

## A study on infant and child mortality rate

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### ABSTRACT

As per the reference made in Orissa Summary Report, 1993, Orissa had the highest infant mortality rate than any state of India (112 infants death per 1000 live births), the present study analysed the rate and cause of mortality of children below 5 years of age of the Bauries, a major scheduled caste community of Puri District, Orissa. It was found that the mortality rate was 10.43% and the causes of this high mortality rate were low level of maternal education, discontinuation of allopathic treatment to superstition and homeopathic or Ayurvedic treatment, low level of nutritional status and lack of proper knowledge for food sanitation and hygiene.

**Key words :** Proximate principles, Mortality rate, Superstition, Nutritional status.

Children are the future of the nation. Prompt care and deep attention should be taken for their all round development. Vidyarthi (1977) while enquiring about the health and sanitary conditions of SC-peoples in Kunti police station of Bihar found that, poverty coupled with malnutrition make these people vulnerable and victims of various diseases and the consequential out come was heavy mortality. Parvathamma (1984) in a similar study in Karnataka observed that, non-availability of modern medical facilities in rural areas was not only the principal reason for poor health of SC adults but also aggravated infant mortality. In this context, a study was undertaken as regards to the mortality rate of children of Bauris - a major SC community of Puri district of Orissa, as they constitute 28.51 % of the total SC population of Puri district Anonymous (1993). The factors like level of education and income, marriage customs, belief in superstition, level of treatment and nutritional status were analysed to draw the proper conclusion.

### METHODOLOGY

Following multistage, stratified random sampling technique, Pipli, Baliana and Daspallah blocks were selected from high, medium and low irrigated zones of the district. Then 20% of households were chosen from 5 villages of each block, making the total sample to 117. Then they were classified into three income groups. Children below 5 years of age were classified into two groups, *i.e.* below 2 years and 2-5 years. All the data collected were coded and analysed using SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences). The study was conducted during the year 2004-2005, basing on the reports of the past 10 years.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mortality rate for infants (Fig. 1) below 2 years and children between 2-5 years of age group was 20%, 7.14%, 10% and 4.82%, 11.54%, 9.09% for low, middle and high income groups, respectively. So, the mortality rate decreases with the advancement of age and does not have any relation with the level of income.

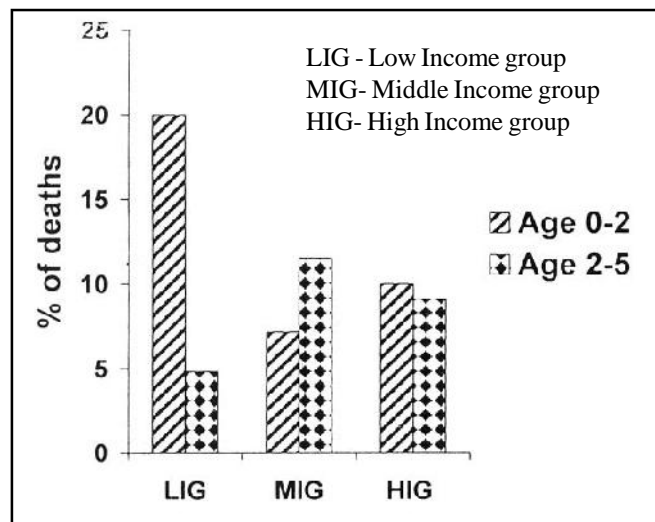


Fig. 1 : Mortality rate

A deep analysis into the reasons for mortality, Table 1, showed that 100% of infants below 2 years of age group died of epileptic fits, for all the three income groups. For children between 2-5 years of age in low income groups, 50% of them expired due to epileptic fits and 25% each expired due to high fever and bronchitis. In case of MIG, 33.33% of each expired due to epileptic fits, diarrhea and bronchitis. But, in case of HIG, 100% of children