

# IMPACT OF LITERACY, URBANIZATION AND SEX-RATIO ON AGE AT MARRIAGE IN INDIA

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The spectre of over-population in India is haunting the planners. The family planning programme has still to go a long way to meet its end of declining fertility. It is believed that a substantial rise in age at marriage can perhaps bring decline in fertility. With this belief in mind, many a time suggestions have been put forward to statutorily raise the age at marriage, both for males and females. In our view, a better approach than the enactment of such a law<sup>1</sup> would be to isolate the basic factors responsible for the preferences of people for a higher age at marriage and if possible to quantify these preferences. The object of the present study is to find out the impact of overall education, overall urbanization and sex ratio on age at marriage for both sexes at state-level of India.

The analysis has been attempted through fitting a linear regression for each state of India between the explained variable i.e. mean age at marriage and the explanatory variable i.e. education-level, urbanization level and sex ratio, taken one by one; by the least square method, the number of districts in each state provide the basic unit of observation.

## *Data*

The cross-sectional data, at district level of India, as obtained from the census of India 1961 reports have been utilised for the purpose. The concepts of literacy, urbanization and sex ratio are same as those of census.<sup>2</sup> The census reports however do not give any

<sup>1</sup> Enactment of such a law will in no case achieve the desired end as the proportion influenced will be restricted to those who go for civil marriage, which is still a rare event.

<sup>2</sup> *Census definition :*

1. Literacy :—"A person who could both read and write was regarded as literate. The test for reading was ability to read only simple letter in print or manuscript. The test for writing was ability to write a simple letter. The test for literacy was satisfied if the person could with understanding both read and write." The number of literates per