

Are Social Group Differentials in Fertility Narrowing with Rising Level of Living in Andhra Pradesh?

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In spite of low fertility levels and higher contraceptive use in the state of Andhra Pradesh, differentials are still discernible between the caste groups. This paper examines whether the caste differentials in fertility and contraceptive use exist at each stage of socio-economic status, and whether these are of the same order and direction, using the Second National Family Health Survey data. Analyses of interaction effects of caste and other socio-economic factors on fertility and contraceptive use show that the caste is not constant across the levels of socio-economic factors. Although the caste differentials are notable in rural areas, they are much narrower at the lower levels of socio-economic status. With the improvement of socio-economic status, not only will fertility decline with a corresponding increase in the use of contraception, but also the differences in fertility and contraceptive use between caste groups will disappear.

Introduction

There is clear evidence now that fertility transition is in progress in Andhra Pradesh. While the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) was about 5.5 children per woman in the 1960s, it has been since then reduced to 2.0 in 2005 (according to the recent Sample Registration System estimates), or to 2.25 in 1996–1998 (according to the Second National Family Health Survey). Fertility transitions in other countries have shown that fertility differentials typically diverge early in the transition and reconverge (though rarely completely) towards the end of the transition as fertility approaches the replacement level. As the state of Andhra Pradesh has approached replacement fertility, fertility differentials have become small. However, in spite of low fertility levels in the state, differentials in fertility and contraceptive use are still discernible between the caste groups (IIPS and ORC Macro, 2000a: 60 and 91). Fertility has been much higher and

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This paper draws heavily on two earlier papers (Ramesh, 2007a, 2007b). I would like to thank the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, India and MEASURE DHS+, ORC MACRO, USA for providing the Second National Family Health Survey data for the state of Andhra Pradesh. I am grateful to Professor P. Ramachandran, Professor Arup Maharatna, Dr S. Mulay, Dr R. Nagarajan, Dr S. Jareena and Mr. P. Phani Vaasu for their kind support and constant encouragement at various levels. Thanks are also due to Professor P.M. Kulkarni and Dr Manoj Alagarajan for their advice and suggestions on analytical techniques used in this paper. However, remaining errors are mine.