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**Criticism of articles centered on Murarai- a rich locality in Birbhum district of West Bengal**

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***Abstract:**The discussion sheds light on ten research articles written in different contexts of the area for the purpose of delving deep into the overall history of the Development Block No.1and No.2 of Murarai in Birbhum district of West Bengal. Some have talked about crop diversification and irrigation system in Birbhum, while others have talked about the people of stone quarry and crusher area. The peasant movement led by Communist party has been discussed in an article. Flood and droughts in Birbhum have been discussed. There is also talk of herbal medicine used in tribal society dotted a few area of the locality. The tourism industry of Birbhum has also been discussed. Indigenous tribe of Birbhum has been mentioned. Urbanization of Birbhum is also mentioned in an article. Finally, there is a discussion on how distance and inaccessible communication systems lay impediment to maternal health services in the 2nd Development Block of Murarai.*

***Key words:** Crop, Communist, Drought, Herbs, Literacy,Tribal, Tourism, Urbanisation*

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**Introduction**

In order to understand the entire human civilization it is necessary to develop a comprehensive idea about each field and level of historical progress of the human world. For, the elements of human history are scattered in the depths of every field and level. But in many cases those field and levels have remained undiscussed. Only by emphasizing the practice of regional or local

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history the culture , customs and beliefs of emerging society in all those fields or levels will nourish overall historical understanding .

### **Review of Literature**

Here are the ten articles reviewed. The discussion on crop diversification and irrigation system is mainly about Birbhum. However, it is not clear what crops are produced here. The second article deals with the life of the people of Salbadra stone quarry and crusher area of Birbhum. The third article mentions the peasant revolt in Birbhum led by Communist parties. The fourth article contains a beautiful analysis of the flood and drought in Birbhum. The fifth article discusses the herbs used in tribal society. In the sixth article the tourism industry of Birbhum has been mentioned centering on Tarapith. In the seventh article, the historical geography of indigenous people of Birbhum has been discussed in detail. The eighth article discusses the urbanisation of Birbhum. The issue of literacy in Development Blocks of Birbhum is discussed in the ninth article. The last article highlights how distance and communication barriers are disrupting maternal health services.

The location of Birbhum district has been identified and the topic of discussion has been specified. Attempts have been made to collect and analyze data mainly from secondary sources. The statistics shows the diversity of irrigation system and agricultural production in different Blocks of the district. Depending on the irrigation system and the diversity of agricultural production, the district Blocks are divided into different zones.

### **I**

In the discussion the development Blocks in the north and east of Birbhum district have been shown as the brightest part in agricultural production and the diversity in agricultural production in this part has been mentioned a lot. The Chhotnagpur plateau has made the western blocks of Birbhum barren, due to which there is a deficit in agricultural production in these areas. It is recommended to use surface irrigation without using ground water arbitrarily.<sup>1</sup>

An article discussed the life of the people of Salbadra stone mine area under Rampurhat Development Block no 1 of Birbhum district .At one time various industries were developed in Birbhum . Notable among these are Sugarcane industry, Cotton industry, Iron industry, Blue

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industry etc. At present the old industries have lost their glory. However, the article does not mention in detail the Stone mining industry that has now developed in some parts of the district. The Santals were the indigenous people of the Stone quarry area and in most cases they owned quarry site. However, the article claims that the opportunistic traders are manipulating the owners of those mines. It has also been mentioned that land is not suitable for cultivation as there are no rivers in the stone quarry areas.

The amount of arable land in the rock stone quarries and crusher areas is largely dependent on rainfall the article goes on to say that the miners go to work as agricultural labourers in Burdwan district at certain time of the year for extra income.

The article states that there are two types of labour in this region-1) 'Labour of stone mine' and 2) 'Labour of stone crusher. A number of shops and market have sprung up around mine owners do not take any measures to protect the health of miners .As a result , the workers are afflicted with various incurable diseases. Silicosis and tuberculosis are the leading causes of death for most miners.

This article shows that the indigenous people of the area do not have much health awareness. However, the rate of education among them is increasing .As mentioned in the article, the indigenous Santals are studying and holding various government posts. However, the article does not mention in detail the superstitions that most of them are obsessed with.<sup>2</sup>

An article discusses Communist-led peasant revolt in Birbhum from pre independence to post independence times. The Zamindars, Jotedar and Mahajans are mentioned as the special privileged class in this country created by the British and there is also how they were exploited and how the peasants became rebellions against them. It has been said that farmer were the owners of land in this country before the British rule .But in British India they lost that right. The Zamindars paid taxes to British government, the peasants became subject to these Zamindars. The Zamindars forcibly collected money or crops from them. As a result, they were forced to take loans from moneylenders and gradually fell into the debt trap. Due to this the peasants became rebellious under the leadership of various leftists leaders. This article mentions various peasant revolts by mentioning the year.

Small peasant revolts have taken place in different parts of our country and many of them have taken an all India form. Judging from that point of view the peasant revolts of Birbhum deserve special mention.<sup>3</sup>

An article shows how people are responsible for floods and droughts in an area. Lack of environmental discipline also causes floods and droughts. Unnecessary dams and arbitrary

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deforestation also cause floods and droughts. The article shows that farming in Birbhum district has improved since independence. Different types of crops are being produced. Sufficient ground water is being used for this, as a result of which the soil is becoming dry.

In the end, several dams have been built to conserve water by stopping the flow of river in Birbhum. As a result in many cases the normal flow of the river has been stopped. As a result, nature has been damaged. However, the article does not mention which river projects are causing adverse condition.<sup>4</sup>

The two authors discuss at the beginning of the article that herbal medicine has been practiced in India since time immemorial. They claim that there are about 40,000 plants that are used as medicine for various diseases. However, in this article they have based their research on 36 plants.

The article shows that various indigenous communities live in forest areas and find medicine for their various ailments from the tree there.

The article shows that in almost every part of Birbhum, indigenous people use plants as medicine for various diseases. However, this research paper does not specify which diseases can be cured. Moreover, there is no comparative discussion of modern allopathic medicine with specific herbal medicine.<sup>5</sup>

An article shows how rural tourism helps to enrich the economy of the country .The author *bhasa* beautifully portrayed the employment opportunities that are created when tourism is developed at the rural level. Like oil, gold etc.the tourism industry has been mentioned as a fast developing industry. Rural people live in various economic hardships. Many times they do not get many necessities, so if a tourist centre is built at the village level, the economic hardship of the people there will go away. The article says that Birbhum district has a rich cultural heritage. Tarapith Temple is one of the Shakti Piths in Birbhum. Various areas of economic development have been created around this Tarapith temple which is making the economy of Birbhum.

The author shows that the tourism including industry frees a large part of the people from unemployment. The tourism industry improves the socio-economic system of the area. Per capita income of people of Birbhum district lags far behind in terms of other comparable groups. The author thinks that if the tourism industry develops, per capita income of district will increase.

The author concludes that the tourism industry could provide employment opportunities for skilled labours, but also un-skilled labour. He pointed out that a stronger tourism industry could be developed around Bolpur, Bakreswar and Nalhati around Tarapith. But here the author does not mention the names of tourist areas like Atla, Birchandrapur, Ghoshgram, Murarai etc.

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Moreover, there is no mention in this article that the business benefits of Tarapith are being enjoyed more by the traders outside this district.<sup>6</sup>

In the beginning of an article, the authors have presented the history of Birbhum district and the geographical location big the district .They also mentioned that this district is a significant district of Rath Bangla.

In this article, the size of the district has discussed the names of the municipalities and names of the rivers if the district has been mentioned. The issues of indigenous people have been raised. The article also highlights that the indigenous community of the district is still living below the poverty line despite being indigenous to the district.

In this article the soil of the whole district is called red. But in reality the soil of the whole district is not red.The geographical boundaries of South Rath and North Rarh have not been properly delineated.It mentions the role of indigenous people in the economic development of the district, but does not mention the fact that the indigenous people of the district have been moving to the outlying district at some point of the year to keep the economy afloat.<sup>7</sup>

An article discusses how some of the villages in Birbhum district, like other districts in West Bengal, are being transformed into cities in keeping with the population growth. It has been mentioned that the population of cities is increasing at a huge rate along with the villages. However, the city lacks all the facilities it needs to survive. Proper planning to keep the environment healthy is not noticed in the cities. This article recommends a proper planning for actual urbanization.

This article discusses the trends and types of urbanization of Birbhum district in a comparative discussion with different district of West Bengal .It has been decided that the type of urbanization in 19 Blocks of this district is not the same everywhere.

The population growth rate of the district is quite high, but there is no civic services are not adequate in the developed cities. This article emphasizes that it is important to look at the blocks that are still lagging behind it terms of urbanization in the district. However, the rapid urbanization in Murarai Block 1 is not mentioned in this article.<sup>8</sup>

## **II**

Education paves the way for people to move forward. Birbhum is the one of the different district of West Bengal. This district is blessed with the footsteps of the great poet Rabindranath Tagore .The education rate in this district is not satisfactory at all.60.48 percent of the total population of

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this district is literate. Male literacy is 51.29 percent and that of female is 48.71 percent. After independence, one after another education commission have been formed in India and initiatives have been taken to expand education in this country .As a result , one educational institution after another has been established in Birbhum district.

This article was originally written by two authors after collecting information from a secondary source. The education index of Birbhum district has been indicated with various statistics. The district development blocks have been divided into different sections according to the role of education; various barriers to education have been highlighted.

However, the analysis of the authors did not give a true picture of all the development blocks in Birbhum district. In many cases, it seems that the information has been served and the decision has been made only on the basis of official statistics without any on the spot search. In this study, Blocks 1 and 2 of Murarai have been included in the list of moderately developed Blocks. But a proper analysis will show that these two blocks are listed as less development blocks in Birbhum. Moreover, this article does not give an idea about the education index of all the Blocks of Birbhum.<sup>9</sup>

The last article presents an analytical statement on maternal health services in Murarai 2 Development Block of Birbhum district, especially maternal health services before and after childbirth. The article details the location of the health centre and how to get there. The services of each health centre are analyzed in the article. The responsibilities and duties of health workers have been discussed the inadequacy of health centres and Health workers in terms of population have been discussed.

The health services have been analyzed by mentioning the geographical location of the 2nd development block of Murarai. Many pregnant mothers have to face difficult situations due to bad roads and distance. As per the instructions of the government of India , there should be one Asha worker for every 1000 people, but the fact that the State has fixed this numbers for its own benefit also create difficulties. The article goes on to say that there is only one doctor in each health centre, but he does not visit the health centre every day. Moreover, ANMs are transferred frequently. The transport system has been blamed for this.

Several recommendations have been made at the end of the article. There has been lack of improving the transport communication system. In terms of population, it has been recommended to recruit health workers. There has been talk frequent transfer of ANMs. This research paper called for ensuring regular attendance of medical officers at health centre. However, there is no recommendation in this article to increase the service mentality of doctors by stopping their

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private practice. It does not recommend doctors to provide medical services in the village at some point in their working life. There was no suggestion of proper infrastructure for Caesar. Because at present the number of caesarean babies us more. So many mothers have to be taken to the local nursing homes or sub- divisional hospital for delivery. Due to the distance, many mothers lost their lives.<sup>10</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In the light of the above discussion, it can be said that in the articles that the writers have discussed on their chosen topic, many issues have remained unnoticed by them. Although an article talks about crop diversification, there is no mention of different types of crops. Though the life of the indigenous Santals was discussed, their superstitious life was not discussed. There is no mention of all the Zamindars in the district who were attacked by the rebels during the discussion of the communist -led peasant revolt. Discussion on floods and droughts did not point a clear picture of all areas of Birbhum. There is no comparative discussion with allopathic medicine in the discussion of indigenous herbal medicine. Other tourist areas of Rampurhat subdivision needed to be discussed centering on Tarapith in the discussion on tourism, but it is not. The discussion on the historical geography of the Birbhum tribes would have been more detailed. Not all relevant areas of Birbhum have been discussed. Murarai was not mentioned much in the discussion on urbanization of Birbhum. The education index of all the blocks was not mentioned in the article on literacy in Birbhum. It was important to discuss the role of local nursing homes in discussing distance and communication barriers.

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