



ATTITUDE TOWARDS FAMILY PLANNING OF MUSLIM STUDENTS IN RELATION TO SOME BACKGROUND FACTORS

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ABSTRACT:

The Present study was conducted on a sample consisting of 400 students - males and females - studying in degree classes of several colleges located in Deoria, district of Uttar Pradesh. Of these 400 subjects. 200 subjects were from Muslim community and 200 subjects were from non-Muslim (The Hindu) community. The samples were incidental in nature and care was taken that both male and female students stemming from Muslim and non - Muslim communities, rural and urban residential areas and varying in family income levels were included. The subjects fell in the age range of 18-22 years. For measuring level of attitude towards family planning. Family planning attitude Inventory has been used. The inventory has been developed by Paliwal W. B. (1979). This is a five point-Likert-type scale. Analysis of data revealed that the non-Muslim group was significantly higher in attitude towards family planning than the Muslim group. Income level of subjects influenced their level of attitude towards family planning. Urban students were found significantly higher than rural students on the level of attitude towards family planning. Sex factor was found significantly influencing level of attitude towards family planning only in non-Muslim group.



KEYWORDS: Muslim and non - Muslim communities, rural and urban residential areas.

INTRODUCTION :

Family planning is a scheme to check up the growth of population. The procedure includes the check in the number of children by making use of certain medical techniques. With the adoption of the technique, the couples not only limit the number of unwanted children but also have freedom to beget children when they desire. Family

planning means a family having a few children and an ideal spacing between two pregnancies, and not the zero number of children. Parents have the right to beget only the number of children which can be properly cared for and cherished because unwanted children invite a source of unhappiness and distress. The concept of family planning is not a new one. During the period of pre-civilization and early civilization, people were more

afraid of pregnancy due to nomadic life. The knowledge of contraception was mixed with magic and roots of plants. People were afraid of vagaries and pangs of pregnancy and unlimited reproductive capacity of human beings which created the problem of food and safety from hazards of nature. So in the primitive stage of life attempts were made by the savage people to control the population through infanticide, abortion, killing the aged, ritual,

taboos at the time of intercourse and prolonged lactation period. In Egypt, one of the oldest contraceptive recipes was found. The ancient Egyptians were quite ahead in the matter of contraceptives when anatomy and physiology was not properly known.

The Malthusian league was the forerunner of the modern birth control movement. American medical Journals had from the 1880s carried articles in which both the desirability of family limitation and the relative merits of different contraceptive techniques were rationally discussed. In the United states an active birth control movement had been initiated in the 1830s by Robert Dale Owen and Dr. Charles Knowlton. Robert Owen's 'Moral Physiology' (1830) was the first book on birth control to be published in America and Knowlton's 'Fruits of philosophy' (1832) was perhaps the most influential contraceptive pamphlet ever to appear. Technically, it was an advance on anything which had appeared before and superior to almost anything which appeared during the next 50 years. It circulated widely in the United States. In America, as in England, the birth control movement attracted a number of eccentric protagonists but unlike its English Counterparts, it had the firm support of a number of eminent doctors.

In early 20th century, general attitude to the birth control questions had become so vocal that the medical profession could not go far along in ignoring the issue. The influence of war as a solvent of public prejudice has frequently been remarked upon : the transformation of attitude of sexual questions generally and to birth control specifically during the period of 1st world war. Slowly and reluctantly, the doctors responded to this changed outlook. By carefully distinguishing between contraception and abortion and by pointing to the complete absence of evidence for the supposed injurious effects of contraceptive usage, the 1916 Report on the National Birth Rate Commission had provided reassurance at least for the more responsible section of the profession, on the two most frequent objections to the practice. The Journals, however, were now prepared to drop their opposition to birth control, after a 'last ditch' attempt to argue that contraceptives were notoriously unable to prevent conception, the subject virtually disappeared from the pages of the Lancet and the British Medical Journal.

The Hindu way of life prescribes the attainment of param purusarth the supreme end of life - Dharma (ethical duty), artha (the economic), kama (the sensous) and moksha (the spiritual). An individual fulfils these necessary obligations of a good life through the four stages of life, which are the Brahmacharaya (celibacy), the Grahasta (the householder), the Vanaprasta (the forest dweller) and the Sanyas (renunciation). Even the Vedas do not advocate child or early marriage. It must be also realized that the period of the house - holder does not last throughout life or even till the end of the normal reproductive period, for the house holder had to enter Vanprasta and Sanyasa ashrama. The sex life and the reproductive period of Hindu male was thus regulated and restricted by innumerable do's, don'ts and taboos.

Vatsayan (Chandrashekhar, 1955) in his kamasutra (4th century A. D.) and Manu in this Dharma Sastra (Circa 600 B.C.) laid down clearly when a husband should meet his wife physically. In Brahadaranyaka Upanishad (Circa 200 A. D.) we are told that mantras to be uttered to prevent conception. Thus in a way the problem of family planning was anticipated and a solution in the light of the knowledge of those days was also offered.

The Grand Mufti of Jordon, in their Fatwa have discussed the pros and cons of Islam and finally stated: " We hereby give our judgment with confidence in favour of family planning." The Mufti of Egypt in their Fatwa came to the conclusion that " It is permissible for either husband or wife, by mutual consent, to take any measure to prevent semen entering Uterus, in order to prevent conception." The Fatwa committee of Al Azhar University, Cairo have issued Fatwa Permitting the use of contraceptives. In fact, Fatwa in support of family planning have been issued by the religious heads in most of the countries in the world.

The recent increase in the population in India and the pressure exercised on the limited resources of the country have brought to the forefront the urgency of family planning and population control. Progress in this field depends first, in creating a sufficiently strong motivation in favour of family planning in the minds of the people and next in providing the necessary advice and service : based on acceptable, efficient, harmless and economic methods of family planning.

The birth control behaviour is greatly influenced by various aspects of the cultural environment in which people live-technology, economy, social structure, values, ideologies modernization, dogmas etc. The study of culture has been the major preoccupation of anthropologists who have shown interest in family planning behaviour. But the whole movement also presents socio-psychological implications. The social aspects and particularly, the personality of the person going for family planning must also be taken into account for the success of the movement. Thus Chatterjee (1971), Ganguli (1968), Higgins (1967), and Pohlman (1966) have emphasized the study of sociopsychological aspects as the key issues relevant to the family planning programme.

The main objective of the work is to find out the roles of some background factors such as community (religion), Sex, income level and residential area in formulation and development of favourable or unfavourable attitude towards family planning. In the light of the objectives the following hypotheses were formulated :-

- 1.The non-Muslim group will be significantly higher than the Muslim group on attitude towards family planning.
- 2.Lower income level group will be significantly lower than middle and higher income level group on attitude towards family planning.
- 3.Urban group will be significantly higher than rural group on attitude towards family planning.
- 4.Female group will be significantly lower than male group on attitude towards family planning.

METHOD

SAMPLE : -The sample consisted of 200 Muslim and 200 Hindu students of college level studying in degree classes of different colleges in Deoria, district of Uttar Pradesh. The sample comprised rural/urban, male/female and HIG/MIG/LIG subjects in both Muslim and Hindu groups. The age range of subjects was from 18 - 22 years. The sample comprised of 80 - HIG, 83 - MIG and 37 - LIG, 75 - rural and 125- urban and 150 male and 50 - female subjects in Muslim group where as in non-Muslim group the sample comprised of 75 - HIG, 85 - MIG and 40 - LIG, 85 - rural and 115 - urban and 120 - male and 80 - female subjects.

Tests used:- For the measurement of attitude towards family planning 'Family Planning Attitude Inventory' developed by Paliwal (1979) has been used. This is a five point Likert-type scale. This scale comprises 25 items. Some items are positive while other items are negative. Higher score on the scale denotes higher attitude towards family planning whereas lower score on the scale denotes lower attitude towards family planning. For classification of subjects into Muslim/non-Muslim; male/female; HIG/MIG/LIG and rural/urban a self made questionnaire was applied which sought informations from subjects related to their background factors.

The data obtained has been put to statistical analysis Means, SDs and 't' ratios have been computed to test the significance of difference between mean scores of different groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis and comparison related to attitude towards family planning scores of Muslim and non-Muslim students reveals that Muslim community belongingness impairs attitude towards family planning whereas Hindu community belongingness facilitates attitude towards family planning. The mean score on attitude towards family planning of Muslim students is 72.15 while that of Hindu students is 91.3. The higher the score, the higher or more favourable is the attitude towards family planning. Hindu students have scored significantly higher than Muslim students on attitude towards family planning because the obtained 't' ratio to test the significance of difference between mean scores has been found highly significant. So, the non-Muslim or Hindu students hold significantly more favourable attitude towards family planning than Muslim students. Lower level of modernization and higher level of religious dogmatism of the Muslim group might have made them to hold unfavourable attitude towards family planning. Furthermore, their consideration of birth control as a sin and against

the preachings of Quoran might have contributed to their lower attitude towards family planning. On the other -hand, readiness to change and lower adherence to religiously dogmatic outlook of the Hindus might have made them more conscious of the hazardous population problem facing India and the world. This higher consciousness might have developed rational outlook in the non-Muslim group which consequently might have made their attitude towards family planning more favourable. Our findings appear to be supporting the findings of Singh, B.K. (1971) who reported that the Hindu teachers had significantly more favourable attitude towards family planning than the Muslim teachers.

TABLE - 1
SHOWING MEANS, S.Ds. and 't' RATIO of AFP SCORES (MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM GROUPS)

Groups	Means	S.Ds.	N	df	't' ratio	Level of significance
Muslim	72.15	18.343323	200	398	10.865631	.01
Non-Muslim	91.3	16.874833	200			

Income level does not prove to be influencing attitude towards family planning in Muslim group, but this variable has been found significantly influencing attitude towards family planning in non-Muslim group. Higher score denotes higher or more favourable attitude towards family planning. MIG in the Muslim group has scored higher than HIG and LIG. But the differences between mean scores are not significant. So, we cannot state with confidence that income level improves or lowers attitude towards family planning of the Muslim group. Our findings for the Muslim group support the findings of Bharati (1972), Kulhari et al (1972) and Bhargava and Singh (1977) who found that income had nothing to do with the people's attitude towards family planning. But in the non-Muslim group, the picture is different. Statistical analysis has proved that LIG is significantly lower than HIG and MIG on attitude towards family planning in the non-Muslim group. In the non-Muslim group HIG and MIG have scored somewhat equal on attitude towards family planning. So, HIG and MIG do not differ significantly on attitude towards family planning. However, significantly lower score of LIG than MIG and HIG on AFP in the non-Muslim group denotes that lower income level lowers attitude towards family planning. The findings related to the non-Muslim group support the findings of Saruparia (1964), Majumdar and Das (1971) and Bhargava and Bhargava (2001) who reported significant relationship between income level and attitude towards family planning.

TABLE - 2
SHOWING MEANS, S.Ds. AND 't' RATIO OF AFP SCORES (HIG, MIG, AND LIG, SUBGROUPS)

Sub-Groups	Means	S.Ds.	N	df	't' ratios	Level of significance
MHIG	72.125	19.022601	80	161	.5534851	NS
MMIG	73.716868	17.638982	83			
MHIG	72.125	19.022601	80	115	.945749	NS
MLIG	68.68919	17.915474	37			
MMIG	73.716868	17.638982	83	118	1.4264247	NS
MLIG	68.68919	17.915474	37			
NMHIG	94.03	16.756558	75	158	.5237501	NS
NMMIG	92.67647	15.882789	85			
NMHIG	94.03	16.756558	75	113	3.2958375	.01
NMLIG	83.25	16.686446	40			
NMMIG	92.67647	15.882789	85	123	2.9915902	.01
NMLIG	83.25	16.686446	40			

Residential area has been found significantly influencing attitude towards family planning only in the case of non-Muslim students. Muslim students do not show variation on their attitude towards family planning due to variation in their residential area. The mean AFP score of rural Muslim group is 71.23 while that of urban Muslim group is 72.7. Although urban Muslim group has scored higher than rural Muslim group, yet the difference between their mean AFP scores is not significant. So we cannot state with confidence whether residential area facilitates or impairs attitude towards family planning of Muslim group. Our findings related to the Muslim group support the findings of Van Groenous (1972) who did not get any significant difference between rural-urban subjects with regard to attitude towards family planning. But our findings for the non-Muslim group are completely different. Urban subjects have displayed significantly higher or more favourable attitude towards family planning than rural subjects in the non-Muslim group. It appears that urban non-Muslim subjects have realised the higher cost of education of children and perceive more children as blockade to happiness in life. They are comparatively better educated than rural subjects. These factors might have contributed to their more favourable attitude towards family planning. Our findings related to attitude towards family planning of the non-Muslim group support the findings of Light (1970), Chatterjee (1971), and Singh and Upamanyu (1982) who found urban subjects significantly higher on attitude towards family planning than rural subjects.

TABLE - 3
SHOWING MEANS, S.Ds. AND 't' RATIOS OF AFP
SCORES (RURAL AND URBAN SUBGROUPS)

Sub-Groups	Means	S.Ds.	N	df	't' ratios	Level of significance
MRG	71.23	17.916349	75	198	.5527858	NS
MUG	72.7	18.573098	125			
NMRG	87.264705	18.044159	85	198	2.8985211	.01
NMUG	94.282608	15.285562	115			

Female subjects from the Muslim group has been found displaying significantly more favourable attitude towards family planning than their male counterparts. It appears that Muslim male subjects consider family planning as a sin and against the preachings of Quoran, but female subjects want to refrain from frequent conceptions due to their health conditions. They do not want to remain bound to their conventional conceptions related to child birth. Their higher score on attitude towards family planning denotes their cravings for more freedom and equality of status with Muslim males or non-Muslim females. They would also be finding themselves unable to rear so many children born in the name of religion and sufferings caused by easy divorce where privileges mostly go in favour of males. On the other hand, non-Muslim males have shown significantly more favourable attitude towards family planning than their female counterparts. It appears that non-Muslim males have realised the problem of unemployment and poverty caused by rapid growth of population, but non-Muslim females still believe in being super mother by begetting many children. Their religious affiliation might have also contributed to their lower level of attitude towards family planning than their male counterparts. Our findings related to attitude towards family planning of the non-Muslim group support the finding of Hall (1970), Fisher (1971) and Bhargava and Singh (1977) who reported males holding more favourable attitude towards family planning than their female counterparts. But our findings related to the Muslim group with regard to attitude towards family planning support the finding of Poffenberger (1968) who reported through survey study that women were more interested in family planning than their men counterparts.

TABLE - 4
SHOWING MEANS, S.Ds. AND 't' RATIOS OF AFP SCORES
(MALE AND FEMALE SUBGROUPS)

Sub-Groups	Means	S.Ds.	N	df	't' ratios	Level of significance
MMG	69.16	18.015425	150	198	4.3654473	.01
MFG	81.1	16.292329	50			
NMMG	93.83	16.868774	120	198	2.6682824	.01
NMFG	87.5	16.155494	80			

The study has led to the following conclusions -

- (i) Community influences level of attitude towards family planning.
- (ii) Muslim groups significantly lower than non-Muslim group on attitude towards family planning.
- (iii) Income level significantly influences attitude towards family planning in non-Muslim group but this variable doesnot influence this attitude area in Muslim group.
- (iv) Urbanisations significantly strengthens favourable attitude towards family planning in non-Muslim group but insignificantly strengthens favourable attitude towards this area in Muslim group.
- (v) Male students hold higher attitude towards family planning in non-Muslim group but lower attitude in Muslim group than their female counterparts.

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