



A STUDY ON FAMILY PLANNING PRACTICES AMONG MARRIED WOMEN OF 15-49 YEARS OF AGE IN URBAN SLUMS OF GUWAHATI (METRO) CITY, ASSAM

Community Medicine

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ABSTRACT

Introduction- Population explosion is one of the burning issues in the present context of India. Guwahati, the gateway of North east India has also witnessed heavy population explosion throughout the last few decades, with underutilization of family planning practices. Therefore the present study is undertaken to assess the practice of family planning methods in slum areas of Guwahati (Metro) city of Assam.

Materials and Methods- The present cross sectional study was carried out for a period of 6 months from July, 2017 to December, 2017 in different slums of greater Guwahati city of Kamrup (Metro) district of Assam. A total of 552 women were selected for the study. A predesigned and pretested semi structured schedule was used to interview the women. The findings of the study were tabulated and presented as percentage.

Results- Majority (79.5%) of the mothers are in the age group of 20-30 years. Only 46.4% of the respondents are currently using contraceptive methods. Oral contraceptive pill is the preferred method (38.3%) for family planning. There is a significant association between educational status as well as number of living children with use of family planning methods ($P < .001$).

Conclusion- Proper family planning practice among the women of reproductive age group can help in stabilization of population of India, which is need of the hour. Strengthening NUHM with suitably equipped family planning services and involvement of NGOs will surely lead family planning practices up to par.

KEYWORDS

Population explosion, family planning practices, urban slums.

Introduction- Population explosion is one of the burning issues in the present context of India. The population of India crossed 1 Billion mark on 11th May, 2000 and is projected to reach 1.53 Billion by the year 2050, which will make it the most populous country in the world, surpassing China^[1].

India is the first country of the world to launch family planning as a National programme during 1951-1952. But even after almost 70 years, there is still lack of awareness and underutilization of family planning practices throughout India till date. As per NFHS-4 data, only 53.5% of married women of 15-49 years of age are current using family planning methods^[2]. As a matter of grave concern, it is less than the NFHS-3 data where the percentage was 56.3%^[3]. This can be attributed to various constraints like low educational level, religious belief, fear of side effects, poor access to family planning methods etc. Guwahati, the gateway of North east India has also witnessed heavy population explosion throughout the last few decades, with underutilization of family planning practices as a major factor. In contrast to the mainstream population, the people of the slums are still living far away from family planning practices. There is still lack of knowledge that proper family planning can reduce maternal, foetal and infant mortality, morbidity of women of child bearing age, prevent complications of pregnancy and abortion as well as mitigate the adverse effects of population explosion. Therefore the present study is undertaken to assess the practice of family planning methods in slum areas of Guwahati (Metro) city of Assam.

Materials and Methods- The present cross sectional study was carried out for a period of 6 months from July, 2017 to December, 2017 in different slums of greater Guwahati city of Kamrup (Metro) district of Assam. Initiation of the study was done in slum areas near Urban Health Center, Ulubari, Guwahati which is a field practice area under Department of Community Medicine, Gauhati Medical College, Guwahati. Then the study was extended to other slum areas.

Taking the prevalence of current use of any family planning methods in married women in the age group of 15-49 years in Urban areas of Assam as 54.9%^[4], absolute error as 6%, with 95% Confidence

Interval, the sample size was calculated as 276 on the basis of the formula,

$$n = \frac{4pq}{l^2}$$

Cluster sampling has been applied as the design of sampling, hence with a design effect of 2, the sample size has been calculated as 552.

As per Guwahati Municipal Corporation, Government of Assam, there are total 90 notified slums in Guwahati city. The 90 slums were taken as primary sampling unit in the study under cluster methodology. Out of total 90 clusters, 25 % i.e. 23 clusters were selected by using Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS) method. From each of 23 clusters, list of married women in the age group of 15-49 years was procured from the Link Worker and from each list 24 women were taken into consideration for study. Women residing in the slums for at least last 6 months and consenting to the interview were included. Privacy and confidentiality of personal information is maintained in every step of the study and results are presented in aggregate form without individual identification. Assamese and Hindi languages were used to obtain the information. A predesigned and pretested semi structured schedule was used to interview the women. The findings of the study were tabulated and presented as percentage.

Results-

Table 1 shows distribution of the respondents according to their socio-economic characteristics, where 79.5% of the mothers are in the age group of 20-30 years. About 46.9% of them are Hindu by religion. Majority of the mothers are educated up to primary standard (80.4%). Majority of the mothers (32.7%) have 2 living children.

Table 2 shows distribution of the respondents according to their current use of contraceptive methods. Only 46.4% of the respondents are currently using contraceptive methods. Oral contraceptive pill is the preferred method (38.3%) for family planning. Govt. health facility (57.8%) is the main source of availing contraceptives in majority of the respondents.

Table 3 shows that opposition by husband (31.7%) is the main reason of the respondents for currently not using any contraceptive methods.

Table 4 shows association between socio-demographic correlates with family planning practices of the respondents. There is a significant association between educational status as well as number of living children with use of family planning methods ($P < .001$).

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their socio-demographic characteristics:

Variables		Number	Percentage
Age of respondent	<20 years	65	11.8
	20-29 years	439	79.5
	>30 years	48	8.7
Religion	Hindu	259	46.9
	Muslim	203	36.8
	Christian	90	16.3
Age at marriage	<18 years	113	20.5
	>18 years	439	79.5
Educational status of respondents	Illiterate	91	16.5
	Primary School	444	80.4
	High School	17	3.1
No. of living children	0	116	21
	1	141	25.5
	2	180	32.7
	>3	115	20.8

Table 2- Distribution of respondents based on current use of any contraceptive methods:

Use of contraceptives		Number	Percentage
Currently using any contraceptive methods (n=552)	Yes	256	46.4
	No	296	53.6
Type of contraceptive method used (n=256)	Oral contraceptive Pill	98	38.3
	Husband using condom	55	21.5
	Intra uterine device	46	18
	Emergency contraceptives	23	8.9
	Tubectomy	31	12.1
Source of availing contraceptives*(n=256)	Vasectomy by husband	3	1.2
	Govt. health facility	148	57.8
	Private health facility	56	21.9
	Local shop	136	53.1

Table 3- Distribution of respondents according to reasons for currently not using any method of contraception (n=296):

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Religious belief	51	17.2
Opposition of husband	94	31.7
Fear of side effect	40	13.5
Wish to extend family	58	19.7
No response	53	17.9

Table 4- Socio demographic correlates and use of family planning methods:

Socio demographic characteristics	Users (n=256)	Non users (n=296)	
Education of respondent	Illiterate	21	Df=2 P value< 0.05
	Primary School	223	
	High School	12	
No. of living children	0	40	Df=3 P value< 0.05
	1	59	
	2	83	
	>3	74	

Discussion- As per NFHS-4 data, 54.9% married women in the age group of 15-49 years were using family planning methods in urban areas of Assam^[4]. In this context, in our study, it is found that only 46.1% of the respondents of the slum area are currently practicing family planning methods. Thus, majority of the respondents are not practicing family planning methods. This is almost similar to the study done in slums of Amritsar city^[5], where it is found to be 48.2%.

Maximum respondents have adopted oral contraceptive pills (38.3%) as the preferred method of family planning followed by condom use by husband (21.5%). Similarly, oral contraceptive pill is the preferred choice of respondents (34.6%) as found in the study done in urban

slums of Lucknow city^[6]. However, condom use by husband (21.2%) is found to be the preferred method of family planning in the study done in slums of Mumbai, Maharashtra^[7]. In more than half of the respondents, major source of availing contraceptives is Govt. health facility (57.1%). Private health facility (40.3%) is found to be the major source of availing contraceptives in a study done in slums of Lucknow city^[6].

Opposition of husband (31.7%) is the main reason of the respondents for not using any contraceptive methods currently, as found in our study. However, desire of a child (60%) is found to be the main reason for non use in a study done in slum of Delhi^[8].

In our study, it is found that there is a significant association between number of living children as well as level of education with the practice of family planning methods. Similarly, significant association is found between educational level and number of living children with family planning practices in a study done in slums of Raipur city, Chattisgarh^[9].

Conclusion- Proper family planning practice among the women of reproductive age group can help in stabilization of population of India, which is need of the hour. It is very much necessary to improve the knowledge of the women, specially those living in the slum area regarding family planning, which ultimately will lead to better practices. Strengthening NUHM with suitably equipped family planning services and involvement of NGOs will surely lead family planning practices up to par.

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