

## CONTRACEPTIVE ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR AMONG UNIVERSITY MEN: A STUDY FROM PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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**Background:** The men's attitudes towards family planning and on the use of family planning method may affect not only their wives intention to use contraception but also the choice of a particular family planning method. This focus of this study is to assess the educated men's role, belief, practice and their participation in family planning. **Methods:** A cross-sectional data on 150 university male employees was taken. The logistic regression in connection with stepwise procedures is used to find the most significant variables that influence the men's current use of contraception status. **Results:** About 42 percent of the married male employees were users of family planning methods. Among family planning methods, condom was the most used method (about 71%) followed by traditional methods (14%). The mean age at first marriage of the respondents was 23 years and for the spouses it was 19 years. **Conclusion:** The knowledge of men in family planning methods is quite universal and general; but the attitude on the use of contraceptives and the family planning method is much different between the employees who had the awareness of contraception and those who had no awareness.

**Keywords:** Age at marriage, contraception, family planning, logistic regression, men's attitude, stepwise procedure

### INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan, men play an important role in household decision making process and it becomes extremely important when the decision making is related to family planning because it includes desirable family size, use of family planning methods and many more.<sup>1</sup> According to United Nations the involvement of the males is defined as *the ways in which men relate to reproductive health, problem, reproductive rights and reproductive behavior.*<sup>2</sup> There are two aspects of involvement of the males in family planning, first is that the men accept and support their partner's need, choices and rights in fertility regulations, and second contraceptive use and sexual behaviour of the men. Globally husbands' active disapproval led women give up the use of contraceptives, and it becomes a valid reasoning in the context of an Islamic society, as husbands oppose the family planning methods. However, the husbands' reasons for opposing family planning vary by socioeconomic characteristics. Many studies in different formulations have been conducted globally to determine the men's role and participation in family planning.<sup>3-12</sup>

Many studies have been conducted on the dynamics of family planning adoption but the demographic research has focused on the determinants of contraceptive use by women. Women were typically the respondents in the knowledge, attitude and practice surveys, in the world fertility surveys, in the contraceptive prevalence surveys, and in the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). In all these types of surveys conducted by various national and international

official organizations, very little attention has been given to studying the determinants of contraceptive use among men. The female-only approach to explore and promote family planning in Pakistan has been critically viewed for their exclusion of men, and therefore in this study at the micro level, attempts have been made to assess men's role, belief, practice, and participation in family planning.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study utilised data on 150 married male employees of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur under age 60 years currently working in the university. In conducting this survey a two-stage probability sample design was used. The universe consisted of the sampling frame of all the disciplines and administration offices considered as blocks prepared by the Department of Statistics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. At the first stage, a systematic sample of block was drawn. At the second stage a simple random sample of male employees were selected within a block. A total of 220 employees were selected and 170 were identified as eligible for the individual interview. Finally, 150 married men could successfully be interviewed. The interviews were completed by going person to person. The interview schedule was a set of structured questionnaire in which men answered the questions.

Logistic regression analysis in connection with Backward Stepwise Wald (BSW), Backward Stepwise Likelihood Ratio (LRS), and Backward Stepwise conditional procedures were carried out to determine the most influential factors of

contraceptive use status. This regression model was used to describe the relationship between dependent or response variable(s) and a set of independent variables.<sup>13-14</sup> In our study, the response variable was current contraceptive use status of men. The 150 men responded 'no=0' or 'yes=1'.

When the explanatory variables have two categories and if one category is presented by zero then the logit model is equivalent to the log-linear model and logit model for logistic regression will give the same results.

In our study, we have considered the following independent variables:

Z<sub>1</sub>= Age of the respondents which takes value 1 if age of the respondent was 35 years and above or zero otherwise;

Z<sub>2</sub>= Education of the respondents which takes value 1 if respondent had the secondary or above education and zero otherwise;

Z<sub>3</sub>= Basic pay scale (BPS) of the respondents which takes value 1 if respondent had BPS 17 or above and zero otherwise;

Z<sub>4</sub>= Age of the youngest child of the respondent coded as 1 if age was above two years or zero otherwise;

Z<sub>5</sub>= Education status of the respondent spouse which was coded as zero for no education or 1 otherwise;

Z<sub>6</sub>= Decision making empowerment status of the respondent which was coded as 1 for the joint decision or zero otherwise;

Z<sub>7</sub>= Modes of employment status of the respondents which was coded as 1 if respondent had teaching status or zero otherwise;

Z<sub>8</sub>= Awareness about family planning by respondent which was coded as 1 for the from TV/ radio/newspaper or zero otherwise;

Z<sub>9</sub>= Total number of alive children of respondent which takes value 1 for more than 4 children or zero otherwise;

Z<sub>10</sub>= Desire for more children by respondent which was coded as 1 for yes or zero otherwise where as the contraceptive use status was taken as the dependent variable;

Y<sub>i</sub> is the use of any family planning method by the respondent which was coded as 1 if individual was using contraceptive or zero otherwise.

## RESULTS

Table-1 shows the demographic as well as socioeconomic characteristics of respondents. The average age of the respondents was 40.67 years. Average age of the respondents at marriage was 23 years and the range was 25–30 years.

In Pakistan, the mean age at first marriage among ever-married women is 18 years.<sup>15</sup> Mean age at first marriage of the spouses of the respondents was about 19 years. The educational level of majority (34.7%) of the respondents was more than 11 years of schooling. There was a positive correlation between education of husband and wife, 80% of the respondents' wives ever-attended the school.

Two major modes of employments namely, teaching (37.3%) and non-teaching (62.7%) were taken in this study. Most (82.7%) of the respondents' wives were housewives.

The knowledge of men on family planning methods is universal yet only some of them adopt family planning and it appears from Table-2 that condom is the most known method (27.3%) followed by withdrawal, injection and pill. The corresponding figures according to Pakistan Reproductive Health and Family Planning Survey 2000–01 were 20.0, 19.3, 8.5 and 6.9 percent, respectively. The present contraceptive using rate of Pakistan is 27.6%.<sup>15</sup> In our study, about 40% couples were currently using contraceptives.

The evidence of income distribution shows that the average annual household income was PKR 9,893 (approximately US\$10 per month). The average number of children ever born was 5.28 and more than 40% of the respondents had 3 alive sons. There were 6.10 average number of family members of the respondents. Within the household, only 26% of the respondents had their own lands.

Only 16.39% of the respondents had ever used any contraceptive method. Among the users, majority (68%) of husbands did not support female methods (pill, injection, other methods like withdrawal etc.) and preferred male methods like condom using arguments shown in Table-3.

The results of logistic regression analysis are shown in Table-4. The most significant variables found in this study that influence men's current use of contraception are awareness of the respondents about family planning, followed by education of the men, desire for more children, basic pay scale or income, and education of the spouses.

The practice of contraception among men who are aware about family planning is 37 times more as compared to those who are unaware about family planning. In case of men whose spouses have formal education the contraception practice is 4.21 times more as compared to those men who have spouses with no formal education.

Desire for more children is an important determinant of contraceptive use by male

respondents. The higher desire for more children finishes the use of contraception.

Income of the respondent also plays a significant role in his attitude towards family planning. The use of contraception among the male employees who have income more than PKR 10,000 is 3.52 times more as compared to other employees.

**Table-1: Percentage distribution of the respondents by background characteristics**

Characteristics	Percentage
<b>Age of the respondents at the time of interview</b>	
Less than 25 Years	2.7
25-29	11.3
30-34	10.0
35-39	17.3
40-44	24.0
45 and above	34.7
<b>Age of respondents at first marriage</b>	
Less than 20 Years	12.7
20-24	35.3
25-29	41.3
30 and above	34.7
<b>Age of the Wives of the respondents at first marriage</b>	
Less than 20 Years	7.3
20-24	30.7
25-29	27.3
30 and above	34.7
<b>Education level of the respondents</b>	
No Schooling	1.3
1-5 years Schooling	4.7
6-10 years Schooling	27.3
11 years and above	34.7
<b>Education level of the wives of the respondents</b>	
No Schooling	20.0
1-5 years Schooling	9.3
6-10 years Schooling	15.3
11 years and above	55.4
<b>Basic Pay Scale of the respondents</b>	
≤7	46.0
8-11	8.0
12-16	7.3
≥17	38.7
<b>Modes of employment of the respondents</b>	
Teaching	37.3
Non-Teaching	62.7
<b>Respondents' Alive Sons</b>	
0-1	20.0
2-5	60.0
5 and above	20.0
<b>Occupation of the wives of the respondents</b>	
Housewife	82.7
Working	17.3
<b>Source of awareness of contraceptive use</b>	
No awareness	64.0
TV	20.7
Radio	4.7
Newspaper	2.0
Other	8.6
<b>Desire for more children</b>	
Yes	42.0
No	58.0

**Table-2: Percentage distribution of the respondents by use of family planning methods**

Family Planning Methods	Percentage
No	60.0
Yes	40.0
Pill	0.7
Condom	27.3
Injection	5.3
Other method/withdrawal etc.	6.7

**Table-3: Distribution of respondents by reasons for using family planning methods**

Reasons	Percentage
Less side effects	8.7
Easily available	12.7
Easy to use	6.0
Wife likes it	2.0
Delay to next pregnancy	2.7
Low price	0.7
Lower risk	0.7
Both like it	6.7

**Table-4: Logistic Regression Analysis using Backward Stepwise Methods**

$Y_i$	Z	Coefficient	SE	p-Value	Odds Ratio
Y	Z <sub>2</sub>	-1.99	0.72	0.006	0.136
	Z <sub>3</sub>	1.26	0.59	0.032	3.52
	Z <sub>5</sub>	1.44	0.74	0.051	4.21
	Z <sub>8</sub>	3.61	0.56	0.000	37.01
	Z <sub>10</sub>	1.22	0.49	0.013	0.29
	Constant	1.53	0.58	0.008	0.22

## DISCUSSION

Men can participate in family planning in two ways: by supporting their partner's decisions to use family planning methods or by participating a male method of family planning like condom, withdrawal, or periodic abstinence. Men's support affects the choice, adoption, continuation and correct use of family planning methods. In our society, men play main role over women in deciding whether they use any family planning method. They have important say in decisions such as desired family size and the use of family planning methods.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, an assessment of men's attitudes towards family planning would provide indication about their role in the choice of family planning methods. The influence of mass media in assessing the men's attitudes towards the family planning is well known.<sup>17</sup> The stepwise Logistic regression analysis gives a key importance of mass media about awareness of contraception. Education is the second important determinant of contraceptive use. Education influences contraceptive behaviour. It facilitates a shift towards a conjugally oriented relationship in which the husband and wife are more likely to take into account the interest of the other sex and of conjugal unit as a whole.<sup>18</sup> In our study

the spouses with formal education confirms this determinant of contraceptive use.

Our findings reveal that the present contraceptive using rate of Pakistan is 27.6% as the respondents belong to an educated community and they can realise the benefits of small family size norms. Average annual household income of the respondents suggests that they are having very low status in income profile because they earn income which is lower than the defined national poverty line.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, men's attitude and participation in family planning were explored statistically using only 150 married male respondents currently working in The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. Although the sample size may not be enough to draw a decisive conclusion, it is expected that this study would provide some indication of the role and responsibility of men in family planning. Logistic regression modelling analysis suggests that the significant factors that may motivate men to participate and use contraceptives include educational attainment, desire for more children, and awareness of contraception and income of the respondent. The family planning programs and/or surveys in Pakistan is/are mainly female oriented, so the information generated in this article would help the policy makers to adopt the effective strategies for the involvement of men in the future family planning programs or surveys. Mass media plays a significant role in increasing the male participation rate in family planning. It is also suggested to policy makers that family planning research, programs towards contraception must be initiated with the equal involvement of men.

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