

Religious leaders must create awareness about family planning, says former CEC

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RELIGIOUS LEADERS should be involved in community outreach activities to ensure that awareness about family planning reaches everyone, said former Chief Election Commissioner Dr SY Quraishi.

He was speaking at Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics at an event to mark World Population Day on Monday.

Quraishi, who has written



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on Monday.
Pavan Khengre

the book *The Population Myth : Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India*, noted that the differential fertility rates between Hindu and Muslims was on a decline just as there was a declining trend in religion-wise

population. Referring to the findings of his book, Quraishi said it was a myth that Muslim couples had more children because the community still practises polygamy.

With states such as Bihar planning to introduce caste-based census, Dr P M Kulkarni, senior demographer, said that accurate recording and tabulation of castes per household was the real challenge before the officials involved in the census.

According to Rajeshwari Deshpande from the department of political science at

Savitribai Phule Pune University, caste has merely been reduced to quota for either admissions for education or for seeking jobs.

She said, "Every caste has a class structure. In the middle class, there is a poorer class and that exists in every caste."

Another panelist, Dr R B Bhagat, Director, the Centre for Migration and Urban Studies at Indian Institute of Population Sciences, Mumbai, highlighted the lack of availability of a comprehensive list of castes based on socio-economic class in the country's 2011 census.