

Fertility Differentials by Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Couples in Maharashtra, 1980

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OBJECTIVE

The First Report on Maharashtra Fertility and Mortality Survey 1980 (MFMS) has identified and described the social and demographic characteristics of couples by which their fertility differs. The more important among them were found to be rural or urban place of residence, the educational level of the wife and her husband and the community (caste-cum-religion) of the couple. The objective of this paper is to examine in depth the fertility differentials among couples particularly by these social characteristics, controlling for demographic factors, such as age and/or duration of marriage.

The MFMS report has presented the relationship of the social and demographic variables taken one at a time with fertility. There are, however, several important issues regarding the joint relationship of the social correlates to fertility that have significant policy implications. For instance, is education a more important determinant of fertility than community? Is the relationship of these two factors with fertility the same in rural and urban areas? Are the effects of these two factors "additive" on fertility or do they jointly enhance fertility reduction? These are some of the issues that could provide useful information in designing policy interventions and programmes needed for population stabilization.

The data are from MFMS, 1980. This micro-analysis is limited to currently married women aged 15 to 49, who also constitute the unit of analysis. Fertility is measured in terms of children ever born by the wife. This fertility measure is affected by demographic factors such as the age composition, marital duration distribution and age at marriage. Hence they have been controlled suitably so that the differentials by social characteristics may be validly compared and interpreted.

Both micro and macro studies have repeatedly shown that the social variables of wife's and husband's education, the "community" to which the couples belong and rural or