Population explosion has been the major phenomenon characterizing the countries like Asia, Africa and Latin America. The growth of population has been perceived as a major hurdle for the process of development in these countries. The rapid growth of the population has been the result of the vital factors viz., fertility, mortality and migration.

Human fertility is determinant of the biological replacement and continuance of human society. In the population dynamics fertility is a positive factor through which the population expands, counteracting the force caused by mortality.

Differential fertility envisages an in-depth examination of different variables which affect the fertility level. It provides an insight into the process and pattern of fertility behaviour for formulating suitable population policy. A variety of factors such as social, cultural, religious, economic, demographic and the family planning interventions are directly or indirectly responsible for the fertility differentials at various levels.

The study of differential fertility assumes importance in view of national family planning, which
warrants a thorough understanding of the differentials and determinants of fertility.

The review of literature reveals the increased need for fertility studies so as to understand and to tackle the population problem, and there exists differences among different populations, in terms of the fertility behaviour. Hence the present study is an attempt to understand differential fertility among Hindu, Muslim and Christian religious groups of urban areas of Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh.

The specific objectives of the present study are:

1. To highlight the socio-economic conditions of respondents.

2. To estimate the fertility behaviour among Hindu, Muslim and Christian respondents.

3. To study the impact of religion, education, income and occupation on the fertility of the population.

4. To examine the extent of K.A.P. of family planning among Hindu, Muslims and Christians.

The study is based on the primary data collected from a representative sample of 300 eligible couples.
belonging to Muslim, Christian and Hindu communities drawn from the urban areas of Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh.

The following are the major findings of the present study. The discussion of the socio-economic and demographic features pertaining to three religious communities - Hindu, Muslim and Christian respondents brings forth the following points of observation:

1. Among all respondents the mean age for all religious groups is 31.6 years. Among the respondents, About 79.6 per cent in all three groups have married between 15-25 years of age, among whom Hindus are predominant followed by Muslims and Christians. It was also observed that Hindus had married earlier when compared to Muslims and Christians.

2. The mean age of husbands is 35.28 for all three religious groups.

3. The literacy level among the respondents is 77 per cent and it ranges from primary to technical levels. The illiteracy level is more among Muslims (35 per cent) followed by Hindus and Christians (22 per cent and 12 per cent).
4. It was observed that there is only 12 per cent of illiterates among husbands of respondents of all religious groups. Among the Hindus and Christians the higher levels of literacy of husbands is noticeable. The wives and their husbands among Muslims have poor literacy levels which is some of the causes for higher fertility rates prevalent among them.

5. It was found that Telugu speaking respondents are more predominant followed by Urdu speaking households.

6. It was found out that all the families in this study were nuclear in structure.

7. It can be seen that 74 per cent of the households irrespective of religious groups, have the household size of 4 members and above. Among them, Muslims are the highest (83 per cent), followed by Hindus (79 per cent) and Christians (61 per cent).

8. It was found that 67 per cent of households irrespective of communities live in own houses and remaining 33 per cent are living in rented houses. The majority of Hindus (79 per cent) are living in own houses followed by Muslims (66 per cent) and Christians (56 per cent).
9. It was found that 53 per cent of households of all communities have one to two rooms, while 47 per cent of households have three or more than three rooms.

10. It was observed that 80 per cent of the households have both electricity and water supply in their houses.

11. Irrespective of the religious groups, for 88 per cent of the households, the supply of drinking water to their houses is mainly through protected water supply in taps, provided by the respective Municipalities.

12. Among the respondents of all communities, 77 per cent of houses have flushout toilets, while the remaining families used public latrines (15 per cent), and open field (8 per cent).

13. It was found out that 76 per cent of the households from all the religious communities are using L.P.G. fuel and others are using kerosene and firewood for cooking.

14. It can be seen that 63.33 per cent respondents are housewives in all the religious groups, while the working women constitute only 36.67 per cent. Muslims are the lowest in working force (18 per cent), while Christians are the highest in working force (61 per cent).
15. It was found that 61.67 per cent husbands of respondents are in service occupations in all the communities while remaining 38.33 per cent are employed as labourers, businessmen and self-employed. Hindus and Christians are predominantly in service and business occupations, while Muslims are comparatively lesser.

16. It was seen that the 68.87 per cent of respondents from all the religious groups have a monthly income level from Rs.5001 to 10,000 per month. Muslims are higher with the low income level followed by Hindus and Christians. The mean income for all religious groups is around Rs.6358, Christians have the highest mean income (Rs.6925), followed by Hindus (Rs.6350) and Muslims (Rs.5800).

17. It was observed that 83.66 per cent of households irrespective of the religious groups, get their family income from salaries and wages.

18. Among the respondents it is found that 54 per cent of households irrespective of religious groups are incurring the expenditure from Rs.3001 to Rs.6000 a month. The overall mean expenditure of all religious groups is around Rs.4080. The average size of the family irrespective of the religious groups is 4.34 and the per capita expenditure for a person in the sample households is around Rs.940 per month.
19. It was observed that 66 per cent of respondents irrespective of communities are non-borrowers, among whom Christians are highest (76 per cent), followed by Hindus (65 per cent) and Muslims (58 per cent).

20. It was found that among the borrowers 58.42 per cent of respondents irrespective of religious groups borrow from money lenders and remaining 41.58 per cent borrow from banks, friends and relatives.

21. It was observed that among the borrowers, 36.36 per cent borrow money for housing or celebration of marriage, followed by (20.70 per cent) for daily needs, medical expenditure (20.70), and education of their children (10.89 per cent).

22. The Hindu and Christian households which seem to have same type of movable assets in their houses, while Muslim households show slightly lesser percentage items of assets owned when compared to others, which indicates their slightly lower economic status.

23. The overall mean age at marriage of respondents of all the religious communities is 21.18 year. The Hindu women have the lowest mean age at marriage as 19.75 years followed by Muslims (20.60) and Christians (23.20).
24. It can be seen that the mean age difference between the respondents and their husbands in Hindu community shows a difference of 7.2 years, while in Muslims 4.3 years and for Christians it is 4.15 years of age. On the whole the mean age difference between the respondents and their husbands is 5.22 years.

25. Among all the communities, 74 per cent of respondents have the difference ranging from 1 to 6 years of age to their husbands, while 26 per cent of respondents have more than 7 years of age difference to their husbands. The difference of 7 years and above is found mostly among Hindus and Muslims.

26. The overall sex ratio for the study calculated was found to be 988 females per 1000 males. It was more by 16 women when viewed against Andhra Pradesh ratio of 972 females per 1000 males. A sex ratio of 950 and above can be considered favourable to females in India.

The extensive analysis of the fertility differentials among three religious communities viz., Hindus, Muslims and Christians reveals the following facts.
1. The Muslim respondents had a higher average number of live births (2.72) than the Hindus (2.26) and Christians (2.04). The majority of the respondents (52.7 per cent) of all communities have 1-2 children, this shows that they are aware of the small family norm and the importance of family planning.

The chi-square test reveals that there is significant relationship between the religious communities and the number of live births and thus the hypothesis formulated that there is no relationship between the religious communities and the number of live births is nullified.

2. The literacy level of Hindu respondents shows that the illiterates exhibit higher average of 2.22 live births compared to literates who show 2.01 live births on an average. As the level of education increases for women, the average number of live births decline, but it rises to 2.23 for respondents with graduation and above level.

The Chi-square test reveals that there is significant relationship between the level of education and the number of live births of Hindu respondents and thus the hypothesis formulated that there is no
relationship between the level of education and the number of live births is rejected.

3. Muslim respondents show that illiterates have higher average number of 2.85 live births, compared to literates having 2.64 live births on an average. As the level of education increases for the women, the average number of live births decline. The trend of the average live births dipping steadily upto secondary level and it becomes higher from the intermediate level onwards and again dips slightly from the graduation and above level.

The Chi-square test reveals that there is no significant relationship between the level of education and the number of live births of Muslim respondents and thus the hypothesis formulated that there is no relationship between the level of education and the number of live births is accepted.

4. It was found that among Christian respondents, that the illiterates have predominantly higher average number of live births (2.91), compared to literates (1.92) on an average. The trend of the average number of live births dipping steadily upto secondary level and increase steadily at intermediate level and further dipping steadily with their educational level reaching graduation and above.
The Chi-square test reveals that there is significant relationship between the level of education and the number of live births and thus the hypothesis formulated that there is no relationship between the level of education and the number of live births is rejected. The literacy levels and the number of live births of respondents of all religious communities shows that the literates have slightly lower level of live births when compared to illiterates. The live births rising from 3 and above births are the lowest among Christians (35 per cent) and the highest among Muslims (62 per cent). The Christian women are the highest with 1-2 live births (65 per cent) whereas Muslims are the lowest with 1-2 live births (38 per cent).

The trend of the live birth averages is dipping steadily upto intermediate level for Hindus and upto secondary level to Christians. The average number of live births of Hindus climbs steadily with their educational levels reaching graduation and above levels, and for Christians it climbs steadily at intermediate level and again dips steadily with their education level reaching graduation and above levels. In the case of Muslims, the average number of live births dips only upto secondary level and it increases higher from intermediate
level onwards and again dips slightly from the graduation and above levels.

5. Among Hindu respondents, the house wives, who are around 69 per cent have an average of 2.10 live births; the manual labourers have a higher average of 3.66 live births and employees and self employed show an average of 2.40 and 2.55 live births respectively. The occupation does not seem to be having any relationship between the number of live births of Hindu respondents.

The Chi-square test reveals that there is no significant relationship between the occupational status and the number of live births of Hindu respondents. Thus the hypothesis formulated that there is no relationship between the occupational status and the number of live births is accepted.

6. Among respondents of Muslim community the house wives who are around 80 per cent have an average of 2.62 live births. The manual labourers have a higher average of 3.75 live births. The employees and the self employed have an average of 2.71 and 2.60 live births. The occupation doesn't seem to have any relationship between the number of live births of Muslim respondents.
The Chi-square test reveals that there is no significant relationship between the occupational status and the number of live births of Muslim respondents and thus the hypothesis formulated that there is no relationship between the occupational status and the number of live births is accepted.

7. Respondents of Christian community the employees who are around 45 per cent have an average of 1.77 live births. The manual labourers have a higher average of 4 live births. The self-employed and house wives, have 2.40 and 1.94 live births respectively. The occupation seems to have an inverse relationship with the number of live births of Christian respondents. The employed women tend to have lesser number of live births compared to the house wives. Among the employed, manual labourers have the highest number of live births.

The Chi-square test reveals that there is significant relationship between the occupational status and the number of live births. Thus the hypothesis formulated that there is no relationship between the occupational status and number of live births is nullified.
8. Among the spouses of Hindu respondents the illiterates exhibit higher average of 3.66 live births, compared to the literates who have 2.12 live births on an average. As the level of education increases the average number of live births tends to decline.

9. Among the spouses of Muslim respondents, illiterates have higher average of 3.2 live births compared to literates who have 2.6 live births on an average. The average number of live births is slightly higher for the spouses with primary education level and then it dips slightly from the secondary onwards up to graduation and above level.

10. Among spouses of Christian respondents, the illiterates have predominantly higher average number of live births (3.87) compared to literates with an average of 1.88 live births. As the level of education increases the average number of live births tends to decline.

The literacy levels and the number of live births of the spouses of three communities shows that the literates have slightly lower level of live births compared to non-literates. The live births from 3 and above are the highest among Muslims (62 per cent) and the lowest among Christians (35 per cent). Christians are
the highest who are blessed with 1-2 live births (65 per cent) and Muslims the lowest (38 per cent).

The trend of live birth averages for Hindus and Christians dip steadily at their primary educational level and graduation and above level. In case of Muslims the average number of live births is higher for illiterates and primary only and dips from secondary level onwards to graduation and above level.

11. Among spouses of Hindu community the employees who are around 65 per cent have an average of 1.5 live births. The manual labourers show a highest average number of 4 live births. The businessmen and self-employed show similar live births and more than that of the employees because businessmen have better economic condition and status of affordability, while in case of self-employed with low levels of income, they tend to have an idea that the more the number of members in the family, the greater should be the income level. The occupation seems to be having relationship with the number of live births.

12. Among the spouses of Muslim respondents the employees who are around 40 per cent have an average of 2.17 live births. The self employed show a higher average of 3.8 live births. The businessmen and labourers show an average of 3.2 and 2.9 live births respectively. The
Occupation doesn't seem to have any relationship with the number of live births of Muslim spouses.

13. Among the spouses of Christian community the employees who are around 80 per cent have an average of 1.5 live births. The manual labourers show a higher average number of 4 live births followed by businessmen (3.8) and self-employed (3.5). The occupation seems to have relationship with the number of live births of Christian spouses.

14. Among the Hindu community respondents the average number of live births are less among the families whose monthly income ranges between Rs.5001 - 10,000. And it is around 3 average live births for families whose monthly income is Rs.10,001 and above. Higher income group seems to have higher average number of live births obviously because of affordability.

The Chi-square test reveals that there is no significant relationship between the income level and the number of live births of Hindu respondents, and thus the hypothesis formulated that there is no relationship between the income level and the number of live births is accepted.
15. It was found that among Muslim respondents that the average number of live births are higher among the families with monthly income below Rs.5,000. And it is less among the families whose monthly income ranges between Rs.5,001 - 10,000. It is also found that 3 average live births for the families with monthly income of Rs.10,001 and above. The families with both lower levels of income and higher levels of income have more or less similar average number of live births.

The Chi-square test reveals that there is no significant relationship between the income level and the number of live births of Muslim respondents and thus the hypothesis formulated that there is no relationship between the income level and the number of live births is accepted.

16. Among respondents of Christian community the average number of live births are higher in the families having an income below Rs.5,000 and it is lower (1.82) for the families having monthly income of Rs.5,001 - 10,000. The families with lower income group has higher number of live births because the people feel that the more the number of members in the family, the greater possibility for higher income levels. Hence people with low levels of income tend to have higher fertility rate.
The Chi-square test reveals that there is significant relationship between the income level and the number of live births of Christian respondents. Thus the hypothesis formulated that there is no relationship between the income level and the number of live births is nullified.

Income levels and the number of live births of all the three religious communities reveal the following facts.

The income level of respondents in all the religious communities shows that 38 per cent of Muslims, 28 per cent of Hindus and 14 per cent of Christian families have an income of Rs. 5,000 and below. The average number of live births for all respondents is 2.93. Muslims and Christians within this income bracket below Rs. 5,000 show more or less similar average number of live births. Whereas Hindus have the lowest average number of live births in this income bracket.

The middle income group with monthly income of Rs. 5,001 to 10,000 have the lowest average of 2.11 live births for all the communities. By religion-wise Muslims have the highest average number of live births (2.39) followed by Hindus (2.13) and Christians (1.82).
The fact is that 68.67% per cent of respondents of the study figure are in this income bracket.

The overall average of 2.93 live births for the first income bracket dips to 2.11 live births for middle income group and it climbs to 2.73 live births for the next income bracket.

The number of live births of the respondents in the lower income levels and the higher income levels have more or less similar average number of live births. The middle income groups have the lowest average number of live births. The higher income group seems to have higher average number of live births obviously because of affordability. This is observed in all the communities.

17. Among respondents of Hindu community the average number of live births are more for the age group of below 19 years and it tends to decline among those who are married in the higher ages.

The Chi-square test reveals that there is no significant relationship between the age at marriage and the number of live births and thus the hypothesis formulated in the present study that there is no relationship between the age at marriage and the number of live births is accepted.
18. Among Muslim respondents the average number of live births are more for the age group of below 19 years and it tends to decline for those who are married in the higher ages.

The Chi-square test reveals that there is significant relationship between the age at marriage and the number of live births and so the hypothesis formulated in the study that there is no relationship between the age at marriage and the number of live births is rejected.

19. Among Christian respondents, the average number of live births are higher for the age group of below 19 years and it tends to decline for those who are married in the higher ages.

The Chi-square test reveals that there is significant relationship between the age at marriage and the number of live births and thus the hypothesis formulated in the study that there is no relationship between the age at marriage and the number of live births is nullified.

The overall inference for all three religious communities (viz., Hindus, Muslims and Christians) in terms of the age at marriage and number of live births
shows that the earlier the age at marriage, the higher is the fertility, the higher the age at marriage the lower is the fertility.

20. Among all religious communities, the average number of live births are more for the migrants (2.50) when compared with non-migrants (2.27). Muslims show highest average number of live births (2.86) for migrants and 2.66 for non-migrants. Christians show the lowest average of 2.19 live births for migrants and 2.00 for non-migrants.

The detailed examination of the knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning pertaining to three religious groups - Hindus, Muslims, Christian respondents highlight the following points of observation.

1. It was found that the sterilization is the most preferred method of family planning among all the religious groups. There is no variation in terms of their opinion on sterilization among the communities, but the use of condom, loop and oral pills show lower preference among the Muslims.

2. Regarding the knowledge about the place of availability of family planning methods, Christians have a higher
level of awareness with 95 per cent followed by Hindus (93 per cent) and the least among the Muslims (78 per cent).

3. The information about family planning benefits and methods for 52 per cent of respondents in all communities was obtained through personal source - radio, cinema/TV and newspapers. The information through relatives and friends was provided to 42 per cent of respondents, and the information through family planning centres reached to only 6 per cent of respondents on the whole.

4. Among all the communities, 62.7 per cent of respondents visited family planning centres on the advice of their husbands, 22 per cent of them due to self initiative. This shows that the awareness of women is becoming more due to the exposure in urban areas.

5. It was found that 95 per cent of the respondents of all religious groups are aware of abortions. Christians and Hindus (97.5 per cent) show more or less similar level of awareness about abortion, while Muslims show slightly lower level (90 per cent).

6. The respondents' knowledge about incentives offered to those who undergo family planning sterilization shows that the awareness is very much present in 91 per cent of
respondents irrespective of communities. Muslims show lower level of awareness (81 per cent) when compared to Hindus and Christians, on an average of 96 per cent each.

7. It was found that 72.3 per cent of respondents among all communities prefer spacing of child births. The high level of favourable attitude is co-terminus with the idea of small family norm.

8. Respondents from all the communities 74.7 per cent show favourable attitude towards family planning, of which Christians show most favourable attitude (87 per cent) followed by Hindus (81 per cent) and the Muslims show the lowest percentage of favourable attitude (56 per cent).

9. Among all the communities, 45 per cent of respondents are in favour of abortion as a method of family planning and 26.3 per cent respondents have emphatically disapproved and another 28.7 per cent of respondents couldn't give any concrete answer either favourable or not favourable. Christians show highest favourable attitude for abortion (66 per cent), while Muslims show least favourable attitude (30 per cent) towards abortion.

10. It was observed that 68.7 per cent of respondents of all religious groups show unfavourable attitude towards vasectomy. This fact is confirmed as 73.03 per cent of
respondents among adopters have undergone tubectomy operations. This is due to the mis-giving that vasectomy results in the loss of stamina and cause inability to work in the males who are bread winners for the family.

11. Respondents from all the communities, 71.7 per cent have indicated their favourable attitude towards tubectomy. The respondents themselves have expressed the high favourable attitude towards tubectomy indicates the fact that women have accepted their position as secondary to men atleast in this matter of family planning.

12. It can be seen that 78 per cent of respondents of all communities favoured small family. Among them Christians and Hindus are in higher percentage when compared to Muslims. The average sizes of the family in Christians is 4.04, Hindus 4.26, and in Muslims 4.72 members.

13. Among all the communities 37 per cent of the respondents are in favour of one child norm, while 53.7 per cent are not in favour of one child norm. 59 per cent Christians show favourable attitude for one child, while 32 per cent of Hindus and 20 per cent of Muslims are in favour of one child norm.

14. It was a significant fact that among the adopters of family planning methods, Hindus are the highest (77 per
cent) followed by Christians (75 per cent) and Muslims are with 52 per cent.

15. Another significant fact is that 73.03 per cent of respondents have adopted tubectomy, 11.27 per cent of respondents have adopted vasectomy while 10.78 per cent used condom, loop 4.4 per cent practiced loop and only 0.49 per cent of respondents used oral pill. Among methods of family planning irrespective of the communities respondents prefer to choose permanent method of family planning namely either tubectomy or vasectomy.

16. It is worth noting that only 10.67 per cent of respondents from all the religious groups are contraceptive users. Half of the respondents obtained the contraceptives from Government Hospitals and primary health centres and other half have obtained through chemists.

17. Among the adopters of family planning methods 79.90 per cent of respondents have no complaints while 20.10 per cent of respondents had minor complaints like irregular periods, bleeding and putting on weight etc.

18. Among the respondents who had some complaints 48.8 per cent of them have consulted doctors, 12.2 per cent have consulted friends and relatives and 39 per cent of
respondents did not consult any one at the event of getting any problem in the post adoptive stage of family planning methods.

19. It was found that 64 per cent of respondents of all communities favoured 2 years spacing between two consecutive children, while 13.3 per cent feel it can be 3 years and about 22.7 per cent opined that it should be only one year.

20. It was found out that 42 per cent of Hindus, 23 per cent of Muslims and 21 per cent of Christians preferred male children, while 10 per cent of Hindus, 15 per cent of Muslims and 13 per cent of Christians prefer female children. Among Muslims (62 per cent) and Christians (66 per cent) welcome child of any sex whereas among Hindus only 48 per cent indicated this preference.

21. It was found that among adopters of family planning Muslims have the highest average of 2.92 live births and Christians have the lowest average of 1.98 live births. Muslim and Hindu adopters have higher number of live births ranging from 3 to 5 and above live births, while Christians are more with 1-2 live births followed by Hindus and Muslims have the lowest percentage with 1-2 live births. The Muslims have lowest number of adopters who have had highest number of live births, Hindus have
highest number of adopters and highest number of live births. The average number of live births is lower among family planning adopters (2.25) than among the non-adopters (2.52). Muslims show the highest percentage of live births as there are 66.67 per cent of the non-adopters who have births ranging from 3 and above live births, Christians show the lowest percentage of live births, as there are 37.33 per cent adopters and 28 per cent non-adopters.

22. Among the respondents of all the communities 38.7 per cent have opined that the role of the son was very important for performing rituals and religious practices, while 36.3 per cent say some important and 25 per cent said as not at all important.

23. Among all the respondents, 67 per cent of Hindus, 61 per cent of Muslims and 47 per cent of Christians say that they would depend on their children in their old age. It may be a fact that children continue to be source of dependence for the parents in their old age in the absence of adequate institutional care and lack of social security.
24. It can be seen that 78 per cent of respondents of all the communities feel that girls should be married above 18 and before 27 years of age.

25. It was observed that 94 per cent of respondents of all religious groups believe in the existence of God, Christians have a lowest percentage of non-believers (3 per cent).

26. Among all the religious groups, 65 per cent of respondents were in favour of daily worship and 35 per cent were for weekly worship. Muslims seem to be more devoted in worship and hence more influence of their religious values on their lives. This is confirmed by their attitude towards family planning and their practice of family planning.

27. It was also observed that Muslims (59 per cent) preferred weekly fast followed by Hindus (56 per cent) and Christians (53 per cent). Hindus are slightly higher in number who intend to observe monthly fast when compared to Muslims and Christians.

28. Among the respondents of all communities 35.3 per cent view that family planning is a sin, of whom Muslims are predominant (90 per cent). About 60 per cent of
respondents opined that family planning is acceptable to the religion of whom Christians are the highest (94 per cent) followed by Hindus (82 per cent) and only 3 per cent among Muslim respondents.

Conclusion

On the strength of the above findings, as a way of conclusion an attempt is made to respond to the issues raised in the objectives of the study.

The socio-economic and demographic profile of the respondents pertaining to the Muslim, Christian and Hindu respondents highlights the fact that the respondents are in the middle and lower middle class households having urban characteristics of higher literacy level, service occupations and other characteristics of urban middle class.

The second objective is to estimate the fertility behaviour among Hindu, Muslim and Christian respondents. The data shows that Muslims show the highest fertility rate (2.72) compared to Hindus and Christians, and they are predominant in having live births of 3-4 and 5 and plus. This clearly depicts the highest fertility rate among the Muslim community. On the other hand Christians show the lowest fertility (2.04) rate and the Hindus (2.26) who figure in between these communities.
The analysis of the fertility differentials brings forth the following fact that religion in the case of Muslims does influence the fertility behaviour in terms of opposing the free adoption of family planning. For Christians religion doesn't seem to be influencing the fertility behaviour which is indicated by highest number of lower live births, low fertility rate and higher percentage of adoption of family planning. Hindus show the second highest fertility rate but highest percentage of adoption of family planning.

The factor of education does influence the fertility behaviour among Hindus and Christians, and not in the case of Muslims.

The occupation as a determinant of fertility behaviour doesn't seem to be in the case of Hindus and Muslims, while in Christians it has an inverse relationship.

Income as a determinant of fertility behaviour is not noticeable in Hindus and Muslims, while in Christians it influences the fertility behaviour.

The examination of the K.A.P. of family planning shows that the Hindus show the highest percentage of K.A.P. (79.4 per cent) followed by Christians (78.4 per cent) and
Muslims (57.3 per cent). Hence the fertility differentials show relative variation among the religious communities.

In the light of the above findings, the main hypotheses of the study namely, religion, education, income and occupation have no impact on the fertility behaviour of Hindus, Muslims and Christians is no longer tenable, have proved to be true.

The related hypothetical proposition whether the hypotheses are true or not, have also been verified. Thus,

1. The lower the socio-economic status, the higher the fertility among religious groups.

2. There is an inverse relationship between fertility and education.

3. Muslims have higher fertility than Hindus and Christians.

4. Christians show lower fertility compared to Hindus and Muslims.

5. There is no relationship between the occupational status and the number of live births among Hindus and Muslims whereas an inverse relationship is seen among Christians.
6. There is no relationship between the income level and the number of live births among Hindus and Muslims, and in case of Christians there is relationship between income level and the number of live births.

7. Early marriage indicates higher fertility rate among the religious groups.

8. There is variability in the level of K.A.P. among the Hindu, Muslim and Christian religious groups.

9. Muslim respondents' attitudes are less favourable to accept family planning methods than the other religions.

10. Adoption of sterilization methods and contraceptives is high among Hindus and Christians.

By way of conclusion, it is emphasized here that, there is considerable evidence to strengthen the argument that, the fertility varies for these three religious groups in the urban areas of Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. These facts, as policy implications should be taken into consideration in the planning and implementation of new strategies for effective family planning campaign in this area.