

DESIRE FOR ADDITIONAL CHILDREN - STUDY AMONG CURRENTLY MARRIED WOMEN IN RURAL TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

Fertility desires and intentions are central in theoretical and empirical approaches to studying childbearing behavior. Coal's (1973) seminal formulation of demographic transition theory argues that fertility will decline when childbearing enters the "calculus of conscious choice"—that is, when having children becomes a subject about which it is possible to have preferences. India is a multi-religious multi lingual and multi ethnic country with vast socio cultural differentials which have strong bearing on the fertility preference. The main objectives of present study were to study level of desire for children, to study the differentials in additional desire of children among the respondents and to examine the effect of socio-cultural factors on desire for additional children of currently married women in rural Tamil nadu. This study was based on a field survey conducted particularly in the Schedule Caste community of Bhuvanagiri Block under the Chidambaram Taluk Cuddalore District in Tamil particularly Nadu. A simple random sampling techniques was adopted to select the sample population The total sample size was 253 women those who were in the age 18 -30 at least having one live birth has been selected Statistical methods such as percentage, cross tabulation, Chi-square and logistic regression techniques have been used The result shows that nearly two third of the respondents (62.8%) have expressed that they does not want any more children in future. More than ninety percent of the respondents who were married in the younger age 19 years do not want to have children in future .Little less than half of the total respondents (47.1 %) wants to have children in future than their counterparts in nuclear families (32.1 percent) and the chi-square test turnout to be moderately significant in this regard ($p < 0.05$) Related to educational status, as the husband's education increases the percentage of respondents desire to have children also increases, (high school and below 25 percent), higher secondary (43.4 percent), degree and above (70.4 percent). The chi-square test results turn out to the highly significant in these regards ($p < 0.001$). Around half of the respondent(49.9 percent) who were house wives have repressed desire to have children and the chi- square test shown moderately associated ($P \leq .002$). Eighty two percent of the respondents those already have only female surviving children were desire any children

than their counterparts who have already male children (72.7 percent) the chi-square result shows there was highly significant association in this regard ($p \leq .001$ level of significance). Overall among the background variables like age at marriage, family type, husband's education, occupation of the respondent, family income, total surviving children etc have significantly associated with the desire for additional children in future. The results of logistic regression model shows there was a significant effects on desire for additional children in future among the respondents in the study area. Base on the findings some suggestions have been framed.

Keywords: Additional Children, Surviving Children etc.

INTRODUCTION

Fertility preference especially in developing countries paves way to increase the family size and thereby changes the demographic structure of an area or even country. Also it will leads to high population growth. Fertility desires and intentions are central in theoretical and empirical approaches to studying childbearing behavior. Coal' (1973) seminal formulation of demographic transition theory argues that fertility will decline when childbearing enters the "calculus of conscious choice" – that is, when having children becomes a subject about which it is possible to have preferences. India is a multi –religious multi lingual and multi ethnic country with vast socio cultural differentials which have strong bearing on the fertility preference.

Measuring fertility intentions, and determining the extent to which they predict fertility behavior, is also important for population policy and the implementation of family planning program. According to Navtej K. Purewal (2012) "The preference for male children transcends many societies and cultures, making it an issue of local and global dimensions. While son preference is not a new phenomenon and has existed historically in many parts of Asia, its contemporary expressions illustrate the gendered outcomes of social power relations as they interact and intersect with culture, economy, and technologies." Substantial evidence from more developed countries – and growing evidence from less developed countries – shows that preferences are associated with childbearing behavior, even after accounting for other socio demographic characteristics. However, there is little evidence on how fertility desires predict fertility in sub-Saharan African settings, where rapid and radical socioeconomic changes coupled with a massive HIV/AIDS epidemic have placed immense strains on traditional marital and reproductive systems. In addition, the conditions under which preferences are more strongly or weakly associated with behavior are not well understood. The general findings of several studies have pointing out the variations in fertility preference with respect to different social-economic and other variables. The national family health survey (NFHS), and Reproductive child health surveys (RCH) conducted in India, also provided some idea in this regard. However the underlying mechanism behind this phenomenon was not clearly brought out. Because society has

its own set of customs and cultural practices related to fertility preferences. India is a multi – religious multi lingual and multi ethnic country with vast socio cultural differentials which have strong bearing on the fertility preference.

OBJECTIVES

The prime objectives of the study was

1. To understand the level of Desire for Children in future among the respondents in the study area.
2. To study the differentials in additional desire of children across the background characteristics and
3. To examine the effect of socio-cultural factors on desire for additional children of currently married women in rural Tamil Nadu

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study was based on a field survey conducted in Bhuvanagiri Block under the Chidambaram Taluk Cuddalore District in Tamil Nadu. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample population. From that Block two villages namely Melamanakkudi and Bhuvanagiri has selected for the study because most of the people belongs to Scheduled Caste Community. 72 women for Melamanakkudi and 182 women from Bhuvanagiri those who were in the age 18 -30 at least having one live birth has been selected. The total sample size was 253 women. Statistical methods such as percentage distribution, cross tabulation and Chi-square test have been used in this study. Binary logistic regression analysis have been used to understand the effects of socio-cultural factors on desire for additional children of currently married women in rural Tamil Nadu

A future childbearing intention was sought from currently married women, who were asked, “Would you like to have another child or would you prefer not to have any more children”. If a woman was pregnant, she was asked whether or not she wanted another child after the one she was expecting. Women who wanted another child were then asked about preferred timing and sex of their next child.

MAIN FINDINGS

Surviving Children and Desire for additional children

Table No. 1: Distribution of respondents' total surviving children

Total Children	Surviving	Male Children	Surviving	Female Children	Surviving
	No. (%)		No.(%)		No. (%)
1	55(21.7)	0	40(15.8)	0	66(26.1)
2	133(52.6)	1	140(55.3)	1	156(61.7)
3	65(25.7)	2	67(26.5)	2	25(9.9)
		3	6(2.4)	3	6(2.4)
Total	253(100.0)	Total	253(100.0)	Total	253(100.0)
Average	2.0	Average	1.2	Average	1.0

(Figures within brackets denote percentages)

Table no 1 shows the percentage distribution of respondents total surviving children .The study result shows that more than half of the respondents (53.65%) have two children and one fifth of the respondents have one child at the time of survey. The total surviving children was two on an average. As far as male and female surviving was considered among the respondents sixteen percent does not have male surviving children and twenty six percent have no female children respectively.

Figure 1: Shows the respondents' total surviving children

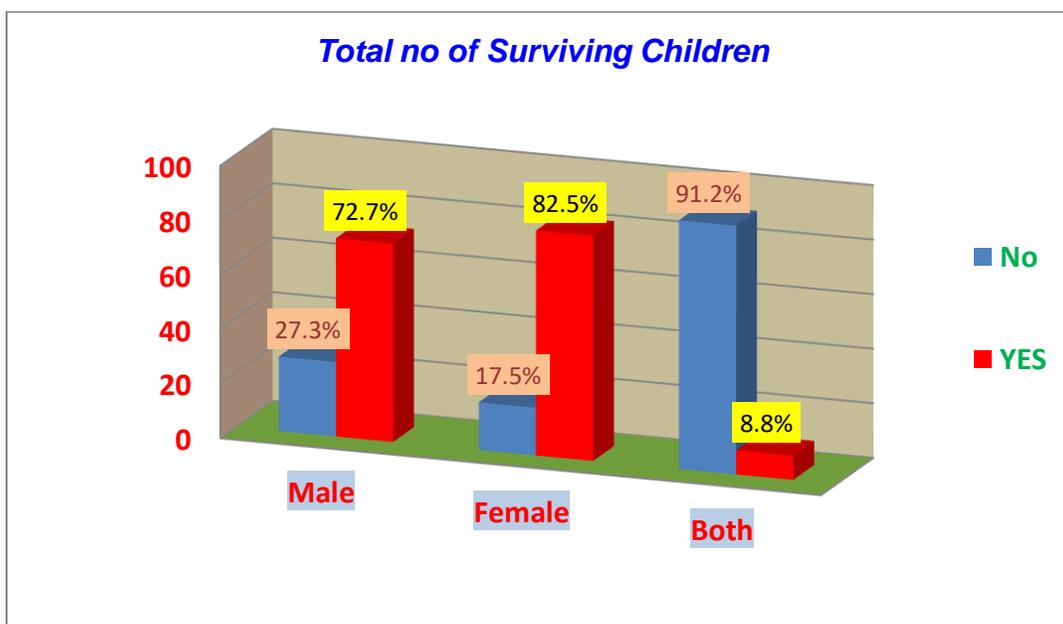


Figure 2: shows respondents' total only female surviving children

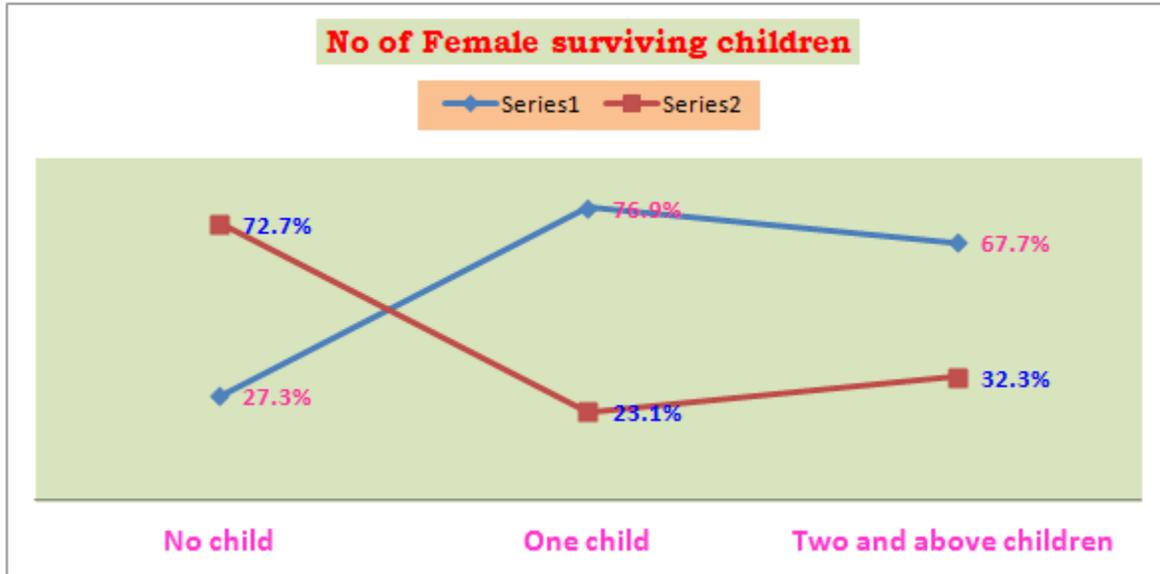


Table no.2: Distribution of respondent's desire for additional children

Desire children in future	No. of Respondents	Percent
No	159	62.8
Yes	94	37.2
Total	253	100.0

Table no.2 revealed that the percentage distribution of respondents' desire any more additional children. Nearly two third of the respondents (62.8%) have expressed that they did not want any more additional children and thirty seven percent of respondents were mentioned that they have desire for additional children.

Table no.3: Respondents the desire for additional children and their background characteristics

Background Characteristics		Desire for Additional Children		
		No	Yes	Total
Age (NS)	≤20	62.5	37.5	32(100.0)
	21-24	50.0	50.0	28(100.0)
	25-28	64.2	35.8	123(100.0)
	29+	65.7	34.3	70(100.0)
Age at marriage(***)	≤19	7.7	92.3	13(100.0)
	20-22	64.4	35.6	73(100.0)
	23-25	61.0	39.0	77(100.0)
	26+	71.1	28.9	90(100.0)
Religion (NS)	Hindu	63.2	36.8	231(100.0)
	Christian	59.1	40.9	22(100.0)
Family type (**)	Nuclear	67.9	32.1	168(100.0)
	Joint	52.9	47.1	85(100.0)
Education of the respondent (NS)	Primary	69.1	30.9	68(100.0)
	Middle	65.1	34.9	63(100.0)
	High school +	58.2	41.8	122(100.0)
Husband/educational attainment (***)	≤10 std	75.0	25.0	136(100.0)
	11-12 std	56.6	43.4	83(100.0)
	Degree +	29.4	70.6	34(100.0)
Respondents occupation (**)	House wives	51.0	49.0	98(100.0)
	laborer	71.3	28.7	122(100.0)
	Business	63.6	36.4	22(100.0)
	Govt job	72.7	27.3	11(100.0)
Family monthly income (***)	₹ ≤5000	50.0	50.0	70(100.0)
	₹ 5001-7000	64.9	35.1	94(100.0)
	₹ 7001+	70.8	29.2	89(100.0)
Currently use of Family Planning(NS)	No	64.4	35.6	146(100.0)
	Yes	60.7	39.3	107(100.0)
Total no of Surviving Children (***)	Male only	27.3	72.7	66(100.0)
	Female only	17.5	82.5	40(100.0)

	Both	91.2	8.8	147(100.0)
Male surviving children (***)	No child	17.5	82.5	40(100.0)
	One child	69.3	30.7	140(100.0)
	Two +	75.3	24.7	73(100.0)
Female surviving children (***)	No child	27.3	72.7	66(100.0)
	One child	76.9	23.1	156(100.0)
	Two +	67.7	32.3	31(100.0)
	Total	159(62.8)	94(37.2)	253(100.0)

***p<0.01 level of significance, **p<0.05 level of significance, NS- not significance

The percentage distribution of respondent's desire for additional children and their background characteristics has given in table no. 4. age is one of the demographic characteristic which influences the knowledge and behavior of the individuals. Here half of the respondents of the total population (50.0 percent) were in the age group 21-24 years want to have additional children followed by a little more than one third of the respondents who were 20 years and less than 20 years (37.5 percent) 25-28 years (35.8 percent) and 29 years and above (34.3 percent) want to have children in future. Respondents who belonged to younger ages (50.8% for 21-24) have more desire for additional children in comparison with respondents belonged to 25-29 ages (34.3%).

Age at marriage as considered, more than ninety percent of the respondents those who were married in the younger age ≤ 19 years have desire for children. Less percentages of desire was found among the respondents who married in the age group 20-22 years (35.0 percent), 23-25 years (39.0 percent) and 29+ years (28.0 percent) subsequently. Women who got married at the early ages were more desire for additional than higher age at marriage. Age at marriage increases the desire for additional children were considerably decreases. The chi-square test turns out to be highly associated in this regard ($P \leq .004$). Religion is an important social variable. Christian respondents have desire more for additional children (40.7 percent) than Hindu respondents (36.8%), and the chi-square test did not turn out to be significant in their regard. In the case of family type, more desire of children was found those respondents belonged to joint family (47.1%) than their counter parts of nuclear family (32.1%). Chi-square value has turnout to be moderately significant in this regard ($p < 0.05$). When considering education of the respondents, educational attainment increases the percentage of respondent's desire to have additional children increases. 30.9 percent those respondents educated up to Primary school 34.9 percent for middle school and 41.8 percent those educated high school and above. The similar situation has noticed in case of husband's educational attainment. Spouses who were more educated have more desire to have for additional children. (Twenty five percent those spouses

educated up to 10th standard level and seventy percent for those their spouses educated degree and above). The chi-square test results turn out to be highly associated in this regard (p<0.001). Occupation is an economic variable which directly affects the desire to have children. When there is good economic condition then only the standard of living will be better with better knowledge and it may desire for less additional children. Approximately half of the percentage (49.9 percent) of the respondent who were house wives were desire for additional children followed by business women (36.4 percent), coolies (28.7 percent) and government job (27.3 percent) . Women who were not working (house wives) had more preferred for additional children than the any other working categories and the chi- square test turnout to be moderately associated in this regard (P≤ .002). Family income as considered, higher income group has prefer less desire of children than the other higher income groups i.e. 50.0% for ₹ ≤5000 and 29.3% for ₹ 7001 and above. The chi-square value turnout to be moderately significant in this regard (P≤ .008). Sex preference is a demographic variable which affects the desire for more children and there by affects the family size. With respect to total surviving children and their desire for additional children, respondents who have only female surviving children have more desire for additional children than their counter parts who have only male children.

Little more than eighty percent of respondents who had only female child were desire for additional children. But in the case respondents who had only children the respective percentage was 72.7 for additional child. The p- value has shown significantly associated desire for additional children with surviving children among the study respondents (p≤.001 level of significance).

Figure 3: Age at marriage and desire of additional children

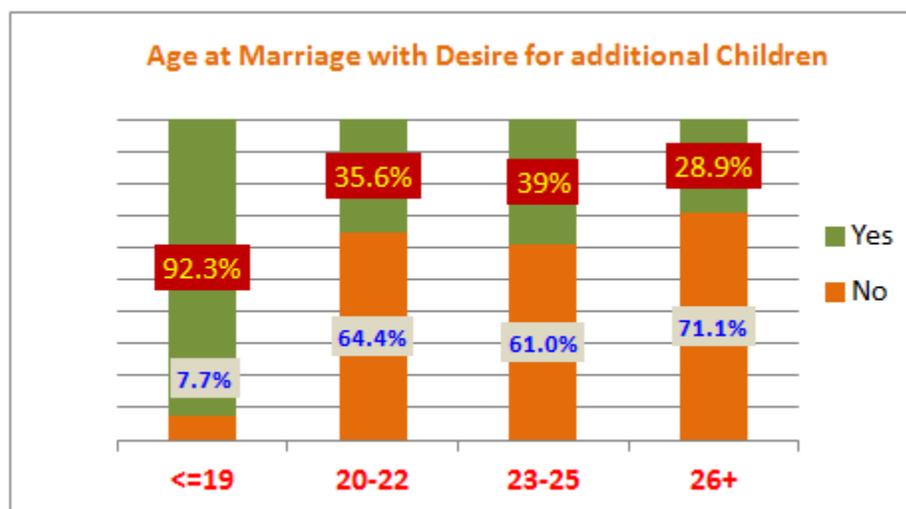
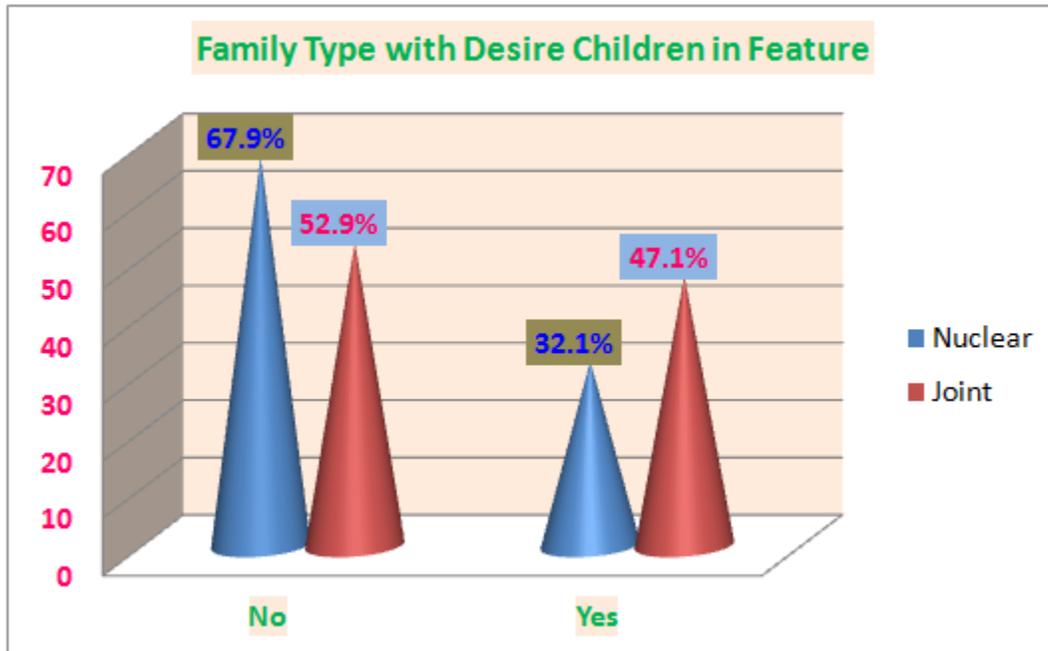


Figure 4: Family type and their desire for additional children.



Results of Binary Logistic Regression-

Table No. 4: Results of Binary Logistic regression

Background characteristics		Desire children ever born	
		B	Exp(B)
Age ≤24 (R)	25-28	-1.054**	.348
	29+	-.341	.711
Age at marriage ≤22 (R)	23-25	.691	1.997
	26+	-.036	.965
Religion Hindu (R)	Christian	.161	1.175
Family type Nuclear (R)	Joint	.577	1.780
Education Primary (R)	Middle	.875	2.399
	High school +	.780	2.182
Husband education ≤10 STD (R)	11-12 STD	1.182**	3.262
	Degree +	.292	1.339
Occupation House wife (R)	Coolys	-.878	.416
	Business	.645	1.906

	Govt job	-17.199	.000
Monthly income ≤5000 (R)	5001-7000	-.150	.861
	7001+	-.427	.653
Total surviving children, 1 (R)	2+ Children	-37.302	.000
Male surviving children, 1(R)	2+ Children	1.590***	4.902
Female surviving children 1(R)	2+ Children	1.858***	6.414

Level of sig*= p ≤0.000-2 Log likelihood 152.321a R- Reference category**

By analyzing the determinants of desire for additional children, the researcher actually intended to examine the effects of important socio cultural and other variables on desire for additional children among the currently married women in the study area. The independent variables were selected, for the binary regression model by considering the significances of the variables and also by checking the multi co-linearity between them. Thus, independent variables selected were age of woman, age at marriage, religion, family type, education of the respondents, husband 'education, respondents 'occupation, family income and surviving children. The likelihood chances of age25-28 were sixty six percent less likely to desire for additional children when compared with reference category of 24 and less age group. The likelihood values of religion, Christian have seventeen times more likely to desire for additional children as compared to Hindu respondents, Joint family have seventy eight times more likely desire for additional children than the reference category of nuclear family. Among the independent variables like, age, husband ' education and surviving child has significant effects in explaining the desire for additional children.

CONCLUSION

From the above findings it can be concluded that there is a variation in the desire for additional children. Majority of the respondents have a survival of two children at the time survey,. With regards to desire for more children majority of women does not want more additional children. Around thirty seven percent of respondents have desire for additional children. Among the background characteristics like age at marriage, husband 'education, respondent 'occupation, family income and surviving children particularly only female children have shown significantly associated with desire for additional children. A woman who has employed in any job has less preference to have additional children than the housewives. The same situation has been found in the family income as considered, higher income group has prefer less desire of children. Some interesting result was seen with respect to total surviving children and their desire for children.

Respondents who have only female surviving children have more desire for additional children in future than their counter parts who have only male children. Lastly, it has been noticed that there is still prevailing of fertility preferences especially male children in the study area. Binary logistic regression analysis shown that among the independent variables like, age, husband education and surviving children has significant effects in explaining the desire for additional children.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Base on the findings some policy implications can be framed:-

- The legislation on age at marriage which was enacted long back in our country has to be considered seriously and should be strictly enforced even in different political situations.
- With the existing mass media, suitable programmes have to be chalked out so that the message of the prescribed age limit for both sexes may reach the people faster especially in the remote villages.
- As female education is very much needed for postponing her age at marriage as a first step.
- Education plays an important role in abolishing the superstitious, beliefs and thoughts especially among the poor literate women in the rural areas.
- Increasing family income is more needed to minimise the preference of children in near future.
- As the socio- economic conditions of the young rural women can be improved by self employment and so that the desire for additional children in view of their future economic security can be lesser.

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