

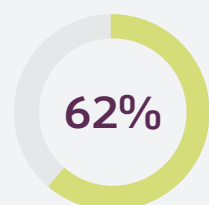
# KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE YOUNG WIVES STUDY: UJJAIN, MADHYA PRADESH

## ABOUT THE STUDY

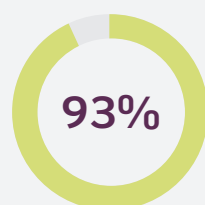
The Young Wives (YW) study examines the influence of socio-cultural and gender norms on Family Planning (FP) among rural couples living in areas with higher prevalence of underage marriages, by studying the cultural ecologies of health that encompasses the interaction between cultural beliefs, practices, and environments and how they influence modern contraceptive use and childbearing. Focusing on wives aged 15-19, married for at least a year, it combines qualitative and quantitative methods. The sample consists of 541 young wives alongside

217 husbands, 217 Mothers-in-law (MILs), and 228 Frontline Health Workers (FLWs), ensuring diverse perspectives. Further, the study employs a triad approach for gathering household level data from wives, husbands, and MILs. FLWs and community influencers' perspectives have also been taken enriching the findings. Overall, the study provides contextual evidence that can support design of norms shifting interventions aimed at avoiding teenage pregnancy.

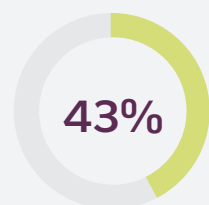
## PROFILE OF YOUNG WIVES



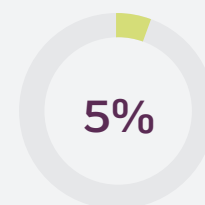
62% of young wives are housewives.



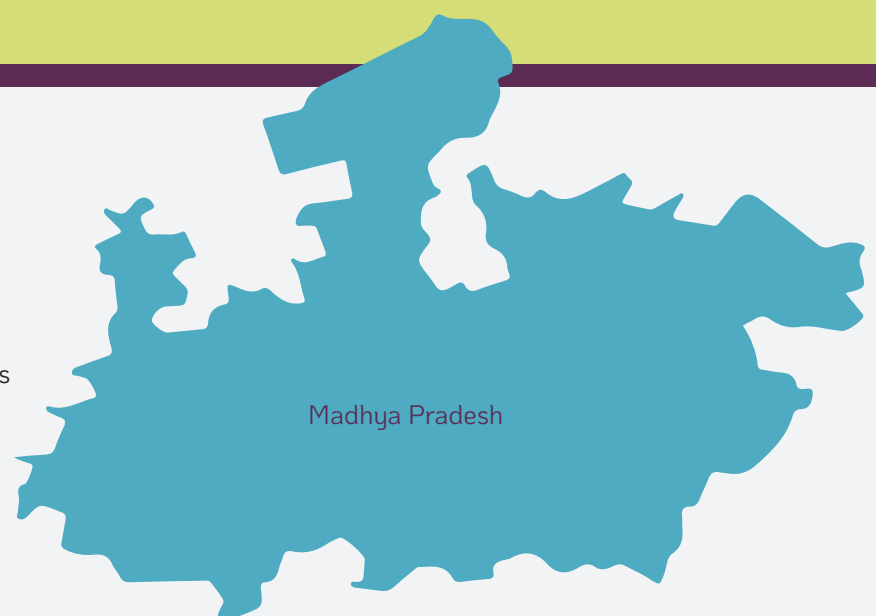
93% of the young wives live in joint families.



43% of the young wives belong to either Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes households.



5% of the husbands are migrant workers<sup>1</sup>



MEAN AGE OF YOUNG WIVES IN UJJAIN IS **18.4 YEARS.**

# KEY INSIGHTS



## 1. Restrictions on mobility and limited asset ownership have negative implications for young wives exercising agency over decisions related to family planning and use of contraceptives.



Around **82%** of young wives had never been to hospital/clinic/doctor at all or have not been there alone.



Over **90%** of the young wives need permission from MIL/FILs and/or husbands to visit their family/friends/relatives.



Only **14%** of young wives own any productive assets or land/house on their name.



## 2. While general knowledge is high and social media use is prevalent, it is not necessarily reflected in knowledge of family planning.

A large percentage of young wives are familiar with key political figures such as their



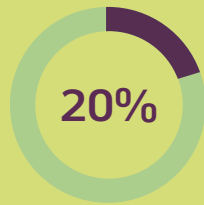
## 3. Misconceptions about contraceptive safety and effectiveness hinder adoption of family planning methods.



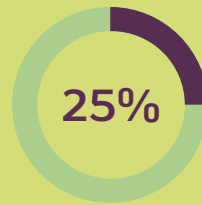
82% of MILs and 41% of FLWs believe that modern contraceptives are inferior to traditional methods due to their perceived side effects.



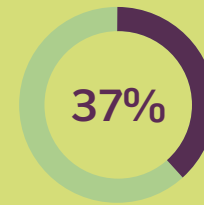
#### 4. Expectedly, family planning uptake was low, especially the modern contraceptive use with high unmet needs and a higher prevalence of teenage pregnancy.



Only around 20% of the wives reported currently using modern family planning methods.



25% of young wives in Ujjain have unmet needs for contraception.



37% of wives in Ujjain had their first child within the first year of marriage.



#### 5. Information deficit and limited interactions with Frontline workers impedes young couples' access to family planning resources and support.

Only about 9% of the young wives received family planning counselling in the last one year.

9%

Around 24% FLWs responded that young couples never sought their advice or suggestions on family planning.

24%



#### 6. There are clearly defined fertility norms in the community, unlike norms relating to contraceptive use, which impedes adoption of family planning methods.



Over **9 in 10** young wives perceive societal pressure for early childbirth in all married couples.



Close to **60%** of young wives and husbands lack awareness regarding the contraceptive practices of their peers within the community.

# RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Family planning programs should prioritize an in-depth understanding of prevailing social norms, particularly those related to fertility, which frequently promote early childbearing among young couples. Strategies should be tailored to address these norms effectively.



2. In addition to targeting young wives and their immediate family members, particularly husbands and mothers-in-law, family planning programs should broaden their scope to include community influencers, health cadre, and local health providers. This holistic approach ensures a comprehensive engagement strategy within the community.



3. Family planning programs should adopt a multifaceted approach, promoting group-based interactions and community-level dialogues to stimulate discourse on family planning methods and the risks associated with teenage pregnancy. Leveraging existing community platforms and institutions can facilitate these discussions and foster greater awareness and acceptance of family planning practices.

## ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup>Migrant workers are defined as those who do not usually live with their wives in the same village

<sup>2</sup>Definitions of descriptive and injunctive norms

In social psychology, social norms can be characterized by two key elements:

(a) Descriptive norms: perceptions of what others typically do within a certain group

(b) Injunctive norms: beliefs about what actions are socially approved or disapproved within that group



Family Planning Norms and Practices among Young Wives in Rural India. PCI India. 2024

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