

# Attitude of Unmarried Girls towards Family Planning

*A Study in an Orissa City*

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## Introduction

The family planning programme is one of the largest government-supported programmes for population control in India. The control of population explosion cannot be achieved without the will and active co-operation and acceptance by people.

The present study is aimed at finding out the awareness, knowledge, attitude and opinion of college girls towards family planning. The college girls were chosen because they represent the attitude of better educated females who enter the child bearing stage in near future and they have the privilege of higher education, so expected to be more aware and their attitude will soon play an important role in determining the success of the population control programme.

## Material and Methods

The study was conducted from September 1987 to June 1988 in Government Women's College, Berhampur, Ganjam Distt., Orissa. 281 students were selected out of a total of 1120 students by stratified random sampling method. They were asked to fill up the prepared questionnaire schedule. The data obtained were analyzed and tabulated to discuss as follows:

## Observations and Discussions

**Table I: Age-wise Distribution and their Study Discipline**

Age Group	No. of Arts Students	%	No. of Sc. Students	%	Total
14-16 years	96	34.16	42	14.90	138 (46.12%)
17-19 years	133	47.33	07	02.49	140 (49.82%)
20+ years	3	01.06	0	00.00	3 (01.06%)
Total	232	82.56	49	17.43	281 (100%)

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Out of a total of 281 girls, 232 (82.56%) belong to Arts and 49 (17.43%) to Science discipline. The maximum number were in the age group of 17-19 years.

**Table II: Distribution as per Permanent Resident**

Age	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Tribal (%)	Total (%)
14-16 yrs	101 (35.94)	32 (11.39)	5 (01.77)	138 (49.12)
17-19 yrs	123 (43.77)	12 (04.27)	5 (01.77)	140 (49.82)
20+ yrs	0 (00.00)	3 (01.07)	0 (00.00)	3 (01.07)
Total	247 (79.71)	47 (16.73)	10 (03.55)	281 (100)

Majority of girls are belonging to urban areas and few from tribal and rural areas. Majority of the urban girls are in the age group of 17-19 years. The next largest group is 14-16 years.

**Table III: The Relation of Literacy of the Father with Respondent's Literacy**

Literary Status of Respondents	Urban Graduate Fathers	Higher Educated Fathers	Total
Arts	76 (27.24%)	156 (55.19%)	232 (82.44%)
Science	2 (00.71%)	47 (16.84%)	49 (17.56%)
Total	78 (27.95%)	203 (72.40%)	281 (100%)

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From the above table, it is seen that a higher percentage of girls belonged to the higher educated fathers. Here  $X^2 = 17.806$ ,  $df. = 1$ ,  $P < 0.001$ , H.S. So, educated fathers have a direct influence upon the education of the girls.

**Table IV: Family Income Vs Educational Status of Respondents**

Literary Status of Respondents	Upto Rs.1,000/- per month	Beyond Rs.1,000/- per month	Total
Arts	80 (28.46%)	152 (54.89%)	232 (82.44%)
Science	4 (01.42%)	45 (16.01%)	49 (17.44%)
Total	84 (29.89%)	197 (70.10%)	281 (100%)

Family income has got a direct relationship with the education. So it is evident that those in the higher income group are more capable of imparting higher education (than those from the low income group), to their children. Here  $X^2 = 13.271$ ,  $df. = 1$ ,  $P < 0.001$  H.S.

**Table V: Family Discussion**

Discussion on Various Points	Number	Percentage
F.P. is a National Programme	148	52.66
Population explosion & its control	144	51.24
About existing problem of the nation	126	44.83
About mortality and morbidity		
Status of the country	73	25.97
About Small Family Norms	118	42.00
About Sex Education	68	24.19
About Dowry and Marriage Problems	176	62.61

It is observed that most respondents have discussed with their parents about the above matter.

**Table VI: Awareness of Respondent about the Need of F.P.P.**

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	255	90.75
No	26	9.25
Total	281	100%

Most are well aware of the need of the programme;

it is a good sign for health and family welfare.

**Table VII: Opinion about Early Marriage**

Age	Good	Bad	Total
14-16 years	8 (3.04%)	78 (29.65%)	86 (32.69%)
17-19 years	5 (1.90%)	172 (65.39%)	177 (67.31%)
Total	13 (4.94%)	250 (95.39%)	263 (100%)

$X^2 = 5.95$ ,  $df. = 1$ ,  $P < 0.02$  significant.

The maximum number in both age groups are against early marriage.

**Table VIII: Permissible Marriageable Age by Law**

Marriageable Age	For Boys	For Girls
16 years	0	1 (0.36%)
18 years	0	185 (65.84%)
21 years	132 (46.97%)	84 (29.89%)
25 years	130 (46.20%)	0
Did Not Answer	19 (06.70%)	11 (03.91%)
Total	281 (100%)	281 (100%)

Most of the respondents know the age of marriage for boys, i.e., 21 years, and girls, i.e., 18 years.

**Table IX: Different Family Planning Methods Known**

No. of Methods	No. of Respondents	Percentage
One Method	68	24.19
Two Methods	64	22.79
Three Methods	38	13.52
Four Methods	13	4.62
Five Methods	8	2.84
Do Not Know	11	3.92
Did Not Answer	79	28.12
Total	281	100

It shows that a maximum number of girls know about one to three methods of family planning.

**Table X: Type of F.P. Methods to be Used After Marriage and Child Birth**

Type of F.P. Methods	After Marriage	After Child Birth
Use of Condoms	45 (16.17%)	14 (04.98%)
Pills	17 (6.04%)	14 (04.98%)

IUCD	18 (6.20%)	22 (07.82%)
Sterilization	16 (5.69%)	36 (12.81%)
Do Not Use a Method	0 (00.00%)	0 (00.00%)
Do Not Know	145 (51.60%)	137 (48.75%)
Did Not Answer	69 (24.40%)	70 (25.26%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>311 (100%)</b>	<b>293 (100%)</b>

Maximum number of respondents are found to be against adoption of F.P. Methods. This finding holds good both after marriage and after child birth which is due to absence of facilities.

**Table XI: Opinion Regarding Time of Starting of F.P.**

Time of Starting	Number	Percentage
Just After Marriage and Before any Child	37	13.18
After One Child	74	26.33
After Two Children	125	44.48
After Three Children	7	2.49
After Four Children	2	0.7
After Five or More	0	0
Do Not Use a Method	0	0
Did Not Answer	36	12.81
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>

In this study the majority opted the time after two children for Family Planning practice.

**Table XII: Number of Children Preferred**

Literacy Status of Respondents	One Child	Two Children	Three or More Children	Total
+ 2 Arts and Science	12 (4.59%)	167 (63.98%)	10 (3.85%)	189 (72.42%)
+ 3 Arts and Science	16 (6.13%)	50 (19.16%)	6 (2.29%)	72 (27.58%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>28 (10.72%)</b>	<b>217 (83.14%)</b>	<b>16 (6.14%)</b>	<b>261 (100%)</b>

Here majority preferred two children.  $X^2$  testing was done to find out the variation.  $X^2 = 14.833$ ,  $df. = 2$ ,  $P < 0.001$  H.S.

**Table XIII: Reasons of Preferring Two Children**

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Inadequate Income	18	6.40
Better Child Care and Education	103	36.65
Better Standard of Living	32	11.38

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Less Worries with Small Family	36	12.82
Son for Old Age	17	6.06
Did Not Answer	75	26.69

<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>
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Here it is observed that a majority (36.65%) preferred to have two children for better care and education. The next group preferred two children for small family (12.82%).

**Table XIV: Attitude Towards Spacing**

Spacing Between Two Children	Number	Percentage
One Year	0	0
Two Years	19	6.78
Three Years	200	71.18
Four Years	0	0
Five Years	42	14.94
Six Years	5	1.77
Did Not Answer	15	5.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>

Maximum number of girls (200 : 71.18%), were of the opinion that spacing of at least three years should be observed by the couple.

**Table XV: Reasons for Spacing**

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Better Care for First Child (Previous Child)	60	21.35
Better Care of the Next Child	81	28.84
In the Interest of the Mother's Health	85	30.24
Did Not Answer	55	19.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>

In this table spacing is desired by the maximum number of respondents (30.24%) in the interest of mother's health, next (28.84%) for better care of the next child. It showed that the respondents are aware of the problems of repeated child birth.

**Table XVI: Agency through which F.P. Knowledge Obtained**

Agencies/Relations	Number	Percentage
Parents, Brothers, Sisters, and Uncles	52	18.50
Teachers, Friends and Others	54	19.21
Newspapers, Radio, T.V., Cinema, Literature etc.	140	49.82
Family Planning Work	55	19.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority (49.82%) happens to get the knowledge of F.P. through Newspapers, Radio, T.V., Cinema and different magazines, etc.

**Table XVII: Knowledge of Cause of Unplanned Family**

Factors	Number	Percentage
Lack of basic education	93	33.92
Husband does not like F.P.	32	11.58
Religious, opposed to F.P.	35	12.43
Lack of F.P. education	100	35.58
Did not answer	21	6.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows the majority (35.58%) are of the opinion that family planning procedure was a failure due to lack of family planning education.

**Table XVIII: Opinion Regarding Success of F.P. in Future**

Opinion	Number	Percentage
Yes	230	81.88
No	9	3.70
May be	1	0.36
Did Not Answer	41	14.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>

Here majority (81.88%) want that the family planning programme should be successful in future.

**Table XIX: Views Regarding Population Control**

Literacy Status of Respondents	National Devpment.	Economic Devpment.	Education & Health	Total
Arts	131 (49.06%)	40 (14.89%)	18 (6.74%)	189 (70.78%)
Science	50 (18.72%)	14 (5.24%)	14 (5.24%)	78 (29.32%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>181 (67.79%)</b>	<b>54 (20.22%)</b>	<b>32 (11.98%)</b>	<b>267 (100%)</b>

### Summary

Parents' education, residential status and family income have a direct relationship with the education and outward knowledge regarding Family Planning in respondents. Majority of the girls have discussed regarding the problem of population explosion with their family members and they are aware of the need of family planning. They know the marriage ages of boys and girls and are against early marriage. Majority of the girls knew two or more family planning methods but did not have any knowledge of when to start. The maximum are in favour of two children and a spacing of three years. All of them got the knowledge of family planning from T.V., newspapers, radio, cinema, etc. They are also aware that lack of proper education is the cause of the failure of family planning programme and it can be achieved successfully in future by proper education. They opined that population control helps the overall development of the nation.

### Conclusion

From the above study it is clear that college going girls are particularly aware of the population explosion and how to control them. It is a good sign for the future success of the national programme.

### Recommendations

1. More widespread propaganda regarding population explosion, its control by Family Planning methods through:

- Media
- T.V., Radio, Newspapers, etc.
- Health Personnel
- At each educational level

2. Detailed methods, their benefits and how and when to use them should be spelt out to each girl, who is going to enter family life.