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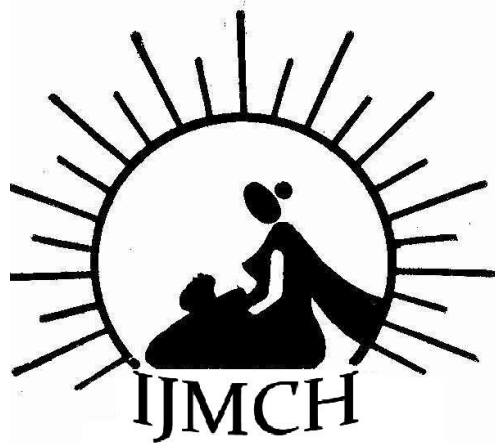
**Social Stigma Associated with Vasectomy among Females  
of Thullur Mandal in Guntur District**

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## Social Stigma Associated with Vasectomy among Females of Thullur Mandal in Guntur District

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** As per NFHS-III, there is a 3.3% vasectomy usage in Andhra Pradesh while on the other hand; tubectomy holds a 96.7% usage. There is a need to explore the reasons why women opt for female sterilization and at the same time very adamant about a vasectomy.

**Methodology:** This is a cross sectional study with 150 subjects from the postnatal ward at a tertiary hospital in Andhra Pradesh who were interviewed by using a questionnaire. Analysis of data is done by using simple statistical methods.

**Findings:** Work disturbance to husband is the most commonly agreed upon reason for refusing a vasectomy. Most women who preferred vasectomy have attained their high school certificates and are employed.

**Conclusions:** Lack of awareness of vasectomy and its benefits and the work disturbance to men explains the low vasectomy rate.

**Key words:** *Social stigma, Family planning, Vasectomy, Tubectomy, Awareness*

### Introduction

- India was the first country in the world to formulate the National Family Planning Programme in the year 1952. The objective is "reducing the birth rate to the extent necessary to stabilize the population at a level consistent with requirement of National economy" (National Population Policy 2000)<sup>1</sup>.
- The acceptance of family planning methods among Indians has still been below the expected rates due to social, cultural and religious barriers.
- India is the second most populous country in the world to allot some of the highest government budgets to the family planning programmes.
- According to NFHS III, only 79% women are aware of male sterilization where as 96% are aware of female sterilization<sup>2</sup>.
- The percentage of vasectomy awareness decreases as we move from urban to rural areas.
- Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh hold the highest vasectomy usage rates in India with 4% and 3.4% respectively.

- Next in line is the southern state Andhra Pradesh (A.P.) with 3.3% vasectomy usage and 96.7% tubectomy usage. The percentage of male sterilization users in A.P. decreased to 2.8% when the rural population is considered<sup>2</sup>.
- In Andhra Pradesh, Warangal and Karimnagar districts with highest acceptance of vasectomy (19% )of total sterilizations.
- On the contrary, Guntur district is peculiar, the percentage of vasectomies done has decreased from 2.86% in 2008-09 to 0.9% in 2009-10<sup>3</sup>.
- There was a wrong belief among the people that males were usually engaged in active physical works and any kind of operation on them will definitely reduce their capability as a man.<sup>4</sup>
- Majority of the subjects believed that the operation leads to weakness and if the male is the sole earner, then the income of the family would suffer<sup>5</sup>
- Such a drastic decrease in acceptance highlights the need to find the reasons and thereby alleviate them.

**Aims & objectives:**

To determine the impact of socio demographic factors on social stigma associated with vasectomy among females.

**Materials and Methods**

**Type of Study:** Community based Cross Sectional Study

**Duration of Study:** 3 Months (Nov 2012 and January 2013)

**Setting:** Thullur PHC area, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh

**Number of Subjects:** 150 Postnatal Women

**Instruments used:** Pre structured questionnaire comprising of questions related to the socioeconomic status and their knowledge about vasectomy.

**Source of Data and Selection of Study Groups :** Data was collected verbally in the form of questions and recorded on the preformed questionnaire. Subjects were selected randomly from subcenter areas of Thullur PHC. Subjects comprised of both having normal vaginal delivery as well as caesarean section operation.

**Statistical Analysis:** The data was collected, compiled and analyzed using Microsoft excel work sheet. Results are presented in tables, charts, bar diagram and pie charts

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- Majority of postnatal mothers (88.8% ) accepting for vasectomy are from Hindu religion
- Occupation tends to increase the chances of communication with others as well as with mass media at the work place.
- Almost 89% of women who preferred vasectomy have received a high school certificate or more indicating the impact of education in the decision making of the family.
- The major reason mentioned by many to opt out of vasectomy is the Hindrance to work 77.3% and the second most reason is Mother-in law influence 56%.
- Although, only 34.7% of women agreed to the reason “husband’s loss of potency”, it is generally much higher when males are asked the same question.
- Majority (88%) of the women were aware of a PHC in their nearby vicinity.
- Out of the above postnatal mothers, 71.9% are having the knowledge of permanent sterilization procedures done at PHC.
- Lack of communication between various organizations leads to finally the poor promotion of vasectomy.

**Table 1: Age group of the subjects**

Age	Postnatal mothers	Vasectomy preferred postnatal mothers	Total
<18	12(8)	1(0.67)	13(8.67)
18-24	105(70)	6(4)	111(74)
25 and above	24(16)	2(1.33)	26(17.33)
Total	141(94)	9(6)	150(100)

**Table 2: Religion of the subjects**

Religion	Postnatal mothers	Vasectomy preferred post natal mothers	Total
Hindu	77(51.34)	8(5.33)	85(56.67)
Muslim	18(12)	0	18(12)
Christian	46(30.6)	1(0.67)	47(31.33)
Total	141(94)	9(6)	150(100)

**Table 3: Educational status of the subjects**

Education	Postnatal mothers	Vasectomy preferred postnatal women	Total
Post Graduate	1(0.66)	1(0.66)	2(1.33)
graduate	3(2)	3(2)	6(4)
Intermediate	16(10.66)	2(1.33)	18(12)
Higher secondary	41(27.33)	2(1.33)	43(28.66)
Middle school	31(20.66)	0	31(20.66)
Primary school	29(19.33)	1(0.66)	30(20)
Illiterate	20(13.33)	0	20(13.33)
Total	141(94)	9(6)	150(100)

**Table 4: Occupational status of the subjects**

Occupation	Post natal mothers	Vasectomy preferred mothers	Total
Professional	1(0.66)	0	1(0.66)
Semi professional	0	2(1.33)	2(1.33)
Clerical/shop owner	4(2.66)	1(0.66)	5(3.33)
Skilled worker	10(6.66)	1(0.66)	11(7.3)
Semi skilled	4(2.66)	1(0.66)	5(3.33)
Un skilled	18(12)	11(0.66)	19(12.66)
Un employed	104(69.33)	3(2)	107(71.33)
Total	141(94)	9(6)	150(100)

**Table 5: Type of Family Planning practice preferred by postnatal mothers**

Type	Number	Percentage
Tubectomy	141	94
Vasectomy	9	6
Total	150	100

**Table 6: Reasons stated for opting out of vasectomy to their husband**

Reason	No (n=150)	percentage
Hindrance of Work	116	77.3
Mother in law influence	84	56
unable to tolerate pain	64	42.7
fear of losing potency	52	34.7

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Lack of awareness of vasectomy and its benefits and the work disturbance to men explains the low vasectomy rate.
- In spite of having awareness women and their husband are least motivated.

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