

COMPARATIVE FERTILITY PATTERN IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS OF CHANDIGARH

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Abstract: This paper aims to look into the structural and material causes that play important roles in determining fertility patterns in rural and urban areas. The present paper draws from extensive fieldwork conducted in rural and urban areas of the Union Territory of Chandigarh to document the causes that lead to differential fertility patterns in rural and urban areas of Chandigarh. The paper also reveals the narrowing gap in various demographic, social, cultural and economic indicators, thereby bridging the differences in fertility patterns in rural and urban areas of Chandigarh.

Keywords: age at marriage, fertility patterns, old age security, remittances, welfare measures,

Introduction:

Fertility pattern is greatly affected by the socio-economic conditions of the people, social institutions, age-old traditions, religious psychology of the people, their cultural heritage, literary level etc. Differences in these fertility-affecting factors at different times and in different areas affect fertility differently, resulting in different fertility patterns in different situations. For a comparative study of fertility patterns in rural and urban areas, it becomes essential to study differences in demographic characteristics, socio-economic features, traditional approaches, attitudes towards births, attitudes towards family welfare-cum-family control measures, parental occupation and religious faiths and beliefs in both the areas. This study is based on the findings of fertility patterns in rural and urban areas through our research study, based on a stratified random sample of 1000 house ladies, comprising 64 rural and 936 urban house ladies. Their comparative view is presented below under different heads so as to arrive at the possible causes responsible for differential fertility rates across diverse geographical regions.

Role of Demographic Characteristics

As per the 1981 Census, only 6.37% of the total population or only 28,769 against a total population of 4,51,610, was residing in rural areas of 24 inhabited villages covering a total area of 45.67 sq. km against the remaining 93.63% or 4,22,841 population of urban areas of Chandigarh, called urban agglomeration, comprising (i) Chandigarh city – Chandigarh E.Q. +

Buterla O.G. + Budheri O.G. – (ii) Manimajra N.A.C. and O.G. (iii) Burail Town and (iv) Attawa Town and covering a total area of 68.33 sq. km, resulting in a high degree of density of 6188 per sq. km. in urban areas against a smaller size of the density of 630 only in contrast total density of 3961 per sq. km. was recorded for the entire Union Territory. The sex ratio in rural areas was recorded to be 688 against 775 females per thousand males in urban areas against 769 for the entire union territory. The literacy rate in rural areas was 44.73 against 66.15 in urban areas for all persons, 52.29 against 70.19 for males and 33.74 against 60.94 for females, respectively. The overall literacy standard for the entire union territory was 64.79 in general, 69.00 for males and 59.31 for females.

Differential Socio-economic Characteristics

The workforce in rural areas was 36.16% of the total rural population, whereas it was 34.83% of the urban population in urban areas against a total workforce of 34.92% of the total population for the entire union territory, in rural areas, 58.58% workers were males, and 3.57% were females whereas, in urban areas, male workers were 54.5% and female workers 9.46% against 54.77% male workers and 9.11% female workers for the entire union territory. The percentage of main workers in rural areas was 35.85%, and of marginal workers was 0.31%, whereas, in urban areas, the respective percentages were 34.61% and 0.22% against 34.69% and 0.23% for the entire union territory.

The percentage of male main-workers in rural areas was 58.37 against 54.23 in urban areas. Of male marginal workers, the respective percentages were 0.21 and 0.27 against 54.5% male main workers and 0.27% male marginal workers for the entire union territory. The percentages of female main and marginal workers in rural areas were 3.1 and .47, respectively, whereas the respective percentages in urban areas were 9.3 and 0.16 against 8.93 and 0.18 for the entire union territory of India. These figures have been given in the following table for comparative analysis and understanding.

TABLE SHOWING COMPARATIVE POSITION OF CERTAIN IMPORTANT DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION OF THE UNION TERRITORY OF CHANDIGARH

Area	Components of the Areas	Total Population	%age of the total population	Area in sq. kms.	Density of population	Sex Ratio	Lit.Standard		
							Gen	M	F
Rural	24 Villages	28769	6.37	45.67	630	688/1000	44.73	52.29	33.74
Urban	4 Towns	422841	93.63	68.33	6188	775/1000	66.15	70.19	60.94
Union Territory		451610	100.00	114.00	3961	769/1000	64.79	69.00	59.31

Source :- Self Compilation

Further break-up of the main workers reveals that in rural areas, 13.93% were cultivators, 4.78% were agricultural labourers, 1.27% were in household industries and 80.02% other workers. In contrast, their percentages in urban areas were 0.49%, 0.25%, 0.55% and 98.71% against their respective percentages of 1.38%, 0.55%, 0.59% and 97.48% for the total number of main workers in the entire union territory. The entire comparative picture of rural and urban population vis-à-vis the total population engaged in different economic activities is summarised in the following table for quick understanding.

TABLE SHOWING COMPARATIVE PICTURE OF RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION VIS-À-VIS TOTAL POPULATION ENGAGED IN DIFFERENT ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Nature of	No. of Village or town	Work force as % of the total population									Break-up of Main Workers - % among them				
		Marginal Workers			Main Workers						Cultivator	Agriculture	H.H. Ind	Other	Total
1	2	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total					
Rural	Village	58.58	3.57	36.16	58.37	3.1	35.85	0.21	0.47	0.31	13.93	4.78	1.27	80.02	
Urban	Town	54.50	9.46	34.83	54.23	9.3	34.61	0.27	0.16	0.22	0.49	0.25	0.55	98.71	
Total	Village + 4	54.77	9.11	34.92	54.50	8.93	34.69	0.27	0.18	0.23	1.38	0.55	0.59	97.48	

Source: Self Compilation

On the social front, the 1981 census recorded the scheduled castes population as 14.09% of the population of the entire union territory, with its break-up of 23.68% of the rural population and 13.43% of the urban population. Their sex-wise break-up was 14.14% of the male population and 14.02% of the female population in the entire union territory, 22.42% of the male and 25.52% of the female population of rural areas and 13.55% of the male and 13.29% of the female population of the urban regions. There were no scheduled tribe population in the union territory. The total number of households was 5,883 in rural areas, 93,713 in urban areas and 100,596 in the entire union territory, out of which the number of the occupied residential house was 5883, 93010 and 98893, respectively. It shows that all the households occupied residential houses in rural whereas only 93 010 against 94 713 occupied residential homes in urban areas.

As per our sample study of 1000 house ladies – 64 rural and 936 urban – the average family size in rural areas comes to 6.94 or 7, and the average dependency load per house lady comes to 5.94 or 6. The average number of children comes to 3.47 or 4 whereas, in urban areas, the corresponding figures are 5.11 or 5 average family size, 4.11 and 4 average dependency load per house lady and 2.73 or 3 average number of children per house lady. These figures are against an overall average family size of 5.2 or 5, an average dependency load per house lady of 4.2 or 4 and an average number of children per house lady of 2.78 or 3 for the entire union territory of Chandigarh from which the sample of 1000 house ladies was taken based on stratified random sampling technique.

As per the field survey undertaken for the study, it was revealed that the system of the joint family was common before the attainment of political independence, but the present circumstances have become different in the sense that not even a single sampled household in urban areas was found to have a joint family and in rural areas too joint family structure was rarely encountered. The observation was the same, so far as sampled households are concerned. An in-depth study about the prevalence of this system revealed only stray cases of joint families in rural areas, and that, too, is not of a rigid joint family system. Still, it needs to be revised because of ancestral farmland and farmhouse involvement. Otherwise, every family had a separate cooking unit. No case was observed in urban areas, even in an open joint family system.

On the issue of age at marriage, in the past, the modal age for marriage of females was around 15 years, with some instances of very early marriages in rural areas and between 18 and

20 years in urban areas. Still, now in the contemporary times, as revealed by our sample studies, it stands changed in favour of delayed marriages both in rural areas and in urban areas where the modal ages for female unions are around 20 years in the age group of 15-20 years with a few cases of marriages at 24-25 years in rural areas and 24 years in the age group of 20-25 years with the increasing trend of weddings at the age beyond 25 years in urban areas. The younger generation of both males and females in both the rural and urban areas were observed to be firmly determined for delayed marriages after enhancing their marital status through better education and better economic activities.

On the educational and professional attainment front, there was little difference because of urban culture in rural areas. Female status in urban areas was observed to be very much better than in rural areas because of a greater degree of educational and professional qualifications and engagement in better and gainful economic activities by the majority of the urban females as compared to their rural counterparts who, too, were observed to be picking up in this direction because of their craze and firm determination for their educational and professional achievements to enter different economic activities.

12.5% of the sampled rural house ladies against 39.7% of the sampled urban house ladies were employed. Their employment ratio comes to 12.5, 39.7 or 1:3.2. The employment position among their grown-up daughters above 20 years of age was 19.2% in rural areas against 28.3% in urban areas, with their respective ratios being 1:1.5 only. It shows a significant improvement over their mothers in the matter of employment. With the advancement of time, the percentage of employed females in rural and urban areas of the union territory of Chandigarh is bound to become at par. Instead, this ratio may tilt in favour of rural females because of their firm resolve and strong willpower to grab more employment opportunities after getting better educational and professional achievements. This has been made possible because of the all-round development of rural areas, their proximity to urban areas, settlement of the majority of urban educated people belonging to different ethnic groups in rural areas, easy and cheap availability of educational facilities at their doorsteps, a quick prompt and affordable system of transport between rural and urban areas and the sacred seat of learning in the form of one of the best universities of the country at Chandigarh and at the same time prevalent of the urban environment and more congenial atmosphere now in the rural areas, awakening on socio-cultural fronts, politico-religious front and better economic conditions of the people on account of large scale remittances

of foreign earnings by their relating working in foreign countries, hike in land prices and better job opportunities in this union territory.

The caste system used to play a dominant role in all social relations. It used to be a base of social moorings in rural areas before Chandigarh became the capital of Punjab and, more particularly, before coming into existence of this union territory and a joint seat of governance of Punjab and Haryana, as explained by elderly persons during the course of our field studies but now the situation stands wholly reversed. Even in rural areas, the rigidities of the caste system are becoming a thing of the past, with mild references to castes in social relations. Many cases of inter-caste marriages in rural areas and marriages in distant castes are openly found. Only a microscopic minority of the people is still caste-conscious and continue to remain rigid in social bonds. Still, in urban areas, the caste system stands pushed to the back seat because of multi-ethnic culture and educational development.

Apart from physical features, educational achievements, professional attainment, gainful employment, and good family background weigh more in matters of wedlocks in the urban areas; even poorer families ignore their caste barriers in all social relations.

Even the old idea of social security in male children for aged parents is disappearing in rural areas except among poorer sections of the rural population who still need some hope of support for their male children during their old age. They, too, seem flexible about it because of the changed environment in the form of an individual type of living in a place of joint living. They were observed making one or the other arrangement for their old age. In urban areas, this idea of social security in male children seems to have been rooted out entirely from the minds of the people who were heard saying that they had to depend upon their efforts even in their old age; that is why the majority of them were saving and investing for their future needs, in addition to their dependence on their old age security in the form of pension, family pension etc.

It was observed that there was a greater degree of desire-cum-craze among the young girls for some economic pursuit and gainful employment in rural and urban areas because of their social awakening and socio-economic need in the changing social fibre. One main reason behind this consciousness was discovered to be in the increasing demand for employed life partners in marital alliances and to achieve a sort of self-confidence for preparing oneself for family or economic crises in their life at any stage. Almost all the young girls in the rural areas did not hide their inner desire to achieve financial independence through their ability of

education and professional skill when asked about the aim of their getting education. The idea of employment and economic achievement is more deeply rooted in rural areas than in urban areas of the union territory of Chandigarh. This is a reverse case concerning the old-time socio-economic scenario of the rural and urban areas.

Differential Traditional Approaches

Traditional approaches to various socio-cultural, socio-economic and politico-religious thinking in rural and urban areas in the union territory of Chandigarh were stated to be different before the attainment of political independence in 1947. These differences started narrowing down after Chandigarh became the provincial capital. The speed of narrowing down the difference picked up. It started accelerating after 1966 when Chandigarh was declared the union territory and the joint seat of governance of Punjab and Haryana states. The present study has revealed that these differences stand disappeared currently. The rural folk in some fields are observed to have advanced their urban counterparts so far as modernity in socio-psychology, cultural set-up, economic thinking, political awakening and freedom from religious rigidities are concerned. The striking force behind all this was discovered to be a fast-developing urban culture in rural areas, easy and cheap educational facilities at doorsteps in the rural areas, the exodus of a good number of males to foreign countries and their frequent visits to their relations, left behind in rural areas, the continuous remittances of their savings not only in the form of currency money but also in the form of commodities of the most modern style in the form of gifts etc., lavish spending style of their families and so on.

The traditional approach to age at marriage in rural areas was very early marriages-below the age of 15 for females-and in urban areas, it was between 15 and 20 years, but now in both places, the age at marriage stands at a higher level in the age group of 20-25 and still higher in urban areas.

The traditional approach to bigger family size stands completely reversed both in rural and urban areas except in certain farm families in the rural areas but not in a conventional way. For example, the general thinking in rural areas favoured four children; in urban areas, it was three.

The traditional approach towards marriage, both in urban and rural areas, favoured universal marriage, irrespective of even the non-eligibility of the spouses. In general, parents used to put different types of cover on social evils, bad habits, criminal records, and disabilities of their wards for the sake of their marriage because they knew well that once married, the

marital bond could not be broken except by the almighty power in the way of death of either life partner. It was due to traditional thinking and religious outlook towards marriages considered sacred, life-long and unbreakable bonds despite prolonged marital discord, major domestic disputes, discontentment in either or both spouses' minds, and permanent infirmities.

Such type of psychology was deep-rooted, particularly in rural areas. Still, this type of thinking and tendency has changed drastically, especially in urban areas where would-be life partners exert their full right in choosing their partners with different considerations. Any family discord or marital dispute is now challenging to tolerate for longer because the attitude towards marriage is changing from sacred and religious to marriages for a happy life and equal contribution from both the life partner. All the young ones interviewed on this problem were unanimous in their viewpoint of marriages according to choice for the mutual satisfaction and happiness subject, of course, to some natural calamity to either of the life partner who deserves the best care by the other, both on human consideration and the consideration of mutual accord of sacrifices. Though the western idea of a marriage of convenience has yet to enter people's minds, the traditional approach stands completely reversed in urban areas. It may rightly be called a transitional period from old, orthodox and traditional psychology to modern psychology of total freedom, liberalisation and equality. In rural areas, there was found to be a mixture of thinking but free from the traditional approach of universal marriages.

Differential Attitude towards Births

The traditional approach in favour of male children in rural and urban areas now stands much weakened in general, particularly in urban areas where people recognise that both sexes are equal. However, in rural areas, farm families still have some preference for male babies because of their professional and occupational requirements and their inner desire to pass on their farmland to their sons.

Safe maternity is considered to be considered more important than the sex of the child. Even in day-to-day care, education and other activities, children of both sexes were observed to be treated at par. Parents' primary concern in the urban areas seemed to be better and higher education for their children, irrespective of their sex. No differential type of expenditure for male children was observed in the expenditure pattern of the people. In most cases, female education was costing their parents more than the male children because of the heavy expense of the conveyance of the females.

In contrast, the male children were using their self-propelled means of transport. Female dresses, upkeep, and additional requirements proved to be more expensive than their brothers. Most parents were heard saying they were very eager to give their daughters the best education even at the cost of much higher expenses and financial burden on the family because of changing social attitudes.

Attitude towards births was slightly different in rural areas than in urban areas. In rural areas, the majority of families were found to be in favour of early delivery after marriage. A few years period-generally three years periods, of issue lessness after marriage was considered a cause for worry for the family, which used to start its efforts to have a child. A long spell between two births equally caused fear in them. Delivery after the age of 40 years was taken very severely because of its old age consequences. In urban areas, no craze was observed in the people's minds for early birth after marriage. They preferred some gap for enjoying their married lives. A long spell of no birth beyond five years was thought to cause worry. They believed in the proper spacing of children. Next delivery in quick succession of the first one used to be avoided, and for this very purpose, abortion or some other measures were resorted to. Even among the poorer families in the urban areas, females only accepted child births one after the other with a sufficient gap. Outlook towards childbirth was considered sacred in rural areas, and that natural outcome of wedlock in the urban areas. Among the rural folk, the psychology of breastfeeding children for a more prolonged spell of years or still more was found to be strong.

In contrast, the reverse case was observed among the urban folk who believed in and relied more on baby foods like milk care and other types of nutritious foods rich in proteins and vitamins. Breastfeeding babies for long periods was disliked in urban areas because of certain notions about breastfeeding. General constraints were stated to be female employment for which employed and working mothers had to leave their babies at home in the care of either elderly ladies or servants who could feed the babies with outside milk like cow's milk or buffalo's milk tinned milk and other baby foods. Lesser periods of breastfeeding and feeding babies with baby foods are considered a social symbol of fashion and modernity among more affluent and educated families. Some females stated that extended breastfeeding was injurious to their health and physical appearance. Therefore they did not like it. There was another notional idea of the slow growth of babies if kept only on breastfeeding. Therefore, the use of baby foods in place of breastfeeding was being resorted to in urban areas.

Attitude towards births in rural areas was observed to have an element of 'Natural Gift' and predestined beyond the personal will of the people as they were heard saying that it is only in the hands of God to bless the people with children and even the time of birth of the children depends upon Gods' Will.

Differential Attitude towards Family Welfare Measures

People's attitude towards these family welfare measures was positive in urban areas and nearly positive in rural areas. In urban areas, these measures were widely accepted by almost everyone, with minor exceptions. They were instead observed to be appealing to education ones in general. Employed females in particular roles of males, females and even elders were also constructive and not obstructive because of changed social psychology, flexible religious thinking, reversal of age-old traditions and social moorings under the impact of higher literacy standards not only among males but also among females, coupled with increasing rate of female participation in economic pursuits which raised their social status and say in decision making. In rural areas, these measures found general acceptability among the younger and educated generation but very restrictive acceptability among other generations, which did not show their opposition. Yet, they did not show their willingness to accept them as usual. The attitude of the male and females towards their measures was observed to be nearly positive, but the attitude of elders was not so encouraging. However, they generally did not want to oppose them openly because of their lesser hold on the young ones, who were stated to be listening less to their advice and wanted to act on their own.

In general, only three measures, namely oral pills, Nirodh and Sterilization, were recorded to be popular in urban and rural areas, with the difference that male contraceptives were more prevalent in urban areas. In contrast, female contraceptives were widely in use in rural areas. Rural males were observed to be against male sterilisation under the notional fear of some damage and harm to their energetic functioning and other functioning of their bodies, so they mostly favoured female sterilisation. In contrast, in urban areas, male sterilisation was considered preferable over female sterilisation, which was considered more harmful to the family's normal functioning for some time. No notional or psycho-fear about male sterilisation was observed in urban areas. The reasons for such differential thinking and differential psychology were plain enough. They could be traced to the educational standard of the males and the nature of work both in urban and rural areas. Males in urban areas were comparatively more

educated than their counterparts in rural areas and, therefore, could understand everything correctly and weigh the complexity of the processes and their aftermath. Males in urban areas mostly belonged to either the service class or business class, having a lesser degree of manual work and a greater degree of leisure at their disposal.

In contrast, their counterparts in rural areas belonged to farming families and labouring classes in general. As a result, they had to perform more manual work with less leisure at their disposal. Another reason was proper medical care during and after sterilisation in urban areas than in rural areas, where post-sterilisation care generally becomes the worst causality both at the hands of the medical personnel and the people themselves, with a greater probability of side-effects in rural areas.

More coverage of these measures was observed in urban areas than in rural areas, where many people even needed to learn about the utility of these measures and their proper use. Rural females were observed to be very interested in understanding their applicability and results if approached sincerely and dedicatedly, which can be provided only by devoted village cadre medical personnel. Such a problem did not exist with urban females, who could contact, talk and even openly discuss everything with medical personnel who, too, knew that they were dealing with educated females who could approach their high-ups in case of any complaint about their objectional attitude and careless handling. This thing did not touch the minds of the medical personnel posted in rural areas. One negative point which did not bother rural folk was found to be causing disservice to the urban people, and that was a political campaign against these measures by vested interest. This political campaign revolved around the non-use of these measures by a particular community to increase their ratio in the total population. There was no sampled unit from that community, so all these findings are based on the demographic structure of the population minus that community.

Differential Impact of Family Welfare Measures in Rural and Urban Areas

A comparative study of the impact of family welfare measures (family planning methods) on fertility in urban and rural areas reveals that in urban areas, their coverage has been adequate and near total, with the result that 54.3% of the sampled house ladies were either regular users or partial users or were previously using them whereas in the rural areas their coverage, had been very much inadequate with the result that only 29.7% of the sampled house ladies were either

regular users or partial users of these measures. In urban areas, only 45.7% of the older age group above 40 were non-users, against 70.3% in the age group above 30 in rural areas. Their impact on fertility behaviour and containment in rural and urban areas has been encouraging and positive. The average number of children per family of regular users of these measures in the age group of 20-30 years comes to be 1.86 in urban areas and 1.89 in rural areas. These average sizes are more or less identical. The average number of children per family of partial users aged 30-40 years came to be 2.04 in urban areas and 2.80 in rural areas, which stood a bit higher than in urban areas. This could be due to a greater degree of carelessness or lethargy in using these measures by rural females of this age group and their life partners due to the greater frequency of default in their use. The average number of children per family of those house ladies who previously used them came to be 2.76 in urban areas.

In contrast, no such category was identified in rural areas. This average compares well with that of partial users in rural areas. For example, the average number of children per female of non-users of these measures came to be 3.38 in urban areas against 3.93 in rural areas. This difference can be attributed to occupational differences, literacy differences and other socio-economic reasons.

Conclusion: The study shows that since the independence and further with the status of union territory conferred to Chandigarh, the differences in gender-based practices and attitudes are narrowing, so much so that the impact of modernity, education and medical facilities have left a deep imprint on the mindset of the rural population and subsequently led to the fertility patterns in both rural and urban population of Chandigarh.

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