PRINT: ISSN 0972-0073 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6802
Anthropologist, 1(2): 133-137 (1999)
DOI: 10.31901/24566802.1999/01.02.07

Demographic Profile of Bhattara, Tribal Population of Nowrangpur District Orissa

Meerambika Mahapatro, M.P. Sachdeva and A.K. Kalla

Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, Delhi 110 007, India

KEY WORDS Bhattara. Orissa. Dependency Ratio. Economic Status

ABSTRACT The article analyses the impact of different characteristics, viz. education, occupation, income, etc. in deciding the structure of the population of Bhattara and attempts to provide an appropriate micro level perspective for the population planners.

INTRODUCTION

Biological and social environments are known to influence the demographic structure of a population. The structural changes take place through birth, death and migration. Differential fertility, mortality and in and out migration are responsible for the structural dissimilarities existing between different populations or with in the population at a given point of time. It is, therefore, essential to analyze population composition as a whole.

In the present study, size, composition and distribution of the Bhattara population are discussed in order to provide a general demographic profile of this tribal group.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

During pilot survey six revenue villages were selected, namely, Kosagumuda, Chelipadara, Bajragada, Junapani, Majhiguda and Santoshpur of Kosagumuds block, Nowrangpur district, Orissa. Bhattara is the most predominant tribal population of these villages. All the households of the six villages were covered under the present study. Intensive fieldwork was carried out using a pre-tested and modified question schedule. A total of 473 households of Bhattara have been studied from the six villages. The number of ever married women studied from the 473 households is 621. Univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses were done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age and Sex Composition

In general age and sex wise composition of a population is called, population structure. Population structure at a given time is the result of replacement of the age cohorts vis-a-vis sex that has been continuously going on right from the very beginning of the population (Bogue, 1969). Population structure is generally depicted by population pyramid. The population pyramid of Bhattara has been constructed (Fig. 1) using the generally used five yearly age cohorts and sex wise distribution set out in table 1.

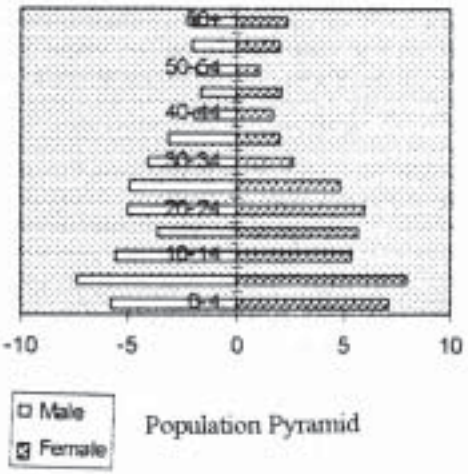

Fig. 1

The population pyramid shows that the

Table 1 : Age-sex wise distribution of Bhattara population

Age	*Male*		*Female*		*Total*		*Sex*
Cohort	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*Ratio*
0-4	123	5.74	152	7.10	275	12.84	1236
5-9	158	7.38	170	7.94	328	15.32	1076
10-14	120	5.60	116	5.42	236	11.02	967
15-19	77	3.59	121	5.65	198	9.24	1571
20-24	108	5.04	127	5.93	235	10.97	1176
25-29	105	4.90	103	4.81	208	9.71	981
30-34	87	4.06	58	2.71	145	6.77	667
35-39	68	3.17	44	2.05	112	5.22	647
40-44	41	1.91	38	1.77	79	3.68	927
45-49	35	1.63	45	2.10	80	3.73	1286
50-54	40	1.87	24	1.12	64	2.99	600
55-59	43	2.01	44	2.05	87	4.06	1023
60+	43	2.01	52	2.43	95	4.44	1209
Total	10486	48.913	1094	51.087	2142	99.99	1044

expansion of 0-4 years age cohort is much less than that of the 5-9 years age cohort, which indicates that the fertility in Bhattara population has started declining during the last five years. The population pyramid shows an usually lower proportion of males at 15-19 years of age compared to those at 20-24 years of age. This may be perhaps because the males in this age cohort are more prone to emigration to different places in search of better livelihood. However, the influence of gender wise differential rate of mortality may not be ruled out. The age cohorts 20-24 and 25-29 respectively show almost similar percentage of male population (i.e. about 5%). However, as in most of the Indian populations the successive age cohorts (i.e. 30-34 years onwards up to 40-44 years) show a general decline in respective gender wise proportion, not withstanding the sex ratio differences. There is an increased percentage of female population in the age cohort 45-49 compared to the earlier age cohort 40-44 years. The increased population of 60+ age cohort, however, is because of the clubbing up of all the age groups beyond 60 years of age. However, at 60+ age cohort, females have outnumbered males, like many other Indian populations, and thus may be because of the mortality in the higher age group being relatively less among the females than among the males.

Thus, in general, this population pyramid with a narrow apex and a broad base indicates that the population is growing, yet a decline in the proportion of 0-4 years age cohort in comparison to that of 5-9 years age cohort is an indication that the population has recently started shrinking.

Sex Ratio

Sex ratio is defined as the number of females per thousand males. The increase or decrease in sex ratio at different age groups may be attributed to a number of factors like differential mortality rates, differential replacement rates and differential migration by gender. "Sex ratio at each age cohort is also a feature of considerable importance, and one which varies considerably due to the impact of sex-selective mortality and migration" (Dictionary of Demography, 1985). Sex ratio is also an indicator of sex differential in mortality (Basu, 1993).

The overall sex ratio (i.e. all ages combined) is 927 for all India population (Census of India, 1991), while the sex ratio of the tribal population of India is 972 and that of the tribal population of Orissa is 1002 (Family Health Survey, IIPS, 1991). However, for the presently studied population, the sex ratio is found to be 1051.72, which is much higher compared to the sex ratio of all India tribal population and Orissa tribal population, respectively.

The above variation is quite in accordance with Basu's (1993) observation that the females in the tribal society are perhaps not neglected and the social and cultural values protect their interest.

Economic Status

In the presently studied population the mode of subsistence of most of the people is agriculture

and labour work; for six months they are engaged in agricultural activities and for the remaining six months they work as labourers. Though cultivation is the main occupation of the Bhattara, yet some of them do not have their own land, and work as daily wage labourer in the fields of the affluent people. The daily wages earned by the Bhattara are very low.

The per capita income wise distribution of the Bhattara households is set out in table 2, from where it is evident that they are living in extremely poor economic conditions, with about 81% of the households having Rs. 1001-3000 per capita annual income and about 8% having still lower per capita income. This when seen in relation to the all India per capita annual income of Rs. 8281.5 (Economic Survey of India, 1994-95) clearly brings out the fact that the Bhattara are economically much weaker and population planners need to pay immediate attention to it. The observation is not surprising when it is found that a female gets only rupees seven per day while a male gets rupees ten per day. For Government sponsored works a male usually gets Rs. 20-25/- and female gets Rs. 15/- per day, respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of the Bhattara Households vis-à-vis annual Oer-capita income

Per capita annual income (in Rs.)	*Households N*	*Percentage*
Less than 1000	36	7.6
1001-3000	383	81.0
3001-5000	46	9.7
More than 5000	8	1.7
Total	473	100.0

Dependency Ratio

Dependency ratio measures the impact of age composition of a population on economy. It given us the ratio in a population of the number of the persons who are economically dependent upon the number of persons who are economically active and independent. For calculating the dependency ratio, it is generally presumed that those who are under 15 years of age and at 60 years and above, respectively are economically dependent on the other members (of 15-59 years age group) of the population (The Dictionary of Demography, 1985). Dependency ratio can thus be divided into child dependency ration and aged dependency ratio.

Child dependency ratio is defined as the number of children in the age group 0-14 years in the population per 100 economically active persons in the age group 15-59 years. Child dependency ratio of the Bhattara is found to be 69.5%, which is much higher than that for the population of Orissa (36.3%) and for the population of India (34.7) respectively (Family Health Survey, IIPS, 1993).

Aged dependency ratio is defined as the number of inactive old persons in the age group of 60 years and above per 100 economically active persons in the age group 15-59 years. The aged dependency ratio of the Bhattara population is found to be 7.9%. However, for the total Indian population and the population of Orissa, the aged dependency ratio is taken as number of persons above 64 years per 100 persons between 15-64 years of age and is reported to be 3.8 for each of the these two populations. Therefore, the aged dependency ratio for the Bhattara was calculated accordingly and was found to be marginally higher (being 4.1).

Educational Status

According to WHO (1970), literacy is defined as the ability of a person to read and write, with understanding a short simple statement in their everyday life. A person who does not fall in this category is considered illiterate.

It is observed from table 3 that only 11% of the Bhattara were literate, while the rest, almost 89% were illiterate. The percentage of literate in Orissa and all India are found to be 49.1 and 52.2, respectively (Census, 1991). Thus the literacy rate of Bhattara is found to be much lower. It is evident from table 4 that 98.4% illiteracy is prevalent among the ever married Bhattara females. Only 1.6% ever-married females are found to be formally educated.

The reason for high percentage of illiteracy among the Bhattara women may be the low age of marriage of the girls coupled with the load of household work, which is almost exclusively done by the females among them. To all this adds the negative attitude of males of the society towards female education, besides their ignorance about the value of education in general.

Though the Bhattara mothers themselves

Table 3: Distribution of educational status among the Bhattara

Age	*Illiterate*		*Illiterate*		*Literate*		*Literate*		*Total*	
cohort	*M*	%	*F*	%	*M*	%	*F*	%	*N*	%
0-4	12	5.6	150	7.0	3	0.1	2	0.09	275	12.8
5-9	97	4.5	139	6.5	61	2.8	31	1.4	328	15.3
10-14	72	3.4	102	4.8	48	2.2	14	0.7	236	11.0
15-19	63	2.9	106	4.9	14	0.7	15	0.7	198	9.2
20-24	87	4.1	124	5.8	21	1.0	3	0.1	235	11.0
25-29	98	4.6	103	4.8	7	0.3	-	-	208	9.7
30-34	85	4.0	58	2.7	2	0.1	-	-	145	6.8
35-39	63	2.9	44	2.1	5	0.2	-	-	112	5.2
40-44	37	1.7	36	1.7	4	0.2	2	0.09	79	3.7
45-49	34	1.6	45	2.1	1	0.04	-	-	80	3.7
50-54	37	1.7	24	1.1	3	0.1	-	-	64	3.0
55-59	43	2.0	44	2.1	-	-	-	-	87	4.1
60+	42	2.0	52	2.4	1	0.04	-	-	95	4.4
Total	87	41.0	102.7	47.9	170	7.78	67	3.1	2142	99.9

have a very high rate if illiteracy, yet they send their children, especially the daughters to the near by school. About 3% of females in the age group 0-19 years have completed their primary, middle and high school level of education. A primary level "Adibasi ashram" is situated in Santoshpur, where it was found that the Bhattara girls were coming from different areas and staying in the school hostel. A primary school and an 'anganwadi' is situated each in Bajragada, Chelipadara and Junapani. However, Kosagumuda village has an Anganwadi, a primary school, a middle school, and a high school.

Excluding Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, the literacy rate among the tribal population of India aged 7 years and above is found to be very low i.e. 25.9% with female population having 14.5% literacy (NSSO, 1991). If Basu's observation that "the Indian tribes have been exposed to literacy only recently" (Basu, 1993) were true, a low rate of literacy among India tribals is quite expected which is also observed among the Bhattara. The literacy rate of Bhattara population in general (11%) and that of females in particular (1.6%) is found to be much lower than that of the all India tribal population. Thus the Bhattara appear to be educationally much backward and educational programmes need to be further strengthened so as to reach them effectively.

Occupational Status

Generally the Bhattara male works in the field and the wife provides a helping hand to him during sowing and harvesting seasons. In addition to that the wife also performs the usual household duties. Children and aged, inactive members of the household, also provide a helping hand to them and, therefore, the earlier observed dependency ratios appear to be less useful for economic status assessment purpose in this population.

Table 4: Distribution of educational status of the married women among the Bhattara

Education	*Mother* *N*	*Percentage*
Illiterate	611	98.4
Primary	7	1.1
Middle	2	0.3
High School	1	0.2
Total	621	100.0

There are two types of land used for agriculture by the Bhattara. One is 'dongara' and (the hilly land) and the other is 'beda' (plain land). Since here the agriculture chiefly depends on climate, people face a lot of problems due to the climatic variations. Summer, rainy and winter seasons are well marked in this area. In rainy season, the Bhansuli river storms off the land, especially the land of Santoshpur, Kosagumuda and Bajragada respectively. Since there is no proper 'canal', the fields are not adequately irrigated and plants wilt during summer.

People generally cultivate paddy, sugar cane, tamarind and 'alsi' (used for extracting oil).

They also depend on aquatic and other animals like snail, fish molusca, ant, insects and other forest products.

It is observed from table 5 that most (80.-7%) of the Bhattara mothers worked as labourer in agricultural and non-agricultural activities, 15.3% of them worked as agricultural labourer only, 2.6% were the free lancers who had petty shops and sold vegetables in the 'hatta', 0.2% women worked as government employees and the remaining 0.6% did not go out to work and were busy in household work only.

Household Type wise Distribution of the Women

While 55.9% of the Bhattara women lived in nuclear families, the remaining 44.1% of the women lived in households comprised of joint families. Table 6 shows that the percentage of women of 45 years and above were more in joint families compared to nuclear families while the women belonging to the younger i.e. 20-39 years age group were more in nuclear families.

Table 5: Distribution of occupational status of the married Bhattara women

Occupation	*Women* *N*	%
Agricultural & non-agricultural labour	501	80.7
Agricultural labour	95	15.3
Free lancer	16	2.6
House wife	4	0.6
Government employees	1	0.2
Dependent	4	0.6
Total	621	100.0

Table 6: Distribution of the married women according to the household type (Nuclear or Joint family)

Age	*Nuclear family*		*Joint family*		*Total*	
Cohort	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
10-14	-	-	1	0.2	1	0.2
15-19	31	5.0	54	8.7	85	13.7
20-24	69	11.1	55	8.9	124	20.0
25-29	76	12.2	30	4.8	106	17.1
30-34	51	8.2	7	1.1	58	9.3
35-39	31	5.0	13	2.1	44	7.1
40-44	19	3.1	19	3.1	38	6.1
45-49	18	2.9	27	4.3	45	7.2
50-54	13	2.1	11	1.8	24	3.9
55-59	19	3.1	25	4.0	44	7.1
60+	20	3.2	32	5.2	52	8.4
Total	347	55.9	274	44.1	621	100.0

CONCLUSION

The general demographic profile of the Bhattara thus reveals that their average economic status is much poorer with much higher child dependency ratio, very high (89%) illiteracy rate which is still higher (98.4%) among the ever married women respectively than that of the total Indian population. However, they have a higher sex ratio than that of all India tribal population or tribal population of Orissa, respectively. It is further seen that nuclear families are more common (56%) than the joint families among the Bhattara. It is interesting to report that up to five years ago Bhattara were a growing population, but during the last five years the population has started declining

REFERENCES

Basu, S.K. : Health status of women in India. *J. Social Change*, **23** : 4 (1993).

Bogue, D.T. : *Principles of Demography*, J. Willey, New York (1969).

Census of India 1991, Govt. of India, New Delhi (1991).

Family Health Survey, Indian Institute of Population Survey, Bombay (1993).

National Sample Survey Organization, New Delhi (1991).

William, C. : *The Dictionary of Demography*, Oxford University Press (1985).