

### I. INTRODUCTION

"Tribe" refers to a group that inhabits a certain geographical area. The tribe has a common dialect in which a specific culture is found. Each tribe has a fixed name, on the basis of which one tribe is considered different from another. The Mahli tribes are a subject that has not gained much attention. In recent times, a few attempts have been made to unravel the mystery regarding their origin,

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their migration, and their sociocultural lives. [1]

The word Mahli comes from "Madt," which means bamboo in Santhali. Mahli are a member of the Austroloid group of races, and they used to call themselves "Hor," which means the man.

The Mahli community is a traditional bamboo workforce mostly residing in the land of tribes in Jharkhand. The Mahli tribes are mostly found in Saraikela, West Singhbhum, Kodarma, Chatra, Hazaribagh, Dhanbad, Khunti, Lohardaga, Ramgarh, Ranchi,

Laatihaar, Pakur, Godda, Dumka, Deoghar, Palamu, Jamtara, Bokaro, Shaibganj, Gumla, Giridhi, and some parts of the Garhwa district of Jharkhand. Apart from this, their numbers are found in Bihar, West Bengal, and Orissa. more states like Assam, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. [2] The total population of Mahli tribes in Jharkhand is 152, 663 (2011 census). The main occupation of the Mahli tribe is making bamboo-made items, of which bamboo sunp, dauri, broom, harka, tupla, umbrella, mat, and comb are prominent. Natua, Paika Naach, Chhau Naach, Dhaka, Nageda, and flute playing are performed by the Mahli Tribe in Jharkhand. There is an absolute need for detailed and methodical research on the Mahli society, which can provide information about the educational, economic, and social fabric of their society, and their welfare programme can be done on the basis of their social needs by bringing information to the society and government. In the adivasi society, the Mahli society is a much more backward society than Munda and Oraon. It is an almost endangered society that is financially troubled and in a state of despair.

In the Mahli society, the main person is "Manjhi." [3] They celebrate festivals like Karam, Tusu, and Sarhul. Mahli worships Marang Buru. There have been traditions going on for generations. These religions are practised by Easterners who believe wholeheartedly in their traditions and culture. Drinking and dancing are part of their everyday life.

### Language of Mahli Tribes

[4] The Mahli tribe had its own language, which was a dialect of Munda and Santhal. For their livelihood and daily work, Mahlis are divided into different areas, and the outcome is that they are losing their native language. Due to minority and scattered populations, the languages of multilinguals also came to dominate them. It was also necessary for bamboo makers to know the local language to transact in the "Haat" market. Thus, they gradually forgot their native language and adopted the prevalent vernacular.

District	Languages
Ranchi	Nagpuri, Kurmaali, Panchpargania
Sahibganj	Khorta, Bangla, Maaltu, Angika
Dhanbad	Kumali, Santhali, Khorta, Nagpuri
Chatra	Mundari, Kuduk, Khata, Santhali
Godda	Maaltu, Khorta, Angika

Table-1: Languages used by the Mahlis in various districts of Jharkhand.[5]

### Methodology:

The study was designed to address the following two questions:

- What is the social and economic perspective of the situation in Mahli society?
- What are the problems in the education of Mahli society?

### Population & Sample:

The present study is a case study of the Mahli tribe society in Taati village, near Ranchi. For the sample, 50 members were selected.

Research Instruments:

Two instruments were used in the present study: the observation method and the interview method. Two interviews were conducted, one with former MLA Surya Singh Besra and the other with author Mnrakhan Ram Kisku of Mahli society. The interview is aimed at finding out about the education and economic situation of Mahli society. Primary and secondary sources of data are used.

### **Economic Life of Mahli Tribes**

Just as there is variation in the languages of tribes, similarly, differences are seen in the economic status of tribes. The economic lives of Mahli tribes depend more on nature, whether it is animal husbandry as livestock for an economic source, bringing flowers and fruits from the forest, doing agricultural work, fishing, or preparing bamboo products. Bamboo manufactured goods made by Mahlis are often purchased by city contractors at low prices, and they are economically exploited by bringing those items to the city and selling them at arbitrary prices. More plastic goods are available and promoted in the market than bamboo-made items. The number of people employed by this tribe is very small.

### **Problems with Education of Mahli Tribes**

Children of the Mahli tribe drop out of school due to the change of curriculum, as other Mahli children are unable to use the book of one course, and there is an additional burden on parents to buy new books for all their children each year. Education materials provided by the government are also not available on time. As a

result, their child's education is left in the middle. The value of education material is increasing day by day, but the value of bamboo material made by Mahlis has been fixed for a long time, which causes them to bear the extra burden of inflation. Even if some Mahlis teach their children, they are unable to get a job, which makes them indifferent to education. Apart from these, their family background is not financially strong enough to send their children to a good school. The lack of teachers in the government schools of the nearby district made them more depressed. Their children joined the family business to support the family's expenses, but they are unable to reach higher education.

### **Solutions:**

To overcome the above difficulties, it is time that we focus on quality education. Children are required to be empowered with quality education and knowledge that can be applied in their real lives. The government authorities, or ENGOs, are required to take certain steps so that the education conditions of these tribes can be upgraded.

### **Free Education**

Poverty is the major resistance to propelling education in tribal society. This can be solved only if free education for a very minimal fee is offered.

### **Establish More Schools**

The children of Mahli tribes are not able to go to school because they live very far away and have to bear the cost of transport. The solution

can be found only if the government takes an initiative to establish affordable schools that are pocket-friendly to middle-class as well as lower-class families in each nearby district.

### **Develop Infrastructure**

The schools in rural India do not possess ample numbers of well-trained teachers and suffer a lot due to the lack of proper infrastructure; the student-teacher ratio is quite improper. So the school's infrastructure should be done well.

### **Provide Study Materials**

Even if few parents are able to bear the fees, they cannot buy books and other study materials. So study materials should be provided.

### **Conclusion:**

The Mahli society is a part of the tribal society, far away from modernity; their social structure, festivals, education, and livelihood are almost unknown. The present paper is the outcome of the study and situational analysis of the Mahli Tribes of Jharkhand. On the basis of this information, we will get to know what can be done for their social welfare, education, and economic growth, so governments and ENGOS, can take initiative to help them.

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