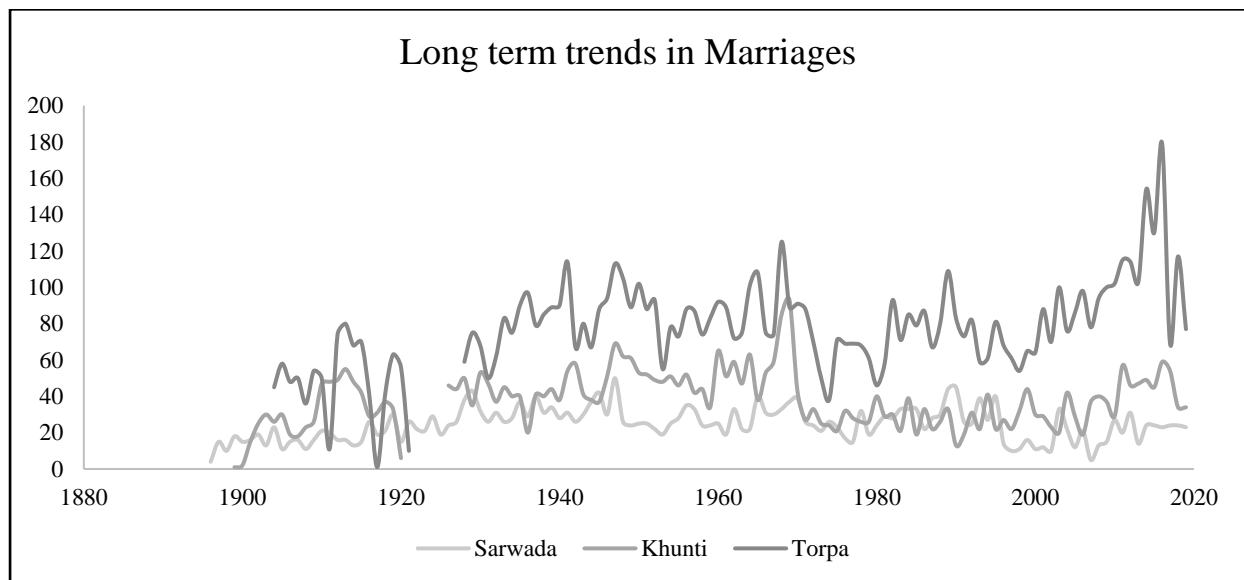


Introduction

Marriage is nearly Universal (Srinivasan and James, 2016). Indian marriages are characterised by lower age at first marriage. But, analysis employing data on marriages of more than a decade and studying a particular community with extendable characteristics has been quite minimal. In the present study, we use parish registers to understand long term trends in nuptiality and its pattern along with seasonality. Earlier attempts included Srivastava (1978); Rajan (1988); Arulraj (1989) who studied marriages on a large scale in their respective research, the research were mainly based in Goa, Bombay and Suranam in Tamil Nadu. This happens to be the first study done in the eastern side of India, in Ranchi, which was a part of Bengal Mission, started by Jesuits of the Belgium Province in 1868.

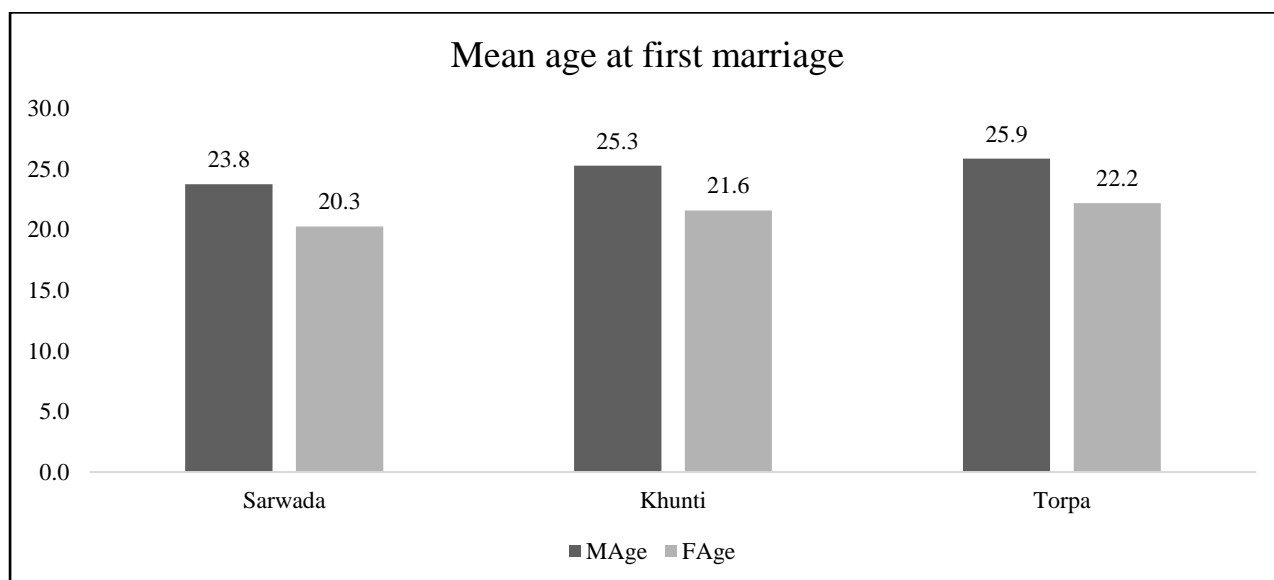
The datasets used are parish registers of nuptiality in the then parishes of the Ranchi Mission starting from 1896-2018, amounting to 16,005 marriages. The method used here is independent analysis, in order to know the long term trends in marriages, its pattern in remarriages and seasonality.

Figure: 1 – Long term trends in Marriages



The above table clearly shows that, marriages picked up only after 1900s and went a little higher in the 1913, 41, 68 and picked more pace in 2016 for Torpa parish, whereas for the rest of two parishes, it was much below than the above discussed parish. The reason for sudden upsurge is the mass marriages due to dispensation of banns.

Figure 2: Overall Mean age at first marriage for Sarwada, Khunti and Torpa



The above table shows the overall mean age at first marriage for both males and females. It is very clear from the above table that, Khunti and Torpa happens to be almost same or nearby in their figures. But Sarwada appears to be standing with different figures because of the large missing data in the registers, because of mass marriages and the entries with absent ages both for males and females.

Seasonality in Marriages

Decadal seasonality in Marriages in Sarwada

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1896-05	96	107	9	77	33	11	7	5	6	4	17	4	376
1906-15	447	236	93	144	74	17	10	9	5	5	11	24	1075
1916-25	182	185	33	67	49	20	9	4	4	4	10	9	576
1926-35	424	451	31	82	126	65	35	14	8	16	8	50	1310
1936-45	536	570	43	81	179	60	35	14	11	13	16	37	1595
1946-55	520	697	57	85	131	62	26	15	16	19	22	51	1701
1956-65	387	762	42	77	143	60	28	14	14	22	7	85	1641
1966-75	437	652	31	96	96	52	29	7	6	12	7	98	1523
1976-85	305	484	46	66	105	100	11	5	7	11	7	105	1252
1986-95	268	356	11	130	287	188	16	8	4	11	4	87	1370
1996-05	182	245	2	139	305	235	6	1	2	8	1	55	1181
2006-15	158	191	6	198	727	285	5	2	4	12	6	94	1688
Total	3942	4936	404	1242	2255	1155	217	98	87	137	116	699	15288

The above table shows the seasonality in marriages among the Roman Catholics in the selected parishes of the then Ranchi Mission. It is clearly evident from the table that, marriages were happening mainly in January and February but later on the pattern started shifting to April, May and June at a later point in time, the reasons for such a sudden shift is due to marriages happening due to affinities and leading to dispensation of banns, this phenomenon was never experienced in the earlier studies in historical demography in the Indian context.

Conclusion

Marriages have been differently experienced in all the selected parishes. Age at marriage could have been universal across all the three parishes, but due to heavy missing values in one of the parishes, the estimates happen to differ in just one of the parishes. A shift has been observed in the seasonality of marriages, due to dispensation of banns, the responsible factors are the cultural upbringing of these villages, with enough autonomy among the men and women to select each other before marriage and start living together has led to mass marriages in these areas mainly leading to dispensation of banns, whereby the banns are restricted by the parish priest pertaining to certain marriages, where both groom and bride have started living together or already have an offspring or about to have one or also in the case of affinities in these parishes.