Fertility Differential Among Lower Caste in Lamachaur VDC, Kaski

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Abstract

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. It has been observed that the levels and patterns of fertility vary considerably in various sub groups of the same population in terms of educational attainment, occupation, age at marriage, contraception user etc. This study, therefore, attempts to study of fertility differential among lower caste people. This study is based on descriptive cum analytical research design. Every household of Dalit community in ward no 6, 7 and 8 of Lamachaur VDC are included in the study with a sample population of 85eligible women aged 15-49 years from 85 households.Fertility differential among lower caste people shows that most of the respondents were in the age group of 36-49 and then followed by age group 26-35 and 15-25. Higher fertility is concentrated in the age at marriage from 16 to 19 as compare to other groups of age at marriage. Literate respondents have low fertility as compared to illiterate respondents. Working respondents have high fertility as compared to non-working respondents. The users of contraception have high fertility as compared to non-users of contraception.But, there is no significant relationship between fertility and age of women, age at marriage, literacy status, occupation and users of contraception as measured by chi-square test. It is better to make women literate and to marry at the age after 19 to reduce fertility.

Key Words: *Contraception, Fertility, Literacy, Occupation, Socio-economic,*

1. Background

The overall development of the nation depends upon different sub sectors and sub groups. It is really difficult to attain overall development by ignoring either one group (community). Dalit are defined as "those communities who, by virtue of atrocities of caste based discrimination and untouchability, are most backward in social, economic, educational, political and religious fields, and are deprived of human dignity and social justice.Dalit are also known as lower caste under the stratified Hindu caste system originated some 3000 years ago. Dalits (lower castes) in Nepal are a historically state victimized disadvantaged community who have been compelled to lag at the bottom of the social structure and excluded from national development mainstream due to the caste system and extreme Hinduism for centuries. Caste based discrimination and untouchability are also in practices within Dalit community that is intra-Dalit discrimination.Within the Dalit community, there are dozens of sub-caste groups from the hills (*Hill Dalits*), the Tarai (*Tarai/Madhesi Dalits*) and Newar community (Newar Dalits).

According to the government's figures, Dalits comprise 13 percent of Nepal's total population. However, Dalit civil society claims it to be about 20 percent; a demographic survey conducted by NNDSWO provides evidence to the claim (NNDSO http://www.nndswo.org.np/index.php?page=workingareas).Dalits' comprise the poorest community in Nepal, in terms of all poverty measures (income, consumption, human development and others). The Dalits lag far behind in their income (the lowest PCI), education (the lowest rate of literacy and enrolment) high fertility rate, and other human development indicators (the lowest HDI). Dalits' overall have the lowest household incomes – roughly half the average incomes of Brahman-Chhetry households and less than a third that of Newar

households; the Madhesi Dalits have the lowest per capita incomes of all.Their land holdings are small and landlessness is extreme among Dalits is 90 percent which is substantiallygreater than national average 24%. The Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS), 2011, showed that about 41 percent Dalit fall below the poverty line which is 16 percent higher than the national average (25%) (CBS, 2011).

The literacy rate among Dalits has grown in absolute terms but the gap between their literacy (33%) and the national average (65.9%) is still wide.Similarly, educations above S.L.C and above bachelor of Dalit represent 3.8 percent and 0.4 percent whereas educations above S.L.C and above bachelor for the national level are respectively 17.6 percent and 3.4 percent. The life expectancy of Dalits is lower (61 years) compared to the national average (68.7 years). On average Brahmans and Newars live 11 to 12 years longer than the Dalits. Under-five mortality is also much higher (90 per 1000) than the national average (68 per 1000) (CBS, 2011). The nutritional status of Dalits is poor and therefore they are vulnerable to infectious diseases. Health awareness among the Dalits is low. Because of illiteracy, ignorance and other socio-economic factors, their living conditions are unhygienic, contributing to their poor health. The Dalits do not have easy access to clean drinking water and they suffer from water-borne diseases.

Dalits' participation in political process and representation in government at the village, district and the national level is insignificant compared to the size of their population. After the people's movement 2006, the country experienced a great change in the political sphere, however, that change has not been able to benefit the Dalit community significantly.Most Dalit groups have their own traditional occupational skills like black smithy (iron worker), gold smithy, tailoring, shoemaking etc. Such inherent occupational skills are the only way many Dalits have to solve their hand-to-mouth problems. Unfortunately, all of these occupations associated with Dalits are considered to be of low social status in Nepalese society. Most of these skilful people are not receiving fair value and social respect for their work and their economic status is thus poor. Moreover they are often exploited in the name of *Balighare, Khalo,* etc. systems and get only minimal payment (mostly in kind/grains) for their works.

In recent days, due to the disregard of their arts and skills, many Dalits are giving up their occupation which has also worsened their livelihoods. In addition, lack of modernization and limited access to markets has put these occupations in danger. Globalization and the flood of cheap international products have further threatened the Dalits' traditional occupations. Developing social respect for these occupations of Dalits and making them competitive in the market is a challenging issue in the economy of Dalit.

Fertility is generally used to indicate the actual reproductive performance of a woman or groups of women.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 ofpopulation, such as the number of married couples to the numbers of women of child bearing age. There are so many factors responsible for higher fertility. 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 educational attainment, age at marriage, occupation, mortality, use of contraception, residence, religion, caste, race etc. 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). It has been observed that in developing countries due to climatic and other reasons, girls reach puberty at an early age and as such the period of reproduction of girls is lengthy. Not

only this, but after marriage, in these countries, women are considered to love in the house, settle that and produce children. Since chances of employment and educational facilities are limited, therefore, women always live at home and feel pleasure in bringing up and playing with their children. Age at marriage is strong determinant of the number of CEB. As the age at marriage increase, the number of CEB decreases (Dahal, 1989).

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.The level of fertility declines with the increase in educational level of females. The same applies for literacy status (higher the level of female literacy in a community the lower will be the fertility). This also implies that the level of fertility should be lower for the literate females as compared to illiterate females. This indicates that as the level of schooling increase both women and men are less likely to be in a polygamous union. The desire to limit child bearing is more apparent at higher level of education that at lower levels (MOHP, 2011).Female in different occupations are found to have different fertility levels. It was generally observed that the wives of those engaged in professional jobs had the lowest fertility. The mean number of CEB per ever married women is highest for the farm workers and sales workers but the lower fertility is observed among the professional, administrative and clerical workers. The CBS information emphasized that there is a remarkable difference between white color and blue color occupation groups of women.The employment of women outside of the home or in the farm reduced the level of fertility behavior. This study,therefore attempts to analyse the fertility differential among lower caste in Lamachaur VDC Kaski.

2. Data and Method

This study is based on descriptive research design to describe the real situation of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of lower caste community. This study is based on primary data collected from the field survey. The questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. Secondary data are also be used as per the requirement of the study.This study is based on multistage sampling. First of all Lamachaur VDC is selected out of 43 Village Development Committee in Kaski district using convenience sampling. Again, out of nine wards in Lamachaur VDC, ward no 6, 7 and 8 are selected using purposive sampling. Altogether there are 85 households in ward 6, 7 and 8. Every household of Dalit community in ward no 6, 7 and 8 of Lamachaur VDC are included in the study and the household data collection is based on every household enumerating system. This study included a sample population of 85 from 85 households. There are 85 household and 85 eligible women have been administered the questionnaire relating to fertility. The respondents are ever married women aged 15–49 years. Chi-square test is used to examine the fertility differential among lower caste people regarding literacy, age at marriage, age of women, occupation and contraception user..

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Fertility by Age of Women

Age of mother is one of the major determinants of fertility. Age of married women and fertility is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Respondents Classified by Age of Women According to Number of Children Ever Born

Number of Children	Age of Married Women			Total
	15 - 25	26 - 35	36- 49	
0 to 3	14 (23.3)	26 (43.3)	20 (33.3)	60 (100)
4 to 6	5 (20)	5 (20)	15 (60)	25 (100)
Total	19 (22.4)	31 (36.5)	35 (41.2)	85 (100)
Chi-Square Value = 5.770 with P Value 0.056				

Table 1 reveals that out of 85 respondents, 19 women are in the age group of 15- 25, 31 women are in the age group of 26- 35 and 35 women are in the age group of 36-49. Out of 60 respondents having fertility ranges from 0 to 3, 23.3 percent are in the age group of 15 -25, 43.3 percent are in the age group of 26 – 35 and 33.3 percent are in the age group of 36-49. Similarly, out of 25 women having fertility ranges from 4 to 6, 22.4 percent are in the age group of 15-25, 36.5 percent are in the age group of 26-35 and 41.2 percent are in the age group of 36-49. It indicates that low fertility is mainly concentrated in the age group of 25-25 and high fertility is mainly concentration in the age group of 36-49.To test the relationship between fertility and age of women, chi-square test is used. The P value is greater than 5 percent. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between fertility rate and age of women.

3.2 Age at Marriage

Age at marriage is another important factor of determining women's fertility. Table 2 shows the variation in fertility by age at marriage.

Table 2: Respondents Classified by Age at Marriage According to Number of Children Ever Born

Number of Children	Age at Marriage			Total
	12- 15	16 - 19	20 and above	
0 to 3	13 (21.7)	40 (66.7)	7 (11.7)	60 (100)
4 to 6	8 (32.0)	11 (44)	6 (24.0)	25 (100)
Total	21 (24.7)	51 (60)	13 (15.3)	85 (100)
Chi-Square Value = 4.029 with P Value 0.133				

As shown from the table 2, out of total respondents, 21 respondents were married in the age ranges from 12 to 15, 51 respondents were married in the age ranges from 16 to 19, and 13 respondents were married 20 years and above. Low fertility (0 to 3) as well as high fertility (4 to 6) is concentrated in the age at marriage from 16 to 19 as compare to other group of age at marriage. The relationship between fertility and age at marriage as measured by chi-square test indicates that there is no significant relationship between age at marriage and fertility. The calculated p value is less than 5 percent.

3.3 Fertility by Literacy

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 rate by literacy status of the study is presented in table 5.

Table 3: Respondents Classified by Literacy According to Number of Children Ever Born

Number of Children	Status of Literacy		Total
	literate	illiterate	
0 to 3	39 (65)	21 (35)	60 (100)
4 to 6	11 (44)	14 (56)	25 (100)
Total	50 (58.8)	35 (41.2)	85 (100)

Chi-Square Value = 3.213 with P Value 0.073

From table 3 it is observed that out of 85 respondents, 58.8 percent were literate and 41.2 percent were illiterate.Out of 85 respondents, 60 respondents have fertility rate ranges from 0 to 3 and 25 respondents have fertility rate ranges from 4 to 6. Out of 60, 35 percent illiterate respondents and 65 percent literate respondents have fertility ranges from 0 to 3. Similarly, out of 25, 56 percent illiterate respondents and 44 percent literate respondents have fertility ranges from 4 to 6. To test the relationship between fertility and literacy status, chi-square test is used. The P value is greater than 5 percent. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between fertility rate and literacy status.

3.4 Fertility by Occupation

Occupation is one of the important determinants of fertility. To examine the relationship between fertility and occupation, respondents other than household work and dependent are considered as working. Fertility rate by occupation status of the study is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Respondents Classified by Occupation According to Number of Children Ever Born

Number of children	Occupational Status		Total
	Working	Non-working	
0 to 3	36 (60)	24 (40)	60 (100)
4 to 6	20 (80)	5 (20)	25 (100)
Total	56 (65.9)	29 (34.1)	85 (100)

Chi-Square Value = 3.140 with P Value 0.076

From table 4 it is observed that out of 85 respondents, 67.1 percent were working and 32.9 percent were non- working.Out of 85 respondents, 60 respondents have fertility rate ranges from 0 to 3 and 25 respondents have fertility rate ranges from 4 to 6. Out of 60, 40 percent non-working respondents and 60 percent working respondents have fertility ranges from 0 to 3. Similarly, out of 25, 20 percent non-working respondents and 80 percent working respondents have fertility ranges from 4 to 6. To test the relationship between fertility and occupation status, chi-square test is used. The P value is greater than 5 percent. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between fertility rate and occupation status.

3.5 Fertility by Contraception User

Contraceptive method is used to prevent women from fertilization and to stop giving birth or to increase the birth interval. Birth control methods help couples to achieve their desire family size by preventing unwanted births. It is expected to have low fertility level for those women who use family planning methods than those who do not.

Table 5: Respondents Classified by User of Contraception According to Number of Children Ever Born

Number of children	Status of Contraception		Total
	User	Non-user	
0 to 3	45 (75)	15 (25)	60 (100)
4 to 6	21 (84)	4 (16)	25 (100)
Total	66 (77.6)	19 (22.4)	85 (100)
Chi-Square Value = 0.824 with P Value 0.364			

From table 5 it is observed that out of 85 respondents, 77.6 percent were users of contraception and 22.4 percent were non-user of contraception.Out of 85 respondents, 60 respondents have fertility rate ranges from 0 to 3 and 25 respondents have fertility rate ranges from 4 to 6. Out of 60, 75 percent users of contraception and 25 percent non users of contraception have fertility ranges from 0 to 3. Similarly, out of 25,85 percent users of contraception and 16 percent non users of contraception have fertility ranges from 4 to 6.The general saying is quite beyond this result. Most of the users of contraception have high fertility as compared to non-users of contraception. To test the relationship between fertility and contraception users, chi-square test is used. The P value is greater than 5 percent. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between fertility rate and users of contraception.

4. Conclusion

Out of 85 respondents, most of the respondents were in the age group of 36-49 and then followed by age group 26-35 and 15-25. Low fertility is mainly concentrated in the age group of 25-25 and high fertility is mainly concentration in the age group of 36-49. There is no significant relationship between fertility rate and age of women as measured by chi-square test. Out of total respondents, most of the respondents were married in the age ranges from 16 to 19. Similarly, higher fertility is concentrated in the age at marriage from 16 to 19 as compare to other groups of age at marriage. Therefore, it can be concluded that increase in age at marriage has a negative impact on fertility for two basic reasons. First, women who marry later have a shorter reproductive lifespan and second, the factors that affect the age at marriage also affect the desired family size norms thereby reducing fertility.Out of 85 respondents, 58.8 percent were literate and 41.2 percent were illiterate.Literate respondents have low fertility ascompared to illiterate respondents.This is because literate women have 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. Butthere is no significant relationship between fertility rate and literacy status as measured by chi-square test.Out of total respondents, 67.1 percent were working and 32.9 percent were non- working. Working respondents have high fertility as compared to non-working respondents. This is because additional manpower is welcome to generate additional income for them. But there is no significant relationship between fertility rate and occupation status. The proportion of user of contraception is greater than non-user of contraception. The more surprise is that contraception users have high fertility as compared to non-user of contraception. This may be the reason that most of the non - users of contraception women can't live with their husband for a long period of time due to husband's

profession in abroad.The relationship as measured by chi-square indicates that there is no significant relationship between user of contraception and fertility.

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