

**Knowledge about Family Planning among Pashtun  
Community:  
A Case Study of 200 Women of Reproductive Age Group**

By

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**Abstract:**

*The rising population is a pervasive and enduring aspect of every society. The rising trend of high fertility rates in Pakistan is due to lack of family planning practices. Specifically, in a backward area of Pakistan, the people do not practice family planning methods. The current study aimed at investigating the knowledge about family planning among Pashtun families. The 200 females with the reproductive age have been selected for collecting the relevant information. The results of the study indicated that the knowledge of females towards family planning and contraceptive method are below to the mark. The females have no rights to take family planning, reproduction or contraception oriented decision, therefore their knowledge, about family planning were not found to be adequate.*

**Keywords:** Family Planning, Contraceptive Method, Fertility, Mortality, Population

**Introduction:**

The sustained enlarge fertility, and swift magnitude of the population has made Pakistan the 6<sup>th</sup> densely populated country in the world. The current size of the population is exceeding 201 million and, assumed to grow up to 307 million by 2050 (Population Reference Bureau, 2018). Family planning brings a systematic and scientific approach to solve the problem of increasing population. Family planning is the process that enables couples and individuals to plan the gap and time of birth of their children through contraceptive methods (Mwaikambo et al., 2011).

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### **Background of Study:**

The advantages of family planning have gained enormous recognition all across the world. These include better health, financial, and social outcomes for females and families, along with improvement in general public health, economic and ecological well-being at the global population-level (Casterline, &Sinding, 2000).

According to United Nations estimates, (2018) the current population of South-Eastern Asia is 657560,743. (Population Reference Bureau, 2018). The increasing rates of population in Asia are hindering the availability of resources for prosperous life standards. (Statistics Division, 2010).

Moreover, Pakistan stands among the highest rank in the Asian country that needs to control the fertility rates in the Asian region except for Afghanistan (Ali, & Okud, 2013). Reproductive health services found in Pakistan are not up to the mark, as shown by the MMR or maternal mortality rate of 276/100,000 live births (Pegu, Gaur, Sharma & Santa Singh, 2017).

The first family planning program of continent Asia was launched in Pakistan however it was never implemented effectively. Several social, economic and religious factors negatively affected the proper implementation of family planning program and contraceptive methods (Casterline, &Sinding, 2000).

The contraceptive methods are imperative to control the high birth rate for securing good community health and women autonomy.

The limited knowledge about the contraceptive methods and illiteracy about the advantages of family planning is another critical factor that serves as a crucial hindrance to the family planning implementation (Sathar, 2011). Mothers' in-law also plays a significant role in deciding the family size even though when to conceive. Son preference is another critical concept that affects the contraceptive decisions in Pashtun families (Fahim, Nabeel, N., & Usman, 2012).

Baluchistan is the most backward province of Pakistan regarding literacy, customs, traditions, and knowledge and belief systems. The women rights are still a nightmare in Baluchistan, and they are driven by the socio-cultural traditions (Shah, Wang, &Bishai, 2011).

The current study aim is to identify the knowledge that affect the application of family planning program in Pashtun family.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

Population growth has become a universal problem, particularly in Pakistan. The Reproduction is primarily associated with women, but the right of decision for family planning process is out of her reach. In

Pashtun families, the females are not allowed to give the opinion regarding family size, time and birth spacing (Population Reference Bureau 2010) Therefore, the current study aims to explore the in-depth information about the knowledge of Pashtun families towards family planning process.

### **The significance of the Study:**

Despite putting many efforts at national and provincial level the birth rate has not been controlled nor have desired development results were achieved. The current study takes into account the critical factor that is contributing to population growth in Pashtun. This research will be helpful to find out barriers to family planning in a community as well as it will give awareness to people about the significance of family planning and an adverse effect of population explosion.

### **Literature Review:**

Family planning is a premeditated married couple's effort to control the birth rate, time and spacing of births. Family Planning improves the family life at the micro level and contributes to maintaining the economic progress at the macro level (Nishtar, &Amjad, 2009).

The birth rate may control by using the advance contraceptive methods by the collaborative understating of both sexes. The culture of Pashtun does not allow the equal rights of women in the household or reproductive matters (Department of Health, 2010).

The current research provides an overview historical background, current trends in the contraceptive methods and sociocultural barriers in the Family planning process. As mentioned by Ayub et al. (2015) Pakistan's contraceptive prevalence rate for most advanced methods is 26%, which is the lowest in South Asia. A population of every culture have some fallacies and myths about the use of contraceptive methods that can be cultural, biological, religious or social. Such myths and fallacies lead to misunderstandings, and collective ignorance makes it difficult to get the desired goals mentioned under Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

It is believed that women do not use contraceptives because either they are unable to find contraceptives or a long travelling is needed to get them (Bahar, Khalid, Khan, Naseemullah & Batool, 2017).

### **Knowledge about Family Planning Practices:**

Each contraceptive method is considerably different in its theoretical effectiveness and its particular efficiency after use. The large population of women is now well aware of different varieties of

contraceptives but have no information about when to begin using contraception after delivery and emergency contraception. Population of Pakistan have lower contraceptive usage because of less education, unfamiliarity with the appropriate method and lack of knowledge. (Bahar, Khalid, Khan, Naseemullah & Batool, 2017).

### **Methodology:**

The current research provides the overview that what methods, scales, procedures, sampling technique, research design, and settings have been used in the study. The detailed description of all stages has been mentioned to provide a clear understanding of the research modalities. The current research aimed to investigate the Knowledge of family planning among Pashtun families.

### **Research Method:**

The mix methods research design was used to explore knowledge and perception of family planning among Pashtun Families. Qualitative research design provides an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in the form of words whereas Quantitative research design provides the in-depth knowledge of the related variable in number,

### **Research Design:**

Survey Research design was used to collect the data from the participants.

### **Sampling Technique:**

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants from the population. Accessible and targeted approachable people included in the study, according to the feasibility of the researcher.

### **Sample Size:**

Initially, the sample comprised of 250 females of reproductive age, but after getting the incomplete information and outliers, 50 participants have been discarded. Then the final sample size comprised of 200 females of OPD of Bolan Medical Complex Hospital Quetta, belongs to the reproductive age group.

### **Data Collection:**

Data has been collected in May 2018 by from the outdoor patient department (OPD) of Bolan Medical Complex Hospital (BMCH) with the help of Dr Shafia Jalalzai. The well-organized plan has been followed to collect the data in the given period.

**Data Analysis:**

The data were analysed through SPSS version 21, by making the spreadsheet, and computing the data. In the initial level, the outliers have been identified in the data set and exclude from the spreadsheet, as the outliers interrupt the valid and reliable output of the study.

The relevant domains of the variable have been computed to make a particular separate domain, and finally, analysis has been run to find out the results.

**Results:**

The current research highlights the findings of the main study to investigate the knowledge of family planning among Pashtun families. The output of the data has been presented in the tabular or graphical form to enhance the interpretation clearer for the reader.

**Sample Description:**

Following table highlight the frequency and percentage of the Demographic attributes of the sample, who participated in the current study (N= 200).

Table 1

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>percentage</i>
<b><i>Age (years)</i></b>		
<i>15-25</i>	48	24%
<i>26-35</i>	80	40%
<i>36-45</i>	44	22%
<i>45 or above</i>	28	14%
<i>Total</i>	200	100%
<b><i>Education</i></b>		
<i>Educated</i>	56	28%
<i>Uneducated</i>	144	72%
<i>Total</i>	200	100%
<b><i>Qualification</i></b>		
<i>Under Matric</i>	24	12%
<i>Intermediate</i>	16	8%
<i>Bachelor</i>	5	2.5%
<i>Masters</i>	7	3.5%
<i>Higher Education</i>	4	2%
<i>Unqualified</i>	144	72%
<i>Total</i>	200	100%
<b><i>Number of Children</i></b>		

<i>2 to 3</i>	52	26%
<i>4 to 5</i>	60	30%
<i>6 or above</i>	88	44%
<i>Total</i>	200	100%
<b><i>Social Status</i></b>		
<i>House wife</i>	184	92%
<i>Employed</i>	16	8%
<i>Total</i>	200	100%
<b><i>Head of the Family</i></b>		
<i>Husband</i>	132	66%
<i>In laws</i>	68	34%
<i>Total</i>	200	100%
<b><i>Husband Education</i></b>		
<i>Educated</i>	96	48%
<i>Uneducated</i>	104	52%
<i>Total</i>	200	100%
<b><i>Husband Qualification</i></b>		
<i>Under Matric</i>	38	19%
<i>Intermediate</i>	14	7%
<i>Bachelor</i>	19	9.5%
<i>Masters</i>	16	8%
<i>Higher Education</i>	9	4.5%
<i>Un qualified</i>	104	52%
<i>Total</i>	200	100%
<b><i>Husband Job</i></b>		
<i>Government</i>	44	22%
<i>Business</i>	52	26%
<i>NGO</i>	8	4%
<i>Others</i>	96	48%
<i>Total</i>	200	100%
<b><i>Monthly income in Rupees</i></b>		
<i>Below 2000</i>	88	44%
<i>21000-35000</i>	68	34%
<i>36000-50000</i>	28	14%
<i>51 or above</i>	16	8%
<i>Total</i>	200	100%

The above table indicates that the sample of the study comprised of 200 female participants belongs to the 26-35 age group with the percentage of 40%, whereas 24% females belong to the 15-25 age group and 22% females belong to the 36-45 age group. Only 14% of female's participants belong to the 45 or above age group.

As far as education is concerned, the above table depicts that more female was illiterate, i.e., 72% as compared to literate females with the ratio of 28%. Among 28% literate females 12% participants were under matric and 8% reported their education to Intermediate level the 2.5% females belong to bachelor's level and 3.5% were master degree holders. Only 2% of females had higher education.

The marital status of all the participants was married. The 44% participant reported to have 6 or above children on average. The 30% females had 4-5 children, and 26 percent of females reported to have 2-3 children.

The 92% of females were housewives, and only 8% of women were doing government jobs. The 66% participants reported their husband as a head of their families, and the rest of the 34% participants stated their in-laws as a head of the family. The 48% husband of the participants were educated whereas 52% of husbands were reported to be uneducated.

Qualification status of the husbands was reported as 19% of them were under matric, and 7% were intermediate. 9.5% of them were bachelor's degree holders and 8% were master only 4.5% husbands had higher education degrees. As far as the Job status of the husband of the participants are concerned 22% husband had Government jobs. 4% of husbands were working in NGOs, 26% were running their business, and 48% were doing other jobs.

Majority of participants reported their monthly income below 20,000 (44%) and the percentage of salary: between: 21,000 to 35000 was reported to be 34%. The 14% participants were earning the wages 'between' 35000-50000. A very few participants (8%) get 51000 or above salary.

### **Frequencies of Items about Knowledge:**

#### ***Item 1: Do you know about family planning***

Table 2

*The Following table showing the Frequencies and Percentages*

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
<i>Yes</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>60%</i>
<i>No</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>40%</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>100%</i>

The above Table highlights the visual representation of the percentage concerning to know about family planning among females. The above table indicates that the majority of females were literate about the family planning with the percentage of 60%.

**Item 2: How you knew about family planning**

Table 3

*The Following table showing the Frequencies and Percentages*

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>By Media</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>22%</i>
<i>By Health Care Team visits</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>8%</i>
<i>By Friends</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Don't know</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>40%</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>100%</i>

The above Table indicates that 40% participants were unaware with the source of information. The 30% participants reported their source of information regarding family planning was their friends and 22% got to know FP though media. Only 8% of females got familiarity with family planning through medical health care team visits.

**Item 3: Do you know about contraceptive method?**

Table 4

*The Following table showing the Frequencies and Percentages*

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Yes</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>58%</i>
<i>No</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>42%</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>100%</i>

The 58 percent of females reported knowing contraceptive methods whereas 42 percent were not aware of the contraception method.

**Item 4: do you follow contraceptive method**

Table 5

*The Following table showing the Frequencies and Percentages*

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Yes</i>	<b><i>56</i></b>	<b><i>28</i></b>
<i>No</i>	<b><i>108</i></b>	<b><i>54</i></b>
<i>Don't know</i>	<b><i>36</i></b>	<b><i>18</i></b>
<i>Total</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>100</i>

According to the above table, 54% of females reported that they do not follow the contraceptive methods and 18% were not aware of contraceptive methods. The 28% female stated that they used contraceptive methods.



***Item no 5: if you use contraceptive methods then which types of those are you using***

Table No 6

*The Following table showing the Frequencies and Percentages*

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Oral pills</i>	20	10
<i>Injectable contraception</i>	36	18
<i>Any other</i>	20	10
<i>No</i>	72	36
<i>Don.t Know</i>	52	26
<i>Total</i>	200	100

In response to the above question, 36% of females reported that they do not use contraceptive methods. The 18% of females reported that they use injectable contraceptive methods and only 10% of females used oral pills and 10% uses any other types of contraception. The major part (26%) of the participants reported ‘‘don’t know’’ which indicated they were not familiar with the use of contraceptive methods

**Discussion:**

The Population trend has become a fundamental universal problem, predominantly in Pakistan (Fahim, Nabeel, & Usman, 2012). The current study has been carried out to investigate the knowledge of family planning among Pashtun families. The sample of the study comprised of 200 participants among which majority of female’s participants belongs to the 26-35 age group with the 40 %, more females was illiterate, i.e. 72% and only 28% were literate. The social status of females was housewife among a majority of a participant (92%), and 8% participant had jobs as Government employers.

The 44% participate reported to have 6 or above children on average. The 30% females had 4-5 children, and 26 per cent of females reported to have 2-3 children, the maximum 66% number of females reported their husbands are the head of their family.

According to the above findings, the majority of participants stated monthly income below 20,000 (44%) According to this findings, the majority of the participants belongs to the low socio-economic status, and they have the high number of children. Majority of respondents 60% were aware about family planning, with 40% who don’t know PF. major source of awareness 30% was friends who had been told about & 54% female reported that thy do not follow contraceptives methods because of different barriers.

According to the present study (26%) of the participants reported “don’t know” which indicated they don’t know about use of contraception.

### **Conclusion:**

The current study aimed to identify the key factors that affect the application of a family planning program in the Pashtun family. Although the findings of the survey provided the in-depth information about the knowledge, of family planning among both genders in the Pashtun families. The progress of any society primarily depends upon the male mentality and belief system, and according to the female respondents, the attitude of the males towards the family planning or contraceptive methods was not positive.

The study also indicated that in Pashtun families the majority of the family belongs to low socioeconomic status with the high number of children. Therefore, a need to develop an awareness program and campaign regarding family planning are imperative to implement. In the future this aspect would be cover using the evidence of the current study. The study suggests a desire need of awareness program at Pashtun families to promote the family planning practices for health, economic and social growth of the province.

### **Implications of the Study:**

The study highlights the following implication

- The Findings of the study would help in making policies to control the high fertility rates in the Pashtun families.
- The findings of the study would be used as evidence for the further study, and the work would be expanded according to the advancement in the contemporary alteration.
- The barriers that have been investigated in the promotion of family planning would be controlled to make the society free of economic, social and occupational problems.

### **Limitation of the Study:**

The current study poses a few flaws that limited the scope of the research to some extents. First, of all, the study has been conducted in the most backward area of Pakistan concerning the Pashtun families, to investigate the knowledge, of the females. Secondly, the study was quantitative, but the majority of females belongs to the illiterate group, and the researcher had to fill the form one by one and female were responding in details.

**Recommendations:**

On behalf of the above limitation, the following recommendations have been made.

As mentioned earlier that the males play a significant role in the decision-making process, therefore in the future study, the male population would be included to comprehend the causes of the lack of family planning practices. Another limitation of the study was the high illiteracy level of females, therefore to conduct a quantitative study or survey research design may limit the validity or reliability of the result as the participants cannot read and comprehend the items. In future, the qualitative research would be carried out comprising the focus group discussion.

Furthermore, the campaign must be organised to spread awareness about the advantages of the contraceptive and family planning method to control the rising fertility rate, and should also throw light on the disadvantage of increasing population.

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