



# **Spousal Education and Its Association with Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Family Planning: A Study of the Singpho Tribe in Arunachal Pradesh, India**

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## **ABSTRACT**

India was the first country to introduce a national family planning programme and has been implementing it since the 1950s. Over the past seven decades, both government and non-governmental organizations have undertaken numerous initiatives to raise awareness about family planning methods and promote their use. Family planning is particularly crucial in a country like India, where the population has been growing at an alarming rate. Effective family planning depends on several factors, including knowledge of fertility control methods, a positive attitude toward their use, actual adoption of these methods and open communication between spouses regarding contraception. A range of social, cultural, economic and demographic factors such as religion, the educational level of both husband and wife, son preference, family structure, income, the woman's age and the number of living children and sons play a significant role in influencing a couple's acceptance and practice of contraception. This paper seeks to explore the relationship between spousal education and the knowledge, attitude, and practice of family planning among the Singpho tribe in Arunachal Pradesh, India.

**Keywords:** Spousal education, knowledge, attitudes, practices, family planning, Singpho

## **1. Introduction**

India was the first country to introduce family planning programme and has been implementing it since 1950s. Over the seven decades of family planning history in India, the government and non-governmental organizations have undertaken various activities to raise awareness about family planning methods and motivate them to use them. Family planning is essential in a country like India, where population has been increasing at an alarming rate. It aims to achieve two main objectives through the use of contraception. First, to limit the family size to the desired number of children and second, to attain this desired family size through proper spacing of pregnancies. Effective family planning requires knowledge of fertility control methods, a positive attitude towards their use, actual practice of these methods and open communication between spouses about contraception. Various social, cultural, economic and demographic factors such as religion, the education of both husband and wife, son preference, family type, income, women's age, number of living children, number of living sons influence a couple's acceptance of contraception. The immediate objective of the National Population Policy (2000) is to address the unmet needs for contraception. The couple protection rate is an indicator of the prevalence of contraceptive use in a population. It is defined as the percent of eligible couples effectively protected against childbirth by one or the other approved methods of family planning (Dabral and Malik, 2004).

Different studies have found that the knowledge and practice of family planning are lower among the scheduled tribe and scheduled caste communities. A survey conducted by International Institute for Population Sciences, Bombay and Population Research Centre, Baroda in 1993 in two districts of rural Gujarat revealed that family planning practices were less prevalent among the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes in comparison to the other caste groups. In the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh it was found that only 25.3 per cent of SC/ST women had knowledge of all the modern contraceptive methods (Roy and Paswan, 1995). The Dudh Kharias of Sundargarh district of Orissa had knowledge of various family planning methods but only a small proportion of the population actually used them. The Tripuri women i.e. 68.81 per cent reported knowledge of contraceptive methods, especially among the young age group, where awareness was high (Borah, 2006). Similarly knowledge of contraceptive methods was fairly widespread (68.57 per cent) among the ever-married Singpho women (Borah, 2006). Family planning is a public health concern in tribal communities where educational disparities affect reproductive behaviour and health outcomes (Basu, 2018; IIPS & ICF, 2021). Study reveals that there are a strong positive correlation between education especially of women and awareness, positive attitude and use of modern contraceptive methods (Jejeebhoy, 1995; Stephenson et al., 2007). Couples where both partners had higher education were more likely to make joint decisions on reproductive matters and used modern contraceptives more.

The North East India (NEI) is a colourful carpet of various indigenous tribal groups of Australoid, Mongoloid and Caucasoid origins with their own distinct culture, traditions, languages, cuisines, attires and life styles. The Singphos are one of the frontier tribe of inhabited in the states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh adjoining the Patkai Hill in North East India. In China they are known as Jingpo and In Myanmar as Kachin (Machey, 2018; Machey et al., 2024).). At present they are mainly concentrated in the upper part of the Tinsukia district and a small size population are inhabited in Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat and Karbi Anglong districts of Assam and hugely found in Changlang, Namsai and Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh. The population of the Singphos is very meagre as is evident from the census count (Dutta, 1990). According to Machey and Saikia (2025) altogether 7958 Singpho people comprising 3999 males and 3959 females are living in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh as per Census 2011. There are only a few print documents available regarding their socio-economic and demographic aspect of the Singphos. Demographically the Singphos are small and economically very poor (Machey, 2013). The prevailing socio-cultural practices, economic and demographic characteristics of the population influence the couples' attitude towards an additional child and thereby the fertility performance of the population (Borah, 2006). However the fertility rate decline remained moderate in India during the last 15 years, the Singpho tribe has been experiencing a fall of fertility and even extinct in the some villages (Machey, 2015).

Knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning are essential for achieving the desired family size and improving women's reproductive health. In fact knowledge, a positive attitude and proper practice of family planning help limit family size, ensure appropriate child spacing and prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmit diseases. For family planning to be effective, it is crucial to have knowledge of fertility control methods, a positive attitude toward the means of fertility control, practice of such fertility regulating means and open communication between husband and wife regarding contraception (Dabral and Malik, 2004). Among various socio-economic variables the education level of spouses' plays a vital role in shaping their knowledge, attitudes and practices concerning family planning. Thus education helps to rationalize people's attitudes toward having additional children, leading them to limit family size in order to maintain their quality of life (Machey, 2016). In this background an attempt has been made to looks at the relationship between spousal education and knowledge of, attitude toward and practice of family planning among Singpho tribe in Arunachal Pradesh, India.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to analyse the association between spousal education levels and their knowledge, attitudes and practices of family planning.

## 3. Methodology of the Study

The study is predominantly based on primary data. Both qualitative and quantitative information were collected through a survey conducted among the Singpho tribe in Arunachal Pradesh, while secondary data were obtained from the printed materials and websites. A cross-sectional research design was used and data was collected through structured interviews from married couples from selected Singpho villages covering a total of 448 households.

## 4. Findings of the Study

Studies have revealed that education plays an important role in the knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) of family planning. Couples with higher levels of educational attainment are likely to better awareness of contraceptives methods, hold positive attitudes toward their use and actively practice family planning. The findings of the present study presented below.

Table: 1

Wife's Education and KAP of Family Planning

Wife's Education	Knowledge of Family Planning			Attitude of Family Planning			Practice of Family Planning		
	Yes	No	Total	Favourable	Unfavourable	Total	Yes	No	Total
Illiterate	3 (20)	12 (80)	15 (100)	5 (33.3)	10 (66.7)	15 (100)	5 (33.3)	10 (66.7)	15 (100)
Primary level (Class I to IV)	80 (57.1)	60 (42.9)	140 (100)	84 (60)	56 (40)	140 (100)	53 (37.9)	87 (62.1)	140 (100)
M. E. level (Class V to VII)	160 (67.8)	76 (32.2)	236 (100)	155 (65.7)	81 (34.3)	236 (100)	136 (57.6)	100 (42.4)	236 (100)
High School (Class VIII to X)	22 (56.4)	17 (43.6)	39 (100)	19 (48.7)	20 (51.3)	39 (100)	18 (46.2)	21 (53.8)	39 (100)

Higher Secondary (Class 10 + 2)	14 (100)	0 (0)	14 (100)	7 (50)	7 (50)	14 (100)	7 (50.0)	7 (50.0)	14 (100)
Graduate and above	4 (100)	0 (0)	4 (100)	4 (100)	0 (0)	4 (100)	4 (100)	0 (0)	4 (100)
Total	283 (63.2)	165 (36.8)	448 (100)	274 (62.1)	174 (37.9)	448 (100)	223 (49.7)	225 (50.3)	448 (100)

Source: Field study data

(Percentage in parenthesis)

The Table 1 depicts a positive relationship between increasing levels of education and the knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning among the Singpho tribe. Among the 448 couples, 63.2 per cent have knowledge of family planning, 274 have a favourable attitude toward it and only 49.7 per cent practice family planning. However, among illiterate women, 20 per cent have knowledge of family planning, 33.3 per cent show a positive attitude and 33.3 per cent practice it. In contrast, among literate women, 64.7 per cent have knowledge, 62.1 per cent possess a positive attitude and 50.3 per cent practice family planning.

Similarly, husband's level of education significant influences his wife's knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning. Data in the Table 2 reveal that women whose husbands are literate tend to have higher levels of knowledge, more favourable attitudes and greater practice of family planning. Moreover, these positive outcomes are even more prominent when the husband has a higher level of education qualification. Knowledge.

Table: 2

Husband's Education and Wife's KAP of Family Planning

Husband's Education	Knowledge of Family Planning			Attitude of Family Planning			Practice of Family Planning		
	Yes	No	Total	Favourable	Unfavourable	Total	Yes	No	Total
Primary level (Class I to IV)	21 (80.8)	5 (19.2)	26 (100)	21 (80.8)	5 (19.2)	26 (100)	14 (53.8)	12 (46.2)	26 (100)
M. E. level (Class V to VII)	46 (61.3)	29 (38.7)	75 (100)	40 (53.3)	35 (46.7)	75 (100)	39 (52)	36 (48)	75 (100)
High School (Class VIII to X)	147 (64)	83 (36)	230 (100)	145 (63)	85 (37)	230 (100)	130 (56.5)	100 (43.5)	230 (100)
Higher Secondary (Class 10 + 2)	73 (66.4)	37 (33.6)	110 (100)	64 (58.2)	46 (41.8)	110 (100)	61 (55.4)	49 (44.6)	110 (100)
Graduate and above	7 (100)	0 (0)	7 (100)	7 (100)	0 (0)	7 (100)	7 (100)	0 (0)	7 (100)
Total	294 (65.6)	154 (34.4)	448 (100)	277 (61.8)	171 (38.2)	448 (100)	251 (56)	197 (44)	448 (100)

Source: Field study data

(Percentage in parenthesis)

## 5. Conclusion

This study explored the influence of spousal education on knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) related to family planning among the Singpho tribe in Arunachal Pradesh, India. The findings reveal a strong positive correlation between education levels and favorable family planning outcomes. In particular, a wife's education significantly impacts her own knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding family planning. Moreover, women with literate husbands are more likely to possess greater knowledge, hold positive attitudes, and actively engage in family planning practices. Overall, the study underscores the pivotal role of education especially spousal education in enhancing the adoption of family planning practices in tribal communities. Expanding access to education and raising awareness can serve as effective strategies for improving reproductive health outcomes in similar socio-cultural settings.

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