

Awareness and Practice of Married Women regarding Natural Methods of Family Planning in Illam District of Nepal

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ABSTRACT

This cross-sectional study intends to assess the awareness and practice of married women towards natural method of family planning of Illam district in Nepal. In this study self-administrated questionnaire was used as a tool of data collection. The study revealed that only 64.3 percent of respondent were heard about Natural Family Planning Method (NFP) which was withdrawal method. Out of total, 60 percent had never practice on NFP that is withdrawal method which they found easy to use and no side-effects. There was no association between ethnicity, religion, occupation and use of NFP. Age was found significantly associated with the practice of NFP. Likewise the age of marriage and number of children was found to be significantly associated with awareness and practice on NFP at the 95% of confidence interval. The awareness and use of contraceptive among married women of Illam district was found very low therefore campaigns should be conducted in communities to raise awareness and practice on NFP methods among both the illiterate and literates to reduce large family size and overpopulation that hinder the economic growth of any country.

KEY WORDS: Withdraw, Calendar, Lactational Amenorrhea method, Basal body Temperature, Cervical Mucus Test Method

INTRODUCTION

Family planning methods are used by the majority of women in sexual relationship in almost all regions of the world (Unsel et al., 2017a). In 2017, worldwide 63% of women in a sexual relationship were using some type of family planning methods including the modern and natural family planning methods (NFP). Likewise, 58% of married women of reproductive age were using modern methods whereas the use of traditional methods was low at 6% in 2000 and decreased to 5% in 2017 (Unsel et al., 2017b). The use of NFP in the Europe was 8%, in Latin America, Caribbean and Asia was 5%, Africa and North America was 4% and Oceania countries was 3% (United Nation, 2017). The withdrawal method was mostly used in Philippines in 2013 (Marquez et al. 2017). In Nepal, only 16% of women of reproductive age had knowledge of and/or practiced NFP. The prevalence of use of any type of method for family planning is 53% among currently married couples that includes 43% of using modern methods, 10% using natural methods (MOHP, New ERA and ICF, 2017).

The prevalence of knowledge regarding NFP in 2011 was 67.4% and the practice rate was 5% among women however the prevalence has increased in 2016 to 75.7% knowledge and 10% of practice rate (MOHP, New ERA and ICF, 2017). So, this topic is chosen to assess

the factors affecting awareness and practice of NFPM among married women of reproductive age in Illam district.

Methods

The study design was based on cross sectional descriptive study. Sandakpur rural municipality of Illam district was chosen by convenient sampling technique and married women of reproductive age group were chosen by simple random sampling. Sample size was calculated by using the formula $n = z^2 pq/d^2$ in 5% level of error. A Self- Administrated Questionnaire (SAQ) was used to collect the quantitative data. It comprised two sections, the first related to demographic details and the second covered awareness and practice of NFPM. Total 16 items (dichotomous in nature) were included in awareness and practice related section. This tool was pre- tested in a group of similar women (Van Teilingen & Hundley, 2001). Most importantly, before beginning the data collection, informed verbal consent was taken from each respondent who were freely participated. Information collected was only used for this research project and respondents' privacy and confidentiality was maintained.

After completion of the data collection, data were checked for their accuracy and completeness. After data entry, analysis was done using SPSS 24 software. Then, data were tabulated according to the socio-demographic characteristics, association between awareness and socio demographic characteristic, associations between awareness and practice. Chi-square test and fisher exact test were used to show association between variables at 5% level of significance p-value less than 0.01 and 0.05.

Results

Socio-demographic Characteristic

The socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents is presented in Table 1 and the following points describe the details of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (n= 311)

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age		
<20	8	2.6
21-30	143	46.0
31-40	96	30.9
41-49	64	20.6
Ethnicity		
Brahmin/Chettri	87	28.
Janajati	184	59.2
Dalit	40	12.9

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Religion		
Hindu	144	46.3
Buddhist	80	25.7
Christian	2	0.6
Kirat	85	27.3
Education		
Illiterate	16	5.4
Literate	51	16.4
primary level	51	16.4
Lower secondary	34	10.9
Secondary	105	33.8
Higher secondary	42	13.8
Graduate	12	3.9
Duration of Marriage		
Less than 2 year	32	10.3
2 to 5 year	59	19.0
More than 5 year	220	70.7
No. of children		
None	40	12.9
Less than 2	223	71.7
More than 3	48	15.4
Residence		
Urban	2	0.6
Rural	309	99.4
Less than 2	223	71.7
More than 3	48	15.4
Residence		
Urban	2	0.6
Rural	309	99.4
Occupation		
Agriculture	174	55.9
Business	96	30.9
Private job	29	9.3
Government	10	3.2
Students	2	0.6

Table 1 shows that out of 311 respondents, the single largest age group was 21-30 (46%), most were Hindu (46.3%) and Janajatis (59.2%). Most of the respondent had studied up to secondary level (33.8%) and only 3.9% were graduated. All respondents were married. The duration of marriage of majority of respondents (70.7%) was more than 5 years and most of respondent (71.7%) have 1-2 children. The majority of respondents (99.4%) were rural residents and agriculture was their main occupation (55.9%).

Awareness of Natural Methods of Family Planning

This section s e relation between demographic characteristic and awareness on NFPM (Table 2).

Table 2

Bivariate analysis between demographic characteristics and awareness (N=311)

Characteristics	Awareness on natural methods		P value
	Adequate	Inadequate	
Age			
<20	5(62.5%)	3(37.5%)	*0.01
21-30	104(72.7%)	39(27.3%)	
31-40	66(68.8%)	30(31.2%)	
41-49	25(39.1%)	39(60.9%)	
Ethnicity			
Brahmin/Chettri	53(60.9%)	34(39.1%)	
			0.528
Janajati	123(66.8%)	61(33.2%)	
Dalit	24(60.0%)	16(40.0%)	
Religion			
Hindu	95(66.0%)	49(34.0%)	
Buddhist	45(56.2%)	35(43.8%)	0.285
Christian	2(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	
Kirat	58(68.2%)	27(31.8%)	
Occupation			
Agriculture	108(62.1%)	66(37.9%)	0.808
Business	65(67.7%)	31(32.3%)	
Private job	18(62.1%)	11(37.9%)	
Government job	7(70.0%)	3(30.0%)	
Student	2(100.0%)		
Duration of Marriage			
Less than 2 year	25(78.1%)	7(21.9%)	*0.011
2 to 5 years	45(76.3%)	14(23.7%)	
More than 5 years	130(59.1%)	90(40.9%)	
No of Children			
None	32(80.0%)	8(20.0%)	*0.01
Less than 2	14(66.4%)	75(33.6%)	
More than 3	20(41.7%)	28(58.3%)	
Residence			
Urban	2(100.0%)		0.539
Rural	198(64.1%)	111(35.9%)	

(*significant at p value <0.05)

Table 2 shows that there was no association between ethnicity, religion, occupation and residence on the one hand and awareness of NFPM on the other. Age was found to be significantly associated with awareness of NFPM, with people in their twenties being more likely to be aware of NFPM. Number of children and duration of marriage was found to be significantly associated with awareness with people married for shorter periods and with fewer children being more aware.

Demographic characteristic and practice of NFPM

Table 3 shows the relation between demographic characteristic and practice of NFPM.

Table 3

Bivariate analysis between demographic characteristics and practice on NFPM (N=200)

Characteristics	Practice on natural methods		P value
	Yes	No	
Age			
<20	5(62.5%)	3(37.5%)	
21-30	54(37.8%)	89(62.2%)	
			*0.00
31-40	17(17.7%)	79(82.3%)	
41-49	5(7.8%)	59(92.2%)	
Ethnicity			
Brahmin/Chettri	23(26.4%)	64(73.6%)	
Janajati	49(26.6%)	135(73.4%)	0.860
Dalit	9(22.5%)	31(77.5%)	
Religion			
Hindu	36(25.0%)	108(75.0%)	
Buddhist	23(28.8%)	57(71.2%)	0.906
Christian	-	2(100.0%)	
Kirat	22(25.9%)	63(74.1%)	
Occupation			
Agriculture	47(27.0%)	127(73.0%)	0.230
Business	19(19.8%)	77(80.2%)	
Private job	10(34.5%)	19(65.5%)	
Government	4(40.0%)	6(60.0%)	
Students	1(50.0%)	1(50.0%)	
Duration of marriage			
Less than 2 years	19(59.4%)	13(40.6%)	*0.00
2 to 5 years	24(40.7%)	35(59.3%)	
More than 5 years	38(17.3%)	182(82.7%)	
Number of Children			
None	24(60.0%)	16(40.0%)	*0.00
Less than 2	50(22.4%)	173(77.6%)	
More than 3	7(14.6%)	41(85.4%)	
Residence			
Urban	1(50.0%)	1(50.0%)	0.454
Rural	80(25.9%)	229(74.1%)	

(*p value is <0.05 in confidence interval 95% which mean it's significantly associated with practice on NFPM)

Table 3 shows that there were no association between factors such as ethnicity, religion, occupation, marital status and residence. Age, duration of marriage and number of children were significantly associated with practice on NFPM with younger people, people with shorter marriage and fewer children more likely to practice NFPM.

Relation between Awareness and Practice of NFPM

Table 4 presents the relation between awareness and practice of NFPM.

Table 4:

Awareness	Practice				P-value
	Yes		No		
				118	37.94%
Yes	82	26.36%			
No	0	0	111	35.69%	

(*significant at p value is <0.005)

Table 4 shows a strong association between awareness of NFPM and the likelihood of practicing of NFPM.

Discussion

Although 64.3% had heard about Natural Family Planning only 40% respondents had used NFPM method that is withdrawal method. This is a higher proportion compared with the National Demographic Health Survey data, which only found a rate of 10% of people in Nepal using Natural Method of Family Planning. the prevalence This finding is supported by a study among nonacademic married female workers (n=89) at Babcock University located in the southwestern region of Nigeria, showed the result that 63% of nonacademic married female workers had a moderate level of knowledge regarding NFPM, where 62.5% had a positive attitude towards its use, and 60.7% commonly used NFPM (Okeowo & Olujide, 2014). A cross-sectional study conducted among women (n=627) of aged 15-49 years old living in eastern Anatolia, Turkey reported that 77.7% used some kind of family planning methods, 48.2% used modern methods and 29.5% were using natural method of family planning (Calikoglu et al., 2018). A cross sectional study conducted among 400 women attending primary health care centers in Kano of Nigeria revealed that 70% of the respondents had knowledge of traditional methods of family planning but the utilization was low at 36.8% and knowledge of modern contraceptive was above average 53.5% but utilization was low at 20.7% (Rabiu & Rufai 2018). Similarly, a study conducted at Nepal Medical College Teaching Hospital showed 16% had knowledge regarding natural methods of family planning which was conducted among the women of reproductive age group (Tuladhar & Marahatta, 2008). This collaborate the result from other studies which revealed 16.2% uses withdrawal method (Somba et al., 2014).

The finding shows that 64.3% respondents were aware of natural method of family planning and only 40% used withdrawal method because they found it easy to use and effective. A cross-sectional study conducted among 809 women of child bearing age in southwestern Nigeria reported 80% ever used a method of contraception, 92.9% were aware of the rhythm method, 92.6% were aware of lactation amenorrhea, 94.3% were aware of the withdrawal method. The current user of rhythm method was 26.4%, user of lactation amenorrhea was 1.1% and 16.8% used the withdrawal method and the majority (52.2%) were commonly using modern contraceptive method (Ajayi, 2018b).

According to a cross sectional study conducted among married women (n=5746) conducted in South Central Ethiopia 99% of women knew at least one method of family planning. Meanwhile, traditional methods such as the calendar method, lactation amenorrhea method and withdrawal method were included by 21.3%, 31% and 20%. And percentage of traditional method ever used included the calendar method, lactation amenorrhea method and withdrawal method was 16.5%, 14.7% and 12.3% (Mekonnen & Worku 2011). A large-scale descriptive study was conducted among married women (n=17,643) of reproductive age group reported that knowledge of contraceptives was almost universal in all six urban cities of Uttar Pradesh. The analysis shows that the rhythm method was the best known of the traditional methods followed by the withdrawal method (Singh et al., 2016).

This study result shows that there was significant association between awareness and practice. As a result, having a good understanding is linked to good practice of NFPM. The result shows that there was significant association between awareness and good practice of NFPM. Another study conducted in Sindhupalchok (Nepal) found that the study population had a low degree of awareness of natural family planning options, as well as incorrect usage of these approaches (Upadhyaya et al., 2017). Audu, Yahya and Bassi (2006) reported different finding that there is a relatively low level of awareness of natural family planning methods in their study population, poor utilization and wrong use of methods. According to the literature, the practice of natural method of family planning is generally very low although people know about it. In one hand, it is very difficult to follow the natural methods and, on the other hand, the success rate of these methods is very low. Especially in developing countries the rate of contraceptive use is very low.

There are some limitation and strengths to this study. This study a moderate number of respondents so the study's limitations make it less likely we can to generalize to the wider population of Nepal. As far as we know it was the first study of its kind in Illam.

Conclusion

The analysis of this study provides information on awareness level and practice on natural family planning methods among married women of reproductive age group of Sandakpur Rural municipality of Illam District. The study revealed awareness about Natural Family Planning methods is good, majority of respondent were aware of at least one Natural Family Planning method but practice was lacking, which is mostly because

of the use of modern methods and one third respondent think this method is risky. The number of children and duration of marriage was found to be significantly associated with awareness and practice on natural methods of family planning. Women education and counseling of couples can play an important to give a lasting solution and that is, improve the level of awareness, which will in turn improves the practice of NMFP in a correct and effective way. For people not using modern methods of contraceptives, campaigns should be conducted in communities to raise the awareness and increase the level of knowledge on NMFP among both men and women.

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Impact of COVID-19 on Education sector in Nepal

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Abstract

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 brought about a seismic shift in the lives of people worldwide, and students were no exception. The impact of covid-19 has significantly disrupted every aspect of human life. Educational institutions around the globe faced significant disruptions, altering the way students learn, interact, and experience their academic journey. Remote learning, social distancing, and various restrictions became the new norm, posing numerous challenges and implications for students of all ages. The pandemic enforced worldwide lockdowns, creating significant negative effects on students' academic and social lives. Around 9 million students in Nepal were estimated to be suffered due to the closure of academic sector. Due to the unfavorable situation, academic institutions were compelled to adopt alternative methods of teaching and learning. The education sector has been fighting to survive the crisis with a different approach to wash away the threat of pandemic. This paper highlights some measures taken by government of Nepal to provide seamless education. Both positive and negative impact of COVID-19 on education are discussed and some fruitful suggestions are also pointed out to carry out educational activities.

Keywords: COVID-19, Education Sector, Online Learning, Remote Learning, Nepal, Pandemic Impact.

Introduction

The year 2020 started with the terror of the COVID-19 and witnessed the indelible imprints of the pandemic on the global community (WHO, 2020). The global health emergency due to COVID-19 was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO). Subsequently, it was declared a pandemic after more than 118,000 infected population by COVID-19 from 114 countries with 4,291 deaths up to 11th March 2020. Globally, up to 6th August 2021, there had been over 200 million confirmed cases, including the deaths of over 42 million (WHO, 2021). WHO recommended the countries across the world to take precautionary measures to break the transmission chain of the coronavirus (Barkur and Vibha Kamath, 2020).

Due to the unfavorable situation academic institutions were enforced to initiate an alternative way to continue the educational classes. Thus, all the teachers were directed to teach through e-learning techniques, mainly online classes. There is no one-size-fits-all pedagogy for online learning. There are variety of subjects with varying needs. Different subjects and age groups require different approaches to online learning (Doucet et al,

2020). Online learning also allows physically challenged students with more freedom to participate in learning in the virtual environment, requiring limited movement (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). The shift to remote learning, led to challenges in adapting to online platforms and potential learning gaps. But slowly the continuation of classes via online has played a significant role for the academic learning or assistance to universities students during the critical situation.

Distance learning is a solution to continuing the education system, but it is difficult in developing countries because many parents have not themselves been to school and there is a lack of the necessary Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructures, computers, radio, and television to provide distance learning. Access to computers and access to the internet is basic to successful distance teaching. This is not guaranteed for all students in developing countries (Zhang, 2020). Also, staff and teachers should be familiar with online teaching platforms. Teachers struggle with difficulties in technology and lack of infrastructure availability. Some private schools may not pay their staff's salary and some schools may pay half salary. COVID-19 affects poor families since many students don't have access to the equipment at home. The physical school closure and the implementation of distance education lead the student to spend less time learning, stress, and lack of learning motivation (Di Pietro et al., 2020).

In developing countries like Nepal the negative experiences of students during the COVID-19 pandemic were often magnified due to various pre-existing challenges and limited resources like limited access to technology and internet for remote learning, disruptions in in-person education, widening educational inequalities, economic hardships affecting affordability and potential dropouts, health and hygiene concerns, especially in areas with limited healthcare access etc. But it is also possible that some students' careers might benefit from the interruptions. For example, in Norway, it has been decided that all 10th grade students will be awarded a high-school degree. A study carried out in France shows that the 1968 abandoning of the normal examination procedures in France, following the student riots, led to positive long-term labour market consequences for the affected cohort (Maurin & McNally, 2008).

The second wave began in April 2021 and peaked in May when the average number of cases per day reached 9317 and deaths peaked at approximately 246 a day in Kathmandu valley and other parts of Nepal. The existing government facilities were not able to handle the volume of sick patients and hospitals continued to experience widespread shortage of oxygen and other logistics supply. The second wave of COVID-19 has also created many challenges and opportunities for the educational institution to strengthen their technological knowledge and infrastructure depending on the resources, both materials and human, available to them. For students, the second wave brought continued challenges in accessing education. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds struggled to keep up with online classes, and the quality of education suffered. Furthermore, the prolonged closure of educational institutions impacted students' mental well-being, as they faced isolation and uncertainty about their