

# Religion Vis-a Vis Fertility and Family Planning Behavior in Uttar Pradesh, India

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## ABSTRACT

The State of Uttar Pradesh has experienced fertility decline significantly among various religious groups both in rural and urban areas irrespective of their socio-economic conditions. In this paper, an attempt has been made to study the fertility and family planning behavior of three communities as observed from national family health survey 2. The analysis is based on interviews with 9100 eligible women who consist of 7615 Hindus, 1430 Muslims and 55 Sikh aged 15-49 years.

**Keywords:** Religion; Socio Economic Condition; Family Planning; Behavior

## Introduction

Religion has a more significant influence on demographic behavior in developing countries than in more developed countries (Guntupalli [1]). Studies on difference of fertility with reference to religion showed that the Muslims in India had higher fertility than the non-Muslims (Balasubramanian [2]). Kigsley Davis calculated birth of child-women ratio from the census data for the Hindu and Muslim females from 1891-to 1941, found that the Hindu ratio was lower than the Muslims throughout the period. Census of India 1931 revealed that the average number of children per family was 4.3 per Muslims and 4.1 per Hindus. Edwin Driver's study on differential fertility revealed that the average number of children born per women was 4.6 for Muslims, 4.5 for Hindus and 4.1 for other religions groups. The reduction of fertility differences among various religious groups suggests a decline in the influence of religion on the choices of persons about child bearing and contraceptive use (Chamie [3]). The rapid population growth in the developing world had led to an increased interest in religions values that may affect efforts to fertility levels and the relationship between religion and fertility behavior (Goldstein

[4]). India is country with a pluralistic religious society. Among them, the discussion is confined only on Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Uttar Pradesh as the changes in their productive behavior of these three groups will Influence the demographic as well as the Political, economic scenario of the state Uttar Pradesh (Bhargava [5]).

The religious composition Of India has been changing and the proportion of Muslims has been steadily increasing for decades. Data from different decadal censuses show that except during 1941-51, the growth rate of Muslims has been higher than that of Hindus and Sikhs. According to 1951 Census, the share of Muslims in the total population was 9.9% and in its increased to 16% in 1998-99, whereas the proportion of Hindus has declined from 84.9% to 83% during the same period (Goldscheir [6]). The growth of population of different religious groups is determined by the various social and economic characteristic of the respective group's. Information about such differentials is necessary to identify the factors and assess the prospects for change in the composition of population in various groups. It is also helpful in identifying the major determinants of the fertility level of the population (Kulkarni [7]).

The objectives of this study are follows:-

1. To study the contribution made by social background of the respondents in the family planning.
2. To study the causes of fertility and the need of various me thousand in the family planning by religion.
3. To study the reasons for which couples adopted in Family planning.

## Methodology

### Area Understudy

With a geographical area of 2.4 lakh square kilo meter, spread across 70 districts, is unique in its topography and large rural population which is 75% of total. The study was conducted in 70 districts of Uttar Pradesh. The total population of Uttar Pradesh was 16.61 million at the time of 2001 census.

### Design of Study

The state of Uttar Pradesh has been divided into two regions – Western and Eastern. The region of Eastern Uttar Pradesh comprises Bahraich, Gonda, Basti, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Ballia, Azamgarh, Faizabad, Sultanpur, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Varanasi, Mirzapur, Allahabad and Pratap garh districts. It covers the area of 85, 803 sq/ km. The region of Eastern Uttar Pradesh is located between 23°05' N to 28°25' N and 81°10' E to 84°40' E. Some of the districts comprising the region in recent past have been bifurcated into separate administrative units by creation of new districts for example: Sidharth nagar, Mau, Sonbhadra etc. Western Uttar Pradesh consists of twenty six districts, which are grouped in to eighteen divisions as following: Agra Division, Aligarh Division, Bareilly Division, Meerut Division, Mirzapur Division, Moradabad Division, Saharanpur Division and Kanpur Division (excluding districts Kanpur Nagar and Kanpur Dehat). The largest district in terms of area is Badaun. The largest district in terms of populations Moradabad (Census [8]).

### Population Understudy

In Uttar Pradesh the total number of villages consists of 2081. In which 1780 villages are populated, whereas the number of De-populated villages are 301. Now for the purpose of the study 70 districts were selected and 10 villages were chosen from each district comprising 700 villages in total.

## Sampling and Sample Size

A total number of 9100 women, 13 from each village, were selected using system at sampling or quasi random sampling. This means forming the sample in some systematic manner by taking item at regular intervals. From each district 10 villages out of total of 700 villages, were selected. In each village, 13 eligible women, after identifying the village were selected. The eligible women information was obtained from the registers maintained by the primary health centre in relation to these eligible women's.

## Data Analysis

The data obtained from 9100 women in the reproductive age group of 15-49 years was analyzed. Therefore, simple percentage method is used in analyzing the status of respondents. The analysis is based on interviews with 9100 eligible women which consists of 7615 Hindus, 1480 Muslims and 55 Sikh aged between 15-49 years.

## Results

1. The contribution made by social background of the respondents in the family planning is shown by Tables 1-4. The above Table 1 shows that the level of illiteracy is somewhat higher among Muslims 74.8% than Hindus 69.6% but it is relatively low among Sikhs 40.1%. The number of women which have done higher secondary education and above was higher among Sikh women than Hindus and Muslim women. Birth intervals are an important indicator of the pace of child bearing. The Table 2 shows that the median birth interval is more than two months longer for births to Hindu women than for births to Muslim women and the median birth interval is more than three months longer for births to Muslim women than for births to Sikh women. Table 3 shows that the proportion of births up to third order is large than, the proportion of births at the next higher order, the proportion of births up to third order is relatively large for births of Hindu women. While the proportion of births that are of order four are higher is relatively large for births to Muslim women. The ages at which women start and stop child bearing are important demographic factor of fertility. A higher median age at first birth and a lower median age at last birth are indicators of lower fertility (Mergan [9]). The Table 4 shows that the median age at first cohabitation with husband was higher for Sikhs women 18.9 years, than for Muslims 17 years and Hindus 16.4 years. The number of children that a woman will have is strongly influenced by the age at which she marries. NFHS-2 data measures age at first cohabitation as a proxy for age at consummation of marriage.

**Table 1:** Married women’s education religion wise.

Religion	Illiterate	Literate <Primary	Primary education Passed	Middleclass passed	High School passed	Higher Secondary and above
Hindus	69.6%	2.4%	9.0%	7.4%	4.4%	7.2%
Muslims	74.8%	4.5%	9.4%	3.7%	3.7%	4.0%
Sikh	40.1%	4.2%	21.7%	3.6%	5.0%	25.4%

**Table 2:** Birth intervals by religion.

Month	Hindus(%)	Muslim(%)	Sikh(%)
7-12	3.1	3.8	0.0
12-17	10.4	13.4	23.0
18-23	14.7	15.3	21.5
24-35	33.6	34.7	20.1
36-47	21.4	17.1	21.5
48-above	16.8	15.8	14.0
Median Month	30.9	28.5	25.3
No. of Birth	4794	1204	27

Note: Source:-Uttar Pradesh NFHS-2

**Table 3:** Birth order by religion.

Religion	Birth Order				Number of birth
	1	2	3	4+	
Hindus	22.5	20.7	18.6	38.2	3536
Muslims	18.3		16.2	47.4	862
Sikh	00	00	00	00	17

Note: Source:- Uttar Pradesh NFHS-2

**Table 4:** Median age at first co habitation with husband by religion.

Religion	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Hindus	17.3	16.5	16.3	16.1	16.0	16.4
Muslims	18.1	17.1	16.8	16.6	16.6	17.0
Sikh	00	00	00	00	00	18.9

Note: Source:- Uttar Pradesh NFHS-2<sup>o</sup>

2. The causes of fertility and the need of various method used in the family planning by religion the total fertility rate can be classified into wanted and unwanted categories. The unwanted TFR relates to the birth about which the mothers reported that at the time she become pregnant, she did not want to have any more children while the wanted TFR represents the level of fertility that theoretically would result, if all unwanted births were prevented. The total fertility rate of Hindus 3.87i.e.41.24%higher than the total wanted fertility rate, 2.74. The TFR of Muslims 4.76i.e.41.66% higher than the TWFR, 3.36 and the TFR of Sikh 2.34i.e.27.17% higher than the TWFR 1.84. Muslims have a lower mean age of first birth. The Table 5 below shows that contraceptive prevalence

is higher among Hindus 29.2%than Muslims21%, However, it she Sikh women, who, at 54.6% have highest rate of contraceptive use in Uttar Pradesh. The rate of contraceptive use is higher among Sikh women than among women any other sub group. The proportion of Sikh women any method of contraception and also to modern method of contraception was higher than among Hindus and Muslims. However the level of knowledge about sources of contraceptive methods was lower among Muslims. Female sterilization is more common among Sikh37%, than among Hindus16.8%, and Muslims 4.3%. Condom use, by contrast, is highest among Muslims 8.5%, followed by Sikh 4.9% and Hindus3.3%.

**Table 5:** Fertility Planning by religion.

	Hindus	Muslims	Sikh
Total wanted fertility rate	2.74%	3.36%	1.84%
Total fertility rate (TFR)	3.87%	4.76%	2.34%

Note: Source:- Uttar Pradesh NFHS-2

The three modern spacing methods the Pill, Condom and IUD together account for55%of contra captive use by Muslims, butonly18%of contra captive use by Sikh and Hindus. The traditional method used by 7.7% of Sikh, 5.9% of Hindus and 4.8%of Muslims. Among the traditional Methods withdrawal is most popular among Sikhs and the rytham or safe Period method is most popular among Hindus.

3. The reasons for which couples adopted in family planning by religion Studies have confirmed that even after controlling the effect of residence and education, exposure to electronic mass media has a substantial effect on contraceptive 16%, newspaper and magazine 11%, cinema 6.2% and 3%have been recently exposed to a family planning messages a drama, folk. Exposure to family planning messages differs by religion, with Sikh women more likely to be exposed to family planning messages in general, and from almost all Use. Exposure to mass media has also been found to strengthen women’s motivation to prevent unwanted fertility (Kulkarni [7]). The above Tables 6 & 7 shows that the most common sources of recent exposure to family planning messages are the radio and the television, 3.9%ofevermarriedwomenreport-havingheardafamilyplanning message on the radio and the same proportion have seen a messages on the television. Other important sources of family planning messages are wall painting media sources, then Hindu or Muslim women, 68.6% of Sikh women say

they have heard or seen a family planning messages through the media, compared with 48.4% of Muslim women and 46.6% of Hindu women. Muslim women are more likely than Hindu women to have heard or seen a family planning on the television, whereas

Hindu women are more likely than Muslim women to have had exposure from each of the other media sources. The above Table 8 shows that Hindus women are somewhat less likely to have analyzed family planning than Muslim or Sikh women [10].

**Table 6:** Contraceptive method currently used by religion.

Family Planning Methods	Hindus(%)	Muslims(%)	Sikh(%)
Any Method	29.2	21.0	54.6
Any modern method	22.9	15.9	46.9
Pill	1.1	2.0	2.3
IUD	0.9	1.0	2.4
Condom	3.3	8.5	4.9
Female sterilization	16.8	4.3	37.3
Male sterilization	0.8	0.0	0.0
Traditional method	5.9	4.8	7.7
Rhytham / Safe period	4.3	3.1	2.4
Withdrawal	1.6	1.7	5.4
Other method	0.4	0.3	0.0
Not us in gany method	70.8	79.0	45.4
Number of women	7413	1417	51.0

Note: Source:-Uttar Pradesh NFHS-2

**Table 7:** Exposure of couples to family planning messages given by different sources of media.

Religion	No. of women	Radio	Television	Cinema	Newspaper/Magazine	Wall painting	Drama /folk	Any source
Hindus	7,715	35%	32.8%	6.2%	11%	16%	3.5%	46.6%
Muslims	1,483	29.7%	37.8%	5.5%	8.6%	13.1%	1.8%	48.4%
Sikh	55	44.8%	59.8%	6.5%	24.5%	23.9%	3%	68.6%

**Table 8:** Exposure of couples to discussion and attitudes with different types of persons related to family planning.

Religion	Husband	Mother	Sister	Daughter	Mother- in- Law	Sister- In-law	Friends/Neighbor	Other relative	Any of these persons	No. of women
Hindus	17.8%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%	1.1%	8.1%	0.1%	22.0%	7413
Muslims	22.0%	0.2%	0.9%	0.1%	0.7%	0.9%	9.9%	0.1%	26.2%	1417
Sikh	24.1%	0.0	2.3%	0.0	0.0	4.1%	6.8%	0.0	26.4%	51

Note: Source:- Uttar Pradesh NFHS-2

Couple’s opinion is one of the determinants of acceptance of any contraceptive method by women. Information on attitudes towards family planning was obtained asking non sterilized women whether they and their husbands approved or disapproved of it. The proportion of Muslim couples having positive attitudes towards family planning was lower than that of Hindus and Sikh.

### Conclusion

The objective of this paper is to use the NFHS-2 describe fertility and family planning behavior in Uttar Pradesh by religion. The total fertility rate of Hindus 3.87 i.e.41.24%higher than the total wanted fertility rate, 2.74 the TFR of Muslims 4.76i.e.41.66% higher than the

TWFR, 3.36 andtheTFRofSikh2.34i.e.27.17%higher than the TWFR 1.84. Muslims have a lower mean age of first birth. The percentage of currently married women with the total demand for family planning is higher is Sikh and lower in Muslim. Muslims were found to be less inclined to use modern contractive methods and they preferred to use the modern temporary methods which are less effective. Information on attitudes towards family planning was obtained asking non sterilized women whether they and their husbands approved or disapproved of it. Exposure to family planning messages differs by religion, with Sikh Women more likely to be exposed to family planning messages in general, and from almost all media sources, then Hindu or Muslim women, 68.6% of Sikh women say they have heard or seen

a family planning messages through the media, compared with 48.4% of Muslim women and 46.6% of Hindu women. Muslim women are more likely than Hindu women to have heard or seen a family planning on the television, whereas Hindu women are more likely than Muslim women to have had exposure from each of the other media sources.

The proportion of Muslim couples having positive attitudes towards family planning was lower than that of Hindus and Sikh. If we look at the educational attainment by religion, Sikhs have done better than Hindus and Muslims. The data suggest that the Muslims did not go for higher education as compared to their counter parts and their schooling at an early stage.

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