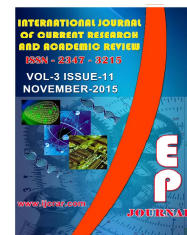




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### Family Planning Practices among Married Women of Reproductive Age Group in a Rural Area in Thrissur District, Kerala, India

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#### KEYWORDS

Contraceptive use,  
Unmet need,  
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#### A B S T R A C T

Family planning helps in regulating fertility which in turn is essential for the proper utilization of the socio-economic resources for the development of any nation. The success of any family planning programme lies in assessing how many are availing the services available and also the unmet need of family planning. To study the family planning practices among married women of reproductive age group in a rural area in Thrissur district, Kerala, India A community based cross-sectional study was undertaken during January-June 2015 in the rural areas catered by a tertiary care hospital in Thrissur with the aim of studying the family planning practices among 100 married women of reproductive age group (15-45 years). Widowed, divorced or separated women, currently pregnant women and women on treatment for infertility were excluded from the study. After obtaining informed consent, a pretested structured questionnaire was used to collect details regarding the sociodemographic profile and usage of family planning services. Analysis was done using SPSS version 16 and Pearson's Chi square test was used. In the study population, 72% were using any of the family planning methods currently. The unmet need of family planning was calculated to be 0.08%. 71.43% reported that they did not receive any advice regarding family planning from the health sector. Statistically significant difference was found between age, religion, education, occupation, number of living children and current use of family planning methods. The current rate of family planning usage was 72.0%. Among the spacing methods, condoms, oral contraceptive pills and intrauterine devices were being utilized. Male sterilization rate was zero. More emphasis should be given on educating the public regarding the availability of modern family planning methods.

## **Introduction**

India is the first country in the world to start a National Family Planning Programme in 1952, aiming to promote responsible parenthood with a two child norm through independent choice of the family planning method best suited to the acceptor (Family Welfare Programme, 1993). The objectives of family planning are to avoid unwanted pregnancies, to bring about wanted pregnancies, to regulate intervals between pregnancies, to control the time at which births occur in relation to the age of the parent and to determine the number of children in the family (Park, 2015).

The acceptance of family planning methods varies within societies and different religious groups. It is opined that socio-economic development leads to increase in usage of family planning methods, thereby reducing fertility (Rajaretnam, 2000).

Only few studies on family planning have been done in rural Kerala. Hence this present study was undertaken with the aim to study the family planning practices among married women of reproductive age group in a rural area in Thrissur district, Kerala, India. We undertook this research to determine the proportion of women practicing family planning methods currently, to determine the unmet need of family planning and to assess the socio-demographic factors influencing family planning practices.

## **Materials and Methods**

This community based cross-sectional study was done in a rural area catered to by a tertiary care hospital in Thrissur during the period from June-July 2015. All married women in the reproductive age group (15-45 years) were included in the study while widowed, divorced or separated women,

currently pregnant women, women on treatment for infertility were excluded from the study. Sample size was calculated as for a cross-sectional study using the formula  $4pq/d^2$ , with  $\alpha$  at 95%,  $\beta$  as 20% and reference prevalence taken as that of current use of any method of family planning among currently married women of reproductive age in rural Kerala, i.e 68.5% (National Family Health Survey 3). Considering a non-response rate of 10%, the sample size was fixed as 100. Out of the 1480 eligible couples in the study area, the required sample was taken using systematic random sampling with the sampling interval kept at 15. After obtaining informed consent from the subjects, a structured questionnaire was used to collect details regarding the sociodemographic profile and usage of family planning services like condom, intrauterine devices (IUDs), oral contraceptive pills (OCPs), injectable contraceptives, emergency contraception, male sterilization and female sterilization. Statistical analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 and appropriate statistical tests like Pearson's Chi Square test ( $\chi^2$ ) was used.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Socio demographic profile**

The age of study subjects ranged from 21-45 years with the mean age being  $34.66 \pm 6.73$  years. Majority (70%) belonged to the Hindu religion and 32% had an education up to higher secondary school. There were no illiterates in the study population. The minimum educational status noted was upper primary school education (2%). Most of the women (74%) were housewives and 92% belonged to the APL category in socioeconomic status. Statistically significant difference was found between age, religion, education, occupation and

current usage of family planning methods (p value<0.05) (Table 1).

**Details regarding marriage and child birth**

The mean age at marriage of study subjects was 22.06 ± 3.05 years while the mean age at first childbirth was 23.65 ± 3.52 years. The mean birth interval between consecutive childbirths was 3.25 ± 2.5 years. Out of the 100 women studied, 70% had two living children, 18% had 1 living child, 4% had 3 living children and 8% did not have any living children. There was significant association between number of living children and current usage of family planning methods (p value=0.000)

**Details regarding family planning methods**

Among the 100 women studied, only 24% had used any family planning method immediately following marriage and among them majority (58.33%) has used oral contraceptive pills. Among 74 women with

more than one living child, 62.2% had used family planning methods between consecutive pregnancies, with majority (54.36%) having used intrauterine devices. Out of the 100 women studied, 72 were currently using any of the family planning methods with the majority (48%) opting for female sterilization (Table. 2).

**Unmet need of family planning and Willingness to practice family planning method**

Out of the 100 women studied, 28 were not currently practicing any of the family planning methods, eight of whom were willing to practice any family planning method in the future. The unmet need of family planning was calculated to be 0.08%. The reasons stated by the remaining 20 who were unwilling to practice any of the family planning methods were unwillingness from the part of husband (30%), unaware of the methods available (20%), trying to conceive (20%), religious belief (10%), underwent hysterectomy (10%) and no specific reason (10%).(Table 3)

**Table.1.Sociodemographic profile of the study population**

Particulars	Study Subjects Number (%)	Association with current usage of family planning methods (Chi square value; p value)
Mean age in years ± SD	34.66± 6.73	161.07; 0.0001
Religion		39.957; 0.0001
Christian	22 (22)	
Hindu	70 (70)	
Muslim	8 (8)	
Education		36.447; 0.014
Illiterate	0 (0)	
Upper Primary School	2 (2)	
High School	26 (26)	
Higher Secondary School	32 (32)	
Graduate	26 (26)	
Post-Graduate	14 (14)	
Occupation		31.911; 10; 0.0001
Housewife	74 (74)	
Self-employed	4 (4)	
Salaried	22 (22)	
Socioeconomic Status		2.757; 5; 0.737
APL	92 (92)	
BPL	8 (8)	

**Table.2.**Details regarding family planning methods in the study population

Particulars	Study Subjects Number (%)
Use of family planning methods immediately following marriage (n=100)	
Yes	
No	24 (24) 76 (76)
Type of family planning method adopted immediately following marriage (n=24)	
Condom	
Oral Contraceptive pills	10 (41.67) 14 (58.33)
Use of family planning methods between consecutive pregnancies (n=No:of women with >1 living child = 74)	
Yes	46 (62.2)
No	28 (37.8)
Type of family planning method adopted between consecutive pregnancies (n=46)	
Condom	
Oral contraceptive pills	15 (32.6)
Intrauterine devices	6 (13.04) 25 (54.36)
Currently used family planning method (n=100)	
Condom	6 (6)
Oral contraceptive pills	2 (2)
Intrauterine devices	16 (16)
Female sterilization	48 (48)
None	28 (28)

**Table.3.**Reason for unwillingness to practice family planning methods

Reason for unwillingness to practice family planning methods	Study subjects Number (%)
Husband not willing	6 (30)
Unaware of methods available	4 (20)
Trying to conceive	4 (20)
Religious belief	2 (10)
Underwent hysterectomy	2 (10)
No specific reason	2 (10)
Total	<b>20 (100)</b>

### **Advice from health sector regarding family planning**

Of the 100 women studied, only 46% had received any advice on family planning from the health sector. Majority (54%) had never received any advice on family planning from the health sector. Advice regarding family planning was found to have statically significant association with current use of family planning (p value=0.000), willingness to practice family planning (p

value =0.000) and availing of family planning service (p value =0.000)

The sources of family planning services were stated as private health sector by 55.56%, public health sector by 36.11% and shops/pharmacies by 8.33% of the study population who were currently following any method.

In the present study, 72% of study subjects were found to be using any of the family planning method currently. It is comparable

to the studies done by Benny et.al (2013) and Pawar Anant et.al (2014). Other studies conducted across India by Rajaretnam (2000), Dhillon and Chandiok (2012) and Nazish Rasheed et. al (2015) show a lower prevalence of current contraceptive use among married women of reproductive age group.

The most commonly used family planning method by subjects in the present study was female sterilization (48%). Similar results were obtained by studies done by Rajaretnam (2000) in Kerala (41.8%) (Rajaretnam, 2000; Benny et. al (2013) in Trivandrum (58.5%), Pawar Anant et. al (2014) in Calicut (49.9%) and Dhillon and Chandiok (2012) in Tamil Nadu. A study done by Nazish Rasheed et. al (2015) showed that 54% of the study subjects used condom as the preferred method of family planning.

In the present study, there was significant association between age of the mother, religion, education, occupation, number of living children and advice from health sector regarding family planning and current use of family planning method. In a study done by Rajaretnam (2000) in Kerala, there was significant association between current use of family planning method and age of the mother, religion and number of children. The study done by Benny et.al (2013) showed significant association of current use of family planning method with age of the mother and number of living children while the study done by Pawar Anant et.al (2014) showed significant association of current use of family planning method with religion in addition to age of the mother and number of living children.

### **Conclusion**

The present study showed 72% of the women were currently using any of the

family planning methods. The unmet need of family planning was calculated to be 0.08%. Statistically significant difference was found between age, religion, education, occupation, number of living children and current use of family planning methods. Advice regarding family planning from health sector was found to have statistically significant association with current use as well as willingness to accept family planning methods but 71.43% reported that they did not receive any advice regarding family planning from the health sector. Among the spacing methods, condoms, oral contraceptive pills (OCPs) and intrauterine devices(IUDs) were being utilized and male sterilization rate was found to be zero. Hence more emphasis should be given on educating the public regarding the availability of various family planning methods. More studies on large populations are required to understand the pattern of usage of family planning methods further.

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