



**RELATION BETWEEN FERTILITY ASPECTS WITH REFERENCES  
TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION ON DALIT COMMUNITY IN  
NEPAL**

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**ABSTRACT**

The fertility behavior of lower caste people of Dalit community in Nepal has highly relation and low socio-economic status. It has focused on fertility aspect of women and their household economic condition and using analytical research approach. Out of the total survey population, 51.20 % were male and 48.80 % were female. Among these 85% female were eligible respondents of reproductive aged 15 to 49 years. Similarly, 57.64 percent respondent's women were currently using family planning methods. Among users 27.06 % were the users of female sterilization, followed by Depo 12.94 %, male sterilization 9.41 percent, Pills 7.06 % and IUD 1.18 % and Out of total respondents, 62.3 % women are engaged in daily wage. This was followed by household work 32.91, agriculture as well as business 2.41 percent. The mean of entire women of the study was found 2.74. Child bearing is highly concentrated in the age group 40 to 44. The literate women have low fertility level than the illiterate women. There is negative relationship between fertility and age at marriage. The mean number of child early birth is 3.10 for the women who married between ages 10 to 14. The mean was found lowest 2.62 where age at marriage was age group of 15 to 19 years. The mean child ever born was the highest 3 among those who involved in agriculture followed by daily wage of 2.96. The lowest mean child ever born was found among those who involved in household work.

**KEYWORDS:** Fertility, Society, Socio-economic, Caste and Ethnicity, Dalit Community.'

## INTRODUCTION

Human fertility is responsible for biological replacement and for the maintenance of the human society. The growth of the population of the world depends entirely on human fertility. Any society replenishes itself through the process of human fertility. Prior to the Second World War, the approach to the study of human fertility was mainly mathematically oriented. The social, psychological, cultural, economic and political factors in determining the levels and differentials of fertility were not accorded a proper importance. The main reason for this limited viewpoint was that the discipline of social studies at that time was not developed to any great extent, nor was the inter-disciplinary nature of this science realized.

The dynamic character of fertility was realized when, after the Great Depression of the early 1930s, the birth rates in North-west Europe and North America, the United States of America and Canada, which were quite low till then and which had consistently registered a declining trend, started rising, stabilized themselves at higher levels and then declined. Till that time, demographers had expected that the birth rates in North-West Europe and North America would continue to decline or would be stabilized at lower levels.

The experiences of other countries also demonstrated that fluctuations in the fertility rates of a country might take place in response to political, social and economic conditions. For instance, in Romania as a result of legalized abortions, the birth rate declined from the level of 24.2 per thousand populations in 1956 to 14.3 per thousand populations in 1996. When, in 1996, abortion facilities were withdrawn, the birth rate shot up to 27.4 in one year, that is, in 1997- perhaps the most rapid rise in birth rate ever witnessed in one year (UN, 1975). This episode in Romanian demographic history is a dramatic example of the kinds of 'natural experiments' occurring in human fertility, most of which are not studied systematically in order to observe causes and consequences (Freedman, 1982).

Fertility is generally used to indicate the actual reproductive performance of a woman or groups of women. The crude birth rate (number of births per 1000 population per year) is only one measure of fertility. Barnard Benjamin defines fertility by saying, "Fertility measures the rate of which a population adds to itself by births and is normally assessed by relating the number of births to the size of some section of population, such as the number of married couples to the numbers of women of child bearing age i.e. an appropriate yard stick of potential fertility". The study of fertility does not indicate the level of fecundity for which

there is no direct measurement. Fecundity is a biological potential level of performance of physical capacity for bearing children of the population.

In vast majority of cases both the men and women have fertility and capacity to produce children. There are, however, many factors which affect and influence fertility. The major important factors which affect fertility are; biological factors, indirect social factors, direct factors influencing fertility and other social factors (Raj, 2005).

According to Census 2011, the population of Nepal is 26494504, which is growing at an annual rate of 1.35% that was 2.24 % during the period of 1991 to 2001. If this rate is continued in Nepal's population, it will take 52 years to double. Fertility in Nepal is high and has remained so over the last several decades, although the fertility rate has declined over the last decade or so. The total fertility rate for the three years preceding the survey is 2.6 births per woman, with rural women having about one child more than urban women (MOHP, 2011).

The primary reason for rapid population growth is due to continues decline in mortality rate on the one hand and nearly stable fertility rate on the other. The total fertility rate (TFR) of Nepal in 2011 was recorded as 2.6. Crude Birth Rate (CBR) of Nepal is 28 per thousand populations and of Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) is 48 percent. Occupation is another important factor of determining fertility. Nepal's literacy rate is only 65.9 % in total and out of which male and female literacy rates are respectively 75.1% and 57.4 %. This lower literacy status also influences the higher fertility in Nepal. The higher experience of child loss increases the number of children ever born which causes higher fertility. Infant and under-five mortality rates in the past five years are 46 and 54 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively. At these mortality levels, one in every 22 Nepalese children dies before reaching age 1, and one in every 19 does not survive to his or her fifth birthday. Infant mortality has declined by 42 % over the last 15 years, while under-five mortality has declined by 54 % over the same period (MOHP, 2011).

Caste system is the basic foundation of the Hindu society. Caste system is based on the Varna system. Nepalese social cultural is based on the Varna system where different caste group and individual interact and interdependent upon each other. The caste or Varna system is based on five primary classifications. These are; the Brahman (priest), the Kshatriya

(warrior and administrator), the Vaishya (merchant), the Sudra (laborer) and the untouchable or polluted.

During the modern period, Prithivi Narayan Shaha addressed the Nation; Nepal is a common garden where four castes and thirty six sub caste blossom forth. To describe the caste hierarchy code formulated as the Muluki Ain, the totality of this caste universe has been paraphrased in the code as Char Varna Chhattis Jat four Varna and thirty six castes. This phrase shows the familiarity of the Nepalese with the Varna model and it's being the main basis of social division. But the multiplicity of caste had already replaced the validity of Varna model for all functional purpose.

Nepal has facing the problems of high fertility especially in different caste/ethnic groups characterized with distinct characteristics. The high fertility is also pronounced in backward and depressed communities such as Kami, Damai, Sarki, and Gaine, the lower caste group. These communities who are backward in the areas of economic, social, cultural, educational and all other conditions are known as Dalit community, who are supposed to be untouchable. This study, therefore, tries to find out the fertility behavior of lower caste to identify whether the theory match with the real practices or not.

The Dalit group as identified by the Dalit Commission May, 2002 as (1) Hill Dalit: Kami, Sarki, Damai, Lohar, Sunar, Badi, Parki, Chunara, Kuch and Kadare (2) Newar Dalit: Kusule, Kasai, Chyame, pode, and Dhaier (Dyahla) and (3) Terai Dalit: Tatma, Paswan, Dushad, Batar, Mushahar, Khatway, Chamar, Dom, Halkhor, Badimar, Chidimar, Gothi and Jhangar. Among the total caste/ethnic group of Nepal, about 20 % are within the Dalit community (Manab- Maryada, 1999), though government sources show only in 12.22 %. According to the census 2011, among the total Dalit, kami constitutes 4.75 %, Damai constitute 1.82 %, Sarki constitute 1.41 % and Sunar constitute 0.24 %. Among the Dalit caste Kami, Damai, Sarki have the larger number than other in Nepal.

### **Problem of the Statement**

Dalit are politically and socio-economically depressed and dominated ethnic group of Nepal. That is why this fertility condition depends on the socio-economic and demographic circumstances. The increasing number of their children is unknowingly being the over burden for them and worsening their economic status. However, they want to overcome their poverty problem producing mere children as economic assets to earn more money by working. They

feel stronger themselves by the large number in the community. Until they do not know that they should reduce the number of children for social prosperity, they will have higher fertility level. So, how the higher fertility performance of Dalit community can be reduced is the main problem. Kami, Damai, Sarki, and Gaine are the disadvantaged in terms of socially, culturally, politically and economically under the Hindu caste system. They are untouchable, called “Dalits” today. There might have the demographic patterns different from other ethnic minorities of Nepal. So, this study tries to examine the fertility behavior and its socio economic and demographic determinants in those communities.

Nepal has multi ethnic caste and multi-cultural country. The caste and ethnicity composition, fertility behavior, household decision, education status, socio-economic statuses are different. By the patriarchal society, where most household decisions are made by the male and head of household where some traditional families are still get many children for purpose of economy activities. The minority caste Dalit are such type of community who get more members for productivity of fertility power. The questions are raising that why the dalit community women have more children for their family. At the same time we can see a decline in fertility in modern families where women have more influence on fertility choices and other household decisions. Thus, the key policy questions would be:

- What are the factors that affect fertility behavior of Dalit community in Nepal?
- How does Socio-economic status related to fertility behavior?
- What is the contribution of household income for fertility into the Dalit women?

### **Objectives of the study**

The study has coverage the following objectives which are:

- To analyze the fertility behavior of Dalit community's women.
- To examine the Socio-economic status of Dalit community.

### **Literature Review**

The developing countries are experiencing high fertility and low mortality resulting rapid population growth. Nepal is also one of the least developed countries, where the birth rate is still high and death rate is also high that led to high fertility of woman and having formation of various obstacles in socio-economic development.

### **Social Theories of Fertility**

**Social Capillarity:** The theory of social fertility was the first logical attempt at offering an explanation for the decline in fertility during a period of social and economic development. Several theories have given sociological explanations for the decline in fertility. These social theories emphasize the fact that human volition has played an important role in fertility decline. The motivational factors operating at the individual level in the social milieu are considered important for explaining reproductive behavior. In the nineteenth century, several French parents had restricted the size of their families so that they could not only maintain their standard of living but also rise in the social hierarchy. This theory was, however, criticized on the ground that it was not backed by sound statistical proof. Yet it must be said to the credit of Dumont that he “emphasized the need for investigating individual attitudes in their social context in order to determine national population trends” (Eversley, 1959).

**Theory of Diffusion/Cultural Lag:** The theory of diffusion or cultural lag explains how the concept of birth control spread over the world. According to the cultural lag theory of fertility differentials, in countries where fertility has been declining, attitudes and practices conducive to diminishing fertility have been adopted first by the better educated, wealthier, and socially more favored groups of the city population and transmitted in the course of time to intermediate and lower status groups and to the rural areas (UN, 1965).

The theory of diffusion or cultural lag assumes that birth control, and especially contraception, has been a recent development and has been lately introduced in human culture. Another important assumption is of time lag and a “trickle down” in the spreading of attitudes towards birth control and its practices. Birth control practices are initiated in metropolitan centers, move to other urban centers after some time lag, and finally reach the rural areas. The middle classes are the first to accept this innovation of birth control, which then trickles down to other lower classes. This trickle down may thus be taken as classic examples of the theory of diffusion of innovations or that of a cultural lag, which is an important hypothesis in the theory of social change.

**Theory of Change and Response:** In 1963, Kingsley, Davis propounded a theory in which he attempted to explain the declines in birth rates in developed countries. It is known that even before the secular decline of birth rates in industrialized countries, mortality rates had started declining, as a result of which the rates of natural increase had gone up. This happened in North West Europe as well as in Japan, though the latter lagged behind by fifty

years. According to Devis, this was a deliberate multiphase response, and it proved to be extremely effective in bringing down fertility. People in these countries found that the sustained fall in mortality, which was brought about by higher standards of living and improved public health program in the wake of industrialization, was handicapping being provided by the emerging economy. Thus the connecting link between the stimulus sustained drop in mortality and resulting increased natural growth and the response curtailment in the rate of population growth by increasing the age at marriage, resorting to contraception and abortion and even migrating outwards was the fear of the loss of status, achieved through rising prosperity, which would result if the high rates of population growth continued.

### **Economic Theory of Fertility**

In recent years, several economists have attempted to develop economic or socio economic theories to explain how decisions on the number of children are made by couples. Economic theories of fertility are based on the assumption that decisions regarding family size are influenced mainly by within the micro economic framework. While the interest of the economists in theory building for population phenomena is only of recent origin, many weighty contributions have been made to the economic interpretation of fertility during the 1960s and 1970s.

**Libenstein's Theory:** Harvey Libenstein, in his well-known work, "Economic Backwardness and Economic Growth" published in 1957, has formulated a theory that explains the factors which determine the number of children desired by each couple. This theory is based on the assumption that people make "rough calculations" regarding the utilities and disutilities of children and then decide on the number of children they would like to have. According to Libenstein, three types of utilities are derived from, and two types of costs are involved in, having an additional child. The types of utilities are: (a) the utility of the child as a "consumption good", that is, the child is here considered as a source of personal to the parents; (b) the utility of the child as a productive unit; that is, the child, it is expected, would enter the labor force at some point of time and contribute to the family income; (c) the utility of the child as a source of security in the old age of the parents or even otherwise. The two types of costs involved in having an additional child are: direct costs in the sense of conventional current expenses of bringing up a child, according to conventional standards until the child becomes self-supporting and indirect cost, which includes opportunities

foregone due to the appearance of an additional child, such as the mother's inability to work; inability to purchase a television set, or a motor car.

Libenstein mentions that three changes occur during the course of economic development which affect the utilities and costs of an additional child. The effects of these changes are: income effect, survival effect and occupational distribution effects. It is worthwhile studying the relationship between the per capita income as a result of economic growth and the three types of utilities of the child. It is evident that with a rising per capita income, there is no change in the consumption utility of the child, whereas the utilities of the child as a productive unit and as old age security decline considerably. Both the direct and indirect costs of an additional child may be seen to increase with the rising per capita income. The theory has more of an explanatory value than a predictive one.

**Socio- Economic Theories:** According to Easterlin, a comprehensive economic framework incorporating the main concepts of demography, sociology and other sciences would be useful to analyse human fertility behavior in a systematic manner. Such a framework, it was thought, should be relevant to present and past fertility behavior in a large number of societies and it should also deal with the trends, fluctuations and differentials observed in fertility during the course of human history. Keeping these considerations in mind, Eastern has proposed a framework in which an attempt has been made to combine sociology and economics of human fertility.

As parents are more concerned about the number of grown up living children rather than the number of births, the principal dependent variable in Easterlin's theory is the total number of surviving children. It is also assumed that both spouses would live throughout the reproductive span of the wife. The demand for children (Cd): The demand for children is the number of children of surviving children the parents would want if fertility regulations were costless. In keeping with the economic theory of household choice, the immediate determinants of demand for children are income, price, and taste. Thus factor demand for children deals with the individual choice about the number of surviving children and the social, economic and environmental factors or conditions that influence the choice.

Potential Output of children (Cn): Supply of children: Potential output of children is a product of couple's natural fertility (N) (fertility in the absence of deliberate control) and the survival rate, i.e., probability of a new born baby surviving up to adulthood. Natural fertility

is determined by biological and cultural factors. Increase in a couple's natural fertility and improvement in the chances of child survival would increase the potential supply of children.

Motivation for Fertility Regulation =  $C_n - C_d$

The demand for surviving children and the supply of children (potential output of surviving children) together determine the motivation of fertility regulation. If the potential output is smaller than demand, i.e.,  $C_n$  is less than  $C_d$  ( $C_n < C_d$ ), there is no desire to limit fertility. Such a situation of excess demand would call for ways and means to increase fertility.

On the other hand, if the potential output of surviving children is larger than the demand for surviving children i.e.,  $C_n$  is greater than  $C_d$  ( $C_n > C_d$ ), this could be considered as a situation of excess supply. In an excess supply situation there is a demand for ways of limiting fertility.

### **Socio Economic Factors**

It has been observed that the levels and patterns of fertility vary considerably in various sub groups of the same population. These sub groups may be based on residence, whether urban or rural, social-economic status in terms of educational attainment, occupation, income, size of land holding, religion, caste, race etc. A study of differential fertility is useful in identifying the factors which determine fertility levels among various sub groups. A study of differential fertility is also important from the point of view of the implementation of family planning programme because it helps us identify high fertility groups on which the programme efforts can be concentrated (Clyde and Whelpton, 1990). In this section an attempt is made to study of differential fertility based on different factors.

**Educational attainment and Fertility:** The educational attainment of couples has a very strong bearing on the number of children born. Educational attainment, especially of women, is one of the indicators of modernization and the status of women in society. In low fertility countries, historically the relationship between fertility and the educational attainment of the wife has been a negative one, in the sense that the higher the educational level, the lower was the family size. In the high fertility countries, such as Egypt, Taiwan and Chile, a distinct negative relationship has been observed between the educational attainment of the women and the number of children born to her. The differences observed in the fertility performance arising out of the educational status of women may be mainly due to two factors: the differential age at marriage and the differential practice of family planning. Higher levels of education for women are usually associated with a higher age at marriage. It may also be

noted that the higher levels of educational provide a higher level of information about keeping fertility under control and create and sustained motivation to keep the family size small with a view to achieving better standards of life.

Two Indian studies have established a distinct relationship between the education of the woman and fertility. The first study was conducted in the metropolitan city of Greater Bombay in 1966, and the second in Panaji, Goa, in 1969 (Bhende and Rao, 1983). A negative association between the educational attainment of married women and fertility was observed in Greater Bombay; and this association was sharp and consistent for each group. The nearly completed family size in the age group of 40 and above for women. Who were matriculates or had studied beyond that level, was 2.95, which was distinctly lower than the corresponding average for women with a lower educational attainment. In Panaji, it was found that the average number of children ever born, standardized for age, was 3.51 for those who were either illiterate or had studied up to primary school level, 3.45 for those who had some secondary school education but had not passed the matriculation examination, and 2.57 for those who had either passed the matriculation examination or had studied beyond that level.

**Economic Status and Fertility:** General studies in the past have highlighted the inverse relationship between the economic status of the family and fertility. This traditional relationship is now undergoing substantial changes as far as the developed countries are concerned. It is obvious that as per capita monthly household expenditure increases, the fertility rate goes down. Thus an indirect relationship between income and fertility has been confirmed.

**Occupation and Husband and Fertility:** In developed countries occupation especially that of the husband is used as an indicator of social economic status, and differential fertility is studied according to the occupation of the husband. Studied conducted in Europe around 1970 indicated that the wives of farmers and farm workers recorded a higher fertility than the wives of men engaged in non – agriculture occupations (UN, 1970). In India, some studies have tried to investigate the relationship between the occupation of the husband and fertility. It was generally observed that the wives of those engaged in professional jobs had the lowest fertility. Agarwal found that cultivators and labourers, had, on average, 7.4 children, and those who reported their occupation as service and those who were professionals had, on an average, 6.6 children (Agarwal, 1970).

**Employment and Fertility:** It has been found that in several studies that the gainfully employed women have a smaller number of children than those who are not employed.

**Religion/Caste, Race and Fertility:** Religion is one of the important factors affecting fertility. The study of various religions as well as ethnic groups has important social and political implications (Weiner, 1971). Several studies have been conducted in developed as well as developing countries to investigate the influence of affiliation to a particular religion on the fertility behavior of the people. At one time, all the religions of the world, except Buddhism, were pro-natalist or populationist. The injunction laid down in various religions indicate the importance of high fertility. Some illustrations are: “Be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth” (Judaism and Christianity); Marry a woman who holds her husband extremely dear and who is richly fruitful” (Islam); Make the bride the mother of the good and fortunate children, bless her to get ten children and make the husband eleventh one” Hinduism (Lorjmer and Osborn, 1934). Some sociologists are of the opinion that minority religious groups may tend to have higher fertility rates to gain more political power (Heer, 1968).

### **Methods**

The studies has based on both qualitative as well as quantitative data have used per the requirement. The questionnaire was formulated to identify the information relating to fertility behavior of Dalit women with socio-economic and demographic variables regarding fertility and respondents who have married women. To conduct the study, descriptive research design has been used as the study with qualitative based approach. Descriptive research design is used mainly for conceptualized of the problem and exploratory research design is used mainly to analyze the relationship between the children ever born and specific socio - economic and demographic variables. For the sampling purpose, the study has used cluster sampling method on sampling area. The sampling population had 85 household women for Dalit community and the study, information have been collected from Dalit married women of reproductive age of fertility and having selected as census of study.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The study has analysis to show the level and pattern of fertility behavior. The method of data has analysis by using Ratio, Mean, Standard deviation and Correlation Coefficient.

**Ratio:** Ratio is the one number divided by another number. An absolute figure is difficult to interpret. Hence, ratio is calculated to find out the relative position of the variable under study and it is calculated by:

$$\text{Ratio} = \frac{\text{Item X}}{\text{Item Y}}$$

**The Mean:** The arithmetic mean is also known as the average. The mean is the figure when the total of all the values in a distribution is divided by number of values in the distribution. Arithmetic mean can be calculated by the following formula:

$$\text{Mean } (\bar{X}) = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

**Standard Deviation:** One of the standard measures of variance is the standard deviation. The standard deviation is a function of the differences between each individual score and the overall mean score, and of the sample. Hence, if all scores were exactly the same, the standard deviation would be zero, because there would be no differences between individual score and the mean. The standard deviation can be calculated by using this formula:

$$\text{Standard deviation } (\sigma) = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})^2}{N-1}}$$

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Nepal is the multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi ethnic society. The total population of Nepal is 2, 64, 94,504 and annual growth rate 1.35% with fertility rate 2.6 per woman. The highest sex ratio 127 males per 100 female have in Manang District and lowest sex ratio 76 male per 100 women has in Gulmi District. The density of the population is 180 per square kilometer. Out of total population 56.96 percent of the total population is in the age between 15- 59. The total household increases to 54, 27,302 and average size of the family is 4.88. The highest and lowest family size are 6.44 in Rautahat and 3.92 in Kaski district. Out of 125 castes, Kshetry represents 16.6 %, Brahmin represents 12.2 % and Kusunda represents only 273 people. Out of total population age in 10 years and above, 35.6 % remain unmarried. Similarly, 40.6 % male remain unmarried out of total population of male age in 10 years and above and 31.1 % female remain unmarried out of total population of female age in 10 years and above. About 48.9 % persons married in the age of 15–19. Likewise, 11.5 % persons married below 14 years age and marriage above 50 years represents 5086 persons. The

literacy rate of the population aged above 4 years is 65.9 %. Similarly, male literacy rate and female literacy rate are respectively 75.1% and 57.4 % (CBS, 2011).

### Household Characteristics

It is important to understand clearly the overall background characteristics of the population being considered in the study. Background situation includes demographic and socio-economic characteristics. In this section an attempt has made to analyze the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the total population.

**Age/Sex Structure:** The total population and composition of male and female has presented in table No 1 as below.

**Table 1: Age/Sex Distribution and Sex Ratio.**

S.N	Age group	Population						Sex Ratio,%
		Male	%	Female	%	Total	%	
1	0-4	12	5.58	13	6.34	25	5.95	92.3
2	5-9	23	10.70	11	5.37	34	8.11	209.11
3	10-14	22	10.23	16	7.80	38	9.05	137.5
4	15-19	18	8.37	23	11.22	41	9.76	78.26
5	20-24	29	13.49	29	14.15	58	13.81	100
6	25-29	23	10.70	25	12.20	48	11.43	92
7	30-34	11	5.12	13	6.34	24	5.71	84.62
8	35-39	17	7.91	10	4.88	27	6.43	170
9	40-44	14	6.51	23	11.22	37	8.81	60.87
10	45-49	7	3.26	17	8.29	24	5.71	41.18
11	50-54	16	7.44	4	1.95	20	4.76	400
12	55-59	4	1.86	4	1.95	8	1.90	100
13	60-64	3	1.39	5	2.44	8	1.90	60
14	65-69	4	1.86	3	1.46	7	1.67	133.33
15	70+	12	5.58	9	4.39	21	5	133.33
16	Total	215	100	205	100	420	100	104.88

The age/sex composition of the population is the most important factor for studying fertility. This study included a sample population of 420 from 85 households. Out of the total population 51.20 % were male and 48.80 % were female. Among these 85 female were eligible respondents of reproductive aged 15 to 49 years. The highest proportion of population was found in age group of 20 to 24 has 13.81%, followed by age group 25 to 29 has 11.43%, age group 15–19 has 9.76% and so on. Likewise, the highest proportion of male and female were also found in age group of 20 to 24. The lowest proportion of

population was found in age group 65 to 69 has 1.67%. It indicates that there exists higher proportion of population as a result of higher fertility.

**Educational Status:** The Education is an important variable of the social characteristics of the persons covered in the study. It is useful to analyzed fertility by considering its impact on the fertility. Hence it is important to know the educational status of the study area. In this study, only the population aged 5years and above was included to determine the educational status of the population under study.

**Table 2: Distribution of the Population by Education Status.**

S.N	Educational Status	Population					
		Male		Female		Total	%
		No.	%	No	%		
1	Literate	167	82.3	122	63.5	289	73.16
2	Illiterate	36	17.7	70	36.45	106	26.84
3	Total	203	100	192	100	395	100
	Educational attainment						
1	Primary	97	58.08	52	42.62	149	51.56
2	Lower Secondary	40	23.95	36	29.51	76	26.30
3	SLC and above	20	11.98	20	16.39	40	13.84
4	Non Formal Education	10	5.99	14	11.48	24	8.30
5	Total	167	100	122	100	289	100

From the table No 2 shows that out of total population 395 populations were aged 5 years and above. Out of total population 73.16% were literate and 26.84% were illiterate. Similarly, out of total literate male represents 57.79% and female represents 42.21%. It indicates that the male literacy was greater than female literacy.

Among the literate population majority 51.56% of the literate accounted for primary level education, which was higher for male 58.08% than that of female 42.62%. Similarly, out of total population 26.30% have lower secondary education. But in case of lower secondary education, the proportion of female 29.51% was greater than that of male 23.95%. Likewise, 13.84% population have SLC and above education. In this class also, female proportion was greater than that female proportion. The proportion of non-formal education represents only 8.30 %. The overall education status indicates that low female literacy rate may be the cause of higher fertility rate.

**Marital Status:** Marriage is the social phenomenon and universal in Nepalese society. It is most important factor in population dynamics as it affects fertility tremendously. Table No 3 shows the marital status of the study population of aged 10 years and above.

**Table 3: Marital Status of Population.**

S.N	Marital Status	Population					
		Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
1	Unmarried	60	33.33	41	22.65	101	27.98
2	Married	120	66.67	140	77.35	260	72.02
3	Total	180	100	181	100	361	100

The out of total population, 85.95% population were aged 10 years and above. Out of total 361 populations, 27.98% persons were unmarried and 72.02% were married. In case of male and female, 33.33 percent of total male and 22.65% of total female were unmarried and 66.67 % of male and 77.35% of female were married. The proportion of married female is greater than that of male proportion.

**Occupation:** Occupational status is an integral part of socio economic development policy. The statistics of the occupation structure of any population is useful for manpower planning. Regarding the occupational status of the Dalit community, eight different categories were employed. In this study, population below 10 years was excluded.

**Table 4: Distribution of the Household by Occupation.**

S.N	Occupational Status	Population					
		Male		Female		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No.	%
1	Agriculture	3	1.67	2	1.10	5	1.39
2	Service	6	3.33	3	1.66	9	2.49
3	Business	5	2.78	3	1.66	8	2.22
4	Household	0	0	59	32.60	59	16.34
5	Daily wage	122	67.78	74	40.88	196	54.29
6	Pension	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	Student	38	21.11	37	20.44	75	20.78
8	Dependent	6	3.33	3	1.66	9	2.49
9	Total	180	100	181	100	361	100

From the above table, out of total population, 361 persons were of age 10 years and above. Out of 361 persons, 54.29 % were engaged in daily wage that consists of 67.78 % of male and 40.88 % of female. Similarly, 20.78 % of total population was in student representing 21.11 % of male and 20.44 % of female. Likewise, 16.34 % were in household work, 2.49 % in

service and dependent, 2.22 % in business and 1.39 % in agriculture. The more surprising is that though the Nepal is agricultural country, only 1.39 percent of the population was in this sector. This is due to the reason that the categorization is based on relative measure rather than the absolute measure. Most of the persons engaged in daily wage were also engaged in agriculture but they are highly dependent upon daily wage rather than agriculture.

**Age at Married Women:** In Nepal generally marriage takes place at an early age and it is almost universal. Early marriage practice generally leads to long term social and economic consequences including higher fertility. Early marriage is insisted due to cultural belief and Age at marriage of eligible women has presented below the table.

**Table 5: Distribution of women by Age at Marriage.**

S.N	Age at Marriage	Eligible Women	
		Number	Percent
1	Below 15	10	11.76
2	15 – 19	64	75.29
3	20 and above	11	12.95
4	Total	85	100

This shows that out of the total currently married women, 75.29 % of the women married at age 15 – 19 and followed by the age group 20 and above 12.95%, and age group below 15 11.76%. The general theoretical principle of marriage at 20 years and above is supported by only 12.95%. The mean age at marriage has found to be 17 years.

### **Fertility**

The fertility level has high according to various demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Lower caste women. Fertility level has examined on the basis of currently married women of 15- 49 years with some selected demographic and socio-economic variables. Variation in Child Ever Born (CEB) is considered as the variation in fertility behavior of women.

**Fertility by Age:** Child Ever Born changes with the changes in age of mother. The age of mother is one of the major determinants of fertility. It is expected that as the age of married women increases, the mean number of CEB also increases and older women experiences longer span of reproductive period than young ones.

**Table 6: Mean CEB by Current Age of Women.**

S.N	Age group	Number	Mean CEB	St.dev
1	15-19	2	0.5	0.7071
2	20-24	9	1.0	0.7071
3	25-29	20	1.9	0.5525
4	30-34	11	2.36	0.80904
5	35-39	10	3.10	1.1972
6	40-44	19	4.05	0.9732
7	45-49	14	3.64	1.2157
8	Total	85	2.74	1.3985

Table No 6 reveals that the mean CEB of entire women of the study was found 2.74. There was positive relationship between CEB and age group. As the age group of the women increases, the mean CEB also increases. The average CEB of age group 30 to 34 was 2.36. It reveals that child bearing is highly concentrated in the age group 40 to 44. The dispersion or scatterings as measured by the standard deviation went on increasing with the increase in age group.

**Fertility by Literacy:** When the women become educate their view about family size also changes shifting from large family size to small family size. Education changes way of thinking and ultimately it affects the fertility. Education status of the women plays an important role in lowering fertility. Education influences the fertility in different ways. It lives to awareness of birth control measure and thus directly affects fertility. Education is one of the best contraception and inversely related with fertility. Fertility behavior in terms of CEB as explained by literacy is considered with literate and illiterate two distinguish categories. Mean CEB by literacy status of the study is presented in table No 7.

**Table 7: Mean CEB by Literacy Status of Eligible Women.**

S.N	Literacy Status	No. of women	Mean CEB	St.dev
1	Literate	50	2.12	1.1718
2	Illiterate	35	3.63	1.2148
3	Total	85	2.74	1.3985

From table No 7 it is observed that fertility level between literate and illiterate is significant and the result support that the literate women have low fertility level than illiterate. The mean CEB of literate woman accounts for 2.12 and that of illiterate women is 3.63. Similarly, the standard deviation for literate and illiterate are respectively 1.1718 and 1.2148. It indicates that CEB is more homogeneous among literate women and heterogeneous among illiterate women.

**Mean CEB by Marriage:** Age at marriage is another important factor of determining women's fertility. Table 8 shows the variation in fertility by age at marriage.

**Table 8: Mean CEB by Age at Marriage.**

S.N	Age group	Number	Mean CEB
1	10-14	10	3.10
2	15-19	64	2.63
3	20 and above	11	3.09
4	Total	85	2.74

From the table No 8 it was found that there is negative relationship between fertility and age at marriage. The mean number of CEB is 3.10 for the women who married between ages 10 to 14 years. This was the highest mean CEB of the study population. The mean CEB was found lowest 2.63 where age at marriage was age group of 15- 19 years. The mean CEB of the respondents whose age at marriage was age group 20 and above was 3.09. On a nutshell, it can be revealed that as the age at marriage increases the mean CEB of the eligible women decreases.

**Fertility by Occupation:** Women hold the triple work responsibility of reproduction, house holding and employment. Involvement in one of the above affects the involvement of others. Reproduction, one part of fertility behavior, affected by the house holding and employment both the terms are treated as occupation. One of the important determinants of fertility is the occupational status, which relates to fertility behavior and contraceptive practices. The mean CEB by occupation as reported by the respondents is shown on table No 9.

**Table 9: Mean CEB by Women's Occupation.**

S.N	Occupation	Number	Mean CEB	St.dev
1	Agriculture	2	3	0
2	Service	2	3.5	2.1213
3	Household work	28	2.25	1.6015
4	Daily Wage	53	2.96	1.2398
5	Total	85	2.74	1.3985

The mean CEB was the highest 3 among those who involved in agriculture followed by daily wage of 2.96. The lowest mean CEB was found among those who involved in household work. It indicates that Lower caste women's mean CEB is higher due to the non service involvement. The variability is lowest in agriculture and the highest in service sector.

## CONCLUSION

Nepal is facing the problems of high fertility especially in different caste/ethnic groups characterized with distinct characteristics. The high fertility is also pronounced in backward and depressed communities such as Kami, Damai, Sarki, and Gaine, the lower caste group. These communities who are backward in the areas of economic, social, cultural, educational and all other conditions are known as Dalit community, who are supposed to be untouchable. This study, therefore, tries to find out the fertility behavior of lower caste to identify whether the theory match with the real practices or not. It has been observed that the levels and patterns of fertility vary considerably in various sub groups of the same population. These sub groups may be based on residence, whether urban or rural, social and economic status in terms of educational attainment, occupation, income, size of land holding, religion, caste, race etc. A study of differential fertility is useful in identifying the factors which determine fertility levels among various sub groups.

Education is one of the major determinants of fertility. When the women become educate their view about family size also changes shifting from large family size to small family size. Education changes way of thinking and ultimately it affects the fertility. In the study area out of total respondents 58.8 % are literate and 41.2 % are illiterate. Hence, level of education of the women of reproductive age needs to be increased to reduce fertility. Age has strong power for declining fertility levels. So the level of fertility depends on age. The mean CEB is varied by age of mother. The number of CEB is expected with the mother getting older. In this study the findings shows the positive relationship between age and mean CEB. Similarly, the research study in relation to fertility and age at marriage come to the end in the conclusion that lower age at marriage is associated with high fertility. The general theoretical principal of marriage at 20 years and above is supported by only 12.94%. Though negative relationship between age at marriage and mean CEB as measured by correlation coefficient is weak and statistically not significant, it is better to rise the age at marriage for the reduction of fertility.

It is common knowledge that where there is high death rate, birth rate is bound to be very high. In developing countries death rate is always high. The study reveals that there is positive relationship between children dead and Mean CEB. Therefore, attempt should be made to decrease mortality rate to reduce fertility rate. Contraceptive method is used to prevent women from fertilization and to stop giving birth or to increase the birth interval. It is

expected to have low fertility level for those women who use family planning methods than those who do not. In this study about 23 % of the respondents still do not use any methods of family planning. They are usually orthodox and religious minded. They believe that family planning is anti- religious. They believe that every family must have a male child and for this couple tries, no matter what may be the size of the family. They feel that what God has given to them is what was in their fate. Under the circumstances they do not care much for high living standard. They are also not careful or mindful even if their living standard somewhat goes down, believing that as the will of god. This is the reason that high fertility does not worry for them.

Higher level of occupation plays an important role to reduce fertility. Those women who are in unorganized sectors had relatively high level of fertility as compared to the women working in organized sector. Due to maximum involvement of women in unorganized sector with low education level, labor value increased and that tended to increase fertility. Since chances of employment and educational facilities are limited, women always live at home and feel pleasure in bringing up and playing with their children. In this study area almost all the people are engaged in labor based work. In this occupation additional manpower is always a welcome. Thus, adding of a child in the family is considered a matter of joy rather than that of sorrow. When child birth is a matter of pleasure, obviously fertility rate will considerably increase. The more surprising is that though the Nepal is agricultural country, only 1.39 percent of the population was in this sector in the study area. This is due to the reason that the categorization is based on relative measure rather than the absolute measure. Most of the persons engaged in daily wage were also engaged in agriculture but they are highly dependent upon daily wage rather than agriculture.

The social awakening among the low caste people is very limited. Those couple does not know full well social responsibilities which will fall upon them with increase in the size of family. The cost of bringing up children is very low. The children are not provided very nutritive diets. They also are not well fed or clothed. It is not necessary that they should be given higher education or even elementary education. Thus they are not a burden on the family. On the other hand when they grow up a little they begin to earn and thus add to the income of the family which is a welcome.

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