

**PREFERENCE FOR TRADITIONAL CONTRACEPTIVE USE AND WOMEN'S EDUCATION: THE
CASE OF SRI LANKA**

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Abstract: *Even though Sri Lanka has implemented a vigorous family planning programme, higher proportion of traditional contraceptive users has been observed among educated women in recent years. This study attempts to examine the factors influencing the reliance on traditional contraceptive methods among educated women in Sri Lanka. The study uses data from Sri Lanka Demographic and Health survey 2006-7 (SLDHS) and data collected from in-depth interviews. Quantitative data from SLDHS show the recent pattern and differentials of contraceptive use, while qualitative findings reveal key factors which contribute to the decision on traditional contraceptive-use. Fear on side effects of modern contraceptive methods and better communication and co-operation between husband and wife on sexual and reproductive health matters are found as main factors influencing the use of traditional contraceptive methods. In addition, lack of time availability for the use of modern contraceptive methods, less frequency of sexual intercourse and building up strong confidence on traditional contraceptive methods also found as other important factors. Since some misbeliefs on modern contraceptive methods among educated women were found, it is necessary to strengthen the family planning counselling targeting the educated women. Several policy initiatives such as introducing institutionalized awareness programmes on modern contraceptive methods for working women and promoting awareness programme on family planning through media are described. The importance of disseminating proper education on modern contraceptive use among educated women is also highlighted.*

Key words: fertility; contraceptive methods; educated women; traditional contraceptives