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Journal

World Cultures eJournal, 16(1)

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Publication Date

2008-03-04

Peer reviewed

Cross-Cultural Comparison of Family Size and Composition between Muslim and Santal Communities in Rural Bangladesh

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Every family adapts from one generation to another to specific environment in which they live and meet their human needs. In so doing, the couples of the family desire and plan ideal family size and composition and reproduce accordingly. They continue their reproductive behavior until they acquire planned family size. This paper, based on primary data collected from March to October, 2005 including 100 couples chosen by Cluster random sample (70 couples from Muslim community and 30 couples from Santal community), is an attempt to compare and explain family size and composition: ideal, actual, expected and adoption practice between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. Average current age of the study participants was 37.89 for husband and 29.89 for wife of the Muslim sample and 38.39 for husband and 29.04 for wife of the Santal sample. The analyses of independent sample t-tests revealed that there are significant differences in ideal, and expected family size and composition as well as adoption practice, but significant similarities in actual and usual family size and composition between the two communities selected.

1. INTRODUCTION

Every eligible couple of the family has demographic and reproductive goals. In order to fulfill these goals every couple determines ideal family size and composition and behaves accordingly (Coombs and Fernandez 1978). The behavior of the couple is influenced by their respective cultural background and socio-economic conditions in which they live. Cross-cultural studies clearly reveal that family size and composition varies from one society to another as well as between the different segments (family, community, region, ethnicity, race, religion, class etc) of the same society (Galt and Smith 1979; Blake 1966; Coombs and Freedman 1979; Jiobu and Marshall 1977; Frenkel 1976; Bulatao 1981; Hirschman and Rindfuss 1982; White 1982; Udry and Cliquet 1982; Coombs and Sun 1978). The book, *Culture and Reproduction* edited by W. Penn Handwerker (1986) is a systematic work and valuable contribution to demographic theory in cultural perspective. The book includes diverse fields in demographic thinking and discusses how cultural and biological determinants influence couple's fertility behavior. The book also explains data presented in cross-cultural perspective by which human cultural and biological variations determine variations in human fertility behavior.

A. H. Galt and L J. Smith (1979) explain reproductive behavior at both the cultural system and the individual household levels. The former shows reproductive behavior influenced by norms, which are understood as cultural responses to environmental, including social and political, constraints. The latter employs micro-economic demand theory to focus upon variations in reproductive behavior among individual families. The cultural ecological approach leads to consideration of the environmental basis of culturally shared preferences about family size or child spacing. According to the authors, when the micro-economic multivariate analysis approach is used in connection with cultural ecological analysis, the

explanation of variation around central tendencies within the sample becomes more important.

Judith Blake (1966), comparing Catholics and non-Catholics, shows that religious culture influences ideal family size. Catholics exhibit larger ideal family size than non-Catholics, because religious values motivate Catholics to have more children than non-Catholics. Freedman and Coombs (1966) find that Catholics prefer and expect more children than non-Catholics. They relate Catholics' preference for more children to regularity of church attendance, adjustment for religion etc. They also relate family size to unemployment, changes in income, economic position, expenditure that, to some extent, influence family size or fertility. Ru-Chi Chou and Susannah Brown (1968) compare family sizes of Roman Catholics and Non-Catholics in Great Britain. In so doing they relate family size to occupation, age, and age at marriage rather than religion. They find out average difference of family size between Roman Catholics and others. In another study R. Jiobu and H. Marshall (1977) examine variations in family size among Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Filipino Americans and native whites. In order to highlight minority status hypothesis they interpret inter-ethnic and inter-racial fertility differences in the United States and examine minority status as an influence on family size and compositional differences between minority and native white populations.

Rodolfo A. Bulatao's (1981) conducted a comparative study of the advantages and disadvantages that wives and husbands in the Philippines, South Korea, and the United States attach to having another child. In this study the differences in advantages and disadvantages across parities suggest a multistage model of family formation, with perceptions of successive children linked to periods in family development. It is argued that this multistage model is consistent with changes in the value of children in the fertility transition. J. Richard Udry and R. L. Cliquet (1982) explore cross-culturally the relationship between age at menarche and timing and sequence of subsequent events in the reproductive process. They interpret findings in light of biological process leading to social interpretations of readiness for reproduction and document persisting biological differences between early and late maturing women in the United States, Belgium, Pakistan, Malay and Malaysia and. In a study Che-Fu Lee and Kuang- Hua Lin (1976) measure inter-live birth interval distribution based on comparative analyses of "effective fecundity", the mean length and variation of postpartum infecundity, and the parity progression ratio from the data of United States marriage cohorts and from an Indian sample.

Clarence Maloney, K. M. Ashraful Aziz and Profulla C. Sarker's (1981; see Aziz and Maloney 1985) research is a valuable contribution to the linkage between cultural belief system and fertility in Bangladesh. The effects of numerous social, cultural, religious factors on fertility behavior are examined in the major religious communities in Bangladesh. The main purpose of this paper is to compare and explain family size and composition between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. The results presented in the findings section of the paper clearly show that there are both similarities and differences in family size and composition between the communities.

2. DATA AND METHOD

The study design used in this study was cross-cultural one in which both qualitative and quantitative (subjective and objective) aspects of family size and composition were included for valid comparison. In the village Kalna, situated in the Talonda union of Tanore Upazila of Rajshahi district, two distinct cultural communities, Muslim and Santal, live side by side as neighbors in the same geographical setting. The village contains about 380 families: 300 Muslim and the rest Santal. In order to compare family size and composition, two separate sampling units of the communities were developed: one for Muslim community and another for Santal Community. Each community was considered as a cluster and individual families were considered as study units. Seventy families in the Muslim cluster community and 30 families in the Santal cluster community were randomly selected through cluster sampling.

A total of 100 couples from both the communities were interviewed to collect raw data on the indicators of ideal, actual, expected and adoption practice. The structured questionnaire contained both open- and close-ended questions. The questionnaire was pre-tested and necessary adjustments were made after the pre-test results were analyzed. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS. The author collected and analyzed the data presented in this article.

3. RESULTS

Description of Family Size and Composition Norms

Normative behavior towards family size and composition is embedded in community cultural framework in which values, beliefs, and attitudes determine membership patterns of the family (Akber and Halim 1978). Generally, family size and composition norms refer to prescribed and proscribed behavior by which someone attains membership in the family through birth, marriage or adoption. Accordingly, after marriage every woman achieves membership in her husband's or husband's parents' family wherein reproductive behavior of the couples about ideal, actual and expected family size and composition is influenced by cultural and socio-economic characteristics.

1. Ideal Family Size and Composition

In order to continue family system from one generation to the next every family has a plan for age at marriage. After marriage every couple also plans to have children, exhibit preferences for children of particular sex, and to rear them to maturity. Tables one to seven represent ideal family size and composition including ideal age at marriage for male and female, ideal interval of birth spacing between marriage and first child even between children, ideal number of children- son and daughter. About 33 percent of the Muslim sample and 55 percent of Santal sample informed us that under 20 years a male should be married, 25 percent of the Muslims and 20 percent of Santals responded that a male should be married within at 21 - 24 age group, but 41 percent of the Muslims and 24 percent of the

Santals said a male should be married at the age 25 and above. On the other hand, marriage for the female only 27.59 percent of the Santals responded a female should be married at age 15, about 57 percent of the Muslims and 58 percent of the Santals said that a female should be married by parents within 16 - 18 age category, and 42 percent of the Muslims and 13 percent of the Santals indicated that parents should marry their daughter at the age 19 and above.

Table 1. Ideal Age of First Marriage for Males

Ideal age at marriage for males	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Under 20	23	33.82	16	55.17	39
21-24	17	25.00	6	20.69	23
25-28	26	38.24	6	20.69	32
29 +	2	2.94	1	3.45	3
Total	68	100.00	29	100.00	97

Table 2. Ideal Age of First Marriage for Females

Ideal age at marriage for females	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Under 15	0	0.00	8	27.59	8
16-18	39	57.35	17	58.62	56
19-21	26	38.24	4	13.79	30
22-24	2	2.94	0	0.00	2
25+	1	1.47	0	0.00	1
Total	68	100.00	29	100.00	97

Table 3. Ideal Interval between Marriage and First Child

Ideal Interval in Years	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
1 – 2	51	75.00	13	44.83	64
3 – 4	12	17.65	14	48.28	26
5 – 6	5	7.35	2	6.90	7
Total	68	100.00	29	100.00	97

Table 4. Ideal Interval of Birth Spacing between Children

Ideal Interval in Years	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
1 – 2	15	21.74	2	6.90	17
3 – 4	44	63.77	20	68.97	64
5 – 6	9	13.24	7	24.14	17
Total	68	100.00	29	100.00	97

Table 5. Ideal Age of Mother to End Child Bearing

Ideal Age of Mother in Years	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
25 – 30	1	1.47	0	0.00	1
31 – 35	38	55.88	7	24.14	45
36 – 40	24	35.29	17	58.62	41
41 – 45	4	5.88	5	17.24	9
46 – 49	1	1.47	0	0.00	1
Total	68	100.00	29	100.00	97

Table 6. Ideal Number of Sons in a Family

Ideal Age of Mother in Years	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
1	34	50.00	5	17.24	39
2	33	48.53	23	79.31	56
3	1	1.47	0	0/00	1
4+	0	0.00	1	3.45	1
Total	68	100.00	29	100.00	97

Table 7. Ideal Number of Daughters in a Family

Ideal Age of Mother in Years	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
1	54	79.41	17	58.62	71
2	13	19.12	11	37.93	24
3	1	1.47	0	0.00	1
4+	0	0.00	1	3.45	1
Total	68	100.00	29	100.00	97

About 75 percent of the Muslims and 44 percent of the Santals said that after one or two years of marriage a couple should have a child, but 24 percent of the Muslims and 55 percent of the Santals said that birth spacing between marriage and first child should be three or more years, but ideal birth spacing between children or first and second child is longer for both communities. Sixty-three percent of the Muslims and 68 percent of the Santals responded that birth spacing between children should be three or four years. The few members of either community selected an ideal spacing of either one or two years or five

years or more. About 44 percent of the Muslims and 13 percent of the Santals said that families should have one to two children, 54 percent of the Muslims and 79 percent of the Santals thought that they should have three to four children, but a few in each community opined that they should have five or more children. About 50 and 79 percent of the Muslims and 17 and 58 percent of the Santals informed us that they should have one son and one daughter respectively, but 48 and 19 percent of the Muslims and 79 and 37 percent of the Santals responded that they should have two of both sexes.

2. Actual Family Size and Composition

Characteristics of actual family size and composition include the wife's number of pregnancies, number of live and still births, birth order and spacing, child mortality, and sex ratios of children. Tables eight to 21 detail the results.

Table eight shows that 57 percent of Muslim women and 51 percent of the Santal women had conceived one or two times, 21 percent of the Muslims and 24 percent of the Santals conceived three or four times, 11 percent of the Muslims and 8 percent of the Santals responded that they conceived five or more times, but 8 percent of the Muslims and 6 percent of the Santals had experienced no pregnancies. Only six women in the Muslim sample and two women in the Santal sample did not conceive due to infertility or infecundity and/or because they were newly married. Among the sampled women who were pregnant in their life cycle, 90% women of both the communities begotten one or more live births and only 7% of the Muslim women and 23% of the Santal women generated one or more still birth.

Table 8. Number of Pregnancies

Number of Pregnancies	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
None	8.70	6.90
1-2	57.97	51.72
3-4	21.74	24.14
5-6	5.80	6.90
7+	5.80	1.35

Table 9. Number of Living Births

Number of Living Births	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
1-2	68.25	55.56
3-4	22.22	25.93
5-6	3.17	11.11
7+	6.35	7.41

In birth order 50%, 58%, 52%, 35% of the Muslim women and 44%, 40%, 54%, 20% of the Santal women for first, second, third and fourth birth were male and 49%, 42%, 47%, 64% of the Muslim women and 55%, 60%, 45% and 80% of the Santal women at those birth order were female respectively. Birth spacing of newborn baby of the two communities is interesting to note here. Birth spacing between marriage and first child, between first and second, and second and third was from lower to higher in years: 68%, 39%, 41% of Muslim women and 52%, 63%, 54% of the Santal women were one to two years; 17%, 41%, 47% of the Muslim and 24%, 21%, and 18% of the Santal were three to four years; about 14%, 19%, 11% of the Muslim and 24%, 15%, 27% of the Santal were five and more years.

Table 10. Sex of First Child

Sex of First Child	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
Male	50.79	44.44
Female	49.21	55.56

Table 11. Sex of Second Child

Sex of Second Child	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
Male	58.00	40.00
Female	42.00	60.00

Table 12. Sex of Third Child

Sex of Third Child	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
Male	52.17	54.55
Female	47.83	45.45

Table 13. Sex of Fourth Child

Sex of Fourth Child	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
Male	35.71	20.00
Female	64.29	80.00

Table 14. Birth Spacing between Marriage and First Child

Years	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
1-2	68.97	52.00
3-4	17.24	24.00
5-6	8.62	8.00
7+	5.10	16.00

Table 15. Birth Spacing between First and Second Child

Years	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
1-2	68.97	52.00
3-4	17.24	24.00
5-6	8.62	8.00
7+	5.10	16.00

Table 16. Birth Spacing between Second and Third Child

Years	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
1-2	41.18	54.55
3-4	47.06	18.18
5-6	11.76	18.18
7+	0.00	9.09

The table also shows child mortality and birth control methods adopted by the eligible couples of the communities. We found that child mortality was low and birth control adoption was high in the communities due to expansion of family planning programs in the study area. Although the mortality rate of sons of both the communities was the same, daughter mortality of the Santal sample was higher than the Muslim was (Santal, 5.06% and Muslim, 3.13%). The Santal sample also exhibited a higher rate of stillbirth than the Muslim sample (8.42% versus 3.33%).

Table 17. Child Mortality

Mortality	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
Son Died	5.63	5.06
Daughter Died	3.13	5.06
Still Birth	3.33	8.42

The women who were pregnant in their reproductive life, 68.25 percent of the Muslim and 55.56 percent of the Santal reproduced from one to two live births, 22.22 percent of the Muslim and 25.53 percent of the Santal reproduced three to four live births, and only 10 percent of the Muslim and 18 percent of the Santal generated five or more live births. Among the given live births 90 percent for son and 47.23 percent for daughter of the Muslim and 92.86 percent for son and 85 percent for daughter of the Santal one to two survived per family respectively, 8 and 12 percent of the Muslim and 7.14 and 15 percent of the Santal three or more son and daughter survived per family.

Table 18. Number of Surviving Children

Number Surviving	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
1-2	92.00	92.86
3-4	4.00	7.14
5+	4.00	0.00

Table 19. Number of Surviving Daughters

Number Surviving	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
1-2	47.23	85.00
3-4	12.77	10.00
5+	0.00	5.00

Table 20. Spouse Using Birth Control When Birth Control Used

Spouse using Birth Control	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
Husband	12.24	0.00
Wife	87.76	100.00

Table 21. Birth Control Method of Wife

Spouse using Birth Control	Muslims (%)	Santals (%)
Tubectomy	25.58	75.00
Oral Pills	44.19	2.33
Other	30.23	22.67

Note: Birth order and birth spacing was accounted for four children by families and child mortality was counted for the number of live births.

3. Expected Family Size and Composition

Expected family size and composition includes expectation of more children, sex preference, reasons for sex preference and agreement about it between husband and wife. Table 22 shows that among the eligible women who were capable of reproducing, about 33 percent of the Muslim sample and 57 percent of the Santal sample expected more children, but 66 percent of the Muslim and 42 percent of the Santal had no expectation for more children.

Table 22. Expectation for More Children

Expect More Children?	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Yes	22	33.85	16	57.14	38
No	43	66.15	12	42.86	55
Total	65	100.00	28	100.00	93

The couples that expected more children had sex preference in expectation. About 59 percent of the Muslims and 68 percent of the Santals preferred additional sons, but 40 percent of the Muslims and 31 percent of the Santal preferred additional girls. About 38 percent of the Muslims and 45 percent of the Santals preferred son for old age security, 53 percent of the Muslims and 54 percent of the Santals preferred son for family line continuation and only 7 percent of the Muslims preferred son for power and dominance. All of the Muslims preferred girls for emotional support, while 20 percent of the Santals preferred girl for household chores and 80 percent preferred them emotional support. In respect of son or daughter preference conjugal opinion is interesting to note. Most of the couples of both communities agreed with one another about son or daughter preference (about 76 percent of the Muslims and 64 percent of the Santals respectively), but 23 percent of the Muslim, and 35 percent of the Santal couples did not agree with one another. The table also shows that most of the eligible couples of the Muslim were using birth control methods, but 68 percent of the Santal couples were not using any birth control method. The table also shows that birth control methods were female oriented.

Table 23. Sex Preferences of Expected Children

Sex preference	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Son	13	59.09	11	68.75	24
Daughter	9	40.91	5	31.25	14
Total	22	100.00	16	100.00	93

Table 24. Reasons for Son Preference

Reason for Preference	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Old Age Security	5	38.46	5	45.45	10
Family Line Continuation	7	53.85	6	54.55	13
Power and dominance	1	7.69	0	0.00	1
Total	13	100.00	11	100.00	24

Table 25. Reasons for Daughter Preference

Reason for Preference	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Household Chores	0	0.00	1	20.00	1
Emotional Support	9	100.00	4	80.00	13
Total	9	100.00	5	100.00	14

Table 26. Couple Agreement on Sex Preference

Agreement?	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Couple Agrees	16	76.19	11	64.71	27
Couple Disagrees	5	23.81	6	35.29	11
Total	21	100.00	17	100.00	38

4. Adoption Practices

The table 27 shows that 97 percent of Muslims and 76 percent of the Santal stated that they did not intend to adopt children, but about one percent of the Muslims and three percent of the Santals had an adopted son and one percent of the Muslims and 20 percent of the Santals adopted a son-in-law for old age security and for conducting family functions.

Table 27. Adoption Status

Adoption Status	Muslims		Santals		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
None	68	97.14	23	76.67	91
As a Son	1	1.43	1	3.33	2
Son-in-law	1	1.43	6	20.00	7
Total	70	100.00	30	100.00	100

5. Usual Family Size and Composition

Usual family size includes those members who are more suitable to live together in the family according to circumstances as well as family head's consideration. Tables 28 to 30 show family size and composition for the Muslim and Santal communities. The data in this table show an average family size of 4.13 persons for the Muslim sample and 4.30 persons for the Santal sample. The distribution of the sex was 47.24 percent male and 52.76 percent female for the Muslim sample, compared to 46.72 percent male and 53.28 percent female for the Santal sample.

Table 28. Family Size

Number of People	Muslim			Santal			Total
	Frequency	Percent	Number	Frequency	Percent	Number	
1	1	1.43	1	0	0.00	0	1
2	5	7.14	10	3	10.00	6	8
3	15	21.43	45	8	26.67	24	23
4	25	35.71	100	9	30.00	36	34
5	17	24.29	85	3	10.00	15	20
6	3	4.29	18	4	13.33	24	7
7	3	4.29	21	2	6.67	14	5
9	1	1.43	9	0	0.00	0	1
10	0	0.00	0	1	3.33	10	1
Total	70	100.00	289	30	100.00	129	100

Table 29. Number of Males in the Family

Number of Males	Muslim			Santal			Total
	Frequency	Percent	Number	Frequency	Percent	Number	
0	1	1.43	0	2	6.67	0	3
1	22	31.43	22	11	36.67	11	33
2	29	41.43	58	7	23.33	14	36
3	15	21.43	45	8	26.67	24	23
4+	3	4.29	12	2	6.67	8	5
Total	70	100.00	137	30	100.00	57	100

Table 30. Number of Females in the Family

Number of Females	Muslim			Santal			Total
	Frequency	Percent	Number	Frequency	Percent	Number	
0	1	1.43	0	0	0.00	0	1
1	19	27.14	19	9	30.00	9	28
2	27	38.57	54	9	30.00	18	36
3	15	21.43	45	7	23.33	21	22
4+	8	11.43	35	5	16.67	24	13
Total	70	100.00	153	30	100.00	72	100

About 27 percent (both male and female) of the Muslim family members (both sexes) and 36 percent of the Santal family members were children younger than 15 years old. Fifty-two percent of Muslim family members and 34 percent of the Santal family members were between 16 and 30 years old, while full adults (31 to 59 years old) comprised 17 percent of the members of Muslim families and 23 percent of the Santal families. The old (over 60 years old) made up only two percent of the Muslim family members and six percent of the Santal family members.

Comparison of Family Size and Composition

In this section we compare family size and composition in the Muslim and Santal communities. Independent sample *t* test were used to compare mean family size and composition in the two communities.

1. Ideal Family Size and Composition

Table 31 indicates that the two communities do not differ on three measures: ideal age at marriage for males, the length of the interval between marriage and first child, and the ideal length for birth spacing. The ideal age of marriage for females is significantly lower for the Santals than for the Muslims (16.38 years versus 18.71 years). The Santals expressed a preference for a higher number of children, both boys and girls, than the Muslims. We found that most of the Santal parents think the more the children the more the income earners add to the family.

Table 31. Comparison: Ideal Family Size and Composition

Test	Summary Statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error)	Levene's test for Homogeneity of Variances (F, p- value)	T-test (t, df, p-value)
Ideal Age at marriage: males	M: 23.03, 2.67, 0.32 S: 21.86, 2.81, 0.52	0.27, 0.61	1.94, 95, 0.06
Ideal Age at marriage: females	M: 18.71, 1.66, 0.20 S: 16.38, 2.77, 0.51	15.08, 0.00**	5.12, 95, 0.00**
Ideal Interval: marriage and first child	M: 2.34, 0.99, 0.12 S: 2.69, 1.11, 0.21	1.52, 0.22	-1.55, 95, 0.13
Ideal Interval: birth spacing	M: 3.16, 0.96, 0.12 S: 3.52, 0.95, 0.18	0.92, 0.34	0.34, 95, 0.10
Ideal number of children	M: 2.74, 0.77, 0.09 S: 3.38, 1.21, 0.22	1.32, 0.25	-3.16, 95, 0.00**
Ideal number: sons	M: 1.51, 0.53, 0.06 S: 1.93, 0.70, 0.13	6.12, 0.02**	-3.19, 95, 0.00**
Ideal number: daughters	M: 1.22, 0.45, 0.05 S: 1.48, 0.69, 0.13	9.66, 0.00**	-2.22, 95, 0.03**

M (Muslim, N = 68) S (Santal, N = 29)

** P < 0.05

2. Actual Family Size and Composition

Table 32 presents data on actual family size and composition for the two communities. Although there are slight differences in the means of these variables, none of the differences are statistically significant, suggesting the two communities exhibit similar family size and composition. We observed that Christian missionary and family planning workers in the study area successfully motivate the Santal couples to build up small family size norms in consideration of mother and child health and economic situations, but could not motivate Muslim couples. We found that both male and female of the Santal work outside the home.

Table 32. Comparison: Actual Family Size and Composition

Test	Summary Statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error, N)	Levene's test for Homogeneity of Variances (F, p- value)	T-test (t, df, p-value)
Number of pregnancies	M: 2.48, 1.91, 0.23, 69 S: 3.00, 2.58, 0.48, 29	2.39, 0.13	-1.11, 96, 0.27
Number of live births	M: 2.54, 1.79, 0.22, 63 S: 2.93, 2.42, 0.47, 27	1.49, 0.23	-0.84, 88, 0.40
Birth space: Marriage and first child	M: 2.48, 1.68, 0.22, 58 S: 3.04, 2.30, 0.46, 25	4.29, 0.04**	-1.24, 81, 0.22
Birth space: first and second child	M: 3.37, 1.97, 0.29, 46 S: 2.84, 1.83, 0.42, 19	0.06 0.80	1.00, 63, 0.32
Birth space: second and third child	M: 2.88, 1.11, 0.27, 17 S: 3.36, 2.69, 0.81, 11	6.10, 0.02**	-0.66, 26, 0.52
Number of surviving children	M: 2.04, 1.47, 0.18, 70 S: 2.07, 1.64, 0.30, 30	0.36, 0.55	-0.07, 98, 0.94
Number of surviving daughters	M: 1.49, 0.78, 0.11, 47 S: 1.95, 1.23, 0.28, 20	0.47, 0.50	-0.85, 65, 0.07
Number of deaths: sons	M: 8.11, 2.49, 0.30, 70 S: 8.03, 2.53, 0.46, 30	0.07, 0.80	0.15, 98, 0.88
Number of deaths: daughters	M: 8.54, 1.87, 0.22, 70 S: 8.00, 2.60, 0.48, 30	5.29, 0.02	1.18, 98, 0.24

** P < 0.05

3. Expected Family Size and Composition

Expected family size and composition depends on discrepancy between ideal and actual family size and composition, that is how many sons and daughters are suitable to their ideal family system and how many sons and daughters survived in their reproductive life cycle. Table 33 represents data on expected family size and composition including expectation of more children, sex preference in expectation, reasons for sex preference (son and daughter), and conjugal status of sex preference and adoption practice.

Table 33. Comparison: Actual Expected Family Size and Composition

Variables	Summary Statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error, N)	Levene's test for Homogeneity of Variances (F, p- value)	T-test (t, df, p-value)
Expectation of more children	M: 2.19, 1.96, 0.23, 70 S: 1.93, 1.98, 0.36, 30	0.00, 0.95	0.59, 98, 0.56
Sex preference in expectation	M: 6.61, 3.56, 0.43, 70 S: 4.90, 3.92, 0.72, 30	4.85, 0.03	2.14, 98, 0.04**
Reasons for son preference	M: 7.93, 2.34, 0.29, 70 S: 6.87, 3.10, 0.57, 30	7.37, 0.01**	1.84, 98, 0.07
Reasons for daughter preference	M: 8.36, 1.69, 0.20, 70 S: 8.13, 1.98, 0.36, 30	1.36, 0.25	0.58, 98, 0.57
Conjugal status of sex preference	M: 6.67, 3.59, 0.43, 70 S: 4.67, 3.87, 0.71, 30	3.22, 0.08	2.50, 98, 0.01**
Adoption	M: 1.06, 0.38, 0.05, 70 S: 1.63, 1.22, 0.22, 30	64.55, 0.00**	-3.60, 98, 0.00**

** P < 0.05

The data show that 33.85% of the Muslim couples (average 2.19) and 57.14% (average 1.93) of the Santal expected more children. Among them, 59.09% of the Muslim and 68.75% of the Santal expected more sons, but 40.91% of the Muslim and 31.25% of the Santal (average for Muslim 3.66 and 3.92 for Santal) expected more daughters.

The table also shows that average 1.06 Muslim couples and 1.63 Santal couples adopted a son or son-in-law. Although there are similarities in connection with expectation of more children, reasons for son and daughter preference, but there are significant variations in respect of sex preference and conjugal status in sex preference and adoption practice. According to value of children theory and generational wealth flows theory expectation of additional son or daughter is economically, socially and culturally rational, because our respondents reports that children, in general, make the family happy, a male child links with the inter generational continuity of the family, and ensures security in old age and other vulnerable situations (Gill, 1995; Handwerker, 1986).

4. Usual Family Size and Composition

Table 34 shows that average family size of the Muslim sample is 4.13 persons, with an average of 1.96 males and 2.19 females. This compares with a Santal average of 4.30 persons, with 1.90 males and 2.40 females. The communities do not differ in these averages.

Table 34. Comparison: Usual Family Size and Composition

Variables	Summary Statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error, N)	Levene's test for Homogeneity of Variances (F, p- value)	T-test (t, df, p-value)
Family size	M: 4.13, 1.34, 0.16, 70 S: 4.30, 1.76, 0.32, 30	2.87, 0.09	-0.53, 98, 0.60
Males	M: 1.96, 0.88, 0.10, 70 S: 1.90, 1.09, 0.20, 30	4.17, 0.04**	0.28, 98, 0.78
Females	M: 2.19, 1.11, 0.13, 70 S: 2.40, 1.40, 0.26, 30	1.94, 0.17	-0.82, 98, 0.42

** P <0.05

4. DISCUSSION

Family size and composition mainly include demographic and reproductive aspects of family behavior. These compose of the number of family members who are incorporated by marriage, blood/birth, and adoption norms that vary across the societies and even within different segments of a society. The results of this study clearly show both similarities and differences in Muslim and Santal communities.

Although both communities- Muslim and Santal are patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal in nature, there are some differences in variables such as ideal age at marriage for female, ideal number of children; son and daughter preferences. These results are more or less consistent with the previous research (Maloney, Aziz, and Sarker 1981; Chou and Brown 1966; Blake 1966).

The communities under study demonstrated significant similarities in the number of pregnancies, live births, children surviving, sons surviving, son or daughter death, and birth spacing between the children born. In our study area both the Muslim and Santal communities adopt son and son-in-law in rare cases due to absence of son in the family. They both think when they will be older, the adopted son or son-in-law will feed and support them and manage the family properly. At last, although ideal and expected family size and composition differ with one another, actual and usual family size and composition are the same between the Muslim and Santal Communities in rural Bangladesh.

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