

Fertility Differentials by Family Type

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INTRODUCTION

The family is one of the basic social institutions of human society. The behaviour of individuals is to a great extent moulded by influences within the family not only during the socialization process at early ages, but also after they have reached maturity. The way in which the family system operates has important demographic consequences. Reproduction takes place within the family, and fertility is affected by the combination of events occurring within and shaped by the prevailing family system in a society. The family is an important decision-making unit, and in societies where the extended family system¹ is prevalent, decisions by couples regarding fertility behaviour may be strongly influenced by the larger family network. Hill [11, p. 271-72] has identified some crucial decisions made over the reproductive career of a couple. He suggests that these decisions are largely influenced by the parents and other relatives concerning (a) when to marry, (b) how soon to have first child, (c) whether to use birth control and method to be used, (d) when to have second and later children, and (e) when to stop child bearing. Davis and Blake [4] point out certain intermediate variables which an individual learns during the socialization process, e.g., acceptability of universal marriage, permissibility of sexual abstinence, the long absence of either spouse and the frequency and timing of sexual intercourse, etc. All of these have direct bearing on fertility in the long run.

One of the functions of the joint family system in traditional societies is that of providing security to aged family members who require family support for their personal well-being. On the other hand, past experience of high mortality likely tends to influence current decisions of couples to have enough

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1 The extended family system can refer either to groups of married relatives living in the same household (Joint family) or to nuclear families living in different households but socially and psychologically dependent on broader kin network.

children to provide the parents security in old age. It is argued that recent substantial declines in mortality, especially in infant and child mortality, have not been understood by couples in the reproductive ages as increasing the probability that children will survive to adulthood. It is further argued that one aspect of the influence of mortality on fertility levels is the desire by couples to have at least some surviving male children.

With much importance given recently to the phenomenon of rapid population growth and ways to curtail it, considerable attention has been given to the influence which family structure exerts on fertility levels. It is argued by some social scientists that the continuing preponderance of the joint family system in the developing countries is one of the main obstacles in their attempts to bring about a decline in fertility. Davis [3, pp. 90-92] has identified certain values prevalent in the joint family system which directly or indirectly favour higher fertility. These include more freedom to young mothers when the economic as well as social burdens of child bearing are shared by other relatives, early marriages especially for females, and universal marriage due to religious and moral obligations. Also the young bride is expected by the family to reproduce early, as in a male-dominated society the husbands demand more children and lower status is accorded to barren women. Lorimer [15, p. 247] points out that "the whole cultural context in which extended families tend to be idealized is likely to be conducive to high fertility", but he further says that "in some situations the influence of extended families might help in restricting the fertility". Hawthorn [10] suggests that extended family system coincides with early age at marriage, and with its greater ease of caring for children, the labour force participation of wives and their fertility are positively influenced.

One should be careful in implying that family system of a society is the only or the most important factor in the study of fertility. Fertility may be affected by economic, religious, social and psychological factors operating in the society. Freedman [5] argues that causal relationship between extended families and fertility might have prevailed in the past in traditional societies, but modernization might have influenced this relationship to a great extent. Similarly, Goode [7] suggests no inherent relationship between the independent nuclear family and lower fertility, as fertility levels may be decided not in the interest of wider kinship but in the interest of individual couples.

The controversial relationship of family system with fertility has inspired certain empirical studies to test the possible relationship between the two. Freedman *et al.* [6], Liu [14] and Palmore [21] found little or no difference in cumulative fertility among women living in different family types when controlled for age in Taiwan and Korea. However, Palmore and Ariffin [21] from West Malaysian data report higher cumulative fertility of women (15-44 years old) currently living in extended families than those who never lived in an extended family.

Similarly some studies done in the subcontinent, e.g., by Hashmi [8], [9], Poti and Dutta [22], Mathen [16] Nag [17], and Leobner and Driver [13], tend to question the adequacy of existing theory in clearly establishing the existence of a patterned relationship between family type and fertility. In fact, Hashmi [8] and Nag [17] report higher fertility in nuclear families than in joint families, while others do not report significant fertility differential by family type. Hashmi [8], using 1958 survey data of Karachi, shows that the results

Table I
 Karachi: Some Fertility Rates by Family Classification, 1958

Family Classification	Population	Crude birth rate	No. of Women 15-49	General fertility rate	No. of married women 15-49	Marital fertility rate	No. of married women 15-49 husband present	Marital fertility rate for women with husband present
All Classification	1,595,350	47	354,400	224	291,750	276	285,715	282
Nuclear	1,035,225	54	228,525	247	192,975	292	191,150	295
Extended	299,750	43	62,925	203	48,400	263	45,875	278
Joint	260,375	44	62,950	183	50,375	228	48,700	237

Source: Hashmi [8, p. 102 Table V.9]

are the inverse of those anticipated by Western social scientists. He finds, as reported in Table I, the fertility of women living in nuclear families to be significantly higher than those living in the extended or joint families. His findings suggest that presence of one or more relatives or sub-families in a primary family affects the fertility level of the couple. He suggests that a possible explanation for the lower incidence of births in joint families is the relative lack of privacy available to couples for engaging in sexual intercourse. Hashmi reasons that by living in a crowded household with other relatives couples may have to wait for opportune times for sexual union, and such a moment may not necessarily coincide with the time of ovulation in the menstrual cycle of the females. This results in higher probability of sexual intercourse in the nuclear family than the joint or extended family settings, and thus the probability of conception could also be higher in the nuclear families. In other related analysis Hashmi [9] reports the same results for the families living in the city of Karachi. He suggests that "when a family system changes from a familistic type to a modern individualistic type, fertility increases, but as an individualistic family becomes more urbanized fertility tends to decline". One reason of high fertility levels among nuclear family women which Hashmi has failed to identify could be related to the formation of nuclear families. Presumably, high fertility within the joint family may lead to the formation of independent nuclear families. On the other hand with the breaking up of joint families into the nuclear families the influence of the joint family on fertility behaviour of nuclear families is likely to persist over a considerable period of time.

Nag [17] in his study of West Bengal (India) villages, suggests that lower fertility in the joint families is due to lower coital frequency. He attributes two factors responsible for lower coital frequency in joint families: (a) lack of adequate privacy, due to over crowding in the household and (b) relatively more adherence to the traditional taboos on sexual intercourse. He also suggests that mothers-in-law in joint families feel ashamed by giving births to children in the presence of younger women in the house, which may not be true for older women living in nuclear families. Similarly in a parallel study made by Pakrasi and Malakar in Calcutta [18], somewhat higher fertility was reported for women in nuclear families, which may not be statistically significant.

THE PRESENT STUDY

Objective

The aim in this paper is to examine the fertility level of women in Pakistan living in joint families as compared with those living in nuclear families. The purpose of this analysis is to test the null hypothesis of no significant fertility differentials to be found between women living in joint and nuclear families in Pakistan, when age and other intervening variables are considered. The hypothesis of no fertility—family type relationship is being tested here keeping in view the evidence from earlier studies and inconclusive information available regarding the possible influence of family structure on fertility in Pakistan.

Family type is closely interlinked with the family life cycle of women. At a given time married women live in either nuclear or joint family settings, but their affiliations might have been changing over time. In our society marriage generally does not follow with the formation of independent nuclear families. Young brides join their husbands' family, thereby creating a new

joint family or expanding the existing one for social, economic or other reasons. The joint family may break up in the process of time as a result of death, migration, economic or other reasons. At a later age, the same couple may form another joint family after the marriage of their son(s). Therefore, the possibility for married women of entering, leaving, and re-entering the joint family system are quite evident. On the other hand, even by living in nuclear families it may not be possible for women to deviate substantially from the values and traditions which they were following in the joint family system. Secondly, nuclear families may be part of an extended family network where different nuclear families may maintain strong social, psychological and economic bonds.

Data and Methodology

Data available from the National Impact Survey of Pakistan conducted by the Pakistan Family Planning Council in 1968-69 through a countrywide sample provide for additional empirical testing of the general theory of the relationship between family structure and fertility.² Data from the survey for this particular analysis are limited in scope.³ Data selected for analysis here include cumulative fertility (as measured by the number of children born alive to currently married women), family type (in terms of household composition: households with one married couple only has been defined here as nuclear family households, while those with two or more couples as joint family households), age of women, number of living children, ideal number of children, the degree of privacy in sleeping arrangements within the household and adequacy of living as reported by respondents, educational level, proportion of women gainfully employed, age at marriage and rural-urban residence. The sample is confined to 2910 currently married women, 15-49 years of age with husband present.

Table II describes the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of women living in nuclear and joint families. It is observed that a slightly lower proportion (55 per cent) of women are reported currently living in the joint families in urban areas than the rural areas (58 per cent). However, it may be pointed out that according to the 1960 Census of Housing [20, Table 8] 41 per cent of the families in rural areas and 38 per cent of the families in urban areas were reported as joint families.⁴ This differential may be due to the methodological variations and definitions of joint family in the Impact Survey and Census. Large numbers of people moving towards the urban areas could be held responsible for breaking the rural joint families into nuclear families. On the other hand some families moving towards the urban areas in search of employment and due to other reasons generally are accommodated for certain period with

²For details of the Survey, see *National Impact Survey Report* (Lahore: Training, Research and Evaluation Centre, Pakistan Family Planning Council). This Survey covered 3,340 households in West Pakistan (referred to henceforth as Pakistan) in which interviews were conducted with 3,013 currently married women, (of whom 2910 were aged, 15-49) 1,113 husbands in about one-half of the households and 156 widows and divorced women. A two-stage stratified random sample was used to provide estimates for rural and urban areas, major regions within West Pakistan, and early vs late family planning programme districts.

³Due to the present non-availability of further data the scope of the present study has been considerably limited. Further analysis is anticipated with the availability of Impact Survey data.

⁴The total of the families given by the Housing Census also included one person families (6.3 per cent of the rural families and 11.5 per cent of the urban families).

Table II
 Pakistan: Selected Characteristics of Currently Married Women Aged 49 or less by Family Type and Rural-Urban Residence 1968-69

Characteristics	Respondents by Family Type and Residence						Total (Weighted)*
	Rural		Urban		Joint	Joint	
	Nuclear	Joint	Nuclear	Joint			
Number of Women	772	958	491	689		2910	
Percent of Women	44.6	55.4	41.6	58.4		—	
Percent never been to school, <i>madrassa</i> or <i>maktab</i>	97.5	94.5	79.0	74.9		90.5	
Percent report independent sleeping arrangement	13.1	17.1	15.3	25.4		16.9	
Percent currently employed	25.1	19.2	11.4	7.8		23.6	
Percent report adequate living	57.8	67.4	42.5	57.3		61.0	
Mean age	32.3	27.9	33.2	29.1		31.1	
Mean live births	4.1	2.8	4.5	3.1		3.5	
Mean living children	3.5	2.4	4.0	2.8		3.0	
Mean ideal number of children	4.7	4.8	4.5	4.5		4.7	

Source: National Impact Survey, 1968-69.

* Percentages weighted; number of women is actual number. Through oversampling of urban households weights of 333 and 188 were assigned to rural and urban areas respectively for computing totals for Pakistan.

some relatives there which might help in increasing the proportion of joint families in the urban areas.

In both rural and urban areas a substantial proportion of women report never attending any school, however the proportion is little higher in nuclear families.

It has been suggested by earlier researchers, e.g. Hashmi [8] and Nag [17] that women in nuclear families have possibly more access to privacy in the household. Privacy, judged here in terms of availability of independent sleeping arrangements for the couple,⁵ is reported more for women in joint families than nuclear families in both rural and urban areas. In the case of women in joint families in urban areas the proportion reporting privacy is substantially higher (25 percent) as compared to nuclear families (15 per cent). The lower proportion with privacy in nuclear families may partly be explained by the older age of women in nuclear families, who have produced higher number of children and have over crowded house.

The proportion of women currently employed is higher in nuclear families in rural areas (25 per cent) followed by rural women in joint families (19 per cent). Only 8 percent of women in urban joint families report being currently employed. One of the reasons of the higher proportion of working women in nuclear families may be their independence from family ties. Traditional joint families still may not encourage labour force participation of women; therefore, women in joint families may be more constrained from working outside the household. However, it could also be that women in many rural nuclear families receive help with child care through the extended family and kinship ties.

In response to a question on the adequacy of living⁶ a higher proportion (67 per cent) of women in rural joint families than the other three categories classify their living conditions for the past twelve months as adequate; and about the same proportion of women in rural nuclear and urban joint families report their living as adequate, 58 percent and 57 per cent respectively. If adequacy of living is considered as an economic indicator then urban nuclear families would be classified as least well off among the four residence/family type categories.

It is observed that the mean age of women in nuclear families is considerably higher than those in joint families for both rural and urban areas (32.3 and 33.2 for women in nuclear families; 27.9 and 29.1 for those in joint families, in rural and urban areas respectively). The possible influence of age composition of women on fertility is discussed later in this paper. Similarly age at marriage could also influence fertility to a great extent. Davis [3] and Hawthorn [10] have argued that lower age at marriage is one of the main causes of higher fertility in joint family system. The data here do not suggest any significant difference in mean age at marriage, which is reported to be about 16 years for both the family types in rural as well as urban areas. The

⁵In response to question: "Do you and your husband have a room for sleeping which is not shared by any other member of the family?" Q.A. 35.

⁶"Would you say that during the past 12 months what you and your family had for living was not adequate, adequate or more than adequate?" Q.A. 40.

findings are somewhat closer to that observed by Yusuf [25] who estimated 16.4 as mean age at marriage in Lahore for 1963-64 and Khan *et al.* [12] of 16.5 for one area of Lahore in 1960. However these estimates are not comparable with mean age at marriage of 17.6 year observed by Sadiq [23] from 1961 Census data, and 19.1 years by Alam [1] from 1964 PGE data. The latter estimates are based on reported proportion single and thus reflect current rates; while average age at marriage calculated from the Impact Survey data and other sample surveys by Yusuf and Khan *et al.* are based on actual experience of women in different marriage cohorts.⁷

Substantial differentials are observed in the average number of births by family type. On an average, women in nuclear families report 1.3 more children than women in joint families in rural areas and 1.4 more children than joint families in urban areas. The average number of children born alive to all women is reported as somewhat higher in urban areas (3.7) than rural areas (3.4), and higher fertility is found among both nuclear and joint families in urban than in rural area. The rural-urban differentials might be partly attributed to more underreporting of live births by women in rural areas through problems of recall. It would appear likely that with infant mortality higher in rural areas, relatively more live births which ended as infant deaths could have been overlooked by rural women. Similarly women in urban nuclear families report the highest average number of living children (4.0) followed by women in rural nuclear families (3.5) and the lowest number of living children (2.4) for women in rural joint families. In terms of a general comparison on mortality of children born alive, nuclear families in rural areas report the highest rate (a difference of .6 between average number of living children and average number born alive). Joint families in urban areas report a difference of .3 between average live births and average living children.

Women in joint as well as nuclear families report about the same "ideal" number of children⁸ (average of 4.5 to 4.8); however, it is somewhat higher in urban than rural areas.

Cumulative Fertility by Family Type

Significant difference has been observed in the average number of live births between women in nuclear and joint families (Table II). Fertility level in a population is largely affected by the prevailing age composition of women, therefore, it could be argued that the above mentioned differentials may be largely explained by different age compositions of women included in the study in rural and urban areas and among different family types. A higher mean age of women in nuclear families than those in joint families is observed (Table II) in both rural and urban areas. Table III indicates that about a fifth of all women in nuclear families in both rural and urban areas are between 40 and 49 years of age as compared with about one-eighth of all women in joint families. As expected, average number of children born alive to women of younger age groups is substantially lower than those in the older age groups. Average cumulative

⁷See Alam [2, p. 29], who has also observed a similar pattern in Cebu, Philippines.

⁸In response to question: "In your opinion, what is the appropriate number of children for a family like yours". Q.C. 20.

Table III

Pakistan: Mean Live Births Per Currently Married Woman by Age, Rural-Urban Residence and Family Type, 1968-69

Age (in years)	Rural						Urban					
	Nuclear			Joint			Nuclear			Joint		
	No. of Women	Percent	Mean Live Births	No. of Women	Percent	Mean Live Births	No. of Women	Percent	Mean Live Births	No. of Women	Percent	Mean Live Births
Less than 15	1	.1	0	2	.2	0	1	.2	0	5	.7	0
15-19	44	5.7	.7	184	19.2	.6	20	4.1	1.1	86	12.5	.5
20-24	105	13.6	2.2	261	27.3	1.7	48	9.8	2.7	167	24.2	1.8
25-29	163	21.1	3.5	183	19.1	2.9	110	22.4	3.7	163	23.7	3.3
30-34	160	20.7	4.6	99	10.3	4.1	103	21.0	4.9	97	14.1	4.0
35-39	156	20.2	5.2	114.	11.9	4.6	111	22.6	5.5	77	11.2	4.6
40-44	111	14.4	5.5	77	8.0	5.4	70	14.2	5.4	56	8.1	5.8
45-49	32	4.2	5.4	38	4.0	5.4	28	5.7	5.6	38	5.5	5.3
Total:	772	100.0	4.1	958	100.0	2.8	491	100.0	4.5	689	100.0	3.1
Age Standardized *			3.7			3.3			3.9			3.4
Mean Live Births												

(Continued)

ity increases with the increase in the age of women in each family type and rural and urban residence. The average number of children born alive to ten 40 years and above is about 5.5 for each family type and is essentially same for residents of rural and urban areas. These are the women who have and large completed their fertility. However, reported fertility is higher ng women in nuclear families than in joint families for almost all the age ps in both urban and rural areas.

When the average number of children born alive is standardized to unt for difference in age distribution of mothers, using the age composi- of currently married women recorded in the 1961 Census as standard⁹, fertility differentials between the two types of family and between rural and n areas are substantially reduced. Thus age-standardized cumulative ility for rural women is 3.7 and 3.3 for nuclear and joint families, respectively. larly among urban women age-standardized average cumulative fertility 9 for nuclear families and 3.4 for joint families. However, even with age ibutions standardized, slightly higher fertility among nuclear families sts. An average of 3.8 children were reported born to nuclear family women 3.3 children to joint family women by combining the residents of rural and n areas. The average difference of .5 child between nuclear and joint lies is, however, not statistically significant with a calculated *t* value of at 12 degrees of freedom. This suggests that family type may not be ating as a factor affecting fertility level. It is important to note here that e the data do not indicate a significant difference in fertility by family type, y women may have changed from living in one family type to the other ng the course of their cumulative fertility. We may point out though that ooking at the current family type we are missing a very important distinc- between "always nuclear" and "currently nuclear". What influence these s might have on the fertility is beyond the scope of the present study, as are only available for current family status.

Ideal Number of Children by Family Type

Fertility level is the product of a number of factors interacting with each r and one factor such as family type could only partially explain fertility entials. As noted above information is not available about the past family of the woman. She might have been living in a different family setting at time of earlier births, and her residence (rural or urban) might have also ged over time due to migration. In this respect the number of children rted as "ideal" by women in different family types and in rural and urban s could provide additional insight as the time reference is current and future er than in the past.

Data in table IV do not show significant variations in the average number children reported as "ideal" by women living in different family types; how- the mean ideal number of children reported by urban women is slightly r than for those in rural areas. The slight rural-urban differentials in d number of children might partially reflect the higher infant mortality rate rural areas which makes women cautious about the probability of the sur-

It is recognized here that the age composition of married women in 1961 Census may e the same as for all married women in 1968-69 when the Impact Survey was conducted.

Table IV

Pakistan: Ideal Number of Children Per Currently Married Woman Aged 49 or less by Number of Living Children, Rural-Urban Residence and Family Type, 1968-69

Number of Living Children	Rural						Urban					
	Nuclear			Joint			Nuclear			Joint		
	No. of Women	Percent	Ideal No. of children	No. of Women	Percent	Ideal No. of children	No. of Women	Percent	Ideal No. of children	No. of Women	Percent	Ideal No. of children
0	70	9.1	4.2	206	21.5	4.5	29	5.9	3.6	127	18.5	4.3
1	77	10.0	4.1	208	21.7	4.8	35	7.1	4.3	113	16.4	4.2
2	107	13.9	4.6	157	16.4	4.5	57	11.6	4.0	114	16.5	4.1
3	126	16.3	4.8	131	13.6	4.9	80	16.3	4.4	93	13.5	4.1
4	138	17.8	4.8	92	9.6	5.0	79	16.1	4.7	78	11.3	4.4
5	101	13.1	5.0	58	6.1	4.9	75	15.3	4.9	69	10.0	5.7
6	82	10.6	5.2	58	6.1	5.3	56	11.4	4.9	44	6.4	5.3
7+	71	9.2	5.1	48	5.0	5.3	80	16.3	4.5	51	7.4	5.1
Total:	772	100.0	4.7	958	100.0	4.8	491	100.0	4.5	689	100.0	4.5

(Continued)

(Table IV Continued)

Number of Living Children	Urban			Rural			Total (Weighted)		
	All type			All type			All types		
	No. of Women	Percent	Ideal No. of children	No. of Women	Percent	Ideal No. of children	Percent Women	Ideal No. of children	
0	276	15.9	4.6	156	13.2	4.1	15.2	4.4	
1	285	16.5	4.6	148	12.5	4.2	15.4	4.5	
2	264	15.3	4.6	171	14.5	4.1	15.0	4.4	
3	257	14.9	4.8	173	14.7	4.4	14.8	4.7	
4	230	13.3	4.9	157	13.3	4.7	13.3	4.8	
5	159	9.2	5.0	144	12.2	5.0	10.0	5.0	
6	140	8.1	5.2	100	8.5	4.9	8.2	5.1	
7+	119	6.8	5.2	131	11.1	4.9	8.1	5.1	
Total :	1730.0	100.0	4.8	1180	100.0	4.5	100.0	4.7	

Source: National Impact Survey, 1961-69

vival of children.¹⁰ The data do suggest that ideal number of children as reported by a woman might be largely independent of the particular family type in which she lives. The data on ideal number of children thus fails to support the general contention that the joint family system *per se* is supportive of high fertility.

Actual and expected fertility behaviour could always vary according to the situation faced by the women. If we take the living children as the actual parity and ideal number of children as the desired parity the difference between the two seems prominent from data in Table IV. When women were asked about their ideal number of children no substantial differences in the number by family type are found; lowest of 4.5 children reported by women in joint families in urban areas to 4.8 children by their counterparts in rural areas, some possible reasons of this differential have been suggested above. But the differentials become more prominent when the ideal number of children are cross tabulated with the number of living children and family type. Table IV also suggests that much higher proportion of women in joint families (22 per cent in rural and 18 per cent in urban areas) report no living child, whereas only 9 per cent of nuclear family women in rural areas and 6 per cent in urban areas, respectively report no living child. This corresponds with higher cumulative fertility among women in nuclear families due to a higher mean age. However, the ideal number of children reported by the zero parity women in each family type is somewhat closer. Women who have 6 or more living children indicate 5 children as ideal in all groups with the exception of women in urban nuclear families having 7 or more living children, who report their ideal number as 4.5. Probably women currently living in urban nuclear families have realised the consequences of higher fertility and may report lower fertility in the future as a consequence of realization of excessive births. On the other hand realisation of excessive number of children may not be pronounced among women in joint families. It may be argued that women with higher number of children living in nuclear families in the urban areas may have more realization of consequences of higher fertility than their counterparts in rural areas and those living in joint families. These women are likely to report lower fertility in the future.

It is important to note that in a society where least attention is likely to be paid to the planned family, whether future fertility could be determined from a response on the ideal number of children. The ideal number of children may be the reflection of the feeling of the woman whereas the child birth may be the result of different factors operating in the society or may be just a chance factor. But a younger woman reporting certain number of children as ideal could presumably be more readily influenced to adopt family planning so that she may not produce more children than she thinks is ideal. In as much as family affiliations and surroundings could always influence her fertility in relation to her opinion on ideal number of children, it is important to identify the characteristics of women including their attitudes about family size in order to develop strategies in family/population planning programmes.

¹⁰See Siddiqui [24, p. 215] who reports over a third of the respondents in the city of Lahore mentioning the infant deaths as the motive for desiring more children.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main objective in this study has been to examine fertility differentials of women living in joint and nuclear families in the rural and urban areas of Pakistan. Data from the National Impact Survey of 1968-69 are utilized to test the general hypothesis derived from a body of theory that the joint family system is more supportive of higher levels of fertility than the nuclear family system. Earlier empirical evidence in some of the countries faced with higher fertility has raised questions about the general theory, and fails to support the theory that the joint family system supports higher fertility as argued by some Western social scientists.

Findings of the present study report higher proportion of women living in joint families in rural as well as urban areas. Higher cumulative fertility is noticed for women now living in nuclear families but when controlled for age, this difference largely disappeared. However, the difference in age standardized cumulative fertility rates of women in nuclear and joint families is not statistically significant. Virtually no difference is noticed in mean age at marriage and ideal family size between women in nuclear and joint families, except women with 7 or more children in nuclear families in urban area report lower number of children as ideal which may be an indication of future lower fertility among women in urban nuclear families. When comparisons were made on several socio-economic characteristics of women it is found that higher proportion of women in joint families report availability of independent sleeping arrangements which may be the reflection of lower cumulative fertility due to lower mean age of women. Similarly higher proportion of women in joint families perceiving their living as more adequate may be partly explained by lower cumulative fertility. A lower proportion of women in joint families reporting current employment may be due to the more traditional nature of joint families where employment of women outside home is not encouraged. However, very slight difference is observed in the proportion of women ever attending school by family type.

Existence of no statistically significant relationship between family type and fertility suggests that family type may not be an important factor in determining fertility level. Women living in nuclear families now may be still influenced by the same set of values and norms as operative in the joint family system. Similarly, nuclear families may be a part of a larger extended family network where women are still influenced by their relatives living in different households. When the nuclear family women are essentially independent of their past family affiliations, or live in independent nuclear families, and also adopt values and norms as operative in independent nuclear families of the more modernized societies, possibly then the influence of a particular family type on fertility behaviour may be more specifically determined.

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