

AN INQUIRY INTO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF FERTILITY
AMONG THE INDIAN TAMIL ESTATE POPULATION : A CASE STUDY
OF THE KOTOPOLA A.G.A. DIVISION IN THE MATARA DISTRICT

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Although several fertility surveys conducted on a national scale have indicated that the fertility of the Indian Tamil estate population in Sri Lanka merits in-depth investigation, few studies have made a conscious effort to do so. The present study was designed with the specific objective of inquiring into the socio-economic factors determining the fertility of the Indian Tamil estate population. The A.G.A. division of Kotapola was selected for the study because it has the largest percentage of plantation workers among the A.G.A. divisions of the Matara district, and also the largest percentage of Indian Tamil estate labour in the district. The Kotapola A.G.A. division accounts for nearly 80% of the resident Indian Tamil estate population within the district.

Among the variables that received special attention in this study were age at marriage of the mother, literacy, educational attainment of the husband and the wife, use and non-use of contraceptives, while the dependent variable was children ever born, (CEB). It was clear that reproductive decisions and behaviour are influenced by pressures emanating from extended family members and other members of the immediate community in which they live. With few opportunities for individual economic advancement and security, the community encourages frequent childbearing. Another important fact that was revealed was that their knowledge of family planning and related services was extremely poor.