



AWARENESS OF FAMILY PLANNING IN SLUMS IN CHANDIGARH: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

A range of 'push' and 'pull' factors are related to urbanization from the standpoint of migration of people to urban areas. However, due to high cost of living they have to settle in slum areas and face problems. Due to illiteracy and less awareness of family planning they are unable to control family size. There is need to study awareness amongst slum dwellers especially amongst women for population control. The present study was carried out on women living in the slums of Chandigarh. The study is based on primary data which was collected through interview schedule from 50 respondents selecting 25 respondents each from two authorized slums in Chandigarh. The findings of the study revealed that women in slums. The findings indicate awareness of family planning programs but not proper utilization of various schemes of family planning program in these slum areas.

KEY WORD: family planning , modern time , planned development and richness of the society.

INTRODUCTION

Although India has largest number of slums dwellers in the world but we know very little about them. With the rapid pace of urbanization in India, slums have become an alarming reality and are the most complicated problem of modern time. If we want to solve this problem we should have proper data and in depth studies. According to Mr. Badiane the Director of UN-HABITAT notes, "One of the major challenges facing urban centres in its lack of information and accurate statistic that could be used when planning development" (UN Habitat Report 2005).

The term family planning is not understood in its right sense by many, including the highly educated. The utterance of the term family planning, particularly in India, would immediately recall to many minds the inverted red triangle symbol. Also, it means for them Nirodh (condom) or the family planning operation. It is understood as the family planning methods or only methods of preventing child births. In fact, family planning refers to fertility regulation or fertility control to have desired family size for happy living. Family planning, in other words, is regulation of child birth, be it a temporary postponement or permanent prevention of births. It includes family planning of children at all levels. Calister (1973) refers fertility control "to patterns of human behaviour that have as their primary objective the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and births". He defines family planning as "the intricate process by which persons, if they wish, can determine for themselves the timing, spacing and number of children to be born to them". It means family planning is the activity/activities by which a family is planned.

Family planning is now recognized as a basic human right. Its ultimate aim is to ensure that every child is



a wanted one and that its coming into the world is the result of a responsible decision on the part of its parents. Family planning helps people in many ways. It (a) helps a women to space her pregnancies in order to safeguard her health and that of her children: (b) protects a women from pregnancy until her body has been weaned and she wants to have another child; (c) gives parents the opportunity to provide a better start in life for each of their children; (d) helps men and women to enjoy their married life without fear of unwanted pregnancy; and (e) provides future well being of the families". It actually calls for judicious and planned

implementation of decisions such as whether to have children or not, if to have how many, and with what interval between them and at what time. It is related to having the desired number of children with desired gap in between.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Family planning means a well-planned family with limited members whose maintenance is possible with available resources and tools and thus builds a healthy and well to do unit. A well planned family is the base for a planned development and richness of the society and or of the country. It can also be stated that the family planning is the key point for a planned development. The use of contraceptives has increased over a period time especially after renaming family planning program as family welfare program but there exists a gap in attitude, practice and knowledge about contraception. Lack of knowledge, education, religious beliefs and fear of side effects, etc. are the chief reasons for not use of contraception techniques by people in general and especially those living in slum areas. The present study was intended to study the awareness of family planning in slums in Chandigarh. The purpose of the study was to know about the socio-economic and demographic conditions of people in slums and their awareness, attitudes and practices towards the family planning. The study was intended to find out the extent or reach of the Family Planning methods. The research mainly emphasized on studying the awareness and methods used by people for Family Planning. The study also emphasized on the program and policies of Family Planning.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the present study were to examine the awareness methods adopted by people for Family Planning, to assess the role of Government in Family Planning in India and to delineate the perception of people towards Family Planning.

METHODOLOGY

The universe of the present study comprised of people in slums, less developed areas in Chandigarh city. The study is primarily exploratory and descriptive in nature. The study was conducted in 'Bapu Dham Colony' and 'Colony Number 4' of Chandigarh city which was purposively selected for the study. The study was carried out on a total of 50 persons (25 men and 25 women) in these slums which were selected through random sampling method. It was decided that in case of locked house or non-availability, the next household would be interviewed only the wives of heads of households were interviewed. Data were collected with the help of interview schedule at the usual residence of the respondents.

Five sets of concerns have dominated the literature on Family Planning. The first grows out of the traditional definition of Family Planning. The second focuses on the Family Planning programs in India. The third major area of focus within the literature based on the different other areas. Fourth, the emphasized on the other various methods adopted in the programs. Finally, it is stressed on the various policies which dopted by the Government for making this program successful. Almost all the woman preferred to have more male-births. Most of them said that they wanted to have at least two sons lest 'something happens' to one turns out bad 'but one daughter would not be enough. Their aspirations about the education and occupation were higher for sons as compared to daughters.

Various studies have mainly focused their attention on villages and cities. Little work has been done on people in slums in Chandigarh. In these areas, the awareness level about family planning is expected to be less which tended to escape the attention of the researchers. The people in slums especially slum woman, the weaker sections of society is the silent victim of temptations, allurements, threats and circumstantial factors (social, economic and cultural).

FINDINGS

The data reveal that there was heterogeneity in the sample as respondents belonged to different social groups. The data show that most of the respondents were in the age group of 31-35 and 36-40 years. The data indicate that most of the respondents belonged to lower caste and middle caste. More than half of the respondent's population belonged to Hindu Religion, 38 percent from Sikh religion and 10 percent Muslim

community and remaining from other religion. It clearly shows the dominance of Hindus and Sikh community in slum areas as is the case of total population of the city. The data further showed that most of the men and women in slum areas belonged to labour class followed by those in service. Some women and men were involved in small business like pan shop; articles selling etc. Majority of the women respondents' income is upto Rs.3000 per month and that of men respondents' is upto Rs. 4000 per month. Average people's income falls between Rs.2000 to 3000 per month. This shows that all our respondents belong to lower class families. The data show that majority of respondents were married between 7-10 years followed by those who have spent 4-6 years of married life. Findings clearly show that the respondents had spent sufficient number of years of married life and they were expected to be having awareness of family planning.

It is interesting to note that majority of the respondents have knowledge about the family planning. One third of the respondents have little or no knowledge about the family planning. The data though show a very positive picture of awareness of family planning but also show a need for spreading the awareness as one-third of respondents were unaware of family planning. The data reveal that more than one third of respondents became aware of family planning due to efforts of health personnel followed by mass media and advertisements. This on the whole shows a very positive picture of contribution of the government machinery in spreading the awareness of family planning. The data further show that majority of the persons who were aware of the family planning got information from govt. followed by NGOs. This data indicate that for the further success of the family planning there is a need for coordination between the govt. and NGOs.

During field work, it was noted that majority of them were aware of at least one method of contraception and gave multiple responses. Males were more aware of condoms whereas females were more aware of Copper T. They also told about the advertisements regarding the birth control methods. This on the whole indicates awareness about family planning among respondents. The data show lack of awareness of spacing in the respondents as majority of them was not in favour of more spacing between the children. One-fifth of the respondents were in favour of spacing of 3 and more years in children.

The data showed that one-third of the respondents preferred sons because they provide security to the parents in old age, 30 per cent of them preferred sons for economic assets and 36 per cent of them preferred sons because they enhance the prestige of the family through carrying the family name. The data clearly show that majority of the respondent were of the opinion that government policies are helpful in family planning. However, about one-third of the respondents were having no idea of usefulness of government policies in family planning. The data do not give an encouraging picture of success of family planning program as only two-fifth of the respondents were of the opinion that family planning has been successful in limiting the size of the family. 28 per cent were of the opinion that family planning program has not contributed much in limiting the size of the family whereas one-third of them have no clear idea of success of the family planning program. The analyses on the whole show that the people in the slums selected for the study were generally aware of the family planning program. They were generally of the opinion that governmental efforts have contributed a lot in the success of the family planning program.

It was also found that majority of the respondents were aware of at least one method of contraception. Regarding attitude towards family planning, majority of the respondents of Scheduled Caste had less favourable attitude towards family planning, whereas majority of the respondents of Non-Scheduled Caste had highly favourable attitude towards family planning. Further, as far as the adoption of family planning methods was concerned, majority of the respondents used traditional methods followed by conventional methods like Nirodh, Family planning operation, Copper-T and Oral Pills. Scheduled Caste respondents opted less methods of family planning for spacing. A majority of the Scheduled Caste respondents were not making use of any method as compared to Non-Scheduled Caste.

CONCLUSIONS

After studying the physical conditions as well as the social, economic and demographic aspects of the slum families in Chandigarh, we can draw certain conclusions about them. Majority of the slum families belong to Scheduled Castes and live in their own semi-pucca or pucca houses, consisting of one or two rooms. Majority of the houses also have electricity, water supply and sewerage. As far as the adoption of family planning methods was concerned, a majority of the respondents used traditional methods followed by conventional methods like Nirodh, family planning operation, Copper – T and Oral Pills. Scheduled Caste respondents opted less methods of family planning for spacing. A majority of the Scheduled Caste respondents were not making use of any method as compared to the Non-Scheduled Caste respondents. The analyses on the whole show that the people in the slums selected for the study were generally aware of the family planning program. They were generally of the opinion that governmental efforts have contributed a lot in the success of the family planning program. Efforts should be made to educate the slum dwellers particularly the women. Doorstep delivery services of modern methods of contraception should be allowed free of cost. NGOs involvement will strengthen the implementation of RCH services for increasing CPR among slum dwellers. There is need for promotion of family planning amongst women in all areas especially slums to secure the well-being and autonomy of women while supporting the health of communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

There is need to provide the people more awareness and knowledge regarding family planning methods. Efforts should be made to spread education among women in slums. Age at marriage should be raised and early marriage should be prevented especially in Urban-slum areas. There is also need to spread knowledge regarding sex and related issues should be provided at proper age and also to raise the status of women so that they become equal partner in decision-making for adopting the family planning measures. Government as well as non-government organizations should organize camps seminars and family planning campaign in Urban, Rural and slum areas. More emphasis should be placed on voluntary acceptance of family planning based on education, information and communication, rather than coercion.

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