



Study of the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Temporary and Permanent Family Planning Methods amongst Female Construction Workers in Pune city

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ABSTRACT

In developing countries, migratory individuals responsible for the construction of buildings are faced with early marriage, low levels of literacy, gender bias, unmet needs of contraceptives and the traditional ways of life attributing to a higher fertility rate. This study was conducted to assess the knowledge, attitude, practices of female workers in reproductive age group in construction sites in Pune with regards to family planning. A cross sectional survey was done where a structured questionnaire was administered to 150 married women within reproductive age group. At least one method of contraception was known by 82.6% of the participants and 62% were found to be practicing methods of family planning (n=150). Despite fair knowledge of means of contraception among the female construction methods in Pune, awareness regarding the concept and benefits of spacing need to be introduced to this part of the population along with initiative to raise the literacy rate.

KEYWORDS: female construction workers, family planning, unmet need for family planning, female literacy.

Introduction

Construction workers are the backbone of the economy as they create the infrastructure necessary for industrial growth. About one-third of these workers are women. [1] They are often involuntarily displaced or resettled and are faced with early age of marriage, low levels of literacy, gender bias, suboptimal living conditions, unmet needs of contraceptives and the traditional ways of life attributing to a higher fertility rate.

In a developing country like India, over population is a major concern. Despite progress resulting from making contraception widely available, there is poor acceptance of contraceptive methods due to ignorance [2].

These women are one of the most vulnerable groups in India mainly because of low literacy rates, uncertain working hours, and lack of access to healthcare. [3] Many women who are sexually active would prefer to avoid becoming pregnant but are not using any method of contraception. These women are considered to have an unmet need for family planning, the concept of which, points to the gap between some women's reproductive intentions and the contraceptive behaviours. [4]

Thus a study was conducted to assess the knowledge, attitude, and practices of family planning methods amongst female constructional workers.

Material and Methods

A community based cross sectional study was carried out in migrant workers of three randomly selected construction sites in and around Pune city. The study was carried out during July 2010 to August 2010. Approval from Institutional ethical committee was obtained before carrying out the study. 150 married women in the reproductive age group of 15-45 years of age [5] were included in the study. Unmarried women, girls younger than 15 years of age and married women more than 44 years of age, along with women that are divorced, separated and widowed were excluded. After taking a verbal consent, data were collected from the workers using a pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire. This included collection of information regarding knowledge, attitude, beliefs and practices of female construction workers regarding temporary and permanent methods of contraception. Data were collected by medical students with the help of social workers appointed by Mobile

crèche. The data collected were analysed using percentages and chi-square test.

Mobile crèche is an NGO that concentrates on the welfare of women and children residing and working on construction sites

Results

Table No.1: Socio-demographic characteristics among female construction workers.

Socio-demographic Characteristic	Frequency (n=150)	Percentage
Migrants from		
Jharkhand	9	6.00%
Karnataka	36	4.00%
Bihar	37	24.67%
Rest of Maharashtra	28	18.67%
Chhattisgarh	29	19.33%
Uttar Pradesh	8	5.33%
Gujarat	3	2.00%
Literacy Status		
Illiterate	93	62.00%
Primary	36	24.00%
Secondary	21	14.00%
Age at marriage		
16-20	20	13.33%
21-25	57	38.00%
26-30	24	16.00%
31-35	38	25.33%
36 and above	11	7.33%

Table No.2: Literacy status of female construction workers and its relation with family size, preference for male child, knowledge of family planning methods and their willingness to use them.

Literacy status Characteristic	Illiterate n=93	Literate n=57	Chi Square	p-value	Remarks
Number of children			37.99	<0.001	Highly significant
1	7 (7.5%)	25 (43.8%)			
2	39 (41.9%)	26 (45.6%)			
3 and more	47 (50.5%)	6 (10.5%)			
Knowledge of Family Planning			15.572	<0.001	Highly significant
Yes	68 (73.1%)	56 (98.2%)			
No	25 (26.8%)	1 (1.7%)			
Willingness to use			0.082	0.77	Not significant
Yes	83 (89.2%)	50 (87.7%)			
No	10 (10.7%)	7 (12.2%)			
Preference for male child			49.884	<0.001	Highly significant
Yes	92 (98.9%)	30 (52.6%)			
No	1 (1.08%)	27 (47.3%)			

Table No 3: Practice of contraceptive methods amongst female construction workers.

Contraceptive Method	Frequency	Percentage
Barrier Contraceptive	30	20.00%
Copper T	4	2.67%
Oral Contraceptives	25	16.67%
Tubal Ligation	34	22.67%
Total Females using contraceptive methods	93	62.00%
None	57	38.00%

Discussion

It has long been argued that improvement in literacy rates and socio-economic development amongst women could change the adverse sex ratio for the better. [6]

Family planning is defined by WHO as, "a way of thinking and living that is adopted voluntarily, upon the basis of knowledge, attitudes and responsible decisions by individuals and couples, in order to promote the health and welfare of family groups and thus contribute effectively to the social development of a country".[2]

According to this study, 62% of the subjects were found to be illiterate. In a similar study conducted on construction workers in Surat city, 78 % of the subjects were illiterate. [7] Statistically significant difference was

observed in preference for male child amongst illiterate over literate. In this study, 98.9% of the illiterate individuals preferred male children in the family. Son preference was observed to be more in illiterate women (70.22%) as compared to literate women (56.77%) [8] in a study carried out in Miraj. Among the literate individuals, 52.6% were found to have a preference for male children. The bias against females in India is grounded in cultural, economic and religious roots. Sons are expected to work in the fields, provide greater income and look after parents in old age. In this way, sons are looked upon as a type of insurance.

The willingness to use methods of contraception for family planning was found to be 88.6%. Positive attitude for contraception was shown by 79.2% females in a study conducted amongst couples in rural Haryana. [2] The Couple Protection Rate (CPR) in the present study population was found to be 62% in coinciding with findings of a study conducted in Rohtak where the Couple Protection Rate was about 53%. [9] Thus about 24% of the study group comprise the unmet need of contraception while in a similar study among a resettlement area in Delhi, 30.6% of the subjects had unmet need of contraception. [10]

In the present study 62% of the female workers were found to be using contraceptive methods of whom, 63.4% were found to have opted for temporary methods. In a study done in rural Haryana, female sterilization was the most common chosen method used by 46.0% of couples [2] which is similar to the findings of Bhasin et al [11], Kansal et al [12] and Girdhar et al [13].

In our study, 13.3% were found to be married between ages 16-20 years in contrast to DLHS III which showed 22.1% of girls married before 18 years of age. [14]

In this study, majority of the subjects were found to have positive attitudes to the concept of family planning but preference for male child, home deliveries and higher family size were biased by their literacy status.

Conclusion

The study revealed good knowledge and favourable attitude of female construction workers towards contraception, but 24% were found to have an unmet need of contraception. Statistical significance was observed in number of children, knowledge of family planning, preference for male child and institutional delivery over home delivery amongst the literate individuals over illiterate. Female literacy plays an important role in these attributes and these are key issues responsible for acceptance of family planning methods and spacing. An area that calls for attention is the role of male child preference which impacts the desired family size highly. Difference between positive attitude towards using contraceptives and practicing them may be attributed to unavailability to contraceptives. Measures should be taken to educate this part of the population regarding gender quality along with organized couple counselling that can play a significant role in the adoption of family planning methods not only for contraception but also for importance of spacing between children

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