

Perception and Role of Husbands about Family Planning In a Rural Area of West Bengal

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Abstract:

Background: Un-met needs of family planning among married women in India were found to be 13.2% as per NFHS (III)¹. These may be the need for limiting the family or for spacing. Since decisions about family planning should be taken jointly by both the partners, male role in family planning is universally important.

Objective: The study was conducted with the objective of assessing the perception & role of husbands about family planning in a rural area of West Bengal.

Methodology: It was a community based observational, descriptive study; cross-sectional in design; conducted in Birpur village under Banspool Sub Centre, North 24 Parganas during May- July 2015. Married couples in the said village constituted the study population. Sampling was done by simple random sampling technique and applying inclusion and exclusion criteria. Information was collected by house to house visit and interviewing the wives of selected samples using a pre-designed & pre-tested data collection form.

Result: Among husbands 11.1% had not heard about family planning. Knowledge about No Scalpel Vasectomy (NSV) was absent in 54.4% of husbands, 90% do not know about the place to avail NSV and Tubectomy was not known among 18.8% husbands. Currently 10% couples were not using any type of contraceptives. Decision of family planning was taken jointly by 84.4% of couples and 5.5% couples had external influence for taking decision.

Conclusion: There is gap in awareness about family planning among husbands, particularly about permanent methods.

Key Words: Family Planning, Role, Husband, Rural, West Bengal.

I. Introduction

Male responsibility does not end only in fathering a child. They also have a vital role in making decision of family planning. This is for prosperity of the family and ultimately development of the country. The role of the husbands becomes more important in a country like India where males mostly are the head of families and principal decision makers. Here, most married women take a backseat regarding decision of family planning and leave the entire decision on their husbands. In rural areas with poor literacy and other inadvertent factors this step leads to far reaching consequences. Poor knowledge of reproductive health issues among men may pose barriers for women to seek care for health and related problems. Keeping these in mind, International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo1994² and subsequently World Conference on Women, Beijing1995³ highlighted the neglected area of male involvement in family planning and reproductive health in context of equality in gender relations and responsible sexual behavior. NFHS (III) found that 13.2% married women had unmet needs of family planning with about 6% women have need for spacing. With this background the current study was conducted to study the role of husbands in family planning in a village in North 24 Parganas District of West Bengal.

II. Methodology

It was a community based observational, descriptive study; cross-sectional in design; conducted in Birpur village under Banspool sub-centre, North 24 Parganas during May- July 2015. Sample size was calculated using the formula $4pq/d^2$ considering prevalence of condom use as a proxy for male participation in family planning. Getting prevalence of male preference of condom over other contraceptives to be 53.8% from a similar study and assuming allowable error (d) of 12 % sample size became 90.⁴ Total population of Birpur was about 3000 and the whole village was catered by three Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA). One ASHA was selected randomly by lottery method who catered a population of 1540 contained in 332 families. From these families, 90 families (wives) were selected using Simple Random Sampling technique and applying inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria included all married women in 15-45 years age group giving consent to participate in the study; exclusion criteria were pregnancy, women who were absent during data

collection period, serious illness or persons not giving consent. Data collection was done through home visits and face to face interview of the wives using a predesigned and pre tested semi-structured data collection form. Data was compiled and analyzed in SPSS version 19.0. Chi-square test was done to examine the association between awareness level and different socio-demographic variables. Significance level was considered at p -value <0.05 .

III. Result

Village Birpur is mostly inhabited by Muslims. Mean age of the wives was 23.5 ± 6.58 years and the largest group was of age 20-26 yrs; mean age of husbands was 23 ± 8.82 years. Among husbands largest number of 27(30%) were occupied in masonry job and 49(54%) were primary literate. Largest group of the wives (43%) were educated till middle school. Out of 90 families 62(68.9%) were nuclear; 58(64.4%) families were having only one child. In 76(84.5%) families decision of family planning was taken jointly by both the partners and in 5(5.5%) it was imposed from outside. Among couples 46(51.1%) were using Oral Contraceptive Pills, 19(21.1%) were preferring to use condom and 9(10%) were not using any Contraceptives. Among husbands 85(94.4%) knew the use of condom, but 38(42.2%) were satisfied using it; 46(51.1%) husbands felt OCP was the best method of contraception. Only 41(45.5%) of husbands were aware about NSV and still less no. (8.9%) know about the place of availability of NSV. Knowledge of tubectomy was prevailed among 73(81.2%) husbands; 54(60%) Husbands wanted two children in the family; 58(64.4%) preferred male child overtly whereas 16(17.7%) did not show any preference of gender and 'son is required for continuation of family' was the reason for male child preference as put forwarded by 40(44.4%) husbands. Among couples 1(1.1%) was not using any contraception even after their third child birth. 69(76.6%) husbands wanted their daughters to get married between 18-22 years of age; 51(56.6%) wanted a spacing of 4-5 years between children and 19(21.1%) husbands wanted to try for son twice. Regarding place of service sought for family planning 41(45.5%) couples had availed services privately from drug stores and 26(28.8%) couples took services from ASHA Only 10(11.1%) husbands accompanied wives for availing Family planning services. Statistically Significant association was found between education level of wives and whether they have heard the name of Family planning, knowledge about place of service for NSV and Tubectomy ($p<0.05$). No statistically significant relation was found between education level of the couples with number of children or influence in decision of Family planning and desired spacing.

IV. Discussion

In the present study, 49% Males were in 25-34 years age group and 70.3% females were in 20-29 years age group. Male awareness about family planning was average. In a similar study conducted by Jayalakshmi MS et al⁴ in CGHS hospital in New Delhi 72.8% males were in 25-34 years and 79.4% females were in 20-29 years age group. In the current study only 3.3% of males were graduates and none amongst females. In the study at Delhi 49.7% males were graduates and 36.4% women were graduates. Nuclear families were 68.9% in the present study whereas it was 72.4% in the Delhi based study. 88.8% of the couples in the current study had 1 or 2 children in contrast to Delhi study where 72.4% couples had so. OCP was the most preferred (51.1%) mode of contraception in the present study whereas Jayalakshmi et al found condom being most popular at 53.8% level. In a similar study conducted by Orji EO in Africa⁵ 69.4% of males preferred condom as a mode of contraception. 44.4% husbands felt sons are necessary to continue family whereas in the other study sons were preferred for support in old age. In the current study imposition of decision from outside about family planning was 5.5% whereas in Delhi study pressure of in-laws was in 15.4% cases. In the present study 11.1% husband had taken decision of family planning whereas 36.5% husbands took decision of family planning in the Delhi based study. In the current study 7.7% husbands accompanied their wives for availing Family planning services whereas Adelekan A et al⁶ found in Africa that only 4.8% of husbands had involved wife in the matters of Family planning.

V. Conclusion

Male involvement in family planning was average. About one-tenth of husbands have not heard and are not using any Family planning methods. Considerable variation in knowledge regarding different method of family planning exists. There is very poor acceptance for methods like IUCD, Tubectomy and Vasectomy. About quarter of the husbands have preference of son. Other than 5.5% couples who were influenced by external sources for family planning, all the others took decision jointly.

VI. Limitations

As majority of the husbands were at work during interview, wives were taken as proxy respondents. There should have been significant amount of Qualitative component in this study.

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Tables & Figures

Table 1. Knowledge & satisfaction of condom use among husbands under study. (n=90)

Use of Condom	Husbands	
	No.	Frequency
Knowledge		
Present	86	95.6
Absent	4	4.4
Satisfaction		
Yes	38	42.2
No	34	37.7
Never used condom	18	20.1

Fig. 1. Pie Diagram Showing Current Mode of Contraception.(n=90)

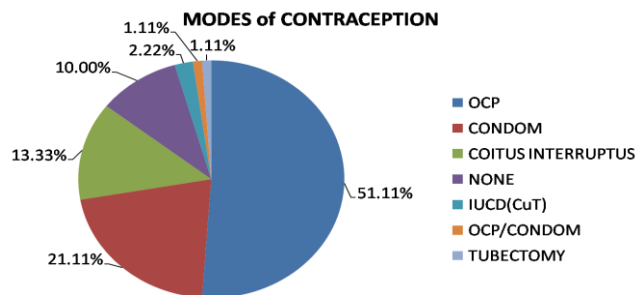


Fig. 2. Pie Diagram Showing Place of Availing Family Planning Services.

