

STATUS OF WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

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Résumé — Nous examinons le lien entre le statut de la femme et les indicateurs démographiques tels que les taux bruts de naissances et de décès, le taux de mortalité infantile et l'espérance de vie des femmes, après ajustements pour le développement économique. A base de données provenant de 89 pays du tiers monde, nous indiquons qu'une amélioration dans le statut des femmes porte un impact important sur la réduction de la mortalité et de la fécondité. Des modèles causals simplifiés indiquent que le statut des femmes, mesuré par leurs taux d'alphabétisme, a plus d'impact sur les variables démographiques que le développement économique.

Abstract — This paper examines the relationship of the status of women to demographic indicators such as crude birth and death rates, infant mortality rates and female life expectancy at birth, controlling for economic development. Using available data from 89 countries in the Third World, it is shown that an increase in the status of women will have significant payoffs in terms of reducing fertility and mortality. Simplified path models indicate that the status of women as measured by female literacy rate has a greater effect on demographic variables than economic development.

Key Words — status of women, economic development, demographic change

For more than a decade now, it has been well-recognized that development and demographic change in a country are related to the changing status of the women in it. However, the nature and strength of the relationships among these variables are not yet clearly understood. Generalizations across societies have been fraught with methodological problems of conceptualization and measurement. This is not surprising, given the fact that both development and status of women are difficult to define and often bound by culture.

In the past, demographic trends, especially in mortality and fertility, have been examined within the framework of the demographic transition theory. In broad terms, the theory states that in preindustrial societies, both birth and death rates are high, with a slow rate of growth of population. In modern industrial societies, both vital rates are low, resulting in a slow rate of growth. In between there is a stage of transition where mortality rates fall faster than fertility rates, causing a rapid population increase. Level of development and changes in it are considered crucial in the demographic transition. Development reduces death rates fairly rapidly but takes a longer time to cause a decline in birth rates.

This simplified statement about the relationship between development and demographic transition has come under attack in recent times as many exceptions are found in the developing world. Part of the problem is the way development has been measured. Development has often been seen in purely economic terms such as Gross National Product (GNP) per capita, or in such factors as urbanization or industrial labour force. Some countries with high per capita incomes, such as the oil rich Middle East islamic nations, do not show any appreciable change in the demographic variables, whereas other countries at low levels of income have experienced significant reductions in mortality and fertility. These apparent anomalies have resulted in attempts to measure development in more general terms, such as social and economic well-being, encompassing a wide variety of indicators, rather than purely by one variable such as GNP per capita.

Research on the status of women and development in recent years has shown that a direct linear relationship should not be assumed. It is possible for some countries to develop economically without corresponding progress in the status of women. There may even be cases where certain stages of development may actually have a negative effect on women (Boserup, 1970, 1975). Women are often displaced from traditional activities owing to the industrialization of agriculture or factory modes of production of goods and services, resulting in a loss of income and status for women. Moreover, status of women is often determined by long-standing cultural norms and values which are often not sensitive to economic changes. Economic development can be unequally

benefiting upper-class men, with the lower class and women left untouched. Chronic maldistribution of income continues in countries such as India, in spite of an overall increase in development. It may be possible that only at a certain threshold of development and only after a time lag do the effects of development "trickle down" to all groups in a society.

This paper has the objective of investigating the effect of status of women on fertility and mortality levels in the context of development. In countries at more or less the same level of economic development, could differences in fertility and mortality be a function of differences in the status of women in these societies? To answer such a question, one needs to define development in such a way that it at least does not include explicit status of women variables. This obviously is difficult, as it can be argued that development in the broader sense should include improvement in the status of women, such as an increase in their literacy, labour force participation, power and autonomy in various social institutions and greater economic rights. For this study, however, the distinction between economic development and status of women will be made — though the study is cognizant of the interrelationship between them. While economic development will to some extent automatically improve the status of women, the aim of this paper is to show that where additional efforts have been made, resulting in an enhancement of the status of women, the demographic payoff in terms of lower fertility and mortality and longer life span are significant.

Measurement of Variables and Data Sources

Eighty-nine countries in the Third World, whose population in 1980 was more than a million and for which data on most of the variables of interest were available, were selected for this study. Information was collected from United Nations yearbooks, World Bank Development reports, UNESCO reports and various publications of the Population Reference Bureau and other organizations.

It was felt that to measure economic development just by GNP per capita is inadequate, especially for oil-rich economies and for those societies where extreme income inequalities exist. Consequently, a composite measure of development was constructed from three variables, namely, GNP per capita, per cent of labour force in agriculture and per cent in urbanized areas, the relative weights being decided by factor loadings that maximize the common variance. Development is viewed as a process of transformation from a preindustrial or agricultural economy to an industrial market economy. Throughout this

paper, this composite development index is used. The index was further transformed so that the resulting distribution had a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. All countries except the outlier of Kuwait (93) had values between 36 and 77. The countries were ranked and grouped into four quartiles: high, upper middle, lower middle and low. The ranges for the categories were 56 or more, 49 to 55, 44-48 and 43 or less.

Our index was purposely kept simple and includes only economic variables such as GNP per capita and those that indicate the level of industrial and occupational structure, namely per cent in agricultural labour force and extent of urbanization. It does not include indicators such as literacy, public health and sanitation. The main reason is that some of these are included in the status of women measures and others, such as infant mortality rate and life expectancy, are our dependent variables. Admittedly, our development index is limited to some dimensions only and is not a holistic measure of development.

There is no simple way of defining or measuring the status of women across different cultures. Raising the status of women implies their full participation in the social, economic and political life of a society. It means women having control of their own lives, their own physical and mental well-being. It should include greater participation in decision making at all levels and equal opportunity in education, employment, health services, and ownership of economic assets. Variables used here to measure status of women include those that indicate their educational attainment, such as literacy, and enrollment in primary and secondary schools. To the extent that the status of women is relative to that of men, some variables are female-to-male ratios.

Apart from educational attainment, status of women is often influenced by marriage customs. Early marriage, especially to a much older man, puts the woman in many developing countries in a very vulnerable position (Safilios-Rothschild, 1972; Ware, 1981). The pressure to marry early arises from sex disparities in education and employment and the fact that girls are not prepared for anything other than marriage and motherhood. Early marriage means very little contraceptive use and high unplanned fertility in the younger ages, resulting in great strain in the lives of these women. Arranged marriage at a young age to a much older spouse also creates a situation of extreme dependency and powerlessness, especially in an extended family living arrangement (Dixon, 1983). Three measures are used in this study to capture the effects of these marriage patterns in the developing world. They are female age at first marriage, per cent of women 15-19 years old in sexual unions and difference in the mean age at marriage of men and women. The United Nations Declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women, stresses that measures should be taken to ensure the principle of equality of status of the

husband and wife, the right to free choice of spouse and the decision to enter into marriage, and equal rights during marriage and in matters relating to children. Increase in status usually results in a later age at marriage and strongly affects women's attitudes towards childbearing.

It is hypothesized that the female-male difference in mortality in a society is an indicator of the status of women. It is found that in more developed societies, females have a biological advantage over men, with their life spans being as much as eight years longer than that of men. Infant mortality rates for females is significantly lower than that of males. Even in the less developed societies, where improvements have been made in the area of health and life expectancies have increased, the same pattern can be noticed. But in some high mortality societies, such as India and Bangladesh, female mortality is often found to be higher than that of males before age 40 except in the few months immediately after birth. This results in a life expectancy at birth for females which is often a year or two lower than that for males. One may surmise that these have to do with the lower status of women in these societies, where they are less well-fed and receive less medical attention than males, given the strong sex preference for boys rather than girls. In the absence of data on health care delivery by sex of clients and age-specific mortality rates by sex for many of the countries considered here, a simple measure of female-minus-male life expectancies at birth is considered as an index of the status of women. Where these differences are small, and even negative, the status of women is considered to be lower than where large positive differences exist. It should be emphasized that sex difference in life expectancy is considered as an independent variable, measuring status of women even though female life expectancy itself is treated as a dependent variable in the analysis. Here the assumption is that for a given level of female life expectancy and or development, differences in life expectancy by sex are dependent on the status of women. Though it is argued that status of women is the cause of the narrowing or disappearance of the female advantage in life expectancy, our interest here is only the justification of using the difference as a measure of the status of women, namely the smaller or negative the difference, the lesser the status of women and vice versa.

An obviously important and widely used measure of the status of women in any society is the participation of women in the labour force. Work outside the home, especially if it brings an income, confers status on the woman. It also gives her the resources to gain independence and a sense of self-worth (Anker, 1982; Youseff, 1982). However, in this study, due to the nonavailability of comparable data across the societies, labour force participation could not be employed. In developing countries, a great deal of work done by wom-

en, such as working on the family farm, care of domestic animals, and fetching of water and firewood, contribute to the family's economic well-being but are not measured in monetary terms. The wide variations found in the female labour force participation rates in developing countries are often a function of differences in definitions and methods of measurements rather than true differences in the economic activity of women. An acceptable measure, with data for the large number of countries covered here, was simply not available.

Many other measures of status of women, such as economic power derived from ownership of family assets, inheritance patterns, rights in divorce and widowhood, are important but are not considered here owing to the difficulty in gathering such data, which are comparable across a wide range of societies.

TABLE 1. SIMPLE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND STATUS OF WOMEN AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES, 1980

Development & status of women	Crude birth rate	Crude death rate	Infant mortality rate	Female life expectancy at birth
GNP per capita	-.25	-.37	-.33	.35
Development Index (composite of GNP capita, % in agricultural labour force and % urban population)	-.63	-.72	-.69	.80
Female literacy rate	-.74	-.80	-.83	.85
Female age at marriage	-.62	-.67	-.75	.71
% of females 15-19 in union	.54	.64	.68	-.65
Female/Male literacy ratio	-.58	-.72	-.72	.72
Female/Male ratio of primary school enrollment	-.49	-.63	-.70	.62
Female/Male ratio of secondary school enrollment	-.46	-.57	-.61	.59
Male Female diff in age at marriage	.48	.49	.59	-.53
Male Female diff in life expectancy	-.48	-.43	-.54	.56
Status of Women Index (composite of Female literacy, secondary edu ratio, diff in ages at marr & diff in life expectancy)	-.70	-.77	-.84	.81

Number of countries = 89

Findings

Correlations between the various measures of development, status of women and the four dependent variables are presented in Table 1. The lowest correlations are with per capita income. The composite index of economic development, made up of GNP per capita, per cent of agricultural labour force and per cent urban, has much higher correlation coefficients, $-.63$ with crude birth rate to $.80$ with female life expectancy. However, the variable most highly correlated is female literacy rate. The correlation of female literacy rate with crude birth rate (CBR) was $-.74$; crude death rate (CDR) $-.80$; infant mortality rate (IMR) $-.83$; and female life expectancy $+.85$.

The next highest correlations are to be found with female age at marriage. The higher the age at marriage, the lower the fertility and mortality levels, as expected. Surprisingly, the female-to-male ratios indicating relative status were not so strongly correlated with the demographic variables — though all of them were in the predicted directions. Lower ratios indicating lower status of women meant higher fertility and mortality and a shorter life span. Once female literacy is taken into account, it would mean that ratios of female to male literacy or school enrollments are not adding much to the explanation of variations in the demographic variables, something later regression analysis confirms.

The status of women index, which is a composite of four variables (namely, female literacy rate, female-to-male secondary school enrollment ratio, difference in age at marriage and difference in life expectancy), has correlations no higher than those with one variable, namely, female literacy rate. It would seem that one could do just as well by using the female literacy rate as a proxy for the status of women. The high correlations between female literacy rate and other status of women variables prove this point (Table 2). The correlation between economic development index and female literacy rate was only $.53$. This implies that while female literacy goes up with development, a great deal of variation still exists in literacy after controlling for economic development.

The characteristics of countries on various demographic and status of women variables are presented by level of economic development in Table 3. Countries in the lowest level of development have high birth rates, as one would expect: 46.3 per 1,000 population and a crude death rate of 18.5 per 1,000. The mean female life expectancy at birth was only 47.3 years and the infant mortality rate 131.5 per 1,000 live births. Eighteen out of the 23 countries at this low level of development were in Africa, with the rest in Asia. Status of women variables also show the expected pattern. Average age at marriage

TABLE 2. SIMPLE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT
AND FEMALE LITERACY WITH THE OTHER
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

	Development	Female literacy rate
Development	--	.53
Female literacy rate	.53	--
Female age at marriage	.50	.72
Percentage females 15-19 in union	-.42	-.70
Female/male literacy ratio	.41	.93
Female/male primary enrollment	.41	.77
Female/male secondary enrollment	.38	.71
Difference in ages at marriage	-.27	-.62
Difference in life expectancies	.48	.54

TABLE 3. MEAN CHARACTERISTICS BY LEVEL OF
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRIES

	Low Development	Lower Middle Development	Upper Middle Development	High Development
CBR	46.3	42.5	37.3	29.6
CDR	18.5	15.9	9.9	7.8
IMR	131.5	114.9	72.8	49.2
Female Life Exp	47.3	51.4	61.7	67.0
TFR	6.40	5.89	5.31	3.90
Literacy Female '80	23.3%	35.7%	57.0%	73.5%
Female Age at Marriage '80	18.3	19.7	20.8	21.9
% 15-19 in sexual union	43.8%	34.5%	22.2%	16.3%
Literacy ratio	.46	.58	.68	.84
Primary enrollment ratio	.67	.81	.88	.98
Secondary enrollment ratio	.58	.70	.82	.91
Diff in age at marriage (M-F)	6.3	5.9	5.1	4.3
Diff in life exp (M-F)	2.6	2.6	3.2	4.3

is low at 18.3, with about 44 per cent of the women in the age group 15-19 in sexual unions. Female literacy rates average 23.3 per cent in the low development countries. Sex differences in school enrollments were highest in this group of countries. In contrast, in the high development group, with about half of it consisting of Latin American countries, female literacy was three times higher at 73.5 per cent. Most of the educational enrollment ratios were close to unity, showing greater equality among the sexes. Differences in the mean ages at marriage also decrease from 6.3 in the low development group to 4.3 in the high development group of countries.

While it is obvious from Table 3 that economic development is related to status of women, our main objective requires the study of the relationship of status of women to demographic indicators controlling for economic development. Therefore a classification of the 89 countries was made both by level of economic development and female literacy rate (proxy for status of women), which show that countries can be identified at different levels of literacy within the same stages of economic development (Table 4). Literacy rates for females vary a great deal among the countries, from 1 per cent to 95 per cent, with no clear mode in its distribution, and with a mean of 45 per cent. The countries were grouped into four categories, with approximately equal numbers in each. The range for the four groups were 70 per cent or more, 30 to 69 per cent, 10 to 29 per cent and less than 10 per cent.

As in any classificatory scheme, such as the one adopted here, some anomalies can be noticed. Congo falls in the upper middle economic development category whereas Kenya and Tanzania are categorized as low. Since development is a combined index based on GNP, per cent urban and per cent in agricultural labour force, a very high figure in any one may increase the index unduly. However, except in a very few cases, most countries seem to be in the category that one would expect in terms of overall development.

Most of the countries in the high development group have female literacy rates of more than 70 per cent. These countries are almost exclusively in Latin America and East Asia. The rest of the countries in the high development category are made up of Middle East arab nations, where female literacy rates are much lower. These countries have a high development index primarily because of their oil-rich economies rather than a more balanced industrial growth. Moreover, the traditional values of Islam may have hampered an increase in female literacy rates, given the restrictions put on women on work and other activities outside the home. For example, Iran and Saudi Arabia have a high development index but very low female literacy rates. Among the least developed countries about half have female literacy rates less than 10 per cent and are predominantly in Africa, except for Afghanistan and Nepal.

TABLE 4. COUNTRIES CLASSIFIED BY LEVEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND FEMALE LITERACY RATE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
FEMALE LITERACY	HIGH	UPPER MIDDLE	LOWER MIDDLE	LOW
HIGH 70% or more	Singapore Hongkong Korea Taiwan Mexico Cuba Puerto Rico	Trinidad Brazil Colombia Peru Venezuela Argentina Chile Uruguay	Mauritius Philippines Fiji Costa Rica Panama Dom Rep	Jamaica Ecuador Paraguay
UPPER MIDDLE 30-69%	South Africa Iraq Jordan Kuwait Lebanon	Tunisia Ghana Syria Turkey Malaysia El Salvador Guatemala	Nicaragua Bolivia	Sri Lanka
LOWER MIDDLE 10-29%	Iran	Algeria Egypt Morocco	Zambia Zimbabwe Cameroon Zaire Botswana Burma Indonesia	Kenya Lesotho Uganda
LOW <10%	Saudi Arabia	Congo	Ivory Coast Nigeria Senegal Cen Afr Rep India Pakistan Haiti	Rwanda Togo Madagascar Malawi Mozambique Bangladesh
			Benin Liberia Sierra Leone Angola Gabon	Guinea Mali Niger Upper Volta Burundi Ethiopia Somalia Chad Yemen
			China Honduras	Afghanistan Nepal Sudan

There are, however, some noticeable exceptions where the female literacy rates are much higher than the level of development would indicate. Thailand, in Asia, has a long tradition of greater equality in educational opportunities for women. Countries in East Africa that used to be under British rule have also put greater stress on literacy and the greater participation of women in the educational system. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have female literacy rates much higher than other sub-saharan African countries.

Though development and female literacy go together in general, and especially at the higher and lower levels, in the middle stages of economic development, greater variations are to be found in female literacy rates. One may speculate that when countries go through the various stages of development, increases in female literacy need not take place at the same rate as economic development. Strong values inherent in the culture, such as arranged marriages at younger ages, preference for boys in education and labour force participation, clearly defined gender roles emphasizing housewife and motherhood for females (prevalent in many Third World societies), are slow to change.

Mean values on the demographic variables are presented in Table 5 for the countries grouped in Table 4. Within each development category, crude birth rates, crude death rates and infant mortality rates increase with a decrease in literacy. Female life expectancies decrease with a decrease in female literacy.

The differences by female literacy are most evident in the transitional stages, namely, in the upper middle and lower middle levels of economic development. In the upper middle development category, the mean crude birth rate for countries with at least 70 per cent female literacy was 31.6 per 1,000 population, increasing to 39.9 for countries with 30 to 69 per cent female literacy and 44.3 where the literacy rate for women is less than 30 per cent. More drastic changes can be noticed in the infant mortality rates, which increase from 44 to 108 per 1,000 live births as one proceeds from high literacy to low literacy countries. The differences by female literacy are just as pronounced in the lower middle development group. Overall means reveal that differences by female literacy categories are at least as important as, if not more so than, differences by economic development categories. Infant mortality rates increase from 42 per 1,000 live births to 152 with decreasing female literacy, and, correspondingly, female life expectancy at birth decreases from 68 to 45. Differences by level of economic development are slightly less, but not by very much, namely, from 49 to 132 in infant mortality rates and 67 to 47 in female life expectancies.

TABLE 5. MEAN VALUES OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES BY LEVEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND STATUS OF WOMEN (FEMALE LITERACY)

Status of Women (female literacy rate)		Level of Economic Development				Total
		High	Upper Middle	Lower Middle	Low	
High (70% or more)	CBR	24.6	31.6	28.0	36.0	27.9
	CDR	6.7	6.9	6.0	10.5	7.0
	IMR	36.8	44.4	37.0	78.0	42.4
	Fem e_0	70.0	67.7	65.0	57.5	68.1
		N=15	N=9	N=1	N=2	N=27
Upper Middle (30-69%)	CBR	39.2	39.9	41.6	47.0	41.2
	CDR	9.2	10.9	14.1	13.6	12.0
	IMR	62.4	83.4	89.0	98.7	83.1
	Fem e_0	63.0	59.0	54.4	53.7	57.6
		N=5	N=9	N=9	N=3	N=26
Lower Middle (10-29%)	CBR	43.0	44.3	44.3	48.0	45.5
	CDR	13.0	13.0	17.3	17.7	16.4
	IMR	106.0	108.0	130.0	117.4	120.3
	Fem e_0	59.0	56.7	49.3	47.8	50.6
		N=1	N=3	N=7	N=6	N=17
Low (<10%)	CBR	44.0	44.0	44.6	47.0	46.1
	CDR	13.0	18.0	19.0	21.4	20.1
	IMR	112.0	128.0	156.0	155.7	152.0
	Fem e_0	49.0	48.0	46.2	43.8	44.9
		N=1	N=1	N=5	N=12	N=19
Total	CBR	29.6	37.3	42.5	46.3	39.0
	CDR	7.8	9.9	15.9	18.5	13.1
	IMR	49.2	72.8	114.9	131.5	92.5
	Fem e_0	67.0	61.7	51.4	47.3	56.7
		N=22	N=22	N=22	N=23	N=89

CBR = crude birth rate 1980

CDR = crude death rate 1980

IMR = infant mortality rate 1980

Fem e_0 = Female life expectancy at birth

Regression Analysis

Per cent of variance explained in the four dependent demographic variables by various combinations of the independent variables were calculated by standard regression techniques (Table 6). GNP per capita as a measure of the level of development explains only a small amount of variance in all the demo-

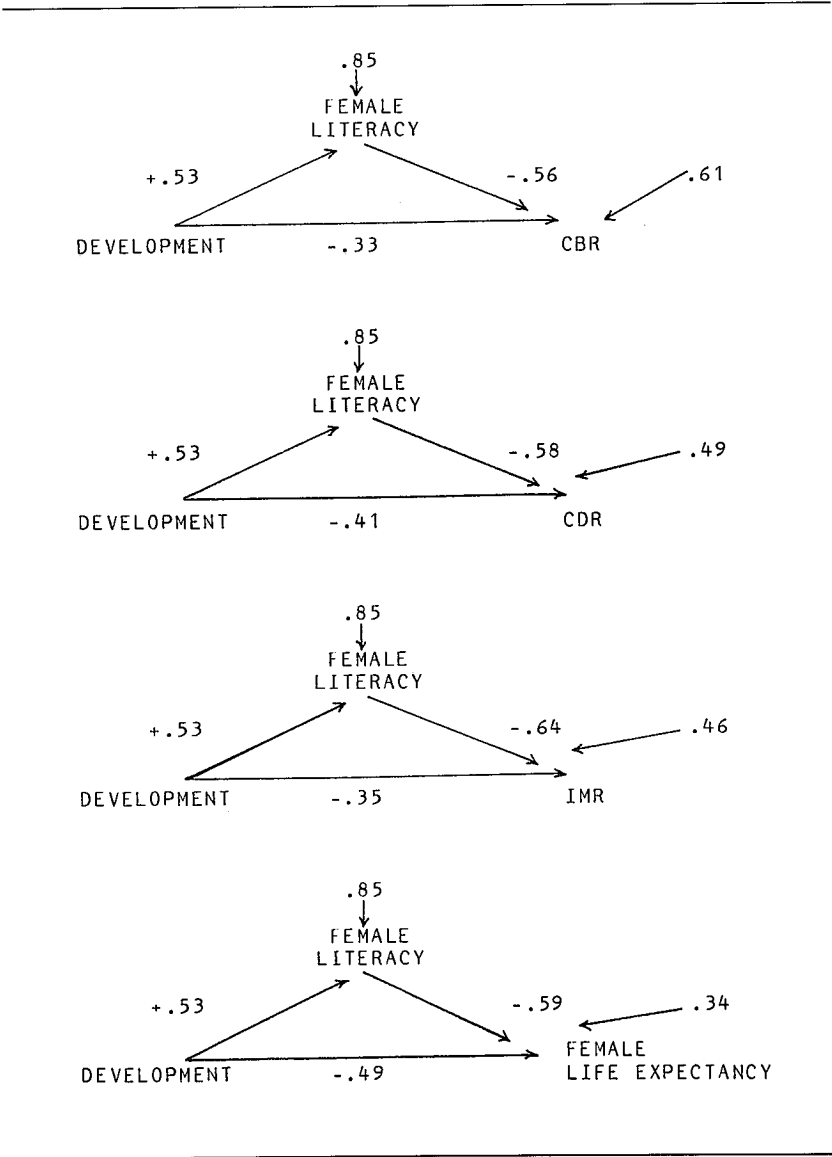
graphic rates, ranging from 6.3 per cent in the CBR to a high of only 12.5 per cent in female life expectancy. Composite development index, which takes into account agricultural labour force and per cent urban in addition to GNP per capita, fares much better, accounting for 40 per cent of the variance in CBR, and up to 63 per cent of the variance in female life expectancy. However, female literacy rate alone explains more variance than the composite development index; 55 per cent in CBR, 64 per cent in CDR, 70 per cent in IMR and 72 per cent in female life expectancy. The two variables together increase the variance explained significantly, denoting the importance of economic development and female educational attainment in changing demographic behaviour. Addition of seven other status of women variables does not increase the variance explained significantly. This is not surprising, as female literacy rate is highly correlated with these variables, and hence most of their effects are already included in that of the female literacy rate.

The path models in Figure 1 show the relative importance of economic development and female literacy rate as causes of demographic behaviour. The path coefficients (direct effects) from female literacy to the demographic variables are greater than the path coefficients from development. The correlation of economic development and CBR of -.63 can be expressed as a direct effect

TABLE 6. PER CENT OF VARIANCE EXPLAINED (R^2) IN THE DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES BY SETS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

	Crude birth rate	Crude death rate	Infant mortality rate	Female life expectancy at birth
GNP per capita only	6.3	13.7	10.9	12.5
Development Index only (GNP & Agricultural labour force & urbanization)	39.9	51.9	48.2	63.4
Female literacy only	54.6	64.1	69.6	71.7
Dev Index & female literacy	62.7	76.4	78.6	88.7
Dev. Index & female literacy + female age at marriage + % females 15-19 in union + female/male literacy ratio + female/male primary enrollment ratio + female/male secondary enrollment ratio + diff in age at marriage by sex	68.5	78.7	83.0	89.8

FIGURE 1. PATH MODELS SHOWING THE EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT AND FEMALE LITERACY ON DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES



of $-.33$ and an indirect effect of $-.30$ through female literacy. Similarly, the correlation of female literacy with CBR of $-.74$ can be decomposed as being made up of a direct effect of $-.56$ and an effect of $-.18$ due to economic development being the common cause of female literacy rate and CBR. We are assuming that economic development has a greater effect on female literacy than the reverse, namely that of female literacy on economic development. The model therefore shows only the arrow from development to female literacy but not in the other direction. We are aware that, in the long run, increasing female literacy must have a positive effect on development. However, because of the above assumption and for a greater parsimony in the model, only the path from development to female literacy is included here. The figures show that in the case of female literacy, most of the effect on CBR is direct; whereas in the case of economic development, indirect effect through female literacy is almost as great as the direct effect. Same patterns are observable in the case of CDR, IMR and female life expectancy.

Conclusion

This brief analysis has been an attempt to show that attention to the improvement of the status of women can have important demographic payoffs apart from those of overall economic development. Much lower fertility in the province of Kerala in India in relation to the other provinces, which are not too different in development, and in countries such as Sri Lanka, Cuba, Thailand and China, is due to the greater participation of women in the educational system, labour force and health care delivery. Our study is analogous to a recent comprehensive study by Lapham and Mauldin, showing that family planning program efforts can have significant effects on the decline of fertility even when the social setting is low (Lapham and Mauldin, 1984). While increasing the status of women is much harder than increasing family planning program inputs, it is something that population planners should give serious attention to in reducing fertility rates in the Third World.

The importance of the status of women in the migration patterns is not addressed in this paper. Substantial differences in the levels and patterns are found across the developing countries in female migration. These are often due to such factors as women's rights to own land (as in some sub-saharan countries), opportunities that await rural migrants to urban areas, and such social customs as taboos against working alongside men (as in some islamic countries). With increased status of women, women will have the same benefits

and hardships as men, and the migration streams will reveal this equal opportunity.

Status of women is a very complex and multidimensional concept. This paper has not done it justice by considering only female literacy as a measure of it, in spite of its power in explaining demographic behaviour. Moreover, a temporal analysis, undertaken at present by the author, relating changes in the status of women to changes in demographic rates, will be a more decisive investigation of its importance for demographic change, and will help sort out issues relating to direction of causality.

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