

## Childlessness in India: Are we ready as developed countries

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### Abstract

India observe double burden of fertility – childlessness along with high fertility, which brings close to a developed country. Paper highlights childlessness and its association with reproductive health problems by exploring NFHS-2 data. Seven percent of married women aged 20-49 years in India are childless, which accounts for more than total population of Australia. Andhra Pradesh shows highest percent of infertile women (13.3%) followed by Goa (11.8%). Significant differential in childlessness has been found by age, residence, education, religion, and standard of living. Reproductive health problems such as: itching, bad odour, abdominal pain, painful intercourse, blood visible after sex and menstruation related problems emerged significantly higher among infertile women than fertile women. Along with the problem of high fertility, childlessness has emerged unnoticed in country like India, so attention should be paid in more realistic manner. More medical facility especially infertility clinics are needed to mitigate this upcoming health problem.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Childlessness is defined, as woman having no live birth or no living children at the end of her reproductive life span (WHO, 1991). This category, often used by demographers to indicate infertility, includes women who have never been pregnant, those who have suffered pregnancy losses, and those with no live births. If not clearly indicated otherwise, it may include women who currently have no living children but may have had one or more live births. Childlessness is a product of the complex interaction of biological, environmental and cultural factors, which needs to be understood at the local community level and for the planning reproductive health care services to address the problems (Unisa, 1999).

Since childbearing is highly valued and childlessness can have devastating consequences for Indian women, infertility is perceived to be a very serious problem (Pachauri, 1998). Sociologists believe that childlessness is also a common cause of divorce. Most of the studies indicate that marital breakdown is clearly associated with childlessness (Unisa 1999, Kiernan 1989, Tilson & Larsen 2000, Ahmed 1987). In India, the males feel that the childlessness is because of the inability of the female partner to procreate. They always find fault with the females, divorce them and remarry. Surprisingly, in many such cases even the second wife fails to bear a child because of the defect in the male (Mishra, 2001). Childlessness has long been seen as a personal tragedy for childless couples in general and women in particular. In India, as in much of the rest of Asia, childless women are socially stigmatized and face grave personal and social consequences (Mulgaonkar, 2001). Childlessness of women may be influenced by factors such as cultural background, educational level, and labour force participation (Australian Demographic Statistics, 1999). In the younger age groups a large percentage of women are childless, but the percentage drops rapidly and stabilizes at a lower level above age 35 (Vemuri & Manohar 1987).

Childlessness is a neglected family planning ingredient. In developing country, childlessness is a huge but badly recognized problem (Gerbstrom, 1980). As modernization continues, childlessness becomes more and more voluntary and fertility begins to decline (Poston et. al. 1984). In India also the proportion of urban population is increasing at a considerable rate, which may lead to increasing childlessness in coming future. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to study the spatial variation in childlessness in India in correlation with the various socio-economic, demographic and reproductive health issues with a special focus on marital breakdown.

## **DATA AND METHODS**

The present study is based on NFHS-2 all India data. The NFHS-2 survey has interviewed 89,199 ever-married women in the age group of 15-49 years, from 26 states of India, which covers 99 per cent population of India. The present study is based on the 27505 currently married women, which had been filtered out from all India samples based on some basic conditions like, age more than 20 years, currently not using any family planning methods, marital duration more than 3 years and staying with their husband. Instead of all women of all reproductive age group (15-49), only women between age 21-49 years has been considered for study in childlessness in India in order to avoid the consequences of physical immaturity of women for childbirth before age 20 years (i.e. shorter exposure to risk of pregnancy and most likely also in part to adolescent sub-fecundity) on one hand and menopause on the other. However, to find out the relationship between divorce and childlessness the sample includes 34837 ever-married women of age 21-49 years instead of only 27505 currently married women, irrespective of their husband staying with them.

The analysis has been done with the help of both, bivariate and multivariate technique. Cross table for bi-variate and logistic regression for multivariate has been applied for data analysis.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The specific objectives of the present study are:

1. To study the socio-economic, demographic and spatial variation among childless women in India.
2. To study the reproductive health problems among childless women in India.
3. To study the autonomy and experience of any form of violence among childless women in India.
4. To study the linkages between marital breakdown and childlessness in India.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. (A) Spatial variation of childless women in India**

**Table 1.1** and **Figure 1** explain the childlessness among currently married women age 21-49 years in India by states. In India overall 7 percent of women are childless. Region wise, Southern (10.9) and Western (10.7) region shows highest percentage of childless women followed by Eastern region (6.5). However, central region exhibits lowest (4.7) percentage of childlessness. In addition to this rest of the regions Northern and Northeastern show the childlessness below the national level average.

State wise Andhra Pradesh shows highest percent of childless women (13.3 percent) in India followed by Goa (11.8 percent). Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have 11.6, 11.4, and 9.5 percent childless women respectively. Thus whole southern states show high prevalence of childlessness, which are quite above the national average.

On the other hand, the northeastern states like Meghalaya (2.3), Arunachal Pradesh (2.7), Manipur (3.1), Nagaland (3.4), Assam (5.8) and Tripura (6.1) have low percentage of childless women, lower than the national average.

The eastern states show high percent of childlessness than national level except Bihar where 5.0 percent women are childless. However, West Bengal and Orissa shows 9.5 percent and 8.7 percent childless women respectively, which is closer to the southern states.

Northern states show a mixed pattern of childlessness. Jammu and Kashmir shows the low percentage of childless women (4.1 percent) whereas Himachal Pradesh shows high percentage of childless women (10.3 percent) above the national average followed by Punjab (7.8 percent). Other northern states like Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan shows 7.1, 5.9, and 4.9 percent childless women respectively, which are below the national average.

Among the central states, Uttar Pradesh shows low percentage (3.8) of childless women whereas Madhya Pradesh shows higher percentage (7.1) of childless women than the national average.

### **1. (B) Socio-economic and demographic differentials among childless women**

**Table 1.2** shows the socio-economic and demographic differential among childless women in India. Age of women shows a negative relationship with childlessness. As the age of the women is increasing the prevalence of childlessness decreases. More than 8 percent women of age 21–24 are childless compared to 5 percent women of 45–49 years age.

Residence also shows a significant difference for childlessness. Urban women are more childless compared to rural women in India i.e. 9.8 percent and 6.3 percent respectively. Within urban area, capital/large city shows highest percent of childlessness (11.6 percent) compared to small city (9.8 percent) and town (8.7 percent).

Education of the women shows significant association with childlessness. As the education of women increases childlessness also increases. Six percent of illiterate women are childless while 7.5 percent literate but middle school incomplete women are childless. Childlessness increases further to 9 and 10 percent for women with middle

school complete and high school & above, respectively. Husband's education also shows positive relationship with childlessness but the differential is less compared to women's education.

Religion wise differential in childlessness also exists. Muslims women are least childless (4.2 percent) whereas other religion's women are most childless (11.8 percent). Christian women rank second most childless (8.4 percent) after other religion's women. Hindu and Sikh women show moderate childlessness equal to 7.4 percent and 6.5 percent respectively. Caste of women does not show a significant differential regarding childlessness.

Working status of women shows a significant differential regarding childlessness. Childlessness is more among the working women than not working women. Eight percent of working women are childless compared to 6.4 percent not working women. Among working women also, about 9 percent of self-employed women and women employed by someone else are childless compared to 6.6 percent women working in family farm/business. In addition to this, occupational differences also exist significantly. About 14 percent women engaged in household work are childless followed by 12.5 percent women whose occupation is related to professional/technical/managerial work. Nine percent women engaged in clerical/sales work are childless whereas labours are least childless (7.6 percent).

Standard of living index calculated by the household goods is the proxy variable for representing the economic condition of a household. It shows a significant differential with childlessness. About 10 percent of women belonging to high standard of living are childless followed by 7 percent of women belonging to medium standard of living. However, 6.3 percent of women belonging to low standard of living are childless.

Age gap between husband and wife also shows positive association with childlessness. About 6 percent women are childless whose age gap is less than one year whereas childlessness increases to 9 percent where the age gap was more than 15 years between husband and wife. Seven percent women are childless where gap is between 1-15 years. This may likely be due to problem in conception because of higher age gap between husband and wife.

**Table 1.3** shows the logistic regression results for childless women by different socio-economic and demographic characteristics. The result of logistic regression also substantiates that childlessness is significantly influenced by age, residence, education, religion, caste, working condition, standard of living and age gap between husband and wife.

Age of the women shows strong statistically significant influence on childlessness. Higher the age of women the likelihood of childlessness decreases. Women of age group 45-49 years have almost half likelihood of childless than women of age group 21-25 years.

The odds ratio shows that the likelihood of childlessness in rural area is 0.53 times less than in urban area.

Education of women also shows a little influence with childlessness. Women with high school complete and above are 1.2 times more likely to be childless than illiterate women.

Religious impact on childlessness is also noticeable. Muslims women are less likely to be childless than Hindu women and result is statistically significant. The likelihood is about half than Hindu women. Women belonging to other religion are 1.5 times more likely to be childless than Hindu women. Christian and Sikh women do not show statistically significant result. Caste is another critical variable. Women belonging to other (general) caste are 1.2 times more likely to be childless than scheduled caste women. Again the odds ratio of other backward caste is 1.13 more than scheduled caste.

Standard of living index of women also shows significant association with childlessness. Childlessness is 1.3 times more among the women belonging to high standard of living than women belonging to low standard of living women and result is statistically highly significant.

Working condition of women also show a significant effect on childlessness. Childlessness is 1.4 times more among the women who are currently working than currently not working women.

Another variable, age gap between husband and wife also show the significant influence on childlessness. Higher the age gap between the husband and wife higher the childlessness has been noticed. Women with age gap of 15 years and above have 1.6 times more likelihood to be childless than women with age gap less than 1 year and result is statistically highly significant.

## **2. Reproductive health problems among childless women**

Several health problems are associated with childlessness. **Table 2** shows reproductive health problems among childless and fertile women. Indicators of maternal health problems such as *ever had an spontaneous abortion and ever had a terminated pregnancy*, and reproductive health problems such as: *itching, bad odour, abdominal pain, fever and other problems, pain or burning sensation during urination, painful intercourse and blood after sex* has been considered for the present study.

Maternal health problems were found more among childless women than fertile women. Spontaneous abortion was found among 1.7 percent of childless women whereas there was not any single case of spontaneous abortion among fertile women. However, almost same percent of childless women and fertile women had ever experienced a terminated pregnancy.



Reproductive health problems emerged significantly among childless women than fertile women. About 21 percent childless women were having itching problem compared to 17 percent of fertile women. Bad odour and abdominal pain was found higher i.e. 14 percent and 24 percent, respectively among childless women than among fertile women. Fever and other problems also had been noticed higher among childless women. Thus, all the above problems associated with menstruation were higher among childless women than fertile women.

Pain or burning sensation during urination was also higher among childless women (24 percent) compared to fertile women (19 percent). Painful intercourse was found one and half times more among childless women than fertile women, which were 18 percent and 11 percent respectively. In addition to this, blood visible after sex was experienced by almost double percent of childless women (4 percent) than fertile women (2 percent).

It is apparent that all the reproductive health problems were quite high among childless women. Thus, reproductive health problems may be one of the reasons for childlessness.

### **3. Autonomy and experience of violence among childless women**

**Table 3.1** presents the autonomy and experience of any type of violence among childless women. Women's autonomy has been seen regarding their decision-making on what to cook and obtaining health care for themselves. Childless women in both type of decision-making are behind the fertile women. Seventy percent of childless women can decide themselves what to cook compared to 75 percent fertile women. In addition of this 11 percent others persons of childless women's household decides what to cook compared to 8 percent others persons of fertile women's household. In case of decision about obtaining health care also, 22 percent childless women can obtain health services for themselves compared to 25 percent fertile women.

Violence against childless women has been seen in terms of percentage beaten or physically mistreated by husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law and sister-in-law. Only

those women have been taken into account who had been beaten or physically mistreated since last 15 years. Less percentage of childless women are beaten by husband compared to fertile women i.e. 88 percent and 93 percent, respectively. But, almost double percentage of childless women had been beaten or physically mistreated by mother-in-law than fertile women, which is 8.4 percent and 4.4 percent respectively. Beating or physically mistreating practice by father-in-law to childless women is almost same as fertile women. Nevertheless, practice of violence was somewhat more to childless women by her sister-in-law. Thus it is clear from the above discussion that husband and father in law do not create more problems particular for the childless women. However mother-in-law and sister-in-law behaves in a more ridiculous manner to childless women. It is a miserable situation for a healthy society.

#### **4. Marital breakdown (divorce) and childlessness**

**Table 4.1** presents the percent of childlessness among divorced women age 21-49 years in India by selected socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Significant differential in childlessness has been found among divorced women by age, residence, education, religion, working condition and standard of living. Overall, in India 37.8 percent of divorced women are childless.

Age of divorced women shows a negative relationship with childlessness. As the age of the divorced women increases childlessness decreases. More than 50 percent divorced women aged 21–24 years were childless compared to 22 percent divorced women aged 45–49 years. In the age group of 30-44 years about 40 percent divorced women were childless.

Residence also shows a significant difference for childlessness among divorced women. Urban divorced women were less childless compared to rural divorced women in India i.e.

30 percent and 41 percent, respectively. With in urban area, city's divorced women show higher percent of childlessness (37 percent) compared to town's divorced women (22 percent).

Education of the divorced women does not show clear association with childlessness. However, husband's education shows positive relationship with childlessness. Thirty-three percent of divorced women are childless whose husband are illiterate while 46 percent divorced women are childless whose husband education is high school & above.

Religion wise differential in childlessness also exists among divorced women. Twenty-nine percent of Muslims divorced women are childless compared to 41 percent Hindu divorced women. It shows that among Hindu, childlessness may be a most important cause of divorced than Muslims. Caste of divorced women does not show a significant differential regarding childlessness.

Working status of divorced women shows a significant differential regarding childlessness. Divorced women who were working are more childless than not working women i.e. 41 percent 33 percent, respectively. Among working, 45 percent divorced women employed by someone else were childless compared to 43 percent divorced women working in family farm/business. However, only 21 percent of self-employed divorced women were childless. In addition of this occupational difference also exist significantly as divorced women whose occupation was labour were most childless (47 percent). However, divorced women engaged in other occupation were least childless.

Standard of living index does not show a significant differential with childlessness among divorced women.

From the above table we cannot draw a strong conclusion that childlessness is the main factor for divorce because the reason and timing of divorce (year of divorce after marriage)

are not available with the data. However, the analysis clearly shows that there is a wide gap in childlessness between divorced women (37.8 percent) and currently married women (7 percent).

### **Summary and Conclusion**

From the above discussion it can be said that a considerable percentage of married women in India are childless or infertile. Southern and Western region shows highest percentage of childless women among which the state of Andhra Pradesh shows highest percent of childless women (13.3 percent) in India followed by Goa (11.8 percent). Urban areas have more percentage of childless women than the rural areas. Results also shows that age is negatively associated with childlessness whereas education of the women shows significant association with childlessness. In India as a whole, there are 5.1% of women who remains childless at the end of their reproductive period (age group 45-49). There is a wide variation in childlessness according to religious affiliation. Muslims women are least childless (4.2 percent) whereas other religion's women are most childless (11.8 percent) besides Christians whose percentage of childless women is 8.4. The percentage of childlessness is least among women who are illiterate and highest in those who are more educated. Women who are working are more childless than women who are not working. Higher the standard of living higher is the childlessness. Age gap between husband and wife also shows positive association with childlessness.

Also, health, autonomy and marital separation among the childless women, may be perceived as a consequence of childlessness. From the forgoing discussion it can also be said that several health problems including reproductive and maternal health are associated with childlessness. Reproductive health problems such as: itching, bad odour, abdominal pain, fever and other problems, pain or burning sensation during urination, painful intercourse and blood visible after sex emerged significantly high among childless women than fertile women. All the problems associated with menstruation were higher

among childless women than fertile women. Maternal health problems were found more among childless women than fertile women. Significant differential in childlessness has been found among divorced women by age, residence, education, religion, working condition and standard of living. Overall, in India 37.8 percent of divorced women are childless. Also childless women's autonomy (autonomy has been seen regarding their decision-making on what to cook and obtaining health care) is very restricted in comparison to the fertile women.

Thus along with population problem of high fertility in the developing country like India, childlessness caused by infertility should also be seen in a more realistic manner. More medical facilities especially infertility clinics are needed to minimize the problems. Going through the miserable situation of childless women in India regarding their poor health, autonomy and social problems, attention is needed to mitigate the psychosocial trauma associated with childlessness.

### **Policy/Programme Implications**

Infertility/childlessness in developing countries is widespread and, in many cases, preventable also. Given limited resources, programs should focus on reducing STDs, postpartum and post-abortion complications, and the endemic diseases that cause infertility. Yet, women suffering from individual disappointment and social stigma of infertility/childlessness cannot be ignored. By training health care personnel to carry out systematic, but limited, evaluation and treatment protocols, it is possible to make diagnoses, offer counseling, and conduct basic treatments without adding substantially to existing health care costs. Some family planning clinics also may be selected to offer basic infertility evaluations and treatment.

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**Table 1.1: Region wise percentage distribution of childlessness among currently married women aged 21- 49 years, India, 1998-99**

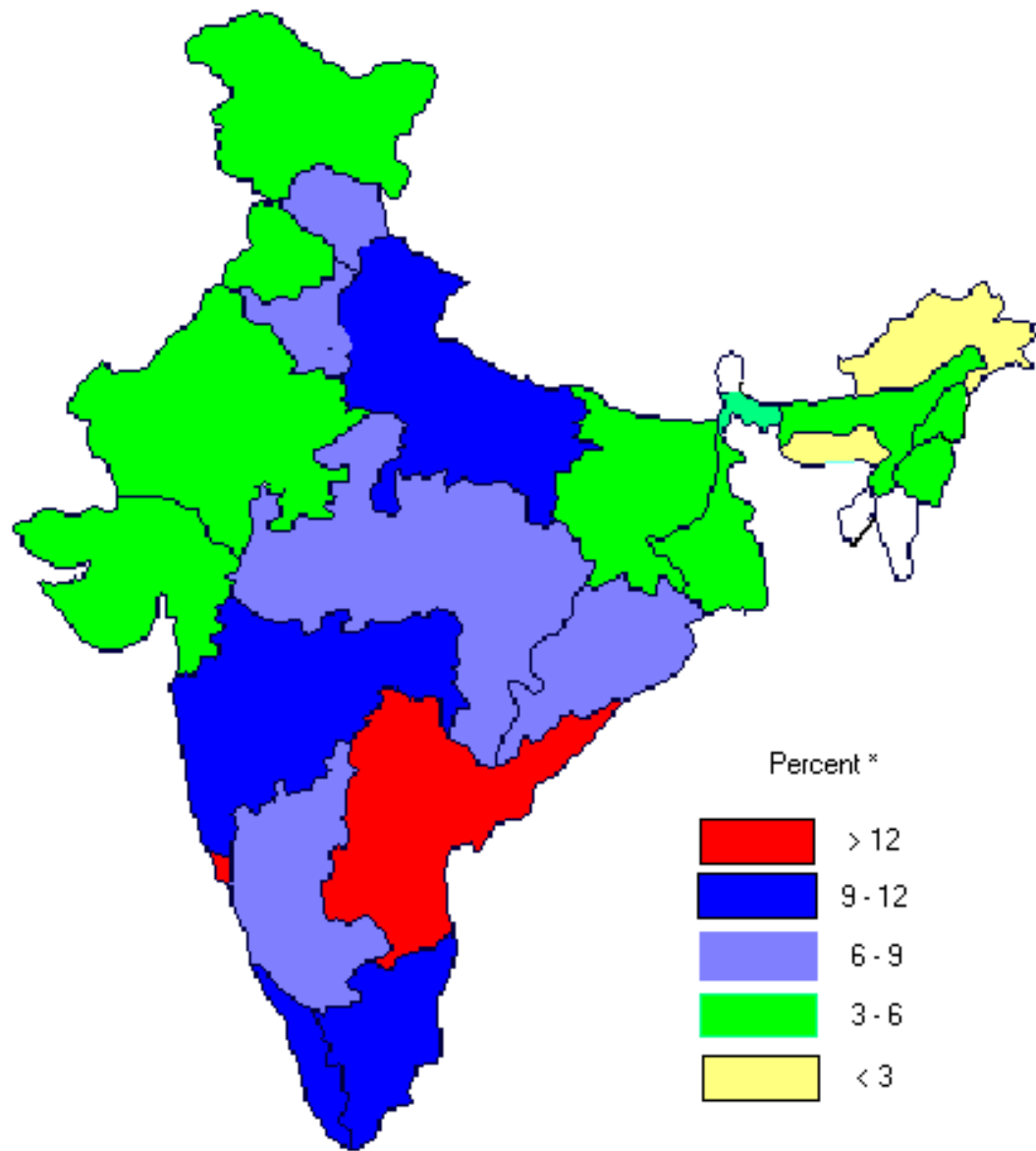
<b>Regions in India</b>	<b>% childless women</b>	<b>Total number of women</b>
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>3052</b>
Delhi	7.1	266
Haryana	5.9	373
Himachal Pradesh	10.3	68
Jammu & Kashmir	4.1	243
Punjab	7.8	345
Rajasthan	4.9	1758
<b>Central Region</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>8654</b>
Madhya Pradesh	7.1	2372
Uttar Pradesh	3.8	6283
<b>Eastern Region</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6826</b>
Bihar	5.0	4350
Orissa	8.7	1082
West Bengal	9.5	1439
<b>Northeastern region</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>1133</b>
Arunachal Pradesh	2.7	37
Assam	5.8	781
Manipur	3.1	65
Meghalaya	2.3	86
Mizoram	*	14
Nagaland	3.4	58
Sikkim	*	10
Tripura	6.1	82
<b>Western Region</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>2909</b>
Goa	11.8	34
Gujarat	9.5	1058
Maharashtra	11.4	1818
<b>Southern Region</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>4929</b>
Andhra Pradesh	13.3	1727
Karnataka	9.0	1056
Kerala	11.6	481
Tamil Nadu	9.5	1665
<b>All India</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>27505</b>

*Note: Some missing cases has not been shown in the table*

*\* Percentage not shown based on fewer than 25 cases*

# Distribution of Childless women in India

1998-99



*Note: For Manipur, Tripura and Sikkim Childlessness is not shown*

**Figure 1**



**Table 1.2: Percent distribution of childless currently married women aged 21- 49 by selected socio-economic and demographic characteristics, India, 1998-99.**

<b>Background characteristics</b>	<b>% childless women</b>	<b>Total number of women</b>
<b>Age groups</b>		
21–24	8.4	5561
25–29	7.4	7288
30–34	7.4	5886
35–39	6.4	3695
40–44	5.7	3186
45–49	5.1	2890
<b>Residence</b>		
Urban	9.8	5846
Rural	6.3	21659
<b>Types of place of residence</b>		
Capital/Large city	11.6	1383
Small city	9.8	1728
Town	8.7	2733
Country side	6.3	21659
<b>Education</b>		
Illiterate	6.3	19224
Literate, < middle school complete	7.5	4164
Middle school complete	8.7	1587
High school complete and above	10.3	2522
<b>Husband's education</b>		
Illiterate	6.2	10577
Literate, < middle school complete	7.3	6734
Middle school complete	7.4	3361
High school complete and above	7.8	6758
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	7.4	22007
Muslims	4.2	4230
Christian	8.4	642
Sikh	6.5	278
Others	11.8	347
<b>Caste/tribes</b>		
Scheduled caste	6.5	5421
Scheduled tribe	7.6	2970
Other backward class	7.0	9118
Other	7.2	9632

Contd...

<b>Background characteristics</b>	<b>% childless women</b>	<b>Total number of women</b>
<b>Currently working</b>		
Yes	8.0	10011
No	6.4	17489
<b>Working status</b>		
Working in family farm/business	6.6	4295
Employed by someone else	8.9	5000
Self-employed	8.8	1224
<b>Occupation</b>		
Professional/Technical	12.5	449
Clerical/sales	9.0	409
Labour	7.6	9465
Household worker	13.6	132
<b>Standard of living index</b>		
Low	6.3	10889
Medium	6.8	12366
High	9.5	3952
<b>Age gap between husband and wife</b>		
Less than 1 Year		1487
1-5 Year	5.9	13285
6-15 Year	7.0	11411
15+ Year	6.9	1279
	8.8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>27505</b>

Note: Some missing cases has not been shown in the table

**Table 1.3: Odds Ratio for Currently Married Childless Women aged 21- 49 years by selected socio-economic and demographic characteristics, India, 1998-99**

Socio-economic and demographic Variables	B	Exp (B)
<b>Age groups</b>		
21–24		1.000
25–29	-0.154	0.858**
30–34	-0.164	0.848**
35–39	-0.333	0.717***
40–44	-0.483	0.617***
45–49	-0.640	0.527***
<b>Residence</b>		
Urban		1.000
Rural	-0.645	0.525***
<b>Types of place of Residence</b>		
Capital/Large city		1.000
Small city/Town	-0.150	0.861
Country side	-0.245	0.782**
<b>Education</b>		
Illiterate		1.000
Literate, < middle school complete	0.104	1.110
Middle school complete	0.106	1.111
High school complete and above	0.151	1.163*
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu		1.000
Muslims	-0.635	0.530***
Christian	0.047	1.048
Sikh	-0.225	0.798
Others	0.415	1.514**
<b>Caste/tribes</b>		
Scheduled caste		1.000
Scheduled tribe	0.142	1.152
Other backward class	0.121	1.129*
Other	0.181	1.198**
<b>Currently Working</b>		
No		1.000
Yes	0.351	1.420***
<b>Standard of living index</b>		
Low		1.000
Medium	0.053	1.054
High	0.246	1.297***
<b>Age gap between husband and wife</b>		
Less than 1 Year		1.000
1-5 Years	0.119	1.126
6-15 Years	0.123	1.131
15+ Years	0.441	1.554***
<b>Constant</b>	-2.253	0.105

<sup>R</sup> Reference Category;

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  and  $R^2 = 0.028$

**Table 2: Maternal and reproductive health problems among childless and fertile currently married women aged 21- 49 years, India, 1998-99**

<b>Health Problems</b>	<b>% Childless women</b>	<b>% Fertile women</b>	<b>% Total</b>
<b>Maternal health problems</b>			
Ever had an spontaneous abortion	1.7 (32)	0.0 (0)	0.1 (31)
Ever had a terminated pregnancy	23.0 (438)	23.5 (6012)	23.5 (6381)
<b>Reproductive health problems</b>			
Itching	20.7 (399)	17.3 (4425)	17.5 (4760)
Bad odour	14.0 (270)	11.9 (3032)	12.0 (3257)
Abdominal pain	24.0 (464)	18.2 (4652)	18.6 (5046)
Fever	10.0 (194)	8.2 (2085)	8.3 (2249)
Other problems	9.9 (191)	7.9 (2031)	8.1 (2195)
Pain or burning during urination	23.6 (457)	18.7 (4764)	19.0 (5154)
Painful intercourse	17.7 (347)	11.4 (2903)	11.8 (3202)
Blood visible after sex	3.9 (76)	2.0 (512)	2.1 (578)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(1926)</b>	<b>(25579)</b>	<b>(27505)</b>

*Figures in the parentheses show the number of cases*

**Table 3.1: Autonomy and violence among childless women and fertile women in India, 1998-99**

<b>Experience of autonomy and violence</b>	<b>% Childless women</b>	<b>% Fertile women</b>
<b>AUTONOMY</b>		
<b>Who decides what to cook</b>		
Respondent	69.5	74.5
Husband	3.8	5.0
Jointly with husband	6.0	4.8
Others in household	10.9	8.3
Jointly with others in household	9.8	7.4
<b>Who decides on obtaining health care</b>		
Respondent	22.2	24.6
Husband	44.7	46.2
Jointly with husband	19.8	17.4
Others in household	7.3	6.9
Jointly with others in household	6.1	4.9
<b>VIOLENCE*</b>		
By Husband	87.6	92.5
By Mother in law	8.3	4.4
By Father in law	1.3	1.4
By Sister in law	1.5	1.3

*\*Includes only those women who had been beaten or physically mistreated since age 15*

**Table 4.1: Percent of childlessness among divorced women age 21-49 years by selected socio-economic and demographic characteristics, India, 1998-99**

<b>Background</b>	<b>% Childless</b>	<b>Total number of divorced women</b>
<b>Age groups</b>		
21-24	53.1	32
25-29	31.7	60
30-34	39.2	74
35-39	40.0	75
40-44	38.7	31
45-49	22.2	27
<b>Residence</b>		
Urban	30.0	90
Rural	41.1	209
<b>Types of place of residence</b>		
Capital/Large city	36.8	19
Small city	36.4	33
Town	21.6	37
Country side	41.1	209
<b>Education</b>		
Illiterate	36.6	164
Literate, < middle school complete	42.3	71
Middle school complete	*	16
High school complete and above	31.3	48
<b>Husband's education</b>		
Illiterate	33.1	136
Literate, < middle school complete	40.3	62
Middle school complete	38.2	34
High school complete and above	46.2	65
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	40.8	196
Muslims	29.2	72
Christian	*	21
Sikh	*	0
Others	*	10
<b>Caste/tribes</b>		
Scheduled caste	39.3	56
Scheduled tribe	36.1	36
Other backward class	39.6	96
Other	34.6	107
<b>Currently Working</b>		
Yes	40.5	104
No	32.7	195

*Contd...*

<b>Background</b>	<b>% Childless</b>	<b>Total number of divorced women</b>
<b>Working Status</b>		
Working in family farm/business	42.3	26
Employed by someone else	45.5	143
Self-employed	21.2	33
<b>Occupation</b>		
Professional/Technical	27.3	22
Clerical/sales	13.3	15
Labour	47.0	151
Household worker	16.7	6
<b>Standard of living index</b>		
Low	36.7	139
Medium	39.7	116
High	34.7	43
<b>Regions</b>		
Northern	*	14
Central	19.4	31
Eastern	42.3	52
North Eastern	*	15
Western	54.3	70
Southern	34.2	117
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>299</b>