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Preference About Sex of Children and Use of Contraception Among Women Wanting No More Children in India

ONE of the reasons given for high fertility and low acceptance of family planning in developing countries like India is the prevalence of a strong preference for sons among couples. This is believed to have a powerful effect on the number of additional children desired by parents which in turn influence their decision to adopt or not to adopt a family planning method eventually determining their completed family size. However, the degree of preference for sons and its effect on the use of contraception as well as completed fertility is likely to decrease with a shift from traditional values to modern values.

Whether or not couples want to have additional children at a given point is expected to influence their decision about the adoption of contraception. However, at the initial stages of demographic transition all those couples who want no more children may not be found using contraception. These couples are the prime target group for the organized family planning programme in a country. Identification of such couples in terms of their size and characteristics is very important for reaching them through the organized efforts. Satisfactory answers to such questions are not yet available for the Indian couples. The present analysis is an attempt to study some of the problems posed above for a representative sample of couples in India.*

This analysis was carried out for the IUSSP Subcommittee on Comparative Fertility
(Footnote contd. on page 82)

The Data

The data are taken from an all India Family Planning Survey sponsored by Nirodh Marketing Division, Department of Family Planning, Government of India. The survey was carried out by Operations Research Group during 1970. In this survey about 25,000 couples with wives in the reproductive age group (15-44) representing all such couples in India were interviewed. Only one spouse, either the wife or the husband selected randomly, was interviewed from each selected family. Thus in half of the sample the wives were interviewed and in the other half the husbands were interviewed. For comparison purposes, the present study is restricted to the couples with wives between 20-39 years of age. The responses of husbands and wives are analyzed separately. There are marginal differences in the magnitudes. However, the pattern of relationships are same for the two groups. For this reason, the following discussion is based mainly on the responses of wives.

Sex Preference for Children

The sex preference for children is ascertained by analyzing the attitudinal responses with respect to the number of children and the number of sons considered ideal by the respondents. The impact of living sons on fertility is ascertained by analyzing the respondents' past fertility behaviour (parity progression ratios), their present behaviour (use of contraception), and their attitudes towards future family growth (whether or not they wanted more children, additional number of children wanted and their sex composition). Since the impact of sons on fertility is likely to vary by the age of women at interview and the total number of living children, these two variables are used as control.

Ideal number of sons

In this survey no direct question regarding the ideal number of sons was asked. In the following discussion, the ideal number of sons refer to

Analysis, under the chairmanship of Prof. Ronald Freedman and Mrs. Lolagene C. Coombs. About 20 investigators participated in this subcommittee and brought together some comparative data on fertility from developed as well as developing countries. The subcommittee met in Brussels during May 1973 and the present paper has benefited from the comments of many participants.

the total number of living sons at interview and the number of additional sons desired by a woman. Measured this way, the ideal number of sons is slightly over-estimated as for those who desired no more sons when they had X number of living sons the ideal number of sons is taken to be X even though *ideal* number, if probed, was likely to be less than X .

There seems to be a strong preference for a son as indicated by the responses to the question : "Do you believe one must have a son". About 86% of wives and 91% of the husbands believe that one must have a son mainly to carry on the line and to support the family.

On an average, Indian women expressed their desire to have about two sons. The concentration at the specific number of two sons is not very high but the dispersion around the modal choice of two is quite high. A significant majority (71%) of women prefer to have two or more sons, with four-tenths of the women preferring two sons. As many as one-fourth of the women expressed their desire to have only one son, whereas one-third of the women expressed their desire to have three or more sons (Tables 1 and 2).

TABLE 1 — LIVING PLUS ADDITIONAL DESIRED NUMBER OF SONS, BY WIFE'S AGE AND EDUCATION FOR MARRIED WOMEN 20-39 YEARS, INDIA : 1970

Wife's Age and Education	Living Plus Additional Desired No. of Sons : Percentage Distribution						
	0	1	2	3	4 or more	fatal	Mean
<i>10-29 Years</i>	3.4	27.9	42.1	16.1	10.5	100.0	2.1
Illiterate	3.1	25.8	42.4	17.3	11.3	99.9	2.2
Primary	1.4	30.8	45.6	14.3	8.0	100.1	2.1
Secondary	6.1	35.2	39.3	11.0	8.4	100.0	1.9
College	3.2	59.4	30.4	7.0	0.0	100.0	1.4
<i>30-39 Years</i>	4.6	21.9	35.6	21.3	16.5	99.9	2.4
Illiterate	4.9	20.4	36.2	21.7	16.8	100.0	2.4
Primary	2.2	25.6	36.1	18.3	17.8	100.0	2.4
Secondary	3.9	30.6	30.4	22.0	13.1	100.0	2.2
College	11.8	45.9	33.7	4.0	4.6	100.0	1.5
<i>20-39 Years</i>	4.0	25.0	39.0	18.6	13.4	100.0	2.2
Illiterate	4.0	23.1	39.3	19.5	14.1	100.0	2.3
Primary	1.8	28.4	41.1	16.1	12.6	100.0	2.2
Secondary	5.3	33.4	35.8	15.3	10.3	100.1	2.0
College	6.8	53.7	31.8	5.8	1.9	100.0	1.4

TABLE 2 - LIVING PLUS ADDITIONAL DESIRED NUMBER OF SONS, BY WIFE'S AGE AND URBAN-RURAL-RESIDENCE FOR MARRIED WOMEN 20-39 YEARS, INDIA: 1970

<i>Wife's Age and Urban-Rural Residence</i>	<i>Living Plus Additional Desired No. of Sons ; Percentage Distribution</i>						
	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4 or more</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Mean</i>
<i>20-29 Years</i>	3.4	27.9	42.2	16.1	10.5	100.1	2.1
Urban 5 lacs and over	6.5	36.6	37.8	14.8	4.3	100.0	1.8
Urban 1 to 5 lacs	3.0	36.5	42.9	12.2	5.5	100.1	1.9
Other Urban	4.6	32.4	40.6	13.5	8.8	99.9	2.0
Rural	3.1	26.4	42.5	16.7	11.3	100.0	2.2
<i>50-59. Years</i>	4.6	21.9	35.7	21.3	16.5	100.0	2.4
Urban 5 lacs and over	5.6	28.1	33.4	20.8	12.2	100.1	2.1
Urban 1 to 5 lacs	4.9	28.0	31.1	20.4	15.6	100.0	2.2
Other Urban	3.8	25.9	31.4	21.3	17.6	100.0	2.3
Rural	4.7	20.8	36.5	21.4	16.6	100.0	2.4
<i>20-59 Years</i>	4.0	25.0	39.0	18.6	13.4	100.0	2.2
Urban 5 lacs and over	6.0	32.0	35.4	18.0	8.5	99.9	2.0
Urban 1 to 5 lacs	3.9	32.4	37.2	16.1	10.3	99.9	2.0
Other Urban	4.2	29.4	36.2	17.2	13.0	100.0	2.1
Rural	3.9	23.7	39.6	19.0	13.9	100.1	2.3

Ideal number of children

The ideal number of children was assessed by asking the question: "In your opinion how many children should a couple have ?" Responses to this question need not necessarily reflect the ideal number of children for the respondents themselves but may indicate the ideal number of children for other couples which may be different from the ideal for themselves. About half of the women consider 3 or 4 children as the ideal number of children a couple should have and about 12% consider 5 or more children as the ideal. About one-fifth of the women either had never given much thought to the problem of how many children a couple should have or had given such answers as "whatever God gives", "as many as possible," or "depends upon economic condition/mother's health." We are not sure whether these percentages reflect the extent of fatalistic view about the ideal number of children or whether they

reflect the lack of proper understanding of the question. However, among the better educated women or women living in urban areas, only a small proportion fall into this indeterminate category (Tables 3 and 4).

TABLE 3 — IDEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN BY WIFE'S AGE AND EDUCATION FOR MARRIED WOMEN 20-39 YEARS, INDIA: 1970

<i>Wife's age and Education</i>	<i>Ideal Number of Children ; Percentage Distribution</i>								
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5 or more</i>	<i>Indeterminate</i>	<i>N.A.</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Mean</i>
<i>20-29 Years</i>	0.5	8.6	30.8	22.9	10.7	6.5	20.1	100.1	3.6
<i>Illiterate</i>	0.6	6.0	26.6	23.5	11.9	7.6	23.8	100.0	3.8
<i>Primary</i>	0.2	11.8	40.8	20.0	9.8	5.4	12.1	100.1	3.5
<i>Secondary</i>	0.1	18.4	47.3	22.3	4.8	1.4	5.7	100.0	3.1
<i>College</i>	1.5	42.0	45.8	5.9	0.5	3.2	1.1	100.0	2.6
<i>30-39 Years</i>	0.2	8.0	28.8	24.0	12.7	6.5	19.9	100.1	3.7
<i>Illiterate</i>	0.2	6.8	24.9	23.9	13.9	7.0	23.4	100.1	3.8
<i>Primary</i>	0.1	7.6	43.8	23.9	10.2	8.3	6.2	100.1	3.5
<i>Secondary</i>	0.1	16.6	49.2	25.2	5.1	0.8	2.9	99.9	3.2
<i>College</i>	0.9	35.2	44.4	12.5	0.3	6.5	0.1	99.9	2.7
<i>20-39 Years</i>	0.3	8.3	29.8	23.4	11.6	6.5	20.0	99.9	3.7
<i>Illiterate</i>	0.4	6.4	25.7	23.7	12.9	7.3	23.6	100.0	3.8
<i>Primary</i>	0.1	9.8	42.2	21.8	10.0	6.8	9.3	100.0	3.5
<i>Secondary</i>	0.1	17.7	48.1	23.4	4.9	1.1	4.6	99.9	3.2
<i>College</i>	1.3	39.1	45.2	8.7	0.4	4.6	0.7	100.0	2.7

The mean number of ideal sons and ideal children vary inversely with education within each age group. The specific preference for 3 or 4 children and two sons is only prevalent among the poorly educated women. A majority of the well-educated women prefer two or three children and one or two sons (Tables 1 and 3). The place of residence (rural/urban) does not have as strong an influence on the desired number of children and sons as the education of wife (Tables 2 and 4). Here the influence of traditional values seems to be weakening mainly with the advancement in education and, to some extent, with the change in place of residence.

TABLE 4 — IDEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN BY WIFE'S AGE AND URBAN-RURAL RESIDENCE FOR MARRIED WOMEN 20-39 YEARS, INDIA : 1970

<i>Wife's Age and Urban-Rural Residence</i>	<i>Ideal Number of Children : Percentage</i>						<i>Distribution</i>		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5 or more</i>	<i>Indeterminate*</i>	<i>N.A.</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Meat,</i>
<i>20-29 Years</i>	0.5	8.6	30.8	22.9	10.7	6.5	20.1	100.0	3.6
Urban—5 lacs and over	0.5	23.6	43.3	18.3	5.0	2.5	6.7	99.9	3.1
Urban 1 to 5 lacs	0.2	14.8	45.0	24.0	5.5	3.1	7.4	100.0	3.3
Other Urban	0.3	11.2	40.8	24.0	7.5	5.4	10.8	100.0	3.4
Rural	0.6	7.2	28.2	22.9	11.6	7.0	22.5	100.0	3.7
<i>30-39 Years</i>	0.2	8.0	28.8	24.0	12.6	6.5	19.9	100.0	3.7
Urban—5 lacs and over	0.2	17.4	41.1	25.0	6.4	3.3	6.7	100.1	3.3
Urban 1 to 5 lacs	0.2	11.1	41.3	29.1	7.6	2.4	8.3	100.0	3.5
Other Urban	0.2	10.0	36.5	26.7	10.6	4.3	11.7	100.0	3.6
Rural	0.1	7.1	26.6	23.3	13.5	7.2	22.2	100.0	3.8
<i>20-39 Years</i>	0.3	8.3	29.8	23.4	11.6	6.5	20.0	99.9	3.7
Urban—5 lacs and over	0.4	20.3	42.2	21.9	5.7	2.9	6.7	100.1	3.2
Urban 1 to 5 lacs	0.2	13.0	43.2	26.4	6.5	2.7	7.8	99.8	3.4
Other Urban	0.2	10.7	38.8	25.3	9.0	4.9	11.2	100.1	3.5
Rural	0.4	7.1	27.4	23.1	12.5	7.1	22.4	100.0	3.7

Sex preference of children

There are indirect evidences to suggest that not only sons are desired but a fair representation of daughters too is desired and that a majority

"Indeterminate include answers such as As many as possible Whatever God gives Depends on economic condition/mothers health etc.

of women would prefer to have children of both sexes. This evidence is reflected by an analysis of the relationship between the ideal number of children and the ideal number of sons. Among those who consider an even number of children as *ideal*, a majority of them want to have an equal number of children of both sexes, relative preference for sons here is nominal. Among those who consider three children as ideal, a modal choice is to have two sons and one daughter. Among those who prefer 5 children, a majority of them wants to have 3 or more sons and one or two daughters. Nevertheless, one-third of these women would not mind settling for two sons and three daughters, or even one son and four daughters (Table 5).

TABLE 5 — LIVING PLUS ADDITIONAL DESIRED NUMBER OF SONS, BY WIFE'S AGE AND IDEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN, FOR MARRIED WOMRN 20-39 YFARS. INDIA • 1970

Wife's Age and Ideal Number of Children	Living Plus Additional Desired Number of Sons:					Total
	0	1	2	3	4 or more	
20-29 years	3.4	27.9	42.2	16.1	10.5	100.1
1 Child	8.7	82.6	1.5	7.2	0.0	100.0
2 children	7.3	57.2	30.5	2.8	2.2	100.0
3 children	2.5	32.0	49.6	11.9	4.0	100.0
4 children	2.1	20.3	50.2	18.8	8.6	100.0
5 children	1.6	13.4	28.0	33.7	23.3	100.0
6 or more	0.5	7.1	22.3	39.6	30.4	99.9
Indeterminate	3.6	14.1	49.4	12.7	20.2	100.0
No Answer	5.4	29.3	33.6	16.2	15.6	100.1
30-39 years	4.6	21.9	35.7	21.3	16.5	100.0
1 child	33.4	14.1	5.4	47.2	0.0	100.0
2 children	9.8	48.3	27.0	6.7	8.2	100.0
3 children	3.6	22.9	44.1	18.2	11.2	100.0
4 children	2.8	19.3	35.3	27.3	15.3	100.0
5 children	1.7	11.1	33.3	30.2	23.6	99.9
6 or more	0.8	7.1	22.5	26.6	43.0	100.0
Indeterminate	1.0	23.3	28.9	18.9	27.8	99.9
No Answer	9.3	20.2	33.3	20.0	17.2	100.0

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20-39 years	4.0	25.0	39.0	18.6	13.4	100.0
1 child	14.1	67.6	2.3	16.0	0.0	100.0
2 children	8.4	53.0	28.8	4.7	5.0	99.9
3 children	3.0	27.8	47.0	14.9	7.4	100.1
4 children	2.5	19.8	42.8	23.1	11.9	100.1
5 children	1.7	12.2	30.8	31.8	23.5	100.0
6 or more	0.7	7.1	22.4	32.7	37.0	99.9
Indeterminate	2.4	18.6	39.5	15.7	23.9	100.1
No Answer	1.2	24.9	33.4	18.0	16.4	99.9

TABLE 6 — PARITY PROGRESSION RATIOS BY WIFE'S AGE AND SEX OF LIVING CHILDREN FOR MARRIED WOMEN 20-39 YEARS WHO HAVE REACHED SPECIFIC PARITIES, INDIA : 1970

<i>Wife's Age and Sex of Living Children^b</i>	<i>Parity Progression Rates^a for Women Reaching at least Parity</i>				
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>20-29 years</i>	71.0	50.9	41.3	35.4	26.4
All Sons	67.9	46.5	46.8	70.5	*
Sons > Daughters	—	-	41.0	45.3	21.2
Sons = Daughters	—	57.7	—	22.9	—
Sons < Daughters	—	—	40.7	36.3	26.4
All Daughters	74.7	46.8	38.8	21.8	*
<i>30-39 years</i>	90.3	80.8	73.5	60.0	50.1
All Sons	91.0	82.6	70.7	56.6	52.5
Sons > Daughters	—	—	71.4	59.5	52.4
Sons = Daughters	—	78.5	—	57.2	—
Sons < Daughters	—	—	75.6	62.7	49.8
All Daughters	89.4	82.7	79.6	78.3	19.8
<i>20-39 years</i>	79.2	65.3	60.5	53.2	45.4
All Sons	77.8	65.6	64.3	59.4	53.2
Sons > Daughters	—	—	58.2	55.4	45.5
Sons = Daughters	—	66.3	—	46.9	—
Sons < Daughters	—	—	59.8	55.9	46.5
All Daughters	80.8	63.0	65.1	66.7	23.1

a Proportion of women who progress to parity $X + 1$ from Parity X . Women who have experienced any infant or child death are not included. *b* Sex distribution of children at time parity X is reached. * Less than 25 women in sample. — No such combination possible.

Impact of living sons on fertility

The relationships between parity progression ratios or the conditional probability of going on to have another child and the sex composition of children already born are examined to study the impact of number of sons already born on the pattern of family growth. Parity progression ratio decreases with the increase in parity, i.e., the conditional probability of moving on to parity $(X+1)$ from parity X is higher than the conditional probability of moving on to parity $(X+2)$ from parity $(X+1)$ for all values of X within each broad age group (Table 6). This decline can be attributed mainly to the incidence of secondary sterility and to some extent to the use of contraception. The sex composition of children at parity X slightly influences the conditional probability of moving on to parity $(X+1)$. With one exception, those who have all sons or all daughters are equally likely to have another child indicating that both groups equally want to have a child of another sex. Those who have children of both sexes are slightly less likely to have another child than those who have children of one sex only. These results indicate that couples in India prefer to have children of both sexes. If number of sons already born had any significant impact on the family growth then the probability of having another child should decrease with the increasing number of sons already born. However, the results do not support this hypothesis. On the contrary, those who have five sons are more likely to try again for a daughter as compared to those who have five daughters trying for a son. The former group probably has nothing to lose if the sixth one is also a son but the latter group is probably too scared to have the sixth daughter.

The evidence is not very strong with respect to the influence of the number of living sons on present behaviour (the use of contraception) and on the attitudes towards family growth (want no more children, and additional children wanted). Results are presented in Table 7. The salient features are:

1. The percent of women wanting no more children increases with the number of living sons at each parity except when all living children are sons. The biggest jump is observed from all daughters to one son category at each parity.
2. The number of living sons has very little impact on the total number of additional children desired. However, the relationship

TABLE 7—PERCENTAGE WANTING NO MORE CHILDREN, MEAN ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN (SONS AND DAUGHTERS) WANTED, PERCENTAGE CURRENTLY USING CONTRACEPTION (TERMINAL AND NON-TERMINAL METHODS) BY WIFE'S AGE AND NUMBER OF LIVING CHILDREN, SONS AND DAUGHTERS, FOR MARRIED WOMEN 20—39 YEARS, INDIA : 1970

<i>Number of Living Children, Sons and Daughters</i>	<i>Percent of Women Want No More Children</i>			<i>Estimated No. of Women in (000's)</i>			<i>Sample Size</i>		
	<i>20-29</i>	<i>30-39</i>	<i>20-59</i>	<i>20-29</i>	<i>30-39</i>	<i>20-39</i>	<i>20-29</i>	<i>30-39</i>	<i>20-59</i>
	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>	<i>(6)</i>	<i>(7)</i>	<i>(8)</i>	<i>(9)</i>
<i>S D</i>									
None	1.4	5.8	2.6	5328.0	1915.2	7243.2	833	299	1132
One child	14.6	35.0	20.2	7361.8	2762.6	10124.4	1185	383	1568
0 1	8.0	27.2	13.5	3298.6	1347.6	4646.1	520	169	689
1 0	20.0	42.5	25.8	4063.1	1415.0	5478.2	665	214	879
Two children	35.7	47.5	39.9	8610.6	4696.2	13306.8	1383	751	2134
0 2	17.4	31.4	21.4	2085.2	844.3	2929.6	299	139	438
1 1	41.1	53.3	45.8	3807.8	2938.0	6195.8	675	362	1037
2 0	42.1	47.5	44.0	2717.6	1463.9	4181.5	409	250	659
Three children	57.2	69.1	63.2	5646.4	5616.0	11262.4	952	958	1910
0 3	39.1	36.4	37.8	385.1	356.9	742.0	89	86	175
1 2	56.7	64.8	60.5	2033.1	1812.3	3845.3	357	329	686
2 1	61.0	87.7	75.2	2507.4	2265.6	4773.0	364	379	743
3 0	44.9	50.1	48.1	720.8	1181.2	1902.1	142	164	306
Four children	82.0	83.8	83.3	2843.6	6183.8	9027.2	509	1030	1539
0 4	43.7	14.5	20.7	75.6	282.5	368.1	25	55	80
1 3	66.8	76.7	73.3	590.1	1124.6	1714.7	114	205	319

		(1}	(2)	(3)	(4}	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2	2	90.6	90.2	90.4	1353.2	2489.6	3842.8	208	405	613
3	1	83.3	92.8	90.1	694.6	1789.6	2484.2	129	275	404
4	0	77.1	74.9	75.3	129.9	497.5	627.4	33	90	123
Five or more children		80.0	89.9	88.5	1475.6	8281.4	9757.2	302	1661	1963
All	D	*	70.1	68.2	16.6	235.8	252.4	8	34	42
S <	D	81.1	87.1	86.3	474.8	3230.2	3705.0	129	668	797
S =	D	*	91.8	91.6	72.3	872.8	945.1	19	176	195
S >	D	78.2	92.9	90.2	828.7	3696.4	4525.2	133	724	857
All	S	*	95.5	95.3	83.3	246.2	329.5	13	59	72
Total		35.1	67.3	50.7	31265.8	29455.3	60721.2	5164	5082	10246

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Table 7 (contd.)

	Number of Living Children Sons and Daughters		Mean Additional Children Wanted			Mean Additional Number of Sons Wanted		Mean Additional Number of Daughters Wanted		
	20-29	30-39	20-39	20-29	30-39	20-29	20-29	30-39	20-39	
	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	
<i>S</i>										
<i>D</i>										
None	2.9	2.5	2.8	1.7	1.5	1.7	1.2	1.0	1.1	
One child	2.3	1.6	2.0	1.5	0.8	1.3	0.8	0.5	0.7	
0 1	2.3	1.2	2.0	1.7	0.9	1.5	0.6	0.3	0.5	
1 0	2.2	1.3	1.9	1.3	0.7	1.1	0.9	0.6	0.8	
Two children	1.4	1.2	1.3	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.4	
0 2	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	
1 1	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.5	0.4	0.4	
2 0	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	
Three children	1.2	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.3	
0 3	1.0	1.6	1.3	1.0	1.6	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	
1 2	1.1	0.9	1.1	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.4	
2 1	1.1	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.3	
3 0	1.6	1.0	1.2	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.5	
Four children	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	
0 4	0.7	1.6	1.4	0.6	1.5	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	
1 3	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	
2 2	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	

		(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
3	1	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
4	0	0.3	0.8	0.7	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3
<i>Five or more children</i>		0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
All	<i>D</i>	*	0.4	0.4	*	0.4	0.4	*	0.0	0.0
<i>S</i> <	<i>D</i>	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
<i>S</i> =	<i>D</i>	*	0.1	0.1	*	0.1	0.1	*	0.0	0.0
<i>S</i> >	<i>D</i>	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
All	<i>S</i>	*	0.0	0.0	*	0.0	0.0	*	0.0	0.0
Total		1.7	0.8	1.2	1.1	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.4

Table 7 (contd.)

Number of Living Children		Percent of Women Currently Using								
		Terminal Methods			Non-terminal Methods			Any Method		
Sons and Daughters		20—29	30—39	20—39	20—29	30—39	20—29	20—29	30—39	20—39
		(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(26)	(27)
<i>S</i>	<i>D</i>									
None		0.1	1.0	0.3	2.2	1.1	1.9	2.3	2.1	2.2
One child		0.6	0.2	0.5	6.0	5.6	5.9	6.6	5.8	6.4
0	1	0.1	0.1	0.1	5.4	8.3	6.3	5.5	8.4	6.4
1	0	1.0	0.2	0.8	6.4	3.1	5.6	7.4	3.3	6.4
Two children		2.8	4.7	3.5	7.8	8.7	8.0	10.5	13.3	11.5
0	2	0.7	1.7	1.0	6.5	7.8	6.9	7.4	9.5	7.9
1	1	1.4	.51	2.8	5.4	9.3	6.8	6.8	14.4	9.6
2	0	6.3	5.9	6.2	12.1	8.1	10.6	18.4	14.0	16.8
Three children		4.9	6.1	5.5	7.8	7.9	7.9	12.8	14.0	13.4
0	3	0.0	1.5	0.7	18.5	15.2	16.9	18.5	16.7	17.6
1	2	4.7	4.7	4.7	5.4	5.8	5.6	10.1	10.5	10.3
2	1	6.3	6.2	6.2	8.8	10.6	9.7	15.1	16.8	15.9
3	0	3.6	9.4	7.2	5.7	3.9	4.6	9.3	13.3	11.8
Four children		4.7	9.5	8.0	7.6	5.3	6.0	12.3	14.8	14.0
0	4	17.9	1.2	4.7	8.1	16.2	14.6	26.0	17.4	19.3
1	3	2.4	7.5	5.7	11.9	8.3	9.6	14.3	15.8	15.3
2	2	4.5	10.3	8.3	8.0	4.8	5.9	12.5	15.1	14.2
3	1	5.2	12.2	10.2	4.2	3.3	3.5	9.4	15.5	13.7
4	0	6.0	5.1	5.3	1.9	1.6	1.6	7.9	6.7	6.9

	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(26)	(27)
Five or more children	222	11.9	13.5	7.9	10.4	10.0	30.1	22.3	23.5
All <i>D</i>	*	1.1	1.0	*	2.8	3.2	*	3.9	4.2
<i>S</i> < <i>D</i>	8.6	14.1	13.5	8.5	13.3	12.7	17.1	27.4	26.2
<i>S</i> = <i>D</i>	*	10.7	11.9	*	9.8	9.1	*	20.5	21.0
<i>S</i> > <i>D</i>	290	11.2	14.5	9.0	8.4	8.5	38.0	19.6	23.0
All <i>S</i>	*	7.9	14.2	*	12.6	9.4	*	20.5	23.6
Total	3.5	7.4	5.2	6.4	7.6	7.0	9.7	15.0	12.2

* Less than 25 women in the sample.

becomes clear once we also consider the sex of additional children desired.

3. The average number of additional sons or daughters desired are quite small and so are the variations, especially at higher parities. Nevertheless, it can be said that the average number of additional sons desired varies inversely and the average number of additional daughters desired varies directly with the number of living sons.
4. The evidence is not very strong with respect to the influence of number of living sons on the present behaviour regarding the current use of contraception if we consider all methods together. However, the relationship becomes clear when we separately consider the use of terminal and non-terminal methods.
5. The percent women currently using terminal methods increases with the number of living sons with few exceptions. The percent women currently using non-terminal methods does not show any consistent relationship with the number of living sons.

The influence of number of living sons on past behaviour as well as attitudes towards future family growth is not very strong. The main distinctions are observed between three groups : (1) couples having all daughters, (2) couples having at least one child of both sexes, and (3) couples having all sons. With respect to the present behaviour in regard to the adoption of family planning, the influence of number of sons is restricted to the adoption of terminal methods only.

Among the three groups noted above, couples having all daughters exhibit the following behaviour :

- (a) the probability that no more children are wanted is lowest;
- (b) the mean number of additional children wanted (especially sons) is highest.
- (c) the use of terminal methods is lowest.

The second group of those who have at least one child of both sexes is on the other extreme of the scale and the third group of those who

have all sons fall in between the first two groups. Although, couples have expressed specific numbers of children as well as sons as their ideals, they have not yet been able to modify their behaviour which would be consistent with their ideals. This gap may reflect a particular stage in the development process where ideals have changed first and the change in behaviour is yet to follow and/or some methodological problems in actually measuring the ideals may have led to this gap. It is also possible that a majority of couples are not consciously deciding about having or not having another child. Since a majority of them are having large families, the impact of having sons on behaviour, retrospective, present or prospective, is not evident.

Use of Contraception by Women Wanting no More Children

The wide gap between the desire and practice is also observed by comparing the number of women wanting no more children with the number practicing contraception to fulfil this desire. Demographic factors like age, number of living children and the number of living sons have very little influence on narrowing this gap. However, it is observed that the gap narrows with modernization.

About 51% of women wanted no more children but only 12% were using contraception in 1970. The proportion of women using contraception among those wanting no more children is nearly five times greater than the corresponding proportion among those wanting more children (19.9% vs. 4.5%). However, all those who want no more children and who could theoretically be supposed to be doing something to avoid excess fertility, are evidently not doing anything about it. There is a wide gap between the desire and practice.

For a faster fertility decline it is important that this prime target group is persuaded to adopt family planning methods through organized efforts. For this purpose, it is essential to identify them in terms of their size and characteristics.

About 41% of all married women in the child-bearing age group (20-39) want no more children and were not using contraception, which indicates that there is a great potential for adoption of family planning methods. However, among those who want no more children, 80% were not using

contraception, which indicates the magnitude of gap between desire and practice. This gap could be narrowed by increasing the use of contraception among those who want no more children without influencing women's general attitudes towards family size. This means that even if the proportion of women wanting no more children in future remains constant at the present level (51%), the use of contraception can be increased.

Demographic factors and gap between desire and practice

The proportion of women wanting no more children or those using contraception increases with age and with, number of living children within each age group (Tables 8 and 9). However, the proportion of

TABLE 8 — WOMEN WANTING NO MORE CHILDREN BUT NOT USING CONTRACEPTION, BY WIFE'S AGE AND FOR MARRIED WOMEN 20-39 YEARS, INDIA : 1970

<i>Wife's age</i>	<i>Percent who want no more Children</i>	<i>Percent currently using Contraception (Incl. Ster)</i>	<i>% wanting no more but not using Contraception</i>	<i>Of those who want no more % not using Contraception</i>	<i>Estimated Number of Women (1000)</i>	<i>Number of Cases</i>
20—24 years	23.8	6.7	20.3	85.2	13816.6	2165
25—29 years	44.0	12.1	34.6	78.5	17449.2	2999
30—34 years	62.2	13.4	50.4	80.9	15942.8	2708
35—39 years	73.3	16.5	57.6	78.6	13512.6	2374
Total	50.7	12.2	40.6	80.0	60721.2	10246

women wanting no more children increases at a faster rate than the use of contraception. The trend is not surprising because more of the older women and women with higher parity probably have already completed their desired family size of 3 or 4 children and comparatively fewer of them have adopted family planning methods to avoid excess fertility. This is also brought out by the fact that 27% among those who have less than ideal number of living children want no more and 8% were using contraception whereas among those who have at least their ideal number, the proportion wanting no more children jumps to 87% but the contraceptive use increases to only 20-30% (Table 9).

TABLE 9 — WOMEN WANTING NO MORE CHILDREN BUT NOT USING CONTRACEPTION, BY WIFE'S AGE AND NUMBER OF LIVING CHILDREN, THE NUMBER OF LIVING CHILDREN CONSIDERED IDEAL, EDUCATION, URBAN-RURAL RESIDENCE, FREQUENCY OF NEWSPAPER READING, OCCUPATION AND LITERACY AND TYPE OF FAMILY FOR MARRIED WOMEN, 20-39 YEARS INDIA, 1970

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Percent who want no more children</i>			<i>Percent currently using contraception (incl. sterilisation)</i>			<i>% wanting no more but not using contraception</i>			<i>Of those who want no more, % not using contraception</i>		
	<i>(20-29)</i> <i>(1)</i>	<i>(30-39)</i> <i>(3)</i>	<i>(20-39)</i> <i>(4)</i>	<i>(20-29)</i> <i>(5)</i>	<i>(30-39)</i> <i>(6)</i>	<i>(20-39)</i> <i>(7)</i>	<i>(20-29)</i> <i>(8)</i>	<i>(30-39)</i> <i>(9)</i>	<i>(20-39)</i> <i>(10)</i>	<i>(20-29)</i> <i>(11)</i>	<i>(30-39)</i> <i>(12)</i>	<i>(20-39)</i> <i>(13)</i>
No. of living children	35.1	67.3	50.7	9.7	14.9	12.2	28.2	53.7	40.6	80.5	79.7	80.0
Below 2	9.1	23.0	12.8	4.8	4.2	4.6	7.8	21.4	11.4	85.5	92.9	89.1
2	35.7	47.5	39.9	10.5	13.3	11.5	28.2	37.2	31.4	79.1	78.2	78.8
3	57.2	69.1	63.2	12.8	14.0	13.4	46.2	55.5	50.9	80.8	80.3	80.6
4	82.2	83.8	83.3	12.3	14.8	14.0	70.5	69.9	70.1	86.0	83.4	84.2
5+	80.0	89.9	88.5	30.1	22.3	23.5	54.1	67.8	65.8	67.5	75.4	74.3
Whether the number of living children is ideal?												
Living children > ideal	88.8	92.2	91.6	27.9	30.1	29.7	61.0	62.7	62.4	68.7	68.0	68.1
Living children = ideal	82.4	91.0	87.3	21.4	21.3	21.3	61.6	70.2	66.5	74.8	77.1	76.2
Living children < ideal	19.4	40.9	26.9	7.7	8.1	7.8	16.2	35.2	22.8	83.5	86.1	84.2
Education												
Illiterate	33.2	64.4	48.8	5.1	10.4	7.8	29.4	55.0	42.2	88.7	85.4	86.5
Primary	39.7	79.1	58.1	17.8	21.2	19.4	26.5	60.9	42.6	66.9	76.9	73.3
Secondary	43.0	81.6	58.2	27.0	44.9	34.1	24.1	38.5	29.8	56.2	47.2	51.2
College	34.9	76.6	52.6	53.3	54.9	53.9	9.3	25.3	16.1	26.6	33.0	30.6

(Table 9 contd. on page 98)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
Urban, rural residences												
Urban— 5 lacs and over	53.7	76.3	65.8	27.0	34.4	31.0	34.4	44.5	39.9	64.4	58.3	60.6
Urban— 1-5 lacs	46.1	80.8	62.8	20.7	36.8	28.4	30.4	47.3	38.5	65.9	58.6	61.4
Other urban	36.9	76.7	55.9	18.6	27.0	22.6	26.0	50.5	37.7	70.5	65.8	67.4
Rural	33.4	65.0	48.7	7.2	11.2	9.1	28.1	54.9	41.1	84.1	84.5	84.4
Frequency of newspaper reading												
Daily	42.8	84.1	62.6	44.6	52.8	48.5	17.6	35.1	26.0	41.2	41.7	41.5
Frequently	38.8	85.7	59.6	29.2	52.5	39.5	20.4	34.3	26.6	52.8	40.0	44.6
Seldom	52.4	65.5	58.1	28.3	35.2	31.3	34.2	30.3	32.5	65.5	46.4	56.1
Never /can't read Occupation and literacy	34.7	66.6	50.2	8.1	13.2	10.5	28.7	54.6	41.3	82.7	82.0	82.2
<i>Working</i> '.	27.6	61.2	45.7	11.3	20.2	16.1	21.2	45.3	34.2	77.0	74.0	74.8
Illiterate	29.0	58.3	45.0	7.9	17.2	13.0	23.2	45.8	35.5	79.9	78.4	78.9
Literate	19.8	80.4	49.3	28.1	39.7	33.8	11.0	42.6	26.4	55.5	52.9	53.5
<i>Not working</i> :	35.7	67.9	52.2	9.5	14.3	11.8	28.2	54.5	41.2	80.7	80.3	80.4
Illiterate	33.5	65.1	49.2	4.9	9.6	7.3	30.0	56.0	42.9	80.4	86.1	87.2
Literate	42.6	80.3	58.4	24.6	34.8	28.9	25.1	47.9	34.7	58.9	59.7	59.3
Type of family												
Nuclear	43.2	72.8	62.3	13.9	17.1	16.0	32.8	56.7	48.2	76.0	77.8	77.3
Extended	32.3	62.0	43.9	8.0	12.7	10.0	26.7	50.8	36.1	82.6	82.0	82.2

The proportion of women not using contraception among those who want no more children does not vary significantly with age or number of living children (Tables 8 and 9). These results only indicate that demographic factors have very little impact on narrowing the gap between desire and practice. However, demographic pressure in combination with the ideal number of children does slightly influence in narrowing the gap between desire and practice. For example, among those who want no more children and who have less than their ideal number of living children, 85% were not using contraception as compared to 76% of those who had their ideal number of children and 68% of those who had more than their ideal (Table 9).

Modernization and gap between desire and practice

The proportion of women wanting no more children or those using contraception increases with the degree of modernization as measured by education, place of residence, access to mass media, family type and work status of women (Table 9). However, the rate of increase is not the same for both the indices. Moreover, the impact of modernization is to narrow the gap between desire and practice as measured by the proportion not using contraception among those wanting no more children (Table 9). The gap between the desire and practice is comparatively smaller for the following groups :

- (a) Those who are better educated.
- (b) Those who live in urban areas.
- (c) Those who have more access to mass media (frequency of reading newspaper).
- (d) Those who live in nuclear families, (e) Those who are working outside home.

Education seems to be the most important factor among those considered in narrowing the gap between desire and practice. For example, 87% of those with no education and wanting no more children were not using contraception to achieve their desire as compared to 30% among those who have gone to college. In cities with population of 500,000 or more, 60% of those wanting no more children were not using contraception as compared to 85% of those living in rural areas. This clearly shows

that the problem does not lie only in rural areas but it is considerable also in big cities.

Profiles of Women Wanting no More Children and not Using Contraception

We know that about 41% of all married women in child-bearing age group (20-39) want no more children but are not using contraception. Logical questions that follow from this are : How to identify them ? and How to reach them ?

In Table 10, we compare the profiles of women who want no more children but are not using contraception (hereafter called as 'target

TABLE 10 — COMPARISON OF PROFILES OF WOMEN WANT NO MORE CHILDREN BUT NOT USING CONTRACEPTION, AND ALL MARRIED WOMEN BETWEEN 20-39 YEARS, INDIA : 1970

<i>Characteristics Contraception</i>	<i>Women want no more but not using</i>	<i>All Women</i>
<i>Age</i>		
20-24	11.4	22.8
25-29	24.5	28.7
30-34	32.6	26.3
35-39	31.5	22.2
<i>No. of Living Children</i>		
Below 2	8.0	28.6
2	16.9	21.9
3	23.2	18.5
4	25.7	14.9
5 or more	26.1	16.1
<i>Sex Composition of Living Children</i>		
None	0.7	11.9
All Daughters	6.0	14.7
S < D	21.2	15.3
S = D	24.0	18.1
S > D	31.9	19.4
All Sons	16.2	6.6

(Table 10 Contd. on Page No. 100)

Comparison Between Living Children and Ideal

Living Children > Ideal	24.2	14.4
Living Children = Ideal	27.8	17.0
Living Children < Ideal	23.6	42.1
Ideal Not Known	24.4	26.5
<i>Education</i>		
Illiterate	82.4	79.3
Primary	8.5	8.1
Secondary	8.6	11.7
College	0.5	0.9
<i>Place of Residence</i>		
Urban		
500,000 +	4.2	4.3
100,000 — 500,000	4.1	4.4
Less Than 100,000	9.0	9.7
Rural	82.7	81.6
<i>Frequency of Newspaper Reading</i>		
Daily	2.3	3.6
Frequently	0.5	0.8
Seldom	0.1	0.2
Never/Can't Read	97.1	95.4
% Living in Nuclear Family	43.8	36.8
% Have No Knowledge	56.7	51.8
% Sub-fecund	20.4	21.8

women') with the profiles of all married women in child-bearing age group (20-39). The salient features are :

- (a) Target women are comparatively older than all married women; about 64% of the target women, as compared to 48% of all married women, are 30-39 years old.
- (b) Target women have more living children than all married women : 75% of the target women, as compared to 50% of all married women, have three or more living children.

- (c) 77% of target women have at least one child of both sexes, as compared to 66% of all married women.
- (d) 52% of target women have completed their ideal family size, as compared to 31% of all married women.
- (e) 82% of target women have no education or live in rural areas.
- (f) 97% of the target women either cannot read or they do not read newspapers.
- (g) 44% of the target women live in nuclear families.
- (h) 57% of target women have no knowledge about any method of family planning.
- (i) 20% of the target women are sub-fecund*.

The implications of the above results are not spelled out in detail. As an illustration, we examine the implications of items (ti) and (z). About 41% of all women want no more children but are not using contraception. 20% of them, however, are sub-fecund and may not be capable of bearing more children. This means that among the target women about 8% are sub-fecund. Since it will be difficult to identify them and to refuse them the availability of services, the efforts made on them will be wasted in terms of any demographic effect. The remaining, 32% of all women, who want no more children and are not using contraception are fecund, and are most likely to give dividends once persuaded to adopt family planning methods. About 57% of the target women have no knowledge even about one method of family planning. This means that about 18% of all married women in child-bearing age group want no more children, are not using contraception, and have some knowledge about at least one method of family planning. The remaining 23% have no knowledge about any method. The priorities and strategies for approaching these two groups of women necessarily will have to be different, especially since a majority of them cannot read or do not read newspapers.

*Here a very crude measure is used for sub-fecundity. Women who have been married for at least three years, and had not experienced any pregnancy wastage, or infant death or a child death and were not using contraception and had no live birth during last three years are classified as sub-fecund.