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Family Size and Socioeconomic Status in Humla District, Nepal

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Introduction: Purpose and Motivation

- What is the relationship between family size and socioeconomic status? Do women with more financial security choose to have more or fewer children in Humla District of Nepal?
- This is important in the field of international development because family planning, maternal health, and contraception are affected by how many children a woman has
- The purpose of this research is to understand what factors influence family size and find patterns in the behavior of women in Humla.

Materials and Methods

- I used information from surveys taken by ISIS volunteers of 368 households in Humla District, Nepal
- Correlations and linear regressions between socioeconomic status indicators and the number of children each woman had in the last five years revealed relationships between fertility and socioeconomic status

Age Specific Fertility

Age of Women	Number of Women	Births to Women in Age Group (last 5 years)	Age Specific Birth Rate
15-19	20	7	.35
20-24	49	55	1.122
25-29	68	79	1.162
30-34	65	62	.954
35-39	49	45	.918
40-44	29	28	.966
Over 45	10	7	.7
			TFR=6.172

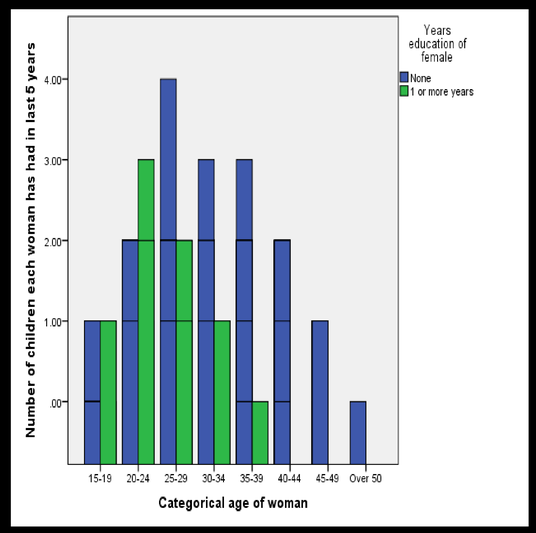
The total fertility rate of women in Humla District is 6.172 children per woman.

Socioeconomic Status Indicators Related to Fertility

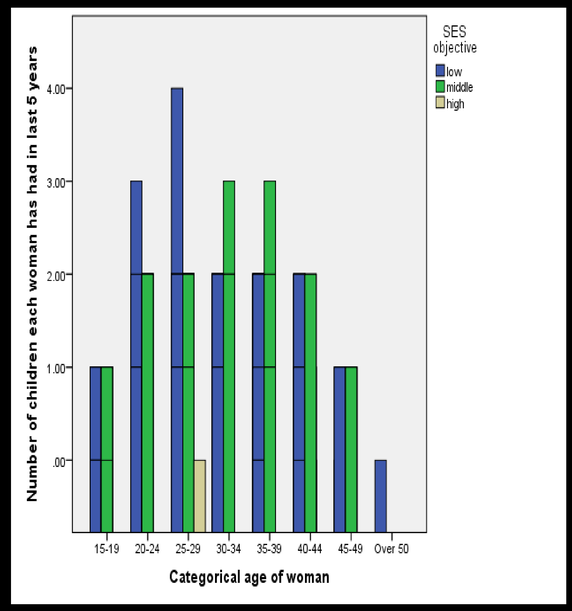
- Sex of household head is negatively correlated with fertility rate, with a correlation coefficient of -.164, meaning that female led households have fewer children.
- Amount of household debt is positively correlated with fertility rate, with a coefficient of .279, meaning that families with higher debt, and thus lower socioeconomic resources, had higher fertility.
- Land size is positively correlated with fertility, with a correlation coefficient of .206, meaning that families with more land typically had more children. More children are needed to help work the land, which is why the relationship to fertility is in the opposite direction from other SES indicators.

More Education is Related to Lower Fertility

In every age category except years 20-24, educated women had fewer children.



Higher Income Women Exercise Delayed Fertility



Why?

Perhaps due to finishing education

Conclusions and Implications

- **The relationship between fertility and socioeconomic status is not as simple as expected. Higher SES doesn't necessarily mean fewer children in this region because families live agricultural lifestyles**
- **Having more children is essential for working the land**
- **Education has a negative relationship with fertility rates, but didn't appear as significant in correlations because the majority of the women in Humla have zero years of education**
- **This is important to the field of medical anthropology because it highlights the factors interacting with education for family planning, and demonstrates that larger families can be beneficial in agricultural communities**

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