

## RESEARCH BRIEF

# Contraceptive use and its effect on Indian women's empowerment: Evidence from the National Family Health Survey 4

The positive effect of women's empowerment on contraceptive use is well established. However, the potential effect of contraceptive use on women's empowerment is relatively unexplored. Contraceptive use is presumed to create pathways to empowerment, by giving women control over their reproduction, increasing opportunities to receive education and participate in the labor force. This paper aimed to assess the impact of contraceptive use on women's empowerment.



Photo Credit: Population Council

## HIGHLIGHTS



Greater investment in family planning would not only reduce fertility and improve reproductive health, but also directly empower women, particularly in lower economic communities.



Improving women's involvement in non-domestic spheres can help facilitate contraceptive use and women's empowerment.



Increased contraceptive use can help protect against unintended pregnancies, prevent pregnancy related health risks, and reduce incidences of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).



Increasing mass media exposure among women can expand knowledge, enhance self-esteem, and aid perception of control over resources.



Photo Credit: Population Council

*While empowerment is associated with contraceptive use in many settings, this study explores the impact of contraceptive use on women's mobility and decision-making power, measures of women's empowerment in India*

## FINDINGS

- Contraceptive prevalence was higher among women of higher socioeconomic status, urban women and older women. Workforce participation and exposure to mass media were positively related to contraceptive prevalence.
- Empowerment, measured as women's mobility and input into decision making, were seen to be positively associated with socioeconomic status, level of education, workforce participation, exposure to mass media and urban residence.
- A larger proportion of women who were sterilized reported mobility than women who were using modern methods for spacing. A greater proportion of women using modern methods for spacing had input into household decisions, compared with women who were sterilized. Sterilized women have reported greater mobility than women who were using modern methods of spacing. Whereas for input into household decisions, it was reverse.
- After multivariate adjustment and corrections for endogeneity, any contraceptive use (sterilization, modern and traditional methods) among sample women was associated with greater mobility and decision-making as compared to women not using any method.

## METHOD

Multivariate modelling and logit regression model conducted using data on married women (aged 15-49 years) from NFHS-4 (2015-16) to understand the impact of contraceptive use on women's mobility and decision-making power.

## RASTA

RASTA (Research and Analyses for Scientific Transformation and Advancement) is a multi-institutional research utilization initiative led by Population Council. For more information please contact [rasta@popcouncil.org](mailto:rasta@popcouncil.org)

## EVIDENCE

The Evidence Project uses implementation science—the strategic generation, translation, and use of evidence—to strengthen and scale up family planning and reproductive health programs to reduce unintended pregnancies worldwide. The Evidence Project is led by the Population Council.

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