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Effect of Women`s Autonomy on Unmet Need for Contraception and Family Size in India

Authors : Anshita Sharma

Abstract : India is one of the countries to initiate family planning with intention to control the growing population by reducing fertility. In effort to this, India had introduced the National family planning programme in 1952. The level of unmet need in India shows a reducing trend with increasing effectiveness of family planning services as in NFHS-1 the unmet need for limiting, spacing and total was 46 percent, 14 percent & 9 percent, respectively. The demand for spacing has reduced to at 8 percent, 8 percent for limiting and total unmet need was 16 percent in NFHS-2. The total unmet need has reduced to 13 percent in NFHS-3 for all currently married women and the demand for limiting and spacing is 7 percent and 6 percent respectively. The level of unmet need in India shows a reducing trend with increasing effectiveness of family planning services. Despite the progress, there is chunk of women who are deprived of controlling unintended and unwanted pregnancies. The present paper examines the socio-cultural and economic and demographic correlates of unmet need for contraception in India. It also examines the effect of women's autonomy and unmet need for contraception on family size among different socio-economic groups of population. It uses data from national family health survey-3 carried out in 2005-06 and employs bi-variate techniques and multivariate techniques for analysis. The multiple regression analysis has done to seek the level and direction of relationship among various socio-economic and demographic factors. The result reveals that women with higher level of education and economic status have low level of unmet need for family planning. Women living in non-nuclear family have high unmet need for spacing and women living in nuclear family have high unmet need for limiting and family size is slightly higher of women of nuclear family. In India, the level of autonomy varies at different life point; usually women with higher age enjoy higher autonomy than their junior female member in the family. The finding shows that women with higher autonomy have large family size counter to women with low autonomy have low family size. Unmet need for family planning decrease with women's increasing exposure to mass- media. The demographic factors like experience of child loss are directly related to family size. Women who experience higher child loss have low unmet need for spacing and limiting. Thus, It is established with the help that women's autonomy status play substantial role in fulfilling demand of contraception for limiting and spacing which affect the family size.

Keywords : family size, socio-economic correlates, unmet need for limiting, unmet need for spacing, women`s autonomy
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