

Awareness, use and barriers of family planning

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Abstract

This paper seeks to refocus the attention of environmentalists on the importance of population trends to environmental sustainability. It examines the determinants of family planning service, use and the barriers in accessing family planning services among urban and rural respondents. Data were collected from a household survey of 250 married men and women. The results indicate that the present generations which are educated practice well planned family planning among other respondents. The most striking result observed was there is a decrease in number of off springs from the past three generations. The key factors that are affecting the family planning in rural areas were identified as lack of awareness, lack of facilities, belief of family, orthodox nature of elders in family etc. As a fact it is understood that it is the women who want to control the number of children they have but are unfortunately not allowed due to the above reasons.

Key words: Family planning; Women; Rural; Urban.

Introduction

As much as half of the Earth's total biological productivity has already been diverted to human use, depleting our natural resources and impairing the capacity of life-supporting ecosystems (Wilson, 2002; World Resources Institute, 1998; Brown, 2004; Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 1990; Green, 2005; Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; United Nations Development Programme, 2002). Continued growth in the world's population will add to this environmental burden and, in places where growth is proceeding rapidly, will undermine the prospects for socioeconomic development (Wilson, 2002; Population Summit of the World's Scientific Academies, 1993; Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, 2006). The United Nations (UN) medium-variant population projection suggests that between 2007 and 2050, the world will have to accommodate 2.5 billion additional people and support desperately needed advances in living standards for nearly three billion people living in poverty (World Bank, 2005; Vlassoff *et al*, 2004)

The impact of humans on their environment is related to population size, per capita consumption and the environmental impact of the technology

used to produce what is consumed. Many environmental problems will be easier to address if world population peaks at 8 billion rather than continuing to grow to 11 billion or higher (Joseph Speidel, 2007). The link between people and the environment is profound. Nothing affects the environment more than we do, people. Whether it has a positive effect or a negative effect, we are the reason. We view the problems either locally or globally but we fix all of the problems locally and personally. The most critical environmental issue today is the number of people on the planet.

Provision of family planning services is one of the most direct interventions to slow population growth and assist environmental preservation (Potts, 1997). The use of family planning services is strongly linked to individual and household socioeconomic factors. In particular, women are ten times more likely to have used a family planning service if her husband approved. This research has highlighted two key issues regarding the people's perception towards population and environment in rural and urban populations.

Methodology

Data were collected using a convenience sample of men and women in and around the city of

Visakhapatnam. During a three months period, from December 2010 to March 2011, the investigators were collected the data. The survey included a demographic data sheet and two questionnaires. The mode of data collection was a personal interview with the respondents. This gave a chance to the investigators to have an insight to their perception towards the issues of the study and also to gather additional information, apart from clarifying any doubts regarding the questionnaire when dealing with less educated women. The interviews were conducted for about 15- 20 minutes for each respondent. A total of 250 surveys were fully complete and subsequently used for data analysis.

Results

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

Table 1. Demographic profiles of participants

Variable		%
Gender	Male	56
	Female	44
Age	20-30	38
	31-40	39
	41-50	17
	50 Above	6
Education	Primary	10
	Secondary	19
	Graduation	38
	Post Graduation	33
Family type	Nuclear	79
	Joint	21
Number of Children	1	40
	2	43
	3	11
	> 3	6
Occupation	Government	24
	Private	58
	Daily labour	8
	Others	10
Family Income	< 15,000	31
	16,000 -30, 000	40
	31, 000 - 50, 000	27
	> 50, 000	2
Number of People Working	Husband	52
	Husband and wife	43
	Husband and children	5

*** All the numerical are representative of percentage

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Of the 250 subjects' respondents whose responses were analyzed, 56% were males and 44% were females.

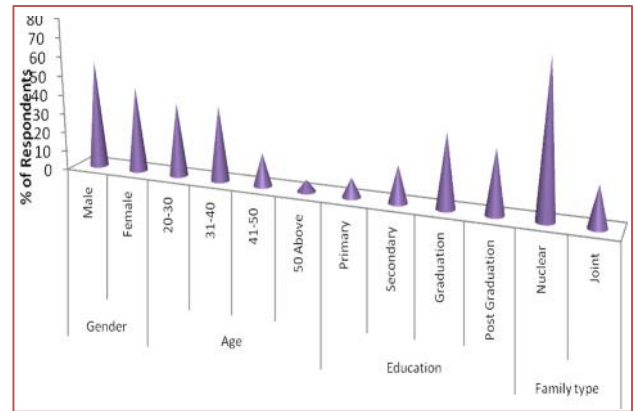


Fig.1a. Demographic data of the respondents

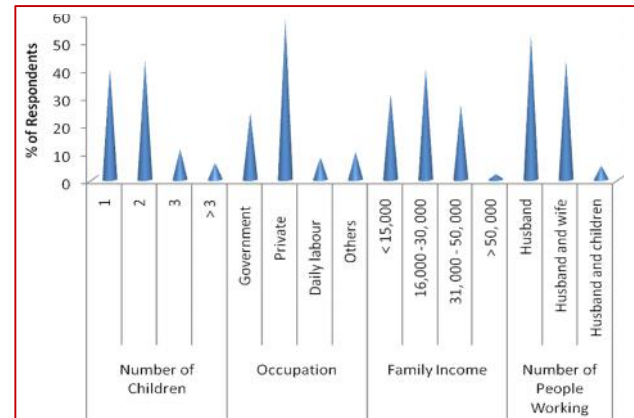


Fig.1b. Demographic data of the respondents

The majority (39%) were between 31-40 years old, 38% being between 20-30 years while 17% were between 41-50 years and the minimum that is 6% being above 50 years. The bulk of the respondents 38% were graduates and 33% were postgraduates giving a high literacy rate of about 71%.

A greater part of the respondents belonged to nuclear family (Fig.1a). 43% of the respondents had two siblings; 40% had only one sibling, while 9% and 3% had three and above three siblings. In terms of occupation most of them were private employees 58%, followed by government employees 24% and rest being daily laborers. The monthly family income of 40% respondents was between ₹16,000-30,000. Thirty one percent of these families had monthly income lower than ₹15,000. Only 27% respondents were with ₹31,000-50,000 and very few 2% above with ₹50,000 incomes (Fig.1b).

Awareness regarding family planning

Table 2. Awareness and meaning of Family Planning among the respondents

Variable		%
Awareness of family planning through	Media	5
	Paper	12
	Community	13
	Hospitals	47
	Others	23
What is family planning according to you	Birth spacing	47
	Birth control	36
	Planning family life	17

*** All the numerical are representative of percentage

Awareness of contraceptives and family planning was 100% among respondents. The majority of the respondents (47%) had come to know about family planning through hospitals. The most common source of information about family planning was through community (13%), while the paper and media was the least common source (12% and 5%), (Table 2). Other sources of family planning information included health workers/hospitals, mass media, friends and relatives (23%). Nearly half of the respondents feel that family planning is about birth spacing (47%). 36% of them feel it is for birth control and only a few 17% feel that it is about planning family life (Fig.2).

Knowledge of contraceptive methods

More than half of the participants (61%) had knowledge of at least one modern contraceptive method. The most common methods known about were condoms (23%), the Pill (15%), loop (14%), while 10% being other practices like planning according to doctor’s advice (Table 3). About two-thirds of the respondents (61%) indicated that they

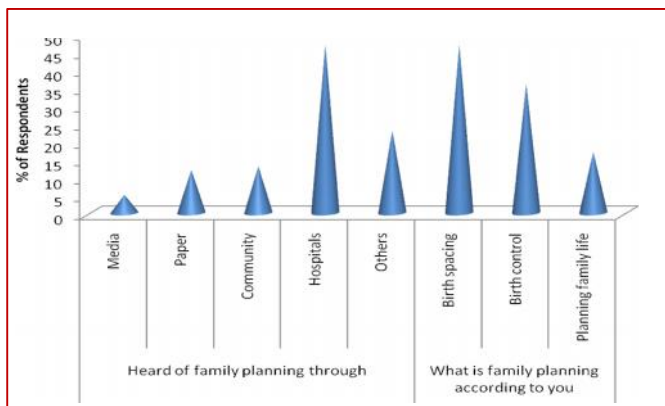


Fig 2. Awareness and meaning of Family Planning

Table 3. Family Planning and type of contraceptives adopted by the respondents

Trends of Family Planning (FP) in the respondents		
Yes	No	
61	39	
What type	Reasons for not practicing FP	
Condoms 23	Lack of knowledge	17
Pills 15	Traditional belief	14
Loop 14	Opposed to family planning	8
Others 10	-	-

*** All the numerical are representative of percentage

adopt family planning. One-third of them are still not practicing (39%). With regard to non-practice of family planning, half of the among the respondents (17%) were ignorant towards the knowledge of family planning, 14% of them believed that it is against their traditional belief and remaining 8% of them were opposed by their family members (Fig.3).

Access and barriers to family planning awareness

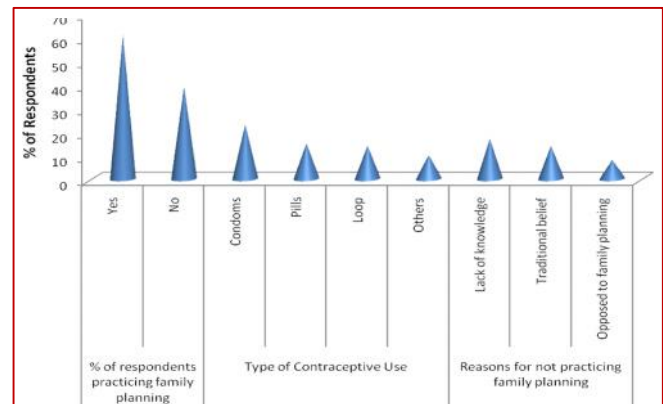


Fig.3. Family Planning and type of contraceptives adopted by the respondents

Half of the respondents felt responsibility in bringing out awareness regarding the family planning issues. Over the half of the respondents (50%) had discussed family planning with their friends and partners, while the remaining half 50% had never done so. Some of the reasons given for not discussing family planning with the friends and partner included shy for most of them (46%), culture (3%) and 1% of them said that their religion would not allow them to do so. While those who have involved in spreading awareness also had a drawback that they would only spread the message

(11%) but will not try to change the misconceptions and beliefs in the negative attitudes towards family planning among their friends (Table 4 & Fig.4).

Table 4. Family Planning and type of contraceptives adopted by the respondents

Talk to your friends regarding family planning			
Yes		No	
50		50	
Tried to change their attitude		If no, why	
Yes	39	Culture	3
No	11	Religion	1
		Shy	46
*** All the numerical are representative of percentage			

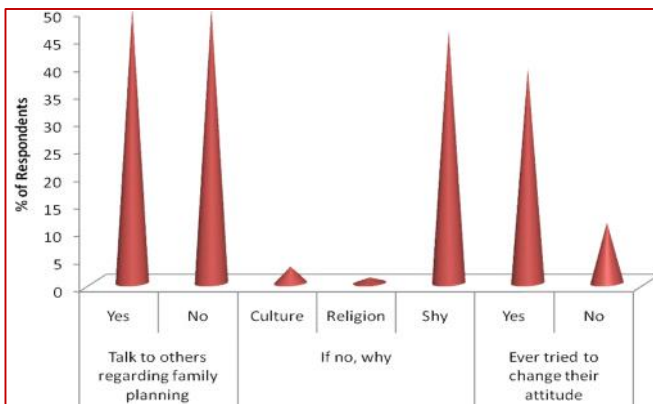


Fig.4. Family Planning and type of contraceptives adopted by the respondents

Discussion

The level of awareness of family planning in this sample of respondents was high (100%). This finding was similar to that in a general population sample from the Lesotho Demographic Health Survey of 2004 (LDHS, 2005) which showed that about 97% of women aged 15-49 years knew about at least one contraceptive method. However, a high level of contraceptive awareness does not always equate with good knowledge (Onwuzurike *et al.*, 2001; Bankole *et al.*, 2004). Over two-thirds of the study respondents (71%) had come to know about family planning because of their higher education (graduation and post graduation), and this agrees with some previous findings (Oye-Adeniran *et al.*, 2006).

The most commonly known and used methods of modern contraceptives were condoms, the Pill

and loop. The level of awareness of regarding contraceptives in this study (61%) was similar to levels in studies among African university students (43.5-58%), (Tamire and Enqueselassie, 2007; Azikem *et al.*, 2003) but lower than among American college students (94%), (Vahratian, 2008). Family planning is an effective means of preventing pregnancy, yet 39% of respondents do not practice it. This is associated with their lack of knowledge, traditional and family beliefs. These attitudes of half of the respondents were to family planning indicated (50%) in favor of family planning. Among the remaining respondents 50% expressed disapproval to be unfavorable of creating awareness which was in similar lines to the study conducted by (Rao *et al.*, 1998).

Conclusion

The study reveals that good knowledge and favorable attitudes towards family planning among the respondents. The overall perception of the benefits of contraceptives was positive, but a minority of respondents had misconceptions. The prevalence of contraceptive use in this study was also high. Moreover, the study reveals that the knowledge of temporary methods and abstinence among the respondents was more than that of permanent methods. Therefore, intensive efforts should be made to popularize permanent methods.

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