

# **SRI SHARADA COLLEGE, BASRUR**

**KUNDAPURA TALUK, UDUPI DISTRICT - 576 211**



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## **Student Project**

**Topic: A study on life and tradition in Koraga Tribe**

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# *A case Study on Koraga Tribal Community in Kumbhashi Grama Panchayath*

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## ***I. INTRODUCTION***

Koraga tribal is also known as Dravidian language and is spoken widely by numerous Koraga people. This language is also known by numerous names such as *Koragara*, *Koragar*, *Korra Koraga* and *Korangi*. This idiom is extensively orated by scheduled tribal folks of Tulu Nadu. Moreover it is verbally narrated by most of Karnataka individuals in West south India. This Tulu Nadu consists of few districts of *Dakshina Kannada* and *Udipi* in Karnataka state. It even includes the district of Kasaragod of Kerala state. Further more this language is remotely connected to Tulu language and even Kannada idiom too. In addition this verbal communication is not comprehensible to *Muddu Koraga*, this is an idiom spoken by Koraga clan in Kerala. Additionally this language is regarded as an independent idiom instead of being dialect of any other language. Koraga people converse in their language only with the people of their own communities. When these people converse with other communities, they communicate in other languages such as *onti* and *ande*. This language is also considered as an endangered idiom as it is already suffering from language shift and loss in several regions within their regional home of Tulu Nadu. The language attitude by the rural people is shown negative. This language as per 2 the myths possesses some cultural traits and also some inferiors. Therefore it is spoken mostly by urban society and not by the rural people as they consider this language a dishonourable way of communication.

## ***II. History***





A few centuries before, the multilingual Koragas who lives in Karkala and Kundapura converse with each other in Kannada, Tulu and Koraga language. It is also seen that the bilingual Koragas living in Magalore and Udipi taluks talk with each other in Kannada and tulu language only. Recently now days the language atmosphere has been changed and all the groups and sub groups are becoming mulingualism and multilingual. Moreover the Koragas were considered highly unique with their distinct cultures and traditions. Their language has been grouped under South Dravidian language group. Furthermore this language has no script and it has borrowed its literature from Kannad script. It is also visible that the people of Koraga are multilingual andbilingual. In addition few trilingual are also seen in Koragas speaking different types of languages. The Koragas are perhaps the poorest among the scheduled tribes in Karnataka and Kerala. Koraga is an aboriginal tribe at Dakshina Kannada and Udupi Districts in Karnataka. Though the Koragas are tribal's, they are regarded as ceremonially impure and unclean in the local Hindu Society and were considered untouchables by the main stream of social group. The Koragas are the most backward among the tribes of Karnataka State in every respect. A great majority of them lead on hard life and good proportion of they are engaged in their traditional occupations like basket making. Koragas are, a very quiet and inoffensive race, small and slight, the men seldom exceeding five feet six inches, black skinned, thick lipped, noses broad and flat, high-check bones and sloping foreheads, and with bushy rough hairs. Their principal occupation was basket making and food gathering. At present, they are engaged with many other occupations. Most of them are labourers. According to the 2001 Census, the total population of the Koraga tribe is 21,000. The District and Taluks wise population:





### ***III. The Koraga language***

Koraga language follows under Dravidian language family. This family involves few groups which are Southern Dravidian, Koraga and Tulu. Writing Script This Koraga language usually follows Kannada script. Koraga is a tribal language spoken mainly in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi Districts of Karnataka State and Kasaragod District of Kerala State. Koraga language is divided into a number of distinct dialects, which are separated from one another by both geographical and social factors. According to early research works (Bhat, 1971), there are four major dialects in Koraga. They are, i) *Onti* spoken in Udupi, ii) *Tappu* spoken in Hebri, iii) *Mudu* spoken in Kundapura and iv) *Ande*, spoken in Mangalore. Most of the Koragas are bilinguals, the other language being Tulu or Kannada. The speakers of the third dialect (i.e., *Mudu* Koraga) mentioned above, know Kannada in addition to their mother tongue. But *Tappu* Koragas are multi-lingual's. They speak both Tulu and Kannada other than their mother - tongue.



#### ***IV. Cultural life***

Once upon a time the Koragas were the ruling tribe of some parts of Dakshina Kannada District and Western Ghats region of the Karnataka State. It is also said that the Koragas were enslaved around 6th A.D. Since then, the Koragas were slave labourers and women were sent to forests. The District Gazetteer of Dakshina Kannada reveals that till the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Koragas were treated as slave labourers, in weekly fairs and yearly fairs in the district. Koragas have their highly distinct and unique folk culture and language. Their language is Koraga and undoubtedly grouped as Dravidian. The Koraga language has no script, but today a few literates have mostly borrowed its linguistic resources from Kannada. Thus, the Koragas are bilinguals and multi-lingual's too.

#### ***V. Family type***

The Koraga family reveals that like any wheels, joint family system is disappearing among the Koragas. Traditional joint families of the Koragas were not as large as in the main stream of Indian society. Nearly two-third of the sample respondents live in nuclear families and only about a third live in joint families.

#### ***VI. Health***

Good health is crucial for socio-economic development of the people. Health is defined as "complete physical and mental fitness of an individual. But health is one of the serious problems among the Koragas. Some of them are suffering from fatal diseases. Frequently they are affected by T.B., fever, typhoid, cold, skin diseases etc. The other problems reported were leprosy, malaria, jaundice, typhoid, heart pain, back pain, stomach pain etc.

#### ***VII. Marriage***

The matrimonial affinity of the tribe as reflected in the kinship system. Once matching the pair is over, the process of marriage rituals will be undertaken. The marriage processes in Koraga are simple but convincingly matching with the common core of the Hindu marriage methods. Here, lexical items related to the marriage ceremony have been taken. Matrimonial alliance will be made as according to the cross-matrimonial relations allowed in their community. Usually marriage process is simple and arranged marriages are common. Marriage by elopement is also practiced but now it is becoming rare. Marriage by labor in the father-in-

law's house is also common. In this section the lexical items of the Koraga language related to most fundamentals of a marriage process has been given. The most fundamental items for a marriage are collected from the natives by asking questions like 'what are the most essential items and events necessary to say a marriage is over?' Responses of the informants after deductive programming resulted with twelve lexical items which denote the most essentials of the marriage process. However, informants also indicated the relative order of the items. The Koraga language is quite notable for the fact that in many domains it holds multiple numbers of synonyms for one and the same concept. The lexical forms denoting the concept 'marriage' are four in number. The *muyi* is identical to the Kannada and Tulu forms with the same meaning. The presence of the form *muyi* 'present for a newly married couple' indicates that the culture of presenting whatever it is possible, one fellowmen of the society had a long practice. According to Koraga tribe, the first most essential to a marriage is 'bride'. This again certifies the matrilineal system of the Koraga tribe.

### ***VIII. Bhūta worship***

Here the specific ritualistic terms related to the worship of God and *bhūta* worship are found. The five forms *kaḍapuru*, *lēci*, *maḍḍatana*, *panyāra*, and *nērangε* are native Koraga forms. The relatable forms either from Kannada or from Tulu are not found. The five forms *pūja*, *cēca*, *cīrta*, *purcada*, and *kilabāra* given above are the adaptation of the Sanskrit borrowed items *pūja*, *sēse*, *tīrtha*, *prasāda*, and *tulābāra* via Tulu. The Koraga language in this domain exhibits the fact that it has its own vocabulary of worship related items. At the same, through its borrowed vocabulary it also evidences that it had sufficient contact with mainstream Hindu based worship practices.

### ***IX. Gods***

Even though the Koraga community is a primitive tribe, which is associated with the spirit worship we find that the ethnic group hold distinction between holy spirits and evil spirits. And their association with the trends other than *bhūta* worship is quite evident to the fact that those people were associated with the major trends in the Hindu society from the very beginning. This is linguistic evidence as reflected in their lexicon, for the fact which is reflected in their

legendary King *habashika* who fought with the *Kadamba* dynasty of Karnataka and defeated the army of *Kadambas* twice and who later got killed tyrannously by the Dynasty, as according to their legends. How far their relation with *Kadamba* dynasty can be proved with this is a difficult question. However, their co-existence with the dominant society of plain land can be well established with this at least from the period of *Kadambas*.

### ***CONCLUSION***

The Present paper concludes the format and results of the research as presented in the dissertation. General introduction to the present paper study involves broader ground chosen for the paper which defines most fund a mentals of the research work undertaken. Brief introduction to the Koraga tribe involves facts like their regional affiliation, population, possible etymology of the term Koraga, their appearance (traditional), their traditional food pattern, ethnic historicity and origin of the tribe, traditional occupations, socio-cultural life and status, sub groups of the tribe, family type, health and alcoholism, their '*ajal*' duties and their relation with main stream society, and their relative status with other tribes in the zone, house hold income, and the sub varieties in the Koraga language.



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