

Marriage Practices by Elopment and Service among the Jenukuruba - A PVTG in Karnataka, India

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Abstract: *Marriage is a social contract for the satisfaction of physical, biological, psychological and spiritual needs of male and female leading to the formation of a family to bring up children and live together. Sexual relationship and procreation are undoubtedly the primary aims of marriage. Marriage validates sex relationships. The institution of marriage among the tribes is different from that in the Hindu society. Marriage among the tribes is not a religious sacrament but a social contract with the purpose of enjoyment of sex, procreation and companion ship. The present research paper deals with the different forms of marriage practices followed by Jenukuruba tribal community based on the research study conducted at "Maralukatehadi" in Periyapatnataluk of Mysuru district organized by Karnataka State Tribal Research Institute, Mysuru.*

Keywords: Jenukuruba, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal group, service marriage

1. Introduction

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 Groups** in Karnataka.

Distribution of PVTGs population in Karnataka

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

The "**Jenukuruba**" are a distinct group of forest dwelling people and are considered as one of the **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group** in Karnataka. The total population is 36,076, out of which the of males are 17,948 and females are 18,128 as per 2011 census¹.

The origin of the name is derived from "Kuru" an expanded form of "Ko" or "Ku", the old Tamil word for "mountain" and "Kuruba" connotes mountain dwellers. The dialect is known as "Jenunudi", they also speak Kannada language. The prefix jenu is the term for honey (teen) and has reference to their early ostensible occupation for a livelihood.

Objectives of the Research Study

- The main aim of the study is to know about the concept towards marriages by Jenukuruba.
- To understand the geographical location of Jenukuruba where they reside and their changing life pattern based on their livelihood.
- To know various forms of marriages practiced by Jenukuruba
- To study the marriage eligibility criteria for Jenukuruba boy and girl.

- To know about the factors responsible for influencing such marriage practices
- To study about the criteria of bride selection and bridegroom selection
- To study about the dowry/bride price observed by Jenukuruba
- To know the traditional customs, beliefs and taboos associated with marriage practices observed by Jenukuruba

2. Research Methodology

Before conducting the research study, the preliminary outline was prepared about the settlement selection. The hamlets were located in remote areas, minimum of 150 to 200 Jenukuruba families resided, they still practice the old tradition and customs of marriage. Our research study is about the distinct marriage practice and customs followed by Jenukuruba. The selection of the areas which is suitable for fulfilling the purpose of our research study. The simple random sampling technique was used .

For the extensive study, interview, participant observation, intensive field work, case study, and group discussion were observed.





Since earlier, nuclear families are common among Jenukuruba. They give equal status to male, female and children. During the study we observed that, after marriage the bridegroom goes and lives in the residence of his bride. Even today they practice matriarchal system more than patriarchal system². The Jenukuruba dwelling in forest fringe areas, after the marriage the man will build the hut near father-in-law's hut and live with his wife. The parents prefer to live with the daughters even after marriage, so they construct the hut close to their parent's hut and live separately with their husband and children.



3. Area of Research

While considering the habitation and settlement of Jenukuruba, they are mostly located in isolated areas than other tribal communities. But today we can observe that they reside in hamlets near villages in the vicinity of forest areas.

Maralukattehadi - one hundred and thirty Jenukuruba families residing in Maralukattehadi is located in Periyapatna taluk of Mysuru district. Maralukattehadi is divided into Maralukattehadi A and Maralukattehadi B³. All the males and females in this hamlet are working as a labourer in coffee/tea plantations in Kodagu. Some of the families grow paddy, ragi, and other grains in their own land.



Jenukuruba Woman



The view of Jenukuruba Hamlet



List of the Clan and Deities among Jenukuruba Community

Clan	Family deities
Ammale	Ganesha, Shivaparvathi and elephant
Golooru	Goluru Odeya and Goluru Odathi
Nanchi	Ajjaiah, Ajamma
Hebbale	Ayyappa, Badrakali
Puttathayi	Trishula
Moormane	Sampikamara
chikkamanevaru	Mathurayaswamy
Salumane	All the deities of JenuKuruba
Ballegadheadathi and Bellegadheadaya	Sannamma Odathi, Doddamma Odathi, Maramma and Chikkamma
Seeguru	Seeguru Odeya and Seeguru Odathi

Marriage by Elopement

An interesting form of securing a bride prevalent in Indian tribes is marriage by mutual consent and elopement. In this form of marriage, the girl elopes with a young man by her own consent and stay away from their parents few weeks or months together. During the study, it is observed that

marriage by elopement is the most common form of marriage among Jenukuruba community.

After attaining puberty, most of the female children are not sent to school due to the reasons like school is far from house and personal issues like shyness, hence they are forced to discontinue their education in primary school. They take care of siblings; household chores then gradually start working and become earning member of the family.

Due to the financial crisis, they work as labourer in coffee estate or banana plantations. Most of the time the relationship between the male and female is built in the working place. Due to the fear of parents, they refuse to disclose about their affair and decide to move away from the parents for few days and they get married which they call “Gandharva marriage.” After marriage they stay in deep forest for a months. When they return back to the home they consider themselves as married couple. Most of the

elopement is observed in the age of 12-15 years in girls and 16- 19 years in boys.

When the children elope, the parents of both girl and boy secretly enquire others to confirm the elopement and they accept their children as couples after returning from forest⁴.

Now-a-days this types of marriage is common among them. Naturally no bride price is demanded in this type of marriage.

Marriage by Service

The practice of marriage by service is very special practice among Jenukuruba. In service marriage the Boy has to serve

his future father-in-law for three to five years. During this period, if the father of the girl is satisfied with the work of boy, he will agree for the marriage of Boy and Girl. If the father is dissatisfied, he disagree the marriage with a boy and gives this chance to another boy. During the course of this service, the young boy can meet the girl but the sexual relationship is not entertained⁵.

In service marriage, in very rare case the female also serve her future in laws for three to five years to get their love and affection. if she wants to marry a boy. Finally the futures in-laws decide to get marry their son to that girl.



Researcher with the subject

4. Conclusion

The concept of arranged marriage is found rare among Jenukuruba. Polygamy, widow marriage, levirate, sororate also practiced. They are leading a collective life in their society.

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Author Profile



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