

Social, Geographic, Linguistic and Temporal Changes in Consanguinity Among Sixteen Tribes of Central India

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ABSTRACT The paper reports on the social, geographical, linguistic and temporal changes in consanguinity among 3232 married couples belonging to 16 tribes of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The inter-tribe variation in total consanguineous marriages is strikingly large (range 0.45 to 46.5%, series average 22.86%). The matrilineal cross-cousin marriages are most preferred (14.2%) followed by patrilineal (7.52%) and uncle-niece (1.14%). The coefficient of inbreeding (F) ranges between 0.001 and 0.029 (series averages 0.014). A considerable heterogeneity exists between the districts for consanguineous marriage. The Dravidian speaking tribes show highest frequency of consanguineous marriages (27.26%) followed by Indo Aryan consistent declining trend in consanguinity from older to younger generation is seen among a majority of the tribes, there is nearly 50% reduction from the oldest generation (28.9%) to the younger generation (15%). The pattern of variation in inbreeding observed among the 16 tribes of Central India can best be understood and interpreted by considering the geographic location of the tribes, their linguistic affiliation and socio-economic development in the region.