Schedule Caste Fertility and Family Planning Behavior of Women: A Case Study of Chittoor District

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Abstract

Fertility, mortality, morbidity and contraception behaviour of the population is mostly influenced by the socio-economic and cultural conditions. Hence, it is necessity to identify and understand the socio-economic cultural factors which are likely to affect fertility and family planning behaviour of particular community against this back ground. The present study conducted among scheduled castes inhabited in Nagiri mandal in Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh.

The present paper discusses about fertility and family planning behaviors practiced by the study community. It is also discussed about the socio-economic conditions of the study community.

KEY WORDS: Socio- economic status, Fertility behaviors, Family planning.

INTRODUCTION

In the Bucharest conference the participants unanimously resolved that "Development is the best contraceptive". Hence, there is a great need to identify and understand the socio-economic factors which are likely to affect fertility, Mortality and Migration of a given population. The socio-economic factors differ from place to place and from time to time and from community to community. It is very essential to study the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of a community, because the level of fertility, mortality, morbidity and contraceptive behavior of the population is mostly influence by their socio-economic and cultural back ground. The socio-economic characteristics like Educational status of respondent, spouse relations ship before marriage, DWACRA membership, and social status of women in DWACRA group, land holdings and family income. While, the demographic characteristics such as: Age structure, sex structure, age at marriage, of respondents, Age at marriage of spouse present age of the respondent, present age of the spouse, and family size are studied. The fertility and family planning aspects that are studied are number children born, age at first birth,Knowledge on family planning and Practice of family planning. An attempt is made here to study the socio – Economic characteristics of sample women and fertility and family planning behaviour of the women belonging to scheduled caste.

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METHODOLOGY

Nagari mandal has chosen for study because of the higher concentration of the women self- help groups and it is the border mandal located in ChittoorDistrict in Andhra Pradesh and Adjacent to Chengalput District in Tamil Nadu. Three revenue villages are

randomly selected on the basis of highly developed, medium developed and less developed villages for study. 50 SC eligible couple between the age group 18-49 years is identified and 50 scheduled caste women are selected on randomly from each village. Thus, the total sample units become 150 drawn from the three sample villages spread other the Nagiri mandal is Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh.

OBJECTIVE
1. To study the socio-economicdemographic aspects of the sample women in the study area.
2. To examine the, fertility and family planning aspects of the sample women in the study area.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Education

Educational status of an individual enhances his ability to think, analyze and act to better his future living. Through education, an individual gains knowledge and wisdom and act according to this own thinking and adopt the behaviour of the others. Education makes people balance and counter balance his emotion and act according to the social consequences. Education makes people aware of their roles in the society and in the family. The particulars education as relating to the 45 percentage those can do their signature on application form in the bank status of sample women
is presented in table-1.

Table-1: Distribution of respondents (Females) by their educational status

Educational Status	Number	Percentage
Illiterates	91	60.7
Primary	39	26.0
Secondary	20	13.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**

SOURCE: Survey schedule

The abovetable's shows that 60.7 percentages of female respondents are illiterate, but more than 45 percentage of respondents can do their signature on application form in the bank. 26.0 percent and 13.3 percent of the sample women have completed primary education and secondary education respectively. Therefore, majority of the respondents are illiterates and even educators, they studied up to primary and secondary level only.Information on educational status of respondent's husbands is presented in table -2.

Table- 2: Educational status of the Husbands of the respondents

Educational Status	Number	Percentage
Illiterates	86	57.3
Primary	23	15.4
Secondary	41	27.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**

It is clear from the table above that more than 57 percent of the spouses (Husbands) of the sample women are illiterates who are less than that of their counter parts. 43 percent of the male have completed their primary and secondary education.

SPOUSE RELATIONSHIP: In India marriage is universal. It is social aspect, entirely determined by the socio-cultural fact that prevailed in the society. In Indian context, it is common that marriage takes place in the blood relationship. The particulars relating to thespouse relationship before marriage is collected and presented in table -3.

Table- 3: Distribution of respondents spouse relationship before marriage.

Relationship	Number	Percentage
Blood relation	60	40.0
Relative	51	34.0
Non-relative	39	26.0
Total	**150**	**100.0**

It is clear from table -3 that 40 percent of the respondents married within their blood relations. 34percent of the sample women married relatives and 26 percent have no relationship before marriage. Majority of the marriages are arranged by their parents and the village elders and celebrated in their villages. Thus, in the study area, majority of the marriagesare taking place within relationship, either of the spouses.

DWACRA membership: It is programme launched by government for the development of women and children in rural areas. Now a days, it is playing a vital role in bringing socio-economic status of the women in the poorer sections of the rural population.Membership status of the sample women in DWACRA group is given in table-4.

Table - 4: Distribution of respondents having membership in DWACRA group.

Membership	Number	Percentage
Member	134	89.3
Non-member	16	10.7
Total	**150**	**100.0**

The membership status of the nearly nine-tenth (89.3percent) of respondent are sample women shows that members in the DWACRA group and rest (10.7 percent) are non-member in the group , because of their poor economic status they do not have a permanent house. Hence, they seems to be migrants. The government schemes are implemented for the development of the poor with the financial assistance through micro finance like self-help groups (SHG's) or DWACRA groups. The house – sites and land pattas are also given to the members of these women. Free gas connection is also provided to the women members of the SHG's.

SOCIAL STATUS IN DWACRA GROUP: Generally, DWARCRA consists of ten members in a group. Among these members two members are selected as 1st leader and 2[nd]leader. These leaders look after the developmental activities of the group and these leaders have contact with Panchayat and Mandal co-ordination team. These members are generally exposed to the outside environment, which leads socio-economic and cultural change. Theparticular of the social status of the women members in DWACRA group are presented in table-5.

Table – 5: Distribution of respondents by social status in DWACRA group.

Social status	Respecting husband / Family members	Involving in decision making in House/ Society	Increase respect by in the village	Involving in solving village problems
1st leader	8	14	14	14
2nd leader	14	14	14	14
Member	32	89	72	88
Total	**54**	**117**	**100**	**116**

It can be observed from table-5 that 67 percent of respondents are members in the DWACRA and 13 percent are 1st leaders, and 20 percent of the respondents are 2nd leaders.

LAND HOLDING: In rural Indiahaving the, land is the symbol of social status. It enhances and a good status in the society. It gives employment to the millions of rural people. It also an economic security to the family. If anybody possesses land he/she is eligible to become a member of the Primary Agricultural Credit Society (PACS) and Farmers Service Society (FSS) and he/she can available of loan facility. The land holding status of responded is collected and presented in table -6.

Table – 6: Distribution of respondents by land holding size.

Land holding Status	Number	Percentage
Landless	27	18.0
Below 2.5 Acres	25	16.7
Between 2.5-5 Acres	78	52.0
Between 5-10 Acres	12	8
10 Acres and above	8	5.3

The table above shows that 18 percent of the sample women have no lands 82 percent of the women in the three sample villages have possessed agricultural. 16.7 percent of the respondents having below 2.5 Acres of land. 52 percent of respondents having the land between 2.5 – 5 Acres, 8 percent have 5 – 10 acres and only 5.3 percent of farmers have above 10 acres of land.

FAMILY INCOME: income is one of the indicators of socio-economic status. The level of income determines the standard of living of the people which intern influence on their fertility, morbidity and family planning practice. The respondents of the present study have been divided into three broad income groups viz, low income group less than or equal to Rs.20, 000/-) middle income group Rs.20001-40,000/-) and high income group (Rs. 40, 0001+). The data relating to family income of the sample women is presented in table-7.

Table – 7: Distribution of respondents by family income.

Annual family income (in rupees)	Number	Percentage
≤ 20,000 (Low)	28	18.7
20,001- 40,000 (Middle)	102	68.0
and 40,001 (High)	20	13.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**

From table-7 it is clear that 68 percent of respondents are getting an income of Rs.20, 001-40,000/- per annum. Another 18.7 percent of respondents are getting an annual income of Rs less than or equal to Rs.20, 000/- and 13.3 percent are getting Rs.40, 001 and above per year. In this study majority of the respondents are in middle income group,and they are completely depend on agricultural sector.

AGE AND SEX STRUCTURE: The age and sex structure of the population influence all the three demographic events viz. Fertility, Mortality and Migration. However, the present age and sex structure inter determined by the past events of fertility, mortality and migration, similarly the present age and sex structure influences the future socio-economic and demographic aspects. Moreover, the age and sex structure also influences saving, investment, work participation rate, investment of labour force, and overall socio-economic development. Therefore, age and sex structure plays a dominant role in the study of people and their behavior towards the family planning programmes. The particulars relating to the Age – wise distribution of the family members of the sample women are presented in table – 8**.**

Table – 8: Distribution of population by broad age group

Age Group (in years)	Number	Percentage
0-14	203	37.2
15-35	162	29.7
35-59	39	7.2
Total	**546**	**100.0**

The highest numbers of people are found in the age group of below 14 years. 30 percent of the people are in relatively.

SEX COMPOSITION: The sex composition of a population is the most basic of all demographic characteristics and it effects directly on the incidence of birth, deaths and marriages migration rates, occupational structure and virtually all other population characteristics. The sex composition of the population is presented in table-9.

Table – 9: Distribution of population by sex composition

Sex composition	Number	Percent
Male	282	51.7
Female	264	48.3
Total	**546**	**100.0**

The table above shows that 52 percent of the total population of all the sample households is male as against 48 percent of women. This trend of male out numbering female is seen in the study area. The sex ratio defined as number of females per 1000 males. The sex ratio in the study population is 936. This sex ratio is high than the Indian overage which recorded as in 2011 census. Therefore, in the study area the sex ratio is adverse to females.

AGE AT THE TIME OF MARRIAGE: In India marriage is universal phenomenon. Everyone in India, sooner or later usually get married. An unmarried person is not merely a necessary social institution but a quasi-religious duty. However, the age at marriage depends on socio-economic and cultural factors and the necessity in the family. A notable point in this connection is in India that child marriages declined as a result of

legislating and social change. Through Self-Help Groups / DWACRA. The post pone pavement of age at marriage of females has proved to be important instrument in restrictions the growth of population in industrialized countries. Data relating to the age at the time of marriage of the respondents is presented in table-10.

Table- 10: Distribution of respondents by age at marriage.

Age at marriage (in years)	Number	Percent
≤ 15	59	39.3
16-17	51	34.0
18 and above	40	26.7
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table-10 shows that nearly two –fifth (39.3percent) respondents married at less than or equal to 15 years of age. About one-third (34.0 percent) married at the ages of 16-17 years and 26.7 percent married at 18 and above years. Therefore, in the present study areas more than one-fourth (26.7 percent) married above legal age of marriage. However, in the study majority of the respondents married below the legal age at the time of marriage. Child marriages are continued up to 1990 decreasing rate in rural areas. At present, child marriages are being celebrated rarely in the villages due to superstition and innocence. Hence, efforts are to be made to rise the age at marriage of females in the community.

AGE AT MARRIAGE OF SPOUSES: Data on age at marriage of respondents husband has collected and the information in the table-11.

Table – 11: Distribution of spouse (Husbands) by their age at marriage.

Age at marriage (in years)	Number	Percent
≤ 17	52	34.7
18 - 20	84	56.0
21 and above	14	9.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table-11 shows the percentage distribution of spouses (Husbands) according to their age at the time of marriage. Most of (56.0 percent) spouses married at 18-20 years of age. About one-third (34.6 percent) married at the lower age group(less than or equal to 17 years) and 9.4 percent of spouses married at 21 and above years. More than 65 percent of the male (spouses) are married at the correct age of the marriages.

PRESENT AGE OF THE RESPONDENT: Present age is an important variable in the study of population. Present age determines socio-economic and demographic aspects like work force, dependency participation reproductive matters and adoption of family planning. The particulars relating to the percentage of the sample women are collected and presented in table-12.

Table – 12: Distribution of despondence by present age.

Present Age of respondents (in years)	Total number of women	Percentage
≤ 25	21	14.0
26-30	81	54.0
31-35	34	22.0
36 and above	14	10.0
Total	**150**	**100.0**

It is clear from table-12 that majority of (54 percent) respondents come under the age group of 26-30 years. 14 percent of the respondents present age are ≤ 25 years. About 22 percent of the respondents present age is fall between 31-35 years and 10 percent of respondents age is 36 and above years.

PRESENT AGE OF THE SPOUSE: the present age of the respondents spouse (Husbands) is presented in table-13.

Table – 13: Distributions of respondents by spouses (husbands) present age:

Present age of spouse (in years)	Number	Percent
≤ 29	42	28.0
30-35	78	52.0
36 and above	30	20.0
Total	150	100.0

It is clear from the table-13 that majority (52.0 percent) of respondent spouses present age is between 30-35 years, 28 percent of the spouses are less than or level to 29 years of age and rest of the sample respondents (20 percent) are at 36 and above years.

FAMILY SIZE: It is an important indicator in the study of demographic aspects. As the family size increases, the economic burden on family also increases. The family size included young, working and old age population. If the age and old age population increases, it will have adverse effect economic conditionof the family. The ideal family size as estimated by the family welfare Association of Kerala is five. In our classification we have grouped the sample women in to three groups, respondents with family size of below three, four and the other respondents in the family size above five. The family size wise destitution shows of respondent is presented in table -14.

Table- 14: Distribution of respondents by family size.

Family size (in members)	Number	Percent
Three	69	46.0
Four	68	45.3
Five and above	13	8.7
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table-14 shows that 46.0 percent of respondent's family size is three members. Another 45 percent have a family size of four members and 8.7 percent of respondents have a family size of five and above member. More than 91 percent of the sample women have an ideal family size**.** In the study area majority of respondents have minimum family size of three to four members. It shows less depending on family economy.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN: The number of children born per women depends on the socio-economic and demographic conditions. When females are socio-economically

better, they prefer lower children. In the present study data on number of children born per women is present in table-15.

Table – 15: Distribution respondents number of children born.

Number of children	Number	Percent
One child	64	42.7
Two children	70	46.6
Three children	15	10.0
Four children	1	0.7
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table-15 shows that the highest number (46.6 percent) of the respondents have two children followed by 42.7 percent have only single child, 10 percent with three children and only 0.7 percent have four children. Thus in the study areas the majority (89.4 percent) of respondents have one to two children. They have adopted the small family norms and maintained small nucleus families in the study area.

AGE AT FIRST BIRTH: It isone of important variable in the study of the fertility behavior. In certain societies, child marriages are prevalent. In this situation, the age at first birth of mothers starts after maturity of females. Age at first birth depends on the socio-economic cultural aspects of thepeople in the society. In the present study age of mother at first birth is presented in table-16.

Table – 16: Distribution of respondents by age at first birth wise

Age at first birth (in years)	Number	Percent
≤ 16	37	24.6
17-18	50	33.4
19 and above	63	42.0
Total	150	100.0

Table-16 shows that majority of respondents have their first birth at the age of 19 yearsand above. One third of (33.4 percent) the respondents had at ages 17-18 years and one fourth (24.6 percent) has at the age of less than or equal to 16 years of age. In the study area, majority of the respondents has their first birth at earlier ages

KNOWLEDGE ON FAMILY PLANNING: Many surveys in India revealed that most of the couples are having knowledge on permanent methods of family planning, especially tubectomy. However, knowledge on temporary method, because of low rate of inter personal and mass media communication in this aspects. Knowledge about family planning methods is the first step in the adoption of family planning. Data related to knowledge on family planning is presented in table-17.

Table -17: Distribution of respondents by knowledge on family planning methods.

Family planning method	Known number	Percentage	Un known number	percentage	Total
Tubectomy	150	100.0	-	-	100.0 (150)
Vasectomy	150	100.0	-	-	100.0 (150)
Nirodh	96	64.0	54	36.0	100.0

					(150)
I.U.D	4	2.7	146	97.3	100.0 (150)
Copper- T	15	10.0	135	90.0	100.0 (150)
Pills	35	23.3	115	76.7	100.0 (150)

It is clear from table-17 that all the respondents have knowledge on Tubectomy and Vasectomy. Among temporary methods of knowledge on family planning Nirodh occupies first place (64 percent) followed by pills (23.3 percent) copper- T (10 percent) and I.U.D (27.7 percent). Hence, these are a great need for propagating knowledge on temporary methods of family planning.

Practice of family planning: The practice of family planning depends on the socio-economic, demographic and cultural aspects. Further, knowledge and attitudes also play a significant role in the practice of family planning. Moreover, at present preference is playing a dominant role in determining family planning practice. Data on practice of family planning is presented in table-18.

Table-18: Distribution of respondents by adoption of family planning

Family planning acceptance status	Number	Percent
Adopted	114	76.00
Non-adopted	36	24.00
Total	**150**	**100.00**

Table-18 shows that about three fourths of respondents (76 percent) adopted family planning methods and rest (24 percent) have not adopted any method of family planning. Hence, there is need for educating the people towards adoption of family planning.

METHOD OF FAMILY PLANNING ADOPTION: In India, permanent methods of family planning are more famous than the temporary method. Further, among the permanent methods, tubectomy is more practicing method, because of socio-economic and cultural factors that are planning an important role in India. Data on method of family planning is presented in table-19.

Table – 19: Distributions of respondents by method of family planning adoption.

Family planning method adopted	Number	Percent
Tubectomy	96	84.2
Vasectomy	-	-
Nirodh	10	8.8
I.U.D	-	-
Copper-T	-	-
Pills	8	7.0
Total	114	100.0

Table-19 shows that among the family planning adopters, majority(84 percent) adopted permanent method followed by Nirodh8.8 percent and rest (7 percent) adopted pills. Hence, educations of the people towards adoption of permanent methods are needed.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Nationally and internationally, it is perceived that population growth centers around women. It is also found that women in general or neglected over several millennia. Women are able to protect themselves from the burden of conceiving and rearing more children. It is poorer in lower section of the society. The poorWomen are put to disadvantage in socio-economic, demographic fertility and family planning behaviors.

Over whelming proportion (89.3 percent) of respondents are DWACRA group's members. Hence, education on various aspects should be implementing on various aspects should be implement on various occupations. Majority (60 percent) respondents are having small size land landings. Further, 68 percent of respondents come under middle family income. Hence, income generating programmes should be implemented in the study area for uplift members are economically active.

Hence, awareness measures should be implemented. Majority of the sample population are males (51.7 percent). Nearly two-fifths (39.3 percent) of respondents married at less than or equal to 15 years of age and 56 percent respondents spouses got married at ages 18-20 years. Hence, awareness on legal age at marriage should propagate in the study area. Majority (45.3 percent) of respondent had a family size of four members.

Majority (46.6 percent) of respondents have two children. One – third (33.4 percent) of respondents had their first birth at the ages of 17-18 years. Therefore, awareness on evil effects of earlier pregnancies can be propagated. Awareness on permanent methods of family planningis better than temporary methods. Moreover, option of family planning is also high in permanent method than temporary methods. Hence, advantages through temporary methods aregained to the public by health revenue and other department's staff. However, some more family welfare programme can also be implemented as per the needy of the society.

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