

# IMPACT OF POSTPONING MARRIAGES ON INDIA'S BIRTH RATE\*

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## *Introduction*

A number of research workers have agreed that by raising age at marriage the fertility level (in terms of birth rates) may be made to decrease (Coale and Tye, 1961; Agarwala, 1965, 1960; Ryder, 1960 etc.). However, there is variation in the quantification of this reduction depending upon the assumptions made and methods used by the individual researchers. Sometimes the range of variation is substantial (Raja Rao, 1964; Khan, 1964; Agarwala, 1965; Goyal, 1964 and Zachariah and Talwar, 1963). On the other hand, another group of research workers feels that the postponement of marriage may not result in any substantial reductions in fertility (Basavarajappa and Belavalagidad, 1967; Chidambaram, 1967 and Khan, 1964).

Before describing the present model, a brief review of the methods used earlier to assess the impact of age at marriage on fertility will be in order. The first source of knowledge about the fertility reduction due to late marriages is sample survey data on fertility. In a typical fertility survey the differential between the total fertility of the sample of women with low mean age at marriage and higher mean age at marriage might be attributed to the higher mean age at marriage in the latter group (Jain,—). However, such a conclusion may be incorrect because the two groups on whom differentials are based may be of different socio-economic and educational categories, which are important determinants of fertility. Probably comparisons are meaningful, if proper standardization (Bogue,—) methods are employed. Thus, it is doubtful whether inferences made on two sub-groups of sample women with different mean ages at marriage (as

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