

ANNEXURE I

Concept Mapping Exercise

To understand the cultural of the concept "Involuntary childlessness", an exercise with a group representing the middle and the upper middle class sections of the society had been planned. The exercise was planned with a view to evolve a conceptual framework for the present study.

Objective of the exercise

To know the societal construction of the term "childlessness" and its related issues.

Participant group

Ten persons that is, five married couples, from middle and upper middle class families, representing the age group of 20-70 years were involved in the exercise.

Tool

A discussion guide was framed in the form of an online covering various issues related to childlessness based on the following aspects

- Importance of parenthood
- Meaning of infertility
- Treatment seeking behaviors
- Coping behaviors
- Role of the health system

Gender differences formed an integral part of each of the domains.

Procedure

Step 1: The selected participants were contacted and a mutually convenient date and time was scheduled for the exercise. They were informed about the objectives and purpose of the exercise in advance. They were also given the guideline describing the salient points around which the discussion would be centered.

Step 2: The exercise was carried out separately with each couple. They were requested to express their views and perceptions related to the research, using their own understanding and experiences. The researcher used the interview guidelines to probe further. Each interview was noted down in points, which was later on expanded and verbatim were retained.

Step 3: The five couple interviews were analyzed. The various responses obtained were noted separately. The same was written on different square pieces of paper, which were used for mapping.

Step 4: To construct the concept map, the participants were gathered in a group (they were oriented to the exercise initially). They were then asked to have a look at the various responses obtained and then discuss within the group how these could be categorized. The categorized Responses were expected to form different clusters. The final concept map consisted of a meaningful arrangement of these clusters, depicting the socio-cultural notions of infertility.

Step 5: The group was asked to interpret the concept map. They were asked to examine the items that were placed in each cluster and decide if any item should be "dropped" or "moved" to another cluster. Then they were asked to provide a name for each cluster that described its content and ideas. The meaning of the map, therefore, evolved from the group through the discussions that followed the exercise.

Step 6: The concept map was used to develop the conceptual framework for the present research study.

The tables given below, tables A to G provide an overview of the perceptions of the participants in the concept mapping exercise on involuntary childlessness.

Highlights of the Results from the Concept Mapping Exercise

Table A

Background Information of the Participants

Sr. No.	Item	Respondents (Married Couples)									
		Couple I		Couple II		Couple III		Couple IV		Couple V	
		H	W	H	W	H	W	H	W	H	W
1	Age	25	23	37	36	47	45	55	55	62	60
2	Education	Graduate	Graduate	B.E.	Post graduate	Graduate	Graduate	GCD	Inter ARTS	Double Graduate	Inter ARTS
3	Occupation	Service	HW	Business	Service	Service	HW	Retired	HW	Retired	HW
4	No. of years of Marriage	1-1/2		11		20		30		40	
5	No. of Children	-		1		2		3		2	
6	Type of Children	Joint		Nuclear		Nuclear		Joint		Nuclear	
7	Family Income-Monthly	More than 15,000		More than 20,000		More than 20,000		More than 20,000		More than 20,000	

Note . H =Husband W = Wife HW=House Wife

Table B**Definition of Childlessness and Immediate Steps in Dealing with the Same**

Definition of Childlessness		
Sr. no.	Age Cohort	Responses
1	20	-
2	30	Couples trying to have a child over more than two years without using contraceptives
3	40	A couple having no child; egg in the woman does not develop; it is a disorder that can be cured; it is also a state of mind, having a child and yet not being happy with it is equivalent to being childless
4	50	A mango tree without any mangoes
5	60	-
Immediate Steps in Dealing with the Same		
1	20	Medical consultation to confirm chances of conception; check-up of both husband and wife and respective treatments
2	30	Medical consultation to confirm chances of conception; medication and if need be adoption of Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)
3	40	Medication and opinion of 2-3 doctors; complying with the treatment; check-up of both husband and wife and respective treatments, adoption of ART
4	50	Medication
5	60	-

Note: The empty column marked by the sign (-) suggests no response

Table C**Values Attached to Children**

Sr. no.	Age cohort	Responses
1	20s	A child is necessary to continue the family lineage, a childless woman may not be allowed to conduct rites, e.g. <i>shrimant</i> (baby shower), <i>kanyadaan</i> (giving away of the bride during the marriage ceremony), people who have children are preferred, lest the childless persons cast an evil eye
2	30s	Feelings of ultimate fulfillment for a woman; continuation of family lineage; childless woman may not be allowed to conduct rites, e.g. <i>shrimant</i> (baby shower), <i>kanyadaan</i> (giving away of the bride during the marriage ceremony); it is believed that for the salvation of the soul, funeral rituals should be performed by the son

3	40s	A child is not necessary to continue the family lineage; but having a child leads to feelings of ultimate fulfillment for a woman; there are rituals where a childless woman may not be allowed to conduct rites, e.g. <i>shrimant</i> (baby shower), <i>kanyadaan</i> (giving away of the bride during the marriage ceremony) Do not agree to the notion that for salvation of the soul, the funeral rituals should be performed by the son
4	50s	A child is necessary to continue the family lineage; emotions and feelings of love are showered in a natural way if its one's own child; a woman may not be allowed to conduct rites, e.g. <i>shrimant</i> (baby shower), <i>kanyadaan</i> (giving away of the bride during the marriage ceremony), people who have children are preferred, lest the childless persons cast an evil eye
5	60s	-

Note: The empty column marked by the sign (-) suggests no response

Table D

Feelings Regarding Childlessness

Sr. no.	Age cohort	Responses
Social Dimension		
1	20s	Women have to suffer more; women are sent in for checkups
2	30s	-
3	40s	More important for a woman to have a child; every woman desires to have a child; society should accept childless couples as they do a handicap person
4	50s	Women have to suffer more; people try to take advantage of their situation (childless couple)
5	60s	Hardly 1% face this problem, 95% people overcome infertility; the small family norm is in and thus, this topic of discussion is out of context
Personal level		
1	20s	It is not necessary that everyone has to have a child
2	30s	Feelings of isolation may creep in
3	40s	Problem can be with either spouse, so no hard feelings, no one person can be blamed; should not feel ashamed or bad about it; should not be obsessed with what society will say; one should train ones mind to accept the status; it should not be the reason for unhappiness; can adopt the policy of Double Income No Kid
4	50s	-
5	60s	Nowadays there is the concept of Double Income No Kid; when they see children leaving their parents they feel lucky to be childless

Note: The empty column marked by the sign (-) suggests no response.

Table E**Ways of Coping with Childlessness**

Sr. no.	Age cohort	Responses
1	20s	Adoption from within the family; adoption from orphanage (last option); invest feelings in other children
2	30s	Adoption with mutual consent, work among children or in orphanages; take up responsibility of any one needy child
3	40s	Adoption; shift focus to constructive, creative activities; accept each other or separate mutually; leave it to God; accept the status and cultivate the idea of living childless; console self of having a better position to enjoy life; one needs support in the form of counseling services and peer support
4	50s	Adoption from within the family
5	60s	-

Note: The empty column marked by the sign (-) suggests no response

Table F**Gender Differences in Experiences of Childlessness**

Sr. no.	Age cohort	Responses
Men's Experiences of Childlessness		
1	20s	Devotes more time outside and so may be spared from the family's verbal tortures
2	30s	-
3	40s	Ego is hurt, "what will people think of me, 'man but childless'"
4	50s	-
5	60s	-
Women's Experiences of Childlessness		
1	20s	Has to bear verbal torture of the family and society; fear that husband may leave her
2	30s	Fear that husband may leave her; feelings of physiological incompleteness; feelings of an incomplete family
3	40s	Heart is hurt; emotions are hurt; emotions of motherhood cannot be expressed and fulfilled; may not accept her status; feelings of deprived motherhood sets in; is more affected than man; as all women want to become mothers and thus feelings of incompleteness (<i>apurna</i>), which is quite natural, creeps in
4	50s	Emotions are hurt; is more affected than man; has to bear verbal torture of the family and society
5	60s	All women want to become mothers

Note: The empty column marked by the sign (-) suggests no response.

Table G
Psychological Implications of Involuntary Childlessness

Sr. no.	Age cohort	Responses
1	20s	Mental breakdown, self torture; feelings of awkwardness during occasions; curb self feelings/expressions; marital conflicts
2	30s	Might feel very bad intrinsically; mental breakdown; self torture; feel isolated if not invited at certain places like birthday parties; family pressures; marital conflicts; adoption of spiritual and religious practices
3	40s	Might feel very bad intrinsically; mental breakdown; self torture, initially, very shocking
4	50s	Mental breakdown; self torture; feelings of loneliness and insecurity; unable to enjoy the joys of rearing a child; unhappy for life; in a joint family. pressure of work on woman increases, family pressures; marital conflicts
5	60s	Modern society is taking it easy, mentally prepared not to have children for 5-7 years, so no problem if it extends