

Fertility Levels among Women of Stone Crushing Industry from Matigara Block of Darjeeling District, West Bengal

Subir Biswas and Debopama Bagchi

*Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal, Raja Rammohunpur,
Darjeeling 734 013, West Bengal, India
E-mail: gargisubir@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT Fertility refers to the actual reproductive performance of a woman or group of women, which is biological in nature but numerous social cultural factors also affect the phenomenon. The occupation may be categorized as such a factor which affects fertility directly or indirectly due to their unique work environment and occupational hazards. In this article an attempt has been made to explore the fertility levels and its correlates of women from stone crushing industry keeping in mind the probable occupational environment, socio-cultural attributes and hazards due to their occupational exposures. Data has been collected from women of stone crushing industry from Balason colony, Matigara block, Darjeeling district of West Bengal, after household survey, interview and observation. The analysis of fertility is carried out in period perspective and data on age is estimated by recall method with cross check. Fertility rates and ratios are estimated following standard formula. The overall fertility rates of the group are somewhat higher than state or nation. The sex ratio is also higher favouring females. The high fertility may be attributed to lower age at marriage, lower age at first delivery, low literacy rate as well as higher infant mortality beside their occupational hazards.