

Tribal—Non-tribal Fertility Differential in India.

1. INTRODUCTION

Changes in population size and composition may occur through a change in one or more of the three demographic processes: fertility, mortality, and migration. The most important of these in the contemporary world, from both practical and theoretical points of view, is fertility. The great difference between the fertility levels of the industrial and non-industrial countries can be explained mostly by the differential practice of modern contraceptive methods. But there are considerable variations in the fertility levels of cultures or ethnic groups which do not practise modern contraceptive methods.² A nation or country may contain a number of such cultural or ethnic units. The study of differential fertility among such units is essential for a proper understanding of the fertility dynamics of a nation or country and hence for the formulation of its population policy, if so desired.

Historical forces in India have contributed towards a great diversity in her population. This diversity is well recognized in terms of language, religion and caste. But it is not very well known that there is a large number of distinct socio-cultural units in India which cannot be fully defined in terms of any of the above categories. These are commonly known as tribes. But the gradual process of assimilation of Indian tribes into the Hindu caste system and various other factors have always made it very difficult to identify clearly the specific characteristics which qualify a group of people to be designated as a tribe.³ Despite this difficulty, after independence the Government of India prepared a list of scheduled tribes for each State which are entitled to some constitutional safeguards and privileges. The total number of Scheduled tribes in India exceeds 300. They differ in various ways and degrees from the mainstream of Indian socio-cultural life, but they also differ considerably among themselves.

The population of the Scheduled tribes in India constituted approximately 6.8 per cent (about 22.5 million) of the total population in 1961 and 1951 respectively.⁴ The higher

percentage of the tribal population in 1961 reflects, at least partly, a relatively higher population growth among them than others. The relatively higher population growth among the scheduled tribes may be due to a higher fertility rate or lower mortality rate among them than others

The purpose of the present paper is to investigate whether there are fertility differentials among the tribal and non-tribal populations of India and among the tribes themselves. If these exist, an attempt will be made to identify the factors which may explain them.

The vital registration data are not available separately for the tribes of India. Hence the common measures of fertility, such as crude birth rate, total fertility rate, and gross-reproduction rate, cannot be derived for them. But a few other measures of fertility, with varying degrees of accuracy, can be derived for some of them from the data available in the following

sources:

- (a) Census of India enumeration data;
- (b) Fertility survey conducted along with the census operations;
- (c) Fertility surveys conducted by others.

2. CHILD-WOMAN RATIO

The census enumeration data along with information on age can yield a measure of fertility known as the child-woman ratio. It is the ratio of children under age five to women of the child bearing ages, defined usually as 15-44, but sometimes as 15-49, 15-39, etc.⁵ The five-year age group distribution data for the tribes separately are not available in all Indian censuses. These are available for the 1911, 1921, and 1931 censuses in which the tribal population was considered as a religious group with animistic beliefs. Davis⁸ has computed the average child-woman ratios from the three censuses for all the main religious groups in India. They are reproduced in the following table.

Table 1

Child-Woman Ratios by Religion, Average for 1911, 1921 and 1931 (Census of India)

	Children 0-4 per 1000 Women 15-39	Children 0-4 per 1000 Married Women 15-39
Tribals	808	1,023
Hindus	678	817
Muslims	770	900
Christians	741	966
<i>All religions</i>	705	844

It is obvious from the above table that the fertility level of the tribals in 1911-31, as measured by the child-woman ratio, was higher than that of the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and also higher than that of all the non-tribal populations taken together. This is true whether all women of 15-39 or only *married* women of 15-39 are considered for computing the ratio.

The five-year age group distribution data for the tribal populations separately are not available for the Indian censuses of 1941, 1951, and 1961, except for the 1961 census of Madras State. In the 1951 and 1961 censuses, the information on the tribal population was limited to the scheduled tribes only. The tribal population was no longer considered a distinct religious group. The members of the scheduled tribes were individually assigned to the religious categories which they themselves declared as their own at the time of the census interview. About 90 per cent of the members belonging to the scheduled tribes were categorized as Hindus in the 1961 census.⁷

There are 42 scheduled tribes in Madras State, but in the 1961 census only 28 of them were returned. The total population of these 28 tribes was 251,991 in 1961, constituting only about .8 per cent of the total population of the State.⁸ The child-woman ratios for the scheduled tribes and for the rest of the population of Madras State in 1961 have been computed from the available data on age group distribution by sex and marital status. These are presented in the following table.

Table 2

Child- Woman Ratios for Scheduled Tribes and the Rest of Population in Madras State 1961 (Census of India)

	Children 0-4 per 1000 Women 15-44	Children 0-4 per 1000 Married Women 15-44
Scheduled Tribes	659 ⁹	770 ¹¹
Rest of Population	601 ¹⁰	768 ¹²

Child-Woman Ratios for Scheduled Tribes and the Rest of Population in Madras State 1961 (Census of India)

The child-woman ratio for the scheduled tribes in Madras, 1961, is considerably higher than that for the rest of the population, as in the censuses of 1911-31, when *all* women of 15-44 are considered. But there is almost no difference when only *married* women of 15-44 age are considered. The results are very similar when the child-woman ratio for the tribals in Madras, 1931, as a religious group is compared with that for the rest of the population in Madras, 1931. The relevant figures are presented in the following table.

Table 3

Child-Woman Ratios for Tribals (as a Religious Group) and the Rest of Population in Madras State, 1931 (Census of India)¹³

	Children 0-4 per 1000 Women 15-44	Children 0-4 per 1000 Married Women 15-44
Tribals	644	802
Rest of population	605	787

Here, also, the child-woman ratio for the tribals is considerably higher than that for the rest of the population when *all* women of 15-44 are considered. The difference is not so great when only *married* woman of 15-44 are considered. The existence of a smaller difference between the child-woman ratios for the tribals and for the rest of the population, when only *married women* are considered, provides some clues to the explanation of the difference in their child-woman ratios. These will be discussed later.

3. COMPLETED FERTILITY

A sample survey undertaken along with the 1931 Census of India yielded comparative data on the average number of children born per couple among the tribals and other religious groups.¹⁴ These are shown according to the duration of marriage. The couples having a marriage duration of 33 years and over may be considered to have completed their child bearing period. The data regarding such couples belonging to tribals and a few other religious groups are reproduced in the following table.

Table 4

Average Number of Children Born per Couple Married 33 Years and Over Among the Tribals and Other Religious Groups, 1931 (Census of India)

	Number of Couples	Average Number of Children Born Alive
Tribals	2,862	6.1
Hindus	84,804	5.8
Muslims	22,138	5.6
Christians	4,955	7.0
Sikhs	3,236	5.7
Jains	527	6.0
Buddhists	299	2.8
Parsis	276	5.4

The above survey had many technical deficiencies but its results are perhaps not useless for comparative purposes. The computed fertility of the tribals was found to be higher than that of all other religious groups except the Christians. The differences among the major religious groups were not, however, significant. It should be noted that all the couples considered in the above table had 33 years or more of married life. Hence, any differential effects of the non-marriage of widows or divorce/separation are not reflected in the fertility measure used.

The tribal average found in the above survey conforms to the results obtained in the surveys conducted by the Department of Anthropology, Lucknow University, among six tribes of Eastern India.¹⁵ In this case, the couples interviewed had duration of marriage varying from 15 to 45 years. The average number of children born per couple in specific tribes is shown in the following table.

Table 5¹⁵

The average number of children born per Couple with Marriage Duration varying from 15 to 45 years among six Tribes of Eastern India investigated by the Department of Anthropology, Lucknow University

Tribes	Number of Couples	Duration of Marriage	Average Number of Children Born Alive
Ho	750	18-45	6.2
Oraon	198	15-45	6.0
Kuki	36	15-45	6.5
Khond	181	15-45	7.2
Tharu	142	15-45	6.6
Saora	123	15-45	5.7
Total	1430	—	6.05

A demographic survey was undertaken among tribal communities of West Bengal in 1962 by the Tribal Research Institute, Government of West Bengal.¹⁶ The communities were grouped into three divisions as follows : I. Lepcha and Rabha; II. Santal, Bhumji, Birhor, Mahali; III. Malpaharia Santal, Oraon, Munda. The average number of children born to women married for 39 years and over among these three divisions were found to be 5.8, 3.2 and 5.5 respectively. The corresponding figures for women with a marriage duration of 30-38 years were slightly lower.

A demographic survey was undertaken among the Toto tribe of West Bengal, some time in the late 1960's, by the Demographic Research Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta.¹⁷ The average number of children born to women married for 20 years and over was found to be 6.9.

For comparative purposes, a few results obtained from the fertility surveys of non-tribal populations of India will be mentioned below. Rele conducted a survey in 1956 in certain rural areas of Banaras district, Uttar Pradesh.¹⁸ He divided the couples in his sample into

the following four social classes : I. Brahmins and Kshatriyas; II. Hindu castes of intermediate social status; III. Hindu lower castes including scheduled castes; IV. Non-Hindus (almost all Muslims). The average number of children born to women married for 30 years and over among these four classes were found to be 5.7, 7.6, 6.9, 7.6 respectively.

The fourth round of the National Sample Survey conducted in 1952 by the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, provided fertility data on a national basis.¹⁹ The average number of children born to rural women married for 23 years and over was found to be 5.2. There is a general recognition of the fact that the figures obtained in fertility surveys are underestimates because of a considerable amount of lapse in reporting children born, particularly those dying in the early years of life. This survey yielded some estimates on the magnitude of the recall lapse. It was found to be about 24 per cent for older couples. The same may be true for all fertility surveys conducted in the rural areas of India.

The women in all the tribal and other samples for which the fertility data have been presented above can be assumed to have passed the child bearing age, except those included in Table 5 whose duration of marriage falls on the lower side of the groupings 15-45 years or 18-45 years. The average numbers of children born for the tribes included in Table 4 are, however, not lower, in general, than those for others. No systematic differences between the tribals and non-tribals can be discerned from the measures of completed fertility mentioned above. Moreover, there seems to be as much variation in tribal fertility as in non-tribal fertility. The tribal average varies from 3.2 to 7.2, while the non-tribal average varies from 2.8 to 7.0. If the two lower most averages are excluded, the respective ranges are 5.5-7.2 and 5.4-7.0.

The fertility surveys conducted in four States of India along with the 1961 census provide data on the average number of children born to ever married women past the child bearing age. These data pertain to major religious groups and a few scheduled tribes. As stated earlier, in the 1961 census the tribal population was not considered as a separate religious group; but in the case of the fertility surveys, the data for a few tribes are provided separately, as if they belong to a distinct religious group. It is not clear whether the members of these tribes include Hindus, Christians, etc., or they include only those who declared themselves as followers of specific tribal religions. In any case, it seems worthwhile to examine the completed fertility data of the tribes in relation to those of other major religious groups. These are presented in the following table.

Table 6

Average number of children born to Ever Married Rural Women of 43 years and over among the Tribals and a few Major Religious Groups in Four States of India, 1961-62 (Census of India)

States	Schd Tribes		Hindu		Muslim		Christian	
	No. of women	Av. no. born	No. of women	Av. no. born	No. of women	Av. no. born	No. of women	Av. no. born
Orissa ²⁰	525	3.8	3,088	3.6	38	4.0	—	—
Assam ²¹	44	5.3	1,395	4.3	528	4.1	162	4.1
Gujarat ²²	638	4.9	4,784	5.1	312	5.2	—	—
Andhra Pradesh ²³	25	4.3	8,751	4.3	494	4.6	474	4.3

No systematic differences in the completed fertility of the tribal and other groups can be observed from the above table. In Orissa, the tribal average lies between those of the Hindus and the Muslims. In Assam, it is the highest, and in Gujarat, it is the lowest. In Andhra Pradesh, it is lower than that of the Muslims but equal to that of the other two groups. For both Assam and Andhra Pradesh, the averages are based on the data from single tribes and very small sample sizes. The variation in the averages for different groups in each State is small, and the inter State variation is also small. The completed fertility averages for the tribal and other groups in Table 6 are generally smaller than those for the corresponding groups in Tables 4 and 5. One main reason for this difference is that the samples for Table 6 consist of ever married women of completed fertility while those for Table 4 consist of couples having a marriage duration of 33 Years and over, and those for Table 5 consist of couples having a marriage duration of at least 15 Years. The fertility measure used in Table 6 is affected negatively by the loss of reproductive period of women due to non marriage of widows and divorced/separated, whereas the measure used in Tables 4 and 5 is unaffected by these factors.

Studies of specific tribes yielding completed fertility measure comparable to that used in Table 6 are very few. The results obtained from a few such studies are presented below.

Table 7

Average number of children Born to Ever Married Women past child bearing age among a few tribes Investigated by Anthropologists

Tribe	State	No. of women	Average no. born alive
Kanikkar ²⁴	Kerala	31	4.7
Khasi ²⁵	Meghalaya	75	4.8
Oraon ²⁶	Bihar	103	4.0
Kondh ²⁷	Orissa	36	3.7
Tribal Laborers (Mixed) ²⁸	Bihar	58	5.5
Tribal Agriculturists (Mixed) ²⁸	Bihar	54	5.1

Studies of non-tribal groups yielding completed fertility measure comparable to the above are also very few. One such study was undertaken in 1951-52 jointly by the Government of India and the United Nations.²² It included a few selected rural and urban areas of Mysore State. For comparison with tribal results, only the rural areas will be considered since the tribal population of India live almost exclusively in rural areas.

One hundred and eighty-six villages selected for the survey fall under the following three zones: I. Rural hills with large-scale anti-malarial operations; II. Rural hills without large-scale anti-malarial operations; III. Rural plains, tank-irrigated areas. The average number of children born to ever married women of 45 years and over in each zone is shown in the following table.

Table 8
Average number of children born to Ever Married Women of 45 years
and over in three Rural Zones of Mysore, 1951-52

Zone	Number of Women	Average no. Born Alive
I	305	4.7
II	474	4.8
III	854	4.9

The results presented in Tables 7 and 8 are in reasonable agreement with those presented in Table 6. The available data regarding the average number of children born alive to ever married women past child-bearing age do not indicate any systematic difference between the tribal and non-tribal groups of India. There is as much variation among the tribals as among the non-tribals. The tribal averages in the above tables range from 3.7 to 5.5, while the non-tribal averages range from 3.6 to 5.2. These averages fall well within the range of variation 2.7 - 7.2, which I found in a cross-cultural study of factors affecting fertility in non-industrial societies.³⁰

4. INCOMPLETE FERTILITY

Besides the deficiencies inherent in the measures of completed fertility mentioned in section 3 above, the measure of incomplete fertility, expressed as the average number of children born to ever married women of all ages, has an additional deficiency. It is affected by the age group composition of ever married women which varies in different societies. Since adequate data for other better measures of fertility of the tribal and non-tribal groups in India are not available, I will use this measure on the assumption that the age group composition of ever married women in these groups does not vary significantly.

The fertility surveys conducted in four States of India along with the 1961 census (mentioned in section 3 above) provide average number of children born to ever married women by duration of marriage for the tribals as a distinct religious group. If women of all durations of marriage are considered, the average is the same as that for all ever married women. It is affected negatively by the loss of reproductive period of women due to non-marriage of

widows and divorced/separated. The results pertaining to the tribes and three major religious groups living in rural areas are presented in the following table.

Table 9

Average number of children born to Ever Married Rural Women of all durations of Marriage among the Tribes and a few Major Religious Groups in Four States of India, 1961-62 (Census of India)

Sched. Tribes	Hindu		Muslim		Christian			
	No. of women	Av.No. born	No. of women	Av.No. born	No. of women	Av. No. born		
Orissa ³¹	2,934	2.6	15,983	2.6	280	3.1	102	2.8
Assam ³²	359	3.0	8,753	3.3	4,060	3.0	754	3.4
Gujarat ³³	3,110	3.3	23,521	3.5	1,467	3.6
Andhra Pradesh ³⁴	465	2.7	49,492	2.8	2,702	3.1	2,718	2.9

The tribal averages are lower than others in the above table for all the four States, but the differences are too small to be of any significance. In Orissa, the tribal average is the same as that of the Hindus, in Assam it is the same as that of the Muslims. The averages for Gujarat State are higher than those for the other three States. The variations between States and between religious groups are, however, not high. The averages range from 2.6 to 3.6.

Besides the census studies mentioned above, there are very few studies of specific tribes yielding an incomplete fertility measure comparable to that used in Table 9. The results obtained from a few such studies known to me are presented below.

Table 10

Average number of children born to Ever Married Women of all ages among a few Tribes investigated by Anthropologists

Tribe	State	No. of women	Average no. born alive
Khasi ³⁵	Meghalaya	250	4.5
Oraon ²⁶	Bihar	379	4.0
Khond ²⁷	Orissa	173	3.2
Tribal Laborers (Mixed) ³⁶	Bihar	245	3.6
Tribal Agriculturists (Mixed) ³⁶	Bihar	196	3.3
Juang ³⁷	Orissa	102	4.0

The survey in Mysore State mentioned in section 3 above yielded comparable data on incomplete fertility of three rural non-tribal groups. These are presented in the following table.

Table 11
Average number of children born to Ever Married Women of all ages in three Rnrnal Zones of Mysore, 1951-52

Zone	No. of women	Average no. born alive
I	1,344	34
II	1,924	3.3
III	3,089	3.5

The results presented in Tables 9-11 are not very consistent regarding the difference in incomplete fertility between tribals and non-tribals. The tribal averages in Table 9 are slightly lower than those for the non-tribals. Again, three of the six tribal averages in Table 10 are higher (4.0 and over) than any non-tribal average in Tables 9 and 11. The apparent inconsistency may be due to sampling fluctuations or due to other deficiencies inherent in the fertility measure used. Alternatively, the results may reflect a greater variability in fertility among the tribals than among the non-tribals. The tribal averages range from 2.6 to 4.6, while the non-tribal averages range from 2.8 to 3.6. These averages fall well within the range of variation 1.7-5.5, which I found in the cross-cultural study mentioned in section 3.³⁵

5 INTERPRETATION OF FERTILITY DATA

The available data on the measures of complete and incomplete fertility, based on the average number of children born to ever married women or to women with specific duration of marriage, do not show any systematic difference in the fertility levels of tribal and non-tribals of India. The variation among the tribal groups themselves is at least as high, if not higher, as that among the non-tribal groups.

Some difference has, however, been observed when the child-woman ratio (children 0-4 per 1,000 women of reproductive age) is used as a fertility index. The value of the child-woman ratio, averaged from the 1911, 1921, and 1931 censuses of India, is higher for the tribals than for the Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. It is higher for the scheduled tribes than for the rest of the population in Madras, the only State for which the relevant data are available in the 1961 Census. A similar gradation, of a lower magnitude, can be observed from the results obtained from the 1931 census of Madras State. Obviously, this needs some explanation.

Davis, who pointed out the difference in child-woman ratios on the basis of the census data of 1911, 1921, and 1931, thinks that the major part of the difference can be explained in terms of the higher rate of remarriage of widows among tribal groups than among the Hindus and other groups.³⁹ He suggests this factor as major explanation of the religious differential in fertility, as observed from the child-woman ratios. In support of his view, he states that "the ratio of children to *married* women shows smaller difference between religious than does the ratio of children to *all* women of the specified ages." But actually the values of the child-woman ratios presented by him and reproduced in Table 1 above show the contrary position, so far as the difference between the tribals on the one hand and the Hindus and Muslims on the other is concerned. The difference between the tribals and the Hindus in the ratio of children to *married* women is 206, whereas the difference between these two groups in the ratio of children to *all* women is only 130. Again, the difference between the tribals and the Muslims in the ratio of children to *married* women is 123, whereas the difference between these two groups in the ratio of children to *all* women is only 38. Obviously, the quantitative facts provided by Davis do not corroborate his view regarding the major explanation of fertility differentials between tribals and others.

But interestingly enough, his view is, at least partly, corroborated by the values of the child-woman ratios computed by me from the 1961 census data of Madras State and presented in Table 2 above. It can be observed from this table that the difference between the scheduled tribes and the rest of the population in the ratio of children to *married* women is only 2, whereas the difference between these two groups in the ratio of children to *all* women is 58. A similar gradation, although of a smaller scale, can be observed from the values of the child-woman ratios computed from the 1931 census data of Madras State and presented in Table 3 above.

The ratio of children to *married* women for any group is higher than that of children to *all* women of the specified ages because the denominator in the former excludes the non-married women that is, the women in the specific ages who are never married or remain unmarried after being widowed, divorced, or separated. The higher the proportion of non-married women of a group in the specific ages, the larger will be the difference between the ratio of children to *married* women and the ratio of children to *all* women. If two groups of people do not differ much in their ratios of children to *married* women but do so considerably in their ratios of children to *all* women, it seems reasonable to infer that the group with a higher ratio of children to *all* women is subjected to a lesser amount of loss of reproductive potential in the form of the non-married state of women. The lower proportion of women in the non-married state may imply one or more of the following conditions: (1) lower age at marriage of women ; (2) lower rate of widowhood ; (3) higher frequency of remarriage of widows; (4) lower rate of divorce/separation; (5) higher frequency of remarriage of divorced/separated women.

Complete quantitative information on the above cultural aspects of tribals and non-tribals of India would have been very useful to interpret satisfactorily the child-woman ratios presented in Tables 1-3 above. The only relevant information available, however, is on the marital status of women. The percentages in various marital states among women (15-44) of scheduled tribes and the rest of the population in Madras and India (1961) are presented in the following table.

Table 12

Marital Status among Women (15-44) of Scheduled Tribes and Rest of Population in Madras State and India, 1961 (Census of India)

	Madras State		India	
	Scheduled	Rest of	Scheduled	Rest of
	Tribes ⁴⁰ %	Population ⁴¹ %	Tribes ⁴² %	Population ⁴⁸ %
Never-Married	7.5	13.3	9.2	7.3
Married	85.0	78.3	84.2	85.9
Widowed	5.2	6.9	5.3	5.9
Divorced/Separated	2.1	1.4	1.3	0.9

The marital status data of Madras State (1961) presented above give us a clue to the fact that the ratio of children to *all* women is considerably higher for the scheduled tribes than for the rest of the population, while there is almost no difference between these two groups in the ratio of children to *married* women (Table 2). The proportion of never-married among the scheduled tribes is appreciably less than that among the rest of the population in Madras. This would imply a lower age at marriage or a lower proportion of celibates among the women (15-44) of scheduled tribes. The lower proportion of widows among the scheduled tribes than among the rest of the population in Madras would imply a higher rate of remarriage of widows among the tribes. The lower proportion of never-married and the lower proportion of widowed among the scheduled tribes of Madras may explain a higher fertility among them, when it is expressed as a ratio of children to *all* women. These facts also explain the non-existence of a difference in fertility among the two groups when it is expressed as a ratio of children to *married* women. Perhaps the difference in the ratio of children to *all* women would have been higher had not the proportion of divorced/separated among the scheduled tribes been higher than that among the rest of the population in Madras. A higher proportion of divorced/separated women among the scheduled tribes would imply that the rate of divorce/separation among them is higher and that there is no reason to assume that the remarriage rate of divorced/separated women is lower among them.

The major bulk of the "rest of population" in the above tables are Hindus among whom, particularly in the high castes, widow remarriage is not customary. This is perhaps the main reason why the proportion of widows among the rest of the population is higher than that of the scheduled tribes for Madras as well as for India. But it is difficult to explain why the proportion of never-married among the rest of population is considerably higher than that of the scheduled tribes in Madras State (1961). It is 7.5 per cent for the scheduled tribes and 13.3 per cent for the rest of the population in Madras. Interestingly enough, the reverse is true for the

whole of India. The percentage of never-married among the women (15-44) of the scheduled tribes in India (1961) is 9.2, while the corresponding figure for the rest of the population is 7.3. The difference between Madras and all-India figures lies not so much in the proportion of never-married among their respective scheduled tribes populations as in the proportion of never married among the non-tribal populations. The difference in the latter is reflected in the average age at marriage of women in different zones of India. It was found in the National Sample Survey conducted in 1952 (see section 3) that the average age at marriage of rural Hindu women married after 1930 was 16.0 years for the southern zone which includes Madras State, and varied from 12.9 to 15.0 years for the other five zones,⁴⁴

Let us now see how far it is possible to explain the child-woman ratios for Madras, 1931 (Table 3) and for all-India, 1911-31 (Table 1) in terms of the marital status data of women compiled from the 1931 census. These data are presented in the following table.

Table 13
Marital Status among Women (15-44) of Tribals and the Rest of Population in Madras State and India, 1931 (Census of India)

	Madras		India	
	Tribals ⁴⁵ %	Rest of population ⁴⁵ %	Tribals ⁴⁶ %	Rest of population ⁴⁶ %
Never-married	9.6	6.9	9.7	4.3
Married	80.2	76.9	80.5	81.5
Widow/divorced/separated	9.6	16.9	9.8	14.2

The proportion of never-married women (15-44) is higher among the tribals than among the rest of populations for both Madras and India, 1931. Hence, the higher fertility of the tribals in Madras as well as in India (1931) as expressed by the ratio of children to all women, can not be explained in terms of age at marriage, or non-marriage of women. But it can be, at least partly, explained in terms of the re-marriage of widows. The lower proportions of widowed/divorced/separated women (15-44) among the tribals than among the rest of population for both Madras and India, 1931 substantiate the commonly known fact that widow re-marriage is more common among the tribals than among the Hindus who form the bulk of the non-tribal population. Unfortunately, the figures for divorced/separated women are not available separately in the census. Assuming that their percentages in 1931 were the same as those in 1961, the differential rate of divorce/separation or of remarriage of divorced/separated women is not expected to contribute significantly to the fertility differential between the tribals and non-tribals as shown in Tables 1 and 3.

It can be observed from Table 3 above that for Madras State (1931) the difference between the tribals and the rest of population is 39 in the ratio of children to *all* women and

15 in the ratio of children to *married women*. The lower amount of difference in the latter ratio can be explained by the presence of a lower proportion of widows among the tribals, the difference between tribal and non-tribal ratios for Madras (1931) even when only women of married status are considered, indicates that there are other factors responsible for the tribal-non-tribal fertility differential, as expressed by the child-woman ratio. The inadequacy of explaining the fertility differentials in terms of marital status of woman is demonstrated more apparently in Table 1, which shows that differences between the tribals and other religious groups in the ratio of children to women become higher, instead of becoming lower, when only *married women* are considered (see section 5).

My interest in the tribal—non-tribal differential in fertility was stimulated by Davi's finding from the 1911-1931 census data that the child-woman ratio for the tribals is higher than for other religious groups in India.⁵ He could not provide any satisfactory explanation for this differential. I was doubtful about the existence of any systematic difference in fertility between the tribals and non-tribals of India. An analysis of the existing data regarding average number of children born to ever-married women or to women with various durations of marriage substantiates my doubt. But it is intriguing to find that the child-woman ratios for the scheduled tribes and the rest of the population in Madras^ the only State which provides such data for 1961, show a similar difference as for 1911-1931. The differential in Madras for 1961 can, however, be explained mostly in terms of the difference in age at marriage and the remarriage of widows. But it is not known whether there was any difference in "the child-woman ratio between the scheduled tribes and the rest of the population of India in 1961. If there was a difference, it would be difficult to explain this difference in terms of the marital status data of women in India (1961) as presented in Table 12. There are very small differences between the scheduled tribes and the rest of the population of India (1961) in the percentage of women under the four marital categories. Moreover, if the difference in the age at marriage and remarriage of widows were significant factors in causing the fertility differential among the tribals and non-tribals in India, it is difficult to understand why these are not reflected in the completed and incomplete fertility measures expressed in terms of the average number of children born to ever-married women.

The lack of age-sex-marital status data of the scheduled tribes in the 1961 census publications, except for Madras State, is a great handicap in analysis of tribal—nontribal fertility differential in India. These data should be provided for all the States in the 1971 census publications. But what is needed more in understanding the tribal—non-tribal and other fertility differentials in India is to conduct anthropo-demographic studies in a number of communities which are culturally homogeneous but differ from one another in various cultural dimensions. We have observed in this paper that the fertility levels of specific tribal and non-tribal groups vary considerably and that these levels are often much lower than their maximum biological potential. The identification of factors, both cultural and biological, which are responsible for variation in fertility among population groups of India, is an urgent task in Indian population studies.

Notes and References

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6. Kingsley Davis, *The Population of India and Pakistan*, p. 80, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1951.
7. *Census of India, 1961, Vol. 1, India, Part V-A (ii), Special Tables for Scheduled Tribes*, p. 273, 1966.
8. See reference in Note 7, pp. xxiii, 287.
9. Computed from *Census of India, 1961, Vol.9, Madras, Part V-A (i), Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Reports and Tables)*, p. 442, 1964. It is shown as 655, perhaps due to computational error, in p. 29 of the same volume. The corresponding figures for the scheduled castes and the general population in Madras (1961) are given as 640 and 601 respectively.
10. Computed by subtracting the scheduled tribe figures from the state figures given in *Census of India, 1961, Vol 9, Madras, Part I-B, Demography and Vital Statistics*, pp. 117-118, 1965. The proportion of scheduled tribe population in Madras State is so low that the child-woman ratio for the total population is the same as that for (total population-scheduled tribe population).
11. Computed from *Census of India, 1961, Vol. 9, Madras, Part V-A (ii), Scheduled Castes and Tribes*, pp. 397-452, 1964.
12. Computed from *Census of India, 1961 Vol.1, India, Part II-C (i), Social and Cultural Tables*, p. 51, 1964, and *Census of India, vol. 9, Madras, Part V-A (i)*, p. 452, 1964.
13. Computed from *Census of India, 1931, Vol. 14, Madras, Part II, Imperial and Provincial Tables*, p. 48, 1932.
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20. *Census of India, 1961, Vol. 12, Orissa, Part I-B, Report on Vital Statistics and Fertility Survey*, p. 96, 1968. The average has been computed by me from the data given separately for the following tribes : Gond, Kandh, Kisan, Mahali, Munda, Shabar, and a few others
21. *Census of India, 1961, Vol. 3, Assam, Part I-B, Report on Vital Statistics*, p. 56, 1966. The tribal data pertain to only one tribe, namely, Khasi.
22. *Census of India, 1961, Vol. 5, Gujarat, Part I-B, Report on Vital Statistics*, p. 68, 1966. The average has been computed by me from the data given separately for the following tribes: (i) Bhil, Vasava, Tadvi, Dungri Garasia; (ii) Dhodia; and (iii) other tribes.
23. *Census of India, 1961, Vol. II, Andhra Pradesh, Part I-B, Report on Vital Statistics and Fertility Survey*, p. 23, 1968. The tribal data pertain to only one tribe, namely, Yenadi.
24. Moni Nag, "A Demographic Study of the Kanikkar of Travancore," *Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology, Government of India*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 110, 1954.
25. Moni Nag, "Effect of Christianity on a Few Aspects of Khasi Culture," *Bulletin of the Anthropological Survey of India*, Vol. 14, nos. 1-1, 7, 1965 (printed in 1968). The average (4.8) has been computed from the data given separately for the Christian and non-Christian sections. It is somewhat lower than the average for the Khasi (5.3) given in Table 6. The area where the Khasi live forms a part of the newly formed state named Meghalaya. Previously it was a part of Assam state.
26. Computed from the data collected in 1964-65, by Bela Sinha of the Anthropological Survey of India under my guidance. The sample includes both Christians and non-Christians from one rural and one urban area in Ranchi district.
27. Computed from the data collected in 1965-66 by Sriparna Roy of the Anthropological Survey of India under my guidance. The survey was made in a village of Koraput district, Orissa.
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30. See references in Note 2, pp. 169-170, The average for the Hutterites of U.S.A. and a few other doubtful averages have been excluded.
31. See reference in Note 20, p. 86.
32. See reference in Note 21, p. 47.
33. See reference in Note 22, p. 60. *ts*.
34. See reference in Note 23, p. 82.
35. See reference in Note 25, p. 7. The average has been computed from the data given separately for women of different age groups among the Christian and non-Christian sections.
36. See reference in Note 28, p. 327. It was found that the average number of children born to the ever-married women of all ages among the nontribal laborers of Jamshedpur was 3.7.
37. Verrier, Elwin, "Notes on the Juang," *Man in India*, Vol. 28, pp. 64, 104, 1968. The average has been computed by me.
38. See reference in Note 30, pp. 171-172.
39. See reference in Note 6, p. 80.
40. See reference in Note 11, pp. 397-398.

41. See reference in Note 12.
42. Computed from *Census of India, 1961, Vol. 1, India, Part V-A (ii), Special Tables for Scheduled Tribes, p. 111, 1966.*
43. See reference in Note 12, p. 21. All India figures for 15-44 have been computed from the figures given for five-year age groups. The percentages have been computed after subtracting tribal figures from them.
44. See reference in Note 19, p. 27.
45. Computed from the marital status data given for five-year age groups in *Census- of India, Vol, 14, Madras, Part 2, Imperial and Provincial Tables, p. 43, 1932.*
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