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Living and delivery conditions of tribal agricultural women: A special focus of different tribal groups of erstwhile Khammam district of the Telangana

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Abstract

Agriculture is the significant and most important part of Indian economy. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in rural India even though; industrial and service sectors have over taken it in the contributions to the overall GDP. The main features of the tribal economies include their agro-forest base, weekly shandies and exploitation by the outsiders, low levels of income, dependency on the non-institutional sources for credit, low levels of education and literacy. These features have their impact on the occupations and living conditions of the tribal women. 60-70 per cent of the tribal women depend on farm related activities mostly. Women in the plain areas, on the road side villages work in non-farm activities. Women are assets to the tribal households as they play an important role in the socio-cultural, living and religious ways of tribal societies. They work hard, manage the family economy, take care of children, attend to domestic chores, work as labourers in the own farms, bring income by taking up wage employment and mostly collect MFP by going into the forests. A decent life and dignified living always elude them despite their work culture.

Keywords: Tribal economies, agro-forest base, low level of income, religious ways of tribal societies, work culture

Introduction

Tribal agricultural women play a major role in ecological protection as they use and manage the forest resources judiciously for a sustainable eco-system for the present and future. Of the 58 districts in the country, with more than 67 per cent of their area, under forest cover 51 are tribal districts. Tribal women love forest, rear forest and build up strong and intimate relationship with it. They live closely with the forests to get water, fuel, minor forest products like fruits, flowers, vegetable and honey. They collect forest products, use a part for domestic consumption and sell the remaining for money. Tribal agricultural women are mostly traditional and their occupations are related to the available natural resources in and around their habitations. Agriculture is considered a family occupation and 60 per cent of the agricultural operations are handled by the tribal women in the villages. 80 per cent of the tribal women work in agriculture against 53 per cent in the general population. They earn money, save money and take care of children and family needs. But they lead a poor life with a gloomy future.

A Tribal woman is considered as an economic asset to the family as she earns income through participating in economic activities to supplement the family income. The second side of her dual role is to take care of the household chores and rear children. She works more than 14 hours a day in her wage earnings employment as well as other income earning activities and domestic assignments. In any economy, the status of the women depends on their income level, employment, education, health and security as well as the role women plays with all freedom in the family, community and society. Different studies on tribal societies reveal that tribal women are more industrious. Despite the relatively better status enjoyed by the tribal women they are prone to complex problems.

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Review of Literature

Gomati Bodra (2008) ^[1] has examined the status of tribal women in the state of Jharkhand. The study reveals that though women are not equal to men, tribal women are better than the high cast women in many aspects. The study observes that the process of development has led to extreme exploitation of the tribal women. Gender discrimination is noted among the tribals along with very low political empowerment of the tribal women. Local political leaders in the tribal villages do not encourage tribal women to participate in discussion and decisions. The study has also examined the status of tribal women in urban centers like Ranchi and concluded that gender discrimination is evident. Suryanarayana *et al.* (2009) ^[2] have examined the status of tribal women in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Food gathering tribes (Chenchu and Yanadi), Pastoral tribes (Sugalis), Cultivator tribes (Koya, Savara and Samantha) and other categories of the tribals are analyzed in the study. Various aspects concerned with tribal women like marriages, religion, participation in village affairs, property rights of the women, education and welfare have been highlighted in the study. The study points out the important role of the women in the tribal society. It is revealed that women face troubles in religious matters and have no share in the family properties. It is found that the welfare programmes of the Government have not reached the tribal women in full. The author suggests that the programmes are to be redesigned. In conclusion the author states that the tribal women enjoy freedom and a good position in the tribal societies.

Mamta Pathak (2013) ^[3] has examined the status of tribal women, empowerment and gender equality of tribal women, tribal women in agriculture and forests. Benefits to the tribals through Government programmes like NREGA, SGRY and IAY have been reviewed by the author. In conclusion it is stated that tribal women play a major role in the co-management of their natural, social, economic resources and agricultural development including crop production, livestock promotion horticulture and post harvest operations. They remain backward due to illiteracy, traditions, superstitions, male domination, social evils and different cultural factors. Tribal development and values of the tribal societies be connected for a strategy to develop the tribals as opined by the author. Their basic rights and opportunities should be protected.

Radha Krishna and Koteshwara Rao (2013) ^[4] have examined tribal labour, living conditions and qualities of work life by taking a sample of 300 respondents from 18 villages of Khammam district of the Telangana state. The analysis is based mainly on primary data through structured Questionnaires. An in-depth study has been made by the authors to analyze the conditions of the tribal labour in the study area. Major findings include that agriculture is an important occupation in the tribal areas, most of the tribal women work as agricultural and casual labourers, tribal women have freedom in decision making and also in spending their earnings, collection of minor forest products during the off seasons and freedom in choosing life partners. Rama Chandran and Vikal Rawal (2013) ^[5] have analyzed the nature of agricultural labour in India and the discrimination meted out to the female workers in agriculture. The impact of liberalization and globalization on the rural economy has been analyzed in depth. Employment growth in the rural areas with NREGA is substantial in the opinion of the authors. The trends of crop

holidays and farmer suicides need to be arrested by taking proper measures. At the end the study suggest that a rethinking is imperative to enhance wage employment in rural India to discourage mass migration to urban centers.

Objectives

The main objective of this research work is to enquire into the living conditions of agricultural women labourers belonging to Koya, Konda reddy (PTG) and Banjara tribal communities.

1. To compare and assess the relative positions of the sample tribal household with regard to living conditions.
2. To analyze the child delivery conditions of the female agricultural workers of the tribal groups.
3. To suggest strategies and measures to promote the overall conditions of the tribal agricultural women in the agency areas.

Statement of the problem

An attempt is made in this study to compare the living and delivery conditions of the tribal women as agricultural labourers of selected tribal groups. The study compares the conditions of tribal women agricultural labour belonging to major tribal groups and Primitive Tribal Groups.

The Hypotheses of the Study

1. There are wide variations in the living conditions of the tribal agricultural women groups.
2. Improvement in the overall conditions of the tribal agricultural women over the years has been at a slow pace.

Methodology

This research work is a micro level study at the village level in the agency area of Erstwhile Khammam district, where the tribal population is the largest (27.4 per cent) in the entire state of Telangana. Multi-stage sampling has been adopted in the selection of the sample. In the first stage, three mandals where the particular study groups of the tribals are heavily concentrated are selected. Koya, Banjara and Konda reddy tribal women groups are predominant in the Chintoor, Kamepalli and Kunavaram Mandals and they are selected. In the second stage, three villages are selected from each mandal and the total villages of the sample are nine and from each village respondents are selected randomly and the total female respondents are 132 for the study.

Data collection

Primary data have been collected for the study. Primary data has been collected by administering a structured questionnaire to the sample households. Earlier studies have been reviewed extensively by the researcher before designing the questionnaire to make it effective. Tools of analysis

Two-way and three-way tables, averages, percentages are used where ever necessary to identify the relations among the variables.

Demographic features of the sample tribal women are given in table-1. It reveals that the average age of puberty is 14.32 years age at marriage is 17.5 years, age at the first issue 19.17 years and average age at the last issue of child is 22.35 years.

Table 1: Demographic Features of Sample Tribal Women (Group-wise)

| Tribe name | Age of puberty (In years) | Age at marriage (In years) | Age birth to the first issue (In years) | Age birth to last issue (In years) |
|-------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Konda reddy | 15.07 | 17.90 | 19.29 | 23.57 |
| Koya | 14.35 | 17.80 | 19.48 | 22.57 |
| Banjara | 13.86 | 16.96 | 18.82 | 21.57 |
| Total | 14.32 | 17.50 | 19.17 | 22.35 |

Source: Field Study

It can be observed that the age in all these four aspects is relatively higher among Konda reddy women followed by Koya and Banjara women. It implies that Banjara women attain puberty at a lower age, married at a lower age, become mothers at an early age. It can be inferred that Banjara women prefer early marriages and early motherhood. Konda reddy women (PTG) attain puberty at a higher age, get married and become mothers at a higher age when compared to the other two groups. Here also the data is concerned with the women respondents and dates back to two-three decades.

Table 2: Do you Accept 18 Years of Age as Marriageable Age?

| Opinion | Caste name | | | Total |
|---------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Konda reddy | Koya | Banjara | |
| Yes | 12 | 7 | 7 | 26 |
| | 46.2 | 26.9 | 26.9 | 100.0 |
| | 40.0 | 13.7 | 13.7 | 19.7 |
| No | 18 | 44 | 44 | 106 |
| | 17.0 | 41.5 | 41.5 | 100.0 |
| | 60.0 | 86.3 | 86.3 | 80.3 |
| Total | 30 | 51 | 51 | 132 |
| | 22.7 | 38.6 | 38.6 | 100.0 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Study

Opinions of the respondent women on the marriageable age of the girls are given in table- 2. Around 20 per cent of respondent women accept 18 years as the marriageable age of the girls. About 40 per cent of the Konda reddy women and 13.7 per cent each of Koya and Banjara women are of this opinion. It is noted that relatively more Konda reddy women prefer marriages at 18 or above age of girls. Koya and Banjara women prefer to continue early marriages of girls as noted in the study.

Table 3: Type of Marriage

| Opinion | Caste name | | | Total |
|--------------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Konda reddy | Koya | Banjara | |
| Arranged | 27 | 33 | 48 | 108 |
| | 25.0 | 30.6 | 44.4 | 100.0 |
| | 90.0 | 64.7 | 94.1 | 81.8 |
| Not Arranged | 3 | 18 | 3 | 24 |
| | 12.5 | 75.0 | 12.5 | 100.0 |
| | 10.0 | 35.3 | 5.9 | 18.2 |
| Total | 30 | 51 | 51 | 132 |
| | 22.7 | 38.6 | 38.6 | 100.0 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Study

Marriages among the tribal are in different types. Marriage by force, by elopement and through love besides arranged marriages are commonly followed among the tribal community. It is interesting to note that 8.2 per cent of sample women have stated that their marriages are arranged marriage (Table-3). Tribal communities value the traditions and parental acceptance with regard to marriages to a large

extent as revealed by the data. However, 18.2 per cent respondent women have got married through other methods. Banjara women are more (94 per cent) in arranged marriages followed by Koya women. Marriages through elopement and by force are more among the Koya respondents (35.3 per cent).

Table 4: How Much Time do you prefer between Issues?

| | How much time | | | Caste name | |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------|---------|------------|--|
| | Konda reddy | Koya | Banjara | Total | |
| One year | 3 | 10 | 18 | 31 | |
| | 9.7 | 32.3 | 58.1 | 100.0 | |
| | 10.0 | 19.6 | 35.3 | 23.5 | |
| Two years | 18 | 17 | 24 | 59 | |
| | 30.5 | 28.8 | 40.7 | 100.0 | |
| | 60.0 | 33.3 | 47.1 | 44.7 | |
| Three years | 7 | 13 | 6 | 26 | |
| | 26.9 | 50.0 | 23.1 | 100.0 | |
| | 23.3 | 25.5 | 11.8 | 19.7 | |
| More than three years | 1 | 8 | 3 | 12 | |
| | 8.3 | 66.7 | 25.0 | 100.0 | |
| | 3.3 | 15.7 | 5.9 | 9.1 | |
| No | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | |
| | 25.0 | 75.0 | .0 | 100.0 | |
| | 3.3 | 5.9 | .0 | 3.0 | |
| Total | 30 | 51 | 51 | 132 | |
| | 22.7 | 38.6 | 38.6 | 100.0 | |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field Study

Child bearing and child rearing are destined to the women by nature. It is a difficult task affecting the health of the females. The gap between deliveries as preferred by the respondent women depicted in table-4 shows that majority of the respondent women (44.7 per cent) prefer two years. Around 20 per cent of women prefer a gap of three years between child deliveries, while 9 per cent of women prefer more than three years of gap. It is interesting to note that 23.5 per cent of women prefer a gap of one year only and among them Banjara women are relatively more (35.3 per cent) followed by Koya (19.6 per cent) and Konda reddy respondent women (10 per cent). Konda reddy women are more followed by Banjara and Koya respondent women in preferring a gap of two years. The data points out that 82 per cent of the Banjara respondents prefer a gap of one or two years while 53 percent of the Koyas and 70 per cent of the Konda reddy respondent women prefer one or two years of gap. It implies that the preference for more gaps is opted by Koya respondent women followed by Konda reddy and Banjara women. As an advanced community Banjara women go for family planning operations after two or three children in the natural process.

Table 5: Did you follow Family Planning Techniques?

| Opinion | Caste name | | | Total |
|---------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Konda reddy | Koya | Banjara | |
| Yes | 12 | 39 | 50 | 101 |
| | 11.9 | 38.6 | 49.5 | 100.0 |
| | 40.0 | 76.5 | 98.0 | 76.5 |
| No | 18 | 12 | 1 | 31 |
| | 58.1 | 38.7 | 3.2 | 100.0 |
| | 60.0 | 23.5 | 2.0 | 23.5 |
| Total | 30 | 51 | 51 | 132 |
| | 22.7 | 38.6 | 38.6 | 100.0 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Study

Family planning techniques as followed by the respondent women are given in table-5. It shows that 76.5 per cent of respondent women have under gone family planning operations. Among them, Banjaras are relatively more (98 per cent) followed by Koya (76.5 per cent) and Konda reddy women (40 per cent). It is an indication of relative levels of awareness and progressive thinking of the three tribal groups in the study. It can be observed that 60 per cent of the Konda reddy respondent women have not adopted family planning techniques against 23.5 per cent of the Koya women. It is interesting to note that only 2 per cent of the Banjara respondent women have not followed family planning techniques. It reveals the relative positions with regard to awareness of the three tribal groups of the study.

Table 6: Place of Delivery

| Opinion | Caste name | | | Total |
|----------------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Konda reddy | Koya | Banjara | |
| Hospital | 4 | 13 | 16 | 33 |
| | 12.1 | 39.4 | 48.5 | 100.0 |
| | 13.3 | 25.5 | 31.4 | 25.0 |
| House | 24 | 34 | 34 | 92 |
| | 26.1 | 37.0 | 37.0 | 100.0 |
| | 80.0 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 69.7 |
| Not applicable | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| | 28.6 | 57.1 | 14.3 | 100.0 |
| | 6.7 | 7.8 | 2.0 | 5.3 |
| Total | 30 | 51 | 51 | 132 |
| | 22.7 | 38.6 | 38.6 | 100.0 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Study

The place of delivery of children of the sample women is given in table-6. Majority of the women respondents (69.7 per cent) in the study delivered children in their respective houses. Another 25 per cent of women delivered children in the hospitals. Group-wise data shows that home deliveries are relatively more (80 per cent) among the Konda reddy women followed by 66.7 per cent each by the Koya and Banjara women. Deliveries under the supervision of qualified doctor in the hospitals are relatively more (31.4 per cent) among the Banjara women. It shows that in the overall study area more than two thirds of the deliveries are at home. It can be said that Banjara women are more with awareness and health consciousness.

and as such natural deliveries are relatively more. Konda reddy respondents (90 per cent) are at the top in having natural deliveries followed by Koya (82.4 per cent) and Banjara women (80.4 per cent) of the study.

Table 7: Type of Delivery

| Opinion | Caste name | | | Total |
|----------------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Konda reddy | Koya | Banjara | |
| Yes | 27 | 42 | 41 | 110 |
| | 24.5 | 38.2 | 37.3 | 100.0 |
| | 90.0 | 82.4 | 80.4 | 83.3 |
| Not applicable | 3 | 9 | 10 | 22 |
| | 13.6 | 40.9 | 45.5 | 100.0 |
| | 10.0 | 17.6 | 19.6 | 16.7 |
| Total | 30 | 51 | 51 | 132 |
| | 22.7 | 38.6 | 38.6 | 100.0 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Study

Natural deliveries of children of the sample women are analyzed in table-7. It is happy to note that 83 per cent of sample women have natural deliveries. Generally tribal women take up physical work during pregnancy and even in the advanced stage of pregnancy. They live close to nature

Table 8: Who did the Job of a Mid-Wifery?

| Opinion | Caste name | | | Total |
|----------------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Konda reddy | Koya | Banjara | |
| Ayah | 3 | 3 | 4 | 10 |
| | 30.0 | 30.0 | 40.0 | 100.0 |
| | 10.0 | 5.9 | 7.8 | 7.6 |
| Nurse | 2 | 9 | 3 | 14 |
| | 14.3 | 64.3 | 21.4 | 100.0 |
| | 6.7 | 17.6 | 5.9 | 10.6 |
| In-law | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 |
| | .0 | 33.33 | 66.67 | 100.0 |
| | .0 | 9.8 | 19.6 | 11.3 |
| Relative | 23 | 30 | 33 | 86 |
| | 26.7 | 34.9 | 38.4 | 100.0 |
| | 76.7 | 58.8 | 64.7 | 65.2 |
| Not applicable | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| | 28.6 | 57.1 | 14.3 | 100.0 |
| | 6.7 | 7.8 | 2.0 | 5.3 |
| Total | 30 | 51 | 51 | 132 |
| | 22.7 | 38.6 | 38.6 | 100.0 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Study

The person doing the job of mid-wives at the time of delivery of the sample women is shown in table-8. As per the data in the table 65 per cent of sample women have been assisted by relatives as mid-wives at the time of delivery. Konda reddy women are more in this respect followed by Banjara and Koya women. Mothers-in-law have helped 11

per cent of women at the time of delivery and here Banjaras are more followed by Koyas. Help from mother-in-law is zero among the Konda reddy women. Ayahs have taken care of 7.6 per cent of women at the time of delivery while nurses worked as mid-wives for 10.6 per cent of women. Skilled mid-wives are to an extent of 18 per cent while unskilled women acting as mid-wives are 81.5 per cent. Elderly women with their experience and know how act as mid-wives in the rural areas during child birth in good number. Their age and experience would facilitate the deliveries of the women through traditional methods and techniques. It can be said that sample women in all the three groups depend on the local women to a large extent at the time of delivery.

Table 9: Were you Healthy when you Delivered Children?

| Opinion | Caste name | | | Total |
|----------------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Konda reddy | Koya | Banjara | |
| Yes | 28 | 42 | 47 | 117 |
| | 23.9 | 35.9 | 40.2 | 100.0 |
| | 93.3 | 82.4 | 92.2 | 88.6 |
| No | 0 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| | .0 | 62.5 | 37.5 | 100.0 |
| | .0 | 9.8 | 5.9 | 6.1 |
| Not applicable | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| | 28.6 | 57.1 | 14.3 | 100.0 |
| | 6.7 | 7.8 | 2.0 | 5.3 |
| Total | 30 | 51 | 51 | 132 |
| | 22.7 | 38.6 | 38.6 | 100.0 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Study

Health of the women after delivery is examined in table-9. It is happy to note from the table that nearly 89 per cent of sample women are healthy after deliveries. Konda reddy women are more (93 per cent) among them followed by Banjara (92 per cent) and Koya women (82 per cent). It is stated that life style, natural food and overall stamina kept them healthy after deliveries. They are also in the habit of lacting of babies for months together through breast feeding which also ensures the health of the mothers. Tribal women

and the babies are healthy due to some of the traditional practices.

Table 10 Decision Making with regard to Number of Children

| Opinion | Caste name | | | Total |
|--------------------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Konda reddy | Koya | Banjara | |
| Myself | 2 | 7 | 3 | 12 |
| | 16.7 | 58.3 | 25.0 | 100.0 |
| | 6.7 | 13.7 | 5.9 | 9.1 |
| Myself and Husband | 1 | 6 | 1 | 8 |
| | 12.5 | 75.0 | 12.5 | 100.0 |
| | 3.3 | 11.8 | 2.0 | 6.1 |
| Husband | 27 | 34 | 46 | 107 |
| | 25.2 | 31.8 | 43.0 | 100.0 |
| | 90.0 | 66.7 | 90.2 | 81.1 |
| In-laws | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | .0 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 100.0 |
| | .0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 1.5 |
| Not applicable | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| | .0 | 100.0 | .0 | 100.0 |
| | .0 | 5.9 | .0 | 2.3 |
| Total | 30 | 51 | 51 | 132 |
| | 22.7 | 38.6 | 38.6 | 100.0 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Study

Decision making in deciding the number of children in the household is examined in table- 10. Majority of the respondents (81per cent) state that their husbands take decision on the number of children. Banjara and Koya respondent women are close at 90 percent in these aspects. Around 9 per cent respondent women state that they themselves decide the number children and Koya respondents are relatively more among them followed by Konda reddy and Banjara women. Both the wife and husband together decide the children as stated by 6 per cent of the sample women and Koya women are relatively more in these aspects. In-laws are not significant in taking decisions on the number of children as only two respondent women mentioned.

Table 11: Do you Feel that a Male Child is Compulsory?

| Opinion | Caste name | | | Total |
|---------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Konda reddy | Koya | Banjara | |
| Yes | 24 | 41 | 45 | 110 |
| | 21.8 | 37.3 | 40.9 | 100.0 |
| | 80.0 | 80.4 | 88.2 | 83.3 |
| No | 6 | 10 | 6 | 22 |
| | 27.3 | 45.5 | 27.3 | 100.0 |
| | 20.0 | 19.6 | 11.8 | 16.7 |
| Total | 30 | 51 | 51 | 132 |
| | 22.7 | 38.6 | 38.6 | 100.0 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Study

Son preference of the sample women is examined in table-11. Nearly 84 per cent of sample women prefer to have a male child. Banjara respondent women are relatively more in having son preference (88.2 per cent) followed by Koya women (80.4 per cent) and Konda reddy women (80 per cent). About 17 per cent of respondent women have not expressed the desire to have male children. Indian society,

bound by customs, traditions and religious practices assigns an important role to the male children. Son-preference has been associated with the Indian society for centuries together. The women in the sample are not exception as revealed by the data. The desire to have a son is very strong among Banjara women in the study.

Table 12: Reasons for Preference of Male Children?

| Reasons | Caste name | | | Total |
|---------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | Konda reddy | Koya | Banjara | |
| 1 | 5 | 4 | 11 | 20 |
| | 25.0 | 20.0 | 55.0 | 100.0 |
| | 20.8 | 9.8 | 24.4 | 18.2 |
| 2 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 18 |
| | 38.9 | 33.3 | 27.8 | 100.0 |
| | 29.2 | 14.6 | 11.1 | 16.4 |
| 3 | 11 | 30 | 23 | 64 |
| | 17.2 | 46.9 | 35.9 | 100.0 |
| | 45.8 | 73.2 | 51.1 | 58.2 |
| 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| | 50.0 | .0 | 50.0 | 100.0 |
| | 4.2 | .0 | 2.2 | 1.8 |
| 5 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | .0 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 100.0 |
| | .0 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 1.8 |
| 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | .0 | .0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | .0 | .0 | 2.2 | .9 |
| 7 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| | .0 | .0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | .0 | .0 | 6.7 | 2.7 |
| Total | 24 | 41 | 45 | 110 |
| | 21.8 | 37.3 | 40.9 | 100.0 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Study

Note

- To perform rituals and ceremonies,
- To look after parents in their old age,
- Hereditry to pass on hereditry rights,
- If son, lives with the parents,
- Family protection, 6-Protects the parents from "Punnama and Naraka",
- To sustain household name (Surname)

Reasons expressed by the sample women for son preference are presented in table-12. 22 respondents (16.7 per cent) have not expressed son preference. The reasons offered by the remaining 110 respondents (83.3 per cent) for son preference are analyzed in the table. Nearly 18 per cent of the respondents state that a son is required to lit the funeral pyre and perform rituals and ceremonies at regular intervals. Banjaras are more (24.4 per cent) in revealing this aspect followed by Konda reddy (20.8 per cent) and Koya women (9.8 per cent) of the sample. Majority of the respondents (58 per cent) state that son preference is to pass on hereditary rights on property and family. Koya women are more (73.2 per cent) followed by Banjara women (51 per cent) and Kondareddy women (45.8 per cent). About 16 per cent state that a son is a needed to take care of the parents in the old age as insurance. Konda reddy respondent women are more (29.2 per cent) followed by Koya and Banjara women is this regard. Around 93 per cent of the sample women expressed these three reasons.

Son stays with the parent although, son protects the family and takes care of the family members, a son protects the parents from punnamanaraka after their death and a son continues the surname of the family and makes the chain unbroken are the other reasons stated by a few respondent. In the Indian context a son is preferred by all communities for which multiple reasons are responsible. Parents feel that female children leave the families after marriage and son alone continues to stay with them. Indian culture for centuries has assigned a vital role to the male children. The

data shows the general nature of the Indian society at large. Of late, son preference is slowly coming down and parents show no discrimination between male and female children. But these trends are limited and they are to catch up further. Education and general awareness are of different nature. No doubt, education enhances general knowledge and overall perceptions. But uneducated tribal women with their experience and social understanding can carry on their living without any problems.

Findings

- The impact of illiteracy is evident on the average age at marriage age at the first delivery of child and average age at the birth of last child (22-35 years).
- Marriageable age of the girls at 18 years is not accepted by a majority of the respondent women implying the preference for early marriages.
- Of the different types of marriages among the tribal communities marriage by arrangement has been followed in majority cases. However, among Koyas it is observed that arranged marriages are relatively less.
- Majority of the respondent women prefer a gap of two of more years between child deliveries.
- However, more number of Banjara women prefer a gap of one year only. Family planning techniques in the form of operations have been accepted mostly by Banjara women followed by Koya women and Konda reddy women. It is found that the family planning message has not been accepted in full by the Konda reddy women.
- More than 70 per cent of the deliveries of the respondent women are in their respective houses and among them, Konda reddy women are more. However, most of the deliveries (83 per cent) are stated to be natural.
- Relatives and in-laws of the sample women have helped and acted as mid-wives at the time of deliveries. It is interesting to note that majority of the respondent women have been healthy after the deliveries.
- Physical work and nature of food in the pre-natal stage have contributed for the health of the tribal women after delivery. It is interesting to note that husbands mostly decide the number of children to be born and the role of the tribal women is very much limited in taking decisions in this regard.

Conclusion

The relative levels of development of the three tribal groups indicate that Banjara women are more advanced in many aspects. Though Koya and Konda reddy women are very close in the level of development, Koya women have an edge over the Konda reddy women.

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