

## Migration, Urbanisation and Fertility: The Case of the Indian Punjab

A. S. Oberai and H. K. M. Singh

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that fertility in urban areas is often lower than in rural areas for given levels of education, income and age-sex structures of the respective populations. This fact, coupled with the rapid migration from rural areas, characteristic of most developing countries today, raises two important questions for researchers and policy makers. First, does rural-urban migration lower fertility and thereby bring down population growth in the economy? If so, how and why? And second, what will happen to the gap between rural and urban fertility, as urbanisation increases?

The present study examines these questions using data generated by two household surveys, one conducted in twenty-six selected villages of Ludhiana district in the Indian Punjab and the other in the city of Ludhiana.<sup>1</sup> The focus of these surveys was on studying the causes and consequences of migration, but questions on fertility were included to trace out the links between migration and population growth through the study of the fertility behaviour of migrant and non-migrant households at the micro level. There were 2696 currently married women in the rural survey and 2592 in the urban survey. Of these, 1567 women in the rural survey and 1943 in the urban survey were in the age-group 15-44. Family planning questions were asked only of the currently married women in the age-group 15-44.

In order to study the relationship between migration and fertility, it is necessary to consider socio-economic and demographic factors which influence fertility. It cannot be said that there is a firm theory here, for the strength and relevance of factors which affect fertility will vary from one social setting to another. However, perceptive studies of scholars like Leibenstein, Becker, Easterlin, Schultz and others have been of value in identifying and analysing many such factors.

The economic theory of fertility behaviour considers fertility to be the outcome of an interrelated process of