

Results: The induced abortion ratio increased over the study period, while miscarriage and still-birth ratios did not change. Induced abortion increased with the number of surviving children but decreased with maternal age and pregnancy interval. Abortion ratios were higher among the educated, better off, and Hindu women. Abortion ratios were also higher among the contraceptive users, particularly condom and pill users, than among the non-users, whereas injectable users had abortion ratios similar to those of the non-users.

Conclusions: The findings of the study suggest that abortion is common among women who want to limit or space childbearing. The small family is becoming a norm, and family planning programmes are fully committed to help couples achieve their reproductive goal. There may be unplanned pregnancies due to failure of methods used and inaccessibility to services, and it is expected that many abortions may occur in the developing stage of the family planning programme. To help couples achieve their desired reproductive goal and reduce maternity-related deaths, MCH-FP programmes should provide safe abortion services and management of abortion-related complications.



Trends in Contraception and Gender Composition of Surviving Children: Examples from Two Rural Areas of Bangladesh

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Objective: Describe contraceptive use over the last ten years and its relationship to the gender composition of living children in a family, and investigate whether gender composition could inhibit a further decline in fertility.

Methods: The MCH-FP Extension Project of ICDDR,B has experiment sites at Sirajgonj and Abhoynagar in Bangladesh. Working within the government system, the Project conducts operations research to improve health and family planning service-delivery in these two sites. Data obtained from the Sample Registration System which conducted interviews at 90 days interval since 1982 of a sample of villagers residing in 10,000 households were used. Using data from 1982 through 1992, descriptive results are presented, followed by multivariate analysis.

Results: Contraceptive prevalence rates (CPR) in both areas increased. Sirajgonj being a more remote and traditional area, CPR rose from 11 in 1982 to 39 in 1992. At Abhoynagar, CPR rose from 22 in 1982 to 47 in 1992. By comparison, the national CPR was 19 in 1983 and 40 in 1991. Gender composition of a couple's living children appeared to be important factor determining their contraceptive use. Women having at least one boy and one girl had a higher CPR over the period compared to women having only boys or only girls. However, even when all children were girls, the couple's contraceptive use had increased over time.

Conclusions: These findings suggest that preference for sons persists in Bangladesh, and that couples also desire a daughter. The fact that couples who have only girls are also inclined to contraceptive use indicates that the use of family planning practices, and desires for having smaller families are becoming behavioural norms.



Influence of Bari Characteristics on Contraceptive Use Among Mothers in Matlab

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Objective: Examine whether there are any characteristics of *bari*, the smallest rural community in Bangladesh, which affect contraceptive acceptance and cost-effectiveness of services.