

Abstract

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CONTEXT

The role of conversation between husband and wife in the contraceptive use dynamics has been well documented (Beckman, 1978; Mukherjee, 1975; Lasee and Becker, 1997; Sharan and Valente, 2002). The successful practice of contraception to a large extent depends upon the spousal conversation regarding fertility desires and contraceptive choices. The frequency of couple's discussion is positively related to contraceptive use in general and method choice and effectiveness in particular (Bean et al., 1983; Kasarda et al., 1986; Sakyi, 1992; Ullah & Chakraborty, 1993; Nyblade and Menken, 1993). Studies have also documented that in case of differences between husband and wife about desired family size and attitudes towards family planning, the husband's preference often dominates (Cain, 1984; Axin, 1992). Spousal conversation has thus been considered a sensitive indicator of contraceptive use due to three important reasons (Srikantan, 1993). They are: (i) child bearing, instead of being a cultural imperative, has come within the scope of conscious choice for the communicating couples, (ii) women's role are no more confined to child bearing and rearing among such couples, (iii) the wife's preferences are taken into account in making the couple's reproductive decisions.

It is in this background, using new wave of Demographic Health Survey 2001, the paper attempts to further widen our understanding on the role of conversation between husband and wife and wife's perception of her husband's approval of family planning on contraceptive use in Nepal. It is hypothesized that family planning practice is positively associated to spousal conversation and husbands' approval of contraceptive use.

DATA AND METHODS

New wave of Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2001 data has been used for analysis. As in the previous surveys the 2001 DHS the sample was nationally representative. The Survey interviewed 8726 ever-married women between 15-49 ages. Nepal DHS 2001 data

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were analyzed to examine the significance of spousal conversation in the contraceptive use dynamics among Nepalese married. In this paper I restrict my analyses to 7587 currently married and non-pregnant women.

Multivariate logistic regression analysis has been used to examine the effect of spousal conversation together with some other variables on contraceptive use among Nepalese women.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Table 1 presents the contraceptive use patterns by selected demographic and socio-economic characteristics among currently married women. The results indicate significant association in contraceptive practices among women with different socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

Preliminary results of our multivariate analysis in Table 2 show that conversation between husband and wife, husbands approval of family planning practice, child loss, desire for additional children, availability of electricity in the household, and television watching are all significantly associated with contraceptive use. The result further demonstrates that spousal conversation about contraception has a significant effect on current use of birth control practices. Couples who discuss about family planning are more likely to practice contraception than couples that never discusses (odds ratio of 1.80). The finding has supported the hypothesized relationship and has endorsed the findings of the previous studies on the effect of spousal conversation on contraceptive use (Mahmood & Ringheim, 1993; Ullah & Chakraborty, 1993; Sakyi, 1992).

Women's current employment is another significant predictor of contraceptive use in 2001. Those who are currently employed are 48 percent more likely to use family planning techniques to limit fertility than those women who are not employed. Child loss has turned out yet another significant predictor of contraception in both the surveys. Women who have experienced child loss are 23 percent less likely to use any contraceptive methods than those women who did not experience.

CONCLUSIONS

The results revealed that husband wife conversation and wife perceptions of her husband approval of family planning are the strongest predictors of current use. This finding has significant policy implications. It is very essential to understand some of the necessary conditions that could facilitate the spousal conversation resulting to the adoption of contraceptive methods. Any IEC program of family planning should also focus to male as the results have revealed the significant impact of husband's approval on contraceptive adoption. This evidence thus suggests that any program effort should be focused on encouraging and motivating couples to discuss contraceptive matters.

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Table 1: Percentage of currently married women currently using contraception by selected demographic and socio-economic characteristics, Nepal, 2001

Characteristics	No. of Cases	Percentage Currently Using Contraceptives
	7587	44.0
Women's Age		
15-24	2116	24.5
25-34	2750	51.5
35-49	2721	51.7
Living Children		
No Children	766	8.7
1-2	2635	38.5
3-4	2729	58.2
5 and more	1457	46.1
Wife's Education		
No Education	5457	40.6
Primary	1105	47.4
Secondary	927	57.8
Higher Studies	98	67.3
Husband's Education		
No Education	2693	37.2
Primary	1914	43.4
Secondary	2440	47.1
Higher Studies	540	66.7
Desire for Additional Child		
No	5365	56.1
Yes	2222	14.9
Discussed about Family Planning		
No	4478	35.3
Yes	2208	56.3
Husband's Approval of Family Planning		
Disapproves	758	19.4
Approves	6082	52.1
Wife don't know	747	3.6
Experience of Child Loss		
No	6150	44.5
Yes	1437	41.9
Availability of Electricity in the Household		
No	5749	37.9
Yes	1838	63.1

Currently Working		
No	1219	43.6
Yes	6368	44.1
Place of Residence		
Urban	1014	64.6
Rural	6573	40.9
Visits of FP Workers		
No	6757	42.8
Yes	830	54.5
Ecological Zone		
Mountain	1031	36.5
Hill	2789	40.9
Terai	3767	48.4
Religion		
Hindu	6515	45.2
Buddhist	574	45.8
Muslim	302	16.6
Christian	48	33.3
Others	148	44.6
Watch TV Every Week		
No	5767	38.1
Yes	1820	62.9
Listen Radio Everyday		
No	4579	38.8
Yes	3008	52.0

Table 2: Logistic regression estimates of the selected predictor variables on current contraceptive use among currently married, non-pregnant women of reproductive age, 2001 Nepal DHS

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	β	Odds ratio	p-value	β	Odds ratio	p-value
1. Ecological Region						
Mountain (Ref)	-	1.000			1.000	
Hills	- 0.481	0.618	0.000	-0.506	0.603	0.000
Terai	- 0.590	0.555	0.000	-0.576	0.562	0.000
2. Place of Residence						
Urban (Ref)	-	1.000			1.000	
Rural	- 0.323	0.724	0.001	-0.319	0.727	0.002
3. Wife's Education						
No schooling (Ref)		1.000			1.000	
Primary	- 0.870	0.419	0.002	-0.645	0.525	0.025
Secondary	- 0.619	0.538	0.030	-0.465	0.628	0.106
Higher Secondary & above	- 0.367	0.693	0.188	-0.246	0.782	0.380
4. Husband's Education						
No schooling (Ref)		1.000			1.000	
Primary	- 0.602	0.548	0.000	-0.403	0.668	0.004
Secondary	- 0.348	0.706	0.011	-0.254	0.776	0.073
Higher Secondary & above	- 0.352	0.703	0.006	-0.308	0.735	0.019
5. Religion						
Others (Ref)		1.000			1.000	
Hindu	0.043	1.043	0.914	-0.433	0.649	0.302
Buddhist	- 0.070	0.932	0.843	-0.452	0.636	0.230
Muslim	0.116	1.123	0.752	-0.216	0.806	0.579
Christain	- 1.377	0.252	0.000	-1.476	0.228	0.000
6. Desire for additional children						
No (Ref)		1.000			1.000	
Yes	- 1.724	0.178	0.000	-1.645	0.193	0.000
7. Child Loss						
No (Ref)					1.000	
Yes	- 0.253	0.776	0.000	-0.250	0.779	0.001
8. No of Surviving Children						
0(Ref)		1.000			1.000	
1-2	- 1.274	0.280	0.000	-0.840	0.432	0.000

3-4 5 and more	- 0.193 0.315	0.825 1.370	0.035 0.000	-0.035 0.337	0.966 1.400	0.722 0.000
9. Electricity available in the household No (Ref) Yes	0.404	1.000 1.498	0.000	0.414	1.000 1.512	0.000
10. Watch TV every week No (Ref) Yes	0.476	1.000 1.610	0.000	0.431	1.000 1.539	0.000
11 Listen to radio every day No (Ref) Yes	0.374	1.000 1.453	0.000	0.295	1.000 1.344	0.000
12. Visit of FP workers No (Ref) Yes	0.240	1.000 1.271	0.004	0.053	1.000 1.054	0.553
13. Current age of women	- 0.005	0.995	0.259	0.021	1.021	0.000
14. Discussed about FP with husband Never discuss (Ref) Discuss				- 0.586	1.000 1.797	0.000
15. Husband approves of birth control Disapproves (Ref) Approves Wife does not know				- 1.438 2.875	1.000 4.211 17.726	0.000 0.000
- 2 Log Likelihood		8326.36			7595.03	
Chi-square		2082.08			2813.00	
Df	24			27		

Note:

"Ref" refers to reference category