



Young Wives: An Exploratory Study of Married Women Below Twenty and the Socio-Cultural Determinants of their Contraceptive Behaviour in Low Resource Settings in India

About the Study

The Young Wives (YW) study examines the influence of socio-cultural and gender norms on Family Planning (FP) among rural couples living in areas with higher prevalence of underage marriages, by studying the cultural ecologies of health that encompasses the interaction between cultural beliefs, practices, and environments and how they influence modern contraceptive use and childbearing. Focusing on wives aged 15-19, married for at least a year, it combines qualitative and quantitative methods. The sample consists of 559 young wives alongside 219 husbands, 256 Mothers-in-law (MILs) and 220 Frontline Health Workers (FLWs), ensuring diverse perspectives. Further, the study employs a triad approach for gathering household level data from wives, husbands, and MILs. FLWs and community influencers' perspectives have also been taken enriching the findings. Overall, the study provides contextual evidence that can support design of norms shifting interventions aimed at avoiding teenage pregnancy.

Two state level disseminations and one national level dissemination were conducted to present the key findings from the data to the stakeholders of the respective state governments as well as researchers in this field.

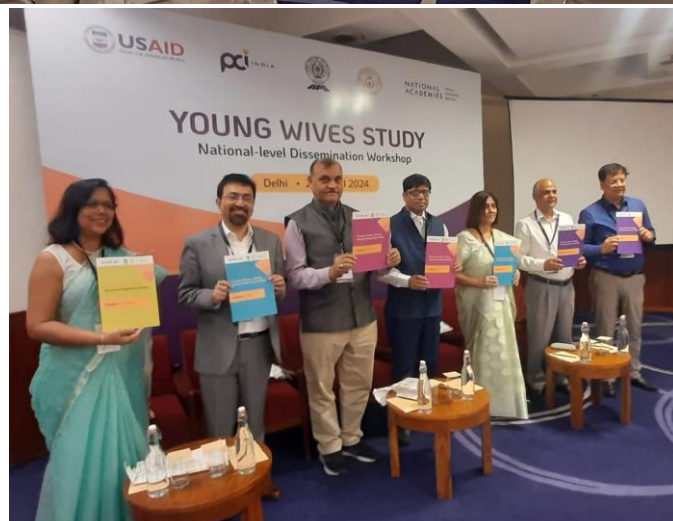
State level dissemination at Radisson Blu, Ranchi, Jharkhand on 9th April, 2024



State level dissemination at Royalsion Class, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh on 16th April, 2024



National level dissemination at India Habitat Centre, Delhi on 23rd April, 2024



Recommendations from the study

1. Family planning programs should prioritize an in-depth understanding of prevailing social norms, particularly those related to fertility, which frequently promote early childbearing among young couples. Strategies should be tailored to address these norms effectively.
2. In addition to targeting young wives and their immediate family members, particularly husbands and mothers-in-law, family planning programs should broaden their scope to include community influencers, health cadre, and local health providers. This holistic approach ensures a comprehensive engagement strategy within the community.
3. Family planning programs should adopt a multifaceted approach, promoting group-based interactions and community-level dialogues to stimulate discourse on family planning methods and the risks associated with teenage pregnancy. Leveraging existing community platforms and institutions can facilitate these discussions and foster greater awareness and acceptance of family planning practices.

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