

Chapter – VI

FERTILITY STATUS IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Comparison between Overall Fertility in Rural and Urban Areas

The present chapter is an attempt to examine the rural-urban differentials in fertility in the district. As an integral part of the study, the religious differentials in fertility by residence i.e. differences among the religious groups in rural and urban areas has been analysed. In order to differentiate urban from rural areas the standard definition given by Census of India has been followed. Therefore, all urban areas with Municipal Board, Municipal Corporation and Notified Area Committee, barring Census Town, have been taken into consideration for the study. Therefore, all other areas barring the areas as above mentioned are rural. Number of pregnancies, births (including still birth) and number of children enumerated during field survey has been calculated for all the religious groups under study separately for rural and urban areas.

Table 6.1: Number of Pregnancies, Births and Children Enumerated During Survey

Religion	Number of sample respondents			Fertility indicators (number of)		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Pregnancies	Births	Children during enumeration
Buddhist	100	70	30	50	47	44
Christian	100	70	30	59	50	47
Hindu	200	140	60	127	107	106
Muslim	200	140	60	158	133	125
Total	600	420	180	394	337	322

Source: Calculated by the researcher on the basis of the data collected from the field during 2007-2008.

So far as the rural-urban differentials in fertility as revealed by number of pregnancies occurred to the respondents is concerned, it is found from the table 6.2 that it is only among Buddhist respondents that there is no difference by residence. However, difference exists in the over all pregnancy rate for rural and urban areas. The same also holds good for all other remaining religious groups i.e. Christian, Hindu and Muslim. The difference is more prominent among Christians and Hindus than the Muslims and Buddhists. It is interesting to note that the least difference in the pregnancy rate among rural and urban dwellers is found among the Muslims. Overall higher pregnancy rates as compared to other religious groups, might be the reason for such a phenomenon among the Muslims.

Table 6.2: Number of Pregnancies, Births and Children During Enumeration

Religion	Residence (Rural/Urban)	Average number of pregnancies	Average number of births	Average number of children during enumeration
Buddhist	Total	1.67	1.59	1.55
	Rural	1.67	1.60	1.59
	Urban	1.67	1.57	1.47
Christian	Total	2.56	2.28	2.16
	Rural	2.81	2.54	2.41
	Urban	1.97	1.67	1.57
Hindu	Total	2.56	2.33	2.24
	Rural	2.88	2.56	2.44
	Urban	2.12	1.78	1.77
Muslim	Total	3.03	2.78	2.57
	Rural	3.19	3.02	2.77
	Urban	2.63	2.27	2.08
Total/Average	Total	2.59	2.35	2.22
	Rural	2.77	2.55	2.40
	Urban	2.19	1.87	1.79

Source: Calculated by the researcher on the basis of the data collected from the field during 2007-2008.

Information relating to number of births including still births as provided by the respondents has been again taken as an indicator of fertility and thus average number of births for all four religious groups has been calculated

separately for rural and urban areas. The scanning of the table-6.2 shows that it is the Buddhist community among which the rural-urban difference in birth is the least (0.03 only). The Muslims again remain in the lower side so far as the rural-urban differentials in birth are concerned. Christians have held the top position in the list with differentials where the extent is 0.87.

It is interesting to note that when it comes to the number of children during enumeration the position of Hindus and Muslims inter changes. The rural urban gap with respect to number of children during enumeration is the lowest among the Hindus (0.67). Christians again top the list with a gap of 0.84 and Buddhists hold the bottom position with a gap of 0.12.

It is clear from the study that the Buddhist community in rural area is not very different from that of the urban in the district and thus the difference is the lowest or no difference exists. The Christian community in the district has dualistic characteristics and hence the rural-urban difference is the maximum with a moderate difference among the Hindus and the Muslims. The Muslims are generally found to be economically poor and educationally backward. From the overall socio-economic conditions of the community it is understood that the people are extremely poor. Long time attachment to agriculture, deprivation in the gainful employment, particularly in the government sectors and public sector units has led to the situation of an overall backwardness among the Muslim community which has resulted in the higher fertility as well as higher rural-urban gap in fertility. Sacchar Committee Report on the status of minorities in India subscribes and clearly states that

the Muslims are in a worst state of affair so far as the situation of employment and education is concerned.

Table 6.3: Distribution of Urban Respondents by Religion and Number of Pregnancies

Religion	Number of respondents with pregnancies						Total
	0	1	2	3	4	≥5	
Buddhist	3	8	16	2	1	--	30
Christian	3	8	10	6	2	1	30
Hindu	1	18	22	11	8	--	60
Muslim	1	17	13	11	12	6	60
Total	8	51	61	30	23	7	180

Source: Calculated by the researcher on the basis of the data collected from the field during 2007-2008

The distribution of urban respondents by number of pregnancies occurred to them shows a very interesting picture where only 4.44 percent of the respondents have reported of having no pregnancy at all till the date of enumeration. Where as 62.2 percent of the respondents of all religious allegiance have reported having pregnancy only once or twice, rest 33.34 percent of the respondents have reported having pregnancy more than twice till the date of enumeration. Among the urban Muslim respondents as high as 50.00 percent have reported having pregnancy once or twice. The same figures are 66.67 percent, 60.00 percent and 80.00 percent for Hindus, Christians and Buddhists respectively.

While comparing tables 6.3 and 6.4 one finds that relatively higher proportion (6.67 percent) of the rural respondents have reported having no pregnancy till the date of enumeration. At the same time relatively lower proportion i.e. 42.38 percent of the respondents of rural areas have reported having pregnancy either once or twice as compared to 62.20 percent in urban areas.

Table 6.4: Distribution of Rural Respondents by Religion and Number of Pregnancies

Religion	Number of respondents with pregnancies						Total
	0	1	2	3	4	≥5	
Buddhist	12	13	34	8	3	--	60
Christian	2	7	19	27	8	7	60
Hindu	10	13	39	32	23	23	140
Muslim	4	22	31	22	33	28	140
Total	28	55	123	89	67	58	420

Source: Calculated by the researcher on the basis of the data collected from the field during 2007-2008.

Cross examination of the table-6.4 to analyse the religious differential shows that as high as 59.29 percent of the Muslim respondents from rural areas reported having pregnancy more than twice. The figure is 55.71 percent, 70.00 percent and 18.33 percent respectively for Hindu, Christian and Buddhist respondents.

Table 6.5: Distribution of Urban Respondents by Religion and Number of Births

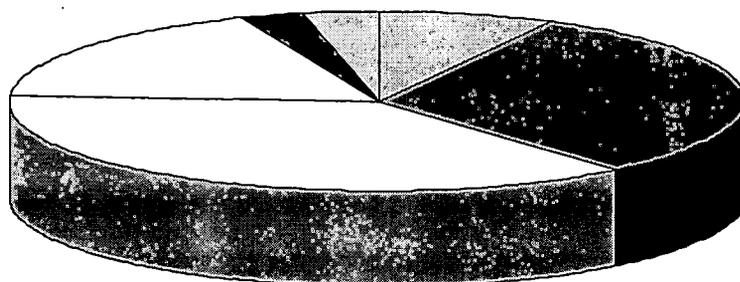
Religion	Number of respondents with births						Total
	0	1	2	3	4	≥5	
Buddhists	3	9	16	2	--	--	30
Christian	6	6	11	6	1	--	30
Hindu	1	24	22	13	--	--	60
Muslim	4	17	18	11	4	6	60
Total	14	56	67	32	5	6	180

Source: Calculated by the researcher on the basis of the data collected from the field during 2007-2008.

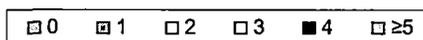
Tables 6.5 and 6.6 show the result of religion-wise distribution of respondents by number of births including still births to them for rural and urban areas. As has been mentioned earlier that the number of births indicates fertility of a group of population, hence a comparative analysis of the groups can be attempted with the help of birth records.

Table 6.5 pertaining to distribution of urban respondents by religion and number of births shows that 7.78 percent of the urban respondents have not given birth to any baby till the date of enumeration. It is thus interesting to note that as high as 68.33 percent of the same category of respondents has reported to have given birth to one or two children. At the same time 23.89 percent of the respondents of urban background have given birth to three or more than three children.

Fig. 6.1: Distribution of Urban Respondents by Number of Births



No. of births



The inter-religion percentage distribution of respondents of urban residence having different religious backgrounds shows that the number of births of babies i.e. three or more than three to them is the highest among the Muslims (35.00 percent) followed by the Christians (23.33 percent), the Hindus (21.67 percent) and the Buddhists (6.67 percent).

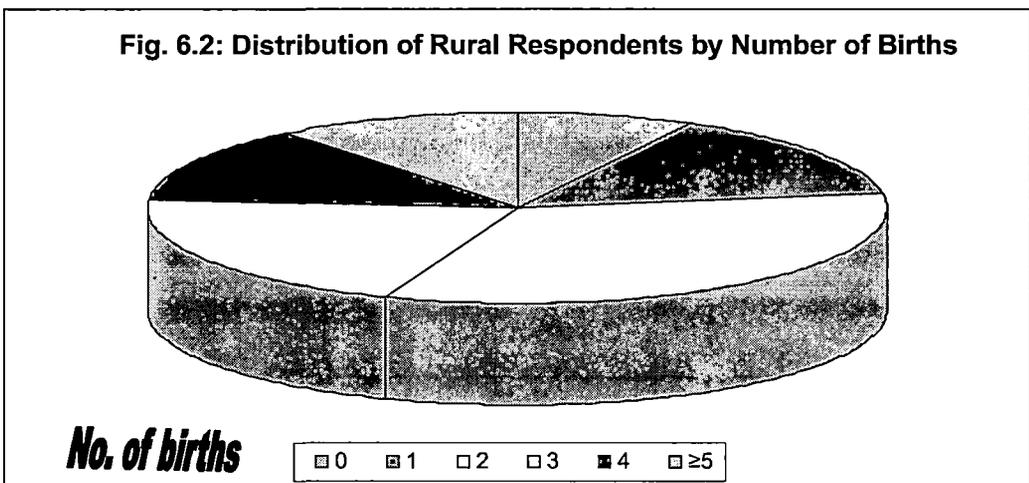
Table 6.6: Distribution of Rural Respondents by Religion and Number of Births

Religion	Number of respondents with pregnancies						Total
	0	1	2	3	4	≥5	
Buddhists	14	12	34	8	2	--	60
Christian	4	6	28	24	2	6	60
Hindu	10	20	41	38	18	13	140
Muslim	5	23	37	17	32	26	140
Total	33	61	140	87	54	45	420

Source: Calculated by the researcher on the basis of the data collected from the field during 2007-2008.

While comparison is made between respondents of rural and urban background with respect to the number of births to them one finds that there exists a difference. The proportion of rural respondents without having given birth to any child is 7.86 percent as against 7.78 percent in case of urban respondents. Similarly, only 47.86 percent of the rural respondents have given birth to one or two babies against 68.33 percent of the same category of respondents in the urban areas. Astonishingly high proportion (44.28 percent) of respondents of rural background has given birth to three or more than three children as against 33.34 percent in urban areas.

Fig. 6.2: Distribution of Rural Respondents by Number of Births



Among the rural respondents it was found that highest proportion i.e. 53.57 percent of Muslim respondents reported themselves having given birth to more than two children. The proportion of Christian respondents belonging to same category is almost identical Muslims i.e. 53.33 percent followed by Hindus 49.29 percent and Buddhists 6.67 percent.

Fertility in a Few Selected Urban Centers

The district of Darjeeling has nine urban centres on the whole of which there is one corporation i.e. Siliguri Municipal Corporation; three Municipalities Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong; and a lone Notified Area i.e. Mirik. Apart from the above mentioned urban centres, there are four Census Towns namely, Pattabong Tea Garden, Cart Road, Uttar Bagdogra and Bairatisal. For the purpose of this study, Census Towns have been taken as part of rural area. Since part of Siliguri Municipal Corporation is extended in Jalpaiguri district, hence it can not be taken for detailed study.

Table 6.7: Urban Centres and their Growth in Darjeeling District

SL	Urban Centres	Status	Decadal Growth Rate (percent)	Remark
1	Pattabong Tea Garden	CT	0.00	Part of Darjeeling Urban Agglomeration
2	Darjeeling	M	4.67	Municipal Town
3	Kalimpong	M	1.07	Municipal Town
4	Mirik	M	3.02	Municipal Town
5	Kurseong	M	4.96	Municipal Town
6	Cart Road	CT	0.07	Non-Municipal Town
7	Uttar Bagdogra	CT	3.08	Non-Municipal Town
8	Bairatisal	CT	1.49	Non-Municipal Town
9	Siliguri	M (Corp.)	3.12	Municipal Corporation

Source: PCA, Vol. 7 (CD ROM), Census of India, 2001.

Table-6.7 shows a very high growth rate of population i.e. annual growth rate of 4.67 percent, 4.96 percent and 3.12 percent in Darjeeling, Kurseong and Siliguri respectively. This phenomenon can not be explained as natural growth. Large scale migration from Nepal and Bangladesh etc. is partly responsible for this phenomenon. This apart, the change of boundary and inclusion of new areas into the fold of municipalities and Municipal Corporation, is another cause of high growth rate of population. In order to explain this phenomenon of high growth rate, records of natural growth rate, for a few municipalities have been analysed.

Table 6.8: Nepali Migration in India (1901-1991)

Year	No. of in-migrants
1901	239127
1911	274251
1921	260220
1931	303139
1941	N.A.
1951	278972
1961	498836
1971	526526
1981	501292
1991	478694

Source: Collected from Dutta, P. (2002): "Nepali Migration in India", p.18
retrieved from <http://www.iussp.org/Bangkok/2002/511Datta.Pdf>

Cross border migration (table-6.8) is one of the most important reasons of high growth rate of population in the urban areas of the region. Though table-6.9 is not particularly applicable to Darjeeling district alone, yet it is well known fact that the Nepali immigrants mostly get settled in the Darjeeling district. It is in this context that the organization such as Amra Bangali and Bangla Bhasha O Banla Bachao Committiee demanding scraping of Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty. They also opposed tripartite talk on Gorkland as they consider many of the Gorkhas are aliens coming from Nepal.

Birth and death records of individual urban centres and estimated figures for their natural growth for the period 1997-2006 show that in Kurseong Municipality alone, the figures vary from as high as 1139 to as low as 718 and thus a natural growth leads to an addition of population to existing population varying between 503 to 818. Similarly, the Kalimpong Municipality recorded births ranging from 1671 to 2628 and also a natural growth of population to the tune of 1302 to 2095.

Table 6.9: Vital Statistics of a Few Selected Urban Centres, 1997-2006

Year	Kurseong Municipality			Kalimpong Municipality			Mirik Notified Area (Urban)			Darjeeling Municipality		
	Birth	Death	Natural Growth	Birth	Death	Natural Growth	Birth	Death	Natural Growth	Birth	Death	Natural Growth
1997	930	253	677	1671	369	1302	197	38	159	1495	564	931
1998	718	177	541	2176	234	1942	211	23	188	1775	480	1295
1999	964	169	795	1969	423	1546	187	48	139	1560	431	1129
2000	918	265	653	1961	430	1531	72	44	28	1608	410	1198
2001	822	319	503	1847	395	1452	304	37	267	1982	544	1438
2002	935	307	628	1835	468	1367	384	30	354	2536	413	2123
2003	1139	321	818	2520	484	2036	303	39	264	2553	517	2036
2004	965	354	611	2332	530	1802	216	47	169	3788	563	3225
2005	957	342	615	2628	533	2095	166	27	139	2541	558	1983
2006	1003	301	702	2534	479	2055	286	30	256	2626	509	2117

Source: Municipal records births and deaths of concerned municipalities (1997-2006)

The scenario in the Mirik Notified Area is not very different from the other urban centres. The only remarkable difference is that the total population of Mirik being low, birth, death and natural addition to existing population is also low. It is observed from the table 6.9 that Mirik has recorded births ranging from 72 to 384 during 1997-2006 and thus a natural growth record is 28 to 354. Darjeeling Municipality on the other hand, has recorded births ranging from 1495 to 3788 during the above mentioned period. During the same period natural growth of population in the urban centre is between 931 and 3225. Thus the higher growth rate of population in the region, discussed in the earlier section, is justified.