Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Family Size between Muslim and Santal Communities in Rural Bangladesh

Md. Emaj Uddin Ph. D.[1], Tanzima Zohra Habib MSS, MS[2], Md. Sayeed Akhter MSS[3]

Abstract

Family size in a particular society depends on marriage, family composition and adoption norms. It also depends upon modes of production, technological and socio-cultural forces. First purpose of this paper was to describe and compare family size (as a dependent variable) and socio-cultural factor (as an independent variable) between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. Second purpose of the paper was to examine how socio-cultural factors influence family size between the communities in rural Bangladesh. In so doing, 70 couples from Muslim and 30 couples from Santal communities from Kalna village, Tanore Upazila, Rajshahi, Bangladesh were randomly selected. Based on structural questionnaire method, including interview technique our descriptive findings, especially percentages suggested that family size, including usual family size, ideal family size, actual family size, expected family size, adoption practice was different between the two communities in the study area. In addition, results of regression analysis showed that socio-cultural factors, especially family, marriage, socio-economic status, and personal characteristics of the couples were affecting family size between the two communities in rural Bangladesh. The findings may be implied in social policy to change in family size in association with socio-cultural situations of the Muslim and Santal couples in rural Bangladesh.

Introduction

Family size and composition in a community, in particular, and a society, in general, depends on family cultural system, socio-economic status, biological and psychological consequences of the prospective couples who are going to form a family or the eligible couples who are living in the family unit. Basically, the family unit may be consisted either of marital union, birth/blood relatives, adopted son or son-in-law, and other secondary kinsmen included in the family, which are influenced and determined by three major norms: marriage norms, family size and composition norms, and adoption norms. These prevalent norms determine and identify membership patterns of the family. In general, the membership patterns of the family: marriage, blood and adoption- which

---

1   Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh. Email emajmd@yahoo.com
2   Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh. Email: shomiswnus@yahoo.com
3   Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh. Email sayeed@ru.ac.bd

are influenced by family cultural system and vary from one community or society to another- determine family size and composition in a given community or society in a certain period of time.

In order to continue and make human beings survive through family system from one generation to another reproduction, production and socialization functions of the family are essential. Because reproduction function within marital union legitimatized by marriage norms meets sexual, emotional and mental satisfactions, and supplies and replaces productive and cultural agents who make sure security in times of old age, illness and inability; production function fulfills material needs: foods, clothes, housing, medicine etc. of the members who live in the family, and the socialization makes ready to be productive and reproductive of cultural agents who, in turn, would bear and rear the family system (Gill,1995; Harris, 1993; Himmelstrand (ed.),1986; Handwerker (ed.), 1986).

This is a universal process of human adaptation to an economic system and environment. However, in order to adapt to a given economic system and environment in a given period of time how many persons, who are related by marriage, birth/blood and adoption and associated with one another, live in a family with age and sex composition and other social characteristics, who marries whom, when and how many, how many children with son or daughter preference a couple should have, whether or not a couple adopts a son or son-in-law if reproduction function is not successful and fitted to the family system- all these family size situations depend on family cultural system, socio-economic status, biological and psychological characteristics of the couples concerned. Regarding this sociologists and anthropologists argue that every couple in a society has an ideality of family size and composition assessed by family cultural system, socio-economic status, and their biological and psychological outcomes. According to ideal family size and composition, each couple demands a number of siblings and fulfills their demand of children to involve in actual reproductive behavior (Freedman, Whelpton, and Campbell, 1959; Westoff et. al., 1963; United Nations, 1987; Card.1981, Maloney, aziz, and Sarker, Sarker, 1997, Akber and Halim, 1978; Ford and Jong, 1970; United Nations, 1997).

Figure 1.Comparison of Cultural Influence on Family size and Composition
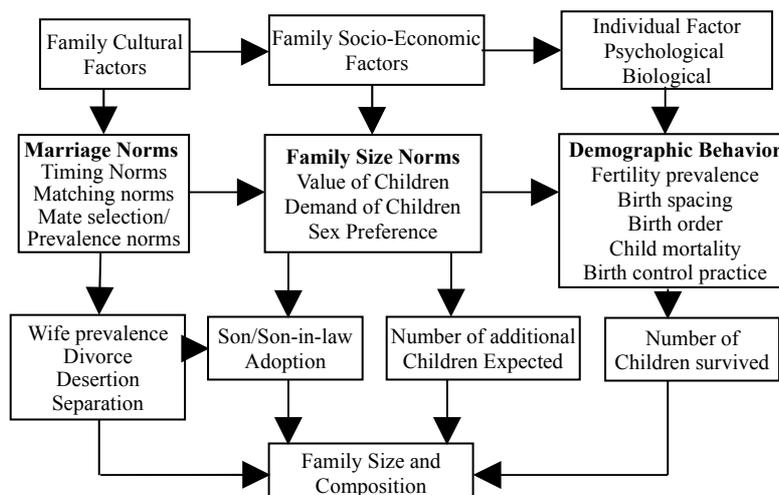
Note: The arrow used in the framework indicates direct influence on the sequential box

To study, analyze, explain and compare family size in relation to socio-cultural factors between Muslim and Santal community, the present study suggests a model shown in figure 1 which is designed to identify a conceptual framework that is composed of in combination of interrelated blocks of factors affecting family size and composition in step by step process. The first three blocks mentioned in the top of the model contain predetermined independent factors (variables) consisting of family cultural factors, family socio-economic status factors, and individual factors (biological and psychological). The family cultural factors not only affect marriage norms posited in the second block (timing norms, matching norms, prevalence norms), but also influence family socio-economic status (male and female position in the family) that, in turn, influence male and female bio-psychological consequences, in general, husband and wife's bio-psychological outcomes, in particular.

The marriage norms determined by family cultural factors not only influence a number of wife, divorce, desertion separation, mentioned in the third stage in progression in the model, but also impact on family size and composition norms (value of children, demand of children, son preference) which further influence demographic behavior (fertility preference, birth spacing, birth order, child mortality, birth control practice) positioned in the second stage in progression in the model of the couples who are involved in the family formation process in which number of children (son or daughter) is born and survived that stresses of the couples, who did not fulfill the ideal number of Children fitted to their family system according to their circumstances, to have additional number of children-son or daughter or adoption of son or son-in-law, determine total size and composition. Based on the model first of all we describes situations of family size and composition including usual, ideal, actual or completed, expected family size and composition as well as adoption. Secondly, we analyzes how cultural system of Muslim and Santal communities, including family cultural factors, socio-economic status factors, and couples' biological and psychological factors influence those family size and composition norms between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh context.

Data and Method

The study conducted in the setting of rural socio-cultural system in which family size of the Muslim and Santal community is influenced. The ecological and geographical locations wherein *Kalna,* a village of *Talonda* union of *Tanore Upazila of Rajshahi* district is situated, was the study area of the research. The reason for selection of the village is the availability of two distinct rural cultural communities: Muslim and Santal. In this village, there are about 380 families. The number of Muslim families is 300 and the rest of them are Santal families.

Samples

Oscer Lewis opines that cross-cultural comparison is possible between continents or nations, within one continent, a single culture area or region, a single local group or culture (Moore, 1968). From this point of view we purposively selected two cultural communities: Muslim and Santal from the rural area of Bangladesh, who were different in family cultural systems with one another. In order to cross-cultural comparison of family size associated with socio-cultural factors between the two communities the families were the study unit. Muslim

families were treated as separate sampling unit of the Muslim community, and Santal families were treated as sampling unit of the Santal community. In this study each community is considered as a cluster. According to cluster sampling, 70 families out of 300 of the Muslim and 30 families out of 80 of the Santal were randomly selected for this study. The main reason for choosing samples by cluster sampling was to create homogeneity within the cluster and heterogeneity between the clusters. This homogeneity within cluster and heterogeneity between cultures had many advantages to choose small samples for valid cross-cultural comparison (Berry, 1980).

Measurement

Community was measured nominally and coded 1= Muslim and 2= Santal. *Age* of the family members was counted for last birthday. *Sex* was measured nominally and coded 1= Male and 2= Female.

Family characteristics were Included and categorized as family head (coded 1 = husband/father, 2= wife/mother, 3= son, 4= daughter and 5= grandfather), family generation (coded 1= one generation family, 2= two generation family, 3= three or more generation family), family type (coded 1= simple family and 2= complex family), residential pattern (coded 1= patrilocal, 2= matrilocal, 3= bilateral and 4= neolocal).

Marriage characteristics were measured and coded both numerically and categorically such as number of times husband and wife married, number of wife maintained by husband, distance between husband and wife's parent's family, pre-marriage relation between husband and wife 1= yes, 2= no, types of pre-marriage relation 1= parallel cousin, 2= cross-cousin, 3= others, marital arrangement 1= romantic, 2= arranged/contractual, husband and wife's age at marriage and duration of marital life.

Demographic characteristics were measured and coded by both numerical and categorical values such as ideal age at marriage for male and female, ideal interval between marriage and first child, ideal interval of birth spacing between children, ideal number of children (son and daughter), number of pregnancy of wife, number of living and still birth, sex of child (1 = male and 2 = female), years of birth spacing between children born, number of children died after delivery and at age 5, expectation of more children (1 = yes and 2 = no), sex preference in expectation (1 = male and 2 = female), reasons for sex preference (1 = old age security, 2 = family life continuation, 3 = power and dominance, 4 = household chores, 5 = emotional support), conjugal status of sex preference (1 = agreement and 2 = disagreement), birth control method (1 = yes and 2 = no), spouse taking birth control method (1 = husband and 2 = wife), husband's method (1= vasectomy, 2 = calendar rhythm, 3 = IUD, 4 = pill and 5 = injection), son adoption (1 = none, 2 = son, 3 = daughter and 4 = son-in-law), number of family members with male and female, number of married, un-married, divorced, separated, widower, widowed persons in the family and the family members life cycle.

Socio-economic characteristics were measured and coded by categorical and numerical values such as husband's occupation (1 = farming only, 2 = farming + employment, 3 = farming + business, 4 = day laboring and 5 = van + rickshaw pulling), wife's occupation (1 = housewife only, 2 = housewife + day laboring, 3 = maid servant, 4 = others), inheritance of family property (1 = husband only, 2 = wife only and 3 = both husband and wife), livestock position (1 = yes and 2 = no), dairy farm position (1 = yes and 2 = no), entertainment facility (1 =

radio, 2 = TV, 3 = radio and TV and 4 = none of them) land in bighas and yearly family income. In measurement of kinship status was coded nearest family kin line (1 = parental line, 2 = maternal line and 3 = both the lines), family name tracing (1 = father's line only, 2 = mother's line only and 3 = both the lines and kinship obligation preference (1 = paternal line of relatives, 2 = maternal line of relatives and 3 = both the lines of relatives).

Data Collection Methods and Techniques

Rapport was built with the respondents, who were selected for this study, to collect real data. In order to build up rapport, researchers met with the respondents from door to door and described the research objectives to realize them. Actually, main goal of the rapport was to prepare respondents mentally and socially about the research objectives on which they would respond accurately and willingly. However, to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, survey method, especially structural questionnaire method with open-ended and close-ended questions was applied to collect quantitative data that are the foundation of the study. The questionnaire was formulated with the bio-polar adjective scaling, cultural frequency scale as well as behavior frequency scaling. In order to probe the method, interview technique was also applied.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze data we applied descriptive statistical techniques (percentages) for the first purpose and regression techniques for the second purpose of the paper. The descriptive statistics describes family size and composition in relation to number of wives maintained, ideal number of children, number of children survived, number of additional children expected, adoption and usual number of family members as well as family cultural system associated with family, marriage, socio-economic status, demographic, biological and personal characteristics of the sampled families of the communities. In this discussion, major differences of those characteristics between Muslim and Santal communities were presented in the percentage point (see fist section in the result and discussion). This second section of the paper was analyzed how family socio-cultural system influenced family size and composition, because the study assumed that family socio-cultural system would influence and determine family size and composition. The influences of family cultural system used as an independent variable on family size and composition used as a dependent variable were measured by linear regression model (impact of independent variable on dependent variable linearly) with *Pearson* correlation. The results of this analysis are differentially related with each other at the 0.05 percent significant level with one-tailed test (see second section in the result and discussion given below).

Results and Discussion

Family Size Characteristics

Normative behavior towards family size and composition is embedded in community cultural framework in which values, beliefs, and attitudes determine membership patterns of the family (Akber and Halim, 1978).

Generally, family size and composition norms refer to prescribed and proscribed behavior by which someone attains membership in the family through birth, marriage or adoption. Accordingly, after marriage every woman achieves membership in her husband or husband's parent family wherein reproductive behavior of the couples about ideal, actual and expected family size and composition is influenced by cultural and socio-economic characteristics.

Usual Family Size

Usual family size includes those members who are more suitable to live together in the family according to circumstances as well as family head's consideration. The data show that on average 4.13 persons of the Muslim sample and 4.30 of the Santal sample were living in per family. Among them 47.24 percent male and 52.76 percent female of the Muslim sample and 46.72 percent male and 53.28 percent female of the Santal were living when the research was conducted. Men and women who were accounted for usual family size and composition were of various age categories of their life cycle. About 27 percent members (both male and female) of the Muslim families and 36 percent members (both male and female) of the Santal families were children whose age category were within 0 - 15 years, 52 percent members (both male and female) of the Muslim and 34 percent members (both male and female) of the Santal were young whose age category were within 16 - 30 years, 17 percent members (both of them) of the Muslim and 23 percent of the Santal were fully adult in the age category of 31 - 59, and only 2 percent of the Muslim and 6 percent of the Santal were elderly at age 60 and above.

Ideal Family Size

In order to continue family system from one generation to the next every family has a plan for age at marriage. After marriage every couple also plans to have children with sex preference and to rear and care to mature them. About 33 percent of the Muslim sample and 55 percent of Santal sample informed us that under 20 years a male should be married, 25 percent of the Muslim and 20 percent of Santal responded that a male should be married within at 21 - 24 age group, but 41 percent of the Muslim and 24 percent of the Santal said a male should be married at the age 25 and above. On the other hand, marriage for the female only 27.59 percent of the Santal responded a female should be married at age 15, about 57 percent of the Muslim and 58 percent of the Santal said that a female should be married by parents within 16 - 18 age category, and 42 percent of the Muslim and 13 percent of the Santal informed that parents should marry their daughter at the age 19 and above.

After marriage a newly married couple should get a child. About 75 percent of the Muslim and 44 percent of the Santal said that after one or two years of marriage a couple should get a child, but 24 percent of the Muslim and 55 percent of the Santal said that birth spacing between marriage and first child should be three or more years, but birth spacing between children or first and second child is more higher between the both communities. 63 percent of the Muslim and 68 percent of the Santal responded that birth spacing between children should be three or four years. The least percent of both communities' position was either one or two years or five and above. How many children a couple should have, note remarkable. About 44 percent of the Muslim and 13

percent of the Santal said that they should have one to two children, 54 percent of the Muslim and 79 percent of the Santal informed that they should have three to four children, but a few of them opined that they should have five or more children. Among the children how many sons or daughters a couple should have? About 50 and 79 percent of the Muslim and 17 and 58 percent of the Santal informed us that they should have one son and one daughter respectively, but 48 and 19 percent of the Muslim and 79 and 37 percent of the Santal responded that they should have two for both sexes.

Actual Family Size

Actual family size was accounted for how many sons or daughters were born and among them how many were living till now. Data show that 57 percent women of the Muslim and 51 percent women of the Santal opined that they conceived one or two times, 21 percent of the Muslim and 24 percent of the Santal gave opinion that they conceived three or four times, 11 percent women of the Muslim and 8 percent women of the Santal responded that they conceived five or more times, but 8 percent of the Muslim and 6 percent of the Santal had no pregnancy in their reproductive cycle.

The women who were pregnant in their reproductive life, 68.25 percent of the Muslim and 55.56 percent of the Santal reproduced from one to two live births, 22.22 percent of the Muslim and 25.53 percent of the Santal reproduced three to four live births, and only 10 percent of the Muslim and 18 percent of the Santal generated five or more live births. Among the given live births 90 percent for son and 47.23 percent for daughter of the Muslim and 92.86 percent for son and 85 percent for daughter of the Santal one to two survived per family respectively, 8 and 12 percent of the Muslim and 7.14 and 15 percent of the Santal three or more son and daughter survived per family.

Expected Family Size

Expected family size and composition includes expectation of more children, sex preference, reasons for sex preference and agreement about it between husband and wife. The data show that among the eligible women who were capable of reproducing, about 33 percent of the Muslim sample and 57 percent of the Santal sample expected more children, but 66 percent of the Muslim and 42 percent of the Santal had no expectation for more children.

The couples expected more children had sex preference in expectation. About 59 percent of the Muslim and 68 percent of the Santal preferred son in expectation, but 40 percent of the Muslim and 31 percent of the Santal preferred additional girl in expectation. Because they preferred son for family line continuation, old age security, power and dominance. About 38 percent of the Muslim and 45 percent of the Santal preferred son for old age security, 53 percent of the Muslim and 54 percent of the Santal preferred son for family line continuation and only 7 percent of the Muslim preferred son for power and dominance. In this respect cent percent of the Muslim preferred girl for emotional support, in contrast between the Santal 20 percent preferred girl for household chores and 80 percent preferred ones emotional support respectively. In respect of son or daughter

preference conjugal opinion is interesting to note. Most of the couples of both communities agreed with one another about son or daughter preference (about 76 percent of the Muslim and 64 percent of the Santal respectively), but 23 percent of the Muslim, and 35 percent of the Santal couples did not agree with one another. The table also shows that most of the eligible couples of the Muslim were using birth control methods, but 68 percent of the Santal couples were not using any birth control method. The table also shows that birth control methods were female oriented.

Adoption Practice

Our findings show that 97 percent of Muslim and 76 percent of the Santal informed that they had no intention for adoption, but about 1 percent of the Muslim and 3 percent of the Santal adopted son and 1 percent of the Muslim and 20 percent of the Santal adopted son-in-law for old age security and conducting family functions. However, description of family size and composition including usual, ideal, actual, expected and adoption practice suggests that there were both similarities and differences in percentages between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh.

Socio-Cultural Characteristics

Studies on family size and composition in cross-cultural perspective indicate that family cultural system, especially family headship, family pattern, marriage pattern, residence and inheritance norms, religion, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, couples' biological and psychological characteristics influence fertility behavior in addition to family size and composition norms. Now we will analyze whether or not these factors influence family size and composition between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh.

Both Muslim and Santal communities are culturally patrilineal, patriarchal and patrilocal in nature. This central principle of family cultural system not only influences family size and composition, in particular, but also men and women relationships across the life cycle, in general, in which male dominance and male preference in all affairs of human life are prevalent, and women are dependent on and submissive to men in their life cycle (Ali. 1998; Aziz and Maloney, 1985).

Marriage Characteristics

Without the provision of marriage between an adult man and woman, birth of a child is illegitimate in both communities. Family formation begins with age at marriage when an adult male and an adult female enters into marital union by marriage norms and live in marital residence with any family pattern- simple or complex- where one or more generations exist. This process of family formation starts with the date of marriage and goes on from first to last birth to death in life cycle. In this respect nearly universal principle of family formation of every community or society is biological maturity or puberty, which is a sign of ability to intercourse between male and female. This age norm of marriage for male and female of every community in the world is generally practiced, although early marriage before puberty and late marriage are possible due to community cultural and

socio-economic statuses. Our data show that family formation for the Muslim was earlier than that of the Santal. Because 42.62% husband's and 44.26% wife's age at marriage for the Muslim were at under 20 years for men and 10-14 years for women in contrast to the Santal both for husband's and wife's age at marriage 18.52% and 37.04% were at the same age group respectively. At another age group, especially between 21-25-age grades, the Santal male position was higher (55.55%) than the Muslim male (37.70%). For females the Muslim position was higher than the Santal at 15-19 age group. The above age group for both men and women of the Santal made late marriage than the Muslim. Reproductive age of women for both the communities is remarkable. That is Muslim women (24%) were capable of reproducing in comparison to the Santal women (98%). Current age of husband for the Muslim was higher than the Santal at age 21-30 and 41-50 age group. At another age group the Santal were higher than the Muslim.

Another point for age characteristics for husband and wife for both the communities was age difference and duration of marital life. Age difference in age group 1-5 and 6-10 between husband and wife of the Muslim couples was higher than that of the Santal couples. But in 16 and above age group the Santal couples were higher than the Muslim were. Duration of marital life was an important point to measure fertility if couples are not infertile or do not adopt any birth control method. Marital life duration in age group 1-10 for the Muslim were about 21% and for the Santal were 29%, at the middle duration the Muslim couples were higher than the Santal couples, but at above duration the Santal couples were higher than its counterpart. However, age characteristics of husband and wife for family formation were perfectly influenced by their respective cultural background.

The data also represent marriage patterns in connection with mate selection, forms of marriage, marital arrangement, proximity of marriage between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. In the study area, Muslim respondents select mate for marriage from both exogamy and endogamy, but the Santal select mate from only exogamy. Among the Muslim respondents 85.29% selects mate from exogamy and 14% from endogamy (cross-cousin and parallel-cousin) in contrast to cent percent of the Santal select mate from exogamy. In study area both communities prefer monogamy and polygamy, but in practice they defer with one another. According to our data, 80.88% male of the Muslim and 62.07% male of the Santal married only one time, but the rest of the Muslim and Santal married two or more times. Between the respondents 84.29% of the Muslim and 79.31% of the Santal maintained only one wife, but rest of the respondents maintained two or more wives. In this respect the Muslim were more monogamous than polygamous in comparison to the Santal. In marital arrangement the Santal practise more contracted marriage (79.21%), but the Muslim practise more romantic marriage (30.88%). In mate selection distance is an important variable. According to our data, about 50% of the Santal selected mate within village or 1-2 miles but 38% of the Muslim did so. About 42% of the Muslim chose bride/groom within 4-5 miles but 34% of the Santal did so.

Family Characteristics

After marriage every couple live in any type of family in relation to headship and residence pattern. Data on family type, residence, headship and family generation and show that 95.71% couple of the Muslim sampled and

80% couple of the Santal were living in the simple family. Only 4.29% of the Muslim and 20% of the Santal were living in the complex family. In respect of types of simple and complex families, 73.13% of the Muslim sampled and 62.50% of the Santal sampled were living in the complete nuclear family. Rest of the couples of both the communities were living in conjugal family unit, conjugal with accretion, in complete nuclear with accretion. Whereas 33.33% of the Muslim and 50% of the Santal were living in the patrilineal joint family, only 66.67% of the Muslims were living in the patrilineal joint family.

But 16% of the Santal were living in the patri-uxorilocal joint with accretion, patrilineal segmentary and patrilineal segmentary with residentially accretion. 84% of the Muslim and 70% of the Santal were living in the patrilocal residence and only 14.45% of the Muslim and 13.33% of the Santal were living in the bilateral rules of residence. It is interesting to note that only 1.46% of the Muslim samples and 16.67% of the Santal samples were women headed household. Husband/ father controlled 92.86% of the Muslim and 80% of the Santal families. Wife or mother maintained 7% of the Muslim and 3% of the Santal families. About 16% families of the Santal samples were directed by son, daughter or grand father, 80% of the both sampled families were two generations and only 7% of the Muslim and 3% of the Santal were only one generation, 12.86% of the Muslim and 16.67% of the Santal were three generations.

Socio-Economic Status Characteristics

Farming is the main occupation of the sample families. They cultivate land with plough and bulls, although some families use modern technology side-by-side ones. Land property is accumulated by either inheritance from family orientation or bought by money. Our data on inheritance of family property, land possession, occupation and education of husband and wife, entertainment facility and family income as about 44% husband of the Muslim and 10% husband of the Santal sampled inherited land from their parents and only 2.86% wife of the Muslim and 3.33% of the Santal sampled inherited land from their parents. Only 17.14% husband and wife of the Muslim sampled inherited land from their parents' family. Rest of them of both the samples of the communities did not inherit any land. However, they inherited land from their family of orientation and it was maximally small amount of land. At present when present researcher was collecting data, 30% of the Muslim sample and 86% of the Santal sample had no land property, viz. they were landless. 41% of the Muslim and 6% of the Santal sample had 1-5 bighas of land and 14% of the Muslim and 6% of Santal sample had 6-10 bighas of land. And the rest of 14% of the Muslim had 11-16 bighas of land.

Although head of the family involves him in many occupations, each of them has muster occupation for livelihood. In order to maintain livelihood 66% husbands of the Muslim sample and 14% husbands of the Santal sample engaged in farming and 16% and 3% of the Muslim sample adopted employment and business besides farming. Only 7% of the Muslim and 85% of the Santal sample were day laborers. On the other hand, 97% wives of the Muslim and 6% of the Santal were housewives. About 93% of the Santal wives were housewives and day laborers and 1.45% women of the Muslim were maidservant. In education 21.88% husbands and 36.92% wives of the Muslim and 65.38% and 73.33% of the husbands and wives of the Santal had no

education. That is they were totally illiterate. About 46% and 49% of the husbands and wives of the Muslim and 11% and 23% of the husbands and wives of the Santal completed primary education. 31% and 13% of the husbands and wives of the Muslim and 7% and 3% husbands and wives of the Santal appeared at secondary and higher secondary education.

Data also suggest family income of the sampled families of both the communities. In respect of family income 31% of the Muslim families and 80% of the Santal families' yearly income were 10-20 thousand and 27% of the Muslim and 16% of the Santal were 21-30 thousand, and about 40% of the Muslim and 3% of the Santal families were 31-50 and above thousand. Family income of the Muslim families, however, was higher than that of the Santal families.

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics include wife's number of pregnancy, live and stillbirth, birth order and spacing, child mortality of the sampled couples of both the communities. Data show that about 90% women of the Muslim sample and 93% women of the Santal sample conceived in their reproductive life cycle at the range of 1-7 and above. Only six cases of the Muslim and two cases of the Santal did not conceive due to infertility or infecundity and/or newly married. The married women of the communities were pregnant, reproduced either live or stillbirth. Among the sampled women who were pregnant in their life cycle, 90% women of both the communities begotten one or more live births and only 7% of the Muslim women and 23% of the Santal women generated one or more still birth.

In birth order 50%, 58%, 52%, 35% of the Muslim women and 44%, 40%, 54%, 20% of the Santal women for first, second, third and forth birth were male and 49%, 42%, 47%, 64% of the Muslim women and 55%, 60%, 45% and 80% of the Santal women at those birth order were female respectively. Birth spacing of newborn baby of the two communities is interesting to note here. Birth spacing between marriage and first child, between first and second, and second and third was from lower to higher in years: 68%, 39%, 41% of Muslim women and 52%, 63%, 54% of the Santal women were one to two years; 17%, 41%, 47% of the Muslim and 24%, 21%, and 18% of the Santal were three to four years; about 14%, 19%, 11% of the Muslim and 24%, 15%, 27% of the Santal were five and more years. Our finding also shows child mortality and birth control methods adopted by the eligible couples of the communities. We found that child mortality was low and birth control methods adoption was high in number in the families of the communities included due to expansion of family planning programs in the study area. Although mortality rate of son of both the communities was the same, daughter mortality of the Santal sample was higher than the Muslim was (Santal, 5.06 and Muslim, 3.13). In respect of stillbirth, the Santal position was higher than the Muslim (Santal, 8.42 and Muslim, 3.33).

Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Family Size

The results show that correlation of family socio-cultural system influences family size and composition. Number of wives in the family influences family size and composition. How many wives a husband maintains

depend on family cultural system. In this respect, number of times husband married, residence pattern, duration of marital life, inheritance, entertainment source, husband and wife occupation, ideal number of children, still birth, son died, son and daughter survived, adoption and female member in the family are positively correlated with number of wives. Among them number of times husband married is highly positively correlated (.57), husband occupation, adoption, female member in the family are moderately correlated and other independent variables included are negatively correlated.

Every couple plans/desires the number of children according to their family cultural system or ideality in which they live. In this respect, family head, family generation, family pattern, residence, marriage pattern (pre-marriage relation, marital arrangement, husband's and wife's age, occupation, education, inheritance of family property, ideal number of son and daughter planned by couples are differentially positively correlated with the ideal number of children. Among these variables ideal number of son and daughter are highly positively correlated (.89 and .84 respectively). Other positive correlated variables such as family head, marriage pattern (whether pre-marriage relation between husband and wife, types of the pre-marriage relation- parallel or cross-cousin- marital arrangement, duration of marital life), inheritance of family property, husband and wife marital age characteristics (husband and wife age at marriage, age difference, husband and wife's current age), husband's and wife's occupation and education attainment, ideal years of birth spacing between marriage and first child and between children are moderately positively correlated (from .30 to.50). Other positive correlated variables: family generation, family pattern, entertainment source, wife's inheritance, residence are correlated at low level (from .01 to.20). And other variables included in the analysis are negatively correlated.

The findings presented in the table also show that number of children survived is positively correlated with family cultural system. Among the variables included in the analysis first birth order and live birth are highly positively correlated with dependent variable number of son survived (.85 and .85 respectively). Other positive correlated variables such as 2nd birth order, 2nd birth spacing, son and daughter survived are moderately correlated (.49, .52, .47, .47 respectively). Another positive values like family characteristics (family head) complex family type, marriage characteristics (husband and wife's age at marriage, current age, marital duration, number of times husband and wife marry, distance between husband and wife's parent family), socio-economic status (husband and wife's occupation and education, inheritance of family property), demographic variables (ideal number of children, pregnancy, still birth, child mortality at various ages, birth control. spouses preference for birth control) are related to the number of children survived as from .01 to.30. Other variables are negatively correlated with the dependent variable.

In respect of additional children expected by parents are also highly correlated with conjugal status of sex preference (.95) and reasons for sex preference (.71) and reasons for daughter preference (.45), expectation of more children (.45) are moderately correlated and family head, family pattern, husband and wife's age at marriage, age of husband and wife, age difference, duration of marital life, land property, family income, husband and education, wife's number of pregnancy, son died after delivery, children survived, number of male member in the family, husband's method for birth control are correlated with additional number of children

expected at low level (.01-.30). The married women did not conceive in their marital life and had no possibility to bear a child or those women could not bear any male child could adopt son or son-in-law for family line continuation. Among the variables included in the analysis maximum were low or moderately correlated with the dependent variable adoption (please, see the table 5.10).

Impact of Socio-Cultural Factor on Family Size

We also applied regression analysis for exploring the relative impact of family, marriage, socio-economic status, demographic, biological and psychological characteristics on family size and composition between the Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. Table 1 presents the results of a series of equations in which various family cultural variables are regressed to measure to determine influence and impact on family size and composition. Each column of the table gives the standardized regression coefficients (betas) for the row variables that are regressed on the family size and composition variables. To measure impact of family cultural background, especially family head, residence pattern, ideal age at marriage for female, actual age at marriage for husband, number of times husband married, pre-marriage relation between husband and wife, age difference between husband and wife, inheritance of family property are positively impact on number of wife maintained. Among the cultural background variables positively impact on the number of wife maintained, actual age at marriage and number of times husband marriage have great impact (2.33 and 1.12 betas respectively); family head, age difference, pre-marriage relation, ideal age at marriage for female, residence (.28, .18, .12, .13, .10 betas respectively) have moderate impact and only inheritance has low impact (.04). Simple family, ideal age at marriage for male and female, actual age at marriage for female, pre-marriage, age difference, wife's inheritance, land property, husband and wife occupation, number of ideal son and daughter- all these variables have positive impact on ideal number of children. Among them actual age at marriage (.94 beta), ideal number son (.87 beta) and daughter (.39 beta) have high impact; simple family (.24), pre-marriage relation (.27), age difference (.12), wife's education (.10) have moderate impact; and husband education, land, wife inheritance, ideal age at marriage for male and female- all these variables have low effect on ideal number of children in the family.

How many children may survive depend also on many family cultural background variables. Family head, number of times wife's marriage, pre-marriage relation, distance between husband and wife's parent's family, age difference between husband and wife, duration of marital life, husband and wife's inherited land, family income, wife's occupation, ideal age at marriage for female, ideal interval between marriage and first child, ideal age of mother to end child bearing, ideal number of children, wife's number of pregnancy, number of live birth, sex order of third and fourth child, years of birth spacing between first and second child, number of sons and daughters survived- all these variables have positive impact on the number of children survived.

Table 1. Standardized Regression Coefficients (Beta) for Family Size and Composition Regressed of Family Cultural System: Family, Marriage, Socio-economic, Demographic, Biological and Psychological Characteristics by Muslim (n=70) and Santal (n=30) Community, Kalna, Bangladesh, 2004

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	No. of wife maintained	No. of Ideal Children	No. of Children Survived	No. of Children expected	Adoption	No. of persons
1. Family head	.28	-.25	.03	-.04	-.16	-.01
2. Family generation	-.05	-.01	-.02	-.03	.05	.00
3. Family pattern	-.15	-.25	-.10	.03	-.02	.01
4a. Simple family		.24	-.05			
5b. Complex family		-.12	-.06			
6. Residence	.10	-.02	.00	-.01		-.03
7. Ideal age at marriage						
Male	-.12	.05	-.03			
Female	.13	.05	.18			
8. Actual age at marriage						
Male	2.33	-.92	-	-.32	.18	-.01
Female	-2.35	.94	-.23			
9. No. of time marriage						
Husband	1.12		.38			
Wife	-.88		.17			
10. Pre-marriage relation	.12	.27	.02		-.29	
11. Type of pre-marriage relation	-.15	-.15	-.02	-.11	.19	.03
12. Marital arrangement	-.03	-.22	.04	.13	.20	-.04
13. Age of husband			-.37	-.18	1.90	-.03
14. Age of wife			-.29	-1.45	-2.12	.18
15. Age difference	.18	.12	.59	1.73		-.18
16. Duration of marital life		-.00	.34	.30	-.29	-.01
17. Inheritance	.04	-.01	-.03	-.01	.08	-.02
17a. Husband inheritance		-.02	.33			
17b. Wife inheritance		.07	.28			
18. Family income	-.00	-.08	.01	-.00	.37	-.01
19. Husband occupation		.05	-.09	.03	.19	-.00
20. Wife occupation		.10	.16	-.00	.06	.00
21. Husband education		-.20	-.04	-.16	.04	.04
22. Wife education		-.03	-.13	.04	-.30	.00
23. Ideal no. of son		.87	-.32	.25	-1.00	.00
24. Ideal no. of daughter		.39	-.38	.17	.03	-.03
25. No. of pregnancy			.09	-.11	1.04	.01
26. No. of live birth			1.31			-.02
27. No. of still birth			-.17			-.01
28. Birth order						
Sex of 1st Child			-.53	-.09	.06	-.01
Sex of 2nd Child			-.27	.02	.13	-.02
Sex of 3rd Child			.09	.05	.10	-.01
Sex of 4th Child			.16	-.04	.07	.01
29. Birth Spacing						
Marriage and 1st Child			-.07			
1st and 2nd			.32			
2nd and 3rd			-.14			
30. Child mortality						
Son after delivery			-.02			.04
Daughter after delivery			-.04			-.02
Son at age 5			-.17			-.01
31. Children survived						
Son			.13	.03	.15	.00
Daughter			.01	-.01	.02	.02
32.Expectation of more child				.04	-.03	.01
33.Reason for son preference				.30		
34. Reason for daughter pre				.23		
35. Conjugal status				.68		
36. Adoption						.01
37. Entertainment source			-.06	.03	-.01	-.01
38. Birth control				.01		.03
39. Spouse taking				.08		
40. Husband				.02		
41. Wife				-.04		
42. No. of male				.08	-.43	.62
43. No. of female				-.02	-.46	.81
Statistical Significance	**.000***		**.000***	**..000***	**.000***	**.000***

*Note: *p<0.05 (1 tailed test)*

Among them, although number of live birth has great impact (1.31 beta) on number of children survived; other variables such as age difference, marital duration, family income, birth spacing, sex order for proper care of the children should not be ignored. Because these factors also have to be considered for children survived.

The table also shows that family cultural background factors also influence number of additional children expected variable. Of the variables, age difference between husband and wife has highest impact (1.73 beta) on the variables included in the analysis. The couples that had not been fulfilled ideal number of children, son and daughter, have more eagerly to have another child- son or daughter. So the variables of reasons for son and daughter preference conjugal status of sex preference, duration of marital life have great impact on sex preference of expectation. Among them conjugal status of sex preference has more impact (.68 beta) on the dependent variable.

Which family or couple adopts son or son-in-law depends on demographic outcomes in which respective couples could not fulfill conditions of ideal family size. The women who never conceived in their reproductive age or did not bear male child, may adopt son or son-in-law for old age security or for conducting family activities properly. In this respect, age of wife, wife's number of pregnancy, family size, ideal number of children impact highly (1.90, 1.04, .80, .64 betas respectively) on adoption variable. Other variables such as family income have moderate impact (.37 beta) on it. Except these birth order, number of sons and daughters survived, husband occupation, marriage relation marital arrangement, age of husband has also positive impact on it. In the last column usual family size and composition is influenced by family cultural system. In this respect two variables- number of males and females have maximum impact (.62 and .81 betas respectively) rather than number wife maintained (.00 beta), ideal number of children (.01 beta), number of children survived (-.01 beta), sex preference of expectation (-.01 beta), adoption status (.02 beta).

Conclusion and Implications

Purpose of the study was to examine and compare how socio-cultural factors affecting family size between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. In so doing, 70 couples from the Muslim and 30 couples from the Santal community from Kalna, Rajshahi, Bangladesh were randomly selected for the study purpose. Our descriptive findings, especially percentages suggested that family size, including usual family size, ideal family size, actual family size, expected family size, adoption practice was different between the two communities in the study area. In addition, results of regression analysis showed that socio-cultural factors, especially family, marriage, socio-economic status and personal characteristics of the couples selected and interviewed affecting family size between the two communities in rural Bangladesh. The findings presented in the study may be implied to change in family size in association with socio-cultural situations in the Muslim and Santal couples live and they can both adapt to changing situations in rural Bangladesh.

References

Akber, M. A. & Halim, M. A. (1978). *Socio- Economic Factors Affecting Family Size Norms and Fertility Patterns in Bangladesh,* Rajshahi: Popular Press, 1st Edition.

Akber, Md. Ali and Halim, Md. Abdul (1978). *Socio-Economic Factors Affecting Family Size Norms and Fertility Pattern in Bangladesh,* Rajshahi: Popular Press, st edition.

Aziz, K. M. A. & Maloney C.(1985) *Life Stages, Gender and Fertility in Bangladesh,* Dhaka: International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease research, Bangladesh.

Berry, J. W. (1980). " Introduction to Methodology," in Harry C. Triandis and Jown W. Berry (ed.): *Handbook of cross-Cultural Psychology,* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Blake, Judith (1966). "The Americanization of Catholic Reproductive Ideals", *Population Studies,* Vol.20, Part-1, July:27-45.

Card, Josefi J. (1981). "Long- Term Consequences for Children of Teenage Parents," *Demography,* Vol.18, No. 2.

Chou, Ru-Chi & Brown, Susannah (1968). "A comparison of the Size of Families of roman-Catholic and Non-Catholics in Great Britain", *Population Studies,* Vol.22, Part-1, March:51-62.

Coombs, L. C. and Sun, Te-Hsiung (1978). " Family Composition Preferences in a Developing Culture: The Case of Taiwan", *Population Studies,* Vol.32, No.1, March:43-64.

Ford, Thomas R. and Jong, Gordon F. De (ed.) (1970). *Social Demography,* Englewood Cliffs, H. J. Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Freedman, R. & Coombls, C. L. (1966). "Economic Consideration in Family Growth Decisions", *Population Studies,* Vol.20, No.2, November:.

Freedman, R., Whelpton, P. K., and Campbell, A. A. (1959). *Family Planning, Sterility and Population Growth,* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

Frenkel, I. (1976). " Attitudes Toward Family Size in Some East European Counties", *Population studies,* Vol.30, No.1, March:35-57.

Galt, A. H. and Smith, L. J. (1979). "Anthropological and Economic Perspectves on Small Family size on the Island of Pantellenia, sicily", *Population Studies,* Vol. 33, No.2, July :223-238.

Gill, K. Kaur (1995). *Population Growth, Family Size and Economic Development,* New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications.

Handwerker, W. Penn (ed.) (1986). *Culture and Reproduction,* London: Westview Press.

Harris, Marvin (1993). *Culture, People, Nature,* Harper Collins College Publications.

Himmelstrand, U. (ed.) (1986). *The Social Reproduction of Organization and Culture,* London: SAGE Publications.

Hirschman, C. and Rindfuss, R. (1982). " The Sequence and Timing of Family Formation Events in Asia", *American Sociological Review,* Vol.47, October:660-680.

Jiobu, R. & Marshall, H. (1977). " Minirity Status and Family size: A Comparison of Explanation", *Population Studies,* Vol.31, No.3, November:509-518.

Lee, Che-Fu & Lin, Kuang-Hua (1976)." Parity Patterns of Birth Interval Distribution", *Demography,* Vol.13, No.1, February:45-55.

Maloney, C., Aziz, K. M. A., & Sarker, P. C. (1981). *Beliefs and Fertility in Bangladesh,* Dacca: International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease research, Bangladesh.

Moore, Frank W. (ed.) (1968). *Readings in Cross-Cultural Psychology,* New Haven: HRAF Press.

Sarker, Profulla C. (1997). *Social Structure and Fertility Behavior,* Dhaka: Centre for Development Services, PP. 12, 23, 53.

Udry, J. Richard and Cliquet, R. L. (1982). " A Cross-Cultural Examination of The Relationship between ages at Menarche, Marriage, and First Birth", *Demography,* Vol.19, No.1, February:53-64.

United Nations (1988). *First Marriage: Patterns and determinants,* New York.

United Nations (1990). *Patterns of First Marriage: Timing and Prevalence,* New York.

United Nations (1997). *Family- Building and Family Planning Evaluation,* New York.