Regional Variation in Demographic Features and Endogamy of the Bhaina Tribe

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Introduction

The Bhaina is a relatively small Hindu tribal group of undivided earlier Madhya Pradesh, principally found in Bilaspur and Raigarh districts Mandla, Shahdol, Hoshangabad, Betul and Bastar are the other important places where the people are dispersed thinly. Their members are also found in small numbers in the adjoining states Vaharastra, Orissa and Bihar. Russel and Hiralai[1] (1993) had found the people primitive, but according to a relatively recent report[2] (Tiwari, 2002) they are now comparatively civilized and acculturated. Scholars have suspected a mixed origin for the Bhaina tribe. The two most often quoted tribes believed having link with the Bhaina in the past were Baiga at Mandia and Kawar and Bilaspur region. According to Mohanty[3] (2004) the Bhaina offshoot of Baiga the Kath-Bhaina being a sub-tribe of Baiga and Rai-Bhaina at Balaghat are no longer believe have to ancestrad link with the Bhaina. Another group Dudh-Bhaina has been considered one of the ten endogamous groups of the Baiga[4] (Adak, 2003). Out of the four sub-divisions of the tribe identified in the past only Laria (Chattisgariya) and Uriya and presently found, whereas people do not remember about the presence of the other two Jhalyara and Ghantyana subdivisions. Their language is Laria or Chhatisgarhi and at Pendra Road most them use the tribe name Bhaina or Bhanu as surname. In Sakti and Raigarh they are also known as Sidar, Recents, some educated Bhaina have started using their clan name as surname. Under the fast changing socio-culture environment due to modernization and acculturation, smaller group-like the Bhaina might be at risk of losing identity. Only a quantitative assessment of its important demomraphic and marriage parameters can predict about its future

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existed the system of mating is one determinant that explain the identity of a group from the observation of type of geographic, social and reproductive isolation maintained by its people, and demography provides its basic composition, vital rates and growth. These are helpful in understanding the dynamics of a population. In the present article, the authors have presented Bhaina's basic demographic features and endogamy at the three regions of their high density.

Materials and Methods

The material used in this article is part of the data collected by the first author for a rersearch project undertaken by Anthropological Survey of India. Central India Region, Nagpur. The study was made in 1993-94 at three places of the Bhaina's high density such as Pendra Road (Northern Bilaspur). Sakti (Southern Bilaspur) and Raigarh. During census survey of 29 selected villages at the three palces, which collectively housed 859 Bhaina households, basic demographic data were collected. Traditional anthropological approach was adopted while collecting genealogical informationrerlating to selectionof male for marriage from 691 families,a nd with the help of structured interview schedule reproductive history of 1013 evermarried Bhaina women was collected.

Observation : Demographic Features

Occupational, cultural and liguistic similarities among the people of a region often suppress the identity of endogamous groups within it. It takes long time even for a trained social scientist to identify them. Under such situation all the community names listed in the census are not necessarily the ultimate endogamous groups, as some of them may constitute people of two or more endogamous groups. During the field investigaiton it was found that the Bhyaina of Pendra Road claim a separate identity for them and maintian reproductive isolation from the Baina of Raigarh on ground of difference in ancestry. The Bhaina of Sakti and the adjoining areas trace their link with the Bhaina of Pendra Road, white others with Raigarh. The situation prompted for a regional analysis of demographic and gentic information. The salient demographic features have been presented through table 1-2. from the literature survey it was found that the earliest mention of the Bhaina population size was in 1891 census of India, which enumerated 14308 individuals in India. According to 1911 census the Bhaina population was 13222 indicating a negative growth Subsequently, it increased to 15231 in 1931, 19953 in 1961. 24740 in 1971 and

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41032 in 1981. The latest population size of the Bhaina tribe could not be cited for its unavailability in the 2001 census. According to 1981 census their population was 39136 in Madhya Pradesh. This showed a growth rate of 59.2% of the size 24584 in 1971. Bilaspur had the largest share Bhaina population (27989 or 71.5%), while in Raigarh their strength was 5311 or 13.6%.

From the preliminary census conducted during the present study the observed demographic information was presented in Table 1 for the Bhaina tribe. It can be inferred from this table that the broad age structure or the percentage of individuals in different age groups is not very different among the three studied regions. However, in Raigarh in compariosn to other two regions, the tribe has relatively less percentage of children in the age group 0-14 years and higher percentage of old people in the age group 65 years and above. This observation is indicative of relative lower fertility and higher longevity of Bhaina in Raigarh. Gender difference in mean age was small but siginficant. In contrast to males having higher mean age (24.82 yr.) than that of femalses (24.17 yr.) in Pendra Road, females at Raigarh and Shakti have higher values than that of males. Mean age of male (27.42 yr.) and female (28.04 yr.) Bhainas of Raigarh was highest among the regions. dependency ratio expresses the burden of economically inactive people of a population. Demographically, children belonging to age group 0-14 years and old people who are 65 years and above fall in the economically inactive or dependent group, white persons in age group 15-64 years are considered economically independent or productive. The lowest ratio of 61.72 dependents per 100 productive persons at Raigarh indicates slightly better economic condition of the Bhaina here than that of Pendra Road (66.82) and Sakti (67.63). In the absence of a direct fertility information, one can have an idea about in from the age and sex structure of the population. In demography, it is expressed as general fertility ratio or child-woman ratio (Number of children in age group 0-4 years/number of woman in the reproductive age group 15-49 years)×100. The present study shows that the lowest ratio (44 children per 100 woman in the reproductive age group) at Raigarh is followed by 51.48 children at Pendra Road and 53.04 children at Sakti. As in biological analysis, in the present analysis sex ratio has been exprerssed as number of males per hundred female unlike that in census, where it is expressed as the number of females per hundred or thousand males. It can be seen from the table that females outnumbered males at Sakti, whereas reverse is the situation at Pendra road and Sakti.

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Marital status composition of Bhaina population shows every little variation among the regions. Percentage of unmarried persons varies from a lowest 44.63% at Pendra Road to the highest 47.52% at Sakti. Similarly the percentage of married persons varies from 46.06% at Sakti to 48.3% at Pendra Road. However, the percentage of widow and divorced persons is more or less same (about 6%) at the three regions.

About 50% of males and above 80% of females were illiterates in the Bhaina population at the studied regions during the period of investigation. Gender bias towards education (not favouring female education) is prominent. None of the Bhaina females but 2.09% of males at Raigarh had reached the level of higher secondary education. The percentage of males and females with primary to secondary education at Pendra Road were 44.18% and 16.98% respectively. As can be seen from the table the frequencies were not very different at Sakti.

Primary occupation of majority of the Bhyainas was agriculture. Those who have inadequate or no land often engage themselves in agriculture labour on daily wage baisi in other's field. For 17.78% of males at Sakti, 22.16% at Pendra Road and 39.27% at Raigarh daily wage labour was the primary occupation. Highest 9% of males at Sakti in contrast to only 1.69% at Pendra Road and 2.62% at Raigarh had secretarial jobs in the public and private sectors. female representation in this regard was negligible. Bhainas' representation in the occupational field of business was about 1%.

Unlike fecundity (reproductive potential), which is a biological parameter, fertility (reproductive performance) is a bio-social parameter and it is generally studied aainst its related bio-events such as age, age at menarche, marriage, first birth etc. of woman. The statistical constants for different bio-events of women, and infertility in the Bhaina population were estimated for the three studied regions and presented in Table 2. Like most traditional communities of India, the Bhaina pays great importance to the event of first menstruation of menarche as it is considered the main eligibility criteria for marriage. During the days of earlier child marriage practice, girls used to be sent to their husband's house after organizing the "Gouna" ceremony on a suitable day following menarche. It can be seen from this table that mean menarcheal age of the Bhaina girls at the three regions is similar. The observed small differe3nces between regions are statistically not significant (t<2.0, p>0.05). Since some women in the studied sample had married

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more than once, the age at first marriage was taken into consideration for the estimation of mean age at marriage. The observed lowest mean value (15.96 yr) among the Bhaina women of Pendra Road was the indication of their relatively less progressed social status in comparison to that of Raigarh (17.25 yr) and Sakti (16.69 yr.) Variation in the age of woman at first birth in a community is the result of the influence of a number of ecological, biological, pychological and social factors. Under natural process the mean interval between marriage and first birth would have been similar in the three regions, but it was found that at Pendra Road the average age of women at first birth was 18.72 years, which was after an average interval of about 2.7 years from marriage. The inverval was greater at Raigarh (about 4 years), where the mean age at first birth was 21.13 years indicating possible greater adaption of family planning measures. In order to estimate the mean age at last brith, post reproductive age group of women (45 years and above) were considered. The observed difference between regions though small were statistically significant for Pendra Road-Raigarh, and Pendra Road-Sakti, but not significant for Raigarh-Sakti. Menopause indicates biological termination of woman's potentiality for conception and age at last menstruation is considered to be its time. Reliable information in this regard could be collected from a limited number of Bhaina women. The estimated mean varies from a low 45.83 years for Pendra Road to 47.02 years for Raigarh region. The earliest age at menopause recorded was 40 years.

Woman without being sterile may be infertile due to voluntary abstinence, contraception or sterility of her husband. Whatever might be the reason if a woman does not give birth to even a single live child during her entire reproductive period (15.45 years of age), she is considered infertile. The infertility rate among the Bhaina women varies from the highest 8.93% at Pendra Road to the lowest 4.51% at Sakti.

Fertility : Fertility of women in a community or population is generally interpreted from their birth rate and average number of children. Birth rate, expressed as number of births per year per thousand. Bhaina women in the reproductive age gorup, was found highest 193.9 at Raigarh followed by 179.6 and 156.6 at Sakti and Pendra Road respectively. The age-specific birth rate was highest for women of age group 20-24 years at Pendra road, whereas it was for 25.29 years at Raigarh (the highest rate shown against age group 15-19 was accidental due to small sample size). At Sakti the birth rate for women till their 29th year of age was

almost the same. Subsequent decline of birth rate with advancing age of women was evident in all the regions.

Average number of live births per married women irrewspective of age in three regions was found similar (varies from 3.34 to 3.47). Average number of live births in completed families or to women who have crossed their fertile period (15-15 years) age was 4.5 at Pendra Road and Raigarh against 4.0 at Sakti. The observed slight decrease in average live birth to women of age above 45 years than that of 40-44 years is obvious, as fertility ceases but mortality among live births continues.

Mortality : High prevalence of poverty, ignorance, traditional practices and beliefs among the Bhainas in many areas of their habitat continue to be considred responsible for their casual and careless attidute towards treatment of any health problem. as a result, mortality is believed high among them. But its accurate estimation is not possible, as all death cases are not registered and for various reasons people at times hide or provide incomplete information relating to death in the family. Therefore, mortality rates estimated during the study and presented in Table 3 for the Bhainas might be less than their actual prevalence. The rates of neonatal, infant, childhood and pre-reproductive mortality in the three regions show that the over all health situations among the Bhainas of Raigarh region is inferior to that of Pendra Road and Sakti regions.

Endogamy : System of Mating

Marriage rules : The Bhaina is a patrilineal and patriarchal society. Monegamy is the rule and common practice, but the people have not excommunicated the families which had practiced poiygyny (3 cases at Pendra Road and 8 cases at Sakti). Remarriage is frequent in the community on grounds of barrenness of wife, misconduct of spouse, inability of woman in giving birth a male child, incapability of a spouse in supporting the family and extramarital relationship. The Bhaina strictly follow clan exogamy. But if a clan has two or more subclants then marriage between sub-clans is allowed. For example Nagbans clan at Pendra Road has three exogamous sub-clans (Buddha Nag, Dond Nag and Dudh Nag) and a person belinging to Buddha Nag canselect a mate either from two other sub-clans of his own clans of from other clans. Some other clans with sub-clans are Bagechhal (Chote and Bade), Lodha (Chote and Bade) and Amaliha (Chote and Bade). Exogamous septs/clans among the spouses encountered during the study at the

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three regions have been listed under Table 4. It was clear that the Bhainas of Pendra Road region have clans, which are not found among their counterparts at Raigarh and Sakti regions, whereas the latter two have many common clans.

Marital Distance : Choice for distance between birthplaces of spouses or marital distance plays a vital role for maintaining endogamy and formation of subgroups within a community. Earlier geographic isolation used to keep populations apart. Now barriers of isolation have been broken down to a great extent due to advanced transporation and communication facilities. If people remain close to their place of birth, marry and bring up their children in the same place, possibility of local genetic differentiation between groups within a region will be great. On the other hand loonger marital distance increases the chance for linking people of different areas. Crow flight distance (in kilometer) between the birthplaces of spouses was estimated from map and its distribution at the three regions was examined (Table 5). As can be seen from the table, rate of village endogamy or zero marital distance was almost the same (little over 6%) in the regions. In 59.26% of marriage at Pndra Road the distance was 1-15 km. whereas the rate was 33.22% at Raigarh and 54.34% at Sakti. The mean marital distance was longest 18.43 km in Raigarh, it was 14.35 km and 16.96 km in Pendra Road and Sakti repectively.

Consanguineous marriage : Consanguineous marriage is strictly prohibeted at Pendra Road, but recently the community could not prevent one such marriage between first crss cousins (mother's brother's daughter). Whereas the Bhainas at Sakti and Raigharh do not consider marriage between "not so close blood relatives" wrong though it is not a preferred once. Among the 6 cases (1% of 599 marriages) of consanguineous marriage observed in Raigarh region 4 were mother's brother' daughter and the rest two were mother's sister's daughter. Similarly, among the five cases (0.63% of 795 marriages) observed in Sakti three were mother's brother's daughter and two were mother's sister's daughter.

Exogamy : Exogamy or marriage between Bhaina and non-Bhaina is practiced at a very low scale. Out of the nine or 1.33% of 674 marriage considered from the genealogies in Pendra Road, eight were between Bhaina male and non-Bhaina female, and one between Bhaina female and non-Bhaina male. The incidence of Bhaina male and non-Bhaina female marriage was 0.38% (two cases) in Raigarh and 0.63% in Sakti. The incidence of marriage between Bhaina female and non-Bhaina male was nil in Raigarh and 0.13% in Sakti.

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Summary and conclusion

The small observed difference in age-sex-marital status composition of the Bhaina of the three regions were not significant. People's slow increase interest towards education was recent trend. Insecurity in traditional agriculture occupation due to poverty and lack of adequate agriculture land have forced many to adopt other non-agriculture occupations.

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Table 1. demographic features of the Bhaina tribe at the three studied regions.

Demographic feature	Pendra Road		Raigarh		Sakti	
			Regions			
Number of villages studied	12		6		11	
Number of Bhaina households (in the studied villages)	246		151		462	
Bhaina population (in the studied villages)	1408		731		2258	
Bhaina (%) (in the age group)						
0-14	37.64		33.52		36.71	
15-49	49.93		50.34		48.14	
50-64	10.01		11.49		11.55	
65 & above	02.42		04.65		03.60	
Age (Mean+SE in year)						
Male	24.82+0.48		27.42+0.73		25.90+0.40	
Female	24.17+0.49		28.05+0.75		26.47+0.42	
Dependency ratio (%)	66.82		61.75		67.63	
Child-woman ratio (%)	51.48		44.00		53.04	
Sex ratio (males per 100 females)						
0-14	94.85		113.04		96.91	
15.49	107.37		110.29		100.18	
50 & above	108.33		100.00		83.87	
All ages	102.60		109.50		96.40	
Marital staus (%)						
Unmarried	44.63		46.37		47.52	
Married	48.30		47.61		46.06	
Widow/Divorced	06.17		06.02		06.42	
Education (%)	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Illiterate	52.45	82.59	46.60	84.24	49.55	86.26
Primary & Secondary	44.18	16.98	51.30	15.76	43.77	13.40
Higher Secondary & above	03.37	00.43	02.09	–	06.98	00.26
Occupation (%)	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture/household works	74.05	71.51	57.33	88.54	72.29	93.04
Wage labour	22.16	28.46	39.37	11.17	17.78	06.70
Govt. & Private Service	01.69	–	02.62	–	09.03	00.26
Business	02.10	–	00.78	00.29	00.90	–

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Table 2: Statistical constants for bioevents of women and infertility among the Bhaina at the three studied regiouns.

Bioevents of women	Regions		
	Pendra Road	Raigarh	Sakti
Age at menarch (in year)	12	6	11
Women studied	302	173	563
Mean+SE	13.83+0.07	13.69+0.09	13.86+0.04
Standard deviation+SE	1.22+0.05	1.18+0.06	0.95+0.06
Min.-Max.	11-17	12-16	12-16
Age at Marrige (In Year)		173	563
Women Studied	302	17.25+0.19	16.69+0.09
Mean+SE	15.96+0.11	2.50+0.13	2.13+0.06
Standard deviation+SE	1.91+0.08	13-27	12-25
Min.-Max.	12-25		
Age at first live birth (in Year)		162	496
Women Studied	270	21.13+0.30	20.12+0.14
Mean+SE	18.72+0.15	2.82+0.16	3.12+0.10
Standard deviation+SE	2.46+0.11	15-33	15-31
Min.-Max.	15-32		
Age at last live birth (in year)		52	181
Women studied	50	34.31+0.89	32.08+0.48
Mean+SE	32-64+0.89	6.42+0.63	4.46+0.34
Sandard deviation+SE	6.29+0.62	21-42	17-42
Min.-Max.	17-41		
Age at Menopause (in year)		49	98
Women Studied	48	47.02+0.24	46.65+0.19
Mean+SE	45.83+0.30	1.68+0.17	1.88+0.13
Standard deviation+SE	2.07+0.21	43-50	42-50
Min.-Max.	40-49		
Infertititv		79	244
Women aged 45+years studied	112	8.86	4.51
%	9.93		

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Table 3: Fertility and mortality among the Bhaina at the three studied regions.

Age specific birth rate	Regions					
	Pendra Road		Raigarh		Sakti	
(N: Number of women studied. Rate: Number of live birth within a Year per 1000 women)						
Age group (in year)	N	Rate	N	Rate	N	Rate
15-19	30	066.7	01	1000.0	14	214.4
20-24	56	303.6	24	375.0	67	194.0
25-29	55	181-8	20	400.0	86	209.3
30-34	43	139.5	32	093.7	89	179.8
35-39	31	096.8	26	038.5	65	169.2
40.44	34	029.4	16	062.5	52	115.4
Birth rate for women in the reproductive age group (15-44 yr)	249	156.6	119	193.3	373	179.6
Average live birth						
Age group (in year)	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
15-19	13	1.00	01	1.00	4	0.75
20-24	47	1.89	16	1.31	44	1.55
25-29	53	2.79	19	2.16	78	2.35
30-34	42	3.28	32	2.86	79	3.34
35.39	31	4.00	26	3.50	65	4.01
40-44	34	4.73	16	3.63	45	4.71
45 & above	50	4.59	52	4.56	181	4.03
All women	270	3.34	162	3.38	496	3.47
Foetal death rate						
Number of pregnancies	918		548		1735	
Number of reported foetal death	16		8		15	
Foetal death rate	1.74%		146%		0.86%	
Mortality among live births						
Number of live birth	902		540		1720	
Neonatal (death within I month)	49	5.43%	47	8.70%	76	4.42%
Intant (death within 1 year of age)	82	9.09%	80	14.81%	122	7.09%
Child (death within 4 year of age)	88	9.76%	95	17.59%	160	9.30%
Pre-reproductive (up to 14 years)	106	11.75%	98	18.14%	182	10.58%

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Table 4: Exogamous septs/clan/Gotra identified within the Bhaina tribe at the three regions.

Pendra Road	Raigargh	Sakti
Nag	Bag	Bag
Singhala	Bendra	Bendra
Mundri Karsail	Cheehhan*	Chitwa
Bagchhal	Chitwa	Dalha*
Mahadeo	Cog*	Deur
Lodha	Deur	Hanuman
Amaliha	Durgasi*	Hathi
Goal	Hanuman	Jatau*
Markam	Hathi	Malhin*
Sonwani	Oot*	Nag
Dhobia	Patail	Patail
Sonar	Rajput*	Rawan
Raghbanshi	Rawan	Suruj
Penka	Suraj	Thakur*
Telasi		Turka
Sikta		
Bhainsa		
Kawarai		
Sondra		

* Clan not reported from other regions

Table 5: Distribution of marital distance among the Bhaina in the three regions.

Distance in km	Pendra Road N=1188	Raigarh N=599	Sakti N=795
0 (village endogamy)	06.31	06.84	06.16
1-5	08.08	01.67	22.67
6-10	18.10	14.69	13.71
11.15	33.08	16.86	17.99
16-20	15.67	22.04	09.57
21-25	07.83	16.36	03.65
26-30	04.54	09.85	07.30
31-35	01.94	05.84	05.53
36-40	00.76	01.84	03.65
41-45	00.92	02.17	02.52
46-50	00.34	00.67	01.38
51-55	00.67	00.67	02.89
56 & above	00.76	00.50	03.12
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Mean+ in km	14.35+0.28	18.43+0.44	16.96+0.54

N : Number of marriages studied.

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