

# A SOCIOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF THE KORAGA COMMUNITY IN UDUPI DISTRICT

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**Abstract:** The Koraga tribe is a primitive tribe and one of the oldest tribe living in Udupi, Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka. According to 2001 census their numbers were 16,071. Koragas numbers are declining today due to their health issues, bad habits, lack of medical facilities, lack of awareness of health among them. Most of the koragas lived separately from the mainstream of the society. The living place of them are called 'KOPPA'. Koragas speaks "KORAGA" language. It is a mixture of local languages like Kannada, Tulu, Konkani, Malayalam etc. Government of India classified them in Scheduled Tribe. Koragas sociological study may do in two ways. One is developing koragas which group having awareness of education and government programmes, another group is highly backward and followed traditional ways of living.

**KEYWORDS:** *Koraga Tribe, Total Population of Tribe, Scheduled Tribe and Koragas*

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The specific objectives of Research paper is as follows:

1. The sociological explanation of Koragas
2. To observe their economic and social life.

## AIM OF STUDY:

The information regarding the Research paper has been collected both by primary sources and secondary sources. They are as follows:

The interview schedule and participant observation are used in this study. Group discussion was organised to gain information the information about the social life of Koragas. The secondary data obtained through the records maintained by administrative bodies. The data was collected from various secondary sources like census report journals, manuals, Encyclopaedias, Records maintained by the social welfare departments.

## SCOPE OF STUDY:

The scope of the study is restricted only for the 10 selected villages and 101 koraga families of Kundapura, Udupi and Karkala. The total population of 101 selected families is consisting of 216 males and 233 females totally 449 members. The detail of selected villages, families, male and female population is as follows.

QSl. No	Name of the Village	Number of Families	Gender wise distribution of the member of the family		
			Male	Female	Total
01	Kaup	08	28	32	60
02	Ammunje	07	24	25	49
03	Katapady	09	30	34	64
04	Halady	06	20	18	38
05	Kumbashi	13	25	22	47
06	Aluru	11	18	20	38
07	Belman	12	24	28	52
08	Pilarkan	14	16	18	34
09	Mundkur	12	21	24	45
10	Sanoor	09	10	12	22
	<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>449</b>

### REVIEW OF EARLY LITERATURE:

The understanding of the Koraga community can be understood through the works of various scholars, Ethnologists, Anthropologists, census enumerators, Sociologists was studied for the presenting the paper done by from early 18th century which includes.

1. The first chronicle available about Koragas is that of Francis Buchanan (1801) who gives the general description of the Koragas and make the reference to the rule of their chieftain, Hubashika for short period. The historical stories about Koragas was heard like Hinge on Hubashika as a hero, invader, Pariar king, chief of savages, king of mountain, slaves castes, king of koragas, koragas chieftain etc.
2. H.H. Wilson in his 'Mackenzie' collection tries to give definition of Koraga tribal community.
3. Dr. Mohammed Peer and Dr. V. Heggade (1982) in their evaluation report on the impact of various developmental programmes implemented during the decade 1980-1990 for the social and economic development of Koraga tribes in undivided South Kanara have briefly highlighted the present conditions of Koragas. Their report on Koragas based on the data obtained from households drawn from South Canara.
4. Karnataka Government has published a brief account of the life and cultural practices of Koraga tribes in the form of reports in South Kanara District Gazetteers (1973) cd. by K. Abhishanker) A hill tribes living in isolation.
5. Edger Thurston (1909) gives a brief information about various customs traditions

observed by Koragas about hundreds of years ago. But he does not analyse the problems, changes and development programmes of Koraga tribe.

6. B.A. Saletore (1944) and Dr. Padhur Gururaj Bhat (1963) Explains Koragas are earlier inhabitants of Tulunadu. They give brief information about various costumes and traditions observed by Koragas about a hundred years ago.
7. Hayavadana Rao in his Mysore Gazetter tries to explain the brief account of cultural traditions of Koragas.
8. Sturrock (1804) compiled various caste and tribes of Dhakshina Kannada. This study shows that Koragas are the tribes, who lives in forest and Hills of undivided South Kanara District. His study reveals the some of their social institutions and practices that existed centuries ago.

Apart from the studies available in the form of monographs, a few recent attempts have been made by various researches writes author of regional Language (Kannada) to contribute articles and write-ups in chronicles on of Koragas communities, in a most general way. Which includes ups in chronicles on incurring condition development.

Dr. K.M. Metri : 'Budakattu Kulakasabu'(2002) Forest Blossoms and the concert Jungle and 'Shukshma Adivasigalu (2017), Dr. Aravinda Malagati and Dr. Odeyar. D. Heggade : 'Koraga Jananga' Vishlotionatmaka Adyayana (2007), Dr. H.J. Lakkappa Gowda :Karnataka Budakattugalu, Dr. A.V. Navada : Koragaru and Tulu Polle (2013)

Dr. Hi. Chi. Boralingaiah and Dr. A.S. Prabhakar (ed) Karnatakada Budakattu Sachitra Kosha(2013), Dr. K. Sundara Naik : "Social transformation among the tribals of Dakshina Kananda" A article was published in Budakattu Adhyana kannada Vishwa Vidyalaya. (2011), Vasudevan C. : Koragas, 'The forgotten of the premitive tribes of Tulunadu(1998),

Dr. Indira Heggade : Tulunadina Koragaru Samajika Arthika Sthitigati (2007), Sri. Gunapala Shetty : Mouna Matadidaga (2012), Dr. Gangadhar Daivadnya : Koragaru Samakalina Spandana(2012), Chi.Boralingayya : Karnataka Janapada Kalegala Kosha (1996), Dr. Arun Kumar :Seeme (1996), Dr. Gayathri Navada : 'Virachane' (1997),

Dr. A.V. Navada : Koraga Budakattu Abhiruddhi Kalpane and Tulu pole (1997), Dr. Purushothama Belimale : Karavali Janapada (1990), Ondu parichayatmaka Kriti (1990), P. Kamalaksha : Dakshina Kannada Jilleya Harijana Mattu Girijanara Samajika Itihasa. (1994),Sri Ramakrishna T. Shetty : Koraga Grammar (1975), Prof Amrith Someshwara : Koragas (1982), Dr.Ramakrishna Shetty : Koragaru Adunudi (1985).

The above survey of the studies on Koraga tribes indicate that many attempts have been made in tribal studies on the way of life, changes and strategy of development. The reports published on the Koragas in the form of various articles are neither complete scientific nor Exhaustive. Therefore, these publications do not provide educational condition present economic and educational condition adequate information on Koraga community.

However, these publications shows that the Koraga tribes have attracted the attention of

Christian missionaries, Social reformers, Administrators, Anthropologists, medical scientist, sociologists and others. Hence, in the present study, an attempt is made to focus on the social changes that have occurred among the Koragas. For the purpose of study I have taken up the 101 Koraga tribal families of 10 villages of Kundapur, Udupi and Karkala.

## MEANING AND ORIGIN OF KORAGA COMMUNITY

The Koraga are a tribal community who are basically found mainly in the Udupi and Dakshina Kannada of Karnataka and Kasaragod District of Kerala State. They are also found in small numbers in almost all districts of Karnataka. The government of Karnataka classified them as Primitive Tribes. The name 'Koraga' have many phonetic variations. As for CampBell refers to them as 'Koras' or Koragars. While the others have used 'Koragar' the Kannada Plural for Koraga. It would appear to us that due to the Tulu accent of the term, the Koraga might have been referred by Buchanan as 'Corar' and 'Corowar'. Therefore the earlier writers have referred Koraga, Korgas, Korar, Corar, Koragars to mean the same community. Likewise some authors have referred to the tribe as 'Koragars' the plural form in English.

As In Kannada the word Koraga is the singular and 'Koragaru' is in the plural, in Tulu 'Korage' is used in the singular and 'Koragare' in the plural and in Konkani the word 'Korgo' is used in Singular and 'Korgar' and 'Koragaranche' in plural. In the term Koraga 'Kora' the first part of their name refers to the 'sun' and the name may have originated from their conventional worship of the sun. There is a possibility that their name is a corruption of 'Koruvar' which in Tulu means the people of the hills. The etymological meaning of the 'Koraga' is not very clear.

1. In the first census report of 1871 relating to South Kanara district. It was reported that they are properly 'no hill tribes' living exclusively in the forest of undivided south kanara with the exception of malekudiyas.
2. In 1881 census report they were recognised as 'aboriginals'
3. In 1891 census Koragas were treated as 'Forest and Hill tribes of South Kanara'
4. In the census of 1921, 1931 and 1941 they were classified as 'Depressed classes'.
5. In 1951 census they were classified as 'Scheduled Caste'.
6. From 1961 to 1981 census report they were re-classified as 'scheduled Tribes'
7. In 1986 they were classified as 'Primitive tribe groups'

Koragas are called in different ways by different scholars, Sociologists Anthropologist and others. According to Ramappa Varmika 'Koragas' belong to slave class. Sir Herbert Risley called them 'aboriginals'. Dr. Elwin V. calls they were 'Original inhabitants of a land'. J.H. Hutton calls 'Primitive Tribes'. G.S. Ghurye describes them as so called 'Backward Hindus'. Social reformer Jyothi Rao phule called 'Adipraja'. Narasimha Mehta, A Gujarath Saint called they were 'Girijana'. Other Social reformer called Adivasis, Vanavasis, Antyaja.

Today we use the term 'Scheduled Tribe'. Since the concept of untouchability has its roots in

the ideas of cleanliness and hygiene it is the life style of Koragas who used to eat dead animals and the left over foods has forced other to keep themselves away from them. In Dakshina Kannada Koragas are considered as untouchables and the practice of social distance, keeping out of personal and social contact is followed in case of Koragas.

Hence, Koragas are not allowed to mingle with others in any of the social functions as well as they are also not allowed to enter into places of worships the persons who touches a Koraga are considered to carry the risk of impurity.

The names of Koragas are interesting and peculiar. Traditional minded Koragas prefer to use the traditional names of their ancestors. There is also a practice of naming the child after the grandparents in the male and female line. The nomenclature is a part of Kinship system, constitutes a relation between generations. The various common names maintained in the lineage or family line shows that there is some significant similarity among the kinsmen. This further strengthen the bond of kinship. It is interesting to note that certain names among traditional Koragas are commonly used for both boys and girls. They were originally worshippers of the sun and they are still called after the names of the days of the week.

Koragas, as field work in udupi, kapu, Kundapur, Belman surrounding shows that they depend forest for their livelihood. Using forest products they make baskets, and other agricultural and household products. As per the fieldwork indicated that most of the Koragas leave these work due to deforestation and forest law affected their work. In societies people show keen interest for plastic products also affected their traditional household work.

As studies with interview method adopted koragas of Kundapur, Udupi, Karkala, Beltangadi and Mangalore region koragas has three main clans-

1. Ande Koragas
2. Vastra Koragas
3. Soppu Koragas

One of the features of these groups are one clan group are not marry with another clan group. We seen endogamous marriage among them. In survey another thing noted that they having exogamous balis like Haledennaya, Kumardennaya and so on. Koragas worshipped SUN god. They also worships devils eg. Panjurli.

**Ajalu:** One of the social duty Koragas are expected to perform that is AJALU system. They are expected to perform ajal during the time of KAMBALA, Village festivals, disease of person of upper castes, removing disease of the children of the upper caste, death ceremonies Koragas were used. They must beat drum and play flute during village festivals, death ceremonies and various religious and social functions. Village leaders insist them to visit housewise beat drum and flute and annuce the date of Village festivals. For return they get little amount of money, old unused household articles, old cloths, food which remain in the household. At present younger koragas opposed these types of ajal system. Even many koraga organization established and create awareness and prohibit of these ajal system.

Poverty and Ignorance keeping them poor. Reasons for poverty is lack of employment opportunities for koragas, because of less education they will not get good occupation which keep them living below poverty line. Ignorance of these community also affected their life. They having the very shy nature, even today they hesitate to touch other castes group created problems for them. Even there are schools in village areas, its away from the Koragas community. Even they send their children to the school children must walk a mile distance and walk in forest areas dangers for children because of forest consist of wild animals which might be cause damage children's life. Some koraga children admitted the school but dropout the school very early.

The reasons for the dropout may be children learning in school might be difficult because of school language like kannada, english, hindi are not familiar to the children, because of the parents illiteracy they didnot train their children properly. Teachers also did not take any special care for this children, it affect their education and oher classmates also not mingled properly with them and these kind of environment koraga students not show interested in study and dropout from the school. Patriarchy system also reasons for school dropouts.

In most of the interior villages there are more dropouts due to lack of schools near their house they haveto travel far so this leads to dropouts of girls and the primary school children sufficient transport facilities available in the country and it also adds on to accessibility. Sometimes the education system in our country also is the reason for dropout example. This schools becomes toxic to student barping students are suspended for minor infections or placed in "remdial classes". Many of the school lack adequate guidance are selling and the curriculum is not relevant to the needs of the students being taught. Health issues amongst koragas students one of the reason to leave the school. Students parents are illiterate because of that reason they do not know the value of education.

Their freedom has been snatched by disciplinary rules in schools. Class system has been affected on tribal community. Lack of interest in education also increasing school dropouts. Child marriage and psychological implications made them feel insecure. Quality of the food supplied in schools is very poor. Lack of teaching faculty to teach the children and understand their psychological condition. Parents refuse to use systematically provided education for their children due to which literacy rate of these communities in Udupi district is very low. Because of the Nuclear family system children are supposed to work to feed themselves. There are many Koraga welfare organisations in Udupi district straining hard to convince Koraga people to send their children to school related to which they keep conducting meetings, discussions, pertaining to welfare of the children.

**Health** is very important for any individual. Health is defined as, "Complete physical and mental fitness of an individual. But health is the serious issues among koragas. Many of the koragas died in very early age due to malnutrition, superstitious beliefs and ignorance. Hospitals and clinics are not avail near of their 'KOPPA'. Even they caught any desease they are not interested to go to the hospitals. The costs of hospital charges, medical treatment are not possible to afford them. They also hinder from health education and heath awareness programmes.

According to V N Raghunathan a senior tribal welfare officer working among the primitive group said that medical records had indicated tuberculosis was the main cause of the

casualties, although governmentsponsored mobile teams, comprised of doctors and paramedics, roamed frequently in the settlements to provide the needy with medical support. Cancer and leprosy also claimed many lives leading to the shrinking of the community, he said. Stating that they were living in severe poverty in the absence of any employment, he said their meagre income derived from marketing baskets made of cane collected from Karnataka. Some of the youth were engaged in laterite stone cutting, masonry work and in beedi-rolling to supplement the family income, the officer said.

There is widespread alcoholism among Koraga men and they also indulge in beedi and betel for which they had to spend a major portion from the paltry income leaving very little for other day-to-day expenses. They subsist mainly on rice and meats such as pork and beef, although they are increasingly also using produce such as pulses and vegetables. Their meat is often sourced from animals that have died naturally rather than by slaughter

## CONCLUSION

The above studies shows that Koragas are leading hard life and living with superstitious believes and practices. Because of their poverty and illiteracy they are easily cheated by the outsiders in social, economic and educational fields. They are not much aware of their health issues. They believed that they caught health problems due to god curse on them as well as due to hostile spirits and ghosts. Modern health technologies and treatment are not reaching them fully. They are using traditional method of curing their diseases. They are facing the severe health diseases like malaria, venerable diseases, forest fever, typhoid, leprosy, T.B., etc. The reasons for this the koragas population decreasing today. Government has to take some steps to improve the conditions of koraga students and their education.

Monetary support, scholarship facilities, free uniforms, should improve the conditions of koraga family by providing proper occupations, land for occupation, provide vitamins food, construction of shelter to them, permanent property and house for live, encourage koraga children must admit the school and dropouts should be controlled. To create such atmosphere for them to have good education and need to inculcate virtues of life. So from the society and NGO's have to contribute to make them most civilized and educated in the society by doing this way we can make their lives prosper and happy. 'Makkala Mane' at 'Dr Ambedkar Nagar in Kumbhashi, is organising various programme for the educational welfare of the Koraga children in Kundapura.

The organisation, tries to impart the importance of education to parents and children of Koraga community. It conducts counseling to the children who are absent for the programme. It organises them programmes on Various topics such as need and importance of cleanliness,

Handicrafts / arts, including sports and cultural activities. Koraga community is not developed to the expected level but slowly they are reaching to the mainstream of the society. It is one of the saddest part of the development. Koraga's culture & tradition has been changed by the modern touch, by the influence of Shista Parampare, their customs & tradition like baptism (Cradle Ceremony), Marriage, House Warming Ceremony, Funeral & Role of priest involved in their various aspects of the way of life. Koraga language has been declining because of the influence of modern education.

Though Government has prohibited "Ajalu Paddhathi" but still it is practice in remote & interior place and in traditional Koraga families. Government has to provide initiative to establish Koraga Tribal Research study centre either in Udupi district or South Canara district. Government and NGO'S must plan for various programmes for protecting koraga culture, improve their education levels, provide medical facilities, etc.

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