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Understanding Post-Abortion Contraceptive Use in India

September 2025

Abortion is a stigmatized and often unsafe practice in India, but remains common. **Post-abortion contraception is crucial** in preventing subsequent unintended pregnancies and reducing health risks for women and children, **yet its use remains low in India**. Existing studies are limited by small sample sizes, restricted geographical coverage, unclear categorization of contraceptive methods, and unaddressed reporting bias. Using data from NFHS-4 (2015–16) and NFHS-5 (2019–21), this study **examines changes in post-abortion contraceptive use and the factors associated with its use**.

Objectives

1. To examine changes in post-abortion contraceptive use among currently married women aged 15-49 in India between 2015-16 (NFHS-4) and 2019-21 (NFHS-5).
2. To identify factors associated with post-abortion contraceptive use using data from NFHS-5 (2019-21).

Data and Methods

Reproductive calendar data from NFHS-4 (2015–16) and NFHS-5 (2019–21) were used to analyse changes and factors associated with post-abortion contraceptive use among currently married women aged 15-49 who had an abortion in the last five years preceding the survey and completed at least one year post-abortion. Contraceptive use was categorized into long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), short-acting reversible contraception (SARC), sterilization, and traditional methods. A multinomial probit regression model, adjusted for reporting bias using the Inverse Mills Ratio, was applied to identify the key factors associated with method choice.

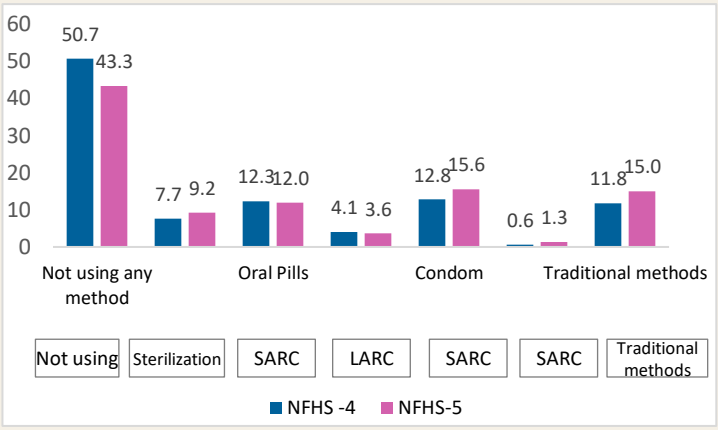
Findings

- **Post-abortion contraceptive use increased from 49% in NFHS-4 to 57% in NFHS-5**, with considerable rises in condom use (13% to 16%) and traditional methods (12% to 15%).
- **Women who had abortions at earlier gestational ages were more likely to use SARC and traditional methods of contraception** than to not initiate contraception.
- **Women who had abortion in a public health facility were more likely** than women who had abortion in private/other facilities **to use LARC** post-abortion, and all other forms of contraception.
- Women who had used LARC as the most recent method before abortion were more likely to initiate LARC than to not initiate contraception post abortion.

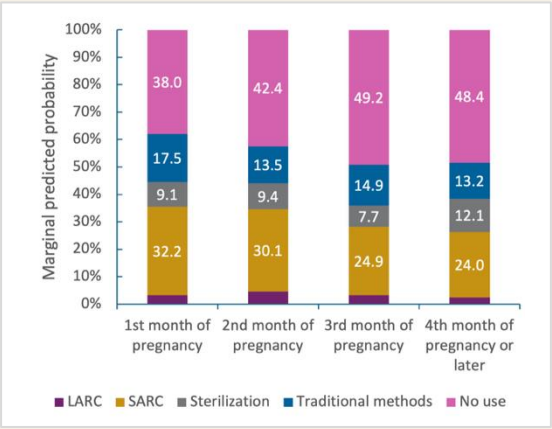
This brief summarizes findings from the following research paper: Jose J, Kannaujiya AK, Kumar K, McDougal L, Hay K, et al. (2025) Post-abortion contraceptive use among currently married women in India: New evidence from National Family Health Survey 2019–2021 (NFHS-5). PLOS ONE 20(5): e0322784. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0322784.

- **Women who had a son were associated with higher post-abortion contraceptive use**.
- **Use of contraceptives post-abortion increased with increasing age of women.**
- Women from higher wealth quintiles were more likely to use SARC or traditional methods post-abortion.
- **SARCs were the most common methods initiated post-abortion.**

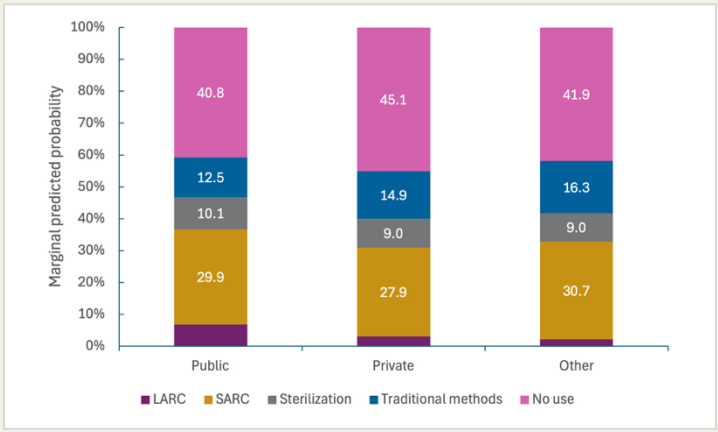
Percentage distribution of currently married women by post-abortion contraception, NFHS-4 & NFHS-5



Post-abortion contraceptive use by gestational age



Post-abortion contraceptive use by place of abortion



Conclusion

- The study underlines the **need to address barriers to post-abortion contraception use** and highlights the role of effective family planning programs in reducing unintended pregnancies.
- The findings also emphasize the **importance of integrating family planning services into abortion care and ensuring counselling on contraceptive options during the post-abortion period**, as crucial measures to improve women's health.

Suggested Citation: Jose J, Kannuajiva AK, Kumar K, McDougal L, Hay K, et al. Understanding post-abortion contraceptive use in India. Mumbai, India & San Diego, USA. GENDER Project, International Institute for Population Sciences & Center on Gender Equity and Health, University of California San Diego.

The GENDER (Gender Equity and Demographic Research) Project is a collaboration of the University of California, San Diego's Center on Gender Equity and Health and India's International Institute on Population Sciences. For more information, please visit www.iipsindia.ac.in/content/gender-project or geh.ucsd.edu. This work was funded by the Gates Foundation (Grant INV-047355).

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