Public perspective on uses and indications of surrogacy in Sri Lanka

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Objective

To describe uses and indications and factors associated with surrogacy among 20 - 40-year-old adults in Sri Lanka.

Design

This descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among men and women aged 20 - 40 years, in Colombo District, Sri Lanka.

Methods

The study instrument was an online questionnaire with close ended questions. A sample of 431 was obtained via a snowball sampling method. Inferential statistics were performed using Chi-Square, Fisher's Exact and Mann-Whitney U Tests, with significance level set at 95%.

Results

The mean age of the study population was elicited as 26.01 years with the median age being 24 years. The higher proportion of the participants were female (68.68%) while 94.20% (n = 406) were heterosexuals. 80.51% were of Buddhist faith while 3.25% had no religious belief. According to the assessed proportions of level of the religious belief, 28.31% were more liberal while 39.44% held moderate views and 29% were firm followers of their respective faiths. Participants in general preferred the usage of surrogacy in women who are medically unable to conceive a child in comparison with the other given circumstances.

The sexuality, religion and the level of religious belief depicted significance ($p = 0.001$, $p = 0.002$, $p = 0.004$ respectively) when associated with same-sex couples/ homosexuals opting for surrogacy as a mean of parenthood. In each assessed category higher levels of acceptance were demonstrated in non-heterosexuals (88%) non-religious believers (92.86%) and more liberal believers (63.93%). When the use of surrogacy to circumvent cosmetic effects of pregnancy was considered, significant difference of acceptance was shown in categories of level of religious belief ($p = 0.026$), sexuality ($p = 0.000$) and religion ($p = 0.000$) with liberal believers (39.34%), non-heterosexuals (72%) and non-religious believers (78.57%) predominating the level of acceptance.

Conclusion

Non-heterosexuals, Buddhists and respondents with liberal religious beliefs were more open minded as to the usage of surrogacy in various instances as opposed to their counterparts. This may have significant socio-cultural impacts on acceptance and normalization of third-party reproduction method like surrogacy, even if properly regulated.