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## **Dynamics of Contraceptive use in Rajasthan: A regional analysis**

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### **Abstract**

The use of various contraceptive methods in Rajasthan varies in each district and region, with in society and also among different caste and religious groups. This paper examine the reason for not using contraception among currently married women of reproductive age group, to study the reason for discontinuing the contraceptive method and factors associated with the future intention to use contraceptives and associated regional variations. District Level Household Survey (DLHS-3) data has been used for the analysis of this study. Fertility related reasons; method related reasons and opposition to use are the main obstacles preventing use of contraception among the married women. Among the non-users, health concerns (10.6%) were reported as the reason for not using contraception in the state and more than 12 percent in north-eastern region followed by south-eastern region with 11.4 percent. The main reason for discontinuing the last method by the ever-users were fertility related reason such as wanted children or method failed become pregnant (83%) and the followed by side effects (6.4%) in Rajasthan. Promotion of health education, communicating advantages of contraceptive methods, removing the mis-conceptions on family planning methods through effective communication may persuade a large proportion of women to adopt contraception.

**Key Words:** Contraceptive use, fertility, Family planning, Population growth, regional variation

### **Introduction**

Contraceptive use, as a proximate determinant of fertility, plays an important role in reducing fertility; and at times contraceptive prevalence has been used to evaluate the effect of family planning programs<sup>1</sup>. In 2000, the heads from 189 countries endorsed the Millennium Declaration<sup>2</sup> where universal access to contraceptive methods was reemphasized as the cost-effective way of reducing maternal mortality<sup>3</sup>. Family planning research and policy have efficiently reoriented the choice of avoiding pregnancy along with convenient and informed access to contraceptive methods to control fertility, especially unwanted/unintended or mistimed pregnancy<sup>4,5,6</sup> and to attain the desired family size<sup>7</sup>.

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Rajasthan is one of the largest states by area in the country with very high population growth rate in India. There are 32 districts and four regions (as per NFHS-2) in Rajasthan and the acceptance of different contraceptive methods still varies in each district and region, with in society and also among different caste and religious groups<sup>8</sup>. The possible reasons for the lower acceptance include cultural backgrounds, attitudes towards family planning, meagre knowledge of family planning methods, the lack of accessibility and availability of services, and the prevalence of traditional methods of birth control<sup>9</sup>. In view of these variations in Rajasthan, it is imperative to examine the reason for not using contraception among currently married women of reproductive age group, to study the reason for discontinuing the contraceptive method and factors associated with the future intention to use contraceptives and associated regional variations.

## Methodology

The analysis has been carried out by using District Level Household Survey (DLHS-3) data. This survey was designed to collect data on various aspects of health care utilisation for Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) and accessibility of health facilities. In the state of Rajasthan, DLHS-3 sample covered a total of 38797 currently married women in the age group 15-49<sup>10</sup>. For regional analysis the state has been divided into four regions according to National Family Health Survey 2 (NFHS-2) as given in table 1. The overall analysis has been carried out with the use of descriptive as well as multivariate analysis. To identify the factors associated with the future intention of contraceptive use, binary logistic regression has been deployed.

## Results

In the District Level House Hold Survey report, 2007-08 it was found that 99.2 percent of the currently married women in the age group 15-49 know any kind of modern method of family planning in Rajasthan.

The reason for not-using contraception had been categorised in to four categories such as fertility related, opposition to use, lack of knowledge, method related reason.

### Reasons for not using Contraception

The main reasons for not using contraception by non-users is categorised as fertility related reason, opposition to use, lack of knowledge, method related reason and others. Fertility related reason includes Not having sex, infrequent sex, husband away, Menopause, hysterectomy, subfecund, infecund, postpartum amenorrhea, breastfeeding and 'up to god' (**Table 2**). The analysis shows that breast feeding is the substantial reason for not using contraception in Rajasthan (39.1%) and all the regions too. The second most fertility related reason is postpartum amenorrhea (26.7%) in the state, while 'up to God' is the second most potential reason in regional level except southern region. In the state nearly 8 percent of the non-users were reported that their husband or others or religious belief opposed to use contraception. While in south-eastern region, more than 9 percent of the women reported the same reason and in western region it is 8.7 percent. Method related reason includes health concerns, fear of side effects, lack of access or too far, cost too much, difficulty or inconvenient to get method, inconvenient to use or interference with body's normal process and afraid of sterilization or cannot work after sterilization. Among the non-users, health concerns were reported by 10.6 percent at the state and more than 12 percent in north-eastern region followed by south-eastern region with 11.4 percent. Afraid of sterilization or

cannot work after sterilization reported by 5.3 percent of the non-users at the state and 6.3 percent at north-eastern region of Rajasthan. All other method related reasons were negligible.

#### **Reasons for not using modern family planning methods by traditional method users**

When we consider the traditional method users, nearly 28 percent indicated that they were not using modern contraception methods because of infrequent sex/didn't have sex/ husband way and the same reason is applicable to all regions (**Table 3**). Among the traditional method users, 3.6 percent were thinking that fertility is 'up to god' in the state, while it is 5.1 and 4.5 percent for north-eastern and western region respectively. Opposition from their husband/others/religious beliefs is 23.5 percent in south-eastern region and it is around 15 percent in Rajasthan among traditional method users. More than 3 percent reported that they themselves opposed the use of contraception. Smaller percent reported that the reason as lack of knowledge among traditional users in the state and regions. Health concerns (15.2%) and inconvenient to use or interference with body's normal process or do not like existing method (11.5%) were the method related prime reasons among traditional method users. In the case of regions it is found that more than 40 percent of the traditional users not using modern family planning method because of health concerns in southern region.

#### **Reason for discontinuing among ever-users**

The main reason for discontinuing the last method reported by the ever-users were fertility related reason such as wanted children or method failed become pregnant (83%) and the Second important reason was related to side effects (6.4%) in Rajasthan (**Table 4**). More than 90 percent (highest) of the ever users in southern region indicate that the reason for discontinuation of the contraceptive use was fertility related, while it was only 76 percent in north-eastern region (lowest). A small proportion reported discontinuation due to some other reasons.

#### **Intention to use contraceptive among non-users in future**

In Rajasthan more than 23 percent of the contraceptive non-users would like to use contraceptive methods in the future, where as the region wise score was 28 percent for south-east region (highest), followed by southern region and north eastern region with 25.8 and 24.8 percent respectively (**Table 5**). Relatively high percent of the non-users rural women, non-users belong to scheduled tribes (ST) category, non-users in the 25-34 age group, non-users among Hindu, non-users belong to rich wealth

index group and women with 10<sup>th</sup> and above educated women have reported that they have future intention to use contraception in compared to the respective counter parts at the state level. Those who were received advice from medical persons or friends or relatives to use contraceptive methods, 40 percent of the women have intention to use contraception in the future. Among the non-users at the state level, more than one-fourth among those who reported fertility related reasons, 18 percent among those who reported opposition to use, one fifth among those who reported lack of knowledge,

and one-fourth among those who reported method related apprehension, have shown interest in future use of contraception (**Table 5**). Difference in the future intention to use contraception was evident in the case of regions for each category. When we consider the type of locality, more than 28 percent of the non-users from south-eastern region have future use of intention, while western region it is only 18.7 percent only. When cast is concern, nearly 32 percent of the scheduled caste non-users from south-eastern region have intention to use contraception in future, while in western region it is only 18.5 percent among ST. Regarding education of women, highly educated women have the intention to use contraception in the future than their counterparts in

western and north-eastern region, while in southern and south-eastern region, women with 5-9 years of schooling have higher intention to use contraception in future.

### **Logistic regression analysis**

The logistic regression results showing the factors associated with the agreement to use contraception in future is given in table 6. Women who received advice to use contraceptives were more likely to use contraception in future in compared to those women who had not received any advice. The likelihood of future use of contraception is 64 percent higher among the women who have knowledge on family planning methods in comparison to those women without knowledge on contraceptive methods. Similarly women with media exposure have more likely to use contraception in future compared to those who did not. Women residing in urban area have less likely to use contraceptive in future compared to rural women.

With respect to the caste, women belong to SC/ST group were more likely to use contraceptives in the future compared to general category, while those women belong to OBC have less likely to do so compared to general category. Age group and future use have a highly statistically significant association. The likelihood of future intention to use of contraception is more among the women in the age group 25-34 than women in 15-24 age group and the likelihood is 73 percent lesser among the women in 35-49 age group. Women belong to Muslim religion and other religion less likely to have intention to use contraception in future compared to Hindu women. Wealth index is not showing significant association with future intention to use contraceptives. The likelihood is much lesser among the women belong to Poor and middle group wealth index comparing to rich group. Educated women have lesser chance of using contraception in future compared to non-literate women. The analysis shows that, those women reported fertility related reason have fewer likely to use contraception in future compared to reference category, while those women reported opposition, lack of knowledge and method related reasons have more likely to use contraception in future compared to the reference category. The regional analysis shows that the likelihood of intention to use contraception among women belong to western region is 50 percent lesser compared to south-eastern region, similarly north-eastern and southern region the likelihood is lesser than the reference category.

### **Discussion**

This paper analysing the contraceptive use and non-use and its reasons among currently married women as well as the reason for discontinuing the contraceptive method and factors associated with the future intention to use contraceptives in Rajasthan and its various regions. Contraceptive non-users among currently married women were 69.2 percent in Rajasthan as per DLHS-3. The effects of determinants of reason for not using contraceptives as well as discontinuation among currently married, non-sterilized contraception women in Rajasthan and its regions vary by the type of reasons. Our analysis indicate that good proportion of women are not using contraception because of fertility related reasons such as breast feeding, postpartum amenorrhea, infrequent sex, health concern and fear of side effects. Similar kind of findings has been obtained from other research studies<sup>11,12,13</sup>.

It has been widely accepted that the use of contraception is a mutual understanding and agreement between the spouses, but there may possible opposition from the partner or others or some religious prohibition. The study found that the opposition from husband as the dominant factor in practicing contraception. Strong patriarchal traditions persist in many different societal parts of our country. Husband's approval is a big factor in deciding

the use of contraceptives, it possibly indicates his fertility preference or adverse feelings about contraception. A study conducted in rural Maharashtra found that more than 16 percent were not using contraceptives due to fear of side effects<sup>14</sup>. Another research indicated that nearly one-third of the users were reported about the fear of side<sup>15</sup>. The results also indicate that small proportion of the women themselves opposed the use of contraception. Good proportion of women was afraid of sterilization or believed that cannot work after sterilization.

Southern region of Rajasthan is tribal dominated area and the proportion of muslim population is 2 percent only while north-eastern region the proportion is more than 10 percent. Among the currently married women in southern region, 54 percent (lowest) were not using contraception while it is 75 percent (highest) in north-eastern region. Religious conservatism also is a strong negative correlate of some forms of contraceptive use and practice of sterilisation may be negligible in some religious groups<sup>16</sup>. In southern region, women afraid of sterilization is only 0.7 percent while in north-eastern region it is 6.3 percent. This disparity is due to the certain misconceptions exists in these regions on sterilization. Husband wife communication, gender roles, access to contraceptives and traditional family norms and values have a more crucial effects on the use of contraceptives than theological and religious barriers<sup>11</sup>. Counselling about side effects and misconceptions can improve the acceptance rate of contraception. Mean age at marriage in north-eastern region is found as 17.4 and nearly 42 percent of the marriages were below legal age at marriage as per the DLHS-3 report. As per the Annual Health Survey (2012-13), more than half of the currently married women aged 20-24 years married before legal age (18 years) in Rajasthan<sup>17</sup>.

Good proportion of women were still using traditional methods and not willing to use modern family planning methods due to health concerns. The analysis indicated that, there are three main reasons for discontinuing contraceptive use. First one is desire for child, second is method failure and third one is side effects. A study carried out in rural Dehradun by Kansal et al concluded that 35 percent of the women discontinued the contraceptive method because they wanted a child and 19.5 percent discontinued due to side effects<sup>18</sup>. Opposition from husband or family, infrequent sex or husband away etc., are the other reasons to discontinuation of contraception. Similar findings has been observed by Huq & Rahman<sup>19</sup>. In southern region, more than 90 percent ever-users were discontinued contraception because of desire for child or method failure and it is only 76 percent in north-eastern region. Discontinuation rate of contraception due to fertility related reasons were highest in southern region compared to other region. Availability of health facilities and human resources were comparatively lower in southern region than other regions of Rajasthan.

Nearly one-fourth of the contraceptive non-users women in the state reported that that they would like to use them in the future. Those who have mass media exposure have a higher chance of contraceptive use in the future comparison to those who are not. Advice and motivation for use contraception in future plays a significant role in changing the attitude towards the use of contraceptives. More than one-third of the women in the state and each region, husband or whose mother-in law or mother or medical persons advised them to use a contraceptive method, reported that they would use contraception in the future. Exposure to electronic mass media has a large effect on use of contraception<sup>20</sup>. It is evident from this study that, those non-users women who have exposure to mass media have more chance for using contraception in the future compared to non-exposure groups. Place of

residence is also a significant socio-demographic variable deciding the future use of contraception. Non-users women residing in rural area have more intention to use contraception in future than the urban residential. More than three-fourth of the currently married non- users women preferring sterilization method to use in future in all the regions and state. Accessibility and availability may be the crucial problem especially in rural areas where it is a problem to get good quality family planning services in low cost. A comprehensive measure to improve the use of contraceptives is to make women aware of the source and availability of contraceptives and how to choose the method effectively<sup>21</sup>.

## Conclusion

The study shows great deal of variations related to various reasons for non-use of contraception, discontinuing contraceptive use and future intention to use contraceptives in the state and regions. It is evident that Fertility related reasons; method related reasons and opposition to use are the main obstacles preventing use of contraception among the married women. Earlier studies have documented, the challenge becomes significant when opposition to use<sup>22</sup>, unawareness<sup>23</sup>, and low education<sup>24</sup> are the prime barriers to the use of contraceptives. The proportion of women discontinuing contraceptive use reporting desire for child or method failure is uniformly high across the state and each regions. Three-fourth of the currently married women were non-users in the north-eastern region. The districts in the north-eastern regions comprise of more than 10 percent Muslim women. Awareness level on contraception is lowest in north-eastern region compared to other regions of Rajasthan. Higher proportions of currently married women were not using any family planning methods due to afraid of sterilization or opposition from husband/relatives or religious prohibition or lack of knowledge in north-eastern region.

Programme managers and policymakers responsible for developing and implementing effective family planning services need to understand reason behind couples stop using contraception or discontinuing or do not intend to use contraception in the future. Now a lot of temporary and spacing methods are available, more couples choose temporary methods and as government places more emphasis on spacing methods. Government has to promote permanent methods than temporary methods.

It can conclude as awareness about family planning methods were almost universal, even among many of those who are aware, adequacy of knowledge was lacking. Promotion of health education, communicating advantages of contraceptive methods, removing the mis-conceptions on family planning methods, counselling of eligible couples on importance of small families, and assisting them in making suitable choice through effective communication by community level workers are the immediate needs.

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**Table 1: Regional Classification of Districts in Rajasthan**

	<b>Region</b>	<b>Districts</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Western Region</b> (13629)*	Ganganagar, Bikaner, Churu, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Nagaur, Pali, Barmer, Jalor, Sirohi, Hanumangarh (11 districts )
<b>2</b>	<b>Northeastern Region</b> (14527)*	Jhunjhunun, Alwar, Bharatpur, Dhaulpur, Sawai Madhopur, Jaipur, Sikar, Ajmer, Tonk, Bhilwara, Dause, Karauli (12 districts )
<b>3</b>	<b>Southern Region</b> (4735)*	Dungarpur, Banswara, Udaipur, Rajasmond (tribal dominated)
<b>4</b>	<b>Southeastern Region</b> (5906)*	Chhitaurgarh, Bundi, Kota, Jhalawar, Baran (Hadoti Area)

\* Sample size in each region from DLHS-3 given in bracket,

**Table 2: Reason for not using contraception by the non-users**

	Western Region	North-Eastern Region	Southern Region	South-Eastern Region	Rajasthan
<b>Fertility related Reason</b>					
Not having sex/ infrequent sex	25.4	23.9	8.2	19.0	22.6
Husband away	4.4	4.0	4.4	1.6	3.9
Menopause/ hysterectomy/ subfecund/infecund	6.8	8.7	21.1	9.4	9.1
Postpartum amenorrhea	25.6	21.5	60.2	27.8	26.7
Breastfeeding	36.3	36.3	62.9	42.5	39.1
Up to god	31.4	25.1	3.6	28.0	26.1
<b>Opposition to use</b>					
Respondent opposed	1.8	1.7	0.2	1.0	1.5
Husband /others opposed/ religious prohibition	8.7	7.4	1.4	9.1	7.6
<b>Lack of Knowledge</b>					
Knows no method/source	1.0	3.0	.2	2.7	2.1
<b>Reason related to Method</b>					
Health concerns	9.5	12.3	4.1	11.4	10.6
Fear of side effects	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.5
Lack of access/too far/ costs too much/ difficult/ inconvenient to get method	1.6	4.0	.4	2.9	2.7
Inconvenient to use/ interferes with body's normal process/ do not like existing method	3.0	4.3	1.2	1.9	3.3
Afraid of sterilization/cannot work after sterilization	6.1	6.3	0.7	2.6	5.3
Others	2.9	3.9	0.7	3.2	3.2
Total no. of cases	2660	3253	563	982	7458



**Table 3: Region wise traditional method users by reasons for not using modern family planning methods by region**

	Western Region	North-Eastern Region	Southern Region	South-Eastern Region	Rajasthan
<b>Fertility related issues</b>					
Not having sex/infrequent sex/	41.5	25.30	19.10	15.10	27.80
Menopause/hysterectomy/sub-	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.3
Post-partum amenorrhoea	0.3	0.80	0.00	0.70	0.50
Breastfeeding	4.5	5.40	1.20	7.20	4.70
Up to God	4.5	5.10	0.00	2.00	3.60
<b>Opposition to use</b>					
Respondent opposed	1.9	5.40	0.00	3.30	3.10
Husband opposed / others	15.6	13.9	5.6	23.5	14.6
<b>Lack of knowledge</b>					
Knows no method/ knows no	2.9	2.1	0.6	0.7	1.9
<b>Method related reason</b>					
Health concerns	4.5	14.10	41.40	12.40	15.20
Fear of side effects	1.0	1.30	0.00	1.30	1.00
Lack of access/too far/cost too	6.7	6.7	1.2	7.9	6.0
Inconvenient to use/ interference	5.7	7.4	25.3	19.0	11.5
Afraid of sterilization/ cannot	8.6	10.8	4.9	4.6	8.3
Others/ do not know	1.6	2.0	0.0	2.6	1.7
<b>No. of Cases</b>	313	391	162	153	1019
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 4: Region wise percent distribution of the main reason for discontinuing use of contraceptives among ever-users**

	Western Region	North-Eastern Region	Southern Region	South-Eastern Region	Rajasthan
<b>Fertility related</b>					
Wanted child/method failed become pregnant	85.0	75.8	90.3	84.0	83.0
<b>Side effect related reason</b>	8.0	8.9	1.8	6.2	6.4
<b>Other reasons</b>					
Family/husband opposed	1.8	1.6	0.1	0.2	1.1
Not having sex/infrequent sex/ husband away	2.9	4.3	2.0	2.9	3.2
<b>Others</b>	2.6	9.4	5.8	6.7	6.3
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>No. of cases</b>	800	982	721	412	2915

**Table 5: Percentage of future users of contraception by region & Rajasthan**

<b>Background Characteristics</b>	<b>Sub-groups</b>	<b>Western Region</b>	<b>North-Eastern Region</b>	<b>Southern Region</b>	<b>South-Eastern Region</b>	<b>Total</b>
Type of locality	Rural	18.7	26.0	26.2	28.2	23.8
	Urban	18.2	19.4	21.4	27.1	20.3
Caste	Scheduled caste	21.7	25.0	23.3	31.8	24.6
	Scheduled tribe	18.5	27.9	30.1	31.6	27.9
	OBC	16.3	24.7	20.6	24.6	21.3
	Others	22.0	22.3	23.5	29.1	22.9
Age group	15-24	17.2	26.5	20.4	29.9	23.4
	25-34	25.4	31.5	39.9	35.8	30.6
	35-49	10.4	11.5	12.1	10.0	10.9
Religion	Hindu	20.1	25.3	25.7	28.3	24.1
	Muslim	9.9	20.8	22.2	24.1	15.8
	Others	15.3	19.2	36.4	11.1	17.4
Wealth Index	Poor	17.0	22.7	28.1	26.1	22.8
	Middle	18.6	25.6	23.7	27.7	23.3
	Rich	19.6	24.5	23.9	30.6	23.4
Women education	Non-Literate	17.8	24.2	25.6	25.3	22.2
	Less than 5 yrs	17.5	27.7	27.3	31.7	24.8
	5-9 yrs schooling	20.2	25.3	26.1	35.1	25.0
	10 and above yrs	22.8	26.7	25.5	31.0	25.9
Reason for not using contraception						
	Fertility related	21.6	28.2	34.4	34.3	27.1
	Opposition to use	15.5	21.1	11.1	18.8	18.3
	Lack of Knowledge	16.0	21.2	0.0	22.2	20.4
	Method related	17.0	29.0	22.9	24.8	24.4
Exposure to media	With exposure	18.8	24.1	28.2	26.7	23.0
Knowledge of any family planning method		18.7	25.2	26.2	27.4	23.3
Advice received from medical persons/relatives/others		33.1	44.5	45.5	42.8	40.3
<b>Total</b>		18.6	24.8	25.8	28.0	23.2
<b>Total No. of Cases</b>		771	1211	274	485	2741

**Table 6: Odds ratio on factors associated with future intention to use contraception by non-users in Rajasthan**

Covariates	Category	EXP(B)	95% C.I.(lower & upper limit)	
Advice received to use contraceptives	Advice received®			
	Advice not received	0.237***	.210	.267
Knowledge on Family Planning methods	Have knowledge®			
	Don't have Knowledge on FP	0.364*	.141	.944
Media Exposure	Media Exposure®			
	No Media Exposure	0.952	.839	1.079
Locality	Rural ®			
	Urban	0.799*	.662	.965
Category	General®			
	Scheduled caste	1.007	.816	1.241
	Scheduled Tribes	1.122	.891	1.413
	OBC	0.882	.741	1.049
Age Group	15-24®			
	25-34	1.154*	1.010	1.319
	35-49	0.274***	.229	.328
Religion	Hindu®			
	Muslims	0.779*	.617	.984
	Others	0.988	.550	1.776
Wealth Index	Rich®			
	Poor	0.898	.732	1.102
	Middle	0.983	.838	1.152
Women Education	Non-Literate®			
	Less then 5 years	0.960	.708	1.303
	5 -9 years	0.987	.840	1.161
	10 and above schooling	0.898	.702	1.150
Reasons for not using Contraceptives	Not fertility related®			
	Fertility related	0.879	.694	1.113
Reason - Opposition	Not Opposition®			
	Opposition	1.376*	1.065	1.779
Reason - Knowledge	Not lack of knowledge®			
	Lack of Knowledge	1.459	.863	2.467
Reason - Method	Not related to method®			
	Method related	1.109	.923	1.332
Regions	South-eastern®			
	Western	0.501***	.413	.608
	North-eastern	0.813*	.676	.977
	Southern	0.812	.628	1.050

Significance \*P&lt;0.05, \*\* P&lt;0.01, \*\*\*P&lt; 0.001 ®Reference Category