

Birhor



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to alcohol. They would like to send their children to school, but cannot afford it. Malnutrition is written across their faces, especially among children.



They are nomadic, moving from one place in the forest to another, setting up their places of worship as they go to a new place. The Birhor follow a mixture of animism and Hinduism. The sun god and ancestral family spirits rank very high in their religion. Due to contacts with Hindu neighbours, they have added some more gods into their list. Birhors believe that the whole universe is created and presided over by Sing Bonga, the sun god and his wife.

Christian ministry has been difficult due to their nomadic nature. Yet there are a few Birhor settlements where there are a few Christians. The Birhor literacy rate is very low and as a result, they fall an easy prey to those who exploit them. Literacy initiatives, hand in hand with Bible translation can bring about a transformation in their lives. They need God's Word in the language that speak to their hearts so that they can understand the love of the Almighty God.

Population: 10,000

Literacy: Very low

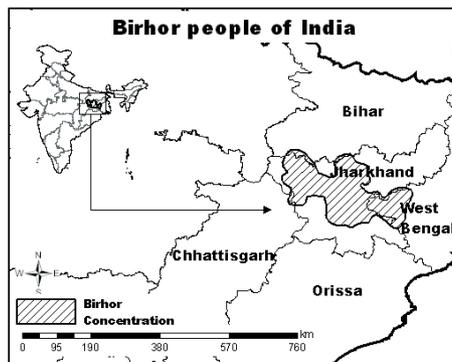
Scripture Status: No translation in progress

The name "Birhor" suggests, "men of the forest." Their lives revolve entirely around forests. These dark-skinned, short-statured, long-headed, wavy-haired and broad-nosed people belong to the

Mundari group of tribes. They are found mainly in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa. The Birhor population in all three states put together is relatively small and is declining with disappearing forests.

Originally hunters, the Birhors, also known as Mankidias, live entirely on forest produce. They love to eat monkey meat and are extremely skilled in trapping any animal. Trapping rabbits, weaving ropes, selling a few baskets when they can, the Birhors seem to live in a different age. It is only recently that they have started ropemaking as their main economic activity. Their need for rice is met through buying it from others in the area, in exchange for forest products.

The Government made huge efforts to settle them, but except for one or two settlements, other Birhors are always on the move. Their birth rate is low and their death rate is high, dwindling their population as the years go by. Most of them are addicted



Pray for:

1. God to break the spiritual and physical bondages that keep the Birhors in poverty, superstitions, ill health etc.
2. The Birhors who have received the light of the gospel to share effectively with other Birhors.
3. God to raise up Christian ministers to work among the Birhor in a culturally appropriate way.
4. A mother tongue translation team to be trained well and translate the Scripture into Birhor.