

Research Paper

Marriage Practice Among Jenukuruba, A Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group In Karnataka, India.

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Abstract: Land and forest have been the most important sources of livelihood for the Jenukuruba community. Traditionally, they collected honey, gathered food, and managed forest produce. Now-a days as restrictions are imposed on the use of the forest by the Government, they have given up their traditional occupations. In recent years most of them have got two and a half acre land from Govt. in which few cultivate crops. They also work as plantation and agricultural laborers and get their wages in cash.

"Jenukuruba" women involve themselves in agriculture, cattle rearing, and collecting herbs, roots, and firewood, contributing to the family income. They also work as laborers. The present paper deals with the Marriage practice and childbirth among Jenukuruba residing at Herur hamlet in Somvarpet taluk of Kodagu district.

Keywords: Jenukuruba, PVTG, Koodikke, Childbirth

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I. Introduction

Among the Scheduled Tribes, specific communities are characterized as a pre-agricultural level of technology, stagnant or declining population, extremely low literacy, and subsistence level of the economy. Most of these groups are small in number, have not attained any significant social and economic progress, and generally inhabit remote localities with poor infrastructure and administrative support. A few are still hunter-gatherers. Therefore, they become the most vulnerable sections among the Scheduled Tribes.

There are 50 tribal communities included in the **Scheduled Tribe** list in Karnataka. Out of 50 Scheduled Tribes, "Jenukuruba" and "Koraga" have been included in the **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group** in Karnataka¹.

DISTRIBUTION OF PVTG'S ACCORDING TO CENSUS

States/Uts.	Name of PVTG	Population					
		1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Karnataka	Jenukuruba	3623	6656	34747	29371	29828	36076
	Koraga	6382	7620	15146	16322	16071	14794
	Total	10005	14276	49893	45693	45899	50870

"Jenukuruba" is one of the **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups** in Karnataka, having a population of 36,076, out of which males are 17,948 and females are 18,128 as per the 2011 census. "Jenukurubas" ("Jenu" or "Teen Curubarus" or "Kurummarus") are seen in the Hunsur, Periyapatna, Heggadadevanakotetaluk of Mysuru district and Gundulpettaluk of Chamrajanagar district and Virajpet and Somvarpettaluks of Kodagu district. The name familiar to all the divisions is derived from "Kuru," an expanded form of "Ko" or "Ku," the old Tamil word for "mountain," and "Kuruba" connotes mountain dwellers. They have their dialect, which is known as "Jenunudi²."

DISTRIBUTION OF JENUKURUBA POPULATION ACCORDING TO CENSUS

District	1991			2001			2011		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Chamrajanagar	8,83,365	38,703	828	5,28,50,562	1,06,111	1355	10,20,791	1,20,219	832
Mysuru	22,81,653	63,399	12,508	26,41,027	2,71,351	15,759	30,01,127	3,34,547	21,995
Kodagu	4,84,455	40,312	7,477	5,48,561	46,115	10,037	5,54,519	58,054	12,191

1. Total population
2. Total tribal population
3. Total Jenukuruba tribal population

As per the 2011 census, the total population of Jenukuruba in Karnataka is 36,076. Of these, 832 people in Chamrajanagar, 21,995 people in Mysuru, and 12,191 people in Kodagu district³.

A CASE STUDY CONDUCTED AT HERUR HAMLET.

Herur hamlet is situated about 4 km Away from Basavanahalli of Somvarpet taluk in Kodagu district. There are Ninety-two families, and 321 people were rehabilitated to this area around 35 years ago.



Most Jenukuruba families have converted to Christianity in Herur hamlet, and some practice their rituals and traditions. Gowamma expressed her opinion on the reason behind the conversion to Christianity. When they failed to find the relief and solutions from the hardships in family and other health problems, even after offering puja and sacrificing the fowl and goat to their family deity of Basweshara, they turned to Christianity only by the faith of getting relief from their misfortunes in future.



Gowamma

Most Jenukuruba children have dropped out of school by 6th or 7th std. Usually, male children assist their parents in the agricultural field, and female children are engaged in taking care of their siblings and doing household chores in the absence of their mother at a significantly younger age.

Even today, it can be seen that Jenukuruba practice two types of marriages. One is “oppavudhu madav madhuve” (arranged marriage), and another one is “koodkkoladhu” (marriage by elopement). Some of the Jenukuruba families practice arranged marriage.

Even today Jenukuruba practice “koodkkoladhu.” When the female children discontinue their studies, they will join coolie work in the coffee estate or banana plantations. They may find their life partner and go to the deep forest, where they spend a few days eating tubers like *nooregenesu*, *soddigenesu*, *koranegenasu*, *naregenesu*, *moodanegenasu*, *suryahannu*, and fruits like *karehannu*, *sottehannu*, *halannu*, *mukkehannu*, *karakai* and *jenu* (honey). After spending a few days in the forest, they return to the male's home and consider themselves a married couple. Most couples live with children after “koodkkoladhu,” and some are separated. Widows, widowers, and male and female divorcees are allowed to remarry in Jenukuruba community.

Most often, the PHC nurses and Asha workers serving in respective tribal settlements find it difficult even to identify whether the woman is pregnant or not. Due to shyness or the fear of being taken to the hospital for maternal health check-ups, pregnant women hesitate to disclose their status to nurses. Based on the doubts, the nurses conduct pregnancy tests and give them regular maternal health check-ups and medications.

Gowri, 68 years, belongs to Jenukuruba, resident of Herur hamlet. She has three children, two females and one male. Gowri has assisted many childbirths of her daughters and daughter-in-law and the women in surrounding areas of her house. During the interaction, she said that she had done her delivery without assistance.



Gowri

Gowri opined that as per their belief, She could cure the internal injuries of delivered women immediately by consuming *kashaya* (medicine) prepared out of irulli (onion), ollemenasu (pepper), kadgeerige (cumin seeds), bellulli (garlic) in empty stomach. The paste of harishina (turmeric) mixed with water is boiled and consumed to cure the stomach pain of delivered women. She said that nowadays, very few childbirths occur at home, and most of them are institutional delivery.

II. Conclusion

Marriage at an early age demands the women in Jenukuruba community to take up family duties. The money earned by men is usually spent only on drinking, smoking, and chewing tobacco. In almost all families, it is observed that the women have to pay the money earned to buy the things for their daily needs. Early marriage, teenage pregnancy, and frequent deliveries contribute to women's health complications. Regular health camp is essential at tribal hamlet at least once a month to educate the people about the importance of maintaining good health.

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