

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

DOI: 10.26727/NJRCM.2019.8.1.084-087

Year: 2019 Vol: 8 Issue: 1. Jan.-Mar. Page: 84-87

### Effect of Gender Preference of Offspring on Contraceptive Use among Married Women in Urban Areas of Belagavi – A Cross Sectional Study.

Kruthika K.,<sup>1</sup> Narasimha B.C.,<sup>1</sup> Jagadish Gangani<sup>2</sup>

**Affiliation:** : 1Asst. Professor, Department of Community Medicine, KoIMS, Madikeri, 2Statistician, Department of Community Medicine, KoIMS, Madikeri.

**Date of Submission** : 28-02-2019

**Date of online Publication** : 24-03-2019

**Date of Acceptance** : 19-03-2019

**Date of Print Publication** : 31-03-2019

\***Author for correspondence:** Dr. Narasimha B.C., Asst. Professor, Dept. of Community Medicine, KoIMS, Madikeri – 573201. Email id: [narasimhbc@gmail.com](mailto:narasimhbc@gmail.com)

#### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Gender preference has been one of the barrier in the use of contraceptives since ages, it may be either male or female gender preference. Even though this is known fact but still it is not adequately investigated. **Objective:** To study the association between gender preference and prevalence of contraceptive use in urban areas. **Methods:** A cross sectional study was conducted in three urban areas of Belagavi. Data was collected using predesigned and pretested questionnaire and analysed using SPSS version 21.0. **Results:** In this study 47.3% of the women had gender preference, among them 31.3% of the women had preference towards male child and 16.0% of the women had preference towards female child. The gender preference of offspring was significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) associated with prevalence of contraceptive use. **Conclusion:** The findings support the contention that there is still a need to intensify Information Education Communication activities and motivate the population to adopt small family norm by practicing contraception and promote the virtue of gender equality among them.

**Key Words:** Contraceptive, gender preference, urban area.

#### INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of contraceptive use is quite low in developing countries especially in India. This has led to a drastic expansion in population growth which in turn hampered the success of the country. The population is expected to stabilize at about a quarter of a billion by 2050, if family planning programs continue to reduce the birth rate.<sup>1</sup> However there is still great variation in the extent and pace of that decline for individual countries.<sup>2</sup> The non acceptance may be due to various reasons like illiteracy, fear of complications, religious beliefs, gender preference etc. Many studies have been conducted in this field in various parts of the country to know the determinants of contraceptive use and causes for non acceptance of contraception, as the acceptance of contraceptives and fertility pattern differs in the societies and the factors responsible for varied picture operate at individual, family and community level.<sup>3</sup>

A strong gender preference may be an obstacle to fertility decline if couples continue having children after reaching their overall family-size goal because they are not satisfied with the sex composition of their children. In developing countries like India gender preference plays an important role in contraceptive use and this may be due to socio-cultural practices that influence gender preference. Prevalence of gender preference has been cited as one of the major reasons for the skewed sex ratio in India<sup>4</sup> which is also an important amenable reason for

the non-acceptance of contraceptives. In a developing country like India where dowry system is still prevalent in some parts of country, daughters are considered as burden and are who belongs to her husband's family after marriage and son is considered as an asset of the family who will live in the same family.

The present study tries to explore the association between gender preference and contraceptive use in urban areas of Belagavi, where gender preference is still persistent.

#### MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in three field practice areas namely Ashoknagar, Ramnagar, Rukmininagar of Department of Community Medicine, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Belagavi. The study was conducted over a period of one year from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. Sample size was calculated taking prevalence of contraceptive use as 40%<sup>5</sup>.

As population of eligible couple in all three health centres was almost in the same range, so we selected 230 subjects from each urban health centre. About 30 extra subjects from each study area were selected to take care of exclusion criteria. Subject selection was done by computer generated random number. Married women between the age group of 15- 44 years and who were permanent residents of study area were included in the study. Contraceptive methods are the preventive methods

to help women to avoid unwanted pregnancies.<sup>5</sup> They include both temporary and permanent measures to prevent pregnancy resulting from coitus. Women who has attained menopause, undergone hysterectomy and with primary or secondary infertility were excluded from the study. Gender preference of offspring is the preference towards the male or female child. Data was collected using predesigned and pretested questionnaire by interviewing after taking written informed consent. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 21.0.

**RESULTS**

In the present study, age of the married women ranged from 20 to 42 years and their husbands' age ranged from 24 to 56 years. Majority 585 (97.5%) of the women were literates and only 15 (2.5%) of them were illiterates. More than half 347 (57.8%) of the study participants belonged to nuclear family and 232 (38.7%) of study participants belonged to socioeconomic class II. The mean ( ± SD) age of the marriage was 20.35 ± 2.00 years. Most 226 (37.6%) of the participants had the duration of married life ranging between 6-10 years.

**Table No.1: Distribution of married women according to number of children**

Number of children	Number	Percentage
None	14	2.3
One	179	29.8
Two	280	46.7
Three	93	15.5
Four	34	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table No.2: Distribution of married women according to number of male and female children.**

Number of children	Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%
None	202	33.7	188	31.3
One child	275	45.8	276	46
Two children	108	18	77	12.8
Three children	15	2.5	51	8.5
Four children	0	0	8	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table No. 3: Distribution of married women according to gender preference**

Gender preference	Number	Percentage
Male	188	31.3
Female	96	16
No preference	316	52.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>

Among the 600 respondents, 280 (46.7%) of the women had 2 children followed by 179 (29.8%) with one child, 93 (15.5%) with 3 children, 34 (5.7%) with 4 children and

only 14 (2.3%) of the married women had no children. (Table No :1)

Among the study participants, 202 (33.7%) of the women did not have male child, 275 (45.8%) of the women had one male child followed by 108 (18.0%) had two male children and 15 (2.5%) of the women had three male children. Similarly among the study participants, 188 (31.3%) of the women did not have female child, 276 (46.0%) of the women had one female child followed by 77 (12.8%) had two female children, 51 (8.5%) of the women had three female children and 8 (1.4%) of women had four female children. (Table No :2)

**Table No.4: Distribution of married women according to reason for gender preference**

Reason for gender preference	Number	Percentage
Male gender preference (n=188)		
Son is an asset	27	14.4
Future source of income	30	16
To control family asset	38	20.2
To continue future generation	93	49.4
Female gender preference (n= 96)		
Take care of parents	55	57.2
They are affectionate	9	9.4
They are equal to male	32	33.4

**Table No.5: Association between gender preference by married women and current use of contraception**

Contraceptive usage	Gender preference			Total
	Male	Female	No preference	
Temporary methods	24 (17.5%)	19 (13.8%)	94 (68.6%)	137(100%)
Permanent methods	13 (8.8%)	12 (8.1%)	122 (82.9%)	147(100%)
Non usage	151 (47.7%)	65 (20.5%)	100 (31.6%)	316(100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>188 (31.3%)</b>	<b>96 (16.0%)</b>	<b>316 (52.6%)</b>	<b>600(100%)</b>

$\chi^2 = 128.32 \quad p < 0.005$

**Table No.6: Association of gender preference of offspring with the number of living children**

Number of children	Gender Preference			Total
	Male	Female	No preference	
None	2 (14.3%)	2 (14.3%)	10 (71.4%)	14 (100%)
One child	43 (24.02%)	30 (16.7%)	106 (59.2%)	179 (100%)
Two children	67 (23.9%)	44 (15.7%)	169 (60.3%)	280 (100%)
Three children	48 (51.6%)	19 (20.4%)	26 (27.9%)	93 (100%)
Four children	28 (82.3%)	1 (2.9%)	5 (14.7%)	34 (100%)

$\chi^2 = 80.1 \quad p < 0.001$

Out of 600 study participants, 284 (47.3%) of the women had gender preference, among them 188 (31.3%) of the women had preference towards male child and 96

(16.0%) of the women had preference towards female child. (Table No :3)

In the present study, 188 of the married women had gender preference towards male, among them 27 (14.4%) of the women said that the reason for male gender preference is that son is like an asset, 30 (16.0%) of the women said that son is a future source of income, 38 (20.2%) said that son is needed to control family assets and 93 (49.4%) said son is needed to control future generation. Among 96 of the women who had preference towards female gender gave the following reasons, 55 (57.2%) of them said that female children take care of parent ,9 (9.4%) of them said female children are affectionate and 32 (33.4%) of them said that female are equal to male. (Table No :4)

In our study, the gender preference was significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) associated with prevalence of contraceptive use Both male 151 (47.7%) and female 65(20.5%) gender preference was highest among married women who did not use any contraceptive and it was lowest among the women who were practicing either temporary or permanent method of contraception. (Table No :5)

## DISCUSSION

Among the 600 respondents in our study, most 280 (46.7%) of the women had 2 children followed by 179 (29.8%) with one child, 93 (15.5%) with 3 children, 34 (5.7%) with 4 children and only 14 (2.3%) of the married women had no children but, in a similar study conducted in resettlement area of Delhi<sup>31</sup> showed that, 21.7% of the women had one child, 32.4% of them had two children, 42% had three or more children and 1.9% of them didn't had any child. Similar study done in rural areas of Belagavi<sup>6</sup> showed that more than 65% of married women became pregnant between 18-21 years and 40% of married women had 2 children, 23% had 3 children and 7% had 4 or more children which are quite similar to our study. Similar results was shown in a community based study done in North West Ethiopia.<sup>7</sup> In our study 398 (66.3%) of the study participants had atleast one male child and 412 (68.7%) of the married women had atleast one female child and the age of the last child ranged from 1-20 years.

In our study, 284 (47.3%) of the women had gender preference, among them 188 (31.3%) of the women had preference towards male child and 96 (16.0%) of the women had preference towards female child. A similar study done in Bangalore<sup>8</sup> showed that 24% of the married women had gender preference towards male child and the reasons for preference were 6.9% of women think that son is an asset, 20.84% of women said that to control family assets, 63.88% of them said that they are future source of income and 8.33% of women said that to continue future generation. The reasons for male gender preference in our study were, 27 (14.4%) of the women said that son is like an asset, 30 (16.0%) of the women

said that son is a future source of income, 38 (20.2%) said that son is needed to control family assets and 93 (49.4%) said son is needed to control future generation. The reasons given by the study participants for male gender preference are similar to the reasons observed in our study.

Among 96 of the women who had preference towards female gender gave the following reasons, 55 (57.2%) of them said that female children take care of parent ,9 (9.4%) of them said female children are affectionate and 32 (33.4%) of them said that female are equal to male.

Among the study participants, 202 (33.7%) of the women did not have male child, 275 (45.8%) of the women had one male child followed by 108 (18.0%) had two male children and 15 (2.5%) of the women had three male children. Similarly among the study participants, 188 (31.3%) of the women did not have female child, 276 (46.0%) of the women had one female child followed by 77 (12.782.3%) was highest among the women who had four living children which is similar to a study done in Madya Pradesh.<sup>11</sup>

In our study, the gender preference was significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) associated with prevalence of contraceptive use Both male 151 (47.7%) and female 65(20.5%) gender preference was highest among married women who did not use any contraceptive and it was lowest among the women who were practicing either temporary or permanent method of contraception. Studies done in rural South India, <sup>9</sup>Bangalore<sup>10</sup> and Kolkata<sup>12</sup> have shown that gender preference is also a reason for non-usage of contraceptive and the association was significant. Hence, due emphasis is required on these emerging issues.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, the study clearly shows that despite of rapid social and economic progress in the country there is still existence of gender preference of offspring. The findings support the contention that there is still a need to intensify Information Education Communication activities and motivate the population to adopt small family norm by practicing contraception and promote the virtue of gender equality among them. Therefore an attempt to promote reproductive health through increasing use of contraceptives, family planning programmes need to target men specifically at all levels of the programme. Men should be actively involved at knowledge, supportive and acceptor level.

## REFERENCES

- 1.Khan NR, Jerifa S. Prevalence of contraceptive use among married women of reproductive age groups in a rural area of Bangladesh. *Journal of Dhaka Medical College* 2014;23(1): 7-13.
- 2 Kebede Y; Contraceptive prevalence and factors associated with usage of contraceptives around Gondar Town; *The Ethiopian journal of Health Development* 2001; 14(3):327-334.

3. Osemwenkha OS, Gender issues in contraceptive use among educated women in Edo state, Nigeria. African Health Sciences 2004; 4(1) 40- 49.
4. Ranganuthia M, Kim C M, Fred A, Roy T K, Son Preference and Its Effect on Fertility in India, National Family Health Survey Subject Reports Number 3, International Institute for Population Sciences Mumbai, India 1997.
5. Park K. Park's Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine. 22<sup>nd</sup> Edition Jabalpur: M/s. Banarsidas Bhanot Publishers 2013; 454.
6. Walvekar PR. Determinants of contraceptive use among married women residing in rural areas of Belgaum. Journal of Medical and Allied Sciences 2012;2(1):7-11.
7. Abera Y, Mengesha BZ, Tessema AG. Postpartum contraceptive use in Gondar town, Northwest Ethiopia: a community based cross-sectional study. Biomed Central Women's Health 2015;15(19):1-8.
8. Blanc A. The effects of power in sexual relationships on sexual and reproductive health: An examination of the evidence. Studies in Family Planning 2001; 32(3):189-213.
9. Rajaretnam T, Deshpande RV. Factors inhibiting the use of reversible contraceptive methods in rural South India. Studies in Family Planning 1994;25(2): 111-121.
10. Hajira SI, Kishore K. Assessment of knowledge about contraceptive methods among Bangalore Urban Women. International Medical Journal 2014;1(9):510- 14.
11. Phatak V, Arya R. Effect of male child preference on the decision making of women in choosing contraception. International journal of Reproduction, Contraception, Obstetrics and Gynaecology 2018;7:1336-9.
12. Ghosh S, Samanta A, Mukherjee S. Knowledge and practice of family planning in married women of reproductive age group in a slum of Kolkata. Al Ameen Journal of Medical sciences 2013;6(1):34-39.



**Conflict of Interest : None**

**Source of funding support: Self**

**How to cite this article:** Kruthika K., Narasimha B.C., Jagadish Gangani. Effect of Gender Preference of Offspring on Contraceptive Use among Married Women in Urban Areas of Belagavi – A Cross Sectional Study. Nat J Res Community Med 2019;8(1): 84-87.

© Community Medicine Faculties Association-2018

NJRCM: [www.commedjournal.in](http://www.commedjournal.in)