



Family Planning Among Muslim: A Study Of Moria Community Of Sivasagar District, Assam

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1. Introduction

The Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) highlights on issues pertaining to the beginning of human life, moral excellence reproductive health, marriage and parenting. The Qur'an exhorts Muslims to marry, stating: "Marry those among you who are single, or the pious among your slaves....." (24:32). This verse therefore means that marriage is a desirable institution for every Muslim. Procreation of human species may be considered one of the most important aspects of marriage. From the Islamic perspective, children are a gift and blessing from Allah who should be properly maintained. Islam believes that the relationship between the husband, wife and the children should be based on mutual love and care, joy, happiness, co operation, peace, unity and tranquility. The husband and the wife ought to console each other in order to forfeit the adornment of life.

2. Moria community

Because of its rich natural resource and fertile land, Assam always attracts the outsiders. Tribals were the original sons of the soil of Assam. Both Ahoms and Muslims entered in Assam as invaders. Ahoms entered Assam from the eastern border in 1228AD, while the Muslim from the west in 1206 AD.

The *Maria* are descended from captured Muslim soldiers who were part of Bakhtiyar Khalji's army in 1206. They are named as such because they were engaged in the bell-metal and smithy industry, the word *Maria* meaning *one who hits metals*. In Hema Kosh (Assamese Dictionary) *Maria* means – A class of Muslim who work in brass. *Maria* means "to beat" in Assamese. Thus we can say that a section of Muslim who took the particular profession of working brass in Assam is called as *Maria*. This section of Muslim contributes much in making utensils of brass. Kaliabar of Nagaon district was their first place of settlement. Now they have settled many place of Assam including upper Assam. They are economically very poor compared to the other communities of Assam. The Govt. of Assam therefore, declared them as MOBC (More other backward caste).

The Moriyas are the descendants of those war prisoners who invaded this land as soldiers of the Muslim king. After their release from the Ahom King's imprisonment, instead of returning to their native lands these soldiers stayed back in Assam permanently. They started to earn their livelihood by making brass and bell-metal utensils. In due course of time, these people came to be known as Moriyas. It can be said that they are keeping the cottage industry of making brass and bell-metal utensils in Assam alive. Presently, the Moriyas are a prominent and noteworthy Islamic community of Assam. Socially, culturally and linguistically the Moriyas have their unique identity. Although drawn from a mixed cultural past, with the passage of time, they got integrated in the fabric of the Assamese society and culture.

3. Review of literature

The most important part of any research is the review of related literature. When we look the research activities on this particular community we found that very less research activity has been done.

Guha (2007) studies the cultural and social aspects of the Moria Muslims of Assam. He observed that this community is one of the most marginalized communities of Assam. Their educational and economic status is very low and poor compared to their social group.

Mahanta (2019) studies the language used by the Moria Muslim community. She observed that most of the Moria community speak Assamese as their mother language.

Amirrtha et al. (2008), *Religious and cultural influence on contraceptives* are of the view that family and marriage are fundamental to Islamic society. Islam recognizes the normalcy of sexual intercourse provided it is within marriage. They stated that a majority of Islamic scholars indicate that family planning is not forbidden. Muslims' opinions regarding contraception range from permissible to disapproval. Some Muslim fundamentalists insist that contraception of any form violates God's intentions. They argue that when the justification of contraception is provided such as health, social and economic indications, coitus interruptus becomes recommended provided the method is reversible and does not induce abortion.

The ACQUIRE project (2008) in their work *Counseling for Effective Use of Family Planning: Trainers Manual*, made reference on how family planning nurses in America identify their clients and address their misconception, ensure optimal communication, improve clients' perception of risk, help client to make decision for permanent methods and other topics related to family planning are discussed.

4. Objective

1. To study the factors that influences their decisions to choose a method of contraceptive.
2. To identify the types of contraceptives use by the Moria community.

5. Methodology

Descriptive is used in this research paper. The study is based on both primary data and secondary data. For this study, the necessary data has been collected through interview method. Secondary data are taken from books, journals, articles, internet etc.

Population: All the Moria population living in the district of Sivasagar, Assam are the population of this study.

Sample Area: The required numbers of sample individuals are selected from the Amguri Block of Sivasagar District.

Sample Size: a total of 50 nos. of male (married) were taken as sample individuals for this study.

Family income of the Sample individuals: its range from 15000- 60000 per month

Educational Qualification of the Sample Individuals: Range from Primary to Higher Secondary

6. The Significance of the Study

In Assam as far the review of related literature, not a single research has been done on the mentioned topic. This work may serve as a reference for students who want to do research on a related topic. Also, it will be useful for resource persons who want to do scholarly work and presentations on Moria and family planning. The work will also inform policy makers to adopt proper policies and programmes for the progress and development of this marginalized country.

7. Finding:

Objective 1

Several factors influence the choice of contraceptive methods, and individuals or couples often consider a combination of these factors when making decisions. Some key factors as reported by the sample individuals are:

- i. Effectiveness: The reliability of a contraceptive method in preventing pregnancy is a significant consideration. Some methods are more effective than others.
- ii. Health Considerations: Individual health status, medical history, and any existing health conditions can influence the choice of contraceptive. For example, some methods may not be suitable for individuals with certain medical conditions.
- iii. Convenience: The ease of use and convenience of a contraceptive method play a role. Some people prefer methods that are easily accessible and require minimal effort.
- iv. Cost: The affordability of a contraceptive method can be a determining factor. Some methods may have associated costs for purchase, while others may be available at low or no cost.
- v. Side Effects: Potential side effects or adverse reactions associated with a contraceptive method can impact the decision-making process. Individuals may prioritize methods with fewer side effects.
- vi. Cultural and Religious Beliefs: Cultural or religious beliefs can influence contraceptive choices. Some methods may align better with specific cultural or religious values.
- vii. Partner Involvement: The preferences and opinions of a partner can influence the choice of

- contraceptive method. Open communication between partners is crucial in making joint decisions.
- viii. Long-Term vs. Short-Term Goals: Individuals or couples may consider their long-term family planning goals, such as whether they want to have children in the future or space out pregnancies.
 - ix. ASHA Karmi (Health Worker): Consulting with healthcare professionals also helps individuals or couples make informed decisions about the most suitable contraceptive method for their needs and preferences.

Objective 2

Contraceptive use can vary based on factors such as socio-economic conditions, education, cultural practices, and access to healthcare. Below we have discussed that we find empirically in the study area. The methods of contraceptive used by the Moria community are

- i. Sterilization: Tubal ligation for women and vasectomy for men are widely used.
- ii. Condoms: Male and female condoms are commonly used for both family planning and protection against sexually transmitted infections.
- iii. Oral Contraceptives: Birth control pills are popular among women.
- iv. Intrauterine Devices (IUDs): Both copper T and hormonal IUDs are used.
- v. Injectable Contraceptives: Some women use injectable contraceptives for family planning.
- vi. Emergency Contraception: This is used in cases of unprotected sex or contraceptive failure. This technique is used by the newly married couples.

8. Conclusion

From the discussion we can say that though the Moria community belongs to a marginalized group and their educational and economic condition is poor than many communities of Assam, still they have the awareness of all modern means of birth control. In our study we observed that all most all the respondent have used condoms as a means of birth control. But one fact they shared that the quality of condoms supplied by the ASHA worker are poor compared to the condoms available in Pharmacy. Moreover, they also shared that due to high price of those branded condoms they cannot afford those.

Reference

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