

EDUCATION, FAMILY PLANNING AND INFERTILITY: A TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP

Adnan Nasir¹, Abid Ghafoor Chaudhry¹, Aftab Ahmed², Syeda Aimen Hadi¹, Adnan Saqib³

Department of Anthropology, PMAS- Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi,²Pakistan Association of Anthropology, Islamabad,

³PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi. Corresponding Author's Email: abidge@uuar.edu.pk

ABSTRACT: *The linkage between education and fertility has surprisingly been paid little attention. Education has been affirmed as a chief agent in developing and modifying female roles. The transforming female roles from more traditional to non-traditional ones have altered their reproductive behavior. This paper studies the effect of altered reproductive behavior in relation with education leading to infertility. The study locale was chosen to be the Rawalpindi city; specifically the areas of "Dhook Kashmirian" and "Satellite Town". A sample of 100 sampling units, that were exclusively married were chosen through convenience sampling to get the structured questionnaires filled which were built specifically to reveal the relation between education, family planning and infertility. The results of the paper show that; a) Elevated education level led to late marriages. b) Use of contraceptive measures increased with education. c) Family planning due to economic pressure and changed female roles led to increased child spacing. d) Continuous use of contraceptive methods leads to decreased fertility.*

Key Words: Education, Family planning methods, Infertility

INTRODUCTION

The ability to conceive through normal sexual intercourse, and "carry the baby to full term, with a life birth nine months after conception" confirms a person to be fertile [1]. Reproductive health is further described as the "state of complete physical, mental, and social health and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters related to the reproductive system and to its functions and process"[2-4].

Education holds prime importance when it comes to influencing female roles. With the advent of industrialization and development the role patterns visibly transformed from the more traditional to less traditional and familial ones. "Educated women want to improve their social status and thus tend to invest their time to progress economically" [5]. The level of education and awareness, thus directly affects the decision to marry, family size, use of family planning methods, child spacing and uncontrollably fertility too.

"Increased age of marriage is directly associated with major social-structural changes such as increases in educational attainment, urbanization, and the emergence of new roles for single women"[6]. Improved education creates awareness and alters the roles and aspirations of women, as "it imparts values, aspirations and skills which encourage and facilitate non-familial roles." [7]. Late marriages a result of increased education, thus is found to affect fertility too, as "around 30 year's fertility declines off course fertility can be sometimes a problem when we are in our late 20s" [1, 5].

Hence "the decision to marry and reproduce is directly dependent upon education and awareness among the individuals." [5] The increased importance of non-familial roles affect the family size and leads "educated women want to have less number of children" [7]. Women wanting to have smaller family size tend to opt for various family planning and contraceptive methods that then affect the fertility.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For conducting the research, the locale was chosen to be areas of Rawalpindi City; "Dhook Kashmirian" and "Satellite Town". From the population of the targeted area sample of

100 respondents were chosen through convenience sampling. The sampling frame included exclusively married people. The respondents were equally chosen from both genders i.e. 50 females and 50 males. The data was then collected regarding the triangular relationship between "education, family planning and infertility" using structured questionnaires and informal interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table.1: Effect Of Education On The Decision To Marry And Fertility.

		Late Marriages In Women Effects Fertility?		Total
		Yes	No	
Education causes late marriages?	Yes	66	10	76
	No	16	8	24
Total		82	18	100

The respondents when inquired about the relationship between late marriages, education and fertility the relationship was found to be strong. 66 respondents agreed that "increased education caused late marriage" while also revealed that these "late marriages led to infertility". Only 16 respondents believed that education was not a cause behind late marriages, however, agreed that late marriages did affect fertility negatively.

"Women's education has been found to influence the reproductive behavior through "knowledge, decision making, physical (ability to move freely outside the home), emotional, economic and social aspects" [5].

This change in age of marriage and altered reproductive behavior affects the fertility negatively. "Education leads to decline in the fertility by delaying, the decision to get married" [4]. Demographic and Economic literature proposes that "female education lowers fertility as it increases the opportunity cost of women's time while the productive technology for children is time-intensive comparative to the parents' technology for their standard of living" [8]

Respondents shared that women who were more oriented towards attaining education and being economically stable

inevitably had to delay getting married. After achieving a suitable position, finding a good match for marriage sprouted as another major issue which, when resolved increased the age of the women that then led to various reproductive issues.

Table.2: Family Planning and Education.

		Family Planning More Common In Educated People?		Total
		Yes	No	
Education causes late marriages?	Yes	54	22	76
	No	13	11	24
Total		67	33	100

The concept of family planning has increasingly become common in the past few decades. Increased education has seriously altered the perceptions of women towards families and their respective roles. Since most of the women are more motivated towards building a career thus having a smaller family is both financially and socially feasible. This change is owed to the "Purposive diffusion of birth control through government and private family planning programs" [9].

Data reveals that on one hand education led to late marriages while on the other hand, the more educated were observed to follow family planning methods. 54 respondents that agreed that education caused late marriages also stated that family planning was more common among the educated. "Men and women with higher education used more contraceptive methods" [10].

Table 3: Child Spacing and Education.

		Gap between children is more, when parents are educated?		Total
		Yes	No	
Education causes late marriages?	Yes	51	25	76
	No	15	9	24
Total		66	34	100

Child spacing and education are also revealed to be relevant. The respondents when asked if educated parents had more space between each child, it showed that 51 respondents agreed that better education led to increased child spacing. "Family planning methods are mostly used by educated women for bringing space between children" [11]. Couples use various contraceptive methods and family planning techniques to either elongate the period before they start a family or to bring space between children. Studies confirm that "women who elongate the waiting time to start their families, do not recognize the effects that age can have on their capacity to have a baby, the risk of losing their child and risk of having a hereditarily abnormal child" [12]. Since the "more educated women are likely to have longer birth intervals than their less educated counterparts" [13] it is

observed that they are the ones who face the most complexes too when it comes to reproductive health.

Table.4: Use of Contraceptive Methods and Infertility

		Medicines Used For Family Planning Effects Fertility?		Total
		Yes	No	
Do you know what fertility is?	Yes	57	30	87
	No	12	1	13
Total		69	31	100

Respondents when inquired if using contraceptive methods like pills and injections lead to infertility, total 87 respondents agreed while only 13 people disagreed.

The overall research results are strengthened by another study that summarizes the relativity between education, late marriages, family planning and infertility. "Given the level of contraceptive use it is definitely more education that is associated with lower fertility. This is most likely an outcome of late marriage, more effective use of contraception, and greater reliance on abortion among better-educated women." [13] Moreover, "women and men have faced harmful effects on health from the use of Family Planning methods" [14].

CONCLUSION

The study thus concludes that increased education and motivation towards building a career instead of a family has seriously restructured the whole reproductive behavior among the new generations. Late marriages, strict family planning and continuous use of contraceptive measures hurdles the overall productivity.

REFERENCES

1. Wilson, M. R., "Fertility, The library of sexual Health," *The rosen group Inc. New York.* pp.14. (2009)
2. Worku, F. and Gebresilassie, S., "Reproductive health for health science student", *The Carter Center (EPHTI) and The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health,* :1 (2008)
3. Bernstein, S. and Hansen, C. J., "Public Choices, Private Decisions: Sexual and Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals," *Sexual and Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals,* (2006)
4. Babary, A., Aslam, S., Chaudhry, A. G. and Hadi, S. A., "Misconception Regarding Reproductive Health: An Assessment Of University Graduates," *Science International, Lahore.* 27(1): 667-670. (2015)
5. Ghazanfar, S., "Education and Human Fertility: An Evolutionary Perspective," *Science International, Lahore.* 27(1): 683-685. (2015)
6. Ikamari, L. D. E., "The Effect Of Education On The Timing Of Marriage In Kenya", *Max Planck Institute For Demographic Research.*12(1): 1-28. (2005)
7. Rindfuss, R. and Bumpass, L., "Education and Fertility: Implications for the Roles Women Occupy," *American Sociological Association.* 379-401 (1978)
8. Massimo, L., "A Concise History of World Population," *Oxford, England: Blackwell.* (1997)

9. Casterline, J. B., "Diffusion Processes and Fertility Transition," *National Academy Press. Washington, DC.* p 3-4
10. Radulovic, O. Sagric, C. Vasic, A. and Markovic, R., "The influence of Education level on Family Planning. Male Fertility", *3rd ed., Medicine and Biology, FactaUniversitatis.* **13**(1): 58 – 64(2006)
11. Jain, A., and Nag, N., "Importance of Female Primary Education for Fertility Reduction", *Economic and politically weekly.* India. **36**(21) (1986)
12. Legere, L., "Knowledge of infertility low in urban teens," *Communications & Stakeholder Relations Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.* 416-480 (2008)
13. Bongaarts, J., "The Causes of Educational Differences in Fertility in sub-Saharan Africa, The Population Council," *William and Flora Hewlett .Foundation.* 1-20 (2010)
14. Aumack-Yee, K., and Hilliard, S. "Fertility Awareness across the Life Course," *Washington, DC: Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University.* (2013)