CHAPTER - 3
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOMEN AND FERTILITY

This chapter presents a brief socio-economic and demographic profile of the Eligible Women (defined as currently married woman aged 15-44 years of age at the time of survey) interviewed in the survey. The chapter also gives the fertility profile of the eligible woman as measured by the number of children ever born to her and the completed fertility as measured by the number of children ever born to her along with some other measures such as distribution of total pregnancies of the eligible women by type of outcome, age specific fertility rates, crude birth rate and total fertility rate.

3.1 PROFILE OF THE ELIGIBLE WOMEN

The basic socio-demographic characteristics of the eligible women are presented in Table 3.1. The eligible women interviewed are young as about 55 percent of them were aged 15-29 years at the time of survey and the remaining about 45 percent were aged 30-44 years. The age at consummation of marriage was below the minimum legal age at marriage for females in the country for a majority of the eligible women (69 percent). This figure is 72 percent in rural areas and it is 52 percent in urban areas.

About 92 percent of the eligible women are Hindu, 4 percent are Muslim, 3 percent are Buddhist and the remaining belongs to Jain, Sikh, and Christian. About two-thirds of the eligible women (63 percent) belong to SC, ST or other backward classes. Four in every ten eligible women are illiterate (44 percent) and only about 17 percent have completed 10 or more years of schooling. Comparative data shows that about a quarter of the spouses of the eligible women are illiterate and 30 percent have completed 10 or more years of schooling. With regard type of house, about 4 in every 10 eligible women live in kachcha houses and another about the same live in semi pucca houses. Only 19 percent of the eligible women live in pucca houses.

3.2 CHILDREN EVER BORN AND CHILDREN SURVIVING

Table 3.2 presents data on children ever born (CEB) and children surviving (CS) by selected socio-demographic characteristics of the eligible women. Here we have presented the mean number of children. Further, the results are compared with the baseline data for total children whereas the endline data is also presented for male and female children separately. As may be observed, the mean number of children ever born is 2.76 and the mean number of children surviving is 2.52 per eligible woman. It may be pointed out that the mean CEB and CS have marginally come down in the district as compared to the baseline (2.80 and 2.6 children per woman respectively).
The mean number of CEB and CS is slightly higher for women living in rural areas (2.78 and 2.52 respectively) as compared to urban counterparts (2.67 and 2.49 respectively). Similarly, mean CEB and CS is higher for Muslims (2.99 and 2.74 respectively) and Buddhists (2.98 and 2.68 respectively) and is lower for Hindus (2.75 and 2.50 respectively). The mean number of CEB and CS is highest for STs followed by SCs and it OBCs and is lowest for others. It may be mentioned here that the mean values are not standardised and therefore, the comparisons made here have this limitation. As expected, the mean CEB and CS decline with an increase in the level of education of the eligible women. An illiterate eligible woman, on an average, bears 3.36 children compared to 1.79 children borne by those with at least 10 years of schooling. The mean number of children ever born has also decline with the improvement in type of house (from kachcha to semi pucca and to pucca).

3.3 OUTCOME OF PREGNANCY

Keeping in view the implication of socio-economic, health care and nutritional status of eligible women on pregnancy outcome Table 3.3 presents the distribution of the pregnancies of the eligible women during the reference period by type of outcome (that is live births, stillbirths, spontaneous abortion and induced abortion). In all there were 621 pregnancies reported by the eligible women during the reference period. About 96 percent these pregnancies had a fruitful outcome, that is, they ended as live births. The remaining about 6 percent ended as spontaneous (3 per cent) and induced abortions (less than a percent) and stillbirths (less than a percent). It may useful to mention that in comparison to the baseline, reproductive wastage has gone down since more pregnancies had a positive outcome (share of live births increased from 94.3 in 1998 to 95.5 per cent in 2005).

Positive outcome of the pregnancies has gone up during the evaluation period.

Reproductive wastage has reduced