

Knowledge and Use of Family Planning Services in Pakhribash Municipality

Niraj Pradhan¹

Email: niraj.pradhan@dhmc.tu.edu.np

Abstract

The main objective of the study was to assess the awareness of family planning services among currently married women of age group 15-49 years and to identify the socio-economic and demographic determinants of use of family planning in Pakhribash Municipality. The study was based on descriptive design in nature using both primary and secondary sources of data; for the convenient of the study, the simple random sampling method was used to collect data likewise; the sample size of this study was 135 numbers of women of reproductive age group who married. The interview schedule was the main tool for collecting the data. In this study all, most all women 96.3% heard about family planning similarly, 90% of women had heard about Depo- Provera. In the same way, 73.1% married women who had ever used a family planning method in the life time but 62.3% of women were currently using a family planning method at the time of survey.

Keywords: *contraceptive, occupation, family planning methods, sterilization*

Introduction

The main problem of development in developing countries is rapid population growth. The population and development is related to each other and on the other hand the modernization, improved living conditions, which are the part of the development, can be expected to bring population growth down. Development may not be possible as long as the current high rate of population growth continues. Likewise, recognizing the need to bring the population growth rate in line with resources, many developing countries have adopted family planning programme in their national policies and programmes (Acharya, 1996).

Around 12 million adolescent girls (age 15 to 19 years) give birth each year in developing countries with risk of pregnancy death being almost double for girls aged 15-19 compared to women aged 20-29. Around 11% of total babies born globally are from adolescent mothers with 95% of these births occurring in developing countries. Approximately 3.9 million girls of this age group undergo unsafe abortions, whilst complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death for 15 to 19 year-old girls globally. (Government of Nepal & Ministry of Health and Population, 2021)

¹ Mr. Pradhan is a Lecturer of Health education at Tribhuvan University, Dhankuta Multiple Campus, Dhankuta, Nepal.

The use of modern contraceptive methods among currently married women increased by 70 percent in the past ten years from 26 percent in 1996 to 44 percent in 2006, with much of this increase attributed to the rise in the use of female sterilization, the pill, condoms and injectables. Overall, there has been a 36 percent increase in the share of temporary methods over permanent methods in the past decade. (Ministry of Health and Population & Government of Nepal, 2007)

Overall, 53% of currently married women use a method of family planning, with 43% using a modern method and 10% using a traditional method. Female sterilization is the most commonly used method (15%), followed by injectables (9%), male sterilization (6%), and the pill (5%). Adolescent use of contraception: Only 15% of currently married women age 15-19 use a modern method of contraception. (Bista, 2021)

One out of every four modern contraceptive users rely on the private sector for their method. 60% of condom users and 41% of pill users obtain their method from the private sector. 39% of married adolescent users rely on private sector sources. More than one-half of the wealthiest contraceptive users obtain their method from public sector sources. (Plus, 2016)

Three out of every five women who began using a contraceptive method in the 5 years before the survey discontinued the method within 12 months. The most common reason for discontinuing a method is the husband being away (47%), followed by side effects or health concerns (18%) and the desire to become pregnant (13%). Unmet need for family planning: Twenty-four percent of married women of reproductive age have an unmet need for family planning; that is, they want to space or limit births but are not using contraception. Demand for family planning: Fifty-six percent of the total demand for family planning is satisfied by modern methods. (Ministry of Health, 2022)

Understanding where women obtain their family planning methods can help programs to better target their resources and increase overall access to modern contraception. This brief is one in a series of country briefs that examines where women obtain modern contraception by method, geography, age, and socioeconomic status. Through a secondary analysis of the 2016 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, the brief explains where married modern contraceptive users obtain their method and examines the contribution of the private sector to family planning in Nepal. (Plus, 2016)

In March 2015, as part of the FP 2020 global partnership to increase access to family planning, the government of Nepal made the following commitments to improve its family planning (FP) program by 2020: a. Increase funding for family planning programs by at least 7 percent annually. b. Identify barriers to accessing family planning services and formulate policies to address them. c. Expand and strengthen family planning service delivery and support mobilizing resources from non-health sectors. Family planning has many benefits for individuals and society. If Nepal achieves its FP 2020 and Costed Implementation Plan (CIP) goals for family planning, it will save the lives of women and children and improve the health of families. These health improvements can have great impacts on the lives of the poorest and most disadvantaged women, as well as the national economy. (Health Policy Project, n.d.)

Fifty-seven (57%) of currently married women are using a method of contraception; 43% are using a modern method, and 15% are using a traditional method. The most popular modern methods used are female sterilization (13%), injectables (9%), and implants (6%). Withdrawal is by far the most common traditional method used; 13% of currently married women use this method compared with 2% who use the rhythm method. Trends of use of any family planning method among currently married women rose from 29% in 1996 to 57% in 2022. Over the same period, use of modern methods of contraception increased from 26% in 1996 to 44% in 2006. It has held steady at 43% from 2011 through 2022. (Ministry of Health, 2022)

The use of family planning services is influenced by a variety of factors, including the gender of the client, age, occupation, education level and location. Since so many people are adopting family planning now, it is progressing well enough. In a similar manner, family planning services are being used by people more wisely and safely. Family planning services eliminate all types of unnecessary barriers. On the other hand, an insufficient knowledge, limited methods, inadequate supplies, limitations on who can be treated, requirements for tests or physical exams, etc., all play a significant role in preventing the use of family planning services.

The social, cultural, and economic norms that exist in any given society have an impact on how frequently family planning services are used. Contraceptive use varies depending on the community and what is considered acceptable by that community. The social conventions that make up Nepali society are very diverse, and this could affect how people feel about family planning services. For policymakers and program implementers, the racial disparities in contraceptive use are crucial.

The objective of studying knowledge and use of family planning services is to understand the level of awareness, understanding, and utilization of family planning methods among individuals and communities. The study aims to assess the availability, accessibility, and quality of family planning services.

The general reproductive health and wellbeing of people and communities are significantly influenced by their knowledge of and use of family planning services. Those who have access to family planning services have the knowledge and resources they need to plan their families and make educated decisions about their reproductive health. By lowering maternal and infant mortality rates, expanding access to education and work opportunities, and decreasing poverty levels, it not only empowers individuals but also helps society as a whole.

The need for education and understanding about the advantages of family planning services must also be prioritized, though their accessibility is essential. In order to expand health education initiatives and raise awareness of the many family planning options available, governments and healthcare professionals must collaborate.

Overall, research on family planning knowledge and use can significantly improve the lives of people, families, and communities by advancing gender equality, sustainable development, better health outcomes, and the eradication of poverty.

Methods and Materials

The study was based in descriptive research design in nature, using both primary and secondary sources of data. Furthermore, the primary data was gathered from the married women of reproductive age group of Pakribash Municipality and various publications, journals, reports issued by NGO/GO organization were considered as the secondary data sources. For purpose of sample selection, the simple random sampling method was used to select 135 numbers of women of reproductive age group who are married. The interview schedule was the main tool for collecting the data.

Results and Discussion

Age and Knowledge of Family Planning Method Knowledge plays a great role to concrete the perception into the behaviour. The table no.1 shows the distribution of respondents by knowledge of family planning according to their age.

Table 1: *Distribution of Age and Knowledge of Family Planning Method*

S.N.	Description	Age of Women								Total	
		15-19		20-29		30-39		40-49		No.	Percent
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
1	Yes	6	4.44	49	36.3	55	40.74	20	14.8	130	96.3
2	No	1	0.74	1	0.74	2	1.48	1	0.74	5	3.7
Total		7	5.18	50	37.04	57	44.22	21	15.54	135	100

Table no. 1 depicts that almost all number of women 130 (96.3%) were heard about family planning method only few numbers of women 5 (3.7%) did not heard about family planning method. Likewise, 55(40.74%) married women the age between 30 to 39 were heard about family planning method, on the other hand, the age between 15-19; 20-29 and 40-49 were found 6(4.44%), 49(36.3%) and 20(14.8%) respectively. The table further shows that the knowledge level is higher among older women compared to those who are in the age group of 15-19. The knowledge level being higher among older women compared to those in the age group of 15-19 suggests that the level of awareness and understanding of family planning methods increases with age and life experience. Older women may have had more exposure to family planning information and services over time, which has contributed to their greater knowledge of family planning methods.

Furthermore, the interpretation of this finding may also suggest the need for targeted outreach efforts to reach younger women who may not have had access to family planning information or services due to cultural, social, or economic factors. By increasing knowledge and awareness of family planning methods among younger women, we can empower them to make informed decisions about their reproductive health, plan their families according to their needs and desires, and contribute to their overall health and well-being.

Sources of Knowledge of Family Planning Methods

Knowledge can be gained through many sources and the reliable sources lead to the healthy modification of behavior. In this way, the only women, who had heard about family planning method, were asked about the sources of knowledge about family planning method and the their answers can be presented in table no. 2 as follows:

Table 2: Sources of Knowledge of Family Planning Methods

S.N.	Description	Number	Percentage	Remarks
1	Radio/TV	55	42.3	
2	Health Workers	25	19.23	
3	Friends	25	19.23	
4	Husband	15	11.54	
5	Newspaper	10	7.7	
Total		130	100	

Table no.2 shows that majority of married women 55(42.3%) were known by radio/TV, likewise, health workers and friends each were the main source of knowledge said by 25(19.23%). Furthermore, husband and newspaper were the main source of knowledge of 15(11.54%) and 10(7.7%) respectively. The sources regarding to knowledge about family planning method were reliable and awareness on family planning method seems to be more effective in study area.

Use of Family Planning Method

Proper use of family planning method can reduce unwanted pregnancy but the education status, occupation, age, culture and tradition etc. play the vital role to choose the family planning method. The only married women, who had heard about family planning method, were asked the questions of use of family planning methods. The situation of use of family planning method in the basis of education status, occupation and age can be presented in the following tables no 3 .

Table no. 3 shows that majority of women 95(73.15%) had been ever used any kind of family planning method is her life time and 35(26.85%) women did not use any kind of family planning method. In the same way 75(57.77%) literate women and 20(15.38%) illiterate women used the family planning method. On the other hand, 30(23.02%) literate and 5(3.83%) illiterate women did not use the any kind of family planning method in so far.

This shows that increasing knowledge and awareness of family planning services can increase their utilization. The capacity to acquire and understand information about various family planning methods as well as a better understanding of the importance of family planning for reproductive health could be responsible for this.

Table 3: Education Status and Ever Used of Family Planning Methods

S.N.	Ever Used of Family Planning Method	Education of Women				Total	
		Literate		Illiterate		No.	Percent
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent		
1	Yes	75	57.77	20	115.38	95	73.15
2	No	30	23.02	5	3.83	35	26.85
Total		105	80.79	25	19.21	135	100

On the other hand, the lower percentage of illiterate women using family planning services suggests that the population under study has limited access to information and education about family planning methods, especially for those who are illiterate. This highlights the requirement for specific measures to increase this public's access to family planning services and education.

These findings, taken together, highlight the significance of increasing access to family planning services and education. 95 out of 135 women (ever used family planning methods) in the study area were asked whether they were currently using family planning methods and their responses can be show in table no. 4 as follows:

Table 4: Age and currently Using Family Planning Method

S.N.	Currently Using Family Planning Method	Age of Women								Total	
		15-19		20-29		30-39		40-49		No.	Percent
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent		
1	Yes	5	5.26	30	31.58	15	15.79	5	5.26	55	57.89
2	No	5	5.26	10	10.53	10	10.53	15	15.79	40	42.11
Total		10	10.53	40	42.11	25	26.31	20	21.05	95	100

Table no. 4 shows that majority of married women 55(57.89%) currently using the family planning methods and 40(42.11%) women did not use any kind of contraceptive methods in the time of survey. At the same time, the age between 20 to 29 groups 30(31.58%) women using and 10(10.53%) women were not using, likewise at the age group between 30 to 39 using by 15(15.79%) and 10(10.53%) were not using any kind of contraceptives.

Nevertheless, the fact that many married women weren't currently using any form of contraceptive method, the need for further efforts to improve access to and understanding of

family planning services, particularly in particular age groups. This could be brought by a lack of information or access to services, barriers in the way due to culture or society, or personal preferences.

Overall, these findings highlight the significance of improving family planning information and services, especially for women in the study area that can reduce unintended pregnancies, improve maternal and child health outcomes, and empower women to make informed decisions about their reproductive health.

95 out of 135 respondents, who were ever used family planning method, were asked which kind of family planning method they were used and the responses can be shown as follows:

Table 5: *Choice of Various Family Planning Method*

S.N.	Family Planning Methods	Number	Percent
1	Depo-Provera	43	45.26
2	Oral Pills	5	5.26
3	Condom	4	4.21
4	Norplant	15	15.79
5	Female Sterilization	20	21.05
6	Male Sterilization	4	4.21
7	Foam/Jelly Creams	1	1.05
8	Other/Natural Methods	3	3.17
	Total	95	100

Table no. 5 presents that nearly half of the married women 43(45.26%) were currently using Depo-Provera in the study area. On the other hand, pills users were 5(5.26%) likewise, condom and Norplant users were 4(4.21%) and 15(15.79%) women respectively. Similarly, permanent method preferred by male 4(4.21%) and female were 20(21.05%). Surprisingly, foam/jelly creams users were 1(1.05%) and other natural method chosen by 3(3.17%) woman. The vast majority of women preferred Depo Provera in the study are, the main reason behind using this contraceptive, might be easily available and administrated by the private clinic.

Communication and Choice of Family Planning Methods

There are varieties of method available in family planning. It also needs to be quite aware on using the suitable method. The physical, mental and psychological aspects play the great role to adopt the suitable method. Similarly, sound and good communication between couple while choosing the appropriate method can lead to harmonious relation to each other.

In this context, the communication between couple while choosing appropriate family planning method can be presented in table no. 6 as follows:

Table 6: *Communication and Choice of Family Planning Methods*

S.N.	Communication	Literate		Illiterate		Total	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
1	Yes	55	57.89	20	21.05	75	78.95
2	No	10	10.53	10	10.53	20	21.05
Total		65	68.42	30	31.58	95	100

Table no. 6 shows that vast number of women 75(78.95%) communicated with each other followed by 55(57.89%) literate women and 20(21.05%) illiterate women. Furthermore, 20(21.05%) women followed by 10(10.53%) literate and 10(10.53%) illiterate women did not talk while choosing family planning method.

Overall, these findings emphasize the need of reducing communication barriers and promoting greater access to information and support about family planning options that can empower women to make informed decision about their family planning requirements and improve the outcomes of reproductive health by encouraging more open and informative discussions about reproductive health.

Conclusion

Contraceptive is one of the important determinants of fertility. In the study area the contraceptive prevalence is dominated by temporary method of family planning, like Depo-Provera. In the study area the contraceptive prevalence rate is higher than the prevalence rate at the national level.

The study on Knowledge and Usage of Family Planning Services, in conclusion, provides valuable insights into the current state of family planning practices and associated factors among women in the study area. The results show that the majority of women in the study area are familiar with family planning methods and have used them at some point. Yet, there are differences in the usage of family planning methods across different ages, educational levels, and contraceptive method categories.

The study emphasizes the significance of providing access to family planning education and information, as well as the necessity of increasing access to a range of contraception methods. Additionally, it highlights the importance of social networks and communication in family planning decision-making.

There is strong evidence to conclude that literacy status of women has strong power to rise contraceptive use in the Pakhribash Municipality and birth spacing is the main reason for having future intention to use of family planning method.

Acknowledgements

The author expresses heartfelt thanks to professor Shyam Krishna Maharjan, Faculty of Education, University Campus, Tribhuvan University and assistant professor Om Bahadur Shrestha, HOD, Faculty of Education, Dhankuta Multiple Campus for their expert guidance and meticulous supervision. The author also thanks the anonymous reviewers who helped with the manuscript's preparation.

References

- Acharya, B. (1996). *Family Planning Concept and Issues*. Central Department of Population Studies.
- Bista, S. (2021). *Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Family Planning Among the Currently Married Women of Reproductive Age of Shivasatakshi Municipality Jhapa District, Nepal*. 9. <https://doi.org/10.3126/pragya.42065>
- Government of Nepal, & Ministry of Health and Population. (2021). *Effectiveness of Sakshyam Kishor Kishori intervention on family planning (FP) uptake among married adolescent girls in selected districts of Nepal*. <http://www.mddohs.gov.np>;
- Health Policy Project, U. (n.d.). *Family planning in Nepal: Saving lives and improving health*. www.healthpolicyproject.com
- Ministry of Health and Population, & Government of Nepal. (2007). *Nepal Demographic And Health Survey 2006 Population Division Ministry of Health and Population Government of Nepal Kathmandu, Nepal*. <http://www.measuredhs.com>.
- Ministry of Health, N. G. (2022). *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2022 Key Indicators Report*. <http://www.mohip.org.np>;
- Plus, S. (2016). *Sources of Family Planning: Nepal*. <https://shopsplusproject.org/sites/default/files/resources/Sources%20of%20Family%20Planning-Nepal.pdf>

