CHAPTER-VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
The status enjoyed by women in any society is an index of the standard of its social organisation. Traditionally women perform major roles of reproduction, working in the kitchen etc. Recently many modern roles have been taken up by women. In the recent years considerable attention has been focused on the need for raising the status of women. The United Nations observed the year 1975 as the International Women's Year. It recommended that it is not reasonable to take care of economic, political, religious and philosophical development without giving equal status to women to that of men.

In this context it is important to consider not only the material conditions but also the prevalent belief system and religious values, particularly in the developing societies like India where from the point of view of religion, the position of the husband is equated with God by describing him as the pati parameshvara (husband, the God) for a woman. The implication of this is not only subjugation of women to their husbands but also suffering in terms of a number of denials including food and material objects. Ultimately, women's health suffer. Since the women, both biologically and socially bear children and
are to carry on the household chores, they further become vulnerable to various sufferings and fertility related problems.

It has been stated that the fertility behaviour of women is greatly determined by their social status which they enjoy in the society by virtue of their education, economic position and decision-making. A negative association is believed to exist between the status of women and fertility.

Changes in the status and role of women are accompanied by changes in the family size and structure. The World Population Plan of Action (U.N., 1974) also recognised that reduction in national population growth rates will depend on broad-based socio-economic changes including modifications in the status and roles of women. A traditional woman has almost no life outside the home and does not belong to secular and voluntary organisation; she herself surrenders to her husband's wishes. Conceptualisation of a tradition-oriented woman, therefore, suggests that it is not only the employment of women per se, but a whole complex of attitudes and practices attached to the women's roles that distinguishes the modern situation from the traditional one.

Speaking about the 'special interest' which women's status has for demographers, Blake (1974) states that the nature of women's position and the variations in its articulation with the status of women,
influence important variables with which students of population are concerned, in particular to reproductive behaviour and the size and the quality of labour force. *Gendell and Murry* (1970) believed "One of the most important causes of the decline in the birth rate in the economically advanced countries has been the change in the social status of women reflected by the entry of women into productive labour. All these theoretical perspectives are presented in Chapter-I of this research work.

With a tremendous increase in the number of publications in developed and developing countries, a researcher has to survey the available literature relating to his field of study in order to keep himself abreast in his field and related areas of study and research. A researcher has to select the kinds of literature to be reviewed and determine the purposes for which he has to study them. The literature-review starts with the selection of problems for research, continues through the various stages of the research process and ends with report writings. The reasons for review of literature are: (i) to gain a background knowledge of the research topic, (ii) to identify the concepts relating to it, potential relationships between them and to formulate researchable hypothesis, (iii) to identify appropriate methodology, research design, methods of measuring concepts and techniques of analysis; (iv) to identify data sources used by other researchers, (v) and to learn how others structured the reports.
Chapter-III of the present work deals with research design which has been described as a logical study of the principles guiding scientific investigation. The present study design is descriptive in nature and incorporates the following aims and objectives:

1. The study aims at finding out female domination in all aspects of family and its management including procreation and reproduction.

2. The study also aims at finding out the correlation between woman's participation in household decision-making and her say in matters of fertility.

3. Furthermore, the study aims at exploring the relationship between woman and her fertility behaviour.

4. It is considered pertinent to trace out the affinity between the level of education of women and their fertility behaviour.

5. It is desired that an attempt should be made to explore the correlation between woman's desire for male child and her socio-economic status.

6. In many a case, it is evinced that the rate of reproduction is controlled by the parents-in-law of women, despite their higher educational and economic status. As a result, the researcher
deems it proper to examine the dominance pattern of in-laws and the fertility decision of women.

7. It becomes quite appropriate to examine the fertility decision of such migrant women in relation to their socio-economic condition and their length of staying.

8. The link between an adverse condition of working women and their fertility decisions needs to be examined.

9. To examine the relationship between exposure to mass media and fertility behaviour of women.

10. To know whether or not the occupation of husbands is a key determinant of women's status.

11. To know whether women's socio-economic status is dependant on the caste in the region under study.

This study is considered significant because the vociferous claim favouring equal status of women brought a sea change. Further more, awareness of the rights of the girl-child brought down the rate of reproduction due to less emphasis on begetting a male child. All these facts establish that along with the enhancement of the status of women decision regarding fertility underwent changes. Therefore, it is quite pertinent and justified to undertake such a study so as
to examine decision regarding fertility in respect of women's class position, level of education, family structure, residential background, socio-economic status, migratory status and dominance pattern in the family.

The following hypotheses underpin the present study:

1. Occupation of husbands is associated with the women status in the study region.

2. Women's education enhances autonomy in the reproductive decision-making.

3. Women's desire for male child results in higher reproduction.

4. Interference of in-laws in matters of begetting children also accounts for higher fertility in very many cases.

5. Migrant women do not desire bigger size of families.

6. Females' exposure to mass media is positively related with the extent of use of knowledge, opinion, and practice of contraception.

7. Women's socio-economic status depends on their castes in the region under study.
The universe of the present study comprises of a cluster of three villages such as Paramahansa, 15 Km. east of Cuttack city, Balichaturi, 16 Km. north of Cuttack city, Kulailo, 32 km. west of Cuttack city and Nayabazar, Badambadi, Jobra, Buxibazar, Ranihat, Telengabazar areas of Cuttack city.

The researcher has adopted sampling method for selection of the 200 respondents in the present study. The sampling procedure has been an intermixture of purposive and convenience types.

After the data were collected from the required number of informants, their informations were classified in the groups according to their resemblance and affinities. Here classification has been done carefully, expressed in the concise, logical and intelligible form to visualise the points of similarity and dissimilarity. The application of Chi-Square as a measure of association between different variables has also been made in the present study.

Chapter-IV gives an account of the research setting. This incorporates a brief description of the geographical location, population, socio-cultural set-up and also other amenities and facilities available in the study region.

Chapter-V describes the socio-economic profile of the respondents, such as age, age at marriage, native place, religion, education, caste,
occupation, type of family, monthly income, marital status, educational qualification of the respondents' husbands, occupation of the respondents' husband, age difference between respondents and their husbands and type of marriage of the respondents which are considered significant in the study of fertility because the fertility behaviour is associated with these variables. Age is considered significant because the fertility behaviour is delimited to a particular phase of life of woman i.e. between attainment of puberty and menopause. It is found in the study that the majority of the respondents are in the highly reproductive age, i.e., 20 year to 30 years. The inverse association between the age at marriage and fertility is evident in this research work. The highest number of respondents (40%) get married between the age of 20-30 years and the lowest numbers of respondents (10%) get married below 20 years of age.

The frequency distribution of the respondents on the basis of their native place reveals that the respondents of the urban area constitute 70% of the sample and the ruralites account for 30% only. Since it is considered that the value system attached to various factors in different religions can be regarded as responsible for fertility differentials to a certain extent, the researcher has attempted to distribute the respondents religion-wise. The tabulated data regarding religion show that the Hindus constitute 75% of the total sample, followed by Muslims and Christians, (10% each).
The level of education of the respondents is considered most significant in determining the fertility behaviour. The frequency distribution of the respondents on the basis of their educational level shows that 25% of the respondents are from primary level, 24% are from middle educational level, 22.5% are from high school level, 18.5% are from college level, and rest 10% of the respondents are illiterate. As it is found that in the Indian society women's socio-economic status is very much associated with their caste, the frequency distribution on the basis of caste is shown in the Table-5.6. This depicts that the majority of the respondents (32%) belong to the functional caste group, and only small number (42.5%) of respondents belong to upper caste group.

In India, gainful employment of women outside the home has been very low due to high rate of female illiteracy and lack of suitable employment opportunities. The frequency distribution of the respondents in regard to the employment of women show that 36% of the respondents are house-wives, 20% of the respondents are engaged in other activities such as, tailoring, terracotta, handicraft, members in SHG etc. along with their household work. Out of the rest 44% of the respondents, 24% are in private jobs. As regards the data relating to the type of family of the respondents, it is found that a vast majority of the respondents (74%) are from the joint families. The respondents who came from the nuclear families constituted 26% of the sample only.
Economic independence empowers women and enables them to take part in decision-making. Therefore, it is considered worthwhile to distribute the respondents on the basis of their income. Data relating the same have been presented in Table-5.9. The same reveal that 36% of the respondents engaged in household activities, have invisible income, 20% of the respondents have their income within the range of Rs. 2000/- to Rs. 5000/- and rest 25.5% get more than Rs. 5000/- as above monthly income.

In the study of fertility behaviour the consideration of marital status assume significance because only married women are expected to beget children. Unmarried motherhood is a myth in Indian society. Data regarding the marital status in the present study reveal that majority of the respondents (86%) belong to married group and only few respondents (14%) fall in the divorced and widowed category. Education and occupation of the respondents' husband are considered significant in the present study because it is normally expected that the higher the level of education and occupation of the husband, the more conscious the woman is in regard to small family norms. Data in this regard reveal that majority of the husband of the respondents (30%) have acquired college level education and are also engaged in Government service (42.5%).

The type of marriage practised by women has emerged as an important variable influencing status of women. The data collected
in this regard show that a majority of the respondents (55.5%) had either love or love-cum-arranged type of marriage, and rest (44.5%) of the respondents has purely arranged type of marriage. As difference in age of the spouses is considered significant in regulating fertility behaviour, the same has been explored in the present chapter which shows that in a large number of cases (55%) the age difference is within 5 years.

In Chapter-VI, an attempt has been made to determine the status of women in the study region on the basis of different socio-economic indicators such as: (i) ownership of property, (ii) freedom to pursue education, (iii) maintaining bank accounts, (iv) freedom to argue in case of difference of opinion, (v) joint decision-making on family size/timing of birth of first children and spacing of children, (vi) joint decision-making on use of contraceptive, (vii) freedom to spend money without resentment of the husband and in-laws, (viii) joint decision-making in regard to education and welfare of children, and (ix) freedom to exercise franchise/contest election without consulting the husband and in-laws.

The data in this regard reveal that out of 200 respondents, 5.5% of the respondents belong to the higher status group in the study region; and 24.5% of the respondents also belong to the lower status
group, but the rest of the respondents, i.e. 70% belong to the middle status group.

In Chapter-VII, the researcher has humbly attempted at examining the relationship between status of women and husbands' occupation, women's education and autonomy in the reproductive decision-making, women's desire for male children and higher reproduction, interference of in-laws and fertility, migrant women and family size, females' exposure to mass media and opinion towards the practice of contraceptives, women's caste and their socio-economic status in the study region.

Data collected in this regard reveal that majority (63.63%) of the women forming the higher status group are married to businessmen. This is followed by government servants (46.42%). The statistical score of Chi Square confirms the association between the level of education and autonomy in the reproductive decision making, women's desire for male children and higher reproduction, interference of in-laws and fertility, type of women and ideal family size, exposure to mass media and inclination towards practice of contraceptives, women's caste and socio-economic status.

Suggestions:

In the light of the above findings, prevailing fertility trends and available literature, the researcher is inclined to conclude with the following few humble suggestions:
1) First and foremost consideration should be to improve the educational level of girls so that they could play a more active role in family planning and fertility control.

2) Along with educational development job opportunities should also be created for females. These two factors alone may play a major role in enhancing the status of women and hence in reducing fertility.

3) Unless autonomy in decision-making in regard to fertility is given to women, neither education nor employment can really reduce the fertility. So responsibilities in decision taking process should also be given to females.

4) Since duration of marriage has emerged as the most important determinant of fertility, age at marriage of girls should be raised so that duration of marriage could be curtailed. Promoting literacy among girls can go a long way in that direction.

5) There is a need to promote small family size norms particularly among the weaker sections of the society. Provisions of old age security can play on important role in this regard.

6) In view of the fact that infant and child mortality has emerged as an important variable in causing fertility variation, the infant and
child welfare programmes need to be expanded and made available to the weaker sections of the society.

7) Joint decision-making on matters of family size remains low among the traditional women. Inter-spouse communication between spouses would facilitate planning of family size and also the practice of contraceptives. Screening of educational and motivational films to males and females together on themes such as pregnancy and child birth, small family, adoption of contraceptives, etc. would promote inter-spouse communication and joint decision-making in these matters inhibiting shyness of the females.

8) Arranging small group meetings separately for males and females addressed by satisfied adapters and health persons would also facilitate joint decision-making on such personal matters as sex, family size and contraception.

9) Family welfare programme needs to be given new orientation as, at present, it has emerged as a family limitation programme only and sterilization has emerged as the most important method of birth control, notwithstanding the population policy which aims at total welfare of the family and community.

10) There is a need to popularise temporary methods of birth control particularly among the young couple of the weaker sections.

11) Rather than reaching the target, the emphasis on family welfare programme should be to make the services available to the people and to encourage them to use contraceptives through more effective advertisement in mass media.