Domestic violence and Its Impact on couple's fertility Intention in India

Akhilesh Yadav[1]   Minakshi Vishwakarma[2]

Childbearing is an important life event in any person's life after the marriage. Couple welcome childbirth with lots of love, happiness, and hope. It also gives a new dimension to a relationship. Most of the time husband and wife together decide about their reproductive goals according to their fertility preferences and choices. Various social factors such as employment status, income, education, number of living children are expected to affect fertility intentions and behavior. Some research shows that couple level factors also affect fertility behavior like age gap between spouses, the difference in educational and employment status of husband and wife (Thompson, 1997; Backer, 1996). But differences in the couple's choices about fertility preferences also affect fertility intention as well as behavior. The existence of domestic violence indicates the dysfunction of the marital relationship and this could affect their future fertility intention (Stieglitz *et al.,* 2018). 33.5% of Indian women of age 15-49 experience lifetime domestic violence and 8.5% experience sexual violence (NFHS, 2005-06). There is a need to understand the fertility intention and concordance about fertility preferences among the couple's who experience domestic violence.

Objective- The broad objective of this paper is to examine the effect of the existence of domestic violence among the couple on their future fertility intention.

Data and Methodology- Demographic Health Survey provide the opportunity to study the couple dynamics of fertility as it gives the men's data on fertility and contraception use. Couple file of National Family Health Survey 2015-16 has been used in this study. It includes the information on fertility intention, preferences and behavior of husband and wife. It also contains the information about women who experience domestic violence. We also excluded those who never had sex. We use the simple percent distribution and kappa statistics to full fill our objective.

Results

Table 1 describes the socio-economic background characteristics of couples. The major share (43.9%) of couples belongs to Other backward caste followed by SC/St (30.2%) and General caste (25%). There are 10.9% couples in which husband and wife bother are uneducated while in 54.3% couples both the partners are having education secondary or above. In only 4 % of cases, the wife is having at least primary and while husband is uneducated. Around 45% of couples have 0-1 living children and 42.3% have 2-3 children. Only 11% of couples are having more than 3 living children.

Table2 gives the prevalence of domestic violence against wife by background characteristics. We divided the domestic violence into four categories. In 23.9 % couple's wife experiences any less severe physical violence and maximum prevalence 36 % among those couple where both the partners are uneducated.30.7 % of women who are having at least primary and husband is uneducated go through less severe violence. The lowest prevalence of domestic violence (17.3%) observed in the couple's having secondary or higher education. Almost 6% of women experience any severe violence and

sexual violence, while in more than half of couple's, women faced control issue from their husband.

Table 3 provides the future fertility intention of couples whether they are intended to have another child or not. Wife's want more children compared to the husbands. 53% of wife does not want more children while 56 % of the husband are not intended to have more children. The higher value of kappa statistics shows that a higher level of agreement does not exist by chance. In the presence of any less severe domestic violence proportion of husband and wife do not intend to have more children are 63% and 59% respective while in the absence of any less severe domestic violence this proportion is less. In case of any severe domestic or sexual violence, the proportion of husband and wife not wanting more children goes further high. But control issue does not affect the choice of more children.

Conclusion Domestic violence have many social and physiological impact on victims. But it also represents the disturb mental condition of the person who is responsible for it. In our study, we included couples in which women are the only victim who experiences violence by their husband. Severe domestic violence and sexual violence have a significant effect on future fertility intention of couples. Both husband and wife do not want more children in the existence of violence as compare it the absence of the domestic violence.

Important References

Backer, S. (1996). "Couple and Reproductive Health: A review of Couple Studies". Studies in Family Planning, 26(7):291-306

Stieglitz, J.; Trumble, B.C.; Kaplan, H. & Gurven, M.(2018). Marital Violence and fertility in a Relatively Egalitarian high-fertility Population. Nature Human Behaviour, 2(1):265-572.

Table 1: Percent Distribution of the Couples According to the Background Characteristics

Background characteristic	Percent Distribution
Ethnicity	
SC/ST	30.19
OBC	43.91
GEN	25.9
Place of residence	
Rural	63.18
Urban	36.82
Religion	
Hindu	76.68
Muslim	16
Others	5.23
Education	
Both uneducated	10.6
Wife is at least primary husband 0	4.05
Husband at least primary wife 0	15.39
Both have at least primary	15.32
Both are secondary and higher	54.63
Age gap between spouse	
Wife older	2.43

husband holder 0-3 years	39.01
husband older 3-7 years	38.76
husband is much older	19.81
No. of living children	
0-1	44.9
1-3	42.11
3+	12.95
Marital Duration	
0-5	33.18
5-10	22.44
10+	44.38
Total	100

Table 2: Prevalence of Domestic Violence by Background Characteristics

Background characteristics	Prevalence of Violence			
	Any less severe	Any severe	Sexual violence	Control issue
Ethnicity				
SC/ST	27.48	7.96	7.23	48.82
OBC	25.48	6.18	5.59	51.76
GEN	17.82	3.12	4.52	41.23
Place of residence				
rural	26.26	6.96	6.57	49.89
urban	19.36	4.16	4.67	43.11
Religion				
Hindu	24.74	6.14	5.89	49.54
Muslim	21.96	5.87	5.57	45.38
Others	21.24	5.23	6.34	38.32
education				
Both uneducated	36.59	10.96	9.24	55.42
Wife is at least primary husband 0	30.69	8.23	7.76	50.97
Husband at least primary wife 0	31.96	10.18	7.93	55.27
Both have at least primary	28.56	7.06	6.87	48.58
Both are secondary and higher	17.03	3.26	4.19	43.08
Age gap between spouse				
Wife older	21.76	6.3	7.69	44.15
Husband holder 0-3 years	24.94	6.33	6.1	50.25
Husband older 3-7 years	24.5	6	5.72	47
Husband is much older	20.48	5.14	5.43	43.07
No. of living children				
0-1	18.14	3.98	4.87	46.51
1-3	25.81	6.36	6.04	46.3
3+	34.3	10.63	8.38	54.31
Marital Duration				
0-5	17.46	3.86	4.82	47.66
5-10	24.96	5.81	5.78	46.13
10+	27.85	7.58	6.7	48.16
TOTAL	23.87	5.99	5.89	52.46

Table 3 Wives' and Husbands' Desire for More Children and Level of Concordance by Background Characteristics

Background Characteristics	Wife wants no more	Husband wants no more	Difference	Agreement	Kappa Coefficient
Place of residence					
Rural	54.0	56.9	3.0***	78.6	0.605***
Urban	56.2	58.4	2.2***	78.1	0.59***
Religion					
Hindu	54.3	57.3	3.0***	80.1	0.621***
Muslim	56.7	58.5	1.8***	76.5	0.563***
Others	56.1	57.0	0.9***	72.2	0.536***
Education					
Both uneducated	68.3	70.3	2.0***	79.5	0.556***
wife is at least primary Husband 0	54.3	56.2	1.9***	76.1	0.567***
Husband at least primary wife 0	66.5	68.1	1.6***	80.9	0.595***
Both have at least primary	58.5	61.2	2.7***	79.2	0.614***
Both are secondary and higher	47.9	51.1	3.3***	77.4	0.594***
Age gap between spouse					
Wife older	51.2	62.5	11.2***	75.4	0.565***
Husband holder 0-3 years	53.3	54.8	1.6***	79.2	0.617***
Husband older 3-7 years	56.9	69.7	12.9***	79.0	0.602***
Husband is much older	54.3	59.4	5.2***	76.3	0.561***
No. of living children					
0-1	21.1	24.6	3.5***	75.4	0.565***
1-3	79.5	82.0	2.4***	79.2	0.617***
3+	91.3	91.9	0.6***	79.0	0.602***
Marital Duration					
0-5	17.6	20.9	3.3***	76.3	0.393***
5-10	53.2	55.9	2.6***	70.2	0.467***
10+	83.4	85.7	2.2***	84.0	0.459***
Less severe violence					
YES	59.3	63.8	4.5***	78.4	0.58***
No	52.9	55.8	2.8***	77.6	0.591***
Severe Violence					
Yes	63.0	67.8	4.7***	78.4	0.553***
No	54.0	57.8	3.9***	77.8	0.591***
Sexual Violence					
Yes	57.9	63.6	5.8***	77.9	0.67***
NO	54.4	57.5	3.1***	77.8	0.59***
Control Issue					
Yes	55.4	58.8	3.4***	76.4	0.563***
No	54.5	56.7	2.3***	77.5	0.628***
Total	53.4	56.7	3.3***	76.7	0.662***