



## Exploring Cultural Hindrances: A Thorough Examination of Men's Views on Family Planning, Decision-Making Authority, and Use of Contraception

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### ABSTRACT

The wellbeing of individuals and families is dependent on family planning, which is also necessary to promote reproductive health. Although women's viewpoints and experiences have received a lot of attention in the field of family planning, whereas men's views and perceptions have often been overlooked. The purpose of this study is to learn more about men's perceptions of family planning and its impact on reproductive health outcomes. In order to obtain more specific information, the study employs a qualitative research approach and conducts in-depth interviews with men for data collection. In order to capture a wide range of viewpoints and experiences about family planning, the research participants are drawn from a variety of different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and cultural settings. The results of the study show that a significant number of males think that different cultural barriers, like financial constraints, less awareness, religious limitations are leading causative barriers of family planning. However, findings of the study also revealed that men's perceptions and practices about the utility of contraception heavily depends on family setup. Hence, a split among men was observed regarding these methods in religious families. Some males were against such practices while others preferred these practices because of its effectiveness to control birth rate and securing well-being of the individuals.

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## 1. Introduction

Family planning is commonly known as limiting child bearing and spacing the births between the children, while the contraception methods may be birth control pills or voluntary sterilization that will be used to achieve such practice. According to Hardee and Jordan (2021), the way in which a person or couple can have the desired number of children they want, and maintain the spacing for their births is called family planning. Reproductive health is a wide-ranging, multifaceted issue encompassing anything from family planning to sexual health. These are among others making contraceptives easily available and increasing the intervals between pregnancies, preventing unintended pregnancies and abortions, protect women form sexually transmitted diseases, and improve the lives of mothers and families at large especially newborns (Sinai, Omoluabi, Jimoh, & Jurczynska, 2020). The gamut of problems linked to reproductive health are scrutinized under family planning involving proper spacing of the pregnancies, avoiding unexpected pregnancies and abortions, protecting against STDs, and improving the well-being of overall family, not only of mother and newborn (Semachew Kasa, Tarekegn, & Embiale, 2018). It is commonly believed that family planning is amongst the public health measures that boost gender equality, improve the health status of both mother and the child, and mitigate the high prevalence of poverty (Ali, Zar, & Wadood, 2022). Accomplishing a demanded number of children

and maintaining a proper interval between pregnancies are two vital points of family planning procedure. In order to responsibly plan a family and decide on the appropriate number of children and the time to welcome them into the family, the concept of family planning includes the methods of contraception (MS, AI, & AD, 2018). Multitude range of methods are available to select from non-hormonal methods like oral contraceptives, condoms, intrauterine devices, and sterilization techniques. Additionally, hormonal methods are also available including pills, injectable hormones and implants (Festin, 2020). Each of the strategies carries both pros and cons; so, it is crucial to better take individual's predilections and demands into account while choosing one. The contraceptive methods that can be considered for family planning include different types. The selection of methods is made out of many explanations including health conditions, personal choices, cultural and religious views (Bongaarts, 2019). Pakistan has made meaningful progress towards increasing family planning elevation and providing sexual services for all. The country is still determined to take any action necessary to enhance the living standards in society. The Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) and the Lady Health Worker (LHW) Program are two of the key projects in the country (Bajwa, 2021). Research shows that pushing men in family planning can result in enhanced contraceptive use and family planning and overall reproductive health. Men can stimulate the use of contraceptives, support their partners financially and emotionally, and decide with the partners whether to have a child or not. The Male Involvement in Family Planning Initiative is an exertion in Pakistan that puts an emphasis on getting men actively involved in family planning (Khan & Sathar, 2020).

On top of that, the Pakistan government has introduced a new program that has been named "Green Star Campaign" in order to support increased access to FP information and services for the people. Thus the purpose of this project was to drive men to discuss family planning and reproductive health (McBride & Ahmed, 2001). A "Baluchistan Health Project" was launched by the United Nations Population Fund in concert with the government of Pakistan and supporting institutions. This project deals with the maternal and child health and family planning of the poor areas in the Baluchistan province (Hassan, Siddiqui, & Friedman, 2020). In Pakistan, even good number of couples already have condoms as part of their birth control. However, some guys may feel embarrassed to walk around shops to buy it. Furthermore, people who bought goods from government sources may be hesitated regarding the quality and accessibility of the items from health workers (Khan & Sathar, 2020). It is also necessary to educate men regarding the right ways of using the condoms Stone, Graham, Anstee, Brown, Newby, and Ingham (2018) and also the right combination of this method along with another like emergency contraceptive pills to eliminate the chances of failure. Unintended pregnancies and maternal deaths is a global phenomenon which can be prevented and reduced by appropriate family planning measurements. One of the challenges in this regard especially in patriarchal society is that women are considered responsible for each and every thing while men may not be supportive or involved in the process instead of the fact that men play important role in family planning because they cannot only support their partners in contraceptive pregnancy but also use masculine contraceptive methods for the wellbeing of family. This research aims to fill a gap in the existing literature. This study examines an area that has received limited preceding research attentions on family planning: men's perspectives on family planning. Many studies in this field primarily concentrate on women's viewpoints. Therefore, this research aims to offer valuable insights into men's involvement in family planning decision-making processes. Thus, this study seeks to explore the various cultural obstacles and decision-making processes involved in men's involvement in family planning. Two research questions are formulated: i) what type of cultural barriers exist within the selected native culture for adopting family planning? ii) What practices are common among men about family planning? The focus is to get information about the level of acceptance of family planning among men. So that it can be analyzed that where people stand and what measurements are required to perform in field of family planning to ensure reproductive health outcomes and well-being of people.

## **2. Recent studies on Cultural barriers and contraceptive methods on men perception**

The foremost issue identified as a cornerstone of family planning is the prevalence of knowledge, attitude, and practice towards family planning. Study revealed that individuals possess less than half of the necessary knowledge and practical skills in family planning (Semachew Kasa, Tarekegn, & Embiale, 2018). Residence, marital status, educational status, age, occupation, knowledge, attitude, number of children, and monthly average household

income all influenced the practice of family planning among participants. The level of knowledge is relatively limited, and the family level is quite modest. The results further revealed that 161 individuals (42.3%) demonstrated a strong understanding of family planning, while the remaining 220 individuals (57.7%) had a limited understanding.

Similarly, in another study Mustafa et al. (2015) examined the knowledge, attitude, and practices related to family planning and the factors influencing the need for and use of modern contraceptives. Upon analyzing the data, it was found that individuals possess a limited understanding of family planning and modern contraceptive methods. The results indicate that most individuals had knowledge of certain contemporary contraceptive methods, yet the overall utilization of contraception remained significantly low. There was a significant lack of knowledge and utilization of contraceptive methods. A cross-sectional study was conducted by Khowaja, Pervaiz, and Khatoon (2019) in Korangi district, Karachi, from April to July 2017 with 419 married men. Family planning and its relevant issues have great influence of religious edifications and societal patterns. The study's findings showed that 95% of the participants were aware of the purpose of family planning, and 44.6% were currently using family planning methods. Religious beliefs accounted for the majority (50%) of reasons for not using a Family Planning method. According to the survey results, most participants believe that the decision regarding Family Planning should be made by the husband (80%) or the wife (64%). The same case is represented by a study in which Ediau (2013) investigated male information, perspectives, and practices towards family planning. The investigation discovered that most of men were well-informed about family planning, but still many actually hold negative perspectives towards contraception. Gebreselassie (2019) led an efficient survey and meta-evaluation on men's perspectives towards family planning and revealed that men's perspectives towards family planning were affected by a few variables, including legalism, schooling, and conjugal status.

Male involvement in family planning and relevant subject matter is crucial because still in many societies, women have to obey their men and following the patterns decided by men as well as of societal norms. A qualitative study presented by Ochako et al. (2015) focused on the obstructions in usage of modern contraception among females and highlighted the issues consist on men's influence, socio-cultural convictions in combination with the quality of available medical services as hindering factor of women access and utilization of modern contraceptives. However, strict religious belief and socio-cultural setup are the responsible factors of shaping men's perceptions and practices towards family planning and other concerned issues (Izugbara, 2012). While another study conducted by Smith (2018) also mention some societal issues like gender role specification, societal norms and religious beliefs as contributory factor of men's attitude and involvement level towards family planning and reproductive health as well. Another dilemma is that instead of having knowledge about family planning, many people do not use contraceptive methods to prevent unwanted and unplanned pregnancies. A study conducted by Mustafa et al. (2015) exposed that most of his study population had some awareness of modern contraceptive means, however the usage of these general contraceptive means was noticed low. Information and utilization of any preventative technique were especially low. A study conducted by Ali, Zar, and Wadood (2022) evaluated the information taken from numerous overviews to observe the patterns and determinants of preventative use among wedded families in Pakistan. The author found a good match between level of education, available financial resources and spreading messages on family planning with the prevalence and recognition of contraceptive use.

It is crucial to acknowledge the significance of contraceptive measures to better understand the problematic condom usage by men. For the purpose, Hall (2014) argue that men's low value perception on preventive measures may cause less inclined to condom utility if they perceive a safe rate of STIs. So, ensuring the quality and availability of contraceptive measures is crucial to enhance people's trust on it as well as for achieving desired outcomes. The research undertaken by Saleem, Rizvi, Shahil Feroz, Reza, Jessani, and Abrejo (2020), establishes the family planning as being indispensable to the achievement of SDGs and it has a direct effect on these goals. The Sukh initiative was a project, developed to deal with the issue of low availability of dependable contraceptive methods in slums in Karachi, Pakistan. The rise in population that indicates low practice of family planning is apparent in many households. Consequently, the goal of this project lay in overcoming the birth rates-induced challenges. This endeavor will introduce a new method of contraception. The findings of this study revealed that a significant number of married women were provided with information about family planning, while men were not taking appropriate action based on this knowledge. They were provided with

information and offered family planning services. Based on the studies mentioned, it is evident that there is a lack of awareness regarding family planning and contraceptive methods among married couples in rural areas of Pakistan. Research indicates that individuals tend to adhere cultural norms and rely on traditional approaches rather than medical interventions. Consequently, there is a lack of awareness regarding family planning. Another reason is that healthcare professionals do not regularly visit rural areas to educate people about family planning. They primarily concentrated on selecting few urban areas and specific locations where they can operate smoothly. In rural areas, the decision-making power regarding family planning is often controlled by the male or the head of the family, primarily due to a lack of awareness. This study aims to explore the cultural barriers that affect family planning and the use of contraceptive methods among men living in rural areas of Pakistan.

### 3. Research Methodology

The current study is conducted to explore the cultural barriers and utilization of contraceptive methods among men residing in rural areas. For this purpose, the researcher utilized a descriptive methodology and opted for snowball sampling techniques to select the participants. Snowball sampling is a useful method when it is difficult to reach the population of interest or when there is limited information available about potential participants. The researcher employed this approach to gather comprehensive and valuable data, as many participants in this targeted study were reluctant to disclose personal information. This study was carried out in a rural area of South Punjab named "Laar", with a sample size of 22 individuals aged between 18 and 40, having various socio-economic backgrounds and cultural contexts. The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide to gather the necessary data and employed a straightforward thematic analysis to interpret data. The inclusion of community members, who may or may not have been users of family planning and contraceptives was the key aspect of the study so that a comprehensive set of knowledge and perceptions can be derived and that which helps to make further plans and policies in this regard.

### 4. Results and Discussion

This section is main part of research, especially because in this section, we uncover the core of our study, revealing the valuable insights we gained from in-depth exploration and analysis research objectives and human experiences and perceptions. The data were analyzed in two themes that are i) Contraceptive usage among male for family planning and ii) Barriers in family planning. The researcher analyzed these themes in order to answer the both research questions.

#### 4.1. Theme 1: Contraceptive usage among male for family planning

Contraceptive use has a significance that goes beyond just avoiding pregnancy. It also had a significant impact on decreasing the occurrence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by encouraging safe and responsible sexual practices.

##### 4.1.1. User of contraceptive methods for family planning

Contraceptive methods are crucial tools utilized to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This method offers individuals and couples the opportunity to have greater control over their reproductive choices and adopt a more organized approach to family planning. The utilization of contraceptive methods has made a substantial impact on enhancing maternal and child health outcomes, empowering women, and fostering overall sexual and reproductive health. Following is the distribution of respondents in accordance of adopting family planning by the use of contraceptive methods:

**Table 1: Frequency distribution of respondents' usage of contraceptives**

Category	Method	No of Respondent	Percentage
Users	Natural Contraception	7	31.81
	Medical Contraceptive Methods	10	45.45
Non-users	None	5	22.72
Total		22	100

Source: Field Data

Participants were divided into two groups based on their contraceptive practices: Users and Non-users, than again users are divided in further two groups based on their selected method of preventive measure that are "Natural Contraception" and "Medical Contraceptive Methods." The gathered information reflected that a significant 77.28% populace has detailed utilizing preventative techniques. Among the participants, 31.81% chose to use natural contraception, including the withdrawal strategy or sex interrupters, where sperm is intentionally delivered outside the female body before discharge, which may involve methods such as fertility awareness and withdrawal. Contrastingly, 45.45% of the participants indicated that they utilized different contraceptive methods, such as birth control pills, condoms, intrauterine devices (IUDs), or other options recommended by medical professionals. It reflects the vigilance of people towards adoption of family planning through availability of diverse option as well as selecting the one more suitable for their lifestyle. In addition, 22.72% of the participants were classified as "Non-Users" as they were not currently using any contraceptive measures. The data highlights the importance of comprehending and advocating for contraceptive options to empower individuals and couples in making well-informed choices about family planning and reproductive health.

**Table 2: Frequency distribution of respondents in accordance of using contraceptive methods**

Categories of users	Contraceptive methods	No of Respondent	Percentage of each category
Natural Contraceptive Method	Natural Withdrawal	7	41.17
	Pills	2	11.76
	Condom	3	17.64
Medical Contraceptive Methods	Injection	2	11.76
	Copper-T	2	11.76
	Tube ligation	1	05.88
Total		17	100

Source: Field Data

Research indicates that among preventative measures, regular withdrawal was the most utilized strategy (41.17%), trailed by medical contraception. It emphasizes on the need to strengthen the awareness about currently available modern contraceptive choices and address misconceptions to advance informed family planning decisions. Further, the people who selected preventative measures reliably featured their desire to have less kids. This feeling focuses on a rising acknowledgment of planning family size to guarantee the prosperity and edification of every child. By deliberately dealing with the numeral of posterity, these people mean to give a superior lifestyle for ensuring personal satisfaction and satisfactory instructive edification for their youngsters, which, thus, can decidedly influence the family's in general socio-economic circumstances. Throughout the interviews, a wide array of viewpoints raised regarding contraceptive practices. Interestingly, a few participants mentioned that their use of contraceptives was mainly driven by a desire to fulfill their sexual desires without necessarily intending to conceive at that specific time. This emphasized the wider intricacy surrounding the topic of family planning, where people may have various reasons for adopting contraception as a part of their reproductive journey. One of the individuals I interviewed mentioned:

*"Attitudes regarding contraceptive methods often shift after marriage. For instance, when a condom is available at home, the decision typically falls to the wife. Conversely, if there are no contraceptives readily accessible, the responsibility and choice of contraception falls to me. In such cases, I can choose whichever method I prefer, while the wife expresses her desire to avoid pregnancy. It is a useful approach for family planning"*

Respondent discussed his approach about the decision-making of family planning within their household. He mentioned that when a condom is present at home, the final decision rests with his wife. However, he assumed responsibility for the decision-making process in the absence of readily available contraceptive options. The respondent's viewpoint emphasizes the importance of having access to contraceptive methods and how they affect the dynamics of decision-making in family planning within a relationship. He has total control over the choice of contraceptive method. He made it clear that he could choose any method of his own choice, although his wife also desired not to have children. It is crucial to understand that family planning decisions affect both partners and should ideally be made with mutual consent, considering the preferences and wellbeing of each individual. In order to ensure and support one's reproductive intent and well-being, effective communication and mutual understanding is crucial by which one

can make rational and appropriate decisions. It is thus clear that couples need to have access to a variety of contraceptive options for them to be able to freely and jointly decide on their family plan.

#### **4.1.2. Non-users of contraceptive methods for family planning**

Certain aspects that came up during the interviews were participants who did not use any birth control method. Participants were asked to share their viewpoint about the acceptability of contraceptives. The central place which the religious teachings had in their mindset made them refuse to use any form of contraception. While some people who oppose it, ticked off several reasons of refusal. There were thus divergent views on which means should be supported for family planning, with one insisting on all-encompassing approach. They zealously promoted the natural course of human pregnancies, highlighting the necessity of letting the body run its system unimpaired by extraneous aid. Quite surprisingly, among the participants, there were a group of people who were against family planning at all and instead expected spontaneous conception. They solidly held the idea that nature defines the proper number of children a couple should have, as well as what the natural order should be. Manipulating one's fertility is a breach of these basic tenets. It is this aspect that emphasizes the spectrum of family planning opinions that are not only determined by individual needs but also by their cultural, religious and personal values.

The reasons why the interviewees have failed to use contraceptives involve multiple factors, that point to the need of a comprehensive understanding of family planning decision-making process. This research reveals the significance of putting programs in place which respect the beliefs and cultural values of different communities and individuals through the adoption of the inclusive family planning strategy. Compared to the traditional method, it can foster collaboration as well as dialogue which in turn could increase understanding and inclusiveness.

*Either birth control pills can sometimes lead to gastro-intestinal problems that act quickly, injections and pills can be contra-indicated, which result in uterine obstructed and/or infection.*

As to the family planning matter, the respondent raised the problem of using injections and pills. He said that there exist various misconceptions about various methods of the birth control, including fear of infections and uterine problems. It is interesting to note that impressions of this kind can vary greatly from person to person and be affected by individual, cultural, or faith-based perspectives. One cannot have efficient and comprehensive family planning services and education unless these perspectives are understood and tackled. This is essential because it provides people with a safe way of living. He highlighted that there is a widespread misconception about quick activating and problematic anorexia associated with these medications. Attitude and beliefs have indeed great role in people's decisions surrounding contraception methods. One of the most effective ways for people to make healthy choices regarding family planning is to look for reliable information, counseling, and education that help them make decisions that fit their lifestyle and health needs. A second supporter expresses similar ideas in regards to birth control pills.

*With contraceptive tablets there are certain effects specific to a woman's health that my wife could possibly get. When a cousin of mine became a mother, she started to really enjoy having a daughter. However, six months on, the girl had passed away. Maybe she was on pills because regardless of her efforts to get pregnant she was not able to be for the last eighteen years. After being remarried, her husband's new family has a team of five children.*

The author analyzes society's evaluation of contraceptive pills with its effect on the well-being of women. He described that his wife's health issues linked to the products she was using. It should always be borne in mind that personal health and possible negative effects need to be considered as health issues when choosing contraceptive methods. It highlights the role of doctors and other health workers to educate and guide patients and their conjugal partners on decisions concerning family planning as part of their health. On the top of that, he told a true life situation of management of family planning. He talked about the sad episode of his cousin who unexpectedly lost her daughter after just six months after giving birth and how this made her go through the phases of despair. After that, she decided to begin to take birth control pills and did not have any children for eighteen years. In the meantime, her other husband has found a way of being a father to another five children from his second marriage. This narrative takes us into

complexity and varied aspects which people can face when they plan for their family. The importance of delivering individuals and couples with exact information and support to help them make informed decisions on their reproductive health is prominent attention. In summarizing this topic, the study discovered that society can be divided into two groups: those who apply contraceptives and those who do not. We find that the respondents are aware of the advantages of family planning as having a choice about contraception use and consider both men and women to have full control of it. On the other hand, those who oppose the use of contraceptive methods believe that these methods can be harmful to women's health and may even lead to infections or permanent infertility. The findings also uncovered that individuals hold varying beliefs when it comes to contraceptive methods, shaping their perceptions based on their unique circumstances. However, the multiple barriers of adopting family planning measures is discussed in detail below:

#### 4.2. Theme 2: Barriers in family planning

It is a fact that family planning has great value for the maintenance of reproductive health of individuals as well as for socio-economic stability. For the purpose, government of Pakistan also highlights its importance and initiate different programs but still there exist a number of socio-cultural embedded factors that constraint people not to adopt family planning.

**Table 3: Frequency distribution of barriers associated with use of contraceptive measures/family planning**

Barriers	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Mis-interpretation	5	22.73
Religious teachings	11	50.00
Cultural constraints	6	27.27
Total Respondent	22	100

Source: Field Data

The perspectives and impression of respondents towards family planning were investigated and categorized. The table presents three fundamental classes and their separate rates among the 22 members: "Misinterpretation" (22.73%), "Religious teaching and believes" (50%), and "cultural constraints" (27.27%). These results feature the different variables impacting family planning choices and accentuate the requirement for designated intercessions and reproductive health projects to successfully address these particular impacts.

Societal setup: Barriers can be deeply ingrained beliefs, values, and customs that shape the perspectives of individuals and communities regarding family planning. The cultural factors that exist in different societies have a reflective impact on how individuals perceive and make decisions about reproductive health. Although family planning is widely acknowledged as an essential way to promote well-being and empower individuals, it is important to recognize that it is influenced by cultural norms that can either support or hinder its adoption. It is imperative that family planning cultural barriers are identified and addressed in order to carry out comprehensive reproductive health programs. The respondents state that they don't think health professionals can adequately educate us about family planning because of limited educational opportunities and language challenges. They also say that it's hard to interpret the written family planning materials that have been provided to us. One of the respondents shared his opinions about this:

*"Health workers do not provide proper and clear guidance about family planning and contraceptive methods and their usage procedure. Instead of understandable guidance through discussion, they often provide written materials which is useless for us. So, relying on traditional approaches and cultural practices are our first preference on the basis of which we make our own decisions rather than trusting the one's provided by health workers".*

Religious Teachings: Religion has always been considered crucial throughout human civilization, as it influence believes and practices of people as well as of societies throughout the history. It plays a significant role in shaping cultural identities, strengthening moral values and determining interpersonal relationships. Religion possess the ability to evoke miracle, foster harmony, and offer solace to its zealots, that is why it has always been profound aspect of human life. However, it also produces some kind of cultural obstructs that may influence the interaction and reciprocation among different groups and communities. Religion, at its core, is all-encompassing and complex whole comprised on believes, practices and rituals gyrate around the veneration of deities and spiritual forces. Assortment of religious philosophies and convictions

provide its followers a distinct perspectives and purposes of life to act upon accordingly. Religious transcripts and teachings have been a profound source of inspiration across diverse eras of the world, that leave eternal impacts on cultural activities. Although, religion cannot only bring people close to each other and foster sense of community among them, rather it also became the source of cultural divisions. various factors including varying belief systems, sacred customs, practices, and a solid pledge to specific codes of conduct work as barrier among these cultural divided community. Religious diversity often results in misunderstandings, stereotypes, and conflicts between communities, which can impede open communication and hinder understanding. One respondent expresses their thoughts on religious guidelines in following words:

*In our religion Islam, there are no specific guidelines regarding family planning and contraceptive methods, as they are not encouraged or supported. Therefore, I have a different perspective on family planning, but I did use a condom for three months at my wife's request. However, I have since stopped using it and now disagree with my wife on this topic. From a religious standpoint, I believe that the uterus should not be interfered with, and I consider abortion to be equivalent to murder*

The respondent appeared to hold the belief that the removal of the uterus or having an abortion is morally equivalent to committing murder, influenced by religious teachings. The respondent expressed the belief that family planning goes against the principles of Islam, and as a Muslim, it is essential to avoid engaging in such activities. The respondent mentioned that he refrains from planning for family size due to religious reasons. He mentioned that his wife wanted to use contraception, specifically condoms, during the early stages of their marriage. Afterwards, he changed his mind and stopped using them, even though he had originally committed to use them for a period of three months. This resulted in a conflict between him and his partner. That underlines the dynamic and unpredictable characteristics of the marital union with regard to the discipline of planning the family. It expounds on the fact that religion is one of the major determinants of people's perceptions as well as decision making with regard to family planning and reproductive health.

Cultural beliefs: Cultural belief systems are considered as very important factors in building societies as well as personal behavior of the people. It incorporates various life aspects, including childbearing and sexual reproductive health. These beliefs provide base for the origination of the values, traditions, rituals and the associated religious activities which get passed down from generation to generation across cultures, worldwide. The studies concerning cultural beliefs have revealed how individuals' perspectives and practices related to family planning and contraception are affected. These cultural concepts shape people's views, choices, and behaviors regarding fertility control and reproductive health, in much extents. Family planning could be impacted by cultural attitudes which make some groups think that having many children is a sign of social status and power.

Some individuals emphasize the economic aspects, and prioritize a smaller family to ensure financial conditions which will better their offspring too. To add on to this issue, people's religious views play a critical role in the decision-making process about family planning. Religious cultures determine attitudes towards family planning approaches, with some attitudes being against all contraception methods while others view having many kids as an irresponsible act and promote the use of family planning methods that their cultures support. With the use of the study, it transpires that some people consider this right to be imputed to men by default, stemming from predominance of gender roles in our society. The way we see the issue of family planning and the contraception processes and methods we depend on is a result of the cultural practices. Regarding this matter, a respondent expressed:

*"I carefully look at all the possibilities and make a cognizant decision for myself in terms of possibilities about family planning. My spouse discusses with female healthcare professionals in this regard, but I don't talk to her about this specific subject. It is common in our culture to defer to men's directives over those of women".*

The respondent emphasized that by using his own perspicacity, he carefully contemplated available family planning options and then make well-informed decisions about them. According to him, he never had discussions on this matter even with his spouse, even though his wife did



it frequently by consulting female health worker. It portrays the role of conversation gaps towards the responsibilities of spouses and emphasizes on importance of open communication about family planning. Moreover, he would note that his village has some cultural laws leading to women inequality. Menacingly it seems women could encounter several limitations and the kind of restrictions they cannot have an option of making decisions regarding family planning. The research shows how the deeply restricted mindset construct challenges for women and restrict to obtain equal rights by proper cultural norms. At the end of the study on this topic, three basic cultural barriers effecting social life of South Punjabi rural residents were identified. The members of the study demonstrated a loyal attitude towards their traditions and customs, and their spiritual wellbeing which gave them from mutual understanding and share their experiences with each other. One of the main challenges that emerged during this investigation was that there is a tendency among the people in the villages to prefer the opinions of the males more than those of the females. Many people in these population often disregard the assistance and counselling with female health workers, on the basis of their belief that only men hold a high position in all walks of life and are the sole authority in decision-making. The results demonstrated their fervent devotion to belief and religious conviction that the teachings of the religion should guide their daily actions.

## **5. Conclusion**

The research on family planning and contraceptive practices concerned about perceptions, practices and attitudes of people regarding the utilization of contraceptive practices. The findings of the research describe the intricate nature of family planning and its relevant perspectives that is shaped by various socio-cultural factors embedded in societal setup including socio-cultural norms, religious beliefs and societal setup etc. Results revealed that majority of people had awareness about contraceptive methods and also utilized them. Most commonly used method was condoms followed by pills and natural withdrawal. However, large number of people expressed much satisfactory perceptions for natural withdrawal as it has no side effects, no economic value, safe for use, ease of them, while talking about artificial methods people had concern about level of efficiency and side effects on reproductive health that influence their decision-making behavior. Misconceptions were also evident including fears like artificial methods may cause infection, swelling or other medical issues. It is because of lack of well-informed awareness and understanding about contraceptive methods of family planning. These misconceptions may have connections with age, education, economy, availability of medical facility, attitude of concerned professionals etc. It reflects the barriers caused by societal setup and reflect interconnected and communicational gaps between different concerning personnel. Religious convictions have great contribution in shaping people attitude and perceptions towards family planning and contraceptives. Those who believed that religion prohibit family planning consider it sin or cause of curse so they did not use any type of contraceptive method or even natural-withdrawal. On the other side, other justified this practice based on their interpretation of religious convictions. It was observed that man have more value than women that effect the decision-making dynamics within family. Some consider it join responsibility so make decision after consensus, while other lean towards men as final authority. However, influence of family members, especially of women was apparent that reflect broader socio-cultural reliance and influence.

### **5.1. Recommendations**

Study suggest dire need of focused awareness campaigns that not only dispel false beliefs and myths but also provide reliable information about contraceptive practices. The promotion of accessible and reliable contraceptive methods, along with comprehensive family planning services, is crucial for achieving sustainable development goals related to health and well-being. Health workers and professionals should be together on a platform, as they both can be trusted source and can approach the community more effectively, to ensure facilitating access to contraceptive alternatives and well-informed decision making. Male-oriented programs should be launched for fostering a supportive environment for family planning. Campaigns that encourage open communication and dialogue between spouse lead to better result in family planning. Policymakers can cultivate a positive transformation towards enhanced family planning practices by incorporating education, awareness, and support from health workers. Such type of collaborative engagement may cause better result in maternal and child healthcare and overall improvement of individuals.

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