

Socio-cultural norms in the context of family planning use, discussion and decision making: qualitative analysis among men and women in Kebbi state

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Introduction

Interrelated social norms that relates to gender, tradition, culture, age and religion are among the several factors that pose barriers to contraceptive use in most traditional settings. In Kebbi state, use of modern contraceptives is very low. At about 1%, the Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey puts Kebbi state as one of the states with the lowest Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR). As 2018 draws near, the contraceptive prevalence rate in Kebbi state is projected to be at about 21% from the Nigeria FP blue print modeling if Nigeria is expected to have a CPR of 36% based on its FP2020 commitments. Understanding the norms around family planning and fertility decision making among men and women in Kebbi state is very key to making a meaningful impact on the state's CPR.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to share the socio-cultural norms that impact fertility and contraceptive decision making in Kebbi state with the view to better understand the context for developing strategic communication programs in the Kebbi state.

Methodology

This qualitative study used projective techniques to elicit information on the socio-cultural norms around fertility and family size among women and men in Kebbi state. The study also explored the context for contraceptive discussions and decisions. FGDs were conducted among female, male, users and non-users. FGDs with women were among younger (ages 18-34) and older women (ages 35-44). Data were transcribed verbatim and content analysis was done based on emerging themes.

Result

Desire for large family size remains very common among women and men in Kebbi state. While this is predominantly common across sex and age, the context appears to be changing among women and younger group even though slowly. While the general opinion suggest that participants understand that smaller family size allows for better care for the family, education and a generally better quality of life, a sizeable number of participants counterbalanced this opinion with the emphasis in the advantage of large family size. Study participants believe that the over all decision as regards number of children to have and the use or non use of contraceptives rests completely with the man, violation of this can lead to maltreatment from husband and divorce.

Conclusion

Men continue to play a key role in highly-stratified populations. This study showed that study participants in Kebbi especially men desire to have large family size. Decision to use contraceptives is dominated with men. Family planning programs will need to develop culturally sensitive and acceptable strategic behavior change communication programs (among other interventions) that address these norms in order to improve on the CPR in Kebbi state.

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