

Assessment of attitude of young mother and their spouses towards family planning methods

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in slums areas of Ludhiana city. The purpose of the study was to assess the attitude of young mothers and their spouses regarding family planning methods. List of randomly selected 120 respondents (young mothers $n_1=60$ and their spouses $n_2=60$) were prepared for the assessment of knowledge and attitude of young mothers and their spouses on the aspect of family planning. The criteria was used to select the sample of families were : a) Young mothers (18-21 years) who have one or more children. b) Young mothers who were residing with their spouses. Standardised Family Planning and Birth Control Attitude Scale (2001) and Interview Schedule were administered. Mann Whitney U test were used for statistical analysis and it revealed that there is highly significant difference (2.70**) among attitude of young mothers and their spouses on the aspect of family planning.

INTRODUCTION

Family planning is the practice used by couple so that they prevent unwanted births and control the spacing between child birth that help to create a small and planned family. It is the best way to control the rapidly and massively growing population. So, family planning contributes effectively in order to promote the health and welfare of the family group and thus contribute effectively to the social development of a country. Mother's health is not only affected by nutrition status but also by early marriage, frequent pregnancies, early motherhood, abortion etc. Moreover child's health is also affected by mother's health. In that context family planning provides

all the advice and methods to avoid above events. World Health Organisation (1970) started the wider dimension of family planning starting from proper spacing and limitation of births to sex education, genetic counselling, teaching home economics and nutrition. This programme makes a planned and scientific approach to the issues and problems of family life and attempts to solve them to make the family life happiest, harmonious and fruitful. Today existence of mankind is threatened by the sheer force of its numbers. The large population handicap the socio-economic progress of the country. It results in increased unemployment, shortage of housing, pressure of land, inadequate education, health facility and shortage of every kind of human resources have made the

population problem a daily experience for the people of India. Though various steps have been adopted by National Government to introduce population control measure but the report of Varma (1998) noted that the large semi-urban and rural sector lies unreached and still impregnable. The measures used for birth control by preventing pregnancy after intercourse are named as contraceptive methods. There are so many contraceptive methods like physical barrier, spermicidal jelly, hormonal pill, intrauterine devices, male contraceptives, emergency contraceptives etc. The success of any method depends on the regular use, proper knowledge and to create a scientific attitude to use such method. Though the knowledge attitude and practices (KAP) about family planning is high in educated family but it is not so in low-economic family as per report of Gupta and Sinha (2006).

Complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death and disability for childbearing women in many parts of the world. Comprehensive, high-quality maternity care can help prevent infant and maternal death and disability. No matter where they live, women should have access to the information and care that keeps them healthy and safe. Around the world, adolescents are less likely than women just a few years older to use family planning. Surveys indicate that many married teenage women prefer to delay, space or limit their births and are not using contraceptives (WHO, 2007). These women are referred to as having “unmet need” for family planning. Improving access to family planning information and services is vital for adolescents to protect their reproductive health.

For a long time, international family planning and reproductive health programmes focussed exclusively on women (Greene, 1998). As a consequence, population policies were implemented almost exclusively through basic family planning programmes serving women. Although both men and women have responsibilities and interest in reproductive health and family planning, demographic studies on fertility and family planning have overwhelmingly focused on women (Greene and Biddlecom, 2000). In practice, the effect that men have on their own and on women’s reproductive lives may be more varied. To exclude men from information, counselling, and services is to ignore the important role men’s behaviour and attitudes may play in couples’ reproductive health choices (Bloom *et al.*, 2000). In response to these factors, programmes are increasingly

seeking ways to develop strategies that allow men’s constructive involvement in family planning and other reproductive health services. Studying male involvement, therefore, is important to understand the multiplicity of forces shaping reproductive decisions among women and men (Clark *et al.*, 2008).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Selection of samples and locale :

Ludhiana city was selected due to easy accessibility and approachability. A purposive list of slums was prepared so as to draw at least 5 slums. A list of randomly selected 120 respondents (young mothers $n_1=60$ and their spouses $n_2=60$) were prepared for the assessment of knowledge and attitude of young mothers and their spouses on the aspect of family planning.

The following criteria were used to select the sample families:

- Young mothers (18-21 years) who have one or more children.
- Young mothers who were residing with their spouses.

Selection of tools :

A Self-structured Interview Schedule was prepared for assessing general information which contained the personal profile of the respondents.

Standardized Family Planning and Birth Control Attitude Scale (2001) developed by Rajamanickam was used to assess the attitude of young mothers and their spouses towards family planning and birth control methods. There were 64 statements in the inventory which were rated at five point scale.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Abortion is one of the method of birth control. It is a procedure to terminate pregnancy before the fetus (unborn child) gets its full development into a child. Table 1 (Fig. 1) shows the pre-test assessment which revealed that majority of young mothers (46.67%) had extremely unfavourable attitude towards family planning followed by 36.67 per cent who showed moderately unfavourable attitude towards the aspect of family planning. Neutral attitude was found among 15.00 per cent respondents, whereas meagre percentage of young mothers (1.67%) had moderately favourable attitude towards the aspect

of family planning. Data pertaining to spouses revealed that highest percentage of spouses (66.67%) had extremely unfavourable attitude towards family planning followed by 23.33 per cent who revealed moderately unfavourable attitude whereas 5.00 per cent respondents showed neutral attitude followed by another 5.00 per cent respondents who reported moderately favourable attitude towards family planning. It was further revealed from the data that none of the respondents from both the groups reported extremely favourable attitude towards the aspect of family planning.

Z-value depicts highly significant differences (Z value = 2.70; $p < 0.01$) To find out the correlation between knowledge and attitude of young mothers and their spouses towards family planning Z test were used and it was found to be highly significant. These findings are in agreement with the previous research of Pathak and Ram (1993) who found that most of the girls in rural areas being illiterate are not aware of family planning methods and even if they are aware they do not have easy access to family planning services or fail to utilize them due to inhibitions or pressure to attain motherhood to satisfy their

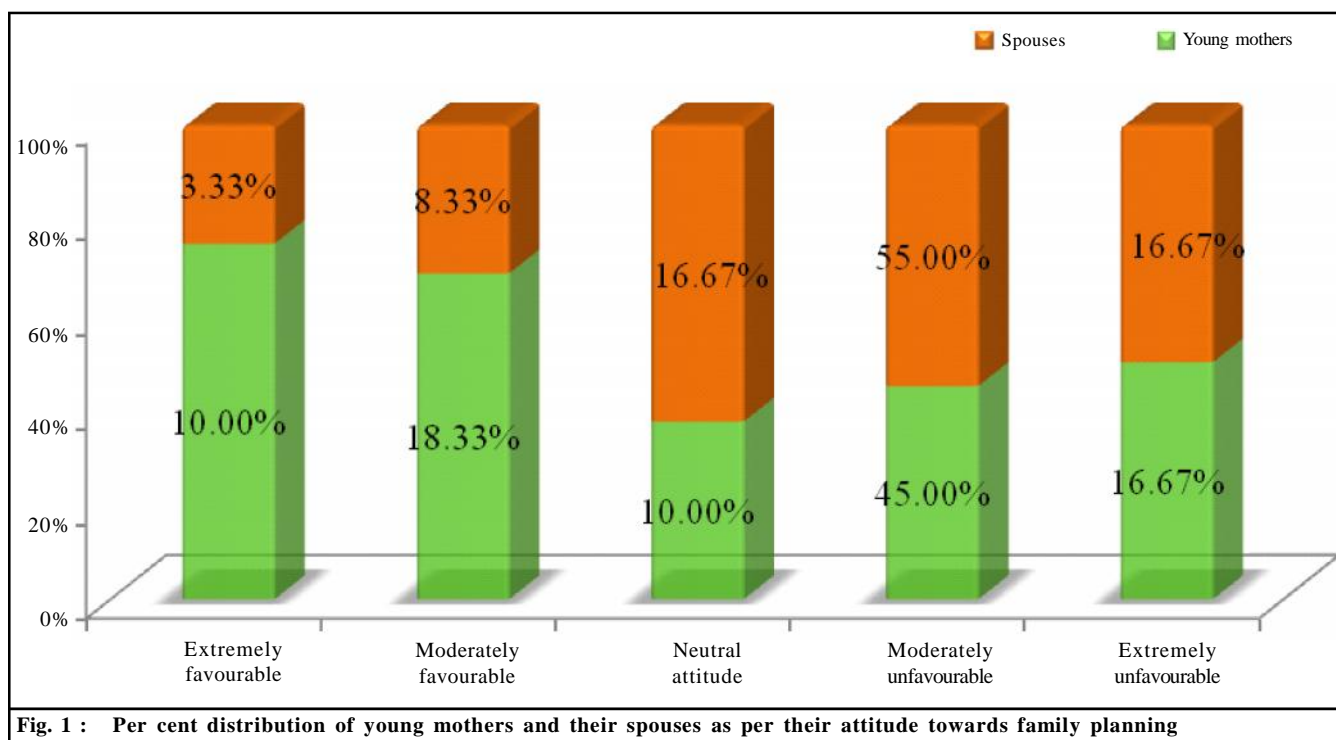


Fig. 1 : Per cent distribution of young mothers and their spouses as per their attitude towards family planning

Respondents	Attitude	f	%	Mean \pm SD	Z-value (Mann Whitney U test)
Young mothers (n ₁ =60)	Extremely favourable	-	-	-	2.70**
	Moderately favourable	1	1.67	29.0 \pm 0.00	
	Neutral attitude	9	15.00	16.89 \pm 1.54	
	Moderately unfavourable	22	36.67	20.33 \pm 0.50	
	Extremely unfavourable	28	46.67	12.68 \pm 0.86	
Spouses (n ₂ =60)	Extremely favourable	-	-	-	
	Moderately favourable	3	5.00	29.0 \pm 0.00	
	Neutral attitude	3	5.00	23.67 \pm 1.53	
	Moderately unfavourable	14	23.33	16.71 \pm 1.73	
	Extremely unfavourable	40	66.67	12.3 \pm 1.42	

** indicate significance of value at P=0.01

mothers-in-law or husbands. Adewuyi and Ogunjuyigbe (2003) examined the role of men in family planning with particular emphasis on men's sexuality, knowledge and attitude to contraceptive use. Findings revealed that men play important role in decisions pertaining to reproductive matters and also knowledge of contraceptive use is high among men in the areas, however, usage is generally low. Family planning helps to prevent unintended pregnancies and the number of unsafely performed abortions, thereby reducing: maternal deaths and disabilities, infertility, prevent high-risk pregnancies among adolescents under age 18 years and women over age of 35 years. There is a safe and effective family planning method for every woman that can enable her to protect her health and that of her children. More than half of all couples in the developing world are using family planning methods to delay, space or limit future pregnancies. Still, the need for family planning keeps increasing as the number of women of reproductive age continues to grow. An estimated 137 million women worldwide have an unmet need for family planning, they are not using any method and report that they want to avoid a pregnancy. To reach these women and save additional lives, governments and donors need to focus more attention and commit more resources to family planning programs (Smith *et al.*, 2009).

Conclusion :

From the above results it is concluded that there is highly significant difference among the attitude of young mothers and their spouses on the aspect of family planning. Findings revealed that there is unmet need for male involvement in reproductive health programmes which is essential for the well-being of the couple. Since, in Indian communities, more so in rural India, men are gatekeepers and influencers in all decision making. Thus, it is important that information and services on reproductive health be made available to both male as well as female adolescents so that they can enjoy a better and healthy reproductive life.

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