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Emerging Social Issues Division

Social Policy and Population Section

Asia-Pacific Population Journal

Article **The Effect of Social Interaction on Fertility Goals and Behaviour Among Women in Bangladesh**

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Abstract This paper uses the concept of social interaction to try to understand the decline of fertility in Bangladesh, a decline that occurred despite minimal change in conventional measures of development. Two measures of demographic change are analysed: the proportion of women wanting no more children and the proportion of women using either traditional or modern methods of fertility control. Two sets of data are used: the 1993-1994 Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey and a set of ethnographic interviews. The data lend support to taking social interaction into account in our analyses of fertility change. The attitudes held and information passed on by a woman's social network (husband, female peers and family planning workers) influence her judgements on appropriate family size, whether she should regulate her fertility and the "best" method for her to use.

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