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The Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Family Planning Services in Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study investigated the socio-cultural factors affecting family planning services among women in Nigeria with special reference to Bade local government, Yobe State. Over a long period of time the issues of family planning have been neglected because so many believes that children are to be birth by chance and not by choice which is opposite of modern family planning philosophy. The main objective of this study is to identify and examine major socio-cultural factors affecting family planning programs in the study area and suggest possible solutions for it. Questionnaire was the major instrument used in data collection. The data collected was analyzed using simple percentage and frequency distribution. The study discovered that there are socio-cultural factors affecting the use of family planning programs among women in the area such as Lack of knowledge and awareness of the health benefits of family, social stigma rumors and myths about use of contraceptives, and lack of consensus among partner is considered as factors preventing family planning practice. It was recommended that government and non-governmental organizations should provide enough facilities and medical personnel for them to provide family planning services and accurate information to dispel myths and including both men and women in family planning consoling and procedures.

Keywords: Socio-cultural, factors, family, planning

1. Introduction

Population Increase has become a great concern for economic planners, demographers and even government as well as it has significance socio-economic impact at individual and societal level. As world population moves towards 5.9 billion, the per capital production of money basic commodities is falling, for instance the recent global food shortage is an evidence, the world Population Report (2006). The effect to raise incomes and living standard is falling in many counties like Nigeria, particularly where population is growing most rapidly and where family Planning is not widely practiced. In the seventies, the country enjoyed oil boom and having a larger family, did not bring economic burden to parents because economic situation was relatively cheaper and easy to come by. There was little or no psychological stress about caring for children. Many parents stick to the traditional belief of having many children, because culturally having many children prove how wealthy a man is. Also, many parents especially men, prefer to have large families that could help them in farming and other economic activities. The Current realization that large population can hold back socio-economic development and health for all programmers has led to the quest for information on family planning and other related reproductive health problems in Nigeria. In this regard the paper focus on socio-cultural factors affecting the use of family planning services in Nigeria with especially reference to Bade local government of Nigeria.

2. Research Design and Study Area

The study adopted survey design with data gathered through different methods. The target population for this study focuses on women and male in Bade Local Government Area, Yobe State. Primary and secondary source of data was also utilized. The primary source used was the administration of questionnaires and In-depth Interview (IDI) while the secondary source included journals, textbooks, dictionary and past research works. This enables the researcher to investigate the social and cultural factors affecting family planning services in the study area. The target respondents were included both female and male (23%) but majority are female (77%). The analysis of their marital status indicated that 9% were single and 15% were divorce as at the time of survey.

3. Conceptual Clarification

Different opinions have been postulated about the concept of family planning, for instance (Hobe raft 2000) sees it as the practice of exercising choice about the arrival of the children, family happiness and all other prevailing economic circumstances. Nwangoro (1999) sees family planning as involving child-spacing He goes further that well-spaced child-rearing practice help women to maintain good health in them and in their children. The overall essence of family planning

therefore seems to be the control of family population and invariable too, the population of the nation so as to avoid unwanted children.

Family planning is basically having children by choice and not by chance and means by which individuals or couples space the process of contraception, pregnancy and child birth at intervals mutually determined by both husband and wife in order to have the desired numbers of children they can conveniently maintain. It can be defined as a situation where couples decide to have their children by choice and not by chance. But it's still controversial and debatable issue from religious perspective when it mentions the number of children for example. Family planning is a way of thinking and living that is adopted voluntarily up on the basis of knowledge, attitude and responsible decisions by individuals and couples in order to promote the health and welfare of the family and thus to contribute effectively to the social development of the country (World Health Organization expert committee 2014).

4. Relevant Literature Review

Globally, there is a clear statistical relationship between fertility and development. Countries with highest per capitain comes and the most favorable Human Development Index(HDI) tend to have the lowest fertility Gould w.S.T(2009). Fertility levels are highest in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in Nigeria where the Total Fertility Rate (TFRs) is 5.1. By Contrast, many developed countries have TFRs of less than 2 and thus below replacement level. However, the relationship between them is far from simple Olawande T.I&Fasasi L.T (2016). It's clear that there is relationship between fertility and development which is quite high in developing countries and lower in developed countries. That is why wide range of concern has raised across the third world countries about population growth. The world's population is increasing and now approximately eight billion people, with high potential for further increase Population Reference Bureau, (2015). In this regard, Nigeria has remained the most populous country in Africa with a total population of about 160 million at the 2006 Census; the current total fertility rate is estimated to be 5.7 per women and low utilization of modern contraceptives is one of the key determinants of high fertility rate in Nigeria as well as an important component of maternal new-born and child services according to world Health Organization (WHO) 2005. With the same line National Population Commission (NPC) (2008) in its report highlighted that Nigeria records one of the highest ratio, with maternal mortality ration of 545 deaths per 100,000 live births. Accordingly, ample evidence from literature shows that low contraceptive prevalence rates are associated with high maternal mortality ratios, Okonofua (2003). Therefore, family planning plays a pivotal role in population control, poverty reduction and human development, Longgwe (2012). It is a perquisite for achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and for realizing the human right of reproductive choice, Allen 92007).

According to Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey, National population commission (2008) reports were stated that evidence shows that the high level of awareness and knowledge of contraceptive methods in Nigeria, for example about 70% of the women know at least a method of contraceptive. But despite of that fact, there are certain factors that hinders from accepting and practicing family planning programs. These factors include Socio-Cultural, economic religion, and sometimes competition between wives in polygamous families or for greed. And this ignorance affects the society because it causes population growth and brings about problems like poor economy, housing problem, food shortage, etc.

5. Family Planning in Nigeria

In Nigeria just as in other countries of the world, the family planning and council was considered and established after the occurrence of the 2 tragic cases of septic abortion in 1957. Family planning started receiving attention in Nigeria in 1958 when the Planned Parenthood federation was established by some concerned by the rapid increase in the country's population from then award the federal government has been showing concern to the problems when it was observed that Nigeria was going through a democratic change leading to a high rate production growth. The federal government later included in its National Health Policy the provision of maternal and child health to include family planning (William, 1983).

As to be expected, innovative ideas usually stem from large urban centers. Family planning came about in Lagos, under the favorable prospects of path finder revealed by the urgent need for fertility regulation. Similarly, in 1958 the marriage guidance council of Lagos initiated the founding of the first family planning clinic under the dynamic directorship of Adeniyi City Health Council (UNICEF, 2010).

A onetime head of state general Yakubu Gowon observed in his statement of the inauguration meeting of population association in 1974 that Nigerian population growth was outstripping the rate of food production thus, creating concern with respect to fixed assets such as land. Consequently, almost after this observation another Nigerian head of state, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida warned Nigeria not to underestimate the population problem facing the country simply because the 1991 provisional national census figure were 58 million people. He continued that "whatever the final figure for our overall population, the facts before let now show clearly that our population has growth faster than our resource" Emphasizing the need for family planning. The Federal Ministry of Health and Human Services expresses campaign more than 96% of rural women and 85% of urban are not current users of any of the modern child spacing methods (UNICEF, 2012).

According to Cornlus (1983), in Nigeria the Yoruba's value children very much because to them a couple with no children no matter how impoverished feels superior to and more blessed than wealthy childless couples. The Uhobo's capture this saying naming their children "Emoyefe Emonigha" (which means children and health).

Olusaniga (1969), again pointed out that generally men (husbands) do not encourage their wives to be contraceptors because to do so is seen as an encouragement of social infidelity in family.

A study conducted by Caldwell in Nigeria in 1969 revealed that the knowledge and acceptance of family planning was greater in urban area than in rural places as a result of proper knowledge of what family planning is all about. In a survey of Lagos women 70% had an idea of family planning but of which only 25% approved of it. This shows that many women are aware of family planning but have a negative attitude towards it. (Cald Well, 1969) Similarly in a study carried out between October and December, 1980 at Oguntala street clinic in Lagos, a sample of 1,511 women was used. The largest single age group was 20 – 29 years. 21% of the sample was illiterates having less than 6 years of formal education. Among the sampling 762 used abstinence, 19 did not accept the use of contraceptive while the remaining 730 accepted one form of contraceptive or another. Among those that accepted contraceptive, their reason for wanting family planning services was to postpone the next pregnancy while about 1.45% had completed their family size. The acceptance rate was due to the fact that the population was essentially on illiterate one, other factors were family size, norms and influence of husbands (Federal Ministry of Health 1985).

But over the years there has been progressive increase in the number of the acceptors which was attributed to the increase in awareness, the need to maintain small families and the available of family planning of family planning services. The increase in the new acceptors was mainly in the urban centers other than the rural areas whereby discussion on sexual matter and contraceptives is still been regarded as very sensitive (Ebum, 1990).

Family planning was seen by both past and present administration of government in Nigeria to help control population growth to meet the government development planning for future references in terms of revenue allocation to both the federal and state level.

In contemporary Nigeria, the government has included family planning as an integrated component of maternal and clinic health couples are now aware that there is a basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children. They also have basic rights to have information, education and the means to take care of their needs and that of their future children.

5.1. Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting the Use of Family Planning Services

The following table is showing an analysis of social and cultural factors affecting the use of family planning services in the study area.

S/No	Items	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1	Lack of women awareness on the family planning matters.	Strongly Agree	70	90
		Agree	5	6
		Disagree	3	4
		Strongly Disagree	0	0
2.	Traditionally having many children symbolized high social status.	Strongly Agree	60	77
		Agree	8	10
		Disagree	10	13
		Strongly Disagree	-----	-----
3.	Women become a man's property after marriage therefore having little say in family	Strongly Agree	50	64
		Agree	10	13
		Disagree	10	13
		Strongly Disagree	8	10
		Total	78	100
4.	Lack of male involvement in family planning programmes	Strongly Agree	60	77
		Agree	8	10
		Disagree	10	13
		Strongly Disagree	0	-----
5.	Dowries suggest that women most bear many children as a way to repay it.	Strongly Agree	45	58
		Agree	15	19
		Disagree	10	13
		Strongly Disagree	8	10
		Total	78	100
6.	Fear of site effect of family planning service	Strongly Agree	70	90
		Agree	5	6
		Disagree	3	4
		Strongly Disagree	0	0
		Total	78	100
7.	Social stigma rumors and myths about contraceptive i.e. condoms are only used to prevent STDS transmission	Strongly Agree	55	71
		Agree	15	19
		Disagree	8	10
		Strongly Disagree	0	0
		Total	78	100

Table 1
Source: Fieldwork (2017)

The above table shows that majority of the respondent strongly agree on the socio-cultural factors affecting the use of family planning service among women in the area. From analysis of data in above table revealed that socio-cultural factors affecting the use of family planning in study Area of Yobe State almost all the items have rated positive. Therefore it is evidently clear that people of study area were agreed on the listed socio-cultural factors affecting the use of family planning services in the area such as lack of women awareness on the family planning matters 90%, traditionally having many children symbolized high social status 77%, women becomes man's property after marriage therefore having little say in family planning issues 64%, lack of male involvement in family planning programmes 77%, fear of side effect of family planning service 90%, and Social stigma rumors and myths about contraceptive 71%. In addition, the in-depth interviews and focal groups discussions conducted in the study are revealed more socio-cultural factors hindering practices family planning services in the area as follows:

- Traditionally high fertility has been a source of social status for both women and men. Young people are not considered adults until they have had child.
- When a couple marries, the grooms family pay significant dowry to the bride's family. This dowry "buys" her commitment to produce children for him.
- Once as woman marries, she legally loses, her status as an autonomous adult and instead is subject to the mandates of her husband and his family. She no longer has an equal say in house hold matters, including number of children to have.
- Polygamy is also another factor that causes the co-wives to compete with each other for number and sex of children.
- Lack of male involvement in family planning, and
- Decision- making positions being fully or mainly controlled by men.
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5.2. Possible Solutions to Addressed Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Family Planning Services

The following table is showing an analysis of possible solutions to addressed social and cultural factors affecting the use of family planning services in the study area.

S/No	Items	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Involving males in family planning counseling and procedures.	Strongly Agree	50	65
		Agree	15	19
		Disagree	13	16
		Strongly Disagree	0	0
		Total	78	100
2.	Providing accurate information to dispel myths	Strongly Agree	60	77
		Agree	10	13
		Disagree	8	10
		Strongly Disagree	0	0
		Total	78	100
3.	Including women in position of power	Strongly Agree	50	65
		Agree	15	19
		Disagree	13	16
		Strongly Disagree	0	0
		Total	78	100
4.	Involving religious leaders	Strongly Agree	60	77
		Agree	10	13
		Disagree	8	10
		Strongly Disagree	0	0
		Total	78	100
5.	Government should provide enough facilities and medical personnel.	Strongly Agree	60	77
		Agree	18	23
		Disagree	0	0
		Strongly Disagree	0	0
		Total	78	100

Table 2

Source: Fieldwork (2017)

The above table shows that majority of the respondent with the higher percentage strongly agree on the possible solutions proposed to address the socio—cultural factors affecting family planning service among women in the study area and in order to find out the level of acceptance of people on the proposed solutions as showed in the above table such as Involving males in family planning counseling and procedures 65%, Providing accurate information to dispel myths 77%, Including women in position of power 65%, Involving religious leaders 77% and responsibility of the Government to provide enough facilities and medical personnel. On the other hand, the interviews and focal group discussions results have indicated that, the problems associated the lack of planning lead to unhealthy growth of child and it leads to Juvenile delinquency, completion maternal and child mortality rates.

6. Conclusion

Based on the results and findings of the study it was found out that, family planning in Nigeria in general and in Bade Local Government of Yobe State in particular are not properly practiced mainly due to socio-cultural factors such as lack of women awareness on the family planning matters, traditionally having many children symbolized high social status, fear of side effect of family planning services, social stigma, rumor and myths about contraceptives, also insufficient knowledge about family planning methods and inadequate health facilities contributed to non-compliance to modern family planning methods. It was concluded that Government and non-Governmental organization should provide enough facilities and medical personnel for them to provide family planning services and accurate information to displace myths and include both men and women in family planning counseling and procedures.

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