

## Muslim People's Perception towards Family Planning in Sylhet Sadar Upazila

M F K Al Mannah<sup>1\*</sup>, Ishrat Jahan Bithi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor & Vice Principal, Enam Nursing College, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Enam Nursing College, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

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\*Corresponding author: M F K Al Mannah

### Abstract

### Original Research Article

The issue of family planning is a complex one in the context of Bangladesh. A good number of people are holding prejudice views about family planning. This study indicates that many Muslim people gathering knowledge from only religious leaders comment that they are not allowed to use family planning method. But, a few people strongly recommend that Islam permits family planning absolutely. In their opinion, family planning method decreases maternal death, maternal morbidity and children death. It also minimizes socio-economic complications, like illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and so on. But, Islam must not forbid family planning and the negative concept about it is just a lacking of religious knowledge. For this purpose, this study aims to investigate the perception of Muslim people about family planning. 100 respondents were taken from Sadar Upazila, Sylhet. Face to face interview was taken with a pretested structured questionnaire. It was a cross sectional study & conducted from July to October 2015. The study shows that majority of the respondents of the both sexes- 62% of male and 76% of female had idea about family planning where 52% of them had partial concept about it. Only 14% male and 6% female say that it was accepted in Islam. 76% male and 62% female respondents stated that, contraceptive method might trigger various types of diseases. Only 34% of the male under the study adopted contraceptive method while 66% of female followed this. People's misconception among family planning clearly reveals from this case study. This study concludes that accurate perception about family planning is poor among the Muslim community at Sylhet.

**Keywords:** Family Planning, Muslim People, Religious Leaders and Islam.

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## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

Family planning has emerged as one of the momentous issues all over the world, particularly in third world developing countries, as it plays a stunning role in population control. The World Health Organization [1] defined family planning as the practice that helps individuals or couples to attain certain objectives such as avoiding unwanted pregnancies, bringing about wanted babies at the right time, regulating the interval between pregnancies, controlling the time at which birth occurs in relation to the ages of the parents and determining the number of children in the family. Contraception as a method of family planning promotes survival of infants as it supports birth spacing and reduces high-risk pregnancies. Achieving adequate birth spacing could reduce child mortality by 20 percent or more, particularly in the developing countries with socio-economic problems [1]. However, despite, the campaign on the usefulness

of family planning in having smaller and healthier family, studies by NPC [2] and Adel Eye *et al.*, [3] indicate that contraceptive use is still low in many developing countries, including Bangladesh. Moreover, there is a strong debate as to either family planning is admissible in Muslim people or not. There are people who hold the notion of family planning as a sin. However, addressing the cultural and religious beliefs around the issue of family planning has been a big challenge for the developing countries. The concept of family planning has raised some concerns regarding its acceptability within certain Muslim populations. Where some Muslim states and organizations have adopted a rather cautious approach to the issue, others have gone to the extent of inviting religious leaders to provide decision regarding this. Islam values the family and encourages procreation.

### Rationale of the Study

The concept of family planning has got huge followings in the world, especially in the

underdeveloped countries like Bangladesh. However, the issue has also sparked intense debate as to its legitimacy in religious and social perspective among the various social and religious groups. Therefore, the issue of family planning is still an unsolved myth. Majority of the people in Bangladesh hold a negative view about family planning being unaware of the implication and explanation of the issue. This is partly because of limited vividly media representation along with inadequate study on the topic. However, creating awareness about the importance of family planning is a must in order to maintain a sustainable level of population growth. Therefore, the study on family planning has been found quite rationale.

## OBJECTIVE

**General Objective:** The broad objective of the study is to have knowledge on understanding of Muslim people in regard to family planning.

**Specific Objective:** The specific objectives of the study are –

- To identify the acceptance and rejection level of female and male partner on family planning.
- To find out the reason to avoid contraception.

## Research Questions

1. What is the current situation of adaptation of family planning among Muslim household?
2. Why do people show unwillingness to family planning?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Several study have been conducted regarding this issue. Some of these are given below-

Carry S & Cker [4], in his article fertility and economy analyzed about the demand for children to parental incomes and the cost of rearing children especially to the demand of the time spent on child care and to the public policies that change the cost of children. He found that fertility is depend too on child and adult mortality uncertainty about the sex of children if there is a preference for boys and girls for variety.

Shulrr T. P [5] In an experimentally designed family planning and health program wed in 1997 for women in rural village of Matlab, Bangladesh. The women in villages benefiting from the program had one fewer child by 1996 than did comparable women in comparison villages. Micm credit targeted to groups of women in Bangladesh increases women's earning and increase their later fertility.

Lasisi, C. J., Basse, T. I., Ita, A. E., Awoyemi, O. K [6] the study examined the awareness and utilization of family planning among married women in the traditional core areas of Ibadan, Oyo State. Result showed that the utilization of family planning methods was low among married women in Opo Yiosa (9%) and Ayeye (11.2%), but high in Mapo,

Oja Oba and Inalende with utilization rates of 31.5%, 29.2% and 19.1% respectively.

Shda [7] the heterogeneity in parent preference or other unobserved determinants of behavior would affect child quantity and quality.

**Family Planning Saves Life.** The widespread adoption of family planning represents one of the most dramatic changes of the 20th century. The growing use of contraception around the world has given couples the ability to choose the number and spacing of their children and has had tremendous lifesaving benefits. Yet despite these impressive gains, contraceptive use is still low and the need for contraception high in some of the world's poorest and most populous places. Recent research is shedding light on how family planning increases survival, improves the health of millions of people, and helps achieve national goals. Considered a "best buy" among health investments, family planning is one of the most cost-effective, high-yield interventions that exists today. Countries that invest in family planning can reap immediate health benefits, investment savings in the health and education sectors, and social and environmental benefits that extend well beyond a single generation.

MENA Policy Briefs; Islam and Family Planning (August 2004) [8] the Quran does not prohibit birth control, nor does it forbid a husband or wife to space pregnancies or limit their number. Thus, the great majority of Islamic jurists believe that family planning is permissible in Islam. The silence of the Quran on the issues of contraception, these jurists have argued, is not a matter of omission by God, as he is "All-Knowing" and Islam is understood to be timeless. The proponents of family planning also note that coitus interrupts, or withdrawal, was practiced at the Prophet's time by his Companions. The majority of theologians from almost all schools of Islamic jurisprudence agree that withdrawal is permissible with a wife's consent. In Islam, a wife has the right to both sexual pleasure and reproduction. Some jurists would argue that ejaculation is essential for a woman to have orgasm, and therefore it is necessary to have prior consent from a wife before practicing withdrawal.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study Design

This study was dealt with the cross sectional descriptive study.

### Study Period

To carry out this research project, the researchers had to spend their time from July 2015 to October 2015.

### Study Place

The study area of this project was Sadar Upazila of Sylhet city in Bangladesh.

### Study Population

The married Muslim male and female aged 18 to 35 of Sadar Upazila under Sylhet are the population of the study. In the research, purposive sampling has been applied. Each Muslim individual was chosen randomly, such that each individual had the same probability of being chosen at any stage during the sampling process.

### Sample Size

Sample size has been selected as 100 in number for researcher's convenience.

### Inclusion Criteria

- People of Muslim religion;
- Married male and female;
- People were willing to participate in the study.

### Exclusion Criteria

- People were other than Muslim religion;
- Unmarried people;
- People were unwilling to participate in the study.

### Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was used for data collection.

### Data Collection Techniques

Methodological triangulation was used to conduct the correct study. Data had been collected from individuals through face to face interview by using a

questionnaire and respondent's answer had been recorded by writing them down. In interview structured questionnaires had been used. And finally for case study guide questionnaire had been followed.

### Research Instrument

Structured Questionnaire and Guide Questionnaire were maintained strictly.

### Data management & Analysis Plan

After collection, data were cleared and categorized. Then master tabulation sheet was prepared after proper checking, verifying and editing as per specific objectives.

### Ethical Considerations

- Verbal informed consent was taken from each of the respondents;
- Respondents' right to refuse and withdraw from the study any time was accepted without retribution;
- Confidentiality of the respondents was maintained.

### Operational Definition of the Variables

#### Peoples' Perception

In this study the term Patients' Perception means how patients view the existing healthcare system in Bangladesh.

#### Family Planning

In this study, family planning refers a program to regulate the number and spacing of children in a family through the practice of contraception or other methods of birth control.

## RESULTS

**Table-1: Idea of Family Planning**

Male			Female		
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	62%	Yes	38	76%
No	2	4%	No	3	6%
Partially	17	34%	Partially	9	18%
No comment	0	0%	No comment	0	0%
Total	50	100%	Total	50	100%

In response to the question about whether they have any idea about family planning, more female than their counterpart male responded affirmatively. There are very small numbers of people under the study who

are still unaware of family planning. 34% male and 18% female say that they have partial idea about family planning.

**Table-2: Whether the Contraceptive Method Risky**

Male			Female		
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	76%	Yes	31	62%
No	0	0%	No	4	8%
Partially	9	18%	Partially	13	26%
No comment	3	6%	No comment	2	4%
Total	50	100%	Total	50	100%

In response to the question whether the contraceptive method is risky, more male than female claim the method to be risky, 18% and 26% both male and female respectively say that the method contains partial risk. Interestingly, only 4% female say that the

process does not include any risk at all. A slight percentage of respondents from both groups did not comment on the issues as they possess no knowledge of it or have had no experience.

**Table-3: Whether they have adopted Contraceptive Process ever**

Male			Female		
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	34%	Yes	33	66%
No	21	42%	No	10	20%
Partially	0	0%	Partially	0	0%
No comment	12	24%	No comment	7	14%
Total	50	100%	Total	50	100%

The table clearly shows that a large percentage of female (66%) than their male counterparts adopted contraceptive method. Many women claim that men do not agree or show any interest of taking it. They also

claim that male think that taking contraceptive is the act of women and it is an established fact in the society. 24% of male did not comment on it while the percentage is 14 in case of female.

**Table-4: Impact of Religion in adopting Contraceptive Process**

Male			Female		
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	12	24%	Yes	27	54%
No	0	0%	No	6	12%
Partially	33	66%	partially	16	32%
No comment	5	10%	No comment	0	0%
Total	50	100%	Total	50	100%

In the question like whether there is any impact of religion in adopting contraceptive, more female than male say that there is no impact of religion on it. A large percentage of (66%) male have partial

knowledge about the issue- the link between religion and family planning. 10% of the male did not comment on it. Optimistically, less women (32%) are found to be partial knowledge about it.

**Table-5: Spouses' Agreement to adopt Contraceptive Process**

Male			Female		
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	92%	Yes	39	78%
No	0	0%	No	2	4%
Partially	4	8%	Partially	5	10%
No comment	0	0%	No comment	4	8%
Total	50	100%	Total	50	100%

This table shows that a considerable percentage of respondents from both parts agree to adopt contraceptive. Only 8% male and 10% female

claim that sometimes spouse agree partially. However, 8% of the female under the study did not comment on the question.

**Table-6: Benefit of Family Planning in National Life**

Male			Female		
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	82%	Yes	37	74%
No	0	0%	No	0	0%
Partially	0	0%	Partially	0	0%
No comment	9	18%	No comment	13	26%
Total	50	100%	Total	50	100%

Both group of the respondent remarkably agree of the positive outcome of family planning in national life. 82% male and 74% female claim that it has benefit

for the whole nation. 18% male and 26% female did not comment on it as they possess little knowledge as to the fact.

**Table7: Whether Family Planning is accepted in Islam**

Male			Female		
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	14%	Yes	3	6%
No	19	38%	No	28	56%
partially	24	48%	partially	10	20%
No comment	3	6%	No comment	9	18%
Total	50	100%	Total	50	100%

In response to the question about whether family planning is accepted in Islam, a good percentage of respondents from both sides claim that it is not accepted in Islam anyway. Only 14% male and 6%

female say that it is accepted in Islam. Shockingly, a considerable percentage of people- 48% male and 20% female- have partial knowledge about religious approach to family planning.

**Table-8: Whether the Contraceptive Method is used regularly**

Male			Female		
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	23	46%	Yes	33	66%
No	27	54%	No	17	34%
Partially	0	0%	No Knowledge	0	0%
No comment	0	0%	No comment	0	0%
Total	50	100%	Total	50	100%

On the question like whether the contraceptive method is used regularly, the proportion of both views is almost the same. 46% male responded affirmatively where the percentage is 66 in case of female. 54% of male, however, and 34% of female say that they do not use contraceptive regularly.

female have idea about family planning where 52% of them have partial concept about it. Only 10% of the people are yet to be informed about FP. They claim that media does not focus the issue of family planning as broadly as it is expected. They also say that lack of campaign, inadequacy of family planning workers and agencies are also liable behind not having adequate information about family planning.

## DISCUSSION

The study reveals a mixture of outcomes about family planning among the both sexes of married Muslim people under the study. The study clearly shows that religion couple with the probable risk relating to the contraceptive methods has a great impact on family planning. Some respondents account inadequate publicity of both print and electronic media for being unaware of family planning. Myths, false beliefs, and rumors about the use of oral contraceptive pills, for instance, are prevalent in Bangladesh. A lack of consultation with qualified FP workers and the influence of religious norms and folk stories are still key hindrances in the uptake of contraceptive use. Many believe that hormonal contraceptives (pill, norplant etc) has negative impact on health and it can give birth of disease like heart disease, Kidney problem and respiratory disease. For many, Condom is the safest method, but it does not bring ultimate sexual satisfaction. Therefore, they often do not show interest in using it. It is also clear from the study, in Bangladesh; husbands' disapproval of FP is still a deterrent to women's regulation of fertility. However, the government of Bangladesh has actively engaged Islamic scholars to advocate for maternal and child health, including FP.

The study represents that majority of the respondents of the both sexes- 62% male and 76%

A large number of people consider contraceptive method to be risky. 76% male and 62% female respondents state that, contraceptive method may trigger various types of diseases. Therefore, they do not adopt it. However, a few of the respondents sometimes use Condom as the means of contraceptive, but they do not continue using this as it does not fulfill a successful intercourse session. However, the respondent still feel that they need more deep information about family planning process and its likely impact- both positive and negative- on them in order to adopt contraceptive safely. The study also put forward that male are less interested to take contraceptive than the female. Only 34% of the male under the study adopted contraceptive method while 66% of female followed this. This is partly because of the fact that the dominant attitude of male poses such an uneven use of the method. However, a good number of male and female respondents say that their spouse agrees to adopt contraceptive. But the limited number of husbands apply contraceptive method on themselves directly, rather the make their wives apply the method.

In regard to the benefit of family planning for both family life and national life, both groups of sexes say that it has positive outcome in many aspects. There are a few respondents who find the partial or less benefit of it.



From guide questionnaire it is clearly reveal that there are many misconceptions about family planning among those people, and the religious leaders take a large role in misinterpreting this issue to the mass people. A very few people have correct notion about what Islam says about family planning.

### Case Study- 1

#### Age: 37 (Female)

She is from a middle class family with 3 daughters and 2 sons. She studied up to class 9. She does not know much about family planning. What she knows- although not profoundly- only the Islamic view point about the issue. She states "I have heard that family planning is completely wrong and is a great sin in the eye of Islam. Religious leader always says in their speech that it is a conspiracy of western world to reduce the number of Muslim population". Therefore, she does not hesitate to give birth of 5 children fearing the fact that it might somehow a religious offense if she adopted contraceptives to control birth. She had discussed once with her husband regarding whether they should follow contraceptive method. But, she did not receive positive response from her husband as the husband holds same notion like hers. She further mentions that "It is only creator who knows how to bring up the children and how to feed them in entire life". So there is nothing to worry about the number of children and about their future.

### Case Study- 2

#### Age: 26 (Female)

Her age is 26. She got married to a Madrasah teacher when she was 19. She is now mother of 3 children and looking forward to taking more. She studied up to class 11 and has some information about family planning. She says family planning is acceptable in particular circumstances such as physical disability, financial hardship and governmental obligation etc. She is not from a well off family and not that much physically strong. She has been suffering from multiple types of problems since the birth of her second child right after the nearly 1.5 years of first one. She discussed several times about the issue with her husband. But her husband never agreed with her pointing out the religious obligations about family planning. Her husband is sure enough that the process is completely prohibited in the eye of Islam. So, they kept continuing children and it is highly likely that they will continue taking children until the final one. She again states that family planning is not acceptable in Islam;

but there are certain situations where family planning can be adopted.

### Case Study- 3

#### Age 33 (Female)

She graduated in political science and now working as a teacher at a private college in Sylhet city. She has two children: one son and one daughter. She is fully in favor of family planning. She says that family planning is completely acceptable in Islam. She accuses the prejudice notion and misinterpretation of religious view for not adopting contraceptives. She has no further intention to take children in future. In her words "family planning is not a process of killing a life, just using some method to prevent conception. And before conception there are only some tissues, not any life!" Her husband who is a private service holder also holds the same views about family planning. The never disputed on the issue of family planning rather always accorded with it. She is, according to her, very happy with nuclear family. She further states "it is much easier to educate children properly and ensure a better life if the number of children is fewer." She find no religious binding about family planning and clarifies that Islam completely accept family planning method. According to her "Islam is the best way of life and our God is very kind. How could he encourage giving birth of many children which is harmful and dangerous for mother, family and mankind?"

## RECOMMENDATION

- To create awareness among religious leaders about family planning.
- To increase involvement of religious figure in establishing Family Planning method.
- To provide information about the benefit of Family Planning through mass media.
- Proper training of Family Planning worker.

## APPENDIX-I

### DATA COLLECTION SHEET

#### SECTION: A (GENERAL INFORMATION)

SL. No. Registration No

Date of Data Collection:

Name of the Respondent:

Sex:

Age:

Religion:

Educational Qualification:

Spouse Name:

Address:

## DATA COLLECTION SHEET

### SECTION: B (PERCEPTION RELATED INFORMATION)

1. Do you have any idea about family planning?  
Yes No partially No comment
2. When did you first come to know about family planning?  
Month----- Year-----

3. Do you think family planning is accepted in Islam?  
Yes No partially No comment
4. Do you think that contraceptive method is risky? How?  
Yes No partially No comment
5. Have you ever adopted contraceptive process?  
Yes No partially No comment
6. When did you last receive your last supply of contraceptives?  
Month----- Year-----
7. When do you want to adopt your next supply of contraceptives?  
Month----- Year-----
8. What are the sources of contraceptives? Hospitals/ Health stations/ Health posts.
9. Does religion play a role in adopting contraceptive process?  
Yes No partially No comment
10. Does your spouse agree to adopt contraceptive process?  
Yes No partially No comment
11. Is family planning beneficial for nation?  
Yes No partially No comment

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