

THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DECISION FOR ADOPTION AMONG INFERTILE COUPLES

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Introduction

Abandoned, orphaned and destitute children have always been there in society. Special institutions and orphanages are set up for taking care of their physical needs. Charity thus ensures fulfillment of basic needs but their emotional needs are left unattended too. There are approx. 32 million destitute children in India, looking forward to a better future. At the same time infertility occurs in 17% of couples and can cause considerable emotional pain for individuals who wish to bear children.

From 1920's till recently adoption was considered primarily as service to childless couples. It is now seen as a form of child care or as a way of rescuing children from adverse settings and placing them with families likely to forward their social and intellectual development and emotional stability.

According to 'Indian Association for the Promotion of Adoption (IAPA)', in earlier days, Indian couples would adopt a child only from within the extended family. Adoption agencies also celebrate 'National Adoption Awareness Week' from Nov. 7-14, who are still trying to find home for the orphans. A life time of joy simply does not outweigh in importance the fact that he/she did not give nine uncomfortable months lying in family womb.

Objectives

- To understand the various factors influencing adoption.
- To study the relationship of these factors in their decision making.

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Review of Literature

Though the area of child development has been fairly well researched in general terms, research on child welfare services like non-institutional services, foster care and adoption is sorely lacking. The existing literature in India on child adoption is limited and there are only few empirical studies done on child adoption.

(a) **History of Adoption** - The practice of adoption has its origin in the beginnings of human society. The Bible states that Moses was adopted by the Pharaoh's daughter and Esther by Mordecai.

In Indian mythology King Janak adopted Sita, a girl abandoned in the field. There was no stigma associated to it. She even arose to the level of Goddess whose name every Indian would know for ages.

(b) **Child Adoption in Indian Perspective** - The 1956 Act has evolved from the Hindu Law which is one of the ancient laws of the world with a religious basis. The Hindu law is not only rooted in the Vedas and in the Smritis, but also in the practices, usages and customs of the people. The son occupies a place of special significance in Hindu religion and this forms the basis for the age old practice of child adoption among the Hindus. In the Hindu religion, it is the supreme duty of the son to solemnise the final rites of the parents and ensure continuity of family lineage.

(c) **Legal considerations** : A Hindu can adopt under the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act of 1956. This act covers all Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhist and Jains. The Non-Hindus, i.e. the Muslims, Christians, Jews and the Parsis are not covered by it as the personal laws of these religions do not sanction adoption and they can take child as their

ward under the guardians and Ward Act of 1890.

(d) **Role of Adoption Agencies**: Adoption agencies play a crucial role in child adoption today. On Jan 9, 1971, professional social workers and adoptive parents, came together to form the IAPA. There is a coordinating body called Voluntary Coordinating Agencies (VCA's) to coordinate the activities of Indian Placement Agencies in order to promote domestic adoptions. In Feb. 1989 another coordinating body was set up called, 'Central Adoption Resource Agency' which is purely a resource agency. Over the years due to the work of these organisations and like minded institutions interested in creating a favourable climate for adoption, the numbers have gradually increased.

(e) **General Attitude towards adoption** - In considering adoption, it is like comparing pregnancy and parenting role to a wedding and marriage. Pregnancy is nine months and motherhood is lifetime. It is like wedding is a day and marriage is a lifetime. What a woman really wants is to be a mom.

It is the experience of professionals who have promoted adoption that, the only complaint of those satisfied parents is, "why were we not advised about adoption earlier?"

One of the couples who had already adopted a child, advise all parents that adopting a child is unique experience in life. **Instead of running from doctors to clinics for ultramodern treatment and spending large sum of money it is better to go for adoption**

(f) **Factors influencing Adoption** : The research done in Sucheta Kriplan Hospital during a period of 10 years (1971-1980) by Mrs. Leela Narang Med. Social Worker, has shown that a lot of changes have been →

taking place within a span of 25 years and more. parents with good educational background and professional status have started coming for adoption. According to study done on adoptive parents 82.9% of fathers and 86.8% mothers were educated, 81.6% of the couples were Hindus and 59.2% of babies who were adopted were males.

A study done by Shalini Bharat (1993) showed that 69% fathers and 72% mothers were mainly in the age group of 31-40 years. Most of the adoptive parents (71%) were in the highest income group (i.e. Rs. 10,000/- p.m. or more).

Methodology

The study was conducted in outpatient Department of Obstetric & Gynaecology, AIIMS, ND by final year B.Sc.(Hons) Nursing Students in partial fulfillment for the B.Sc.(Hons) Nursing Degree, CON, AIIMS during May 98.

A study sample includes all couples attending the OPD of Dept. of Obstetric & Gynaecology, AIIMS for the treatment of infertility.

Purposive sampling technique was used. The first 25 couples fulfilling the criteria for selection of samples were selected for the study. Each subject was given a code number, willingness to participate in the study was taken and they were assured of the confidentiality.

The study variables include Age of the couple, Education of the couple, Family income, Religion, Type of family, Primary/Sec. infertility, Period of infertility, Male/Female infertility, Treatment taken, Duration of treatment, Adoption in the family/neighbour/friends.

The interview schedule consists of twenty closed ended questions. The first five questions were on the demographic data of the couples. The next five questions were on the problems of infertility and the rest of the questions were on the knowledge of adoption and their opinion.

The researchers introduced themselves to the subjects. The purpose of the study was explained to them. They were interviewed on the basis of interview schedule. The data obtained was entered in a master sheet, analysed and interpreted using descriptive statistics. Frequency and percentage was computed.

Findings

1. 52% of the husbands were of the age group 26-30 years, out of which 61.53% favoured adoption. The next higher group (24%) came under the age group 31-35 years, out of which 83.33% favoured adoption.
2. The maximum number of wives (64%) fell in the age group 20-25 years out of which 56.25% favoured adoption. 24% of wives fell in the age group of 26-30 years out of which 83.33% favoured adoption.
3. 36% of the husbands had an education upto graduation and out of which about 77.78% favoured adoption. 64% of the husbands had an education upto intermediate and below, out of which only 43.75% favoured adoption.
4. 32% of the wives had an education upto graduation and about out of which 75% favoured adoption. 68% of the wives had an education upto intermediate and below, out of which 52.94% did not favour adoption.
5. Out of the total sample 48% had an income greater than Rs. 4000 out of which 83.33% favoured adoption. Out of those who had an income of less than Rs 4000 only 30.77% favoured adoption.
6. 96% of the total sample were Hindus out of which 58.33% favoured adoption. 4% of the total sample were Muslims and non favoured adoption.
7. 56% of the total sample were from joint families out of which 64.29% supported adoption. 44% of the total sample belonged to nuclear families and out of them only 45.45% supported adoption.
8. 80% of the wives have primary infertility out of which 60% supported

adoption. 20% had secondary infertility and only 40% of them supported adoption.

9. Among the total sample 48% had infertility for more than four years of which 58.33% favoured adoption. 52% had infertility for less than 4 years for which 53.85% favoured adoption.

10. In 52% of the total sample wives were responsible for infertility out of which 53.85% supported adoption. In 12% of the total sample husbands were responsible and among them only 33.33% supported adoption. In those cases (36%) where both partners were responsible for infertility, 66.67% supported adoption.

11. Out of the total sample 72% had taken treatment of which 50% favoured adoption.

12. 100% of the couples had heard of adoption of which 72% got the information through mass media and 20% from friends and relatives. Though they had heard of adoption 80% were not aware of any adoption agency and 52% did not think that there were any legal procedures involved in adoption.

13. Out of 48% of the total sample who were aware of the legal procedures 66.66% favoured adoption. Of the 52% who were not aware of legal procedures, only 46.15% supported adoption.

14. 88% of the total sample had no history of adoption in the family. Yet 54.55% of them favoured adoption. 76% of the total sample had no history of adoption among friends and relatives but 56.23% of them favoured adoption.

15. Majority of the total samples (44%) proposed that one should plan for adoption after a period of infertility of 6-10 years and 72.72% of them were in favour of adoption.

16. 56% of the total sample favoured adoption. The preference of the couples regarding the sex of the child was asked. 50% of the couples wanted a male child, 14.29% opted for a female child and 35.71% had no preferences. 57.14% of those



couples wanted to adopt a relative's child.

Conclusion

The aim of the study was to find out the various factors influencing the decision for adoption among infertile couples.

After the study it was observed that 56% of the subjects favoured adoption. The factors influencing their decision were varied. It was found that the couples with high education, good family income, those who came from joint family, those who had primary infertility, especially female infertility, supported adoption.

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"A CRY FROM THE WOMB"

Oh, my loving mother,
You gave me life in your womb,
Let me live and love you,
Don't send me to the tomb.

Oh, dear mother care for me,
Don't bother if I am 'he' or 'she'
Oh, don't be so cruel to me,
I am your child oh, mummy,

Oh, mum, you have to be healthy,
to see me hale & hearty,
Protect your health from all hazards,
Nourish yourself by proper diet,
Screen yourself for high risk too,
which effects your life and my life too.

But if you don't care for me
And not happy to deliver me
I no longer wish to stand on your way
I would gladly fade away.

But remember oh mother if I die,
To the fact you can't lie,
That I cried within your womb,
To whom you had never been kind,
It'll prick your heart throughout your life.

SUNITA LAWRENCE