

## **Family planning behaviour of Indian couples: when do Indian men adopt family planning methods**

Shailendra K Mishra and Sanjeev Bakshi

Biological Anthropology Unit, Population studies Unit,  
Indian Statistical Institute, 203 B.T. Road, Kolkata, INDIA

e-mail: [shailendra17@gmail.com](mailto:shailendra17@gmail.com) , [shailendra\\_r@isical.ac.in](mailto:shailendra_r@isical.ac.in)

**Background:** India is amongst the pioneer countries to start family planning program at national level. In spite of consistent efforts of promoting family planning programs with several modifications during the trajectory of last sixty years, desired progress is yet to be achieved. Several localized and national level surveys were carried out to understand the drawbacks of existing programs and to provide evidences for future policy modifications. Studies on choice of family planning methods and its correlates are limited. However, adoption of family planning method by a couple is subject to gender bias in developing countries like India. Family planning methods are either male specific or female specific. It is observed that when a couple decides to choose a permanent method, wife is more likely adopt.

The present study attempts to model the choices of male and female specific family planning methods by the Indian couples. The overarching aim of the study is propose a conceptual framework comprising of various demographic, socio-cultural and economic factors and their association with couple's choice of family planning methods.

**Methods:** The present study is based on the participants of National Family Health Survey -3, who are currently in wedlock and are practicing family planning. Adoption of family planning method was viewed as a decision making process involving four stages. In the first step, a couple decides whether to practice family planning or not. Second step involves deciding between permanent method and non-permanent method as a choice. In the third step, it is decided who among the two (husband and wife) will adopt family planning method. Finally, it is decided out of the available methods which one is the most appropriate to be adopted. The present study mainly attempts to model third step in the decision hierarchy. The factors that might influence the probability of a couple's decision about family planning method were grouped into four broad categories, namely, the

couple characteristics, wife's capacities, husband capacities and environmental factors. Both, binomial and multinomial logistic regression model were fitted to estimate the effects of various factors on the probability of permanent as well as non permanent family planning methods.

**Findings:** The results of the study suggest that violence against wife and her exposure to media are significant correlates to determine couple's choice of family planning method. Education is found not only to give wife more leverage to convince the husband for sterilization but also increases the likelihood of using female specific family planning method in case of non permanent methods. The present age of women and the age at marriage are observed to have quadratic effects on likelihood of male sterilization. Among environmental factors, effect of place of residence is not found significant; however, effect of caste is discernible in selection of non-permanent method of family planning.

**Conclusion:** Selection of appropriate family planning method by a couple involves many factors together. Therefore, it is imperative to understand selection process in all possible ways. Findings of the study are, hence important addition to present existing knowledge in this regard. Study results show important links between women empowerment indicators and choice of family planning method to be used by couple. It provides a country wide trend about family planning decision making and its correlates. The results of the study can be utilized for future policy interventions on the issue.