

Demographic Profile of Yadavas – A Backward Caste Population of Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT The Yadava is a backward caste population found distributed in a number of villages in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh practicing their traditional occupation of cattle herding. In the present paper an attempt has been made to unravel demographic profile of the Yadava pertaining to ages at menarche, marriage, first conception, menopause and outcome of pregnancy. The data were collected from a total of 300 ever married Yadava women. Average fertility and average offspring mortality per women and the percentage of different types of offspring mortality as well as co-efficient of inbreeding were calculated. The findings were discussed in the light of earlier works on Andhra populations.

INTRODUCTION

Fertility and mortality are the two important demographic characteristics determining the growth of the populations. These two parameters depend upon various biological and socio-cultural practices such as type of marriage, type of family, age at menarche, age at marriage, age at first live birth, age at menopause, place of women in the society, value for children, health condition and adoption of contraceptive devices etc. which vary from society to society. In the present work it is attempted to understand fertility and mortality of the Yadava.

Yadavas, meaning descendants of king "Yadu" from whom Lord Krishna was descended, has been regarded as a synonym or title of Yadaian (Tamil) and a subdivision of Golla. There is a tradition among the Yadava/Gollas that Lord Krishna was brought up by this caste. In general there are two endogamous groups of Yadavas in Southern Andhra Pradesh, Telugu Gollas and Tamil Gollas. The Telugu Golla women wear the 'Pallu' of their sarees on the right side and Tamil Gollas on their left side. For majority of the Gollas cattle is the sole wealth and a minority of them practice cultivation, besides their traditional occupation of cattle herding.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was carried out in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh. The Yadava families belonging to six villages were selected randomly on the basis of the preponderance of the commu-

nity. In all 300 ever married Yadava women belonging to the age group of 15 to 60 years were studied. The demographic data were collected using a structured schedule. Cross checking was made to verify the information pertaining to present age, occupation, age at menarche, age at marriage, age at first conception, outcome of each pregnancy and on consanguinity of couples. Average fertility and average offspring mortality per women and the percentage of different types of offspring mortality along with different rates for fertility and offspring mortality were calculated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean age at different stages of women's reproductive period i.e. menarche, marriage, age at first conception and menopause are shown in Table 1. The mean age at menarche was found to be 13.44 ± 0.06 years which is very much within the range of age at menarche for the other Indian Populations (Gupta and Jaiswal, 1992). The average age at marriage was found to be 17.00 ± 0.18 years. This shows that the Yadava women get married after attaining menarche. The mean age at first conception was found to be 18.32 ± 0.32 years and the mean age at menopause was found to be 46.12 ± 0.27 years.

Table 1: Mean age at different stages of reproductive period among Yadava women

Stage	Mean $\pm$ S.E
Age at menarche	13.44 ± 0.06
Age at marriage	17.00 ± 0.18
Age at first live birth	18.32 ± 0.32
Age at menopause (N=64)	46.12 ± 0.27

The percentage of consanguineous marriages was found to be 37% of which the first cousin marriage was predominant. The co-efficient of inbreeding (0.0321) found among Yadavas (Table 2) fall within the range observed for other Andhra Pradesh populations (Dronamraju and Meerakhan 1961, 1963; Sanghvi, 1966, Chakravarti, 1968; Reid, 1973; Pingle, 1975; Veeraju, 1978).

Table 2: Incidence of consanguineous and non-consanguineous marriages among the Yadava population

Type of Marriage	Number	Percentage	Mean Inbreeding Co-efficient
Consanguineous	111	37.00	0.0321
Uncle-Niece	43	14.33	
First Cousin	68	22.66	
a) M.B.D.	37	12.33	
b) F.S.D.	31	10.33	
Non-Consanguineous	189	63.00	
Total	300	100	
M.B.D.	=Mother's brother's daughter		
F.S.D.	=Father's Sister's daughter		

The distribution of Mean fertility and mortality among consanguineous and non consanguineous matings are portrayed in Table 3. The mean number of pregnancies is found to be 3.07 ± 0.21 in consanguineous couples and 2.79 ± 0.11 in non consanguineous couples. Thus consanguineous couples have higher average number of pregnancies than that of non-consanguineous couples. The mean number of live births is found to be 2.69 ± 0.26 in consanguineous couples and with a slightly lower value ($2.55 \pm$

0.14) in non consanguineous couples. Similar trends has been observed in case of surviving offspring as well, with consanguineous couples showing higher mean value (2.48 ± 1.08) than that of non-consanguineous couples (2.11 ± 0.13). Though the consanguineous couples have shown higher values for mean conceptions, live births and surviving offspring, compared to the non-consanguineous couples the differences between them are statistically insignificant. Prenatal deaths (1.94 ± 0.17) in consanguineous matings is slightly greater compared to non-consanguineous ones (1.69 ± 0.13). However, the difference between the two types of matings is found to be insignificant. It is observed from Table-3 that the mean number of (1.57 ± 1.06) neonatal deaths are found to be higher in related couples than in un-related couples (1.20 ± 0.12). The t-value shows no significant difference between them. The mean number (1.47 ± 0.16) of infant deaths are higher in related couples than unrelated couples (1.10 ± 0.12). But the difference found to be insignificant. In case of child deaths the mean (1.30 ± 0.16) is found to be higher in related couples than unrelated couples (0.74 ± 0.10) with a statistically significant difference.

A cursory glance at the reproductive behaviour among Yadavas though reveal a general trend of higher number of conceptions and reproductive wastages in consanguineous couples than in non-consanguineous couples, the difference in all the cases fall short of significance, strengthening the observations of Sanghvi (1973) that the prolonged inbreeding

Table 3: Mean fertility and mortality among consanguineous and non-consanguineous matings.

Parameter	Type of Mating	No.	Mean $\pm$ S.E.	t-value
A. Fertility				
Pregnancies	C	334	3.09 $\pm$ 0.21	1.2652
	NC	491	2.79 $\pm$ 0.11	
Live Births	C	292	2.69 $\pm$ 0.20	0.5735
	NC	455	2.55 $\pm$ 0.14	
Surviving offspring	C	240	2.48 $\pm$ 0.18	1.6666
	NC	401	2.11 $\pm$ 0.13	
B. Mortality				
Prenatal deaths	C	31	1.94 $\pm$ 0.17	1.1682
	NC	43	0.69 $\pm$ 0.13	
Neo-natal deaths	C	23	1.57 $\pm$ 0.16	1.8500
	NC	44	1.20 $\pm$ 0.12	
Infant deaths(1m to 2 yrs)	C	16	1.47 $\pm$ 0.16	1.8500
	NC	20	1.10 $\pm$ 0.12	
Child deaths(above 2 years)	C	18	1.30 $\pm$ 0.16	2.9692*
	NC	15	0.74 $\pm$ 0.16	

C = Consanguineous

NC = Non-Consanguineous

* Significant at 5% level

resulting in the reduction of the average number of deleterious genes from the gene pool of a population.

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