

Role of Religion in Fertility and Family Planning Among Muslims in India

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Introduction

Religion has a significant relevance in the demographic study of socio-economic groups. Religion prescribes a code of life, refers to a system of beliefs, attitudes and practices which individuals share in groups, and through this orientation towards life and death, religion is supposed to affect one's fertility behaviour (Chaudhary, 1982). According to Westoff, 'the religious affiliation of the couple connotes a system of values which can affect family via several routes: (a) directly, by imposing sanctions on the practice of birth control or legitimizing the practice of less effective methods only, or (b) indirectly, by indoctrinating its members with a moral and social philosophy of marriage and family which emphasizes the virtues of reproduction' (Westoff, 1959 : 117).

The study of demography of religious communities is all the more important and intriguing in case of India because of its religious heterogeneity, and the fact that followers of different religions are living side by side. According to the 1991 census, more than four-fifths of the population were Hindus (82 percent), 12 percent were Muslims, a little above 2 percent were Christians, 2 percent were Sikhs, about 1 percent were Buddhists, and about half percent were Jains. The rest consisted of Jews, Parsis and others. In terms of decadal growth rate during 1981-91, Buddhists showed the highest rate (35.9 percent), Muslims recorded a growth rate of 32.8 per cent, which is higher than the growth rate of 32.8 per cent, which is higher than the growth rate observed for Hindus (22.8 percent). The Growth rate for Christians (16.9 percent) is considerably lower than that for Muslims and Hindus. Thus it is seen that religious differentials in growth rate were significant during the recent decade.

Historically Muslim group consistently showed higher population growth than many other religious groups. For example, during the last several decades the proportion of Muslims in India's population has been steadily increasing while that of Hindus steadily falling. In the undivided India, the Muslim share increased from 20 percent in 1881 to 24 percent in 1941 while that of Hindus declined from 75 percent to about 70 percent (Table 1). In the post-Independence period, 1951 to 1991, the proportion of Muslim population increased from a little less than 10 percent to 12 percent and the proportion of Hindus declined from 85

percent to 12 percent and the proportion of Hindus declined from 85 percent to 82 percent (Table 2). The growth rate has also been higher for Muslims than for Hindus. For example, the percentage increase during 1951-61, 1961-71, 1971-81 and 1981-91 was 33, 31, 31 and 33 respectively for Muslims and 21, 24, 24 and 23 respectively for Hindus (Table 3).

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Population by Religion India, 1881-1941

Census	Year	Hindus	Muslims	Tribal	Christians	Sikh	Buddhist	Jain	Parsi
1881	75.09	19.97	2.57	0.71	0.74	0.07	0.49	0.034	0.005
1891	74.24	20.41	3.26	0.77	0.68	0.09	0.51	0.032	0.008
1901	72.87	21.00	2.88	0.98	0.77	0.10	0.47	0.033	0.008
1911	71.68	22.39	3.17	1.21	1.00	0.11	0.41	0.033	0.007
1921	70.73	23.23	2.97	1.47	1.06	0.12	0.39	0.033	0.007
1931	70.67	23.49	2.26	1.77	1.28	0.13	0.37	0.032	0.007
1941	69.46	24.28	2.26	1.91	1.46	0.12	0.37	0.032	0.006

Source: Davis, K., 1951, pp. 178-193

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Population by Religion India, 1951-91

Census	Year	Hindus	Muslims	Christian	Sikh	Buddhist
1951	84.99	9.93	2.30	1.74	0.06	0.45
1961	83.51	10.70	2.44	1.79	0.73	0.46
1971	82.72	11.21	2.60	1.89	0.70	0.47
1981	82.64	11.35	2.43	1.96	0.71	0.48
1991	82.00	12.12	2.34	1.94	0.76	0.40

Source: The respectively census reports

Note: 1. The figures for 1981 exclude the state of Assam as census was conducted there in 1981.

2. The figures for 1991 exclude the state of Jammu and Kashmir as no census was conducted there in 1991.

3. After 1931 census the tribals were not listed as a separate religious group.

Table 3: Percentage Decadal Growth Rates by each Religious Group Indian, 1881-91 to 1981-91

Religion	1881-91	1891-1901	1901-11	1911-21	1921-31	1931-41	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91
Hindu	10.49	-0.34	5.00	-0.44	10.35	13.23	20.89	23.69	24.15	22.78
Muslim	14.24	8.85	9.20	4.67	11.69	19.09	32.89	30.85	30.58	32.76
Christian	21.66	28.29	32.08	22.66	32.66	24.50	30.78	32.60	16.77	16.89
Sikh	2.76	14.91	37.42	7.52	33.73	31.60	26.53	32.28	26.16	25.48
Jain	15.94	-5.83	-6.47	-5.63	6.29	15.81	26.73	28.48	23.69	4.42
Buddhist	45.41	20.29	15.12	9.63	18.80	4.28	16.71	17.20	22.52	35.98
Parsi	5.27	4.61	6.23	1.61	7.83	5.08	-9.86	-9.32	-21.61	6.63
Jew	42.68	4.16	13.75	3.44	11.04	-1.93	-30.72	-68.60	3.55	-6.18
India	11.76	1.54	6.74	0.90	10.45	15.20	21.15	24.79	24.69	23.79

Source: For the period 1881-1941 Davis, 1951

For the period 1951-1991, Respective Census Reports and Roland, 1988.

Different religious groups enter demographic transition at different times due to various factors. But in adapting to a modern integrated industrial society, ultimately all communities have to complete the demographic transition. The demographic transition and the associated changes in proximate variables relating to nuptiality and contraception may take place at different periods for different communities.

Different periods for different communities:

This would set forth a cycle of increasing differentials in fertility which would be established in all communities. This would lead to a convergence in fertility and mortality levels of all communities in the long run and population stabilization in each community and in the country as a whole.

In India, different communities are, apparently at different stages of demographic transition. Parsees with low death rates and low birth rates are already in the final stage of establishing a new demographic equilibrium. Since 1951, the population of Parsees has been on the decline (Visaria, 1974). The Christian community too is reaching this stage. Due to modernization of Christians, their fertility has come down significantly. Social change was important in lowering Christian fertility (Round, 1988). Available data indicate that Hindus have experienced a faster pace of fertility decline than Muslims (Mistry, 1990).

The pace of demographic transition of any religious group is largely determined by socio-economic and cultural profile of the community. Changes in socio-

economic variables such as education, status of women and economic status will bring about changes in such proximate variables as nuptiality and contraceptive use, which in turn affect fertility and mortality levels. Although religion is an important variable, it is the other socioeconomic variables such as female education and economic status, which have overriding influence in the demographic processes.

Need for the Study

As noted earlier, Muslims as the largest minority religious groups in India are undergoing demographic transition, but factors and the mechanisms through which such changes are occurring are not well understood. Not much empirical research seems to have been carried out exclusively on Muslim population and so our knowledge on demography of Muslims is rather limited. Hence, it was felt that a detailed empirical investigation exclusively among Muslims would certainly enhance our knowledge on the determinants of the demographic processes among Muslim population.

Of the three demographic processes, which affect the size of the Muslim population in relation to other religious groups, it was found that the factor, mortality, is not so important (Balasubramaniam, 1984). Also migration does not play an important role in changing the population size among Muslims except for Border States. Hence, the present study concentrates mainly on fertility and family planning behaviour among Muslims.

Earlier several studies were carried out on Muslim fertility and family planning mainly in relation to other communities such as Hindus (a brief review of these studies is given by Balasubramaniam, op. cit and Mistry, op. cit.). Most of these studies revealed a higher fertility and lower family planning practice among Muslims. However little attempt has been made to look into high Muslim fertility taking into account various social, cultural and religious factors exclusive to Muslims. The present study tries to fill up this gap.

Again very few studies have tried to study the opinions and attitudes of the Muslim leadership towards various aspects related to population problem such as small family norm and use of contraception etc. (Qureshi, 1996). The present study tries to cover this area by trying to get the Muslim leadership's views and attitudes regarding above-mentioned variables in Muslim community. The findings of the present study would be revealing in light of the fact that in the lower socio-economic group of Muslim community leaders wield a lot of influencing power.

Thus, since we want to study fertility and family planning behaviour exclusively among Muslims, Malegaon city in Nashik district was chosen as the study area. In Malegaon city, nearly three-fourths socio-economic development. Also in Malegaon, a number of Islamic religious schools exist.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the thesis is to examine the possible association between certain socio-economic, cultural and some other background variables and fertility and family planning use in order to understand more clearly how important these factors are in explaining the observed levels of fertility and contraceptive use in the study area. The factors that are considered for examination are variables relating to modernization, female status and religiosity and social indicators like age at marriage, education and occupation and economic variables like income status of the household.

In order to fulfill the objectives it was decided to carry out a detailed study of fertility and family planning behaviour among Muslim women in Malegaon city, a place where Muslims form major religious group with nearly three-fourths of the total population of the city.

The specific objectives of the study are :

1. To portray the demographic, social and economic picture of the study population;
2. To find the level of fertility and family planning practice among Muslims in the study area;
3. To find the degree of religiosity and its influence on fertility and family planning;
4. To ascertain the level of modernization and status of Muslim woman and their influence on fertility and family planning; and
5. To find the attitudes and perceptions of leaders of the community on issues related to population, family planning and family norm among Muslims in general.

Methodology and Questionnaire

For the study purpose a sample of 800 Muslim households in Malegaon city was selected. The 1991 census house listing was used as the sampling frame for the selection of the sample.

The information for sampling on wards and blocks come from the 1991 Census Records. The census wards were same as Municipal wards. For selection of sample units a two-stage sampling design was adopted. In the first stage, wards with Muslims in Majority were selected. In the second stage, blocks were selected from each selected ward. To identify the Muslim majority wards, the proportion of Muslims in each ward was estimated based on voter's list. Those wards in which Muslim voters formed 75 percent or more of the total population were selected. There were 35 Muslim majority wards in Malegaon city. These 35 wards had 265 blocks. Of these 265 blocks, 60 blocks were selected by PPS systematic sampling of blocks. From each selected block, 15 households were selected by simple random sampling. The overall sample size was fixed as 900 households to give some allowance for non-response. Thus, the list of 900 households with their building numbers and names of the heads of the households was compiled from the 1991 census house listing. Copies of census block maps for these 60 blocks were used for the interview. The listing of the households and copies of block maps were obtained from the Census Office, Nasik Road.

A list of 60 community leaders was compiled with the help of a few knowledgeable residents of Malegaon city. The sample of leaders comprised of educationists, teachers, politicians, social-workers, doctors, businessmen, professionals and grassroots level workers.

Keeping the objectives in mind, the questionnaire was carefully designed to obtain information on household characteristics, marriage and pregnancy history, family planning, religiosity, modernization and status of woman. Three types of questionnaires were used. First part of the questionnaire is the household questionnaire in which information was collected on household characteristics such as age, material status, literacy, occupation, and duration of stay in Malegaon of each member of the household. Questions on socio-economic status of the household and the births and deaths that occurred in the preceding two year period before the survey, were also included here. The second questionnaire used in the survey is the woman's questionnaire which was administered to all the ever-married women aged 15-49 years. There are four sections in this questionnaire. The first section consists of questions on marriage and pregnancy record, second on knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning, the third on religiosity and the fourth on modernization and status of

women from ever-married women age 15-49 in the study area. The questions from second section were administered to currently married women only whereas questions from all other sections were administered to all ever-married women.

The third questionnaire was administered to community leaders which has fourteen open-ended questions to obtain data on their perceptions of population and related issues. Questions on the knowledge, attitudes, practice of family planning, economic backwardness, modernization, status of women and religiosity among Muslims are also included.

The pretesting of the questionnaire was done on a sample of 27 respondents - 10 from low, 10 from middle and 7 from high income groups in Poona city and on the basis of the results of the retest, the questionnaire was revised. Later it was translated from English into Urdu (in Devnagari script). The local language of Malegaon Muslims.

The fieldwork was carried out during the period October 194 to March 1995 by employing qualified local Muslim women as investigators. The investigators were given a thorough training on interviewing methods. The average time required to fill the household questionnaire was about an hour while the questionnaire on community leaders required 15 minutes to half an hour.

Of the 900 households selected, data were collected from 800 households. From these 800 households 961 ever married women, age 15-49 were interviewed. After completing the interviews, the schedules were edited to ensure the completeness, comprehensibility and consistency of the responses obtained.

Profile of the Study Area

Malegaon city is an important powerloom centre in western India. With 3.4 lakh population in 1991, it constituted 25 per cent of Nashik district urban population. Its density was 28455 persons per sq. km. and sex ratio was 961 females per 1000 males in 1991. It is one of the areas characterised by high fertility and low family planning acceptance. The latest available statistics - **Annual Vital Statistics of Maharashtra 1989** - published in 1993, indicated that the birth rate of Malegaon city was 48 per 1000 population. In 1987-88 Malegaon city had 46,966 eligible couples with a couple protection rate of 26 percent (**Family Welfare Project for Low Acceptance Areas in Maharashtra State Project Agreement Document**). A distressing feature of Malegaon city is that a considerable proportion of its population lives a slums. It has poor medical facilities. Also as far as toilet facility is concerned, it is in poor shape.

According to 1991 census 73 per cent of the population in Malegaon was Muslim. Weaving is the major occupation among Malegaon Muslims. Historically Muslim community in Malegaon grew by migration mainly that of weaver's form North India (Momin, 1994 and Hikim, 1988).

In 1740 when Naroshankar, a Sardar of Peshwa Bajirao started constructing a fort at Maliwadi (previous name of Malegaon) Muslims for the first time in considerable numbers migrated of Malegaon as artisans, stone cutters and engineers from north India. These Muslims brought their language - Urdu to Malegaon. After the 1857 war of Independence, many Momins (Muslim weavers) from north India migrated to Malegaon in order to escape the persecution of the British. Again in 1863, Momins from Banaras migrated to Malegaon to escape the harshness of famine. These Muslim weavers continued their traditional occupation of weaving. In the past Malegaon was a traditional handloom centre. With the introduction of power in Malegaon in 1935, it became a powerloom centre and remains so till today and majority of the Muslims continues weaving as their main occupation. Most of these weavers live at subsistence level.

After 1857 along with weavers, many Alims and Hafizs (Muslim religion scholars) too migrated to Malegaon and over time established, religious institutions in Malegaon. Presently there are a number of schools to give religious education to boys and girls separately.

Muslims of Malegaon are patriotic Indians. In the past they participated enthusiastically in both Khilafat and non-co-operation movements and some of them sacrificed their lives for freedom struggle. During Partitions in 1947, none of the Malegaon Muslims migrated to Pakistan as they believed India to be their homeland.

Major Findings

The major findings of the present study are presented below:

Household and Respondent Background Characteristics : The socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the sample population are as follows - The age distribution of the Malegaon Muslims in the present study is typical of high fertility population with 48 per cent of the population below 15 years of age and 4 per cent of age 60 and above. The sex ratio is 965 women per 1000 men. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents were living in Malegaon since birth. A large majority of household heads is males. Eighty-two per cent of the household heads are currently married, 16 percent widowed and 1 percent divorced. One-third of the household heads are illiterate. Also one-third of the household have reported look as their occupation while 16 percent are engaged as labourers and

11 percent in business. The average household size is large - 7.8. Around three-fourths of the household had only one eligible woman and 8 percent had no eligible woman. Three-fifths of the households are in nuclear family and the rest of joint family. The young dependency ratio is very high.

For three-fourths of the households, the average monthly income is Rs.2000. The per capita monthly income for the survey population is only Rs.200. About half of the households live in one room and one-third live in two rooms. The housing conditions and ownership of consumer durable reveal of low level of economic status in the surveyed area. The standard of living too is low. Also most of, the Malegaon Muslims in the study area are engaged in low-income occupation. However, literacy level in the population is relatively high. Eighty-three percent of the males and 76 percent of the females are literate among Malegaon Muslims. The overall literacy rate is 79 percent. The literacy rare for Malegaon city in 1991 was 62 percent for males and 49 per cent of females.

To have a concise picture of socio-economic status among Malegaon Muslims, and index of standard of living (SLI) was constructed by including consumer durable, housing characteristics and income. Based on this all the households were divide into low, medium and high categories. As many as 51 percent fell into the category of low, 39 percent in the category of medium and only 9 percent in the category of high SLI.

The percentage distribution of ever-married women by background characteristics is given in Table 4. Ninety-five percent of the ever-married women in the survey population are currently married, 2 percent were widowed and another 2 percent are divorced. Twenty-nine percent of the ever married women are illiterate and more than four-fifths of them are housewives. About 6 percent of the respondents are running *charkha* and 5 percent are engaged in loom work. Very few women are engaged in occupations like teaching and medicine. Half of the women listen to radio or television. Four-fifths of the literate women are exposed to print media.

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Ever-married Women Age 15-49 by Background Characteristics

Characteristics Age	Number of Women	Percentage
15-49	39	4.1
20-24	87	19.4
25-29	199	20.7
30-34	192	19.9
35-39	169	17.6
40-44	112	11.7
45-49	63	6.6

Material Status	914	95.1
Married	23	2.4
Widow	3	0.3
Separated	21	2.2
Divorced		
Education	278	28.9
Illiterate	149	15.5
Up to 4th	404	42.0
5th to 9th	88	9.2
SSC	39	4.1
Above SSC	3	0.3
Religious		
Occupation	809	84.2
Housework	8	0.8
Self employed	0.4	4.9
Loom-Owned, 4	47	2.3
Loom-service	22	1.3
Service	12	0.4
Maid servant	4	5.7
Religious	55	
Charkha		
Total	961	100.0

Religiosity: Religiosity could be one of the background variables that can explain high fertility among Malegaon Muslims. Therefore, an attempt was made to measure the religiosity of Muslim women in Malegaon in terms of their religious practices. Viz. Namaz (prayer), Roza (fasting), paying of Fitra (charity) and participation in Waaz (religious congregation). Overall 67 per cent of the ever-married women were offering Namaz daily. Almost all the respondents were observing fast during the month of Ramazan. Around 75 percent of the respondents were giving charity and 84 percent of the women were participating in religious congregation.

To get a clear and more concise picture of religiosity among Malegaon Muslim women, an index of religiosity was constructed by internally scaling the observance of the above four religious practices. Depending upon the score the women were divided into three groups religiosity, as much as 62 percent of the women exhibited high religiosity, 33 percent exhibited medium religiosity and only 3 percent were found to be of low religiosity (Table 5). It was further observed that the respondents had a fairly good idea about their own intensity of religiosity (Table 6).

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Ever married Women by Index of Religiosity

Score	Group	Number of Women	Percent
0-4	Low	27	2.8

5-8	Medium	342	35.6
9-12	High	592	61.6
Total respondents		961	100.0

Table 6: Distribution of Ever married Women by Index Religiosity and Respondents Self Perception about Religiousness

Index	More Religious	Religious	Less Religious	Don't Know	Total Percent	Number
Low	3.7	44.4	48.1	3.7	100.0	27
Medium	12.0	65.2	18.4	4.4	100.0	342
High	37.2	57.6	3.7	1.5	100.0	592
Total number	262	576	98	25		961
Percent	27.3	59.9	2.6	100.0		

No differentials in religiosity by age of the women were observed. Surprisingly with each level of education, religiosity increased (Table 7) and this relationship was found to be statistically significant. May be with increasing education, the women understand their religion better and practice it more intensely:

Table 7: Differentials in Religiosity of Ever-married Women by Age and Education

Variable Age	Index of Religiosity			Total	
	Low	Medium	High	Percent	Number
15-19	7.7	30.8	61.5	100.0	39
20-24	1.6	34.8	63.6	100.0	187
25-29	2.5	34.2	63.3	100.0	199
30-34	2.6	43.2	54.2	100.0	192
35-39	2.4	38.5	59.2	100.0	169
40-44	5.4	28.6	66.1	100.0	112
45-49	1.6	27.0	71.4	100.0	63
Education	6.1	54.7	39.2	100.0	278
Illiterate	1.3	36.2	62.4	100.0	149
Up to 4th	2.0	29.7	68.3	100.0	404
5th to 9th	0.0	12.6	87.4	100.0	127
SSC and above	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	3
Religious	27	342	592	100.0	961
Total Percent	2.8	35.6	61.6	100.0	

Modernization and Status of Women : Modernization and status of women could be the background variables that can explain high fertility among

Malegaon Muslims. Therefore, an attempt was made to measure modernization and status of women among Muslims women in Malegaon.

In the present study the variables, modernization and status of woman, are combined at it is observed that in general highly modernized societies are also the societies with high levels of status of women and vice-versa. Here certain variables - *pardah*, female education, female labour-force participation, marriage, discrimination against girl child, female property rights, son preference, decision making, freedom of movement and exposure to media - have been used as indicators of status of women and modernization among Malegaon Muslim women. On each variable a number of questions were framed on both attitudes and practices.

Among the respondents 99 percent approved *pardah* and 65 percent of the women thought that *pardah* is not a hindrance to progress of women in modern world. Ninety per cent of the women had over practiced *pardah* while 74 per cent were currently practising *pardah*. On female education, all the respondents felt that education for girls is as important as for boys. Ninety seven per cent of the respondents favoured both types of education viz. Modern and religious. Seventy-two percent of the respondents felt that girls should complete at least S.S.C. or above. Also a majority (89 percent) approved girls participation in sports.

Regarding attitudes towards gainful employment, almost all the respondents (98 percent) opined that each women should be economically independent. Again 85 percent of the women felt that a woman should not leave her job for the sake of her husband. Strangely only 5 per cent of them were working and 45 percent along expressed a desire to work.

On marriage, the respondents universally opined that marriage is a must for women and almost all the women were in favour of arranged marriages. A majority of the women (68 percent) disapproved polygyny among Muslims. Also almost all the women (96 percent) have disapproved the triple Talaq. The custom of dowry is not prevalent among Malegaon Muslims. Mehr (dower) though theoretically an institution to empower Muslim women, it was observed that in practice it has failed to do so (Table 8).

Table 8: Percentage Distribution of Ever married Women by their Attitudes Towards Marriage and Related Practices

Variable		Number of Women	Percent
1.	<i>Ideal age of marriage</i>	500	52.0
	below 18	322	33.5

	18	322	33.5
	above 18	2	0.2
	Don't know		
2.	<i>Knowledge of legal age at marriage</i>	503	52.3
	above 18	379	39.5
	18	20	2.1
	below 18	69	6.1
	Don't know		
3.	<i>Ideal age difference between Husband and Wife</i>	559	58.2
	Up to 3 years	393	40.9
	4-6 years	3	0.3
	7 and more	6	0.6
	don't know		
4.	<i>Polygyny among Muslims</i>	651	67.8
	Disapprove	246	25.6
	Approve	64	6.6
	Don't know		
5.	<i>Arranged marriages</i>	943	1.9
	Approve	18	
	Don't know		
6.	<i>Dowry</i>	728	75.8
	Minimum	233	24.2
	Disapprove		
7.	<i>Amount of Mehr</i>	592	61.6
	Maximum	14	1.5
	According to status	48	5.0
	Minimum	274	28.5
	Approves-amount indicated	33	3.4
	Don't know		
8.	<i>Unilateral divorce (Talaq)</i>	921	95.8
	Disapprove	6	0.6
	Approve	34	3.6
	Don't know		
9.	<i>Marriage among blood relatives</i>	45	4.7
	Close blood relatives	76	7.9
	Distant blood relatives	840	87.4
	No relatives	961	100.0
	Total		

Almost all the women reported that there should be no discrimination in respect of feeding, clothing and medical care between boys and girls whereas some women thought that boys should be given better education. (8 percent), a greater share in property (17 percent) and household work should not be taught to boys (26 percent). Further, 65 percent of the respondents affirmed that they do not

discriminate between boys and girls. It was also observed that Malegaon Muslims do not have preference for son.

Regarding property rights, only 4 percent of the women got a share in property. However, 11 per cent of the respondents stated that they owned some asset like a house, land or loom.

On decision making, 80 percent of the women felt that a woman should have a say in important matters in her life like acquiring education, marriage, family planning, family size etc. Overall, only 35 percent of the women, had an effective say in decision making (Table 9)

Table 9: Percentage Distribution of Ever-married Women by their Attitudes and Practices Regarding Decision Making on Important Issues

Variable	Don't Know		Should not have a say		Should have a say but not declared		Say was declared but not effective		Say was declared and effective		
	Wome n	%	Wome n	%	Wome n	%	Wome n	%	Wome n	%	
1	Acquiring skills	34	3.5	15	1.6	340	35.4	29	3.0	543	56.5
2	Education	36	3.7	21	2.2	483	50.3	87	9.0	334	34.7
3	Job Selection	56	5.8	153	15.9	598	62.3	94	9.8	60	6.2
4	Marriage	36	3.7	464	48.3	286	29.8	3	172	17.9	
5	Family Planning	71	7.4	197	20.5	249	25.9	133	13.8	311	32.4
6	Family size	72	7.5	201	20.9	249	25.9	132	13.7	307	32.0
7	Sex composition	71	7.4	203	21.1	249	25.9	134	13.9	304	31.7
8	Children's education	29	3.0	9	0.9	244	25.4	13	1.4	666	69.3
9	Children's marriage	27	2.8	8	0.8	741	77.2	9	0.9	176	18.3
	Number/per cent	48	5.0	144	14.7	384	39.8	68	7.3	317	33.2

Total respondents 961 (100%) under each variable 1-9

Overall percentage is based on equal weights to all nine questions.

On freedom of movement, 70 percent of the women opined that women can go out alone for shopping etc. With regard to exposure to electronic media, the Muslim women in Malegaon have low exposure as 51 per cent never listen to radio and 44 per cent never watch T.V.

In order to peruse whether there existed correlation's among the different variables of modernization and status of woman included in this study, indices were constructed separately for each variable. Later adding these indices an aggregate index was prepared. Even though the individual indices show small correlations among themselves, they show significant correlation ranging between 2 and 7 with the aggregate index (Table 10).

Table 10: Correlation Matrix among the Indices of the Variables Considered to construct the Index of Modernization and Status of Women (IMSW)

	EDN	LFP	M.I	M.II	DISC	DEC	FREE	MED	AGGR
EDN	1.0000								
LFP	0.0951*	1.0000							
M.I	0.0468	0.0984*	1.0000						
M.II	0.0717*	0.1930*	0.0199	1.0000					
DISC	0.2324*	0.1233*	0.0629	0.2107*	1.0000				
DEC	0.3748*	0.0893*	0.1507*	0.1404*	0.2886*	1.0000			
FREE	0.0690*	0.0950*	0.0952*	0.0666	0.1779*	0.1572*	1.0000		
MED	0.2511*	0.1240*	0.1262*	0.2582*	0.1734*	0.3672*	0.0238	1.0000	
AGGR	0.4871*	0.5263*	0.3010*	0.4842*	0.4494*	0.7241*	0.2473*	0.6456*	1.0000

Definition of Variables

EDN	Index of Education
LFP	Index of Labour force participation
M-I	Index of Marriage-I
M-II	Index of Marriage-II
DISC	Index of discrimination against girl child
DEC	Index of decision making
FREE	Index of freedom of movement
MED	Index of Exposure to mass media
AGGR	Aggregate Index

On the basis of the scores in the aggregate index and the maximum variation between the groups, the women were divided into three groups of low, medium and high levels of modernization and status of woman. Thirty percent of the respondents fell in the category of high, 44 percent in medium and 26 percent in the low category (Table 11).

Table 11: Percentage Distribution of Ever married Women by (IMSW)

Index value	Women	Percentage	Group mean
Low	(16-39)	246	25.6

Medium	(40-49)	427	44.4	44.7
High	(50-64)	288	30.0	54.0
Total		961	100.0	44.8

Even though the Muslims in Malegaon as a whole are characterized by low of modernization and their women have lower status than women in other communities, it was found in the present study that education does make Muslim women modern and improve their status (Table 12). Some association was found between age and index of modernization and status of women (Table 13).

Table 12: Percentage Distribution of Ever married Women by Education and IMSW

Level of education	IMSW			Number of women
	Low	Medium	High	
Illiterate	51.6	32.6	4.2	278
Upto 4th	16.9	18.3	10.4	149
5th - 9th	26.8	40.9	56.6	404
S.S.C.	3.3	6.8	17.7	88
Above S.S.C.	1.2	1.2	10.7	39
Religious*	--	--	--	3
Total Number	246	427	288	961
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	

*No analysis was done for this group due to small cell frequency.

Table 13: Percentage Distribution of Ever Married Women by Age and IMSW

Age	IMSW			Number of women
	Low	Medium	High	
15-19	4.9	4.2	3.1	39
20-24	18.3	17.6	23.3	187
25-29	18.7	18.7	25.4	199
30-34	18.7	20.8	19.8	192
35-39	17.4	18.1	17.0	169
40-44	11.8	13.8	8.3	112
45-49	10.2	6.8	3.1	63
Total Number	246	427	288	961
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	

With modernization religiosity may decline. Therefore, the relationship between index of religiosity and index of modernization and status of woman was examined. It is found that index of religiosity does not vary much with index of modernization and status of woman implying that no strong association exists between religiosity and modernization and status of woman among Malegaon Muslim women (Table 14).

Table14: Percentage Distribution of Ever-married Women by Index of Religiosity and IMSW

Index of Religiosity	IMSW			Percent	Number
	Low	Medium	High		
Low	55.6	40.7	3.7	100.0	27
	6.1	2.6	0.3	2.8	
Medium	40.9	43.3	15.8	100.0	342
	56.9	34.7	18.8	35.6	
High	15.4	45.3	39.4	100.0	592
	37.0	62.8	80.9	61.6	
Total Number	246.0	427.0	288.0	100.0	961
	25.6	44.4	30.0		
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Marriage: In the surveyed population marriage is universal. By age 25-29, 95 percent of the women are ever-married, by age 35-39, 99 percent of the women are ever married, and by age 40-44, 100 percent of the women are ever married. In the age group of 15-49, about 2 percent of the ever-married women are divorced and less than 1 percent are separated. The median age at first marriage for the ever married in the age group 15-49 is 18 years. Over time age at marriage does not seem to have changed and not much variation in average age at marriage for girls has been observed. However, age difference between husband and wife is declining.

Knowledge of minimum legal age at marriage for females is low among Malegaon Muslim women. Only two-fifths of the women could identify age 18 as the minimum legal age of marriage for females. Consanguine marriages are not widely prevalent as only 12 percent of the respondents have married among their close relatives (Table 8).

Family Planning: The awareness about family planning methods is widespread among Malegaon Muslim women with 88 per cent of currently married women reporting the knowledge of at least one method of family planning. There exists considerable variation in knowledge by method of contraception. The most widely known method is female sterilization (86%) followed by pill (83%), condom and copper-T (82% and 81% respectively) and male sterilization (64%).

No differentials in knowledge by age and education were observed. Among different sources of knowledge on contraception, health professional viz. Doctors, para-medical staff, Anganwadi workers and friends seem to be the main source for acquiring knowledge on family planning methods.

Of 914 currently married women, 32 percent were found to be ever users of contraception. Among the ever users, 25 percent were current users and 7 percent were past users. It is very encouraging to note that there is fair amount of method mix in the current use of family planning among Malegaon Muslims.

Among the total users, only 39 percent of the women or their husbands are sterilized and thus sterilization is not the mainstay among the users. It is again very satisfying to note that the use of spacing methods is higher than the use of sterilization (although the overall use is only 25 percent). This is very much in keeping with the reproductive health approach the government is now introducing which propagates a balanced method mix. The relationship between current use and age is typically curvilinear (Table 15). The use is higher in nuclear families than in joint families. The use rate does not differ between low and medium status couples while it is higher for couples with higher socioeconomic status. The use of spacing methods generally increases with rise in socioeconomic status while there is clear negative relationship between socioeconomic status and female as well as male sterilization.

Table 15: Current Use by Background Variables

Variable	Current use (percent)	Total currently married women
<i>Age</i>	0.0	38
15-19	13.8	181
20-24	25.9	193
25-29	29.6	186
30-34	39.4	155
35-39	30.7	101
40-44	11.7	60
45-49		
<i>Education</i>	20.9	263
Illiterate	27.5	138
4th std.	26.3	388
5th - 9th	27.1	85
SSC	24.3	37
Above SSC	--	3*
<i>Religious</i>		
<i>Family</i>	29.2	421
Nuclear	21.5	493
Joint		
<i>Index of SL.</i>	24.0	337

Low	22.8	451
Medium	35.7	126
High		
Total	229	914
Percentage	25.1	100

The past users were asked about their intentions for future use of contraception, sixty-four per cent of them reported that they would like to use some method in future.

All the never users were asked about their intention for future use of contraception. A large majority of the never users (80 percent) did not intend to use any method in future. An analysis of the reasons forwarded for not practising contraception in future reveals that the largest proportion (32%) do not intend to use contraception because they want children. Other major reasons for future non-use were health problems (19%), against Islam (16%), and opposition from husband (15%). Only 20 percent of the never users showed an intention for future use. They prefer spacing methods to sterilization for their future use.

Many Muslims in their ignorance still believe that Islam does not allow the use of contraception. Hence an attempt was made to find whether extent of religiosity among women has an effect on their contraceptive use. An analysis of the relationship between the index of religiosity and contraceptive use reveals that the percentage of women had ever used a method of family planning increases with the intensity of religiosity (Table 16). Thus it underscores that Islam does not disallow use of family planning methods.

Table 16: Use of Contraception among Currently Married Women by Index of Religiosity

Religiosity Index	Ever use	Never use	Total percent	Number of Women
Low	8.7	91.3	100.0	23
Medium	29.5	70.5	100.0	329
High	34.5	65.5	100.0	562
All women	32.1	67.9	100.0	914

In order to find from the women if according to them, there is anything in Quran or Hadees prohibiting contraception all the ever-married women were asked whether the Quran and Hadees contain a command on family planning. Of those who read Quran and Heeds, 64 percent said that there is no command against family planning in the Quran and Hadees while only 2 percent affirmed. Thirty-

four percent answered 'don't know'. This information would be highly useful to the planners and administrators of family planning programme among Muslims. Since the family planning acceptance among Muslims is low, it is generally believed that the Muslims oppose family planning. So all the respondents were asked : "It is observed that statement?" Overall 44 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement while 42 percent disagreed. Fourteen percent reported 'don't know'. It is important to note that a majority of the respondents disagreeing with the statement (32 percent) stated that even if the religion doesn't permit contraception, Muslims must practise contraception for the welfare of the family.

With modernization and increasing status of woman, contraceptive practice is expected to increasing. A cross-classification of contraceptive use by index of modernization and status of women shows positive relationship between the tow variables. Ever use increases with the increase in the index of modernization and status of women (Table 17).

Table 17: Use of Contraception among Currently Married Women by IMSW

IMSW	Ever use	Never use	Total percent	Number of women
Low	10.1	89.9	100.0	237
Medium	33.7	66.3	100.0	401
High	48.5	51.5	100.0	276
All women	32.1	67.9	100.0	914

The effect of independent variables on contraceptive practice can be known more precisely after controlling for the effects of other variables in multivariate regression analysis. Therefore, regression analysis was carried out to assess the net influence of the predictor variables on ever use of contraception. Regression model is fitted by taking all the explanatory variables, which showed a significant association with contraceptive use. The predictor variables considered for he analysis of determinants of ever use of contraception were : education of women, age at marriage of woman, the type of family which she lives, index of standard of living, index of religiosity and index of modernization and status of women. In this analysis number of children ever born is used as demographic control variable (Tables 18, 19, 20).

Table 18: Means and Standard Deviation (SD) of Variables Used in Regression Analysis for Contraceptive Use and Children Ever Born

Variables and Measurement	Mean	SD
Ever use of contraception = 1 if ever user = 0 other wise	0.32	0.47

Children ever born (continuous variable)	4.09	2.72
Education of woman 0) illiterate 1) up to 4th std. 2) 5th to 9th std. 3) SSC 4) Above SSC	1.45	1.13
Age of marriage (continuous variable)	17.89	2.57
Family type = 1 if joint = 0 otherwise	0.54	0.50
Index of standard of Living (continuous variable)	15.11	6.85
Index of religiosity (continuous variable)	9.32	2.58
Index of modernization and status of women (continuous variable)	44.76	8.13
Age of women (continuous variable)	30.71	7.75

Table 19: Correlation Matrices of Variables Used in Table 18 (n = 914)

Vars	CEB	EU	EDN	AAM	FT	ISL	IOR	IMSW	AGE
CEB	1.0000								
EU	0.1117*	1.0000							
EDN	-0.2153*	0.1080*	1.0000						
AAM	-0.1353*	-0.0659*	0.0693*	1.0000					
FT	-0.3110*	-0.0613	0.1541*	0.0398	1.0000				
ISL	-0.0864*	0.1299*	0.4257*	0.0849*	0.2536*	1.0000			
IOR	-0.1096	0.0925	0.3648*	0.0346*	0.0588	0.3780*	1.0000		
IMSW	-0.1688*	0.3362*	0.4925	0.0492	0.0331	0.3411*	0.3673*	1.0000	
AGE	0.6672*	0.1125*	0.1487*	0.1160*	0.3235*	0.0121	0.0273	-0.1011*	1.0000

Definition of variables

CEB:	Children ever born
EU:	Ever use of contraception
EDN:	Education of women
AAM:	Age of marriage of women
FT:	Family type
ISL:	Index of standard of living
IOR:	Index of religiosity
IMSW:	Index of modernisation & status of women

Table 20: The Logistic Regression Results for Ever use of Contraception (n = 914)

Independent variables	Coefficient	Standard error	`Z' statistics	Odds ratio
Education	-0.1299	0.0874	-1.487	0.8781
Age of marriage	-0.0709	0.0328	-2.160	0.9316
Family type	-0.1594	0.1676	-0.951	0.8527
Index of standard of living	0.0181	0.0130	1.394	1.0183
Index of religiosity	-0.0318	0.0352	-0.902	0.9687
Index of modernization & Status of woman	0.1289	0.0317	9.442	1.1376
Number of children ever born	0.1426	0.0317	4.499	1.1532

Constant: -5.7224 Log likelihood: -495.8972

X: 154.91 DF: 7

Z Statistic = absolute value of estimate/standard error. 2.53, 1.96 and 1.64 are the critical values for significance at the 99%, 95%

The logistic regression analysis revealed that among Malegaon Muslim women, higher modernization and status of woman have independent positive effect on acceptance of family planning. This finding is important because modernization and status of woman increase and odds of acceptance of contraception even after controlling for education and number of children ever born. Unexpectedly increasing age at marriage is found to reduce the odds of contraceptive acceptance. The effect of other predictor variables included in the model - family type, index of standard of living and index of religiosity - on odds of contraception is insignificant.

Fertility: The fertility of Malegaon Muslims is very high. The total fertility rate is 4.4 children. The average number of children ever born for all women as well as currently married women age 40-49 is 6.6. The different indicators 'birth order', 'age at first birth' and 'age at last birth' too indicate high fertility for Malegaon Muslims. Sixty-six percent of the women had third or higher order births. Only 34 percent of the women had first and second order births. The Muslim women in Malegaon are not following the small norm, which the government propagates. Overall, 52 percent of the women gave birth to their first child when they were between age 15 and 19 years. Twenty five percent of women in the age group 45-49 had completed their last birth when they were between age 40 and 44. All the

above indicators of fertility show that Muslim women in Malegaon have very high fertility.

However, the gap of 2.2 children between total fertility rate of 4.4 calculated for the two year period prior to the survey which is a current fertility measure and the mean number of children ever born (to women age 40-49) of 6.6 which is a cohort fertility measures, suggests that the fertility has declined among Malegaon Muslim women during the recent decades.

The variables age at marriage, education of woman and type of family are included for the study of differential fertility. Since one of the objectives of the study is to examine the relationship between fertility, religiosity, modernization and status of woman, these variables too are included in the analysis are mean number of children ever born (CEB) both non-standardized and standardized for age, and completed family size of the women age 40-49 (Table 21, 22).

Table 21: Standardized Mean Number of Children Ever Born (CEB) to currently Married Women by Background Variables

Variable	Mean CEB	Age standardized Mean CEB	Number of women
Age of marriage	5.06	5.06	137
12-15	4.19	4.37	271
16-17	3.78	3.98	319
18-19	3.76	3.20	187
20+			
Education	4.77	4.37	263
Illustration	4.72	4.37	138
Up to 4th	3.73	3.99	388
5th - 9th	3.09	3.48	122
SSC and above	--	--	3*
Religious			
Family type	5.00	4.35	421
Nuclear	3.31	3.91	493
Joint			
Index of Religiosity	4.51	4.51	352
Medium	3.83	3.83	562
High			
Index of Modernization and Status of women	4.61	4.48	237
Low	4.21	4.10	401
Medium	3.47	3.73	276
High	4.1	4.1	914
Total			

Note: Age distribution of all currently married women is taken as the standard age distribution.

* No analysis was done due to very small cell frequency.

Table 22: Mean Number of Children Ever Born (CEB) to Currently Married Women Age 40-49 by Background Variables

Variable	Mean CEB	Number of women
Age of marriage	6.93	30
12-15	6.29	38
16-17	6.76	46
18-19	6.21	47
20+		
Education	6.80	59
Illustration	6.44	34
Up to 4th	6.60	52
5th - 9th	5.44	16
SSC and above		
Family type	6.75	95
Nuclear	6.20	66
Joint		
Index of Religiosity	7.31	51
Medium	6.16	110
High		
Index of Modernization and Status of women	7.32	50
Low	6.28	80
Medium	5.87	31
High		
Total	6.60	161

In the present study, mean CEB reduces with increasing age at marriage and increasing level of education. Fertility is higher among women in nuclear families than women in joint families. After age standardization too, the above differentials remain.

Women with high religiosity are expected to exhibit high fertility, which was observed among Catholics (Blake 1984). Among Muslims high religiosity may be even more strongly related with high fertility as orthodox Muslims are usually conservative because they hold to old beliefs and practices more tenaciously (Kirk, 1973). Therefore, for Malegaon Muslim women, the relationship between fertility and index of religiosity was examined. It is found that fertility was lower among women with high religiosity than among women with medium religiosity. Even after age standardization, the relationship holds true (Table 21).

Very often it is observed that with modernization and increasing status of woman, the fertility reduces. With modernization demand for children reduces (Eastern in 1983). With increasing status of woman, women find less time for child bearing and child rearing (Weeks, 1988). Therefore, among Malegaon Muslim women, the relationship between fertility and index of modernization and status of woman was examined. It is found that with increasing level of modernisation and status of woman, the fertility reduces. After age standardization, even though fertility differential by index of modernization and status of woman narrow down, the direction remains the same.

The above analysis of differential fertility is not adequate to assess the net influences of factors affecting fertility. The significance of various factors can be examined by using multivariate regression analysis with appropriate controls for demographic and education variables. Hence an attempt was made to analyses factors affecting fertility using regression analysis. Children ever born was used as dependent variable to represent fertility. The explanatory variables used for the regression analysis of fertility were age at marriage, family type, index of standard of living, index religiosity, index of modernization and status of woman. Education and age of women were used as control variables (Table 23).

Table 23: The Regression Results for Children Ever Born (n = 914)

Independent	Coefficient	Standard error	't' value	P>t
Education	-0.1107	0.0696	-1.591	0.112
Age at marriage	-0.2116	0.0250	8.478	0.000
Family type	-0.4454	0.1406	-3.169	0.002
Index of standard of Living	0.0044	0.0111	0.400	0.689
Index of religiosity	-0.0943	0.0280	-3.372	0.001
Index of modernization & status of women	-0.0123	0.0093	-1.318	0.188
Age of women	0.2281	0.0089	25.540	0.000
Constant	2.6309	0.6352	4.142	0.000
2				
R	0.5083			

The regression analysis for children ever born indicates that, all the seven-predictor variables together explain 50 percent variation in children ever born. But, of the seven variables considered, only three variables - age at marriage of

women, family type of index of religiosity - are found to influence fertility significantly. As expected, higher age at marriage among Muslim women reduces their fertility significantly. Women living in joint family have significantly lower fertility than women living in nuclear family. The effect of religiosity of women on fertility is significantly negative, i.e., higher the religiousness lower the fertility. Education of women is found to have some negative effect on fertility (significant only at 11 per cent level). Though the coefficient of index of modernization and status of woman is negative it is not a significant factor to influence fertility. Index of standard of living is not at all a relevant factor to alter fertility levels.

Role of community Leaders: With a view to ascertain the role of community leaders in the promotion of family planning message and acceptance among Muslims, 60 community leaders in Malegaon were interviewed to know their perceptions on population, family planning programme and related issues. There was a mixed response from the various types of community leaders although majority of them agree that population problem exists, approve population policy and family planning programme of the Government of India, small family norm, family planning messages on electronic media, discuss small family norm with their followers and believe that the attitudes of Muslims are favourable towards family planning. Thus, Muslims leaders in Malegaon are in favour of small family norm and family planning for Muslims. Further most of the leaders perceive Muslims to be backward in different aspects of modernization and more religious than other communities. Though almost all have said that the status of Muslim women is better than a Hindu or Christian woman in family as well as in social life, they do want to improve her status by giving her more education, jobs outside home, better role in decision-making at home and better implementation of property rights.

It is a fact that a considerable proportion of Muslims are yet to be convinced about the benefits of a small family norm and accept family planning in large number. The leaders have recommended that the best way is to educate the Muslims about small family norm and teach responsible parenthood.

The role of religion seems to be ambivalent as Quran and Hadees (Traditions or Prophet) can be used to oppose or support family planning. Some leaders have suggested to use Quran and Hadees to promote family planning while others have misquoted from the above sources to oppose family planning. Further the thinking of the religious leaders on contraception seems to be changing.

The necessary measures for increasing the contraceptive practice among Muslims as recommended by community leaders are providing a sense of security, eliminating communal riots, removal of poverty and illiteracy, present

population as a national and environmental problem, and involve Muslim leaders and officials in propagation of the message. On the other hand, the quality of the services should be improved by incorporating the personal touch. Further, the programme should be re-oriented to maximize the participation of men in family planning.

Even though the Muslim attitudes are becoming favourable towards contraception and family planning practice is increasing, in order to accelerate this process, co-operation from the religious leaders will help in promoting family planning whereas in the long run it is by education, development, improvement in the status of Muslim women by providing her with education and economic opportunities, and large scale participation by political leaders along will bring about a higher level of family planning acceptance among Muslims.

Policy Implications

The policy implications of the present study areas follows:

1. The Muslims in the study area are a homogenous population who are mainly engaged in the low-income occupation of waving. Their housing characteristics, possession of consumer durable and per capital income, all suggest a low level of economic development. Even though literacy levels are relatively high, educational levels are low. Therefore, it is recommended that general socioeconomic developmental programme to uplift the Muslim community should be undertaken.
2. Overall only 34 per cent the births in the study area are of first and second order births. The government propagates a two-child family. However 66 per cent of the Malegaon Muslim women have three or more than three children. Therefore, a strong information, education and communication campaign is to be mounted among them.
3. It is encouraging to note that there is fair amount of method-mix in the current use of family planning among Malegaon Muslims. Among the total current users only 39 percent of the women or their husband are sterilized, thus sterilization is not the mainstay among the users. It is again very satisfying to note that the use of spacing methods is higher than the use of terminal methods (although the overall use is only 25 percent). This is very much in keeping with the reproductive health approach the government is now introducing which propagates a balanced method mix. Therefore, it is recommended that the family planning authorities may lay more emphasis on Liking spacing methods available to Muslims.

4. It seems from the remarks of the opinion leaders that the family planning services in Malegaon are poor. Roy et al's (1990) baseline survey of Malegaon city too has found the same. Therefore, it is recommended that the quality of family planning services in Malegaon city should be improved.
5. The lares proportion of the never users reported that they do not use contraception because they want children. Looking at the reasons for non-use of contraception like health problems, husband's opposition and 'against Islam', it seems that there is substantial scope for furthering the contraception among Muslims by providing proper contraceptive information and education.
6. The present study reveals that religiosity neither promotes fertility nor hinders contraceptive use. As such it is suggested that religions should be given a back-seat while propagating family planning among Muslims.
7. There is a need for modernizing Muslims urgently. Also status of Muslim woman needs to be improved by providing her with education and employment opportunities.
8. It is observed that a number of community leaders are willing to propagate small family norm and contraceptive use among Muslims. These leader's services can be utilised by the family planning programs administrators.

Conclusion

To conclude, the study population is a homogenous population of Muslims mainly of weaving community with low levels of socioeconomic development characterized by high fertility and low family planning acceptance which is passing through the mid-transition stage where in the fertility continues to be high yet declining. Religion does not seem to explain their high fertility and low family planning acceptance while modernization, and status of woman seem to be important in explaining their high fertility and low family planning acceptance.

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