

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**FAMILY PLANNING BEHAVIOUR**

Most of the problems of women whether physical, social or economic are directly or indirectly related to their junction as child-bearers and therefore unless "their basic human right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of children and to have the means to do so are recognised, they cannot exercise and enjoy real equality with men. Without achievement of this basic freedom within the sexual partnership women have been and will continue to be disadvantaged in their attempt to benefit from other reforms".

The success in family planning may be the first condition, if women in our country have to attain full stature and status. The family planning movement is, thus, primarily for the women, of the women, and by the women. Greater involvement of women in this movement paves the way for greater and quicker success of the same. Women have to realise the urgency of the problem and the need to increase their participation in the programme of family planning.

#### CURRENT AND FUTURE CONTRACEPTIVE USES

Currently more than half of the working women (59.0 per cent) as against 40.0 per cent of the non-working women are practising different types of contraception. The major method commonly accepted in both the groups is sterilisation particularly female sterilisation (30.5 per cent each).

**TABLE 2.1****PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF COUPLES WHO ARE CURRENTLY USING FAMILY PLANNING METHODS ACCORDING TO AGE OF THE MOTHER**

Family Planning Method	Present age of women				Total	
	30 years & below		31 years & above		Working Women	Non-Working Women
	Working Women	Non-Working Women	Working Women	Non-Working Women		
Vasectomy	08.00 (6)	01.43 (2)	20.80 (26)	08.33 (5)	16.00 (32)	03.50 (7)
Tubectomy	18.67 (14)	30.00 (42)	37.60 (47)	31.67 (19)	30.50 (61)	30.50 (61)
Temporary	18.66 (14)	05.00 (7)	14.60 (11)	21.27 (4)	33.77 (25)	05.50 (11)

However, 16.0 per cent of working women and 3.50 per cent of non-working women adopted male sterilisation. The other temporary methods accepted by a very negligible proportion of couples in both the groups are IUD, Oral pill, condom, rhythm and abstinence.

**TABLE 5.2****PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WIVES WHO PLAN TO ACCEPT CONTRACEPTION IN FUTURE ACCORDING TO THEIR AGE**

Plan to use con- tracep- tion	Present age of women				Total	
	30 years & below		31 years & above		Working Women	Non- Working Women
	Working Women	Non- Working Women	Working Women	Non- Working Women		
Will use	87.80 (36)	85.39 (76)	34.15 (14)	12.50 (4)	60.98 (50)	66.12 (80)
Will not use	04.88 (2)	07.87 (7)	58.54 (24)	75.00 (24)	31.71 (26)	25.62 (31)
Cannot say	07.32 (3)	06.74 (6)	07.31 (3)	12.50 (4)	07.32 (6)	08.26 (10)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b> <b>(41)</b>	<b>100.00</b> <b>(89)</b>	<b>100.00</b> <b>(41)</b>	<b>100.00</b> <b>(32)</b>	<b>100.00</b> <b>(82)</b>	<b>100.00</b> <b>(121)</b>

It seemed that the chances for acceptance of one or the other methods of contraception are greater for both the working and non-working women. Over sixty per cent of non-working women and 41.0 per cent of working women are not practising any family planning method. Among them, more than half of the women (66.12 per cent of non-working women and 60.98 per cent of working women) intend to use one or the other modern methods of contraception in future. Nevertheless, more than a quarter of the two groups (31.71 per cent of working women and 25.62 per cent of non-working women) did not accept to use any family planning methods in future also because of so many

reasons. And only 7.32 per cent of non-working women have no plan to accept any method in the near future. This is because they might not have attained the desired family size.

#### ATTITUDE TO INDUCED ABORTION AS A METHOD OF CONTRACEPTION

In the absence of widespread use of modern contraception, induced abortion has been an important method of contraception in traditional communities. Lorimer (1974) believes that abortion cannot be widely practised by many people if there is no cultural base on which it is already accepted and practised. Nag (1968) further adds that in many societies abortion is mostly used for terminating premarital pregnancies. Similarly, Davis and Blake (1956) report that abortion has been more wide-spread in non-industrial societies than in industrial societies. However, it is also widespread in a few industrialised nations since the beginning of this century particularly in Sweden, East Germany and from nineteen fifteen onwards, in Japan. In India, it is not yet widely accepted as a method except for terminating premarital or other illegitimate conceptions even though it has been legalised in medical grounds.

TABLE 5.3

**ATTITUDE OF WIVES TOWARDS ABORTION (M.T.P) AS A  
METHOD OF LIMITING FAMILY PLANNING SIZE ACCORD-  
ING TO AGE**

Attitude towards abortion (M.T.P)	Present age of women				Total	
	30 years & below		31 years & above		Working Women	Non- Working Women
	Working Women	Non- Working Women	Working Women	Non- Working Women		
Yes	86.67 (65)	78.57 (110)	76.00 (95)	60.00 (36)	80.00 (160)	73.00 (146)
No	09.33 (7)	06.43 (9)	16.80 (21)	26.67 (16)	14.00 (28)	12.50 (25)
Uncertain	04.00 (3)	15.00 (21)	07.20 (9)	13.33 (8)	06.00 (12)	14.50 (29)
Total	100.00 (75)	100.00 (140)	100.00 (125)	100.00 (60)	100.00 (200)	100.00 (200)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate the number of wives.

Table 5.3 presents data on respondents' age and their attitude towards abortion (M.T.P) as a method of contraception. An overwhelming proportion of both working (80.0 per cent) and non-working women (73.0 per cent) have favourable attitude to induced abortion (M.T.P) as a method of limiting family size. A comparatively small fraction of the respondents (14.0 per cent working and 13.0 per cent non-working women) did not favour abortion. As regards incidence of abortion in the sample population while 13.5 per cent of the working women experienced at least one induced abortion during their

married life, only 3.5 per cent of non-working women experienced it once. Since most of the wives resort to induced abortion only in their thirties and forties, it may be assumed that they use abortion mostly as a method for limiting family size.

#### DECISION ON FAMILY PLANNING ADOPTION

To a woman, family planning does not only mean, a solution of population problems for the nation, but also a much needed solution for the problems of her own status and rights. Unless she has the basic freedom to decide upon the number and spacing of children, she will remain incapable of availing herself of other freedoms. Though this idea has permeated in all societies all over the world, still a greater number of women are not free to exercise the right to plan their lives and their families because of their position within their respective societies. They have to fight against the outmoded social traditions for this basic freedom. In the present study a question was asked to all respondents to find out their role in family planning decision. Table 5.4 shows the percentage distribution of respondents according to age and family planning adoption decision.

TABLE 5.4

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WIVES ACCORDING TO THE  
DECISION ON FAMILY PLANNING ADOPTION AND AGE OF  
THE MOTHER

Decision on family planning adoption	Present age of women				Total	
	30 years & below		31 years & above		Working Women	Non- Working Women
	Working Women	Non- Working Women	Working Women	Non- Working Women		
Husband	02.67 (2)	06.43 (9)	03.20 (4)	13.33 (8)	03.00 (6)	08.50 (17)
Wife	05.33 (4)	05.00 (7)	16.00 (20)	06.67 (4)	12.00 (24)	05.50 (11)
Both husband	92.00 (69)	83.57 (117)	80.80 (101)	75.00 (45)	85.00 (170)	81.00 (162)
In-laws	—	05.00 (7)	—	05.00 (3)	—	05.00 (10)
<b>Total</b>	<u>100.00</u> (75)	<u>100.00</u> (140)	<u>100.00</u> (125)	<u>100.00</u> (60)	<u>100.00</u> (200)	<u>100.00</u> (200)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate the number of wives.

All but a small fraction of the working (65 per cent) as well as non-working (81 per cent) women said that the decision about contraceptive use is made both by wife and husband, only a comparatively small minority (12.0 per cent working and 5.5 per cent non-working) of women made their individual decision on family planning adoption. A negligible proportion of working women (3 per cent) and non-working women (8.5 per cent) have their husband's influence on contraceptive



behaviour. And only 5.0 per cent of non-working women have their elders (mother-in-law and father-in-law) decision on family planning adoption. These data, therefore, clearly demonstrated that family planning decisions are mostly bilateral i.e., made by both wives and husbands.