

Deprived among marginalized – Health status of women in a tribal settlement

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Abstract

Indicators related to health of women in Kerala depict a rosy picture. But there are a lot to be observed in between the social strata of the population, especially among those communities who are getting increasingly marginalized from the overall development of the state, like Tribal. It is well known that female gender is deprived in all sectors of health cutting across the economic and cultural variability. The aim of this study is to analysis the status of a tribal community compared to a nontribal community sharing the same geographical location with respect to the gender.

This study was conducted in a tribal belt inhabited by both the tribal people and nontribal people. This is a cross sectional study. The data regarding all the 52 tribal families were analysed against 95 families who are not tribal but sharing the same geographical setting.

Family size in the tribal and non tribal areas was found to be 4 (3.86-4.14) and 4.3 (4.19-4.41) respectively. The old age dependency is almost 9 in both the groups is close to the National average of 8 and very low compared to the general population of Kerala, that is 12. The proportions of people who have received higher education (11.1% in Tribal and 7.9% in nontribal) are low compared to that of state's average of 27%. Sex ratio 'above the age of 65' is just 750 among the tribal and 1363 among the non tribal. The Work Participation Rate among females is very high in tribal (56.9%) but the percentage of tribal population in high income jobs in only 9.6%.

In short the tribal women enjoy a very low standard of living poor living conditions. The health issues of these deprived should be considered for the all-inclusive development of the state and the country.