

## Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Baigas of Samnapur Block of Dindori District, Madhya Pradesh

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**ABSTRACT** The paper presents few aspects of socio-demographic characteristics of the Baigas of Samnapur block of Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh. The finding indicate that majority of population is illiterate and thus the situation demands some sort of educational programmes for the awareness and upliftment of educational status among them. The population indices are lagging behind the state population. The fertility and mortality levels are high, the infant mortality rate being particularly higher. The dependency ratio is very high indicating a large number of dependents in population, thus requiring some attention of the family welfare institutions. The high mortality rate is prevalent due to frequent occurrence of different diseases, however some deaths have also resulted from delivery complications. Acceptance of family welfare is almost nil. Under these circumstances it is highly desirable to take step for reducing infant mortality by improving mother and child health service and by increasing awareness regarding hygienic conditions at the time of delivery or else wise. Also, steps should be taken to increase acceptance of family welfare devices.

### INTRODUCTION

The demographic profile of any population help to describe as accurately as possible, the demographic and health aspects of the population, by collecting information of a sample of the total population.

The socio-demographic profile of any population is the product of its culture and ecological factors. It helps in the study of several aspects of the population. Basu (1994) mentioned that socio-demographic profile of any population is directly related to the health of population. In this way socio-demographic study of any population help in health promotive and disease curative strategies.

A number of studies on demography have been made by various investigators (Elwin, 1939, 1950; Nag, 1954; Hu, 1955; Sen, 1956; Saxon, 1957; Mahapatra, 1972; Russel et al., 1975; Chaudhari, 1986; Basu et al., 1989; Basu, 1994; Sharma et al., 1994; Pandey et al., 1999; Sharma et al., 2000; Yadav, 2000, 2001; Tiwari et al., 2001; Sharma et al., 2002; Dwivedi, 2003; Sharma et al., 2004) and many others covering most of the aspects of different populations. In the present study an attempt has been made to elucidate the socio-demographic characteristics of Baigas of

Samnapur block of Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study is conducted among the Baigas of Samnapur block of Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh, India. The newly formed Dindori district is surrounded by Kachar & Satpura mountain ranges of Narmada river, which is very rich in terms of natural beauty and wild resources, but very poor from the economical point of view. It is basically a tribal area. It is surrounded by Jabalpur in its northeast, Shahdol in northwest, Bilaspur in southwest, Rajnandgaon and Balaghat in south and Mandla in west. It also touches the boundary of Chattisgarh state.

The Simardha and Tikariya villages come under block Samnapur of Dindori tehsil, Dindori district. It lies between, 22°17' to 23°22' North and 80°35' to 80°58' East. The block covers on area of 806 km<sup>2</sup>. Out of the two villages, which are covered during study, Simardha is a forest village, situated at a distance of 8 km from block headquarter on a small hill top, whereas Tikariya is a road side village.

Baiga is one of the important tribes of central India. Baiga can easily be described as a tribe, which has been least affected by the modern civilization. The earliest account of the Baiga that has come down to us is as recent as 1867, when captain Thomson, in his Seoni settlement report,

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briefly described them as “the wildest of the tribes, inhabiting the most inaccessible hills and the remotest forests; living on what they can secure with their bows and arrows, in the use of which they are very skilful, and on the forest produce, and the small crops which they raise on the hill sides.”

The Baigas appear to be a branch of the great Bhuiya tribe, which still numbers half a million in Bengal and Bihar and is to be found chiefly in Jashpur and Serguja in the present neighborhood of the Baiga. The Bhuiya, who are also called as the Bhumia, are, as their name implies ‘lords of the soil’. This title is also claimed by the Baiga who call themselves Bhumiaraja or Bhumijan, and Bhumia is the name given to the most important sub-section of their tribe.

A total of 100 households comprising of 494 individuals were randomly selected during the study. For this purpose, the two villages named Simardha and Tikariya were randomly selected from the total number of villages and then different households were selected out of these two villages on a random sampling basis. Thus the present investigation has been conducted by random sampling using pre tested, structured interview schedule. Simultaneously, group discussion and informal interview methods have been used. Observation has been conducted through semi-participant method.

The socio-demographic characteristics presented here were obtained by observations relating to type of family, average family size, marriage patterns, clan endo-exogamy, village endo-exogamy, age at the time of marriage, marital status, dependency ratio, educational attainment, vital rates, viz, fertility rate, growth rate, infant mortality rate etc.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that out of 494 people residing in 100 households, which were studied, about 72 percent live in nuclear families, and some others are living in joint families, i.e., 26 percent. A very few are living in extended families (2 percent). All the Baigas of this region practice clan exogamy whereas village endogamy is practiced by 32 percent households. They very frequently marry within their relatives, i.e. cross cousin marriage (48 percent), and also marry out of the blood relations (52 percent).

The age of marriage for bride and groom

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic characteristics of Baigas of Samnapur block of Dindori District**

S. No.	Characteristics	Figures/ Percent
1.	Population Covered	494
2.	Number of household studied	100
3.	Type of house-hold/family	
	(a) Nuclear	72%
	(b) Joint	26%
	(c) Extended	2%
4.	Average family size	4.94 individuals
5.	Clan endo - exogamy	
	(a) Clan endogamy	0%
	(b) Clan exogamy	100%
6.	Village endo - exogamy	
	(a) Village endogamy	32%
	(b) Village exogamy	68%
7.	Pattern of preferential marriages	
	(a) Consanguineous/cross cousin	48%
	(b) Out of blood relatives	52%
8.	Age at time of marriage	
	(a) Males 16-18 years	40.17%
	(b) Females 13-15 years	37.96%
9.	Educational attainment	
	(a) Illiterate	65.58%
	(b) Primary	26.31%
	(c) Middle	07.89%
	(d) Higher secondary	00.20%
	(e) Graduate	-

exhibits a little variation. The more common age of marriage for groom is between 16-18 years (40.17 percent), whereas in ease of bride, age between 13-15 years (37.96 percent) is more common. Thus age between 13-21 years is more common for marriage of girls and boys among Baigas.

The Maximum numbers of people are illiterate (65.58 percent), whereas some of the children have registered their names in the village primary school (26.31 percent) and very few have reached upto middle (7.89 percent) and higher secondary level (0.02 percent). Thus it could be concluded that maximum number of Baigas are illiterate and it is suggested that government should plan some sort of educational programmes for the educational awareness and upliftment of their education level. The average family size in found to be 4.94 individuals among them.

Table 2 reveals information regarding five most common diseases of the village. It can be observed from the table that five most common diseases of the village are Malaria (17.2), Cough-cold (16.4), Itching (11.8), Cholera (11.4) and Stomachache (10.6). The other common disease besides the above stated, along with their frequencies, are exhibited in the table. It should be mentioned here that the information of five

**Table 2: Population Characteristics among Baigas of Samnapur block of Dindori District.**

S. No.	Characteristics	Baigas	Madhya Pradesh
1.	Population size (acc. to stages of life)		
(a)	Neonatal (0-28 days)	0.80%	-
(b)	Infant (28 days-2 years)	4.65%	-
(c)	Early childhood/milk teeth period (3-6 years)	13.36%	-
(d)	Middle childhood/permanent teeth period (7-10 years)	16.19%	-
(e)	Later childhood/pre pubertal period (11-15 years)	9.51%	-
(f)	Adolescent (16-21 years)	10.93%	-
(g)	Adult/child bearing period (22-55 years)	38.46%	-
(h)	Old age (56 - above)	6.07%	-
2.	Young dependency ratio	131.44	65.5
3.	Old dependency ratio	16.35	6.5
4.	Total dependency ratio	90.73	72.1
5.	Index of aging	0.102	10.0

most commonly occurring disease is collected from each sample, and then, the frequency of prevalence of each disease is calculated. In this way, the five most commonly occurring diseases among the total diseases have been traced from the available information.

Table 3 depicts the population characteristics among Baigas of Simardha and Tikariya village of Samnapur block of Dindori district. If we look at the population size, according to the stages of life, we will see that maximum number of individuals come under the category of adult or child bearing

**Table 3: Population characteristics among Baigas of Samnapur block of Dindori District.**

S. No.	Characteristics	Baigas	Madhya Pradesh
1.	Population size (acc. to stages of life)		
(a)	Neonatal (0-28 days)	0.80%	-
(b)	Infant (28 days-2 years)	4.65%	-
(c)	Early childhood/milk teeth period (3-6 years)	13.36%	-
(d)	Middle childhood/permanent teeth period (7-10 years)	16.19%	-
(e)	Later childhood/pre pubertal period (11-15 years)	9.51%	-
(f)	Adolescent 16-21 years)	10.93%	-
(g)	Adult/child bearing period (22-55 years)	38.46%	-
(h)	Old age (56 - above)	6.07%	-
2.	Young dependency ratio	131.44	65.5
3.	Old dependency ratio	16.35	6.5
4.	Total dependency ratio	90.73	72.1
5.	Index of aging	0.102	10.0

age group, i.e., 22-25 years (38.46 percent), followed by middle childhood, i.e., 7-10 years (16.19 percent), early childhood, i.e., 3-6 years (13.36 percent), adolescent, i.e., 16-21 years (10.93 percent), later childhood, i.e., 11-15 years (9.51 percent), old age, i.e., above 56 years (6.07 percent), 28 days to 2 years (4.65 percent) and neonatal, i.e., 1-28 days (0.80 percent) Thus number of adults are maximum among the Baigas.

The young dependency ratio, which is the ratio of child population (0-15 yrs) to the working population (15-64 years) is 131.44, and old dependency ratio which is the ratio of aged people (above 64 years) years to the working population (15-64 years) is 16.35. The total dependency ratio is quite higher 90.73, which shows that out of every hundred working population, there are 90.73 dependent population. It also implies the poor economic status of Baigas. The index of aging which is the ratio of aged population (above 64 years) to the child population (0-14 years) is 0.102. The comparison of population indices with that of state indices reveal that the Baiga population is lagging behind.

On the basis of births and deaths occurred since last year preceding the survey, vital rates for the population have been computed. As evident from the table 4, Baigas have little higher crude birth rates (56.68 percent) and death rates (38.46 percent) as compared with the vital rates of Madhya Pradesh. Thus the population growth rate among the Baigas has been higher than state. The infant mortality rate among the Baigas is significantly higher (428.5 percent) than that of state, which indicates about an immediate need for the awareness regarding antenatal care, child rearing and delivery practices among them. The total fertility rate among Baigas is 259.25, which is higher than the total fertility rate of Madhya Pradesh.

The socio-demographic analysis of the data among Baigas of Simardha and Tikariya village of Samnapur block of Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh, India has revealed that most of the

**Table 4: Vital rates of Demographic characteristics among Baigas of Samnapur block of Dindori District.**

S. No.	Vital rates	Baigas	Madhya Pradesh
1.	Birth rate	56.68	34.4
2.	Death rate	38.46	12.7
3.	Infant mortality rate	428.5	104
4.	Total fertility rate	259.25	4.6

Baigas are illiterate and poor. Most of them live in nuclear families and commonly practice village exogamy, exceptions being there. Consanguineous marriage is seen among many of them, and age of 13-21 years is more common for marriage among them. Their fertility rate is very high owing to the small age of marriage. The mortality level is high, particularly the infant mortality rate, which is significantly higher. Frequent occurrence of diseases is also a major cause for the high infant mortality rate. This should be taken seriously and efforts should be made in this regard. The acceptance of family planning devices is very low, which is not correct as it contributes significantly for population increase. Under all these circumstances, it is highly desirable to take steps for reducing infant mortality and fertility rate by providing more medical health and family welfare services, increasing awareness for utilization of these family welfare services as well as regarding antenatal care and delivery health practices, and by increasing acceptance of spacing methods of family planning.

At last it is suggested that government should plan some policies or programmes to increase awareness among the Baigas of Samnapur Block of Dindori district, which would help them to better utilize their resources. Economic status also makes an impact on the health status, and so attempts must be made by some government or non government institutions to uplift their economic status by guiding them about the proper utilization of their skills and resources.

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