

Book Review

GENETIC DEMOGRAPHY OF KUNBIS OF VIDARBHA. By Prodyot Gangopadhyay. p. vi+139, tables, photographs, figures, glossary, 2025. Dattsons Publishers: Nagpur.

In the present slim volume, *Genetic Demography of Kunbis of Vidarbha*, the author has studied eight subgroups of Kunbi community of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, based on the analysis of statistical data compiled during the tenure of long four years (1993-1996) of field work in six districts of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. The volume carries a foreword by Prof. Tapas Mukherjee, Ex-Founder Director and Head of Human Genome Research, Chandigarh University, Chandigarh.

The study was conducted in the districts of Buldhana, Amravati, Akola, Nagpur, Bhandara and Chandrapur of Vidarbha region. Kunbi is a generic term applied to several castes of traditional farmers in Western India, a majority of whom are confined to Maharashtra state. The terms Kunbi and Kanbi are synonymous. This community also exist in the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. In Uttar Pradesh Kunbis are referred to as Kurmis. Kunbis are included among the Other Backward Classes (OBC) in Maharashtra. Maharashtra's Kunbi community shares links with North and Eastern India's Kurmi. Kunbi and Kurmi are agricultural communities. The subgroups of this community studied are as follows: Ghatole, Hindre, Lewa, Lonare, Jadhav, Tirole, Dhanoje and Bawne. The sample size is not mentioned for each subgroup. Geographical distribution of these people shows that the Hindre, Lewa, Ghatole, Lonare and Jadhav live contiguously centering the western part of Vidarbha, while Tirole, Dhanoje and Bawne are concentrated towards the eastern part of Vidarbha.

The present study is more like a fieldwork report and analysis of a survey. The author has presented 'Table of Contents' (p. iii) with the following chapters in a tabular format with three columns. Chapter I: Introduction. Chapter II: Material & Method. Chapter III: Demography. Chapter IV: Summary and Discussion on Morphometric, Anthropometric, Serological and Population Profile. Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusion. Lastly, glossary, references and photographs have been presented. Many subheadings have been presented under each chapter. Contents in a tabular format is an unusual presentation.

The author has categorized the data collected under three sections: a) Demographic information, b) ABO & Rh blood groups, c) Anthropometry. Under 'Demography' (Chapter III, pp. 36-110) there is no mention of the number of families surveyed for each subgroup of the Kunbis. The Tables 1.1 to 1.10 also do not indicate anything in this respect. A total of 1323 blood samples were tested for ABO and Rh blood groups, and also for the presence or absence of sickling phenomena. For the anthropometric study sixteen measurements on head, face and body dimensions were taken during the survey. Here again sample size for anthropometric study is not mentioned for each subgroup of Kunbi community. The Tables 3.1 to 3.22 also do not indicate the sample size of the different Kunbi subgroups studied.

The study of A₁, A₂, B, O, A₁B, A₂B, Rh (d) and Sickling phenomena have been presented through Tables 4.1 to 4.5 (pp. 105-110). *The universally accepted and accurate symbol is RhD, sometime informally used as Rh(d) (italics mine)*. On page 103, the author discusses 'Blood Groups and Sickle Cell'. There is serious typographical error on page 108, RhD has been presented as Rh D, as a heading, and this has been followed at several places under discussion. It seems the author has not carefully checked the proof pages. The author should have used the symbol χ^2 (chi-square) instead of putting it as x^2 or Ch^2 , as and where applicable. The Table 4.5 (p. 110) present 'G²S Values in Kunbi Population of Vidarbha', indicating all the eight subgroups, but no discussion has been presented on it.

Under 'Discussion and Conclusion' (Chapter V, New Series ©SERIALS

pp. 117-120), the author writes “An overview of the demographic features of all the subgroups of Kunbi defines that the small size population of Lonare, Lewa and Jadhav may be due to low fertility. Further, lower values of fertility variance and comparatively low mortality factors led to lower pressure of selection intensity, while Jadhav Kunbi showed higher fertility variance with lower values of average number of births. Interestingly these Kunbi groups are observed to be practising family planning methods more frequently than the other groups. On the other hand, all other five groups which are more or less large in number experience higher selective pressure under the major component of mortality factors (p. 117). The general trend in all the population subgroups under the present study is progressive aging phenomena and limited pronounced population increment in size. Based on distance analysis, the author reports, “Dhanoje is found to be significantly different from

all the other subgroups as having the lowest frequency of group ‘A’ and ‘O’ genes. The Lonare and Ghatole Kunbi show high frequencies of RhD negative gene. Small population size and higher RhD negative women might have been the reason for high incidence of reproductive waste among Lonare. Lonare and Lewa have shown differences with other Kunbis in a significant way” (p. 120).

In spite of the comments mentioned above the reviewer feels that this volume on the demography of the Kunbis of Vidarbha would be helpful to the students who are interested in genetic demographic studies, and the general readers may find it interesting to know about the brief ethnographic profile of the people and demography of this area.

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