

Demography of the Santals in West Bengal and Jharkhand: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT A systematic micro demographic study with special emphasis on sex-ratio (Female - Male ratio or FMR) patterns among the Santals in nineteen villages of the bordering districts of the states of West Bengal and Jharkhand comprises 2257 male and 2135 female individuals. Sex-ratio patterns among the Santals exhibit low FMR (946), compared to the all-India FMR_{ST} , 972 (Census of India, 1991). However, the average FMR (946) of the Santals in this area, has been found to be little higher than the average FMR_{ST} (941 in Census of India, 1991) of these two neighbouring states. Santals of Jharkhand also show higher FMR (964) in comparison with those of West Bengal (935). FMR of all age groups among the Santals in Jharkhand exceed the FMR of the Santals in West Bengal, except that in the age-group of 10-14 years. In both the states, a decline of FMR_{59} from FMR_{04} indicates a trend of excess girl-child mortality among the Santals. However, a decadal increment of FMR among the Santals in this region is observed from the higher value of FMR_{0-9} than FMR_{10-19} . Substantial female labour participation (FLP) is reflected from FMR_{15-44} and FMR_{15-64} among the Santals, especially those of Jharkhand. Further, percentage of persons (0 - 4 years and 0 - 14 years), work-participation rate and age-dependency ratio are found to be higher among the Santals of Jharkhand. In contrast, child-woman ratio and percentage of old-age population among the Santals of West Bengal are recorded as higher than the Santals of Jharkhand.