



## “STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF BAIGA TRIBES IN MADHYA PRADESH: CURRENT SCENARIO OF DINDORI DISTRICT”

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### **Abstract**

*The article analyzes the status of the Human Rights of the Baiga community in the context of Madhya Pradesh. The Constitution of India provides a special status to Scheduled Tribes in the Indian context. The Scheduled Tribes are called tribal, Vanvasi. Scheduled Tribes hold 8 per cent of the Indian population. A total of 573 Scheduled Tribe community people exist in different parts of India. The Baiga tribes are Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) and one of the most backward tribes found in Madhya Pradesh. Baiga tribes are found in Baiga Chack, Mandala district, Balaghat district, and Bilaspur district. The Baiga society is considered to be a completely Indio-Aryan Dravidian related tribe, which has a distinct feature in social, economic, cultural form. The livelihood of the people of Baiga society is derived only from forest products. In Baiga society, the institution of family is small but the structure of kinship is found to be very strong. The people of Baiga society search for a medication to adopt themselves. In Baiga society, strict laws related to the dispute are vigorously followed. People of Baiga society have been making their livelihood only for many thousands of years by cultivating agriculture, and forest products. The Government of India and the Government of Madhya Pradesh has been implementing various welfare schemes for the protection of human rights of Baiga Tribes in Madhya Pradesh. In this context, this article makes a serious attempt to analyze the dynamics of human rights of Baiga Tribes in Madhya Pradesh with special reference to the Dindori district.*

**Keywords:** *Baiga, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) Socio-Economic, political and Cultural Status, Tribes, Human Rights, fifth Schedule, Constitution of India.*

### **Objectives**

**The article will critically investigate the following objectives**

To explore the nature and current scenario of human rights of Baiga Tribes in Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh.

1. To analyze the status of socio, economic, civil, cultural and political Rights of Baiga Tribes in the Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh
2. To critically explain the role of the democratic institutions in the protection of human rights of Baiga Tribes in the Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh.
3. To analyse the dichotomy between the traditional political institutions and modern political institutions.

### **Introduction**

Even today, many places exist away from all kinds and modern beliefs and laws, born of all the logical wisdom of the civilized world, which is free from pollution caused by modern development. India has many places in the year, where there are many places for today. Aeroplanes and trains have not even been seen and their food, life, living and speech are seen in a completely different condition from other



civilized Society. These tribes mainly reside in Madhya Pradesh only. The Baiga tribe is considered to be primarily close to nature. The geographical habitats of the Baiga Scheduled tribe community are mainly seen in the districts of Balaghat, Mandala, and Dindori District in Madhya Pradesh, where most of the Bhariya Baigas and habitats reside. The Baiga tribe is added to the Madhya Pradesh branch of the last tribe Bhuiya of Chota Nagpur, whose land is called Baiga. According to this, the Baiga tribes later came to inhabit the inaccessible forests of Mandala, Shahdol, Dindori, Anuppur, Umaria, Rajnadgaon and Balaghat.

### **Scheduled Tribes in India**

Based on the Constitution of India, the tribal population in the Indian population has been declared as Scheduled Tribes by the constitution legally 366; 25 by the Constitution. By Article 342, this Article is fully accorded special status to the Scheduled Tribes community by the President of India for its public interest information and by the Parliament of India, whether it is a community or a group, it is recognized by the Constitution by the constitution. The status of tribal society present in India is uniquely recognizable in a cultural perspective even while keeping backwards in all the areas of social life, economic, social, cultural and political. The following aspects are the salient features of Baiga Tribes in the Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh : (i) Special Cultural aspects (ii) Geographical isolation (iii) Psychologically Shyness connected to the touch of others (iv) Having backwardness in all the areas of social life. (v) Concepts related to the culture of ancient society.

The life of the people of the Scheduled Tribes in a different way has a different characteristic from the people of the rest of the society from all the areas of life, their life among the Biological diversity and geographically. The people of the tribal community are residing in inaccessible mountainous areas and the Baiga tribal society enjoys a lonely life among the forests. In Indian states, 30 tribes have been identified within 30 states and in union territories and several individual ethnic groups have also been identified, along with about 705 tribal tribes in the same category as Scheduled Tribes. The average form of tribal population is 8.6 per cent. On the other hand, 89.97 per cent of the Scheduled tribes are inhabited by rural areas, and 10.03 per cent of people are considered to be living in urban areas. According to the 2001 to 2011 population census of the tribal society, the decadal pattern was 25 per cent more than that of women, compared to 23 per cent of the balance of men. In a nutshell, when it comes to the habitat of the Scheduled Tribes, it is seen as mainly geographically divided into two regions.

#### **1. Middle India**

#### **2. The North Eastern States**

Talking about Central India, the percentage of Scheduled Tribes is seen more in Central India. 14.69% in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra 10.1%, Orissa 9.2%, Rajasthan 8.9%, Gujarat 8.6%, Jharkhand 8.3%, Chhattisgarh 7.5%, West Bengal 5.1%, Andhra Pradesh 5.7%. On the other hand, the northeastern region is also having the following percentage of the Scheduled Tribes population. Such as Assam 3.7%, Meghalaya 2.5%, Karnataka 4.1%, and other states 11.6% (Ministry of Public Affairs, Government of India 2013) 64.7% of Scheduled tribes are residing in the Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh.



**Table: 1, some state –wise Demographic Status of Total Population & ST Population (Census 2011)**

S. No	State	Total population	Tribal population	% of tribal population	Numbers of ST
1	Madhya Pradesh	72,626,809	15,316,784	21.09	43
2	Maharashtra	112,374,333	10,510,213	9.35	45
3	Odisha	41,974,218	9,590,756	22.85	62
4	Rajasthan	68,548,437	7,097,706	8.9	12
5	Gujrat	50,671,017	7,481,160	8.6	31
6	Jharkhand	26,945,829	7,087,068	8.3	30
7	Chhattisgarh	25,545,198	7,822,902	30.62	42
8	West Bengal	2,280,540	4,406,794	5.1	40
9	Andhra Pradesh	76,210,007	5,024,104	5.7	35
10	Assam	26,655,528	3,308,570	3.7	15
11	Meghalaya	2,318,822	1,992,862	2.5	17
12	Karnataka	61,095,297	4,248,987	6.95	50

### Scheduled Tribes in Madhya Pradesh

If we have to find some information about the most backward tribes among the Scheduled Tribes, the Baiga tribe is one of the other backward tribes. Baiga Tribes are also living in Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh. On the other hand, the areas of the majority population of Baiga Scheduled Tribes are residing in the Madhya Pradesh State. Large numbers of Baiga Tribes are living in Balaghat district and Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh. Sub castes of Baiga Tribes i.e. Bhariya, Kumda Bhanja, Nahor, Narotia Bharotia, Bhaheer, etc. Talking about the population in Madhya Pradesh, the population of the Baiga was 4114526 as of 2011; on the other hand, the state of Chhattisgarh has also had 89744 Baiga tribes. According to Planning Commission of India, the groups of Baiga tribes in Madhya Pradesh are divided into two regions according to their way of living. The first is the internal form and the second is a group of connected villages. In Indian society, the group structure of families has been considered prevalent, but on the contrary, the people of the Baiga tribes give great importance to the single-family institution in any geographical situation. For this reason, due to this social value, the children of Baiga tribes get married at a very young age. A very small number of Baiga families are found in Mandala in Dindori district and also in Balaghat district; the reason for their backwardness is that the Baiga tribe prefers a single-family system. The people of Baiga tribes maintain their special and distinct identities from many communities as they prefer to remain isolated from other communities. Dindori district is considered to be the geographical habitat of Baiga tribes. Mainly the population of Baiga Scheduled Tribes is found more in the Dindori district. This place is surrounded by entire forests and hills; this place is called Baiga Chack. Baiga Chack of the Dindori district is having natural geographical features. The arrival of Baigas in this mountainous region would have been on the riverside and flat land in the past, but after a while, the Baigas have been considered as historical tribes in this area.



## Demographic Profile of Madhya Pradesh

Source: M.P. State MDG Report 2014-15, Page No.03

S.NO	Indicators	M.P	All India
1	Geographical Areas in Lakh Sq.KM	3.08	32.87
2	Population (Crore)	7.26	121.02
3	Density of Population (population Sq.KM	20.3	17.64
4	Decadal Growth Rate Percent	236	382
5	Urbanization (%)	27.63	31.16
6	Sex Ration Females /1000 males	930	940
7	Literacy Rate (%)	70.6	74.0
8	SC share in total Population (CENSES2011)	15.6	16.6
9	ST share in total Population (CENSES2011)	21.1	8.6
10	Poverty Ration Rural (Planning Commission )	35.74	25.7
11	Poverty Ration Urban (Planning Commission )	21.0	13.7
12	Poverty Ration total (Panning Commission )	31.65	21.92
13	Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)[SRS] (2013)	54	40
14	Maternal Mortality Ration (IMR)[SRS] (2011-2013)	221	167
15	Malnourished Children (% of underweight children under<3years[NFHS3]	57.9	40.4
16	Enrolment in Primary Education (GER primary,2011) [DISE]	136.6	118.6

### Baiga Scheduled Tribes

Baiga Scheduled Tribes is one of the groups of highly specialized backward tribes in Central India. The Government of India has already taken cognizance of some backward tribes based on some of the following criteria in the scheme in the past,

#### which is as follows:

1. Those who live in completely backward and inaccessible areas.
2. Stability and low population.
3. Agricultural system based on the technologies of ancient times
4. Low level of education.

In the state of Madhya Pradesh, approximately there are 1143 Baiga tribes. On the other hand, there are 22 blocks and approximately there are 6 districts in the State of Madhya Pradesh (Tribal Ministry 2016). Article 366 (25) is an Act passed by the Parliament of India based on which the Scheduled Tribes get constitutional recognition. In addition to providing constitutional recognition to the Scheduled Tribes, the Indian Constitution has included all the areas of the Scheduled Tribes in the 5th and 6th Schedules to secure the social, economic, political and interests of the Scheduled Tribes.



## Profile of Dindori District

Dindori district is mainly located in the eastern region of Madhya Pradesh state, which is bordered by the state of Chhattisgarh. Other districts from the Dindori district also share their borders, Shahdol district is to the east, Mandala district is to the west of Dindori district, Umariya is to the north, Bilaspur and Karwadha district is located to the south of Chhattisgarh state. The total geographical area of the Dindori district is 7,470 kilometre. Narmada, the sacred river of Madhya Pradesh, also passes through this, which is surrounded by the Mekal Mountains in a way.

The Constitution of India declares the district of Dindori legally a Scheduled Tribe area based on the 5<sup>th</sup> schedule. According to the 2011 census, it has been divided into a total of 7 blocks in Dindori district, which is covered by Dindori, Shahpura, Mehandwani, Anuppur, Bajag, Karanjiya, and Samnapur. There are 2 tehsils in the Dindori district: Dindori and Shahpura. There are 2 cities in the Dindori district and a total number of 924 villages, out of which 901 are inhabited and 23 are uninhabited. There is 1 district hospital in the Dindori district, 29 family health centres exist and 7 community health centres exist. There are also 162 sub-health centres. Apart from an allopathic hospital, facilities for 25 Ayurveda hospitals also exist. All this is a great effort to provide various types of facilities to the Baiga tribes to improve their health.



Based on the 2011 national census, the literacy rate of the Dindori district, surrounded by the Baiga community of Madhya Pradesh, is about 63.90. While there are 8 pre-primary schools in the Dindori district, 171 Primary Schools and 71 Secondary Schools; 14 Secondary Schools as well as the presence of 5 Higher Secondary Schools. The literacy rate among many men and women is about 75.47 per cent. There are approximately 3, 78,714 literate people in Madhya Pradesh's Dindori district. 64.69% literacy rate is seen in almost the entire tribal society. All these facilities have been provided by the Indian and State Governments to empower the Baiga tribal society.



## **History of Baiga Tribes**

The Baiga tribe which is found in the state of Madhya Pradesh is one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). The Baiga tribe are inhabiting at dense forests and hills. This tribe is a shy tribe that lives in the forests. It has nothing to do with urban facilities and administration. The consciousness of the Baiga tribes is mainly based on collective consciousness (Emile Durkheim 1912), which has a deep community sense in itself. Although the Baiga tribe is found more in Madhya Pradesh, it is considered a resident of Chhattisgarh because many similarities are seen in the language of the Baiga tribe found in Balaghat and Mandala district and Chhattisgarh language. In the context of the Baiga tribes, Dr Varrier Elvin has written a famous book i.e. *The Baiga* (1932). This book has extensively focussed on social life, political, economical, social and cultural aspects of the Baiga Tribes. The Baiga tribes of Dindori are surrounded by forests and hills. This Baiga Chak is geographically surrounded by Narmada and Riva from the east, also from the southern Bilaspur district and from the western Mandala district. The arrival of Baigas in this area is considered to be the culmination of a kind of historical event. The intention of the Baigas to live in a special place is to establish supremacy by the Hindu aggression as well as the descendants of Ratanpur. This aggression can be taken into account in the same way as the Gonds have settled in the Narmada Valley. It can be inferred that in the 9th century itself, the Gonds crossed the south and the Godavari and Idraonati rivers and started coming to the areas of Chhattisgarh and at the same time established their suzerainty over the plains and fertile parts of the region. While giving a clear vision, the Mekal Mountains range from the western part of Chhattisgarh and the northern border, are very much compelled to learn, with one such proof, this concept is proved to be completely true. Because the people of the Baiga tribe who currently live in Mandala, Karvadh, Dindori, Bilaspur districts of Madhya Pradesh are also extensively speaking the Chhattisgarhi language. This gives strong proof that due to the attacks of other people, the people of the Baiga tribe stay away from modern civilization and have settled down in the inaccessible hills surrounded by the forest. The Baiga tribe is one of those tribes which are far away in all areas of development irrespective of the social, cultural, economic, and political and identity of their primitiveness. The language and dialect are also going through the cycle of the process of change due to modernity. How do they keep themselves stable and uphold their cultural standard values in the framework of present-day development, based on which they will know that they belong to the Baiga tribe?

## **Social, Economic, and Political Status of the Baiga Society**

Baiga Scheduled Tribes mainly get their livelihood activities completely from the forest. The way the Baiga tribes do agriculture is largely different from the others. These tribes believe more in shifting cultivation. The historical importance and values of the Baiga tribes behind the farming in the form of shifting works, these people have been against the plough farming on the earth since it was the time of Naga Baiga because they believe that the earth is their mother and any product that can make their living, only available from the forests. It is also believed that if the people of the Baiga tribe do farming, it is believed that the work will be account for in the sin category.

## **The Economy of Baiga Society**

Baiga Tribes used to perform agricultural work mainly from the hoe and axe, but even today, for the Baiga tribe, they would like to do agriculture in the traditional manner established by their ancestors. The shifting cultivation system is a farming system related to the identity of the Baiga tribes. They call this type of farming with two names. The first is called *bhoom* or *Webber farming*. Before cultivation, these people are offered coconut to the forest deity. This Baiga tribe chooses months of harvest for



cultivation and cuts down the trees from the low side. It likes to choose the edges of inaccessible hills and the area near the river. After that for a long period, the leaves of trees, leaves, fruits, etc. remain in the open for a long time so that they all dry up and they set fire to them in the late summer months and only in the early months of the rains. This ash gives the ground to be crushed, and then this ash is spread all around by a hoe. In this way seeds of Kodo, Kutki, Gadiya, Bajara, Saag, Jhujharan, Barbati etc. are spread around the field in the middle of the hands. In this way, the Baiga tribe is mainly able to do three years of farming, the reason behind this is that the Baiga tribe who do agriculture by traversing the forests, after the arrival of rain, this ash gets washed away due to rain. After exploring the forests, they set fire to the forests and re-cultivate farming. The farming system of Baiga Tribes has now been banned on the pretext of governance. It is a one-sided perspective that affects all areas related to the life of Baiga tribes. On the other hand, there are laws which are known as Biosphere Protected areas, which protect wildlife animals. These acts also have affected the livelihood of the Baiga tribes. 200 families of the Baiga tribe have been removed from the Achanakmar region of the Amarkantak area on the pretext of wildlife protection. The economy of the Baiga tribe people is mainly dependent on farming, hunting, animal husbandry, domestic trade, collecting honey bees, selling wood, working in the forest, etc. Those who bring food ingredient on hunting, the first day's food are called stale in the Baiga tribe.

### **Culture of Baiga tribe**

People of the Baiga community say very enthusiastically that they are sons of nature and prefer to live peacefully in the natural environment. People of Baiga society would like to keep long hair which is a type of identification of Baiga. The Baiga tribe mainly has a special cultural identity and incomparable greatness. The nature of the people of Baiga society is very simple and related to honest and true thoughts, which gives a natural identity to the people of this society. The life of the people of Baiga society is very simple. Their desire is completely limited to a lot of levels, for this reason, the level of the standard of satisfaction of the people of Baiga society is limited to bread, clothes and houses. In the culture of Baiga society, the liquor made by them holds great importance. In Baiga society, there is such a belief that the men of the Baiga tribe would like to eat and drink. They spend their entire lives on these two things. In Baiga society, due to women being given a lot of respect, the disrespect of women is considered as disrespect to the entire society. The hair of the Baiga men is cut only at the time of birth, which is called Baiga Jhalaar only in the entire life.

### **Baiga community housing system**

Baiga tribes are found in large numbers especially in the Mandala district in Madhya Pradesh, because of their nature, they would like to make their habitat on the high hills among the forests. The habitat of the people of the Baiga tribe establishes their place of residence only in the hills of Satya Pura and the Mekal Mountains. The villages of the Baiga tribe people are seen far away from the reach of common people. The people of the Baiga tribe mainly prefer to remain in the group. Only a village of one Tola is called after connecting eight and ten houses. The people of the Baiga tribe build their own houses in a group of their own hands. The Baiga people build their houses on the hills and slopes. The people of the Baiga tribe collect Dora, Bakkal, bamboo, and grass to build a house. The constructions are made only with the help of the people of their other Baiga society, which is called Bimaar. In the culture of the society of Baiga tribes, after the construction of the house, the owner of the house arranges for the drinking of the indigenous liquor of Mahua. When talking about the groups of the rich Baiga tribe, these people build a house on the side to facilitate the guests.



### **Status of Education in Baiga Society**

The education status of the Baiga Tribes is very low due to the lack of resources. By the way, the cultural values of the Baiga society are such that their main business will be related to farming and forest properties that are why the people of the Baiga society focus on the rearing of animals and provide such education which is for the benefit of the self and the group. Baiga society believes that only informal education should be provided to their offspring only through the medium of their ancestors, but in this society, there is always the fear that if their children start taking education then they will go towards the city. The Government of India and Madhya Pradesh State has provided various opportunities for the betterment of literacy and education among the Baiga tribes of Madhya Pradesh.

### **The social life of the Baiga community**

The number of families belonging to the community of Baiga tribes is less than the number of communities of the mainstream of society, but on the other hand, the internal structure of kinship and relations is found to be very strong. Baiga People generally like to wear pataka (loincloth) and on the other hand, women prefer to wear only a saree on their body, which is also called Lugar. They do all kinds of material by cutting wood from the forest. People of the Baiga community like porridge in most of the food items. People of the Baiga community have a very honest and innocent nature, they have been following the traditions of their ancestors since time immemorial and in the social system in their society and they like very few changes. In the Baiga society, marriage is considered to be a sacred institution and a bond of social relations. In the Baiga society, it is very bad and prohibitive to carry out the marriage in the same caste. Consanguineous marriages are considered taboo in the structure of marriage. In the Baiga society, full freedom is provided to the women and the Baiga society. In the Baiga society, at the age of 16 or 17 years, the girls are declared as adults and the girls are given personal freedom to elect the boys themselves to establish the institution of marriage.

### **The political organization of Baiga society**

As always, the system of traditional gram panchayats among the Baiga tribes has been playing its role since ancient times. As a political unit of Baiga society, Gram Panchayats are maintaining a legal system in the Baiga society by establishing a just system, while dealing with internal matters with a positive role. Through the traditional political organizations of Baiga society, it is the development of the villages as a group and protects the human beings and the forests. In the Baiga society, Gram Panchayat, which is a small unit of a political system that works at a low level, has always played a positive role in all the areas of the social life of the Baiga society like social, economic, political, and cultural. The Gram Panchayat of Baiga society mainly works with the cooperation of 5 people. These names like Mukadam, Kotwar, Davar, Samrath, and Diwan can be seen in the changing form in the Baiga society only based on time and place. These changes are mainly found in various regional units because the habitat of the Baiga society is geographically in very inaccessible areas, due to which there is a lack of high transport system in the society and they have to live in the hills and forests naturally. In the Baiga Society, Panchayat, the lawsuit works formally in the first place, it is also called Saina. It is mainly in Baiga village, very old age and intellect matured, in all kinds of decisions. It has been playing a vital role in the Baiga society. Kotwar invites all the people of the villages to come to the Gram Panchayat and at the same time, their opinion gets their views in front of the Gram Panchayat. Kotwar makes all kinds of information and decisions from Gram Panchayat accessible to other Baiga people. Davar, Diwan and Samrath mainly help in assisting the Mukadam only in taking decisions. In the Baiga society, these five main members play their role in the judicial system of each village. Tala Manjura and Favia are also included in the system. All these members together form a caste panchayat.





In any dispute involving one or more villages, a similar meeting is organized in the context of that dispute. Every person and related formal villages are also included in these meetings. This gathering is found to be much larger than the caste meeting of the main village. Today, the present institution, which was based on a caste basis, has established its existence even in time. But it does its work only in a limited role. Today, the people of the Baiga community will also seek the help of the members of the modern political system. In most of the controversies, the people of the Baiga community have come to seek the help of the established administration and police. On the other hand, the role of informal members like Mukadam is now getting limited. In 1996, by extending the Scheduled Areas, the Indian Parliament provided several rights to the gram panchayats for their governance so that synergy was established between traditional political institutions and modern political institutions.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

The Baiga society has many aspects within its own special cultural and normative values that identify the characteristic of this tribe and the backwardness of development. Baiga men have an incredible speciality and ability in making medicines and making forest products. Many schemes related to the economic, social and political development of this tribe were also implemented by the welfare schemes of the government and social organizations. In the state of Madhya Pradesh, many such welfare schemes can be studied which are being run by the Government of Madhya Pradesh itself for the development of the tribes belonging to the Baiga tribes. The Central Government and State Governments spent several crores of rupees for each of the Baiga community's economic, educational, health, sanitation, housing, communication and cultural activities and political development. Various types of schemes were conducted by the Madhya Pradesh Government so that all areas of the social life of the Baiga tribes could be developed, but on the other hand, due to many flaws in the economic structure of the Baiga tribe itself, even today, the Baiga tribe was told by their ancestors. Whether the traditional agricultural system is being run or is being run with an untimely state of mind and temporary mind, due to which their economic development is full of problems. Only the lower-income is derived from their product. Socially, these tribes also divide themselves into many types of sub-tribes within themselves, further enhancing their educational, political, economic problems. The low level of political consciousness further aggravates the problems of this community. Lack of illiteracy in the Baiga tribe, ignorance and living on geologically inaccessible hills, the Baiga tribes prefer to remain secular with the current public logical and political culture of the country. Due to their political organization being completely in different dimensions of time and space, the rest of the society is slowly drifting away from the political standard values, mainly because of their lack of political consciousness and enlightenment. Baigas are facing many problems due to poverty. In the present day, the Government of India and the Government of Madhya Pradesh have been implementing various schemes to solve the political, economic, social, educational problems prevailing in the Baiga society. Even today, there are various problems are prevailing in the tribal society

i.e. illiteracy, poverty, superstition, stereotypes, means of Transport and lack of means of communication. For this reason, they were given special protection by the Indian constitution. The Central and State Governments have been trying to improve their political, economic, social, educational status by implementing various welfare schemes.



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