

# Women's position and their behavior towards family planning

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## Abstract

**Objective:** to determine the position of women in their families and their behavior towards family planning in Surat. **Design & settings:** through stratified random sampling every 6<sup>th</sup> women of age group 15-49 years attending the family planning clinic at New Civil Hospital, Surat was interviewed. **Material & Methods:** By oral questionnaire method, a pretested proforma was used to interview women of age group 15-49 years having at least one living child from September to November, 2006. **Statistical analysis:** data was analyzed by using Epi info software. **Result:** 40% illiterate woman and 57.1% women having education upto primary level have adopted permanent methods of family planning. 69% housewives and 50% of service class women have adopted temporary or permanent methods of family planning. Surprisingly, those women with annual income upto Rs. 5000, 71.4% practiced permanent methods of family planning compared to women with annual income above Rs. 5001. A positive relationship observed between son preference and family planning practices. **Conclusion:** The education level, occupation, family income and son preference have shown positive impact on adoption of family planning methods.

## INTRODUCTION

India is having almost half of the population (about 49%) formed by women. India was the first country to launch the National Family Welfare Programme in 1952, which was later on renamed as Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) programme. Still women are socially, economically, politically and culturally lagging in India. Research has shown that theoretically and legally, though women are recognized as equal to men, they are still in grip of traditional roles and have not freed themselves from the domination of men (1). In Indian society, still daughter is considered as a liability while the son is considered as an asset. Improvement in status of women expedites success of family planning (2). So, any improvement in status of women is considered an effective strategy for making family planning a real success in India. In present study, women's position with respect to family planning behavior in Surat is studied and the impacts of other variables like occupation, income that influence its adoption are analyzed.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The sample was drawn from those women attending family planning clinic at New Civil Hospital, Surat by using stratified random sampling. Every 6th women coming to attend the clinic was interviewed by pretested oral

questionnaire proforma. The subjects consisted of 235 currently married women in the age group of 15-49 years and having at least one living child. The data was collected from September to November, 2007. All the women's were interviewed by intern doctors. Data were analyzed as per the objectives of the study by using Epiinfo software and suitable statistical tests used to assess the association between various variables.

## RESULTS

In this study, it was found that 29% of women were illiterates, while 36% were literates with primary education. 26% of them studied upto secondary level and only 2% women had education upto the degree or above.

**Figure 1**

Table 1: Distribution of women by contraceptive behavior and level of education

Educational status of women	Non-adopters %	Temporary Adopters %	Permanent Adopters %	Total	Population (%)
Illiterate	41.8 (28)	17.9 (12)	40.3 (27)	100.0 (67)	29.0 (67)
Primary level	19.0 (16)	23.8 (20)	57.1 (48)	100.0 (84)	36.0 (84)
Secondary level	36.1 (22)	32.8 (20)	31.1 (19)	100.0 (61)	26.0 (61)
Higher Secondary	29.4 (5)	52.9 (9)	17.6 (3)	100.0 (17)	7.0 (17)
Graduates & above level	100.0 (6)	0	0	100.0 (6)	2.0 (6)
Total	32.8 (77)	26.0 (61)	41.2 (97)	100.0 (235)	100.0 (235)

$X^2 = 23.8$  and significant at 0.01 or 1 percent level, (Figures in parentheses denote the number of women)

Among illiterates, almost 42% women have still not adopted family planning method and about 40% have adopted permanent methods of family planning. In contrast among graduates and above level, all the females are not adopting any method of family planning. 57.1% of women have adopted permanent methods of family planning among those women studied upto primary level (Table 1).

**Figure 2**

Table 2: Distribution of women by contraceptive behavior and occupation

Occupation of respondent	Non-adopters %	Temporary Adopters %	Permanent Adopters %	Total	Population (%)
House wives	31.1 (65)	28.2 (59)	40.7 (85)	100.0 (209)	89.0 (209)
Laborers	40.0 (4)	0	60.0 (6)	100.0 (10)	4.0 (10)
Service	50.0 (8)	12.5 (2)	37.5 (6)	100.0 (16)	7.0 (16)
Total	32.8 (77)	26.0 (61)	41.2 (97)	100.0 (235)	100.0 (235)

$X^2 = 5.52$  and significant at 0.06 or 6 percent level, (Figures in parentheses denote the number of women)

The findings of the study reveal that among women; service class women constituted only 7% as compared to housewives (89%). Among service class women, 50% women have not adopted any family planning method compared to housewives (31.1%). 69% housewives and 50% of service class women have adopted temporary or permanent methods of family planning (Table 2).

**Figure 3**

Table 3: Distribution of women by contraceptive behavior and family income

Income of the family (in Rupees)	Non-adopters %	Temporary Adopters %	Permanent Adopters %	Total	Population (%)
Upto Rs. 5000	22.9 (8)	5.7 (2)	71.4 (25)	100.0 (35)	14.9 (35)
Rs.5001 – 10000	37.2 (32)	20.9 (18)	41.9 (36)	100.0 (86)	36.6 (86)
Rs. 10001 - 20000	34.1 (28)	34.1 (28)	31.7 (26)	100.0 (82)	34.9 (82)
Rs. 20001 - 30000	25.0 (7)	39.3 (11)	35.7 (10)	100.0 (28)	11.9 (28)
Rs. 30001 & above	50.0 (2)	50.0 (2)	0	100.0 (4)	1.7 (4)
Total	32.8 (77)	26.0 (61)	41.2 (97)	100.0 (235)	100.0 (235)

$X^2 = 23.27$  and significant at 0.01 or 1 percent level, (Figures in parentheses denote the number of women)

Those women with annual income upto Rs. 5000, 71.4% practiced permanent methods of family planning compared to women whose income varied between Rs.5001-10000 (41.9%), Rs.10001- 20000 (31.7%) and Rs.20001-30000 (35.7%). Similarly, non adopters in women (22.9%) with annual income upto Rs. 5000 are lowest then any other higher income group (Table 3).

**Figure 4**

Table 4: Distribution of women by contraceptive behavior and son preference

Son preference	Non-adopters %	Temporary Adopters %	Permanent Adopters %	Total	Population (%)
Son preference	5.9 (1)	53.0 (9)	41.2 (7)	100.0 (17)	7.2 (17)
No preference	34.9 (76)	23.9 (52)	41.3 (90)	100.0 (218)	92.8 (218)
Total	32.8 (77)	26.0 (61)	41.2 (97)	100.0 (235)	100.0 (235)

$\chi^2 = 9.18$  and significant at 0.01 or 1 percent level, (Figures in parentheses denote the number of women)

Data presented in Table 4 shows association between adoption of family planning method and son preference. In present study, only 7.2% women have shown son preference and 92.8% women shown no preference to son. 53% of women using temporary methods of family planning have shown son preference.

## DISCUSSION

In this study, it was found that 29% of women were illiterates, among illiterates; almost 42% women have still not adopted family planning method. 57.1% of women have adopted permanent methods of family planning among those women studied upto primary level (Table 1). Researches in most developing countries also support the fact that there is a strong positive association between the levels of women's education and the adoption of family planning (2, 3). In contrast among graduates and above level, all the females are not adopting any method of family planning. The possible reason may be because of very less number of females in this category.

Wife's occupation is one of the important socio economic status indicators that influence the contraceptive behavior of women. Some of the studies have established that working women are more inclined to adopt one of the other methods of family planning as compared to housewives (4). The findings of the study reveal that among women; service class women constituted only 7% as compared to housewives (89%).

Income is a composite variable, which has an association with the adoption of family planning. Usually, it is closely correlated with other socio economic variables which are

also associated with family planning practice. Therefore, it is difficult to separate the role of income from other allied variables like occupation. A few studies have proved that positive relationship between economic status of the family and adoption of contraception has been observed by a few studies (5, 6). But in this study, among women with annual income upto Rs. 5000, 71.4% practiced permanent methods of family planning compared to women whose annual income is above Rs. 5000. This is may be because though women are having low income but having good knowledge regarding the contraceptive methods.

Son preference has been dominant in the Indian society since ages. Several studies have, documented this phenomenon mainly in the northern and central states (7, 8). Present study also supports this as 53% of women using temporary methods of family planning have shown son preference. But overall only 7.2% women have shown son preference which might be because of good IEC activities on mass media.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of present study suggest that the position of women in the society had greatly influenced the adoption of family planning by them. The education level, occupation, family income and son preference have shown positive impact on adoption of family planning methods.

Education is an essential requirement for improving the status of women, which in turn, encourages the adoption of family planning. The mind set of people for a greater value for son(s) affects the adoption of family planning which needs to be changed by promoting awareness on equal values for son and daughters. Use of mass media for creating better awareness regarding education and son preference should be promoted vigorously.

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