

Menarche and Menopause Among the Semi Nomadic Lohar Gadiyas of Malthon Town of Sagar District, Madhya Pradesh

Ankur Yadav, Amita Jain and A.N. Sharma

INTRODUCTION

The menarche and menopause are two important biological events, which occur in the life cycle of every normal female. It is established beyond doubt that the mean age of onset of menarche and age of menopause varies from one population to another due to several factors, viz., heredity, environment, nutritional status, physical activity, occupation and obesity etc.

The objective of the present paper is to assess the onset of menarcheal age and menopause among the semi-nomadic Lohar Gadiyas of Malthon town of Sagar District, Madhya Pradesh, India.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study is conducted in Malthon town of Khurai Tehsil of Sagar District of Madhya Pradesh, India. The block Malthon lies in between 24° 01' North and 78° 18' east and covers a total area of 756 sq. kms. The town Malthon is situated exactly on National Highway Number-26, in between Sagar-Jhansi road about 60 Kms away from Sagar Headquarter.

The Lohar Gadiyas are semi-nomadic in nature, i.e., they are in a phase of transition between settlement and nomadism. Out of them, few are settled permanently in the Malthon Town and rests are going to settle. They mainly stayed in Malthon town, in their tent like houses made on wooden pillars by polythen roof, from the first week of July to second-third week of November, than from there, they migrate to different directions on their small bullock carts and again came back to Malthon, on the same time, next year. Their main occupation is blacksmith work, i.e., they prepare the iron-articles by primitive techniques. They called themselves as "Hindus" and stratified themselves as "Rajput" in Hindu stratification.

The present study is based on interview of

128 housewives and conducted by random sampling and semi-participant method using structured schedule. In interview the discussion is made in large to get in-depth information.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results of the present study are presented in the table 1. It could be seen from the table 1 that the age of onset of menarche among Lohar Gadiya females ranges from 13 to 18 years. Table also reveals that among them over 90.62 per cent have menstruated for the first time when they were between 13 to 15 years of age. The mean menarcheal age is found to be 13.88 ± 0.109 years whereas the age of menopause among Lohar Gadiya females ranges from 41 years to 50 years and about 81.57 per cent women attained their age of menopause in between 45 to 50 years of age. The mean age of menopause is 46.34 ± 0.361 years among Lohar Gadiya women.

The age at onset of menstruation in different population of India has revealed that as one progressed from eastern region to southwestern region of India the menarcheal age gradually increases suggesting a geographical line. Coefficient of variation (c.v.) of the age of menarche of different groups varies from 0.40 in the Chenchus of Andhra Pradesh to 75.03 in the Ahom of Assam. In the case of Chenchus the degree of dispersion is too low, while in that of Ahom of Assam, the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh and one pooled sample from Assam display variation of much larger order.

The most of samples including the present one, however, fall within the small range of variation from 12 to 15 years for onset of menarche. Menarche before 12 years which has been considered as abnormal by Montagu (1945) is observed.

The mean age of menopause among the Lohar Gadiyas sample compared with some other population group of India. It appears that the age of

Table 1: Information regarding age at onset of menarche and age of menopause

S. No.	Age of onset of menarche	Absolute	Percent	Mean± S.E.	Age group of menopause	Absolute number	Percent	Mean± S.E.
1.	Thirteen Year	65	50.8		39 to 40 year	-	-	-
2.	Fourteen Year	38	29.7		41 to 42 year	2	5.3	-
3.	Fifteen year	13	10.2	13.88±0.11	43 to 44 year	5	13.1	46.34±0.36
4.	Sixteen year	4	3.1		45 to 46 year	14	36.8	
5.	Seventeen year	3	2.3	-	47 to 48 year	9	23.7	-
6.	Eighteen Year	5	3.9		49 to 50 year	8	21.1	-
7.	Nineteen Year	-	-	-	51 to 52 year	-	-	-
Total		128	100.0		Total	38	100.0	

menopause is lowest in Mahars of Maharashtra (43.03 ± 0.50) and highest among Ahom of Assam (48.44 ± 0.52), whereas age of menopause among Lohar Gadiya (46.34 ± 0.361), lies in between these. The coefficient of variation of menopause in the samples is found to vary from 4.21 to 7.20 limiting the variation within a medium range.

The span of reproductive life is the period between onset of menarchal age and age at menopause. This is an important factor as far as the reproductive potentials is concerned. Among the samples considered here it is found that the Mahar have the smallest mean span of reproductive life (29.05 year) and it is much less than the Ahom women's reproductive life (35.18 years) who occupy the highest position in this respect, whereas reproductive life of Lohar-Gadiyas are 32.46 years, which is intermediate between them.

It may be concluded from the on going brief findings that the mean age for onset of menarche among respondents are 13.88 ± 0.109 years, whereas mean age of menopause among women is 46.34 ± 0.361 years and the span of reproductive life among Lohar Gadiya female is 29.05 year, which are in intermediate position as compared to other Indian population, viz., Ahom, Singpho, Maharashtra Brahmins and Mahar.

KEY WORDS Menarche. Menopause. Lohar-Gadiya. Madhya Pradesh.

ABSTRACT The present paper discusses the onset of menarche and age of menopause among the Semi-nomadic Lohar Gadiya women of Malthon town of Sagar district, Madhya Pradesh. The present study is based on interview of 128 Lohar Gadiya housewives by random sampling and semiparticipant method, using pretested schedule. The findings indicate that the mean age for onset of menarche among respondents are 13.88 ± 0.109 years, whereas mean age of menopause among women is 46.34 ± 0.361 years and the span of reproductive life among Lohar Gadiya females is 29.05 year. Then the results are compared with other similar studies of Indian population.

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Authors' Address: Ankur Yadav, Amita Jain and A.N.Sharma, Department of Anthropology, Dr. H. S. Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar 470 003, Madhya Pradesh, India