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Perceptions of Women towards Population Education

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ABSTRACT Population education is an important component of family planning programme. Women perceptions towards family planning can influence the socio-economic development of a community. The present study examines the extent of positive attitude among women regarding population education and various socio-economic factors affecting them. For the purpose, 100 women were selected through multi-stage sampling method, using questionnaire and a scale regarding perceptions of women towards Population Education. The data was analyzed computing percentages, chi-square values, p- values, degrees of freedom, means and standard deviations. The results indicate that there is insignificant association between various socio-economic factors and perceptions of women towards population education.

INTRODUCTION

Women are bearing children over increasingly short period of their lives. For the average women in developing countries with relatively low fertility rates, such as Indonesia and Mexico, fifteen years elapse between first and the last birth, which is less then 20 per cent of the mother's lifetime. In countries with higher fertility and low expectancy, such as Kenya and Senegal, the average interval is nineteen to twenty years, or about 40 per cent of a women's life time. Comparable intervals are eight years for women in the United States and two years for those in Japan (Kumar 1991). The size of the family is a matter of great importance not only for the country as a whole but also for the welfare and health of the individual, the family and the community. India has adopted the goal of universalizing the two-child family norm by the end of this century. The achievement of this goal has consequences both at the micro level i.e. level of individuals and family and at the macro level i.e. for the nation as a whole. The size of the family affects of quality of life of human beings every increase in family size results in decrease in per capita food and nutrition availability and this slows down the quality of nutrition and improvement of health standards. Family size is seen to be related to education, where the mother's education is high, and the family size is usually smaller and infant mortality is also relatively lower. The level of the mother's education and its impact on family size is evident in the State of Kerala, where female literacy is the highest, and it has the lowest birth rate, and the child mortality rate is also the lowest in the country (himachial.nic.in/scert/him_chetna124_135.htm).

Review of Literature

Faphender (1990) matched the results of a survey of semi-matched samples in two rural sites in Thailand, which indicated that family size has an important impact of children's education. The number of children in a family and the likelihood that a child will study beyond the compulsory level are inversely associated, even when other important determinants of children's schooling in controlled. Survey results and qualitative data collected through focus groups also reveal that in Thailand the primary responsibility for funding children's education falls directly on parents. Thus more children readily translate into reduced resources available for child and hence less education. Given the inverse association between family size and children's education, the fertility decline that is under way is likely to contribute to rising levels of education by changing the distribution of children with respect to family size.

John (1998) used a survey data from the nationally representative 1994 Inter-Censual Demographic Survey to examine the association between family size and children's schooling in Vietnam. The data provided information on several education measures for all children over age 10, including children no longer residing in the household. Although a clear inverse bi-variant association between family size and children's school attendance and educational attainment is evident, multivariate analysis controlling for urban/rural residence, region, parents' education,

household wealth, and child's age, revealed that much of this association, especially that predicting educational attainment, is attributable to these other influences.

John (2000) found the primary determinant of the timing of the onset of the fertility transition is the effect of mass education on the family economy. The direction of the wealth flow between generations changes with the introduction of mass education, at least partly because the relationships between members of the family are transformed as the morality governing those relationships changes.

John (2004) inducted a study in which he studied that after serving for two decades as a model for Third World birth control and economic development programs is now abandoning its earlier population policies in favour of encouraging dramatic population growth. The initial eugenics-based program introduced in 1984 sought increased fertility for university-educated women and provided major subsidies for the voluntary sterilization of poor and uneducated parents. These much publicized and internationally discussed programs have now been abandoned in favour of new population programs, seeking to encourage fertility in lower as well as better educated groups. A forty per cent population increase is being set as a goal.

Sarah (1994) found in his study that by data from the 1988 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey 77 per cent of cohabiting marital partners held similar attitudes toward family planning and that 73 per cent of the concordant couples approved of contraceptive use. However, only 61 per cent of the wives correctly reported their husband's attitude. Although 76 per cent of the couples agreed on whether they wanted more children, just 44 per cent gave concordant responses on ideal family size. Regression analysis showed that urban residence, the wife's attitude toward family planning and discussion of family planning between spouses has significant independent effects on current contraceptive use.

La et al. (2003) examined in their study that most women had positive perceptions regarding their reproductive rights. Women's demographic factors were statistically significant to concepts and practices of sexual health, marriage and having a family, as well as awareness of and practice of screening procedures for the early detec-tion of cancer. The study encoura-ges active participation of men to empower women to exercise their repro-ductive rights, as well as to enhance wo-men's participation in public life and decision-making. Brochures on women's reproductive rights should be published to disseminate information to youth, men, women and the elderly to increase aware-ness. Programmes about the reproductive rights of women should be encouraged, stressing the importance of sexual health through religious education as one of the best strategies for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The health team should address the importance of repro-ductive right issues in health education or counselling at any clinical setting

Objectives for the Study

1. To assess the socio-economic factors affecting population education.
2. To study the perceptions of women regarding population education.
3. To examine the level of consent among women for population education.

Justification of the Study

It is essential to have an education regarding population and small family. Women should be aware regarding different population checks. We are living in the age of science and technology, due to which there is terrific pace in both the material and non-materiel aspects of life. So in order to bridge the gap between different aspects of life, there is need of both population education and small family norms. The rapid Population growth and the concomitant problems of poverty, lack of adequate health and educational facilities, malnutrition, non fulfilment of poverty, even the basic needs of a vast majority of the population, paucity of employment opportunities, natural resources and consequent environmental degradation constitute critical dimensions of the population and development phenomena. It is also important to note that the population phenomenon today embraces issues beyond development. While the size, growth, composition and distribution of population have a close bearing on socio-economic development, the population related issues also bring forth concerns for the "carrying capacity" of biological and ecological system and the future of mankind. The present study is, thus, an attempt to

encourage population education and small family norm among women particularly in reproductive age.

METHODOLOGY

The paper is based on 100 women, divided into two equal parts, i.e. 50 women from urban areas and 50 women from rural areas. Each part (urban as well rural women) was further divided into two sub-samples; comprising 25 working women and another comprising 25 non-working women. Thus, present study was investigated through multistage sampling. The data was collected from Jammu and Kashmir in the year 2007. Tools used included questionnaire and a scale regarding "Small Family and Population Education" devised by Sidhu et al. (1985).

Attitudes regarding Small Family Norm were divided as low, medium and high. Low level of attitudes comprised up to 50 per cent of total scores (up to 13 scores on the scale). Medium level of attitudes comprised 50-70 of total scores (14-18 scores on the scale). High level comprised greater that 70 per cent of total scores (above 19 scores on the scale) for small family.

Attitudes for population Education were also divided as low, medium and high. Low level comprised 50 per cent of total scores (up to 16 scores on the scale). Medium level comprised 50-70 per cent of total scores (17-22 scores on the scale). High level comprised greater than 70 per cent of total scores (above 23 scores on the scale) for population education.

The data was systematically analyzed computing percentage, chi-square (χ^2), levels of significance, degrees of freedom (d.f), standard deviation (S. D) and correlation. The three levels of significance were obtained as: p-value <0.01 i.e. highly significant; p-value <0.05 i.e., significant and p-value >0.05 i.e., insignificant; where p indicated proportionate values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Attitude towards Population Education as per various Factors

Table 1 shows attitude of women towards population education as per social factors. It is found that the 72.92 per cent rural women possess high level of positive attitudes regarding population education. Similarly, 73.08 urban wom-

Table 1: Attitude towards population education as per various factors (n=100)

Variable	*Positive attitude*								χ^2-*analysis*
	Low		*Medium*		*High*		*Total*		
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	
Dwelling									
Rural	6	12.50	7	14.58	35	72.92	48	100.00	1.82_{2}^{***}
Urban	3	5.77	11	21.15	38	73.08	52	100.00	
Total	9	9.00	18	18.00	73	73.00	100	100.00	
Status									
Working	3	6.38	9	19.15	35	74.47	47	100.00	0.76_{2}^{***}
Non working	6	11.32	9	16.98	38	71.70	53	100.00	
Total	9	9.00	18	18.00	73	73.00	100	100.00	
Type of Occupation									
House wife	5	11.90	8	19.05	29	69.05	42	100.00	3.99_{6}^{***}
Govt. Job	3	8.82	6	17.65	25	73.53	34	100.00	
Private Job	-	-	4	23.53	13	76.47	17	100.00	
Self Employee	1	14.29	-	-	6	858.71	7	100.00	
Total	9	9.00	18	18.00	73	73.00	100	100.00	
Educational Status									
Illiterate	-	-	-	-	3	100.00	3	100.00	9.54_{10}^{***}
Up to primary	-	-	2	50.00	2	50.00	4	100.00	
Up to middle	-	-	2	66.67	1	33.33	3	100.00	
High school	2	10.00	10	50.00	18	40.00	20	100.00	
Graduate	6	17.14	10	28.59	19	54.29	35	100.00	
Higher Education	2	5.71	12	34.29	21	60.00	35	100.00	
Total	10	10.00	36	36.00	54	54.00	100	100.00	

Row Percentage
*** p –value >0.05 (insignificant)
Degree of freedom (d.f) in subscript of χ^2 value

en have also high level of positive attitudes towards population education. Such differences between dwelling and positive attitude regarding population education is found insignificant (p-value >0.05) at χ^2 value of 1.85 with 2 degree of freedom. Moreover, 74.47 per cent working women possess high level of positive attitude regarding population education. Similarly, 71.70 per cent non-working women have high level of positive attitudes towards population education. Such differences between working and non-working women have positive attitude regarding population education and is found insignificant (p-value >0.05) at χ^2 value of 0.76 with 2 degree of freedom. Also 85.71 per cent of self-employed women possess high level of positive attitudes regarding population education and 76.47 per cent of women working in private sector have high level of attitudes towards population education. It is also observed that 73.53 per cent government employed women have high level of positive attitudes towards population education. Similarly 69.05 per cent housewives also possess high level of positive attitudes regarding population education. It is found insignificant (p-value >0.05) at χ^2 value 3.99 with 6 degree of freedom. The table also depicts that highly educated women possess high level of positive attitude regarding population education. About 50 per cent primarily educated women possess high level of positive attitudes towards population education and 33.33 per cent women educated up to the middle have high level of positive attitudes regarding population education. Also 60 per cent highly educated women have high level of positive attitude towards population education. It is found insignificant (p-value >0.05) at χ^2 value of 9.54 with 10 degree of freedom. Pathak (1979) highlighted in his analysis that high fertility despite considerable decline in mortality is the main cause of the continuing high rate of growth of Indian population. The fertility level depends on several demographic economic, physiological and cultural factors, viz., age of the couples, size composition of the surviving children and the frequency of the use of contraception.

Veer (2006) studied that the success of the population programme in curbing the accelerated growth of population, depends to a large extent on the attitudes and values of the people regarding family size. It is, therefore, of crucial importance that positive attitude and values towards family size and other population issues should be developed. Education can be a most dynamic and influential factor for inducing such changes. Population education is a part of the overall national development and improves the quality of life of the individual as well as the nation.

Attitudes towards Population Education as per various factors

It is observed from table 2 that 75.95 per cent women in nuclear families possess high level of positive attitude towards population, 60 per cent, women in joint families have also high level of positive attitude; which is found insignificant (p-value >0.05) at χ^2 value 4.29 with 4 degree of freedom. It is studied that 76.92 per cent women up to the age of 25 years possess high level of positive attitude regarding population education, 67.65 per cent women up to the age of 25-35 years also have high level of positive attitude towards population education. Similarly 74.07 per cent women above 35 years age, have high level of positive attitude towards population education. However, it is found insignificant (p-value >0.05) at χ^2 value of 1.57 with 4 degree of freedom.

It is observed that only 8.49 per cent unmarried women possess high level of positive attitude towards population education and 7.18 per cent married women have high level of positive attitude towards population education. Such differences between marital status and positive attitude regarding population education are found insignificant (p-value >0.05) at χ^2 value of 7.90 per cent with 4 degree of freedom.

It is observed that 81.25 per cent women from family income up to Rs. 3000 per month possess high level of positive attitude towards population education, 67.80 per cent women with average family income (3000-9000 per month) also have high level of positive attitude towards population education, 7.78 per cent, women with high income have high level of positive attitude towards population education. Such differences between family income and positive attitude regarding population education are found insignificant (p-value >0.005) at χ^2 value of 2.25 with four degree of freedom.

Veer (2004) observed that population education has a double task, it is both motivational trying to encourage people to adopt family planning and it is instructional (teaching people the facts about population problem, its probable

Table 2: Factors affecting attitude towards population education among women (n=100)

Variable	*Positive Attitude*								χ^2 *Analysis*
	Low		*Medium*		*High*		*Total*		
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	
Family Type									
Nuclear	5	6.33	14	17.72	60	75.95	79	100.00	4.29_4^{***}
Joint	4	20.00	4	20.00	12	60.00	20	100.00	
Extended	-	-	-	-	1	100.00	1	100.00	
Total	9	9.00	18	18.00	73	73.00	100	100.00	
Age (Yrs.)									
Up to 25	2	5.13	7	17.95	30	76.92	39	100.00	1.57_4^{***}
25-35	4	11.76	7	20.59	23	67.65	34	100.00	
Above 35	3	11.11	4	114.81	20	74.07	27	100.00	
Total	9	9.00	18	18.00	73	73.00	100	100.00	
Marital Status									
Unmarried	3	7.32	5	12.20	33	80.49	41	100.00	7.90_4^{***}
Married	5	8.77	12	21.05	40	70.18	57	100.00	
Separated	1	50.00	1	50.00	-	-	2	100.00	
Total	9	9.00	18	18.00	73	73.00	100	100.00	
Family Income									
Low (up to Rs. 3000 per month)	2	6.25	4	12.50	26	81.25	32	100.00	2.25_4^{***}
Average (Rs. 3000-7000)	6	10.17	13	22.03	40	67.80	59	100.00	
High (Above Rs. 7000 per month)	1	1.11	1	11.11	7	77.78	9	100.00	
Total	9	9.00	18	18.00	73	73.00	100	100.00	

Row Percentage
*** p –valuee"0.05 (insignificant)
Degree of freedom (d.f) in subscript of χ^2 value

consequences and possible alternatives). It is relevant to include both sex education and family life education knowledge and attitudes about population. The family and sex includes population awareness, family living, reproduction education and basic values. Veer (2004) also found that the population education hold promise not only as means of diffusing more pervasively in a given country that can be done by the channels ordinarily available to family planning programmes, desired changes in attitudes, behaviour patterns and attitudes.

Perceptions of Women regarding Population Education

Table 3 shows the perception of women regarding population education. It is found that majority of women by 82 per cent favours that population education should be introduced as a subject of study in higher secondary schools and collages. This is found highly significant (p-value <0.01) at χ^2 value 4.96 with 1 degree of freedom. 66 per cent women agree that population education creates a feeling of small family, which is found highly significant (p-value <0.01) at χ^2 value of 10.24 with 1 degree of freedom. 52 per cent women also agrees that population education makes the children aware of population problem. It is found significant (p-value <0.05) at χ^2 value of 1.60 with one degree of freedom. It is seen that 39 per cent women admits that population education touches emotionally charged areas of sex and is found significant (p-value <0.05) at χ^2 value of 4.84 with one degree of freedom. 40 per cent women also agrees that population education leads towards immoral acts, which and is found significant (p-value <0.05) at χ^2 value of 4.00 with 1 degree of freedom. However, 40 per cent women perceives that that population education leads towards immoral acts and this is found significant (p-value <0.05) at χ^2 value of 4.00 with one degree of freedom. It is found that 48 per cent women agree that population education teaches them that children are not of God, this is found significant (p-value <0.05) at χ^2 value 1.69 with 1 degree of freedom. But 34 per cent women think that investment in population is mere wastage. This is found highly significant (p-value <0.01) at χ^2 value of 10.24 with 1 degree of freedom. 53 per cent of women agree that population education would increase the burden of

Table 3: Perceptions of women regarding population education (n=100)

S. No.	Statement	Agreement						χ^2 value
		Favouring		Not favouring		Total		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	Population education should be introduced as a subject of study in higher secondary school and collages.	82	82.00	18	18.00	100	100.00	40.96_1^{*}
2	Population education creates a feeling of small family.	66	66.00	34	34.00	100	100.00	10.24_1^{**}
3	Population education makes the children aware of population problem.	52	52.00	48	48.00	100	100.00	1.60_1^{**}
4	Population education touches emotionally charged areas of sex	39	39.00	61	61.00	100	100.00	4.84^{1**}
5	Population education leads towards immoral acts.	40	40.00	60	60.00	100	100.00	4.00_1^{**}
6	Population education teaches us that children are not of God.	48	48.00	52	52.00	100	100.00	1.60_1^{**}
7	Investment in population is more wastage.	34	34.00	66	66.00	100	100.00	10.24_1^{*}
8	Population education will increase the burden of curriculum.	53	53.00	47	47.00	100	100.00	0.36_1^{***}
9	Family life education wills helps in changing the reproductive of young men and women.	50	50.00	50	50.00	100	100.00	0.00_1^{***}
10	Population education will realize rich dividend.	53	53.00	47	47.00	100	100.00	0.36_1^{***}
11	Family life education is a propagandist and out of tune.	37	37.00	63	63.00	100	100.00	6.76_1^{*}
12	Family life education will create a feeling of hatred for brothers and sisters.	29	29.00	71	71.00	100	100.00	17.64_1^{*}
13	Family life education will create a feeling of disaffection for parents.	35	35.00	65	65.00	100	100.00	9.00_1^{*}
14	Population education should not be introduced as teaches are incompetent to teach it.	45	45.00	55	55.00	100	100.00	1.00_1^{*}
15	Population education should an integral part of present curriculum.	61	61.00	38	38.00	100	100.00	54.98_1^{*}
16	There is no utility of population education in schools.	54	54.00	46	46.00	100	100.00	0.64_1^{***}

Row Percentage
*** p-value >0.05 (insignificant)
** p-value <0.05 (significant)
* p-values <0.01 (highly significant)
Degree of freedom (d.f) in subscript of χ^2 value

curriculum which is found insignificant (p-value <0.05) at χ^2 value of 0.36 with one degree of freedom. Moreover, 50 per cent women perceive that family education helps in changing the reproductive thought of young man and women and this is found insignificant (p-value >0.05) at χ^2 value of 0.01 per cent with 1 degree of freedom. It is observed that 53 per cent women agrees that population education will realize rich dividends and this is found insignificant (p-value >0.05) at χ^2 value of 0.36 with 1 degree of freedom. However, 37 per cent women favours that family life education is a propagandist and out of tune, which is found highly significant (p-value >0.01) at χ^2 value of 6.76 with 1 degree of freedom. It is observed that 29 per cent women perceive that family life education will create a feeling of hatred for brothers and sisters and this is found highly significant (p-value <0.01) at χ^2 value of 17.64 with 1 degree of freedom. Nevertheless, 35 per cent women agree that family life education would create a feeling of disaffection for parents. This is found highly significant (p-value < 0.01) at χ^2 value of 9.00 will 1 degree of freedom.

It is studied that 45 per cent women favour that population education should be introduced, but teachers are incompetent to teach it and is found highly significant (p-value <0.01) at χ^2 value of 1.00 will 1 degree of freedom. 61 per cent women think that population adverted should be an integral part of population curriculum. This is found highly significant (p-value <0.01) at χ^2 value of 54.98 with 1 degree of freedom. However, 54 per cent women perceive that there is no

utility of population education in schools. This is found insignificant (p-value >0.05) at χ^2 value of 0.64 with 1 degree of freedom.

According to Veer (2004) for developing curriculum in population education, we should develop concepts in it and tests the concepts like, the cause of population growth, consequences of population growth and the need for population control. These three concepts broadly cover the contents from the bases of organizing the elements of curriculum. They also indicate the scope of population education in the curriculum.

Mean Scores of Population Education

Table 4 shows that mean score of different items on population education. The highest mean score as 1.82 is found, an agreement that regarding population education should be introduced as a subject of higher secondary school and colleges, with S. D of 0.38, which is regarded as positive attitude. Whereas, the lowest mean score as 1.29 is found an agreement that population education should be an integral part of present curriculum, with S. D of 0.45, which is regarded as positive attitude. Overall, 7 items of the scale regarding population education shows positive attitude of women, whereas, 9 items of the scale depict negative attitude of women towards population education. Veer (2004) suggested a two prolonged attack on population problems. An intensive work on population education will have to be undertaken in subject areas like geography, civics, social studies, general science and biology. Manuals on population education can also be prepared. Specific teaching units can put in manuals focussed on population dynamics and its various social, political, economic repercussions. Extension lecturers should also be introduced. Graphics can also be made of use. Films can also be shown to women.

CONCLUSION

Urban women have more positive attitude towards population education than rural women. Working women have more positive attitudes towards population education as compared to non-working women. Similarly self-employed women have more positive attitude towards population education as compared to women working in private sectors, government and job, house wives. Highly educated women have more positive attitude towards population education as compared to illiterate to women. Women in nuclear families have more positive attitude towards population education as compared to women belonging to joint and extended families.

Table 4: Mean scores of population education (n=100)

S. No.	*Population education*	*Mean score*	*Standard deviation (S.D.)*	*Attitude*
1	Population education should be introduction as a subject of higher secondary school and collages.	1.82	0.38	Positive
2	Population education creates a feeling of small family.	1.66	0.47	Positive
3	Population education makes the children aware of population problem.	1.52	0.50	Positive
4	Population education touches emotionally charged area of sere.	1.39	0.49	Negative
5	Population education leads towards immoral acts.	1.40	0.49	Negative
6	Population education teaches us that children are not of good.	1.48	0.50	Negative
7	Investment in population is mare wastage.	1.34	0.47	Negative
8	Population education will increase the burden of curriculum.	1.53	0.50	Positive
9	Family education helps in changing the reproductive of young men and women.	1.50	0.50	Positive
10	Population education will realize rich dividends.	1.53	0.50	Positive
11	Family life education is a propagandist and out of time.	1.37	0.48	Negative
12	Family life education will create of family of natured for brothers and sisters.	1.53	0.50	Positive
13	Family life education will create a feeling of disaffection for parents.	1.37	0.48	Negative
14	Population education should be introduced, as our teachers are incompetent to teach it.	1.29	0.45	Negative
15	Population education should an integral part of present curriculum.	1.35	0.47	Negative
16	There is no utility of population education in schools.	1.45	0.50	Negative

Women belonging to the age group of 25-35 years have more positive attitude towards population education as compared to women, above 35 years. Unmarried women have more positive attitudes towards population education as compared to married and separated women. Similarly women belonging from higher family income group have more positive attitude towards small family norm as compared to compared to women belonging to average family income group (3000-7000/- per month) and low family income (up to 3000/- per month).

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