



Asian Profile

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Desired Fertility and Family Planning: Husband and Wife Communication in Sri Lanka

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Introduction

Most fertility and contraceptive related surveys in the world gather information from only female respondents. This may be because, the woman being the child bearer, her intentions of future fertility related events are thought to be more reliable predictors of future behaviour. In recent times there has been growing concern with the role of husbands in fertility decisions and behaviours. The attitudes of husbands towards fertility achievement may be as pertinent as those of the wife, especially in cultures where males tend to dominate family decision making.

Although aggregate views of men and women are remarkably similar towards a number of key issues that may affect fertility behaviour, it is likely that differences may surface when these are examined at the level of individual couples. Analysis of fertility intentions of individual couples have greater policy implications for family planning programmes than the aggregate views.

Material and Methods

The 1985 Sri Lanka Contraceptive Prevalence Survey (SLCPS), re-interviewed 2,310 of the respondents from the 1982 SLCPS living in 17 districts. In addition, for the first time in Sri Lanka a randomly selected sample of 577 of the husbands of the study women were also interviewed separately. In the present analysis, the records of the 577 men interviewed during the 1985 Contraceptive Prevalence Survey were matched to their wife's records and agreement between husband's and wife's responses to a series of questions on fertility preferences and discussion on family planning were examined. The pattern of family planning communication between spouses was examined as a function of selected socio-economic variables.