

Change in Trends of Family Planning in Indian Married Individuals in Urban India

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Abstract

Objective: This paper studies the reasons for urban Indian couples' decision to wait for or not prioritise children at this stage of their relationship. Importance is given to relational negotiation, autonomy and socio-cultural factors.

Background: In Indian society, the institution of marriage is closely related to the expectations of children, which is supported by the social norms of India for ideals of childbearing. Most studies are about women with fertility issues or who want children. Couples who choose not to have children for now but may consider in the future are less spoken of. Urbanization and changing gender roles have influenced these decisions.

Method: Using a qualitative descriptive design grounded in a social constructivist paradigm, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight married individuals residing in urban India who were not planning to have children at present. Data were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

Results: Three themes were identified: autonomy in marriage, preparation for parenthood, evolving meanings of parenting, career, oriented lifestyle, and liberty of choice. Participants felt that deciding to have a child was a crucial step influenced by their emotional readiness, financial standing, gender roles, career aspirations, and at the same time dealing with the pressure from society.

Conclusion: Deferred parenthood emerged as a dynamic, relational, and socially embedded process rather than a fixed identity position.