



## INFERTILITY: IS ADOPTION AN OPTION

## Community Medicine

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## KEYWORDS

## INTRODUCTION:

According to WHO, infertility is a disease of reproductive system defined by the failure to achieve a clinical pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse(1). This pathological entity robs the infertile couples of the right, instinct and need to procreate, for that being the ultimate aim(2). Globally, more than 70 million couples are reported infertile who more often than not suffer from negative psychological disturbances due to conflux of individual, interpersonal, social and spiritual expectations(3). These couples are often excluded socially. Among others, infertile women suffer from depression more often as they can't bear a child and are often blamed for it. Now, with the changing times, trends of adopting orphan child are changing. Although adoption remains a largely under-researched field in India, it has got huge potential to prove as an alternative strategy for infertility management.

As CARA says, adoption is a process through which an adopted child is permanently separated from his biological parents and becomes the legitimate child of his adoptive parents with all rights, privileges and responsibilities that are attached to the relationship(4). Adoption as an alternative is yet to be fully explored and integrated into management schedules for infertility in spite of its emotional and financial implications(5).

Social beliefs say that biological ties play an important role in parent-child relationship and thus cause marked decrease in adoption acceptance rates(6). This study aims to assess the acceptance among infertile couples of the adoption as an alternative management.

## OBJECTIVES:

The study aimed to find the knowledge, attitude and practice of adoption as an alternate to artificial reproduction techniques among the infertile couples. It also wanted to bring out the difference between the opinion of the husband and wife regarding adoption and to make an attempt to analyze and enlist the reasons which are responsible for the low rate of adoption in the Indian setup.

## METHODOLOGY:

The present study was a cross sectional study conducted on 50 infertile females attending government infertility clinic - 'roshni' in a Government hospital of Bhopal over a duration of 1 month from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018 after obtaining Ethical clearance from the institutional ethics committee. A structured questionnaire was administered to them ensuring reliability after taking informed consent. This included the socio demographic profile, their past and ongoing treatment history, their knowledge, attitude and practice regarding adoption. The questions were simple and clear, formed after extensive study of appropriate literature. The Inclusion criteria were approval of infertility by physician. The data was entered using MS excel and analysed using epi-info 7 software.

## RESULTS:

In the present study, majority of participants fall in the age group of 26-30 years. 40% of them have been married for less than 5 years and 78% of women are housewives among participants. 78% women said their husbands work in private sector and only 4% were farmers. 68% of the participants were muslims by religion and 46% of the women belonged to OBC caste. Half of the participants incur less than 5000 rs of income per head. Only 4% of women chew tobacco among others. 62% of participants took responsibility of infertility and 8% women have been taking treatment for more than past 10 years. 62% of women have never had conception previously.

54% of participants said that adopting the child will fulfill their desire of having child but only 14% were aware of adoption procedure. Only 34% of participants' families agree to accept adopted child.

62% of women gave normal menstrual history. 36% of participants have more than 10 intercourses per month. 56% of women gave euthyroid history and only 8% were hypothyroid.

When the participants were asked about what they understood by the term 'adoption', 22% of them had no information where as 18% weren't ready to answer. 6% defined adoption as a procedure to adopt somebody else's child where as 26% described it as taking care of an orphan child. 8% thought it would give them a child and 6% accepted it as the last resort. (Figure 1)

When asked why having one's own child is more important, 36% couldn't give any reason and another 36% blamed the family for the same. The 10% of participants agreed on saying that they won't differentiate between the adopted and their own child but another 10% were under the pressure of society. 4% of participants believed that they couldn't call an adopted child their own where as 2% each said that they wanted to experience those 9 months of pregnancy and that the adopted child wouldn't support them in future(Figure 2)

Table 1

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Respondent's age(in years)</b>		
20-25	15	30
26-30	23	46
31-35	7	14
36-40	4	8
40 above	1	2
<b>Duration of marriage(in years)</b>		
<5	20	40
6-10	15	30
11-15	10	20
>15	5	10
<b>Occupation of women</b>		
Working	11	22
Housewife	39	78
<b>Occupation of Husband</b>		
Unemployed	0	0
Private work	39	78
Farmer/ Agricultural labour	2	4
Labour	9	18
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	34	68
Muslim	16	32
<b>Caste</b>		
General	13	26
SC	11	22
ST	3	6
OBC	23	46
<b>Income per head</b>		
<5000	25	
5000-10000	14	
>10000	1	

H/o Addiction			
Women	None	48	96
	Tobacco chewing	2	4
Husband	None	22	44
	Tobacco Chewing/ smoking	17	34
	Alcohol	4	8
	Both alcohol and tobacco	7	14

Table 2

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Whom do u think is responsible for infertility</b>		
Women herself	31	62
Husband	9	18
Don't Know	10	20
<b>Duration of treatment for infertility(in years)</b>		
1-5	38	76
6-10	8	16
>10	4	8
<b>H/o previous Conception</b>		
Yes	19	38
No	31	62

Table 3

Questions	Yes	No
<b>Knowledge about Adoption</b>		
Have you ever considered it as an option		
Will adopting child fulfil your desire of having a child	27	23
Are you aware of legal procedure for adoption?	7	43
Will the family accept the adopted child	17	33

Table 4

Overall menstrual history	Normal	31	62
	Abnormal	19	38
Intercourse per month	<3	10	20
	3-10	22	44
	>10	18	36
Thyroid history	Euthyroid	28	56
	Hypothyroid	4	8
	Hyperthyroid	18	36
Knowledge about infertility treatment options	Yes	11	22
	No	39	78

Another study conducted in Nigeria by Ojabe et al showed high level of knowledge of Child Adoption practices (89.4%). Poor knowledge of adoption practices in the participants of the present study could have led to the secondary increase in unacceptance of an adopted child.

34% of the participants' families of the present study agreed to accept an adopted child ,similarly, 29% respondents had support from in-laws in Eke et al study. Only 6% of the present study participants knew the correct meaning of adoption in contrary to all the studies conducted in other parts of the world such as 59.2% in Abubakar et al study , 59.3 % in Omosun et al study, 79.2 % in Eke et al study.

The major reason for unwillingness to adopt a child in the present study were family and social constraints which were similar to the finding of Adewunmi et al study (78.3 %),while the major reasons in Omosun et al and Bolkaie et al were the desire to have own biological child.

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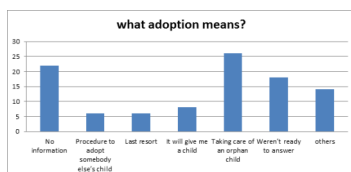


Figure 1

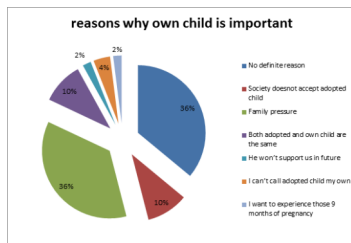


Figure 2

DISCUSSION

Infertility is a major psycho-social stress factor for the infertile couples especially in the developing countries like India where adoption is not considered a good option.

The present study was conducted among 50 participants ,of whom only 14% were aware of correct adoption procedure in contrary to the Abubakar et al study in which 59.2 % of the respondents had good knowledge of adoption. The study conducted in Nigeria by Eke et al showed that 49.2% had knowledge of government adoption laws.