



The Impact of Female Education on Fertility: A Comparative Study of India and Rajasthan

KEYWORDS

Female Education, Fertility, India

Dr. Firdous Ansari

'Ansari Bldg' 'I' 'B'Road, Sardarpura, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

ABSTRACT

Female education has its impact on social as well as health development of a nation. It is known that informed reproductive and health care decisions are taken by educated women. In this paper a comparison regarding female literacy and fertility is made between rural and urban areas of India and Rajasthan, considering fertility indicators e.g. total fertility rate and age specific fertility rate with various education levels; illiterate, literate, and graduate and above. In the beneath discussion is made.

Discussion : Study reveals a decrease in fertility rate as education level is increased in India as well as in Rajasthan. As far as we concerned rural and urban area of these two geographical locations, in rural India total fertility rate is found more in illiterate women, whereas in reference of Rajasthan, urban and rural areas have same scenario. There is a need to use literacy as a tool of controlling fertility rates.

Introduction

In developing countries, one of the key to reducing fertility levels is achieving higher female literacy rates, as improvements in female literacy have direct effect on reducing fertility (Honolulu et al, 1990). Negative association between female education and fertility was pointed out in many empirical studies (F Ansari et al,2012;Schultz, 1997; Ainsworth et al, 1996).

It has been a matter of concern between health and education, for health researchers and health professionals of developing world as well as for developed world. (Evans et al; health Canada,1999;world bank2000)

Educated women have other sources of prestige and fulfillment besides reproductive performance, more control over household resources and personal behavior, and greater involvement in reproductive decisions (Murthy et al, 1995; Dyson and Moore, 1983)

According to the annual report of 'Registration of Births and Deaths in Delhi-2009', prepared by the economics and statistics directorate, lesser level of educational attainment leads to higher birth orders. However, having education level of mothers below matriculation, in case of third birth order, was reported 62.86%.This proportion was found 85.83% in case of beyond third birth order.(Annual Report on Registration of Births and Deaths in Delhi-2009). In this paper ,data is considered from the website of Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. This study deals with computation and comparison of percent increase/decrease in fertility indicators at various level of education, for rural and urban area of India and Rajasthan. Fertility indicators considered are total fertility rate and age specific fertility rate. Education levels of a woman considered in the considered data were illiterate, literate and graduate and above.

According to World Bank, total fertility rate represents the number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with current age-specific fertility rates.(World Bank).

literacy, in India, is defined as the ability to read and write with understanding in any language.

Scenario in India

In India, total fertility rate is found 57.14% more in illiterate women as compared to literate women. When illiterate women were compared with women having education of level graduate and above, this rate was found around 106% more in illiterate women.

If we talk about age specific fertility rate of women aged 20-24 years, an increment of 41.38% was observed in illiterate women over literate women. In age group 20-24 years age specific fertility rate is found 154.06% more in illiterate women when a comparison is made between illiterate women and women having education of level graduate and above.

Rural Vs Urban India

Total fertility rate is figured around 48% and 39% more in illiterate women as compared to literate women of rural and urban India respectively. The same measure is turned to be around 89% and 67% more in illiterate women over literate women of rural and urban Rajasthan respectively. As far as age specific fertility rate of women aged 20-24 years is concerned, additional figure of around 31% and 54% were observed in illiterate women as compared to literate women of both the considered residential levels of India, respectively. When a comparison is made for women aged 20-24 years, age specific fertility rate is resulted around 119% and 138% more respectively for rural and urban India.

Scenario in Rajasthan

In Rajasthan, illiterates are found with 38.46% increased total fertility rate as compared to literate women and it is found to be 89.47% more in illiterates as compared to women having education level graduate and above.

Rural Vs Urban Rajasthan

The illiterate women have almost same increment of around 32% in rural as well as in urban Rajasthan. If total fertility rate is compared between illiterate women and women having education level graduation and above, in-

crements of 85% and 61% were observed in rural and urban Rajasthan, respectively. As far as age specific fertility rate of women aged 20-24 years is concerned, illiterate women were found around 30% and 20% more than literate women of both the considered residential level of Rajasthan, respectively. While age specific fertility rate in the women of same age group is found around 132% and 181% more in illiterate women as compared to literate women as compared to women having education level graduation and above in rural and urban Rajasthan.

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