



UNWANTED CHILDREN AS A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BURDEN: INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY OF CONTRACEPTION AND FIGHTING CULTURAL PRESSURE ON WOMEN

Background:

Since the beginning of the existence of first people, women have been considered as a cleaning and cooking ladies, as well as a factory on babies. Their only objective was to give birth to as many babies as they could and they weren't considered equal to men. With the society development, the position of women in society develops too – they are doing the same jobs as men do (politics, management, etc.) and we are all considered equal. Although our society is often very well developed, there are still states and communities that are not allowing contraception and where women have to fight the lack of contraception daily. Those states are mostly 3rd world countries and religious countries. Religion has a great impact on society where we grow – for example Roman Catholic Christians were very strict about contraception, it was considered like an abortion, today they are more open-minded about this. Protestants permit using contraception and consider family planning as an important moral good. Jews are putting the well-being of their women on the first place and allow the use of birth controls. In 2012 40% of 213.4 million of pregnancies were unintended (worldwide). In less developed countries 190 million pregnancies were registered, out of which 39% were unwanted, abortion or miscarriages. For comparison 23.4 million pregnancies in developed countries ended with 47% being unintended (all data from 2012). The worst results come from Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, Congo, Gabon, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe or Madagascar. Most of these countries are a

part of the countries with the highest fertility and the highest natal death rate at the same time. That is the case of African countries Somalia, Mali or Niger. Besides Africa, many Asian countries suffer the same problem – high fertility and high natal death rate at the same time. That would be a problem for Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea or Philippines. All these countries suffer economic, social or psychological problems within the state and some of these countries suffer religious pressure too.

According to rainn.org (rape, abuse & incest national network) 44% of victims are under age of 18, 80% of those are under age of 30. 5% of these women get pregnant. The problem is often whether to keep that child or have an abortion. In 2012 in America 17 342 babies were a product of a rape. These women suffer psychological, drug and alcohol abuse problems and are 4 times more likely to commit a suicide. But they have to take care of children that they didn't even want. They have to quit schools or jobs in order to have time for the baby. And they need money to keep the baby fed and safe, so they ask to state for a palimony. The careers and whole lives of these women are over just because they were raped or had an accidental intercourse with someone. But they could have avoided this situation if they were using contraception. Contraception is available worldwide and it's up to the society or the religious groups to recognize it as a meaningful way of how to prevent the women from having the unwanted children.

UN Involvement:

In 2011, the UNFPA and the Center for Reproductive Rights published a briefing paper on the subject of "The Rights to Contraceptive Information and Services for Women and Adolescents". This paper acknowledges the importance of birth control pills and informs about good and meaningful ways of using the contraception. This paper declares the right to use the contraception as a human right and stresses the health, economic and social benefits of its usage. "Women's and adolescents' right to contraceptive information and services is grounded in basic human rights. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development recognized "the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice." Additionally, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has indicated that "States parties should provide adolescents with access to

sexual and reproductive information, including on family planning and contraceptives, the dangers of early pregnancy, the prevention of HIV and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).¹ Also according to Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin (the executive director of the fund) women that use the contraception are better educated, healthier, more empowered in their households and communities and more economically productive.² In addition since August 2012, contraception coverage is included in the employer-provided insurance for no additional cost. These measures were taken very positively, except for the far-right religious and conservative groups. They say that contraception is infringing their religious liberty.

In order to prevent the quality, accessibility, acceptability and availability of contraceptive product the World Health Organization (WHO) determined the critical questions and outcomes concerning the use of contraception. The WHO recommends increasing the facilities availability along with moderating the distance to these services, funding budgets to family planning, regulating the contraception cost or raising the standard of care to the established. There are also 9 points that the WHO created in order to prevent the human rights:

1. non-discrimination in provision of contraceptive information and services
2. availability of contraceptive information and services
3. accessibility of contraceptive information and services
4. acceptability of contraceptive information and services
5. quality of contraceptive information and services
6. informed decision-making in provision of contraceptive information and services
7. privacy and confidentiality in provision of contraceptive information and services
8. participation in provision of contraceptive information and services
9. accountability in provision of contraceptive information and services.³

Looking at the map created by Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division monitoring the use of contraception in 2011, the worst results are not surprisingly

¹ Cited from <http://www.unfpa.org/resources/rights-contraceptive-information-and-services-women-and-adolescents>

² <http://thinkprogress.org/health/2012/11/14/1189161/un-contraception-human-right/>

³ http://www.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/102539/1/9789241506748_eng.pdf

coming from the central African states, but also from Afghanistan and Pakistan, unstable and religiously affected countries.

Questions to consider

1. Is your country a religious country?
2. What is your country's attitude towards the contraception?
3. What is your country's fertility? What is your country's natal death rate?
4. Is your country suffering a political, social or economic issues caused by rape or unintended intercourse resulting in unwanted children?
5. Are your women put under a pressure due to their choice of taking birth control pills?

Useful links and sources

<http://www.fpa.org.uk/sites/default/files/religion-contraception-and-abortion-factsheet.pdf>

<http://mic.com/articles/19272/un-declares-birth-control-a-human-right-and-america-falls-short>

<https://rainn.org/get-information/statistics/sexual-assault-victims>

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2e/Countriesbyfertilityrate.svg>

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.NMRT/countries?display=map>

<http://www.unfpa.org/resources/rights-contraceptive-information-and-services-women-and-adolescents>

<http://thinkprogress.org/health/2012/11/14/1189161/un-contraception-human-right/>

http://www.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/102539/1/9789241506748_eng.pdf

http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/contraceptive2011/wallchart_front.pdf

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