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Ethnic Variation in Fertility Patterns among Four Communities of Manipur

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ABSTRACT In the present paper an attempt is being made to compare the fertility patterns among four communities viz., Meiteis, Kabuis, Pangals and Nepalese of Manipur. The findings of the study reveals that age at menarche occur earliest among the Meiteis and delayed most among the Kabuis. While for menopause the earliest and latest is observed among the Pangals and the Kabuis respectively. On the other hand reproductive span is longest among the Nepali and shortest among the Pangals. With regards to fertility performance, highest number of ever born live birth is observed among the Nepalese and lowest among the Meiteis. This is in agreement with the findings of pregnancy wastage where in the lowest is recorded among the Nepalese and highest among the Meiteis. The relationship of the fertility pattern with education and occupation is also presented in this paper.

INTRODUCTION

Fertility–the actual reproductive performance, (Bhande and Kanitkar, 2001); the actual occurrence of births, especially Live births (Cox, 1959) is a time dependent genetic concept. Though reproduction is a biological and Universal phenomenon socio-cultural norms and practices and physical environmental conditions are the influencing factors for determining fertility of a population. Fertility is an instrument for biological continuance of human society and one of the basic determinants of population growth. This, being a positive force, it cannot be denied that every society replenishes itself only with the help of fertility. But excessive replenishing results to more and more increase in the population problems cannot be denied at the same time. Rapid increase in population of developing countries has become a global phenomenon. Despite several efforts to stabilize the population of our country, the same is increasing day by day causing enormous problems to the peaceful existence of human society and environment.

India –the second most populous country in the world which shares more than 17% of the world population in contrast to its land area of 2.4%.The population figure of India has already crossed one billion as evident from the absolute count, figuring to 1027 million souls according to the ever first gigantic decennial census of 2001 (Bose,2001).

Manipur,one among the eight states in north east India lying between 23.83 degrees and 25.68 degrees north latitudes and between 93.03 degrees and 94.68 degrees east longitudes is a small state covering a total area of 8628 sq.metres (22,327 sq.kms) of which only 688 sq.kms constitute plain or valley areas. The total population of Manipur according to India's first National Census of 21st century is 2,388,634 of which male constitute 1,207.338 and females 1,181,296. This small state is inhabited by a number of communities viz General Meiteis (the dominant group),33 recognized scheduled tribes, scheduled caste, Manipuri Muslims(Pangals), Nepalese and other community such as Punjabis, Biharis, Marwaris etc. The Meiteis, Kabui tribe, Pangals have been living together for centuries and Nepalese though came later, they have been settling in Manipur for at least more than one century years. Though they have been living together, they represent different endogamous group with different and distinct socio cultural, ethnic, linguistic and genetic identity.Against these backdrop, the Meiteis, Pangals, Nepalese and Kabuis found settling in two valley districts viz., Imphal East and West(same geo-ecological conditions) have been selected for examining their differential fertility behaviour if there be any and seeking both biological and socio cultural explanations.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present investigation was conducted

with the main objectives of understanding the fertility pattern of four communities viz.,-Meiteis, Pangals, Kabuis and Nepalese settled in Manipur. The information pertaining to fertility –age at menarche, marriage, menopause, age at first issues, record of pregnancies, educational and occupational status, use of contraceptive devices were collected using structured schedule. The study sample comprising of 724 married women (200 Meiteis,164 Pangals, 231 Nepalese and 129 Kabuis) were selected from six Meitei villages viz.-Leikinthabi, Nilakunthi, Wabgai, Potsangbam, Khonghampat, Loitangkhunou; three Pangal villages viz.-Lilong, Heikrumakhong and Khetrigao; three Nepali villages viz.-Pangei, Kanglotombi and Koirengei and four Kabui villages viz.-Sawombung, Tarungkhun, Sangaiporou and Langthabal.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age at menarche, one of the important biological determinants of fertility shows a range varying between 10-18 years among the girls of 24 countries of the world (Shah, 1958). Bundi Tribe of Highland new Guinea records the latest age at Menarche. On records the girls from this tribe experience the latest mean age at menarche of 18 yrs (Malcolm,1970).The interaction of genetical and environmental factors influencing the age at menarche of a population is well documented (Johnson, 1974; Barry, 1988; Tanner and Keeffe, 1967). There are reports on the variation of the age at menarche in hot countries- 13 year; temperate zones-14.3 years and cold countries-15.8years (Bhasin and Bhasin, 1993), 12.5 yrs and 14 yrs for girls of middle and lower socio-economic classes respectively (Johnston, 1974 and Eveleth and Tanner, 1976). Studies also show that positive secular trend in age at menarche is occurring in various parts of the world (Hoshi and Kouchi, 1981; Tanner and Keeffe,1976; Barry, 1988).

The findings of the present study reveal that, out of the four populations, age at menarche (Table 1) occur earliest among the Meiteis (13.60±0.10years) While Kabui shows the highest (15.40±0.23years).The Pangals (14.40±0.08years) and Nepali (14.03±0.10years) come in between Meiteis and Kabuis. When statistically treated, significant difference is observed only between Meitei and Kabui at 5 % probability (see "t" value table1)The reason as to why the age at menarche occurs earliest among the Meiteis is not exactly known. But better nutritional status, socio-economic status, consciousness of good health may be the probable factors. The question of heredity cannot be at the same time ruled out.

Though age at menarche is earliest among the Meiteis, the age at marriage of the same population is comparatively late. The highest age at marriage (Table 2) is observed among the Kabuis (20.03±0.12 years) followed by Meiteis (19.98±0.34years), Pangals (17.54±0.21 years) and Nepalese (17.33±0.22 years).The prevalence of the

Table 1: **Distribution of women according to age at menarche**

Age (in years)	*Number of women*							
	Meitei		*Pangal*		*Nepali*		*Kabui*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
10	-	-	-	-	1	0.43	-	-
11	13	6.50	-	-	10	4.33	-	-
12	19	9.50	5	3.05	25	10.82	1	0.78
13	72	36.00	27	16.46	48	20.78	10	7.75
14	53	26.50	49	29.88	64	27.71	26	20.60
15	29	14.50	69	42.07	45	19.48	38	29.46
16	6	3.00	9	5.49	25	10.82	33	25.58
17	5	2.50	4	2.44	9	3.90	15	11.63
18	3	1.50	1	0.61	4	1.73	6	4.65
Total	200	100.00	164	100.00	231	100.00	129	100.00
Mean(yrs.)	13.60± 0.10		14.40± 0.08		14.03± 0.10		15.40± 0.20	

't' Value d.f. μ

Meitei X Pangal = 1.89
Meitei X Nepali = 0.96
Meitei X Kabui = 0.57
Pangal X Nepali = 0.87
Pangal X Kabui = 1.80
Nepali X Kabui = 2.39*

* significant difference at 5% level.

practice of girls getting married off before they attain menarche or immediately with the onset, some 4-5 decades ago has been the influencing factor till today resulting to early age at marriage among the Nepali and Pangal population.. On the other hand better educational status (Table 8) is the likely explanation for comparatively late age at marriage among Meitei and Kabui women showing statistically no significant difference (t=0.07). From the findings it is also observed that Meitei and Kabui women have very close age at marriage to the all India average (20.0 years). Age at marriage is observed occurring much earlier among the Nepalese and Pangals. They also show no significant difference statistically (t = 0.32). Significant difference at 5 p.c level is observed among the Meitei and Pangal, Meitei and Nepali, Pangal and Kabui, and Nepali and Kabui

Age at marriage has been recognized as one of the prominent determinants influencing fertility. Women getting married at an early age naturally experience more years of reproductive span and tend to have more Children when they reach menopause. The reverse is true for women getting married at a later age (NSS, 1960-61; Agarwala,1970; Sharma and Abdul, 1990; Muthrayappa, 1998) Though a determinant of fertility, age at marriage on the other hand is influenced by education, economic status, socio-cultural beliefs & practices, urbanization, employment status etc., (Caldwell et al., 1983; Srikantan, 1977; Choudhary and Devi, 1997; Maheo, 2004).

Menopause-the permanent cessation of menstruation resulting from less ovarian follicular activity (WHO, 1981), determines the end of reproductive life of women. The occurrence of it generally range between 44 to 49 years and average being 46 years (Pearl, 1939). Though it shows a very high variation in a number of population (Maheo, 2004), genetic, nutrition, socio-economic, marital status, parity, geographic and climatic, smoking habit, diseases, drugs and contraceptives have been reported to effect menopause (Khaw, 1992; ICMR, 1998).

On the basis of present findings (Table 3), menopause is not sharply defined as that of menarche. The widest range of age at menopause is observed among Kabui women (38-57yrs) while

Table 2: Distribution of women according to age at marriage

Age (in years)	*Number of women*							
	Meitei		*Pangal*		*Nepali*		*Kabui*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
12	2	1.00	-	-	14	6.06	-	-
13	7	3.50	4	2.44	31	13.42	-	-
14	9	4.50	6	3.66	10	4.33	2	1.55
15	14	7.00	31	18.90	24	10.39	3	2.33
16	19	9.50	24	14.63	23	9.96	3	2.33
17	25	12.50	24	14.63	14	66.06	4	3.10
18	13	6.50	27	16.47	35	15.15	20	15.50
19	15	7.50	15	9.15	17	7.36	12	9.30
20	19	9.50	19	11.59	26	11.26	20	15.50
21	12	6.00	4	2.44	11	4.76	13	10.08
22	9	4.50	1	0.61	12	5.19	7	5.43
23	11	5.50	4	2.44	6	2.60	7	5.43
24	12	6.00	-	-	2	0.87	5	3.88
25	8	4.00	2	1.22	3	1.30	11	8.53
26	4	2.00	1	0.61	-	-	7	5.43
27	6	3.00	1	0.61	1	0.43	7	5.43
28	4	2.00	-	-	2	0.87	1	0.78
29	3	1.50	-	-	-	-	-	-
30+	8	4.00	1	0.61	-	-	7	5.43
Total	200	100.00	164	100.00	231	100.00	129	100.00
Mean (yrs.)	19.98± 0.34		17.54± 0.21		17.33± 0.22		20.03± 0.12	

't' Value d.f. μ

Meitei X Pangal = 3.29*
Meitei X Nepali = 3.54*
Meitei X Kabui = 0.07
Pangal X Nepali = 0.32
Pangal X Kabui = 4.34*
Nepali X Kabui = 4.63*

* significant difference at 5% level.

the narrowest among the Pangals (38-48yrs). But, of the four populations, the longest (33.40 years) and shortest (28.74 years) reproductive span is observed among the Nepali and Pangal women respectively whereas the highest and lowest mean age at menopause is observed among Nepali women (47.44±0.38 years) and Pangal women (43.41±0.14yrs) respectively. When "t" test of significance is applied to see if there exist any significant difference among the populations, it is observed that except between Meitei women (44.85±0.16 years) and Kabui women (45.73±0.71yrs), and also between Nepali women and Kabui all others show statistically significant difference (see "t" value, Table 3).The similarity observed between Meitei and Kabui may be due to their closer genetic affinity, as both are indigenous population of Manipur. At the same time use of drugs and female contraceptive devices as birth control means may be other related factor.

It is evident from Table 4 that mothers age at first issue range longest among the Meiteis (15-35years) and shortest among the Nepali women (15-30 years).While comparing the mean age at first issue of the four populations it is observed that, the highest and lowest occur among the Kabui (22.87±0.22yrs) and Pangal women (18.66±0.20yrs) respectively. The higher and lower age at first issue among the population correspond to their age at marriage which occurs highest and lowest respectively.

Table 5 presents the number of live births ever born to women of different age groups. Mothers of youngest age group (15-19 years) delivered least number of children as compared to the mothers of higher age group. Though highest number of children as high as 6.39 for Nepali and as low as 5.72 (Kabui) per mother is delivered by mother of age 45 and plus, the average number of children vary from 4.01 for Meiteis to 4.35 of Pangals. This tendency of increasing number of live births with the increasing chronological age of mother in all the four populations is because of exposure to longer period of married life. The order of live birth delivered by mothers who completed fertility period is presented in table 6. In all the populations lesser order of birth (first four order) is lower than the high order (five and more) of

Table 3: Distribution of women according to age at menopause

Age (in years)	*Number of women*							
	Meitei		*Pangal*		*Nepali*		*Kabui*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
38	-	-	2	5.56	-	-	2	4.55
39	2	3.08	1	2.78	2	2.67	3	6.82
40	2	3.08	4	11.11	-	-	4	9.10
41	3	4.62	2	5.56	1	1.33	2	4.54
42	3	4.62	4	11.11	5	6.67	2	4.54
43	2	3.08	5	13.89	3	4.00	1	2.27
44	10	15.38	3	8.33	4	5.33	2	4.54
45	19	29.23	12	33.33	7	9.33	5	11.36
46	15	23.08	1	2.78	4	5.33	3	6.81
47	2	3.08	1	2.78	5	6.67	4	9.10
48	2	3.08	1	2.78	10	13.33	4	9.10
49	3	4.62	-	-	8	10.67	1	2.27
50	2	3.08	-	-	18	24.00	4	9.10
51	-	-	-	-	3	4.00	4	9.10
52	-	-	-	-	2	2.67	-	-
53	-	-	-	-	2	2.67	1	2.27
54	-	-	-	-	1	1.33	-	-
55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
56	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2.27
57	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2.27
Total	65	100.00	36	100.00	75	100.00	44	100.00
Mean (yrs.)	44.85± 0.16		43.14± 0.41		47.44± 0.38		45.73± 0.71	

't' Value d.f. μ

Meitei X Pangal = 2.29*
Meitei X Nepali = 3.52*
Meitei X Kabui = 0.94
Pangal X Nepali = 4.84*
Pangal X Kabui = 2.45*
Nepali X Kabui = 1.63

* significant difference at 5% level

Table 4: Distribution of women according to age at first issue

Age (in years)	*Number of women*							
	Meitei		*Pangal*		*Nepali*		*Kabui*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
14	-	-	3	2.00	-	-	-	-
15	5	2.50	4	2.67	3	1.34	-	-
16	15	7.50	23	15.33	16	7.14	3	2.40
17	18	9.00	22	14.67	18	8.04	5	4.00
18	22	11.00	27	18.00	23	10.27	1	0.80
19	23	11.50	20	13.33	34	15.18	15	12.00
20	22	11.00	23	15.33	50	22.32	12	9.60
21	21	10.50	15	10.00	21	9.38	22	17.60
22	15	7.50	3	2.00	18	8.04	12	9.60
23	14	7.00	4	2.67	15	6.70	9	7.20
24	11	5.50	3	2.00	10	4.46	5	4.00
25	8	4.00	-	-	7	3.13	8	6.40
26	6	3.00	-	-	2	0.89	7	5.60
27	6	3.00	1	0.67	2	0.89	7	5.60
28	4	2.00	1	0.67	1	0.45	9	7.20
29	3	1.50	-	-	3	1.34	4	3.20
30	3	1.50	1	0.67	1	0.45	1	0.80
31	1	0.50	-	-	-	-	3	2.40
32	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
33	1	0.50	-	-	-	-	1	0.80
34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
35	2	1.00	-	-	-	-	1	0.80
Total	200	100.00	150	100.00	224	100.00	125	100.00
Mean (yrs.)	20.96± 0.28		18.66± 0.20		20.16± 0.18		22.87± 0.22	

Table 5: Number of children ever born to woman of different age group

Present age	*No.of woman (%)*				*Children per woman*			
	Meitei	*Pangal*	*Nepali*	*Kabui*	*Meitei*	*Pangal*	*Nepali*	*Kabui*
15-19	2.00	12.20	3.46	2.33	1.75	1.5	0.37	0.67
20-24	7.00	20.73	12.99	6.98	1.50	2.21	1.70	1.55
25-29	17.50	21.34	14.72	15.50	2.09	4.71	2.73	2.10
30-34	12.00	9.76	13.85	13.18	3.17	5.13	2.90	2.71
35-39	20.50	13.41	12.99	15.50	3.38	4.77	4.23	3.50
40-44	8.50	4.27	8.23	12.40	4.41	5.14	4.79	4.25
45+	32.50	18.30	33.77	34.02	5.90	6.03	6.39	5.72
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	4.01	4.35	4.15	4.12

birth. It is evident from the table that Kabui women have given birth to a maximum of 13 live birth while the other 3 populations have given birth to a maximum of 13 live births. Highest frequency percent of women of both Meitei (17.65%) and Kabui (20.45%) have a birth order of 7.On the other hand 13.89 % each of Pangal women have 8 and 9 birth order. While for Nepali, birth order of 5 is shown by a maximum of 17.33 % women. However the average completed fertility range from lowest 6.19 among the Meiteis to the highest 6.39 among the Pangals. The highest number of ever born children both to the women of different age group and completed fertility among the Pangal and subsequently followed by Nepali can be attributed to age at marriage (Table 3), lower literary level (Table 8). Among the Pangals the lower incidence of contraceptive practices (Table10) as bound by their religious belief is another factor attributing to higher fertility among them. This present finding of Pangals having highest fertility is also in agreement with other studies of Rele (1982), Choudhuri (1984), Mahadevan (1986), Balgir (1992), Choudhuri and Devi (1997).

The product of pregnancies in the form of Live birth, pregnancy wastages (still birth and abortion) is presented in Table 7. It is evident from the table that highest number of pregnancies per woman (4.97) is observed among

Table 6: Children ever born to woman who completed fertility

No. of live births	*Number of women*							
	Meitei		*Pangal*		*Nepali*		*Kabui*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
0	-	-	1	2.77	1	1.33	1	2.27
1	3	4.41	2	5.56	1	1.33	4	9.09
2	6	8.82	2	5.56	1	1.33	-	-
3	4	5.88	2	5.56	5	6.67	1	2.27
4	5	7.35	3	8.33	11	14.67	6	13.64
5	10	14.71	4	11.11	13	17.33	5	11.36
6	6	8.82	3	8.33	12	16.00	2	4.55
7	12	17.65	4	11.11	8	10.67	9	20.45
8	10	14.71	5	13.89	8	10.67	7	15.91
9	5	7.35	5	13.89	5	6.67	4	9.09
10	1	1.47	2	5.56	3	4.00	4	9.09
11	4	5.88	2	5.56	3	4.00	-	-
12	1	1.47	-	-	3	4.00	-	-
13	1	1.47	1	2.77	1	1.33	-	-
14	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2.27
Total	68	100.00	36	100.00	75	100.00	44	100.00
Average Completed Fertility	6.19		6.39		6.35		6.29	

Table 7: Product of pregnancy by mothers' age

Age group of mother	*Live Birth (PC)*				*Still Birth (PC)*				*Abortion (PC)*			
	MT	*PG*	*NL*	*KB*	*MT*	*PG*	*NL*	*KB*	*MT*	*PG*	*NL*	*KB*
15-19	0.81	2.95	0.29	0.35	-	0.54	-	-	-	0.54	-	-
20-24	2.41	10.46	5.01	2.43	-	0.13	-	-	0.34	0.27	0.20	0.17
25-29	8.40	21.45	9.14	7.29	-	0.54	0.10	0.17	2.07	2.14	0.39	-
30-34	9.09	10.32	9.33	7.99	-	-	0.10	0.35	0.81	-	0.20	0.52
35-39	16.00	13.40	12.48	12.15	-	0.54	0.59	0.69	1.27	0.80	0.20	0.87
40-44	10.59	4.83	8.94	11.81	0.35	0.40	-	0.35	0.81	-	0.10	1.56
45-49	8.86	10.72	11.98	21.70	-	-	0.69	0.17	0.81	0.40	0.10	1.90
50-54	3.91	8.85	7.66	16.70	0.12	-	0.29	0.35	0.46	0.40	0.10	-
55-59	10.47	9.38	10.61	9.02	-	0.80	1.18	0.17	0.35	0.13	0.10	-
60-64	7.71	-	5.50	0.69	-	-	0.30	0.17	-	-	-	-
65-69	8.98	-	7.27	0.52	0.46	-	0.88	-	-	-	0.10	-
70+	4.95	-	5.89	1.74	-	-	0.20	0.17	-	-	0.10	-
Total %	92.18	92.36	94.10	92.39	0.93	2.95	4.33	2.59	6.92	4.68	1.59	5.02
Total (f)	801	689	958	532	8	22	44	15	60	35	16	29

Total Pregnancy Per Woman
Meitei = 4.35 Nepali = 4.54
Pangal = 4.97 Kabui = 4.64
MT = Meitei NL= Nepali
PG= Pangal KB= Kabui

Table 8: Distribution of women by educational status and live birth

Educational status	*No. of woman (%)*				*Average No. of live birth/woman*			
	Meitei	*Pangal*	*Nepali*	*Kabui*	*Meitei*	*Pangal*	*Nepali*	*Kabui*
Illiterate	57.50	79.27	41.56	47.29	5.11	4.92	5.49	5.09
Nursery- V	9.50	3.66	20.78	10.85	3.11	2.67	3.75	4.93
VI - X	20.50	13.41	33.33	31.01	2.39	2.18	2.92	2.88
XI–Graduate	12.50	3.66	4.33	10.85	2.24	1.66	2.60	2.86
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	4.01	4.35	4.15	4.12

the Pangals followed by Kabuis (4.64) and lowest (4.35) among the Meiteis. Though highest number of pregnancies are observed among the Pangals, the frequency percent distribution of live birth(92.36%) out of the total pregnancies is comparatively low. It is because of higher percentage (7.63%) of pregnancy wastage (abortion-4.68%; still-birth-2.95%) observed among them. Out of the total number of pregnancies observed in each population, the highest and lowest frequency percent of live birth are recorded among the Nepalese (94.10%) and Meiteis (92.18%) respectively. As regards to the recorded pregnancy wastage, the Meitei women show highest (7.85%) contributed by highest case of abortion (6.92%) and lowest still birth (0.93%). Nepalese record the lowest (5.92%) pregnancy wastage (4.33% still birth and 1.59% abortions). Variation in the distribution of pattern of pregnancy wastages among these populations are of different causes. Incidence of higher pregnancy wastage observed among the Kabuis and Pangals may be attributed to higher degree of consanguineous marriage observed in both the populations as also reported in other populations (Basu, 1975; Ansari and Sinha, 1978; Mian and Mustaq, 1994; Latheef et al., 1998; Pandey et al., 2000) and termination of unwanted pregnancies among the Kabuis. Exceptionally high incidence of still birth observed among the Nepalese may be due to poor health and inadequate care during pregnancy and child birth. Chronic malnutrition of the expectant mothers may also be another factor. Similar findings were also reported by IPPF (1976). Among the Meiteis, pre-natal health care measures are taken care of, as a result of which percentage of still birth is very low. The incidence of higher rate abortion is due to termination of unwanted pregnancies in order to limit the family size.

Most of the studies conducted so far revealed a negative or inverse relationship between fertility and educational attainments (Blake, 1967; Caldwell et al., 1983; Talukdar, 1983; Rohini and Reddi, 1989; Bhasin and Bhasin, 1993, 2000; Choudhuri and Devi, 1997; Chaturvedi et al., 1995) but the condition is not necessarily true in certain developed countries (Wunderlich, 1967) and inverse relationship is now diminishing or even disappearing in some low fertility countries (UN, 1973).

The present findings show conformity with the views of inverse relationship between fertility and educational level (Table 8). Higher the literacy lower the number of live birth is the relationship. Illiterates have highest average number of live births ranging from 4.92 (lowest) among the Pangals to 5.49 (highest)among the Nepalese. A number of earlier workers have examined the relationship between fertility and occupation and reported that agriculturist have maximum number of children (Driver,1963; Agarwala, 1970; Choudhuri and Devi , 1997; Bhasin and Bhasin, 1993, 2000; Chaturvedi et al., 1995) and lowest among the serviceman (Driver, 1963; Bhasin and Bhasin, 2000).

Table 9 presents the relationship between fertility and occupation. Though there exist variation in the distribution pattern of occupation among the four communities, uniformity is observed as far as live birth in relation to occupation is concerned. Women engaged in manual labour work give birth to higher number of children however, among the labours, those engaged in agriculture give birth to highest number of live birth-Nepali being the highest (6.62) and Pangal being the lowest (5.50).This finding is an agreement with Driver (1963), Bhasin and Bhasin (1993, 2000), Verma (1999). Prevalence of highest fertility among the labours is due to the reason that they need more working hands and children become assets for them. Housewives

Table 9: Distribution of women by occupational status and live birth

Occupational status	*No.of woman (%)*				*Average no. of live birth/woman*			
	Meitei	*Pangal*	*Nepali*	*Kabui*	*Meitei*	*Pangal*	*Nepali*	*Kabui*
Cultivator	6.50	54.88	9.09	2.33	6.31	5.00	6.62	5.33
Manual Labour	40.00	14.68	35.93	35.66	4.25	3.54	4.84	4.34
Business	3.50	3.66	9.09	48.06	4.03	3.50	4.05	4.21
Weaving	7.50	-	-	1.55	2.13	-	-	3.00
House Wife	36.00	20.73	42.86	6.98	4.14	4.05	3.09	4.11
Govt. Service	3.50	-	3.03	3.88	2.43	-	3.71	2.60
Others	3.00	6.10	-	1.55	1.83	2.00	-	3.50
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	4.01	4.35	4.15	4.12

Table 10: Distribution of women according to the type of contraceptive practices

Methods	*Number of women*							
	Meitei		*Pangal*		*Nepali*		*Kabui*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Oral Contraceptives	11	5.50	1	0.61	8	3.46	9	6.93
Vasectomy	8	4.00	2	1.22	7	3.03	-	-
Tubectomy	29	14.50	10	6.10	12	5.20	11	8.53
IUD	23	11.50	-	-	7	3.03	4	3.10
Rhythm Method	10	5.00	-	-	10	4.33	-	-
Withdrawal & Condom	16	8.00	10	6.10	25	10.82	10	7.75
Others	2	1.00	1	0.61	3	1.30	3	2.33
Non-Users	101	50.50	140	85.36	159	68.83	92	71.31
Users	99	49.50	24	14.63	72	31.17	37	24.68
Total	200	100.00	164	100.00	232	100.00	129	100.00

also have higher fertility as they stay at home and can take care of children.

Use of contraceptive practices (Table 10) are found to be prevalent highest among the Meiteis (49.50%) followed by Nepalese (31.17%) and lowest among the Pangals (14.63%) and Kabuis(24.68%). While among the Pangals both tubectomy and use of withdrawal techniques and condom equally shares 6.10% each. Among the Meities use of IUD is also comparatively high (11.50%) as compared to other devices. Most frequently practiced contraceptive device among the Nepalese is use of condom and withdrawal technique (10.82%). Prevalence of highest percentage of use of contraceptive devices among the Meiteis is mainly due to attainment of higher educational status and having more awareness on family planning. On the other hand the contrast is for the Pangals. At the same time they still adhere to the orthodox belief in the religious restriction on use of contraceptive devices. Moreover in such a small state but with a multi ethnic population who wants to be a minority. This is always the question mark.

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