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Perspectives of Family Planning among Youth of Jabalpur City, Madhya Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT Girls are the core of human dynamics only healthy female can make socio-economic upliftment of the country. College girls are in reproductive age and are future mothers, their awareness towards family welfare programme is significant. Therefore it is necessary to have health concern information for the understanding of dimensions and magnitude of awareness towards health and family welfare programme among reproductive age group A sample of 250 randomly selected other backward class college girls of Jabalpur city, Madhya Pradesh, were surveyed. Sample colleges were selected by praportational probability allocation method. Study was conducted in various colleges of Jabalpur. It has been noted that 90.4% girls accepted two children norms in family. 96.0% students mentioned there should be one male and one female child in family. Age of first conception should be 22-25 years as accepted by majority of girls. Ideal difference between marriage and first conception should be 2-3 years accepted by 40.0% girls each. The source of information regarding planning of family is television. 98.4% girls correctly accepted limitation of children is possible.44.8% girls have opinion that 3 years spacing between two children is ideal.97.6% girls have heard about contraceptives. 95.8% girls are aware of female contraceptive devise. 36.0% girls suggested oral pills to be safest measure. 56.0% girls agreed that purpose of using contraceptives is to delay first conception.41.6% girls believed that contraceptives cannot be used while breast-feeding, and 16.8% accepted that use of contraceptive can cause undesirable effect on physical beauty of women. Study shows that girls have positive attitude regarding planning of family, but there is lack of knowledge regarding various issues of contraceptives. Therefore this is suggested that education courses like population education should be included in the syllabus of students, so that girls can develop life skills for their better future.

INTRODUCTION

India is the first country in the world to formulate a National family planning programme in 1952, with the objective of "reducing birth rate to extent necessary to stabilize the population at a level consistent with requirement of national economy". Right from the independence; women children and provision of contraceptives services have been the focus of health services. (Ninth Five Year Plan 1997-2002).

Health of youth no longer requires justification. More than half the world's Population is below 25 years. Reproductive and Child health (RHS-RCH) 1998-99 reveals alarming truth on the age of marriage for girls. 37% of the girls in India are getting married before attaining 18 years of age. NFHS II 1998-99 show that only 10% of the married adolescents of age 15-19 years use any method of contraception. (Sen 2004). Empirical studies have shown that the estimated negative co-relation between the use of family planning and infant mortality is extremely high (Saifuddin 2002) Youth is defined by the United Nations as 15 – 24; years of age (WHO 1999). In India adolescent and youth girls receive the least attention of all even though preparing for taking up marriage responsibility and in short span of time to motherhood for rearing the family.

In India 25-30% of the young women begin child bearing as early as 17 years (UNPF 2000). In this context reproductive rights for women are significant. Reproductive rights have been defined to include not only a women's freedom to enjoy sexual relations and reproduction, namely when and how many children she wishes to have but also includes the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individual to decide freely and responsibly the number, amount of spacing and timing of births, to have appropriate information and means in terms of health facilities and financial resources for taking the decision and to attain the highest standards of sexual and reproductive health. (Hussain 2003).

As many as 40% of all young women aged

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15-19years in India are already married. 17% of all adolescent females aged 13-19 years are already mothers or are pregnant with their first child. (Jejeebhoy 1996).

Girls are the core of human dynamics only healthy female can make socio-economic upliftment of the country. College girls are in reproductive age and are future mothers, their awareness towards family welfare programme is significant. In the study of Venkalesh et al. (2005) it is revealed that there was a better awareness of health promotion availability of existing health services leading to better utilization of the same by the educated mothers where as, it was otherwise amongst, illiterate women who were bound by cultural and superstitious beliefs.

In most of the world, family planning programs, have had great success in slowing population growth, yet in many countries, these programmes tend to reach older woman often after they had desired number of children, even as family planners encourage woman to plan their family size and adequately space births, the youngest married couples are often over looked. (Allaudin and Machlaren 1999)

Improvement in the health status of the population has been one of the major thrust areas of the social development programme of the country. This is to be achieved through improving and accessing and utilization of Health and family welfare services with special focus to reproductive health. Therefore it is necessary to have health concern information for the understanding of dimensions and magnitude of awareness towards health and family welfare programme among reproductive age group. Various studies based on NFHS-1 data show that even after controlling for the effects of other factors, education remained a key factor influencing contraceptive use (Rutherford and Ramesh 1996). Preventing pregnancies among recently married may have a long term demographic impact. (Singh 1998).

The main objectives of the study is to observe the extent of awareness towards family planning measures.

STUDY DESIGN

It was not easy to conduct the present observe the due to its sensitive nature and the confidentiality maintained by girls in Indian social structure. For recording information regarding knowledge and perception towards family planning, a detailed structured but simple questionnaire was distributed among 250 randomly selected other backward college girls of Jabalpur city, Madhya Pradesh, India. Questionnaire consists queries related to legal age for marriage, ideal age for conception, preference to sex of child, awareness towards contraceptives myth about contraceptives etc. Sample colleges were selected by proportinal probability allocation method. Study was conducted in various colleges of Jabalpur viz; Govt. M.H. College of Home Science, Govt. M.K.B. College, Navyug Arts and Commerce College St. Aloysius College, Kesharwani College, C.P. Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Govt. Engineering College, Govt. Agriculture College, G.S. College, Hawabag College, and Mata Gujri College,Govt.Ranjhi College,Hitkarini mahila Mahavidyalya. The data was collected in the month of October and November 2004.

Study Area: India is the seventh big country of the world. It has 2.4% land area and 16.7% population of the whole world. Madhya pradesh is one of the major state of India located in the central part of India therefore it is named so. It has 6,03,85,118 total population out of which 2,89,28,245 are female. Jabalpur city is heart of India, and a Division of Madhya pradesh The population of Jabalpur is 2,167,469.

Sample: 250 randomly selected *other backward class category* college girls of Jabalpur city, Madhya Pradesh, India are the sample for present study. Other backward class (OBCs) is one of socially disadvantaged groups, as they still continue to lag behind the rest of the society due to their social and economic backwardness. In the specific census data it is not possible to quote the exact figure of their population. However estimate of OBC constituting 52% of the country's total population. (Ninth five year plan 1997-2002) It is apparent that majority of OBC live below poverty line, posses no asset and are engaged in low income traditional occupation like handloom weaving, pottery, fishing black smithy etc. Therefore Indian Govt. has launched various schemes for their educational and economical upliftment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Attitude Towards Planning of Family: Regarding attitude towards family size and child bearing age. Table 1 reveals that 90.4% girls

accepted that there should be two children in a family, 8.8% said only one child and 1.6% accepted that a family should have four children. Sex wise bifurcation of children shows that 96% girls mentioned one male and one female child, 2.4% said one male and none female while 1.6% girl's accepted two male and two female children should be in the family. Sharma (1999) in his study reveals that majority 94% of the mothers want to have son as their first issue, 52% of mothers want their daughters educational level to be up to graduation.

Age of first conception of a girl is 22 to 25 years of age as concluded in study. 22 years age is accepted by 15.2% girls, 23 years by 19.2%, 24 years by 28% and 25 by 20% of students. The ideal difference between marriage and first conception should be 2 or 3 years as accepted by 40% girls each. 1-4 years accepted by 7.2% each while 5-6% girls mentioned that women should have child after five years of marriage. This finding support the statement of Khokhar and Mehra (2005) that delayed child bearing may reduce maternal and infant health risks but also provide them increased opportunities for women to acquire education, skills and great aspirations for herself and her family.

Table 2 shows details of source of information or knowledge about age of conception and ideal no. of children to have by a couple. Electronic media seems to be the most powerful (52.8%) followed by print media (19.2%) and interpersonal communication by 27.6% regarding age of first conception. Knowledge about (sex wise) ideal number of children to have, majority of them came to know by Television i.e. 40.8% followed by magazine 11.2%, family members 11.2%, radio 10.8%, teacher 6.0%, newspaper 9.2% and friend 5.3%.

Family planning attitude among youth shows their future planning. 98.4% girls in (Table 3) correctly accepted that limitation to childbirth is

Table 1: Attitude towards family size and childbearing age

Total girls	*Ideal no of children in family*				*Ideal no of children Male+Female*			*Ideal age for first conception (in years)*								
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*1+0*	*1+1*	*2+2*	*17*	*18*	*19*	*20*	*21*	*22*	*23*	*24*	*25*
250	22	226	0	2	240	6	4	0	6	2	12	24	38	48	70	50
%	8.8%	90.4%	0%	0.8%	96%	2.4%	1.6%	0%	2.4%	0.8%	4.8%	9.6%	15.2%	19.2%	28%	20%

Table 1: Conti...

Total girls	*Ideal difference between marriage & first Conception (in years)*					
	1 year	*2 years*	*3 years*	*4 years*	*5 years*	*Above 5 years*
250	18	100	100	18	14	0
%	7.2%	40%	40%	7.2%	5.6%	0%

Table 2: Source of information regarding age of conception and number of children

Information regarding	*Total girls having information*	*Electronic media*			*Print media*			*Interpersonal communication*			
		Total	*Radio*	*TV*	*Total*	*Magazine*	*News paper*	*Total*	*Friend*	*Teacher*	*Family member*
Age of conception	250	133	27	106	48	3	17	69	13	24	32
	%	53.2%	10.8%	42.4%	19.2%	12.4%	6.8%	27.6%	5.2%	9.6%	12.8%
No of children (sex wise)	250	129	27	102	65	42	23	56	13	15	26
	%	51.6%	10.8%	40.8%	26.0%	16.8%	9.2%	22.4%	5.2%	6.0%	11.2%

Table 3: Knowledge and attitude towards family planning

Total girls	*Limitation to child birth is possible*			*Space between two children is possible*			*Total girls*	*Ideal difference between two children (in years)*					
	Yes	*No*	*No response*	*Yes*	*No*	*No response*		*1.6*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*5+*
250	246	4	-	248	2	0	250	10	30	112	36	54	8
%	98.4%	1.6%	-	99.2%	0.8%	0%	%	4.0%	12.0%	44.8%	14.4%	21.6%	3.2%

possible. While 1.6% did not think so. Regarding spacing 44.8% girls mentioned ideal difference between two children is 3 years, 21.6% girls mentioned 5 years and 14.4% girls accepted 4 years followed by 2 years (12%) one and half years (4%) and above 5 years (3.2%) 99.2% girls accepted spacing between children is possible 0.8% mentioned that spacing is not possible. . Zhu, Rolfs, Nangle and Horan, define an optimal interpregnancy interval as 18-23 months (Gold et al. 2004)

The source of information regarding family planning and its various important issues like limitation to childbirth, ideal difference between two children and space between children is possible, are discussed in Table 4. The information regarding limitation to child birth is possible is mainly gained by electronic media i.e. 51.6% followed by print media 24.8% and interpersonal communication 23.6%. The information of spacing is gleaned by Electronic media (54.4%) then print media 21.2% and interpersonal communication 24.4% one of the major objective of use of family planning method is spacing between two children, so that mother can provide proper attention and rearing to child during first two years. The information regarding spacing is perceived by electronic media 57.6% print media 20.8% and interpersonal communication by 21.6%.

2. Knowledge and Awareness Regarding Contraception: Women only can practice reproductive rights when they have proper knowledge of contraceptives, their use, purpose and common belief associated with contraceptives this segment of study is focused on these issues among youth. Table 5 reveals that 97.6% girls have heard about contraceptives, 2.4% students have not yet heard about it. Regarding knowledge of contraceptive methods, out of 244 girls who have ever heard about contraceptives, only 118 girls i.e. 48.3% have knowledge of permanent method i.e. sterilization. It is good to notice that 95.8% girls are aware of

Table 4: Source of information & awareness regarding family planning

Awareness towards	*Total girls aware*	*Electronic media*			*Print media*			*Interpersonal communication*			
		Total	*Radio*	*TV*	*Total*	*Magazine*	*News paper*	*Total*	*Friend*	*Teacher*	*Family member*
Limitation to child birth is possible	250	129	22	107	62	38	24	59	4	28	27
	%	51.6%	8.8%	42.8%	24.8%	15.2%	9.6%	23.6%	1.6%	11.2%	10.8%
Ideal difference between two children	250	136	26	110	53	38	15	61	16	24	21
	%	54.4%	10.4%	44.0%	21.2%	15.2%	6.0%	24.4%	6.4%	9.6%	8.4%
Space between two children is possible	250	144	32	112	52	38	14	54	24	20	10
	%	57.6%	12.8%	44.8%	20.8%	15.2%	5.6%	21.6%	9.6%	8.0%	4.0%

Table 5: Awareness towards contraception and contraceptive method :

Total girls	*Ever heard about contraceptives*			*Knowledge of contraceptive method*							
				Permanent contraceptive method					*Female contraceptive method*		
	No	*Yes*	*No response*	*Total response*	*Female sterilization*	*Male sterilization*	*No response*	*Total response*	*IUD*	*Copper T*	*Tablets*
250	6	244	126	118	44	74	14	230	20	84	126
%	2.4%	97. 6%	51.6%	48.3%	10.1%	17.1%	5.7%	95.8%	4.6%	19.4%	29.1%

Table 5: Contd...

Knowledge of contraceptive method						
Male contraceptive method			*Other contraceptive method*			
No response	*Total response*	*Condoms*	*No response*	*Total response*	*Interval*	*Traditional medicine*
176	68	68	228	16	12	4
72.1%	27.8%	27.8%	93.4%	6.5%	4.8	0.9

female contraceptive devise (IUD 8.6% copper T 36.5% and Tablets 54.7%), 6.5 girls have knowledge of other method (i.e. interval, Traditional) and 77.8% girls have knowledge of male contraceptive (condoms). Maharaj and Cleaned (005) has concluded in his study that a majority of urban women had favorable attitudes towards condoms.

Table 6 shows the source of information of knowledge and awareness of contraceptives and various methods. About contraceptives 59.4% electronic media, 26.2% print media and 14.3% interpersonal communication informs girls. Regarding method of contraception, again electronic media is most powerful (54.0%) followed by Interpersonal communication 24.5% and print media i.e. 21.3%. Role of friend in informing contraception method is 12.8%, which shows perhaps girls feel comfortable in a pear group to discuss this confidential matter.

Table 7 shows the distribution of safest contraceptive method 90 girls out of 250 i.e. 36.0% suggest tablets to be the safest, followed by condoms (20%) copper T (16%) and male sterilization (13.6%) female sterilization (12%) whereas 2.4% girls did not respond.

Regarding purpose and precaution of contraceptive's use opinion of girls are significant. 56% students agreed that purpose of contraceptive is to postpone first conception majority of girls i.e. 91.2% agreed contraceptive should be use to space children. 93.3% of total girls have view that purpose of contraceptive use is to space children. Data from studies of first –time parents in Gujarat and west Bengal have shown that young couples wanted to spend more time together to get to know each other better before they had their first child. As many as 65% of couples wanted to delay their first pregnancy for one to three years after marriage. (Pachauri 2004).

India's social and cultural Scenario clearly indicates the male dominance at all stages of the reproductive process besides burden of birth control, which is placed on women 62.4% girls agree that use of contraceptive is responsibility of female partner where as 67.2% girls mentioned that precaution to use the contraceptive is responsibility of male partner (Table 8). Sharma (2003) mentioned that men play a significant role in all spheres of life including reproduction. Significantly, programmatic factors like giving undue weightage to female methods in the family welfare programme is responsible for male methods taking aback seat and shift of responsibility for family planning exclusively to women.

Table 9 shows the myth and common belief associated with use of contraceptives. 41.6% girls mentioned that contraceptives can not be used while breast feeding 16.8% girls accepted that use of contraceptive can cause undesirable effect on physical beauty 60.8% girls mentioned that there is no ill effect of contraceptive on physical beauty.

Table 10 reveals the source of information to students regarding myth and common belief associated with use of contraceptives. Regarding breast feeding and contraceptive use, electronic media 19.6% interpersonal communication and 19.1% print media informs 59.6% girls. Where as information of undesirable effect of

Table 6: Source of information of knowledge and awareness of contraceptives

Awareness towards	*Total girls responded*	*Electronic media*			*Print media*			*Interpersonal communication*			
		Total	*Radio*	*TV*	*Total*	*Magazine*	*News paper*	*Total*	*Friend*	*Teacher*	*Family member*
Ever heard about	244	145	30	115	64	43	21	35	8	15	12
contraceptives	%	59.4%	12.3%	47.1%	26.2%	17.6%	8.6%	14.3%	3.2%	6.1%	4.9%
Contraceptive	244	132	22	114	52	36	16	60	32	18	12
method	%	54.0%	8.8%	45.6%	21.3%	14.4%	6.4%	24.5%	128%	7.2%	4.8%

Table 7: Knowledge of safest contraceptive method

Total girls	*Female sterilization*	*Male sterilization*	*IUD*	*Copper T*	*Tablets*	*Condoms*	*Interval*	*Traditional medicine*	*No response*
250	30	34	0	40	90	50	0	0	6
%	12.0%	13.6%	0.0%	16.0%	36.0%	20%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%

Table 8: Opinion regarding precaution & purpose of contraceptive use

Opinion regarding	*Total girls*	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*No response*
Purpose of contraceptive use to postpone first conception	250	140	98	12
	%	56.0%	39.2%	4.8%
Purpose of contraceptive use to space children	250	228	14	8
	%	91.2%	5.6%	3.2%
Responsibility of contraceptive use is of female partner	250	156	88	6
	%	62.4%	35.2%	2.4%
Responsibility of contraceptive use is of male partner	250	168	72	10
	%	67.2%	28.8%	4.0%

Table 9: Myth or common belief regarding use of contraceptives

Total girls	*During breast feeding contraceptive can be used*				*Use of contraceptives may cause undesirable effect on physical beauty*			
	Yes	*No*	*Total*	*No response*	*Yes*	*No*	*Total*	*No response*
250	94	104	198	52	42	172	214	36
%	37.6%	41.6%	79.2	20.8%	16.8%	60.8%	85.6	14.4%

Table 10: Source of information of common belief and myth regarding contraceptive use

Total girls	*Myth or common belief regarding*	*Total girls responded*	*Electronic media*			*Print media*			*Interpersonal communication*			
			Total	*Radio*	*TV*	*Total*	*Magazine*	*News paper*	*Total*	*Friend*	*Teacher*	*Family member*
	During breast feeding contraceptive can be used	198	117	15	102	42	33	9	39	2	17	20
		79.2%	59.0%	7.5%	51.5%	19.1%	16.6%	4.5%	19.6%	1.0%	8.5%	10.1%
250	Undesirable effect of contraceptives on physical beauty	214	127	15	112	43	39	4	44	10	15	18
		85.6%	59.3%	7.0%	52.3%	20.0%	18.2%	108%	20.5%	4.6%	7.4%	8.4%

contraceptives is perceived by (59.3%) electronic media, 20.5% interpersonal communication and 20.0% by print media.

CONCLUSION

The paper has attempted to describe the attitude and awareness among college girls of Jabalpur city Madhya Pradesh towards family planning and it's methods. Present study has dealt with two major issues, regarding attitude towards family planning, it is highly appreciable that majority of the girls have positive attitude to plan a family and girls are very clear and positive regarding age of first conception, ideal no of children in family and spacing of children etc.

As far as knowledge and awareness regarding contraceptives is concerned, in this context it is important to mention that the first point i.e. proper planning of a family, only can be achieved through proper knowledge and awareness of contraceptives. There is a lack of knowledge and awareness of contraceptive methods. Only a small no of girls know permanent contraceptive method. Regarding safest method of contraceptive also girls are confused. Responsibility of use of contraceptives approximately equal percentage of girls are in favour of male and female which concludes that both men and women should equally responsible in bringing children to life. Some girls also have myth and misconception regarding use of contraceptive. As a result, due to lack of awareness girls could not grow as responsible parent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The government should acknowledge that reproductive health education or population

education is the most vital need of youth as vital as any other education course. It is necessary to develop life skills in youth to grow as a responsible and confident parent capable of taking any rational decisions regarding planning of family in future. Establishment of Adolescent clinics or counseling center at college can help in this matter. Lecture of concerning expertise, film show, followed by discussion can also be organized on use of contraceptives (targeting females), by college administration, NGO'S or Rotary and Lions Club. There is a need to orient parents and community also realizing the fact, importance of awareness among girls to make healthy and happy future family.

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