

## **Background**

Abortion, though a critical component of reproductive health, is often used as a substitute for contraception in India, particularly among older women. This practice carries significant health risks, including infections, haemorrhages, and long-term reproductive complications. The reliance on abortion, rather than contraception, poses both public health challenges and questions regarding reproductive health access and behaviour. This study focuses on older women aged 30-49 in India, examining their reproductive choices, particularly their intention to use contraceptives in future post abortion in India.

## **Theoretical Focus**

The study is grounded in reproductive health theory, which emphasizes the importance of family planning and contraception in reducing maternal morbidity and mortality. The health risks associated with repeated abortions underscore the critical need for accessible and affordable contraceptive options. Despite these risks, cultural, socio-economic, and systemic barriers often limit the use of contraception among older women in India. By analysing these dynamics, the study seeks to identify the demographic and behavioural factors that lead women to opt for abortion instead of contraception, even after they have completed their family size.

## **Data Source**

The study uses data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-21), a comprehensive and nationally representative dataset that includes information on reproductive health, family planning, fertility behaviour, and demographic characteristics of Indian women. The NFHS-5 dataset offers detailed information on women's reproductive calendar, providing insights into abortion incidence and future contraceptive intentions. The study focuses on women aged 30-49, a group that is often overlooked in family planning interventions.

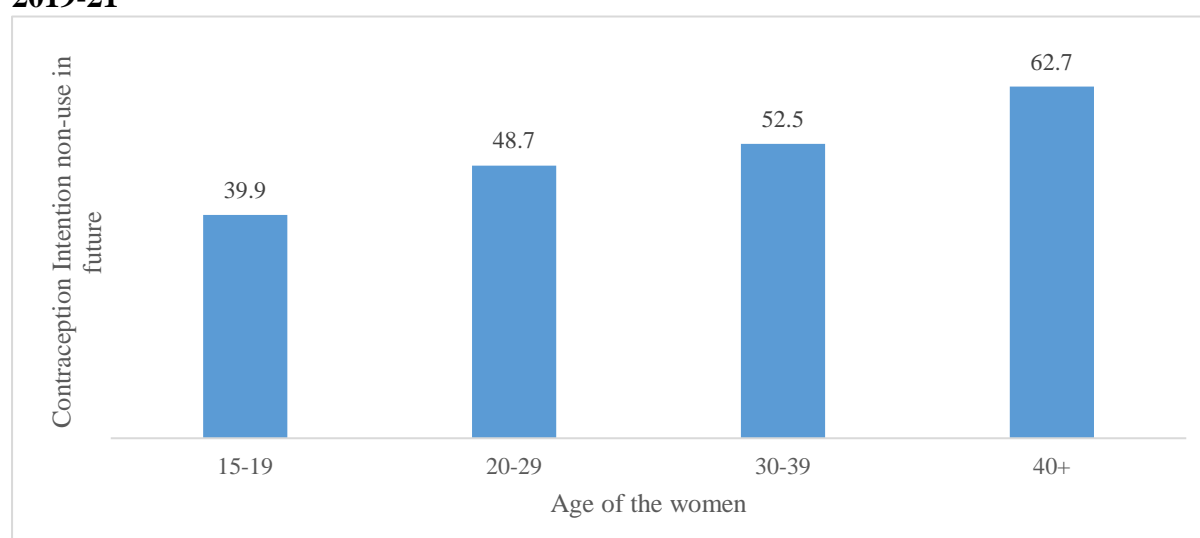
## **Research Methods**

This study utilizes multivariable logistic regression analysis to examine the relationship between future contraceptive intentions and pregnancy intention in India followed by abortion. The primary outcome variables are the intention to use contraception in the future and the incidence of abortion among women who did not want their last pregnancy. The independent variables include demographic characteristics (age, education, economic status, place of residence) and pregnancy intentions (whether the woman wanted more children,). The sample size of the study is 4689 (currently married women who had undergo abortion in the last 5 year preceding the survey).

## **Expected Results**

For the univariate analysis, it was found that 53%, and 63% of the women aged 30-39 and 40+ respectively, didn't planned to use contraception in future (Figure 1).

**Figure 1 : Non-use of contraception in future by current age of women, NFHS, India, 2019-21**



The multivariable analysis shows that older women (aged 30-39 and 40+) are significantly more likely to not intend to use contraception, with AORs of 1.72 and 2.45, respectively. Also, women who no longer want children or want to delay childbearing are significantly more likely do not intend to use contraception, with AORs of 4.15 and 3.56. Wealth and education have less pronounced effects, though the richest women are less likely to not use contraception (table 1).

**Table 1: Adjusted Odds Ratio along with 95% CI for women's no intention to use any modern method in future followed by abortion by demography characteristics and pregnancy intention, India, NFHS, 2019-21**

Age Of The Women	AOR (95% CI)
15-19	1.00
20-29	1.5 (0.94 2.37)
30-39	1.72*(1.07 2.76)
40+	2.45*(1.42 4.21)
<b>Past Contraception Use</b>	
No Method	1.00
Any Modern Method	0.09*(0.07 0.1)
<b>Desire For Child In Future</b>	
Wants Within 2 Year	1.00
Wants After 2+ Years	3.56*(2.78 4.54)
Wants, Unsure Timing	1.79 (0.97 3.32)
Undecided	3.31*(2.35 4.68)
Wants No More	4.15*(3.39 5.08)
<b>Educational Status</b>	
No Education	1.00
Primary	1.07 (0.83 1.4)
Secondary	0.97 (0.78 1.19)
Higher	0.95 (0.73 1.25)
<b>Wealth Index</b>	

Poorest	1.00
Poorer	1.19 (0.96 1.48)
Middle	0.95 (0.76 1.19)
Richer	1.04 (0.82 1.32)
Richest	0.76*(0.59 0.99)
<b>Place Of Residence</b>	
Urban	1.00
Rural	1.05 (0.9 1.24)

\*p<0.05

## Discussion

The study highlights a critical gap in reproductive health interventions for older women in India, who remain at significant risk due to underutilization of contraception. Despite completed family sizes, many women aged 30-49 continue to rely on abortion, a practice fraught with health risks. This behaviour likely stems from a mix of cultural factors, insufficient contraceptive access, and a lack of family planning services tailored to this age group.

To address this issue, the study underscores the need for:

- **Improved Access to Contraceptives:** Ensuring that contraceptives are available and affordable, particularly for older women who are often excluded from mainstream family planning programs.
- **Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Increasing knowledge about the dangers of repeated abortions and promoting contraception to prevent maternal morbidity and mortality.
- **Culturally Appropriate Counseling:** Offering sensitive family planning counseling that meets the unique needs of older women, especially those in rural and underserved areas.