

EXPLORING THE KEY DETERMINANTS OF QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN SONBHADRA DISTRICT, UTTAR PRADESH: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL STUDY

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Abstract

The quality of life of tribal communities is shaped by a complex interplay of socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors. By adopting a multidimensional framework, the study seeks to assess the quality of life and their living conditions of tribal populations in Sonbhadra district, Uttar Pradesh that emphasizes lived experiences, perceptions, and community narratives. The study employs qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation to capture the voices of tribal households across diverse groups in Sonbhadra. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how tribal communities define and negotiate their quality of life beyond conventional economic indicators. The analysis of the focus group discussions identified several recurring themes related to the lived experiences of tribal communities. With respect to quality of life, participants reported persistent economic hardship, inadequate housing conditions, limited access to healthcare facilities, and poor educational opportunities. Many participants expressed dissatisfaction with their standard of living and reported a constant struggle to meet basic needs. Health-related issues such as malnutrition, untreated illnesses, and lack of nearby medical facilities were frequently discussed, indicating their strong influence on overall well-being. Findings of the study also revealed both resilience and vulnerabilities, offering insights into the challenges posed by poverty, marginalization, and limited access to state welfare programs, while also recognizing the strength of cultural identity as a source of continuity and empowerment. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to policy formulation and development initiatives that respect tribal autonomy, promote inclusive growth, and safeguard cultural heritage. By focusing tribal perspectives, the study underscores the importance of qualitative inquiry in shaping holistic measures of quality of life.

Introduction

Sonbhadra, a district located in southeastern Uttar Pradesh, is often referred to as the "*Energy Capital of India*" due to its coal and power industries. It is home to one of the largest tribal populations such as Gond, Kharwar, Baiga, and Chero in the state, comprising over 20% of its residents and who face unique socio-economic and cultural challenges. Despite its rich natural resources and cultural diversity, the region has long grappled with persistent socio-economic challenges, including poverty, limited access to education and healthcare, livelihood insecurity, environmental displacement and marginalization from mainstream development processes.

Background of the Study

Despite decades of planned development, tribal communities in India continue to experience systematic exclusion from mainstream socio-economic progress. Scholars argue that development policies often fail to consider the cultural, social, and ecological contexts of tribal life, resulting in limited effectiveness and sustainability (Noronha & Nairy, 2005). Education and health indicators among tribal populations remain significantly lower than national averages, and gender disparities further compound these challenges. Land alienation and loss of forest rights have severely affected tribal livelihoods. Although legislation such as the Forest Rights Act (2006) was enacted to protect tribal land ownership, implementation gaps persist. As a result, tribal communities remain vulnerable to exploitation, indebtedness, and economic insecurity (Gupta & Bilas, 2017). Further, social marginalization and cultural stereotyping also contribute to low self-esteem and limited aspirations among tribal youth.

In recent decades, development discourse has shifted from mere economic growth to a broader understanding of human well-being. This shift emphasizes the importance of quality of life, encompassing physical, psychological, social, economic, and environmental dimensions. For tribal populations, improving quality of life requires not only income generation but also access to education, healthcare, skill development, social dignity, and sustainable livelihood opportunities. Therefore, this study aims to assess quality of life (QOL) using a multidimensional framework that goes beyond economic indicators.

Concept of Quality of Life

The concept of *quality of life (QOL)* among tribal populations is multidimensional, encompassing health, education, livelihood, and cultural identity. Scholars argue that tribal well-being cannot be measured solely by economic indicators but must include cultural resilience and social cohesion (Pandey, 2013).

The World Health Organization defines quality of life as an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of culture and value systems, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns (Skevington, 1990). It goes beyond material wealth and includes emotional well-being, physical health, social relationships, personal development, and environmental conditions.

Researchers have emphasized that quality of life consists of both objective indicators—such as income, education, housing, and health—and subjective perceptions, including happiness, life satisfaction, and sense of purpose (Dissart & Deller, 2000). Studies suggest that while economic stability is important, factors such as social support, employment security, and opportunities for personal growth play an equally critical role in determining quality of life (Evans & Huxley, 2002). For tribal communities, quality of life is deeply influenced by structural inequalities, social exclusion, and lack of access to basic services. Inadequate education, poor health infrastructure, unemployment, and environmental degradation significantly reduce their life satisfaction and overall well-being (Jana & Ghosh, 2015).

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Sonbhadra district hosts sizeable tribal populations (including Gond, Kharwar, Agaria and related groups) who experience persistent deprivations across multiple dimensions of well-being. Existing studies and program reports point to serious problems—high seasonal migration, persistent child malnutrition, low school retention, and environmental degradation—but they are fragmented, often single-sectoral, and lack longitudinal evidence linking exposures (for example mining or migration) to outcomes across domains. It was also noticed that women, in particular, face multiple disadvantages due to low literacy, early marriage, health issues, and limited mobility. Due to the rapid industrialization and mining, seasonal migration, weak service delivery, and contested land and forest rights have created complex and immense pressures on and contribute to poor quality of life in terms of livelihoods, health, education, and cultural continuity and limited socio-economic mobility among tribal communities in Sonbhadra.

Existing literature reveals that most studies on tribal populations focus on identifying problems rather than evaluating solution-oriented interventions. There is limited empirical research that simultaneously examines the ways we can enhance the quality of life and making their lives easier.

Scope and Expected Outcomes of the Study:

- The study tries to addresses the gap by treating quality of life as a multidimensional construct and investigating its key determinants in an integrated way.
- To identifies barriers to have a good quality of life among these communities
- Also, the findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, development practitioners, and researchers, and make some recommendations for inclusive tribal development strategies for the upliftment of the quality of life of culturally resilient and vulnerable tribal groups of Sonbhadra District.
- The scope is limited to selected tribal communities and does not claim universal generalization.

Methodology

Study Area

Sonbhadra district, the second largest in Uttar Pradesh, is located in the state's southeast and is referred to as the "*energy capital of India*." The district covers 6905 square kilometers in total size. It was founded in 1989 when it broke away from the Uttar Pradesh district of Mirzapur. Garhwa district of Jharkhand state, Koria and Surguja district of Chhattisgarh state, Singrauli district of Madhya Pradesh state, Kaimur and Rohtas district of Bihar state, and Mirzapur and Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh state border it. The district office is in the city of Robertsganj. It is a single district in India that shares borders with four states such as M.P., Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Bihar. According to the 2011 census, the urban area is recorded at 125.4 sq. km, while the rural area is 6779.6 sq. km.

Sonbhadra is among the most economically, socially, and politically underdeveloped districts in Uttar Pradesh. According to the 2011 census, this district was rated second in terms of area, 51st in terms of population, and 52nd in terms of literacy (64 percent). Since the dawn of civilization, this region has been home to several tribal populations.

Notable tribal groups in this district include the Gond, Kharwar, Paharia, Agaria, Panika, Patari, Bhuiya, and Chero (Census 2011). Because of their social and economic background as well as the lack of political backing, they are living a very terrible life.

Sample:

The study population was based on the tribal population living in Sonbhadra District of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. The sample was drawn from different parts of the district. All samples were collected using the cluster sampling technique. The selection and size of the sample were determined in accordance with the research design of the study.

Research Design

The study was designed as a exploratory research design through which try to explore the different aspects/dimensions/indicators of quality of life perceived by tribal communities living in Sonbhadra District.

Inclusion Criteria

- Tribal people living in Sonbhadra District of Eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- Willingness to participate in this study will be main concern while selection.
- Participation will be voluntary.
- Age limit will be 20-50 years.

The specific age group chosen because this is the age when people have developed attitude towards groups and things. The people of these groups are mature enough and have also attitude towards changing/accepting the changes occurring in society. They know what is good or bad for them and also become the change agent for other members of their community.

Exclusion Criteria

- Tribal people living other places in India.
- Those who did not given consent for participating in the study.
- Tribal people those who have physical or mental disability or having serious health issues.

Result & Discussion

During our study, a total of 10–15 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted over a period of three months to explore the key issues related to quality of life among tribal people living in Sonbhadra district. Each focus group comprised 8–10 participants, forming heterogeneous groups in terms of age, gender, educational background, and occupational status.

Key determinants of Quality of Life

Table 1 - Major themes, categories and codes of FGD emerged from content analysis (Quality of Life) shows the findings, such as major themes, categories, and codes derived from the FGD through content analysis.

Major Theme	Sub Themes Identified		Codes/Responses
Quality of Life	A	Interpersonal Connections	Family, Relatives, Friends, Neighbours, Community Interaction, Social Discussions, Social Gatherings, Meetings, Mutual Exchange, Cooperation, Support, Hospitality/Accommodation
	B	Physical Wellbeing	Disease, Pain, Disorders, Physical Health, Mental Health, Healthcare Services, Illness, Medical Treatment, Prevention, Health Facilities, Clinics/Hospitals
	C	Career & Professional Life	Job, Occupation, Employment Opportunities, Work Availability, Income/Wages, Job Satisfaction, Farming/Agriculture, Business/Selling, Livelihood Activities
	D	Economic Stability	Money, Financial Resources, Electricity Access, Household Appliances, Safety/Security, Independence/Autonomy, Clothing, Food, Water Supply, Basic Needs
	E	Sense of Community	Social Networks, Workplace Belonging, School Belonging, Community Groups, Cultural Groups, Tribal Connections, Social Attachment, Social Identity

	F	Security & Protection	Threat from Wild Animals, Physical Attacks, Flood Risk, Monsoon-related Danger, Natural Hazards, Disaster Risk
	G	Environmental Conditions	Education System, Transportation Facilities, Drinking Water Availability, Employment & Agriculture Conditions, Mobile Network Signals, Internet Connectivity, Infrastructure
	H	Mental & Emotional Wellness	Feelings, Desires/Wishes, Happiness, Emotions, Life Satisfaction, Mental Satisfaction
	I	Socio-economic condition	Money, financial Issues, Quality of Life, Life status
	J	Status of Education	Education, Awareness, Knowledge
	K	Sex Ratio	Male, Female



Figure 1: Conceptual framework illustrating the multidimensional domains contributing to overall Quality of Life.

The analysis of the focus group discussions revealed several recurring themes related to the lived experiences of tribal communities. With respect to quality of life, participants reported persistent economic hardship, inadequate housing conditions, limited access to healthcare facilities, and poor educational opportunities. Many participants expressed dissatisfaction with their standard of living and reported a constant struggle to meet basic needs. Health-related issues such as malnutrition, untreated illnesses, and lack of nearby medical facilities were frequently discussed, indicating their strong influence on overall well-being.

Traditionally, a tribal community has been an isolated population that is primarily found in forests or other secluded areas far from the centre of society. The primary sources of income for the tribes in the study area are the forest resources and their daily wages. Even though some Gond and Kharwars members work in agriculture, their standard of living is still too low. Their distinct culture, way of life, traditions, and customs set them apart from strangers. For this reason, they are often described as primitive, backward people who live in forests.

In order to better meet the political and administrative needs of tribal people, the Government of India has designated Dudhi and Obra as reserved seats for Scheduled Tribes (S.T.) in the legislative assembly (Vidhan Sabha). According to the Census of India (2011), Scheduled Tribes constitute approximately 8.6% of the total population of the country, whereas tribal groups in the Sonbhadra district constitute nearly 20.67% of the total district population. This indicates that Sonbhadra represents a significant tribal belt in Uttar Pradesh, requiring targeted interventions for tribal welfare and inclusive development.

The term development in this context refers not only to national economic progress but also to the improvement of individual and community well-being, including enhancement in livelihood opportunities, access to education, health services, and overall improvement in Quality of Life. Development is therefore closely linked with multidimensional human well-being rather than mere economic growth alone (Sen, 1999).

1. Interpersonal Connections

Any interaction or relationship between two or more people is referred to as social relationships (Cash, E., & Toney-Butler, T. J., 2022). Social interaction forms the foundation of interpersonal relationships. Exchange, competition, conflict, cooperation, and accommodation are the five basic types of social interaction. Competition and conflict often contribute to social change, whereas exchange, cooperation, and accommodation generally maintain social structure and promote social integration (CK-12 Foundation, n.d.).

In the tribal settlements of Sonbhadra, competition and conflict are often observed due to issues such as ownership of limited resources, scarcity of livelihood opportunities, and the prevalence of substance abuse. These factors sometimes disturb community harmony and interpersonal trust. However, the positive elements of interpersonal connections such as cooperation, exchange, accommodation, and mutual support are more commonly visible among the tribal population, indicating the existence of strong community ties and social cohesion.

The tribal population reported that they share positive relationships with neighbours, relatives, and family members. This helps them in maintaining peace and security within their settlement. Trust, respect, and emotional support were frequently mentioned as important values. Many individuals expressed that social discussions and communication provide them comfort and emotional strength. Social events, meetings, and interactions also help them sustain collective identity and cultural continuity.

Such strong interpersonal bonding is consistent with sociological observations that tribal societies are often characterized by close-knit kinship structures and collective living patterns (Majumdar & Madan, 1956). Despite occasional disputes, their social relationships remain stable, and they continue to value cooperation and mutual help.

2. Physical Wellbeing

Health is defined as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (2024). A major implication of this definition is that mental health is not only the absence of mental illness but also the presence of psychological resilience, social functioning, and emotional stability.

Social inequality remains a strong predictor of health outcomes. For example, even in Kerala, a state known for progressive health policies, tribal communities experience higher rates of underweight, anaemia, and goitre compared to non-tribal groups, though hypertension and tuberculosis rates are comparable (Haddad et al., 2012). This highlights the persistent health inequalities affecting tribal populations across India.

The tribal population in the study area reported dissatisfaction with their physical health. This dissatisfaction is largely due to limited awareness, underutilization of preventive health services, and inadequate access to healthcare infrastructure. Tribal health issues require special attention as many tribal communities remain underdeveloped and face significant barriers to healthcare access (Taraphdar et al., 2022).

It has been reported that several tribal people in Attappady (Kerala) developed psychiatric conditions due to severe socio-economic challenges such as land alienation, unemployment, malnutrition, and discrimination. Diagnoses included depressive disorders, substance abuse, and other serious mental illnesses (Kottai, 2018). Similarly, some individuals in Sonbhadra also expressed dissatisfaction with their mental wellbeing, reporting stress, anxiety, and emotional instability.

Although respondents expressed satisfaction with certain health schemes and services provided by the government, many also admitted they were not fully aware of the available programs. Mobile health services occasionally reach their villages, but hospitals remain far away, making emergency care difficult.

A unique positive aspect of tribal health is their dependence on forest resources and indigenous healthcare practices. They continue to use herbal medicines and natural materials for treatment and healing. However, modernization and lack of awareness among younger generations have resulted in declining indigenous knowledge systems. Younger people are less aware of traditional healthcare practices, healthy habits, and preventive lifestyle measures.

Substance abuse was reported as highly prevalent among the tribal population. Alcohol consumption, tobacco chewing, smoking, and pan masala usage were common among men. Such patterns often begin at an early age and continue throughout life. Women, although less involved in substance use, expressed concerns about child health and nutrition.

The researcher found that initiating area-specific, group-specific, and health need-specific action research studies is imperative among India's tribal communities. Such studies would support the development of effective need-based healthcare strategies for diverse tribal groups (Taraphdar et al., 2022).

3. Career & Professional Life

Employment is a critical component of Quality of Life, as it influences income, self-esteem, security, and social status. Most tribal respondents were not satisfied with their occupations, except those working in government jobs. Many reported that their income is insufficient and wages are not fair.

A significant proportion of the population depends on the "thozhilurappu" scheme, which refers to India's rural employment guarantee programs, particularly the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). This scheme ensures 100 days of unskilled manual employment for rural households and is intended to strengthen livelihood security through wage employment.

Traditionally, tribal communities depended on forest produce for survival. However, due to deforestation, environmental degradation, and stricter forest laws, the availability of forest products has declined. This has weakened their traditional livelihood system and reduced economic independence.

The tribal community in Sonbhadra has diverse occupations. Some work as basket makers, hunters, gatherers, and forest product collectors. Those with land cultivate crops such as ginger, jackfruit, ragi, rice, mango, etc. Others work as labourers in nearby mining regions like Chopan, Obra, and Robertsganj. These areas contain mineral resources and several opencast mines.

However, individuals engaged in small-scale occupations were not satisfied with their income. They expressed a desire for better employment and higher wages. Lack of education prevents them from entering mainstream professional employment. Many respondents stated that they feel physically and mentally stressed due to unstable employment conditions and exploitation. Some reported being cheated in wage payments or being underpaid for products they sell.

This reflects the larger structural problem of tribal labour exploitation and limited access to sustainable livelihood opportunities (Xaxa, 2008).

4. Economic Stability

Financial and material wellbeing refers to the degree to which an individual's resources, financial condition, and financial decisions provide security and autonomy. In the present study, most tribal respondents reported dissatisfaction with their financial situation.

Many individuals reported experiencing anxiety, depression, and emotional stress due to economic hardships. They stated that they do not have sufficient financial resources to meet daily needs. Basic facilities such as electricity, household appliances, and housing infrastructure were reported as inadequate. Several respondents also stated that they do not have enough clothing. Food insecurity and limited access to safe drinking water were also frequently mentioned.

Overall, economic stability was found to be one of the weakest dimensions contributing to Quality of Life among the tribal population. Such deprivation is consistent with the multidimensional poverty framework which highlights that poverty extends beyond income and includes deprivation in housing, sanitation, food security, and access to basic services (Alkire & Foster, 2011).

5. Sense of Community

A person's subjective feeling of being an important part of their social networks, workplaces, schools, communities, cultural groups, and geographical locations is known as a sense of belonging (Hagerty et al., 1992).

The tribal respondents showed a strong sense of community identity. Many described themselves as "sons of the soil," indicating strong attachment to their land and tribal environment. Like pre-civilized and isolated communities, they remain deeply bonded with each other due to cultural unity, kinship ties, and shared lifestyle patterns.

They believe their tribal identity is superior and distinct from other communities, reflecting strong cultural pride. These traits can be understood as natural outcomes of isolation, small population size, and shared cultural practices.

Most respondents reported feeling happy when among their tribal group. They expressed that they are accepted and supported by their family, relatives, and friends. They rarely feel lonely because community members involve them in social gatherings and shared responsibilities. Such belongingness is an important protective factor for mental wellbeing and resilience (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

6. Security & Protection

Personal safety refers to the ability to perform daily activities without fear or worry of physical, psychological, or emotional harm. Perceived personal safety differs from actual safety and must be approached as an experienced feeling rather than an objective condition (Jansson et al., 2013).

The tribal respondents reported that they do not feel secure in their homes, particularly at night. Attacks by wild animals were frequently reported. Fear of such attacks remains a daily concern. In response, the community has used fencing and bio-fencing techniques such as lemongrass plantations to reduce wildlife intrusion.

Most respondents were dissatisfied with current safety conditions. They reported that neither agricultural fields nor workplaces are safe. Because they live in forest areas, reaching hospitals in emergencies becomes extremely difficult. Even though government schemes provide free hospital treatment and mobile medical services, respondents reported that emergency transport facilities are insufficient.

Monsoons and floods also increase vulnerability. Heavy rainfall isolates the villages, making travel impossible. People expressed dissatisfaction regarding their safety during floods and their lack of emergency travel facilities. These issues highlight how environmental vulnerability intersects with personal safety and access to healthcare infrastructure (UNDRR, 2019).

7. Environmental Conditions

Environmental conditions refer to the quality of the ecosystem and infrastructure surrounding a person's living environment. Respondents reported dissatisfaction with the educational system, as children must travel long distances to attend school.

They were also dissatisfied with the availability of higher education institutions and related services. Infrastructure supporting employment and agriculture was also considered inadequate. Transportation facilities were poor, and access to safe drinking water was a major concern.

In addition, respondents stated dissatisfaction with mobile network signals and internet connectivity. Poor digital connectivity limits access to information, communication, education, and employment opportunities. Maintenance of the village premises and overall settlement environment was also reported to be unsatisfactory.

Such poor environmental conditions contribute to reduced Quality of Life and reflect the infrastructural deprivation of tribal regions (Planning Commission of India, 2014).

8. Mental & Emotional Wellness

Emotional wellbeing includes life satisfaction, sense of purpose, ability to pursue goals, and maintaining a stable emotional state. Emotional wellbeing reflects equilibrium in feelings, thoughts, social relationships, and life goals. Research shows that subjective wellbeing is significantly lower among tribal adolescents compared to non-tribal adolescents (Satheesan, S. & Sindhu, V., 2023).

Respondents in the tribal village stated that their wishes are often not fulfilled. Many expressed hopelessness, stating that they do not have much to look forward to in life. While they experience love and emotional attachment to others, happiness was not consistent.

They reported panic, stress, and worry in response to unexpected situations. Many mentioned that they rarely wake up with optimism about the day. They also expressed that they do not always enjoy the activities they engage in.

Such responses indicate reduced psychological wellbeing, possibly associated with unemployment, poverty, health insecurity, and marginalization. Emotional wellbeing is strongly connected with economic stability and social belongingness, which are also weak in the study population.

9. Socio-economic Condition

The tribal people of Sonbhadra district are among the unassimilated tribal groups who remain socially and economically excluded from mainstream planned development. Despite constituting 20.67% of the district population, they continue to live in hardship.

Most tribal households fall under the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category. Their possessions are limited, and they are heavily dependent on forest resources. Some also engage in agricultural farming. Such dependency makes them vulnerable to seasonal unemployment and ecological changes.

The study area is male-dominated in terms of household leadership, though women contribute significantly to the workforce. Male-headed households constitute more than 94% of total households. This indicates that gender equality awareness remains low and attitudes need improvement (Tripti, Kumari and Choudhary, B.K., 2012).

Socio-economic deprivation remains a major barrier to improving Quality of Life. Poor housing, limited employment, food insecurity, and lack of modern facilities reinforce marginalization and restrict development outcomes.

10. Status of Education

The educational status of Sonbhadra district remains low, and this is a major factor contributing to poverty and underdevelopment among the tribal community. The majority of the tribal population is illiterate.

The district literacy rate (44.2%) is significantly lower than the state average (55.7%). Such disparities highlight educational inequality. Chopan block, which has the highest tribal population, also has the lowest literacy rate (35.2%). The difficult terrain in this region creates major challenges for education and health service delivery.

Both formal and informal education systems remain inadequate. Many tribal children are forced into labour rather than continuing education. Female literacy is extremely low (23.1%), reflecting gender disparities in educational access. Low education is directly linked to unemployment, exploitation, and restricted access to government schemes.

Education remains an important dimension for enhancing Quality of Life and enabling tribal integration into mainstream economic opportunities (UNESCO, 2015).

11. Sex Ratio

The sex ratio, defined as the number of females per 1000 males, is a sensitive indicator of women's position in society. India has historically reported low sex ratios. However, improvements in sex ratio often indicate better survival and life expectancy of women.

In India, the sex ratio was 927 in 1991, increased to 933 in 2001, and further increased to 943 in 2011 (Census, 2011). Compared to the tribal sex ratio of Uttar Pradesh (952), the tribal sex ratio of Sonbhadra district is 946 (2011).

Block-level variations show that tribal sex ratio is higher than the state average in Ghorawal (954), Nagwa (953), Dudhi (962), and Babbani (971). However, Robertsganj (937) and Chopan (927) show lower tribal sex ratios compared to the state norm.

This indicates uneven gender balance across blocks, potentially influenced by socio-economic status, migration, healthcare access, and cultural preferences. Sex ratio remains an important demographic indicator affecting long-term social development and Quality of Life outcomes.

Conclusion

The present study highlights that the Quality of Life (QoL) of tribal communities in Sonbhadra district is shaped by multiple interrelated dimensions such as Interpersonal Connections, Physical Wellbeing, Career & Professional Life, Economic Stability, Sense of Community, Security & Protection, Environmental Conditions, Mental & Emotional Wellness, Socio-economic Condition, Status of Education, and Sex Ratio.

Findings reveal that although tribal people possess strong community bonding, cultural identity, and social support systems, they continue to experience significant challenges in other domains. Poor access to stable employment opportunities, low wages, limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient educational facilities contribute to their dissatisfaction with overall living conditions. Health-related issues, including limited utilization of healthcare services and the growing prevalence of substance abuse, further reduce their physical and psychological wellbeing.

The study also shows that tribal settlements remain highly vulnerable to environmental risks such as floods, monsoons, and wild animal attacks, indicating low levels of perceived safety and inadequate emergency support systems. Additionally, the low literacy rate and poor educational attainment in the district restrict tribal participation in mainstream employment, which further reinforces poverty and socio-economic marginalization.

Overall, the tribal population in Sonbhadra continues to face multidimensional deprivation despite their significant demographic presence in the district. Therefore, improving Quality of Life among these communities requires an

integrated approach that strengthens education, livelihood opportunities, healthcare accessibility, infrastructure development, and social protection measures. A holistic development strategy addressing all dimensions is essential for achieving sustainable and inclusive tribal development.

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