

# A Comprehensive Analysis of Social, Cultural, Political, Ecological, Economic Dimensions and Developmental Issues in Tribal Barahaiya Village, Chanho, Jharkhand

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**Abstract:** *The study analyses Barahaiya, a tribal village in Jharkhand, focusing on its social, cultural, political, ecological, and economic dimensions. It highlights the community's reliance on agriculture, traditional practices, and natural resources while grappling with developmental challenges like healthcare gaps, poor education, and poverty. Using participatory rural appraisal tools, the research emphasizes sustainable interventions and community-driven development to preserve cultural heritage and enhance livelihoods.*

**Key Words:** *Tribal Context, Ecosystem Studies, Cultural Heritage, Community Development, Socio-economic challenges, Jharkhand, Oraon Tribe*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The study presents an in-depth study of Barahaiya, a tribal village in the Chanho block of Ranchi district, Jharkhand, is home to 1,721 residents across 372 households, predominantly from the Oraon community. Divided into Sadan Tola, Oraon Tola, and Pahan Tola, the village showcases a blend of rich tribal traditions and modern developmental challenges. Agriculture, supplemented by wage labor and traditional crafts, is the primary livelihood. However, the lack of basic amenities such as healthcare, quality education, and proper sanitation hinders progress. Culturally, Barahaiya is rooted in the Sarna religion, which emphasizes nature worship and harmony. Festivals like Sarhul and Karma reflect the community's strong connection to their environment and heritage. Despite this, the village faces significant challenges: inadequate healthcare infrastructure, high school dropout rates, poor sanitation, and reliance on rain-fed agriculture. Economic issues like poverty, unemployment, and migration, particularly among young men, exacerbate vulnerabilities. Using participatory tools like resource mapping, and focused group discussions etc. this study provides a comprehensive understanding of Barahaiya's socio-economic realities. It emphasizes the need for sustainable interventions, community participation, and governance improvements to address the village's issues while preserving its cultural identity. The findings advocate for inclusive and community-centered development approaches to uplift Barahaiya and similar rural tribal communities.

## 2. OBJECTIVES:

1. To study about social, demography (past and present) and the tribal context of the village.
2. To examine the economic conditions, livelihood pattern and standard of living of the village.
3. To study about the natural resources, its changes, over the years and the people relation with the resources.
4. To understand the culture, traditional, political, and other unique practices of the village.
5. To analyse the various development issues and needs of the community.

## 3. RESEARCH LOCATION AND METHODOLOGY:

The research was conducted in Barahaiya Village, located in the Chanho Block of Ranchi District, Jharkhand, India. Jharkhand, created in 2000, spans 74,677 sq. km and has a population of 32.96 million (2011 census), with agriculture and minerals as economic mainstays. Ranchi, the state capital, is known for its plateaus and tribal population, including groups like Munda and Santal. Chanho Block, entirely rural, has a 66.81% literacy rate and a population of 107,503, of which 53.6% are tribal. Barahaiya Village has 1,721 residents, a literacy rate of 47.29%, and is organized into three

areas (Pahan, Sadan, Oraon tolas). The study focused on understanding the village's socio-economic conditions and livelihood challenges.

### Data Collection Methods:

**I. Primary Data Collection:** Primary data for the study was collected using various Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods to gain in-depth insights into the village's socio-economic and cultural context. Tools such as transect walks provided direct observations of village conditions, while social and resource mapping documented households and natural resources, including water and forests. Wealth ranking categorized households into four economic groups based on income, land, and assets, and mobility mapping analyzed the village's connectivity to nearby towns and institutions. Seasonal calendars tracked agricultural and weather patterns, while focused group discussions (FGDs) engaged specific groups, such as women and farmers, on key topics. Trend analysis, pairwise ranking, problem tree, and solution tree methods identified and analyzed major village issues and potential solutions. Daily activity calendars compared the tasks of different community groups, and historical timelines outlined significant village events and their impacts. Structured and unstructured interviews gathered qualitative insights, complemented by direct observations of behaviors and activities. Additionally, case studies and cash flow analyses offered detailed examinations of individual stories and household income-expenditure patterns, enriching the study's findings.

**II. Secondary Data Collection:** Data from local institutions like schools, panchayats, and Anganwadi centers provided additional context about the village's demographic, economic, and poverty status. The combination of these methods provided a comprehensive understanding of Barahaiya's socio-economic dynamics, identifying key issues such as poverty, literacy gaps, and resource utilization, and laying the groundwork for community-focused development initiatives.

## 4. RESULT & DISCUSSION:

### 4.1 Social Dimension

The social structure of Barahaiya village, located in Chanho block, Ranchi district, reflects its unique tribal characteristics and traditional lifestyle. With a population of 1,721 spread across 372 households, the village is divided into three hamlets: Sadan Tola, Oraon Tola, and Pahan Tola. The Oraon tribe dominates the population, practicing the Sarna religion, which emphasizes nature worship. Each hamlet maintains distinct roles, water sources, and social norms, creating a caste-based structure that fosters some level of segregation.

### Demography

The population of Barahaiya is evenly split between 873 males and 848 females, yielding a sex ratio of 971 females per 1,000 males, higher than Jharkhand's average of 948. Among the three hamlets, Oraon Tola has 546 residents, while Sadan Tola and Pahan Tola host 625 and 550 people, respectively. Literacy rates stand at 47%, with male literacy at 45% and female literacy at 44%. Despite these improvements over previous decades, educational progress is hindered by traditional beliefs and poor infrastructure.

### Religion and Caste

Barahaiya village predominantly follows the Sarna religion, with its sacred groves serving as focal points for worship. The community comprises Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), and Other Backward Classes (OBC). The segregation among the tolas reflects deep-rooted social norms. Oraon Tola consists solely of the Oraon tribe, Sadan Tola houses OBC and general castes, while Pahan Tola comprises SC households. Interactions between these groups are limited, reinforcing traditional roles and barriers.

### Gender Roles

Gender roles in Barahaiya reflect traditional tribal practices. Women actively participate in household chores, agriculture, and forest product collection, while men handle tasks like labor and community activities. On average, women dedicate 7 hours daily to household work compared to men's 3 hours. However, women face greater drudgery, compounded by gender wage disparity—women earn ₹180 daily compared to ₹200 for men.

### Health and Sanitation

Health facilities in Barahaiya are limited. Villagers rely on quacks for treatment, with the nearest Community Health Center located 12 kilometers away. Malnutrition affects 55% of women, and open defecation remains prevalent, despite

100% toilet coverage under the Swachh Bharat Mission. Toilets are often used for storage, indicating a lack of awareness about sanitation's benefits. Common diseases include fevers, coughs, and viral infections, often exacerbated by poor water and hygiene practices.

## Education

The village struggles with educational access and quality. While government data suggests a 47% literacy rate, practical skills are limited to signing names. Schools lack infrastructure, forcing children to travel to nearby towns for secondary education. Dropout rates remain high, driven by poverty and early marriages.

## Traditional Institutions and Affinity Groups

Barahaiya hosts traditional Sarna committees, focusing on religious and cultural activities. However, affinity groups such as SHGs and farmer collectives lack active participation, limiting their developmental potential.

## Transportation and Connectivity

Barahaiya is connected to nearby markets via public transport, but most residents walk or use bicycles due to financial constraints. Network connectivity is inconsistent, with only Reliance Jio functioning intermittently.

## 4.2 Cultural Dimension

The cultural identity of Barahaiya village in Jharkhand is deeply rooted in its tribal traditions, which the community strives to preserve. The cultural practices, festivals, food patterns, attire, and customs reflect the Oraon tribe's reverence for nature and their unique way of life.

### Practices

Sarna worship is a cornerstone of the village culture. The Sarna grove, known locally as "Jaher Than" or "Gram Than," is a sacred site surrounded by Sal trees where villagers offer prayers. Ceremonies are led by the Pahan, the village priest, with assistance from the Naike. The village's traditions emphasize collective participation and nature's blessings for prosperity.

### Marriage System

Marriages in Barahaiya are unique and deeply rooted in tribal customs. Couples marry by swearing an oath to nature, and clan exogamy is strictly followed to avoid marrying within the same surname. The dowry system is absent, replaced by gift exchanges. A practice called "Dhuku Dhukana" allows couples to live together before formal marriage with community consent. Weddings are simple and include meals of rice, dal, and vegetables, reflecting minimal expenditure.

### Festivals

The village celebrates several festivals that showcase its vibrant culture and connection with nature. Key festivals include:

- **Karma:** Celebrated in Bhadra (August/September), it honors Karam Devta, the god of power and youth. Villagers perform group dances, plant Karma trees, and seek blessings for agricultural prosperity.
- **Sarhul:** Marking the arrival of spring, this festival worships the village deity using Sal flowers. The Pahan predicts agricultural outcomes by observing water levels in earthen pots.
- **Jawa:** Celebrated by unmarried girls to pray for household fertility and prosperity using germinating seeds.
- **Bandana:** Dedicated to livestock, it involves cleaning, decorating animals, and singing "Ohira" songs to honor their role in daily life.

Other notable festivals include Tusu Parav, Hal Punhya, Bhagta Parab, and Jani-Shikar, each with unique customs and significance. The village calendar includes 104 festival days annually, with an average expenditure of ₹35,850.

### Food Patterns

Traditional diets in Barahaiya have evolved over time. Earlier, 80% of meals included millets like Marwa and Gundli, but now rice dominates, with millets reduced to 20% due to shifts to cash crops like paddy and wheat. Meat, poultry, and alcohol (Mahua and Hariya liquor) are integral to festivals and ceremonies. Vegetables are increasingly consumed, though summer supplies are often purchased from markets.

## Customs and Indigenous Knowledge

The Oraon tribe practices unique customs tied to life events such as births, marriages, and funerals. Indigenous technical knowledge plays a key role in resource management, including neem leaves in grain storage and traditional healing methods for human and animal ailments.

## Attire

Traditional attire includes the **Lal Padh Sari**, associated with the deity Sarna Maa, worn by women, who also follow the purdah system. Men wear dhotis during rituals and casual western attire like shirts and pants for daily activities. Younger generations prefer modern clothing like jeans and frocks.

## Temples

Barahaiya has two key religious sites: Sarna Sthal, located in the forest, and a communal temple in the village's center. These temples are maintained collectively and serve as cultural hubs during festivals. The cultural practices of Barahaiya village illustrate its commitment to preserving traditions while adapting to modern influences, maintaining a unique balance between heritage and progress.

## 4.3 Economical Dimension of Barahaiya Village

The economic dimension of Barahaiya village highlights the community's resource utilization, livelihoods, and challenges, primarily revolving around agriculture, traditional occupations, and allied activities. These dimensions reveal a complex interplay between natural resources, economic practices, and social vulnerabilities.

### Livelihood and Occupation

Approximately 70% of the population in Barahaiya depends on agriculture, with paddy being the principal crop. Farmers face irrigation challenges, with only 20% cultivating paddy twice annually. Other crops like mustard, vegetables, and chilies contribute to household sustenance and additional income. Traditional occupations, such as pottery, blacksmithing, and cobbling, are still practiced but are declining due to economic instability and reduced demand. Seasonal migration supplements income, as many villagers work in construction or as laborers in urban areas. The transition from traditional vocations to precarious labor indicates a shift driven by inadequate returns and mechanization in agriculture. For example, traditional weeding and harvesting jobs have been replaced by machines.

### Cost of Cultivation and Profitability

The economics of farming varies based on land ownership:

- Farmers with their own land spend around ₹39,300 per acre and achieve a benefit-cost (B:C) ratio of 0.93.
- Those leasing land spend ₹47,800 per acre, with a B:C ratio of 0.76.
- Tenant farmers face additional burdens, with a B:C ratio of 0.83, and often pay 10% of their production as rent.

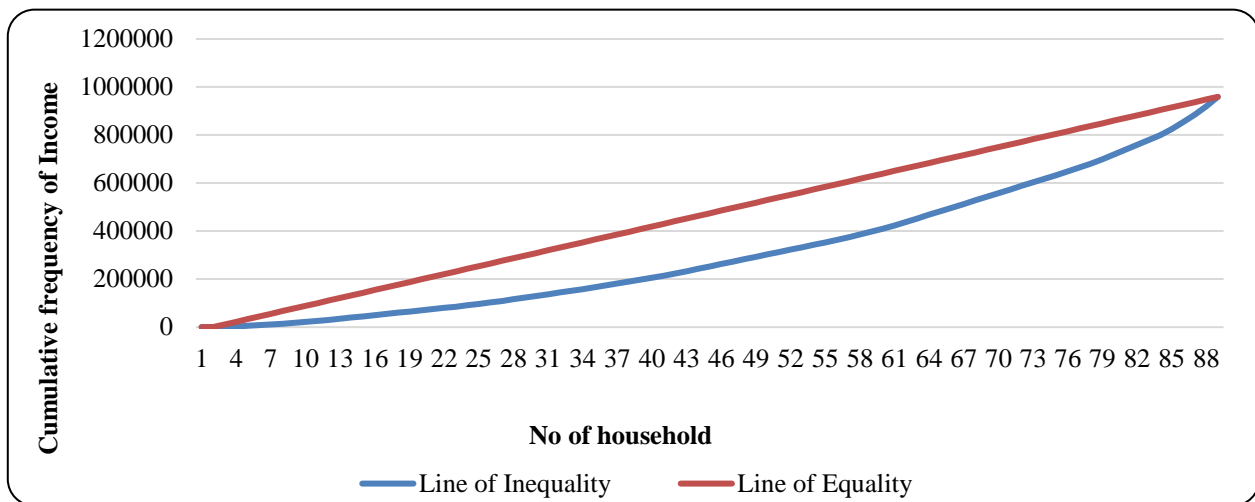
Despite efforts, no category achieves a B:C ratio of 1, indicating that farmers struggle to recover their investments. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides, constituting significant costs, lower crop quality and profitability.

### Non-Farming Activities

Pottery is a significant non-farming livelihood. The production cycle involves sourcing clay, shaping, drying, baking, and marketing. A typical production cycle costs ₹12,550 and generates an income of ₹14,535, resulting in a B:C ratio of 1.2. However, challenges include declining soil quality, high costs, and low market prices offered by wholesalers. Other secondary livelihoods include:

- **Plate and Bowl Making:** Using *Sarai* leaves, women produce plates and bowls, earning ₹1–₹2 per piece.
- **Mat Making:** Using date palm leaves, mats are sold for ₹50–₹500 based on size.
- **Tamarind Selling:** Tamarind fetches ₹20 per kilogram or ₹500–₹800 per tree.

## Poverty and Inequality



**Chart 1: Lorenz Curve**

Equal distribution of money in oraon tola is clearly understood by this curve, 95% of the family have 65% wealth and 5% of the family have 35% wealth. It shows that level of equality because in this toli all have same type of work and same income, with a Gini coefficient of 0.61. Landlessness exacerbates inequality, as many work on leased land or as tenants. Categorically, poor households lack land, livestock, or vehicles and primarily depend on labor, while middle and rich groups have more assets and diversified incomes.

### Infrastructure and Access to Financial Services

Barahaiya's infrastructure is limited, with 70% of houses being kutchha and no access to proper drainage. While 96% of households have electricity, irrigation is a challenge, with most relying on borewells. Financial access is primarily through SHGs and local moneylenders, who charge high interest rates, trapping many in debt cycles. The single bank located 10 km away offers limited support.

### Vulnerabilities and Challenges

Seasonal migration, climate-induced crop failures, and the lack of skill-based education make the village economically fragile. Annual cyclones and floods further destabilize agricultural incomes. The absence of sustainable farming practices and overreliance on chemical inputs worsen soil health, diminishing long-term productivity. Barahaiya's economy is shaped by agricultural dependence, traditional livelihoods, and systemic challenges. Strengthening irrigation, promoting organic farming, and enhancing non-farming income sources could provide pathways to resilience.

## 4.4 Political Dimension

### Panchayat Administration

Barahaiya village is part of the Roll Panchayat, which governs four villages: Roll Barahaiya, Chaliya, Ghutwa, and Matha Toli. The Panchayat office is located 2 km from Barahaiya. The Pradhan (Sarpanch), Rita Oraon, from the Bharatiya Janata Party, is the first female leader in this role. Monthly Gram Sabha meetings address community issues and disseminate information about government schemes. The panchayat is noted for fairly distributing benefits among villagers, though occasional political influence and disputes occur.

### Traditional Governance

The Oraon community follows a customary governance system led by the "Pahan Raja," who resolves disputes through communal meetings. A unique feature is the use of a drum to summon villagers. Other communities like Sadan Toli and Pahan Toli rely more on ward members and the Sarpanch for dispute resolution.

## Government Schemes and Entitlements

- **Housing Schemes:** Initially, 12 families benefited from the Indira Awas Yojana, receiving ₹75,000 each. The updated Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana (PMGAY) provided ₹1,30,000 to 50 households.
- **Kisan Credit Card (KCC):** Around 30% of households have access, with loans ranging from ₹10,000 to ₹1,10,000, primarily aiding large-scale farmers.
- **MGNREGA:** Of the 60 job cardholders, 150 individuals work under this scheme, earning ₹268 per day. However, corruption is reported, with political influence affecting wage distribution.
- **Public Distribution System (PDS):** All households benefit from subsidized food grains, significantly reducing hunger during non-seasonal times.
- **Ayushman Bharat:** While all households have the health insurance card, only two families have used it due to lack of awareness.
- **Pension Schemes:** Around 60 villagers receive old-age pensions, with ₹500–₹700 depending on age.

## 4.5 Ecological Dimension

The ecological dimension focuses on the interplay between people and their natural environment, emphasizing the local ecosystem of Barahaiya village. This includes both living and non-living components, like flora, fauna, water bodies, and natural resources.

### Climate

Barahaiya village experiences four main seasons: summer, rainy season, autumn, and winter. Seasonal shifts are becoming unpredictable due to pollution. Temperatures in summer range from 35°C to 45°C, while winter can drop to 5°C to 10°C. Seasonal diversity has diminished over the past two decades.

### Soil

The village features domat (local term), red, alluvial, and black soils. These soils are fertile, supporting crops like cotton, wheat, and sugarcane. Black soil, rich in organic matter and nutrients, is ideal for agriculture. However, droughts have rendered some areas infertile.

### Natural Resources

Water sources include "tangar," a stone-surrounded resource. Government initiatives, like bore wells and water schemes, aim to improve access to clean water. Risks from irregular monsoons lead to agricultural failure and water scarcity. Rainwater harvesting and solar pumps are potential solutions.

### Flora and Fauna

Local flora includes mango, neem, bamboo, and mahua, with significant economic and medicinal uses. For example, mahua flowers are used for alcohol and medicine, while neem acts as a pesticide and has medicinal benefits. Fauna includes cows, goats, and hens, crucial for the village economy through milk, meat, and other products.

### Risks and Challenges

Natural calamities like forest fires and thunderstorms are common. Forest fires disrupt ecosystems and livelihoods, while thunder poses life risks, particularly during monsoon. Diseases like malaria and chickenpox are prevalent, aggravated by limited healthcare.

### Land and Forests

Barahaiya's land is classified into upland, middle land, and lowland, each supporting specific crops. Two nearby forests provide firewood, fruits, and medicinal herbs, forming a vital part of local livelihoods. This ecological balance highlights the village's dependence on natural resources and the pressing need for sustainable practices.

## 5. DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

The developmental challenges in Barahaiya Village encompass critical issues impacting the community's well-being, economy, and social structure. These problems, highlighted through Pairwise Rankings and community discussions, reveal a complex and interrelated set of concerns.

### **Water and Irrigation**

Water scarcity remains a pressing concern. Though the village relies on wells and hand pumps, these sources are often inadequate. During summer, water levels drop significantly, with wells sinking 10–50 feet deep. Hand pump water frequently contains fluoride, making it unsuitable for cooking. There are no large-scale water storage or rainwater harvesting systems to support agricultural needs during monsoon fluctuations, exacerbating crop failures.

### **Alcoholism**

Alcohol consumption is a major developmental barrier. Families spend significant portions of their income on alcohol, leading to domestic violence, theft, and social issues. Alcohol abuse also fosters unethical behavior, including neglect of responsibilities and violence against women. Entire families, including children, are involved in alcohol consumption, perpetuating the cycle of addiction.

### **Health**

The absence of a primary health center forces villagers to travel 10 km for basic medical care. Institutional deliveries are rare, and the lack of proper facilities often results in maternal and child deaths. Ambulance services are unreliable, and traditional methods or untrained elders handle emergencies, leading to severe health consequences.

### **Agricultural Failures**

Crop failures are common due to irregular rainfall, late monsoons, and fog. Farmers lack knowledge about improved seeds and techniques, and many cannot access crop insurance due to the absence of land titles. Poor farmers face double losses, losing their crops and work opportunities, forcing migration for survival.

### **Sanitation**

Open defecation is widespread, with only 35 household toilets in the entire panchayat. Even where toilets exist, many are repurposed or unused due to habit. This practice causes health problems and poor hygiene standards.

### **Superstitions**

Deep-rooted beliefs in black magic result in severe consequences, including honor killings. Medical conditions are often attributed to supernatural causes, delaying professional treatment and perpetuating harmful practices.

### **Unemployment and Lack of Skills**

During non-agricultural seasons, unemployment rises due to a lack of alternative skills. Most villagers rely solely on farming, leaving them idle and income-less during lean periods.

### **Additional Challenges**

Electricity, though available, is unreliable with low voltage and slow repair times. Corruption further hinders access to services like new connections. Developmental efforts in Barahaiya require addressing these multifaceted issues through education, infrastructure development, and skill-building initiatives.

## **6. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD:**

The fieldwork in Barahaiya Village provided a comprehensive understanding of its socio-economic, cultural, and developmental landscape. The village reflects a rich tapestry of traditions and strong social bonds, fostering unity among its residents. Despite this, Barahaiya remains underdeveloped, with significant challenges in infrastructure, health, education, and livelihood. The primary occupation is agriculture, which is highly vulnerable due to the lack of irrigation facilities, leading to frequent crop failures and financial instability. The tribal community is welcoming and culturally rooted, with women playing a pivotal role in preserving traditions. However, modernization is gradually influencing the younger generation, introducing changes in lifestyle and livelihood patterns.

### **Way Forward**

#### **Water**

Access to water is a critical need for both drinking and irrigation. The construction of watershed structures by JSPLS can help address this issue. Additionally, restricting the cutting of stones from *Khadaan*, the only irrigation source, will preserve water for agricultural use.

### **Health**

A primary health centre within or near the village is essential to ensure timely medical care. The replacement of the irresponsible Anganwadi *Sewika* can enhance childcare and health services. Improved sanitation, including drainage systems and reduced open defecation, is crucial for better health outcomes.

### **Education**

More teachers should be appointed to improve the quality of education. Preventing child migration with parents, especially during work seasons, will ensure uninterrupted schooling for children, fostering long-term development.

Barahaiya's development requires a collaborative approach, integrating traditional values with modern infrastructure and services. Initiatives focused on water, health, and education will lay the foundation for sustainable progress while preserving the village's cultural identity.

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