Overall Significant Predictors of Awareness on Reproductive Health among Rural, Urban, and Tribal Individuals

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Abstract

Introduction: Reproductive health is an integral part of health in general. Awareness on reproductive health is important if reproductive health is to be maintained and protected. There is a paucity of studies that examine this awareness among all three groups of people (rural, urban, and tribal) in India. In order to fill this gap, the present study was undertaken. **Aim:** To measure the level of awareness on reproductive health among rural, urban, and tribal people and to identify the significant predictors of it. **Methodology:** A total of 210 respondents constitute the sample in the present study. A self developed scale was used to measure the level of awareness on reproductive health. Step-wise multiple regression analysis was carried out to identify the significant predictors of awareness in the present study. **Results:** The typical respondent is moderately informed on matters of reproductive health. Moreover, education has about 41 per cent influence on the level of awareness on reproductive health among the respondents. Based on the results, a few suitable suggestions have been provided in the full paper.

Keywords: Tribal**,** Urban, Rural, Awareness, Contraceptives, Reproductive health

Introduction

Reproductive health is an essential component of overall health. Reproductive health could mean a wide range of things. The World Health Organization[1] defines reproductive health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so." In the matter of reproductive health, there can be no compromises as it can be a matter or life and death. In fact, it has been estimated that every year around the world, 210 million women experience life threatening complications as a result of pregnancy and 68,000 women die due to unsafe abortions according to Glasieret al.,[2]Awareness on key aspects relating to reproductive health is likely to play and important role in reducing such fatalities. The growing population is another concern that is considered to be a causal factor for many other global issues such as climate change. Bearinger et al.,[3]stress on the need for accurate sex education for both boys and girls so that they are equipped to negotiate sexual behaviours. In this context, the present study is aimed at understanding the overall predictors of awareness on reproductive health among rural, urban, and tribal individuals living in Karnataka/Bengaluru, India. Through an understanding of the significant predictors, suggestions can be provided to improve the situation with regard to awareness on reproductive health. However, before embarking on this journey, the researchers have examined previous studies on the matter.

Review of Literature

The researchers have reviewed a plethora of previous studies on the subject matter. Some of the recent and relevant ones are as follows: In a study by Kamalam and Rajalakshmi[4], itwas found that 40 per cent of college going girls were not aware of any form of contraception. Gupta et al., [5], in their study wanted to assess the level of awareness among school going rural and unmarried adolescents with regard to reproductive health. Their study constituted a sample of 8,453 respondents aged between ten to nineteen years and it was found that there was a huge gap in terms of the level of awareness on reproductive health among the respondents. Uddin and Mannan[6] through their study wanted to test the level of awareness of rural adolescent girls in Bangladesh with regard to reproductive health. The results

indicated the fact that a sizable proportion of the respondents had incorrect knowledge of issues concerning fertility, STD. Kotecha et al, [7] through their study among adolescents discovered the fact that only 31 per cent of boys and 33 per cent of girls had heard about contraception. After a review of such previous studies, the researchers discovered a certain gap in the existing literature on the subject matter.

Research Gap

Although it is observed that there have been several studies in the Indian subcontinent and in developing counties in general with regard to awareness on reproductive health, there is a paucity of studies looking at the issue from a holistic point of view. Most of the existing studies focus on rural areas or a certain group, such as college students. There is need to conduct a study that includes people from different areas (rural, urban, and tribal) and not just one. Secondly, although there are studies that indicate to us the level of awareness on reproductive health, there is a need for studies that examine the factors that influence this level of awareness so that appropriate suggestions can be provided to help improve it. In order to fill this research gap, the present study is being undertaken.

Objectives

1. To identify the level of awareness of individuals (rural, urban, and tribal) with regard to reproductive health.
2. To discover the significant predictors of reproductive health among the respondents.

Materials And Methods

Research Design

The researchers have adopted an exploratory research design as one of the main aims of the study is to discover the significant predictors of the awareness on reproductive health.

Tools

The researchers have used a self-prepared interview schedule with two parts. The first part contained questions relating to the background characteristics of the respondents while the second part of the schedule contained a self-developed scale to measure the level of awareness of reproductive health among the respondents. The scale as a total of 15 items with a three point Likert scale.(1-Little or no awareness, 2- Partially aware, 3-Fully aware). It has items concerning menstruation, contraception, and sexually transmitted diseases, to name a few. A score of 15-25 is considered to be low, a score of 26- 35 is considered to be moderate, while a score of 36 and above is considered to be indicative of a high level of awareness. The researchers performed face validity to establish the validity of the scale. With regard to the reliability of the scale, the reliability test produced a Cronbach alpha value of .896, indicating good internal consistency.

Universe and Sampling

The researchers have used a sample selected for a previous study conducted by the researchers. This included a total of 110 adults (18 years and above) from the Hakki-Pikki tribal community settled in Bengargetta, Bengaluru. Simple random sampling in the form of lottery method was used to select this sample from a total of 175 households. In order to conduct a more inclusive study, the researchers used purposive sampling to select 50 adults (18 years and above) from two urban areas (JP Nagar and Shantinagar) and 50 adults from two rural areas (Bidadi and Hunsuru). Thus, a total of 210 respondents constitute the sample in the present study (110+50+50). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy test was performed to find out whether the selected sample was adequate. The KMO value was found to be .910 indicating that the sample was more than adequate.

Statistical Test:

A step-wise multiple regression analysis was carried out to identify the significant predictors ($p<0.05$) of awareness on reproductive health among the respondents.

Results

Background Characteristics Of Respondents & Their Score

The mean age of the respondents was found to be 33 years, with the minimum being 18 years and the maximum being 70 years. Majority (60 per cent) of the respondents were female, while the remaining (40 per cent) were male. Majority (83.8 per cent) of the total respondents were found to be following Hinduism. One tenth (10 per cent) of the total respondents were Christians, while the remaining (6.2 per cent) were Muslims. Married individuals constitute the majority (66.7 per cent) of the total respondents. A little less than one fifth (19 per cent) of the total respondents were unmarried. Five respondents (2.4 per cent) were widows while 2 respondents (1 per cent) were separated. With regard to education, it was found that on average, the respondents had studied up to 10th standard. The average score of the respondents with regard to the level of awareness was found to be 34.43, indicating a moderate level of awareness. The minimum score was found to be 20 and the maximum was found to be 45.

Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis

As mentioned previously, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed to identify the significant predictors of awareness on reproductive health among the total respondents (n = 210). The results of this analysis can be seen in table 1

Table 1 shows the results of the step-wise multiple regression analysis to discover the significant predictors of awareness on reproductive health among the respondents.

From column number 1, the model number can be inferred. Column number 2 indicates the significant predictor. Constant refers to the dependent variable, that is, awareness on reproductive health. Education, in the present study, is the significant predictor of awareness on reproductive health. R, seen in column number 3, represents the correlation between observed and predicted values. R^2, as seen in column 4, indicates how closely the data in the present study are fitted with the regression line. The adjusted R^2 seen in column 5, represents the R square values when they are adjusted as per the number of predictors. In column 6, we notice the change in R square, which is the change in R square when another predictor is added. However, since there is only one significant predictor in present study, there is no adjustment/change in the R^2 value. The importance of the independent variable (education) can be seen through the unstandardised beta weight value in column 7. In column 8, one can notice the standard error, indicating the accuracy of the predictor (education). Standardised beta weight as seen in column 9 is a more developed version on the unstandardised beta weight. The t value and p values are seen in column 10 and 11.

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was twofold. On the one hand it was aimed at assessing the level of awareness of the respondents with respect to reproductive health. It was found to be moderate (mean = 34.43). On the other hand, another major objective was to discover the significant predictors of the awareness on reproductive health. For this purpose, a step-wise multiple regression analysis was carried out. The results indicated the fact that education has about 41 per cent influence on the awareness of the respondents with respect to reproductive health. Thus, based on the findings it can be concluded that education plays a vital role in this matter. Since on average, the respondents have studied only up to 10th standard, it is suggested that there could be literacy drives organised in all three areas (rural, urban, and tribal) to help increase the literacy rate and thereby also awareness on reproductive health. Moreover, sex education could be included as an integral part of the education system. Instead of shying away from discussing it, it ought to be discussed so that less people fall victims to deadly diseases such as HIV that continues to plague our country and the world.

Model	Predictors	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Change in R square	b	SEb	β	t	p
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	(Constant)	.639	.409	.406	.409	27.843	.644	.639	43.223	.000
	Education					.687	.057		11.987	.000

Table.1: Different Fungal colonies isolated from different markets of Bangalore

Based on the results in table 1, it can be sated that the education of the respondents (measured in years) has 40.9 per cent influence on their awareness on reproductive health (see column 6). Moreover, from the unstandardised beta weight (see column 7), it can be stated that when the level of education of the respondent increases by .687 units (about 7 months), their awareness on reproductive health increases by 1 unit (1 score).

Thus, in the present study, education has about 41 per cent influence on the respondents' awareness on reproductive health. The remaining 59 per cent of the variance remains unexplained and requires further investigation through future research.

This is consistent with a finding in an American study by Chandra et al., [8] where it has been estimated that having three or more children is closely associated with lower levels of education among other factors.

Conflict of Interest

No known conflict of interest.

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