

An anthropological demographic study on bhumij population at the barameytala village in the district of Bankura, West Bengal

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Abstract

This study deals with the demography of Bhumij community inhabiting in the Barameytala Village of Bankura District, west Bengal and discusses the socio-cultural aspects of the community through the demographic parameters. There are a total of 67 Bhumij households in the village. There are total 326 Bhumij populations in the village out of which 149 are male and 167 are females. The primary data for demographic parameters regarding household census, population characteristics, educational status, occupational status etc were collected. Demographic indicators like sex ratio, literacy rate etc were also collected.

Keywords: demography, bhumij, Bankura district, households, sex ratio.

1. Introduction

The word demography has been deriving from Latin 'Demos' means people and 'Graphy' means measurement. Demography is the statistical study of human population. It is like a mirror to a population. Demography is the backbone of planning and development for the people. Anthropological demography is a specialty within demography which uses anthropological theory and methods to provide a better understanding of demographic phenomena in the current and past populations. Anthropological demography is a specialty within demography which uses anthropological theory and methods to provide a better understanding of demographic phenomena in current and past populations. The main theoretical concepts in anthropological demography are culture, gender, and economy etc. (Bernardi, 2017 pp.1-20) ^[1].

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the present research under the broad objectives of 'Demography of Bhumij Community' were as follows:

- 1) To conduct a household census;
- 2) To record and analyses the population characteristics;
- 3) To know the educational status;
- 4) To make out and analyses the occupational status;

3. Methodology

In this study, we make use of primary data collected through a household survey in the villages of Barameytala village of Khatra-II number Gram Panchayat in Bankura District under Khatra Development Block, West Bengal. Various qualitative and quantitative tools and techniques of research methods in Anthropology like observation, schedules, interviews etc were employed for data collection for this study. Prior to fieldwork,

intensive library work has been undertaken for the present work.

The format of the household questionnaire, covering broad aspects of each household's socioeconomic, demographic, and village-specific characteristics, is such that the information could easily be transformed on an individual basis. The modes of household survey data collection are as follows: Direct questioning of household head and other members; extracting data from Participant Observation; and Interviewing of selected informants. (Chaudhry, 2009, pp.39-68)

4. Study Area

The present study was conducted at Barameytala village of Khatra-II number Gram Panchayet in Bankura District, West Bengal. It falls under the Khatra Development Block. There were total 316 individuals in the village out of which 149 males and 167 females. Primary occupation of these villagers is agriculture.

5. Results and Discussion

Bhumij means one who is born from soil. The Bhumij are one of the Hinduised tribal/Adivasi groups of the living primarily in the Indian states of Assam, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand, mostly in the old Singhbhum district. The Bhumij are one of the major tribal groups in West Bengal. They have a unique cultural and traditional heritage. They speak the Mundari language of the Austroasiatic language family or sometimes the predominant local language such as Bengali. The Bhumij believes in animism and they practice ancestral worship. Main economic activities of the Bhumij are agriculture,

collection of forest produce from the forest, lac cultivation and basketry.

As regards dress and ornaments they follow the Hindu neighbors. Children of both the sexes go naked up to four or five years. Then, they wear a towel (Gamucha) or a pant till adolescence when they start wearing clothes. The male dress consists of a shirt, a dhoti and a towel. The towel is kept on the shoulder. The women wear sari and blouse called Jakit. The sari worn is generally of white color. During winter, they also use sari or dhoti as wrapper for protection against cold. In summer, men do not use shirt when they are in the village. The young girls are found of ornaments. They purchase various brass ornaments such as; nose – rings, ear-rings, bead necklaces, armlets and bangles. They also wear flowers in their hair particularly at weddings and festivals. These dress and ornaments are purchased from the market. Their musical instruments are flutes (Bansi) and drums (dhol and Madal). The wooden frame of the Dhol is made by them out of Gamhari wood and the skins of the drum are fitted up by the Chamar caste. The flutes are made out of bamboo.

The whole Bhumij society is mainly divided into four endogamous groups such as Tamudia or

Tamaria Bhumij, haldipokhoria Bhumij, Teli Bhumij and Desi or Dehuri Bhumij. Of these, Tamudias occupy the highest place in social precedence because of their traditional occupation of shaving. Next to it are the Haldipokhoria Bhumijas. It is said that the females of this section used to serve as mid wives among other Bhumijas. The Teli section, who occupy the next position used to press oil traditionally. The Desia section used to burn lime. All these sections have now left their traditional occupations but have retained their endogamous divisions with much emphasis on caste ranking. Each class forms an endogamous group of its own so that a Tamudia Bhumij will not marry a haldipokhoria Bhumij and vice versa.

5.1 Household Census

Demographic processes are to a large degree dependent on the household situation of the individuals involved. In many social, economic, and cultural processes, the household rather than the individual is the relevant unit of analysis. Therefore, developments in the number and composition of households are crucial in understanding many societal trends and phenomena. (Imhoff, et. al, 1995) The Barameytala village has a total number of 67 households with a population of 326, all the families belongs to Bhumij community.

Table-1: Type of Households among the Bhumij of Barameytala

| Type | Number of Households | Total no. of Households (%) |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Nuclear family | 30 | 44.78 |
| Joint Family | 11 | 16.42 |
| Extended Family | 15 | 22.38 |
| Sub-Nuclear or Broken Family | 11 | 16.42 |
| Total | 67 | 100% |

This table has been consisted by different categories, likely- Nuclear family, Joint family and Extended family and Sub-Nuclear family or broken family. In this village the nuclear family number is large (44.78%). Joint family is also seen (16.42%) but obviously less than nuclear family. And the extended family also present and this number is high than the joint family. Another type of family is Sub-Nuclear family; this is also present in this village. This may be single member family or when a

newly married couple settle a residence and without children or when any of the nuclear family is lacking. This table (Tab-2) shows the family size among the Bhumij of Barameytala. According to this table there are four family sizes are found, likely- Small (1-4), Medium (5-7), Large (8-10) and Very Large (11+). The Small family number is maxim in this village. Then the medium family number is also high. The number of large family is less than small and medium size family. There are only such families having member.

Table 2: Size of Family among the Bhumij of Barameytala

| Size (No. of Member) | Number of Families | Total No. Of Family (%) |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Small (1-4) | 36 | 53.73 |
| Medium (5-7) | 22 | 32.83 |
| Large (8-10) | 7 | 10.45 |
| Very Large (11+) | 2 | 2.99 |
| Total | 67 | 100% |

5.2 Age and Sex Structure

Age composition reflects the dominance of a particular age group of the population in socio cultural life and economic status of a community.

Table 4: Year wise Sex and Age Groups Distribution among the Bhumij of Barameytala

| Age-group | Male | | Female | | Total No. | % |
|-----------|------|-------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| 0-4 | 11 | 7.38 | 15 | 8.98 | 26 | 8.23 |
| 5-9 | 12 | 8.05 | 22 | 13.17 | 34 | 10.74 |
| 10-14 | 15 | 10.06 | 16 | 9.58 | 31 | 9.81 |
| 15-19 | 14 | 9.39 | 17 | 10.18 | 31 | 9.81 |
| 20-24 | 16 | 10.74 | 18 | 10.78 | 34 | 10.76 |
| 25-29 | 11 | 7.38 | 17 | 10.18 | 28 | 8.86 |
| 30-34 | 9 | 6.04 | 11 | 6.59 | 20 | 6.33 |
| 35-39 | 16 | 10.74 | 10 | 5.99 | 26 | 8.22 |
| 40-44 | 10 | 6.71 | 5 | 2.99 | 15 | 4.75 |
| 45-49 | 11 | 7.38 | 6 | 3.59 | 17 | 5.38 |
| 50-54 | 9 | 6.04 | 3 | 1.8 | 12 | 3.80 |
| 55-59 | 5 | 3.36 | 4 | 2.4 | 9 | 2.85 |
| 60-64 | 1 | 0.67 | 11 | 6.59 | 12 | 3.80 |
| 65-69 | 4 | 2.68 | 4 | 2.4 | 8 | 2.53 |
| 70+ | 5 | 3.36 | 8 | 4.79 | 13 | 4.11 |
| Total | 149 | 100 | 167 | 100 | 316 | 100 |

5.3 Sex Ratio

The female-male ratio or sex ratio is important in a household in determining the attitude toward work. Although not to be assumed a generalization, female household members in rural India are often constrained by cultural norms from working outside their household. This suggests that a high female-male ratio might be related to household poverty. Sex ratio is the biological characteristic that divides the human race into males and females. It is observed that the sex ratio of Bhumij population in the study area is 892.21

5.4 Literacy rate

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Bhumij Population by Literacy Level

| Educational Status | Male | | Female | |
|--------------------|------|-------|--------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % |
| NL | 28 | 19.86 | 65 | 41.67 |
| PR | 39 | 27.66 | 47 | 30.13 |
| S | 56 | 39.72 | 39 | 25 |
| HS | 9 | 6.38 | 1 | 0.64 |
| G | 9 | 6.38 | 4 | 2.56 |
| Total | 141 | 100% | 156 | 100% |

Table 5 this table is mainly used for counting the educational status of this community of this village. We divide the educational status into six categories; namely-NL-Non-Literate, PR-Primary, S-Secondary (V-X Pass), H.S. - Higher Secondary, G-Graduate.

Studying this population on the basis of educational status mainly secondary status is high in males. But in females the illiterate status is high than the males. The number of males whose educational status of H.S. level is higher than the females, also the number of Graduate males is higher than the number of the Graduate females.

Occupational Status of Bhumij Population at Barameytala Village

Occupation is the major way for human survival and subsistence. Division of labor is one of the important features that characterize every occupation. In the simple

hunting and gathering societies, division of labor was primarily based on sex and age. With settled agriculture it become more refined that surplus made a group of people to engage itself in activities not directly related with food production. Industrialization and modernization at present have lead to a highly complex division of labor. Data on occupation were collected from those males and females who were engaged in different types of work other than household works and studies. In the present study the occupation of the different individuals are classified in various categories as follows:

1. **Non-Worker:** Household workers, students and dependents, those who do not earn money.
2. **Landowner:** Engaged in agricultural activities that has personal land.
3. **Sharecropper:** Engaged in agricultural activities but dependent on landowners.
4. **Agricultural Laborer:** Engaged in agricultural activities.
5. **Laborer:** Day Laborer.
6. **Skilled Worker:** Driver; Carpenter, mechanic etc.
7. **Service:** School teachers, doctor, Company jobs.
8. **Petty Business:** Small Shopkeeper and other petty business.

Table 6: Distribution of Population on the Basis of Occupational

| Occupational Category | Male | | Female | |
|-----------------------|------|-------|--------|--------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % |
| Non-Worker | 50 | 33.55 | 125 | 74.85 |
| Landowner | 39 | 26.17 | 15 | 8.98 |
| Sharecropper | 5 | 3.35 | 6 | 3.59 |
| Agricultural Laborer | 23 | 15.43 | 12 | 7.18 |
| Laborer | 14 | 9.39 | 6 | 3.59 |
| Skilled Worker | 4 | 2.68 | 0 | 0 |
| Service | 7 | 4.69 | 2 | 1.19 |
| Petty Business | 7 | 4.69 | 1 | 0.59 |
| Total | 149 | 100 | 167 | 100 |

This table is showing the distribution of population on the basis of occupational category. On the basis of various type of occupation most of the male have their own land and then many males work as agricultural laborers. Some males are engaged in shared cropper, driver, grocer, service and business. In case of female many females have their own land and then the other females work as agricultural laborer. Some females are also engaged in many types of occupation like-shared cropper, laborer, service and business.

6. Conclusion

The present study among the 67 Bhumij households in the village reveals that the Barameytala Village. Bhumij are basically loves the nature. Agriculture is the primary occupation in the village and most of the villagers are associated with this incredible occupation. The most important areas of occupation in the village are agriculture, Service, Petty business etc. Participation of females in the workforce is generally for household work while the males are engaged in economically productive activities outside.

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8. References

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