

CHILDBEARING CHOICES



UNWANTED PREGNANCY In many countries, women are engaged in childbearing for the better part of their adult lives. To what extent are women having the number of children they want? Generally, women say that the majority of births are desired. *In 24 out of 42 countries surveyed, however, women report an average of at least one unwanted birth.*

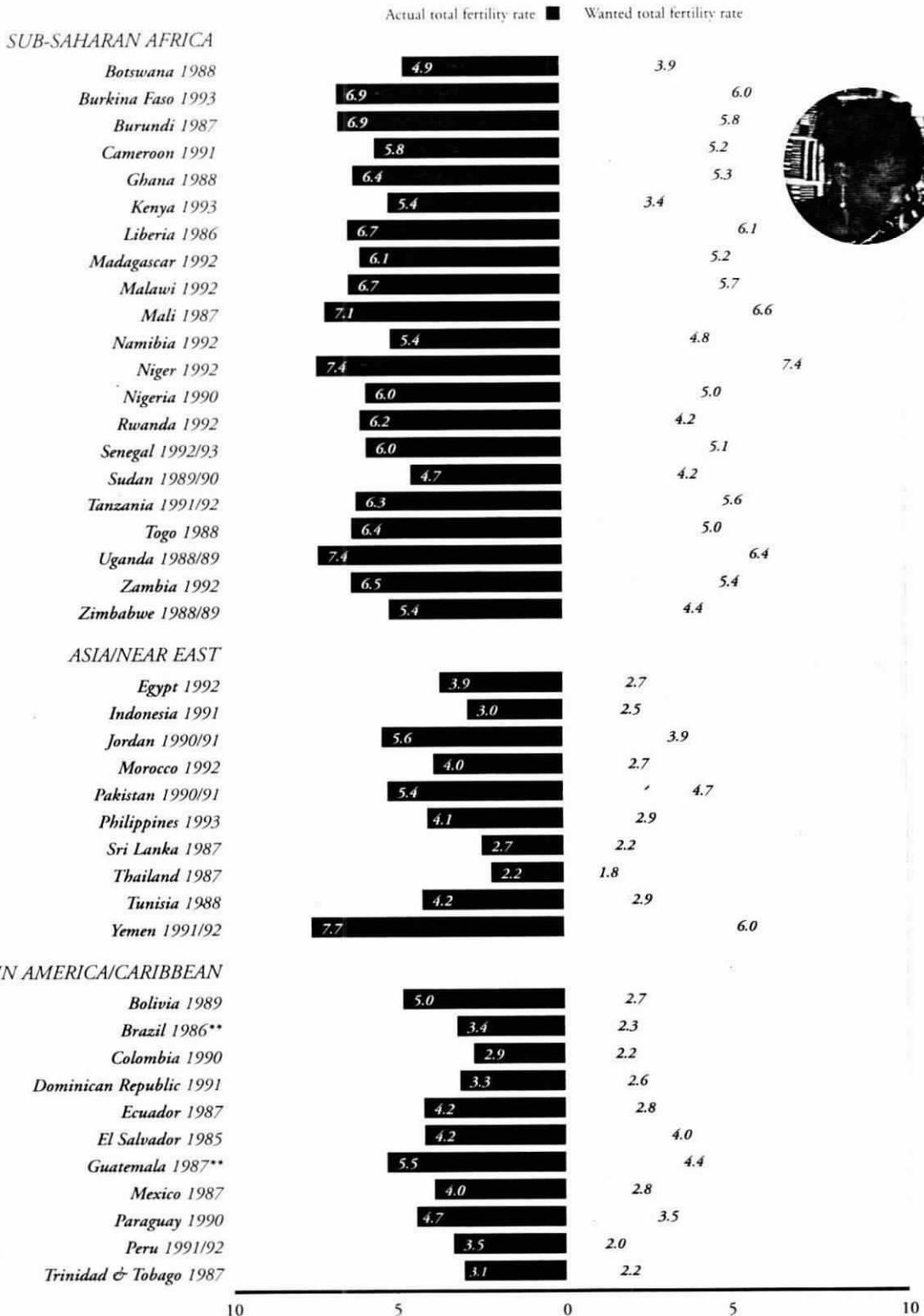
When asked about their ideal family size, Kenyan women report having an average of two births more than desired. In 16 other sub-Saharan countries with higher fertility rates than Kenya, however, women report a lower average number of unwanted births. Women in Niger, where the fertility rate is 7.4 births per woman, identify all pregnancies as wanted.

In Latin America, Asia, and the Near East, unwanted fertility ranges from an average of 0.2 births per woman in El Salvador to 2.3 births in Bolivia. In Yemen, with the highest fertility among all the countries surveyed, the ideal family size women report is nearly two children less than the actual fertility rate.



WANTED FERTILITY

Total fertility rates and wanted fertility rates for women 15 to 49*



*Rates refer to three years preceding survey except for Niger and Pakistan, where rates refer to six years preceding survey.

**Women 15 to 44

IDEAL FAMILY SIZE On average, women want smaller families than they did in the past.

Recent survey findings reveal that the number of children women consider ideal has declined over time in every country surveyed. *In eight out of 20 countries, women report an average ideal family size that is at least one child less than the ideal that women reported 10 to 15 years earlier.*

Even in countries where women have historically wanted the most children, the survey findings reveal decreases in the ideal family size. In 1977, Kenyan women reported an average ideal family size of 7.2 children. By 1993, the ideal family size among women - 3.9 - was substantially smaller. Among the countries surveyed, the largest decreases in ideal family size over time have taken place in Kenya, Senegal, and Jordan.

Although ideal family size is declining, many women continue to want at least three children. Among the countries for which trend information is available, only four - Egypt, Thailand, Colombia, and Peru - currently have an ideal family size that is under three children. In sub-Saharan Africa, women generally report an ideal family size of five or six children, but in some countries it is as high as seven.

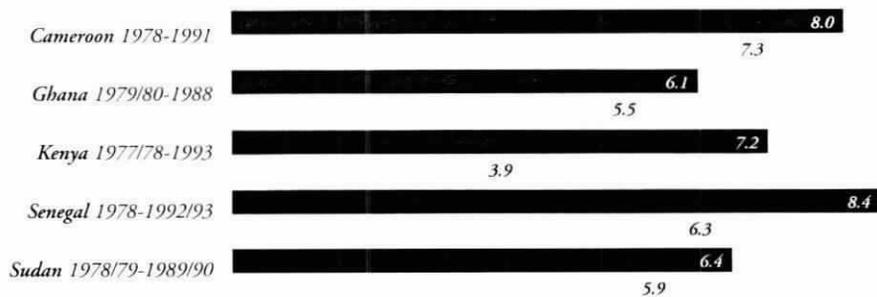


TRENDS IN IDEAL FAMILY SIZE

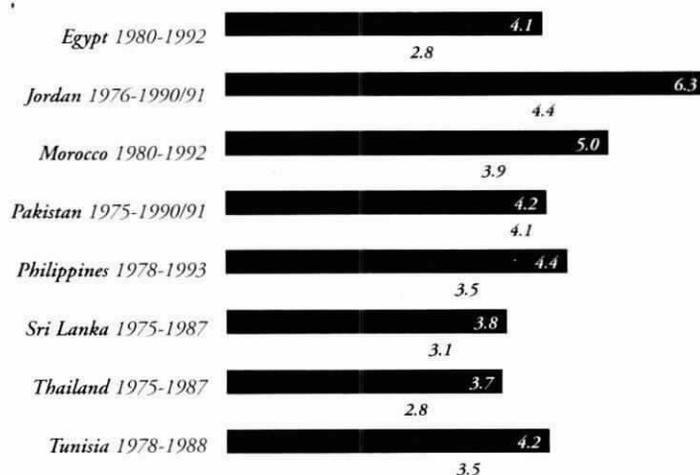
Mean desired number of children among currently married women 15 to 49

WFS-World Fertility Survey ■ DHS-Demographic and Health Survey

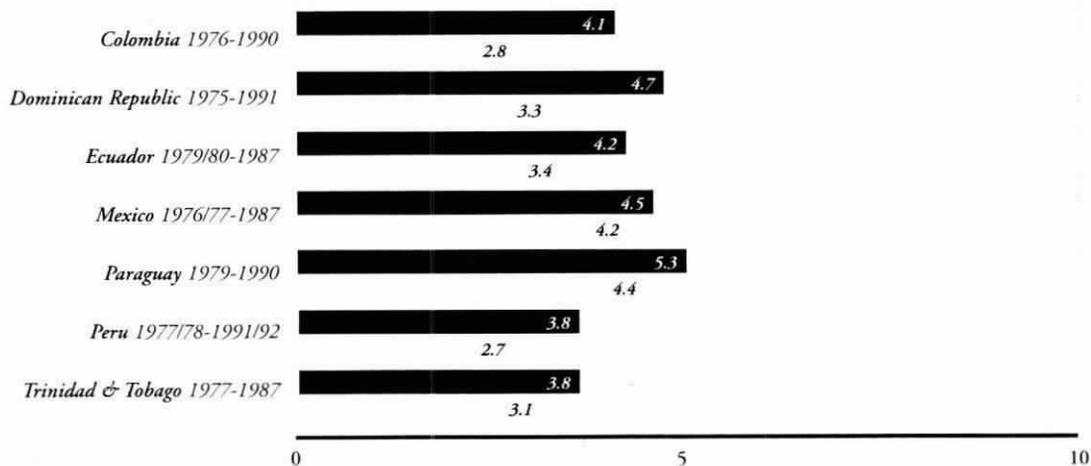
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



ASIA/NEAR EAST



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KNOWLEDGE OF CONTRACEPTION AMONG WOMEN Contraception provides a means for women to gain greater control over their reproductive lives, enabling them to have as many children as they want and when they choose. Before family planning can be a viable option, however, women need to know of a contraceptive method and source.

Overall, awareness among women about contraception is high. In 21 out of 42 countries surveyed, 95 percent or more of women have heard of at least one traditional or modern method. In most other countries, 70 percent or more of women know of at least one method. Notable exceptions are Mali and Nigeria, where less than 45 percent of married women are aware of any contraceptive method.

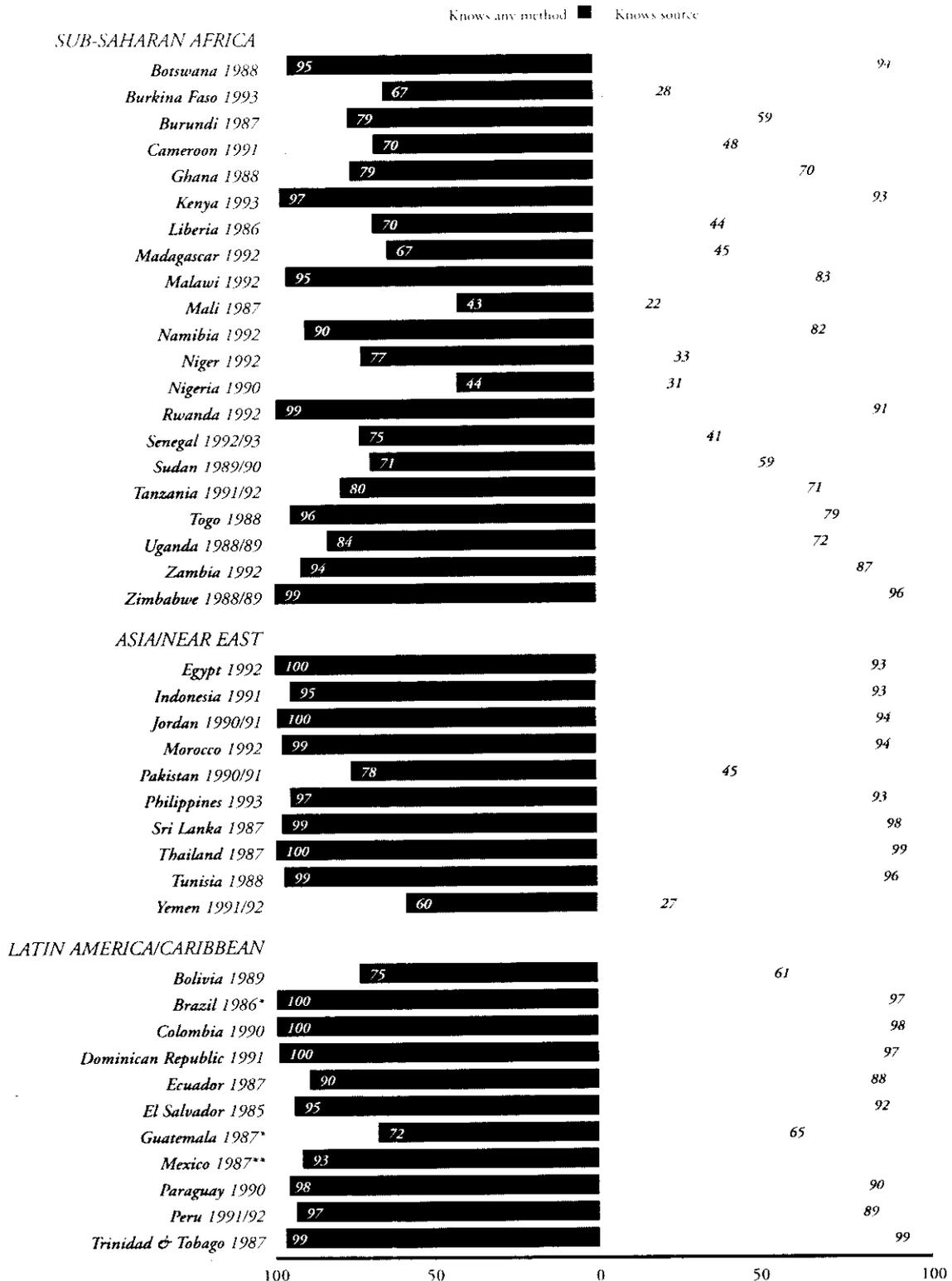
While many women are aware of a method, knowledge of a source for family planning methods is not nearly so widespread. Many women do not have the information that would enable them to find a modern method of contraception. *In eight of 21 countries surveyed in sub-Saharan Africa, less than half of married women ages 15 to 49 know where to obtain a single modern method.* In contrast, in Botswana, Kenya, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe, more than 90 percent of women know a source.

In 14 out of 20 countries surveyed in other regions, at least 90 percent of women know of a source for family planning. In Pakistan and Yemen, fewer than half of women know a source, and in Bolivia and Guatemala, fewer than 66 percent of women know where to obtain a modern method of contraception.



CONTRACEPTIVE KNOWLEDGE

Percentage of currently married women 15 to 49



*Currently married women 15 to 44
 **Data not collected in survey

CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG WOMEN More women than ever before are using contraception to space births and achieve their desired family size.

Among the countries surveyed, women in Asia, the Near East, and parts of Latin America are most likely to use contraception.

Contraceptive use among married women approaches or surpasses 50 percent in 13 out of 21 countries surveyed in these regions. In Brazil, Colombia, and Thailand, two-thirds of women use contraception. Only women in Bolivia, Guatemala, Pakistan, and Yemen report significantly lower use of family planning. Where contraception is widely used, women tend to rely on modern methods such as the pill, IUD, and female sterilization.

Even though contraceptive use has increased in some sub-Saharan countries, women in this region are least likely to use family planning. Fewer than 10 percent of married women report using family planning in 9 out of 21 countries surveyed. Substantially more women, however, are using family planning in Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, and Zimbabwe: At least 25 percent of women in these countries report using modern contraception.

DISCONTINUATION OF CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG WOMEN

The results from several countries suggest that anywhere from 25 to 50 percent of women stop using a method of contraception within a year of starting. A number of reasons may underlie a woman's decision to discontinue use. She and her husband, for instance, might want another child. Of more concern to family planning programs, her decision could be related to dissatisfaction with the contraceptive or to improper use of the method. When many women discontinue use soon after starting, it may be a sign that family planning counseling and follow-up services need strengthening.

CONTRACEPTIVE DISCONTINUATION

Percentage of users discontinuing during the first year of use

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<i>Egypt 1992</i>	29
<i>Indonesia 1991</i>	27
<i>Jordan 1990/91</i>	44
<i>Morocco 1992</i>	39
<i>Philippines 1993</i>	35

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<i>Colombia 1990</i>	39
<i>Dominican Republic 1991</i>	53
<i>Paraguay 1990</i>	57
<i>Peru 1991/92</i>	47

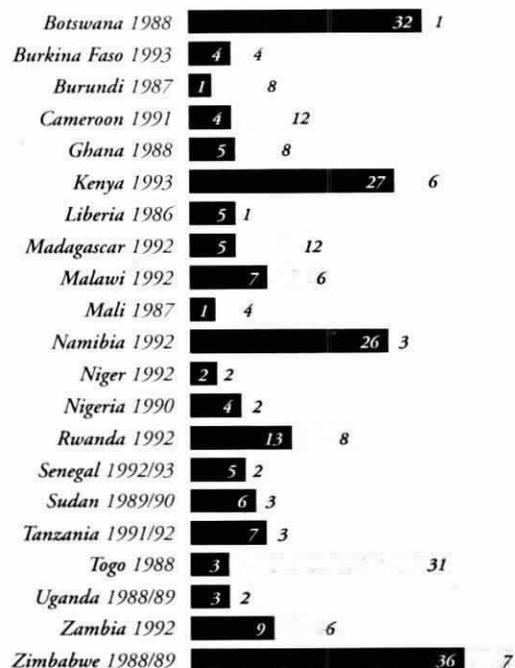
Note: Calculations based on life tables

CONTRACEPTIVE USE

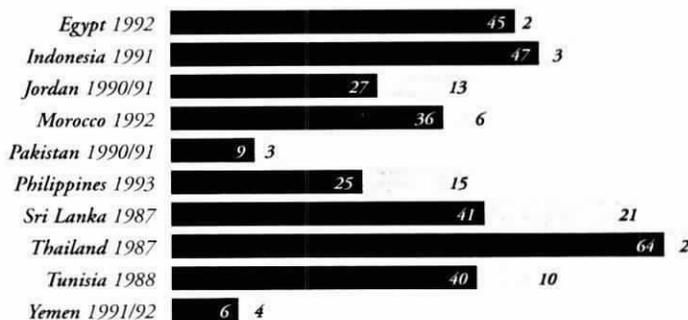
Percentage of currently married women 15 to 49 using a contraceptive method

Modern method* ■ Traditional method**

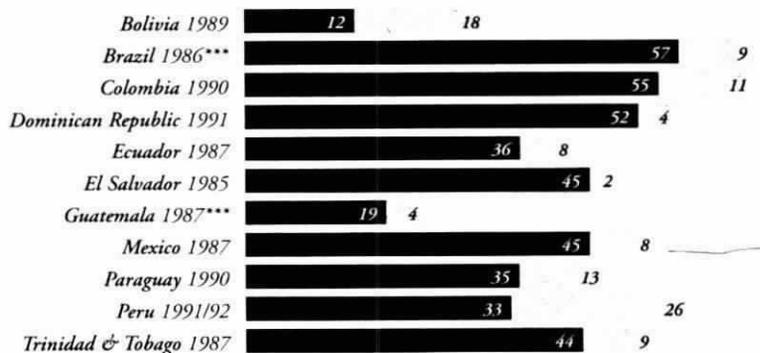
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0 25 50 75 100

*Pill, injection, IUD, condoms, vaginal methods, male sterilization, and female sterilization

**Periodic abstinence, withdrawal, prolonged abstinence, herbs, and other methods

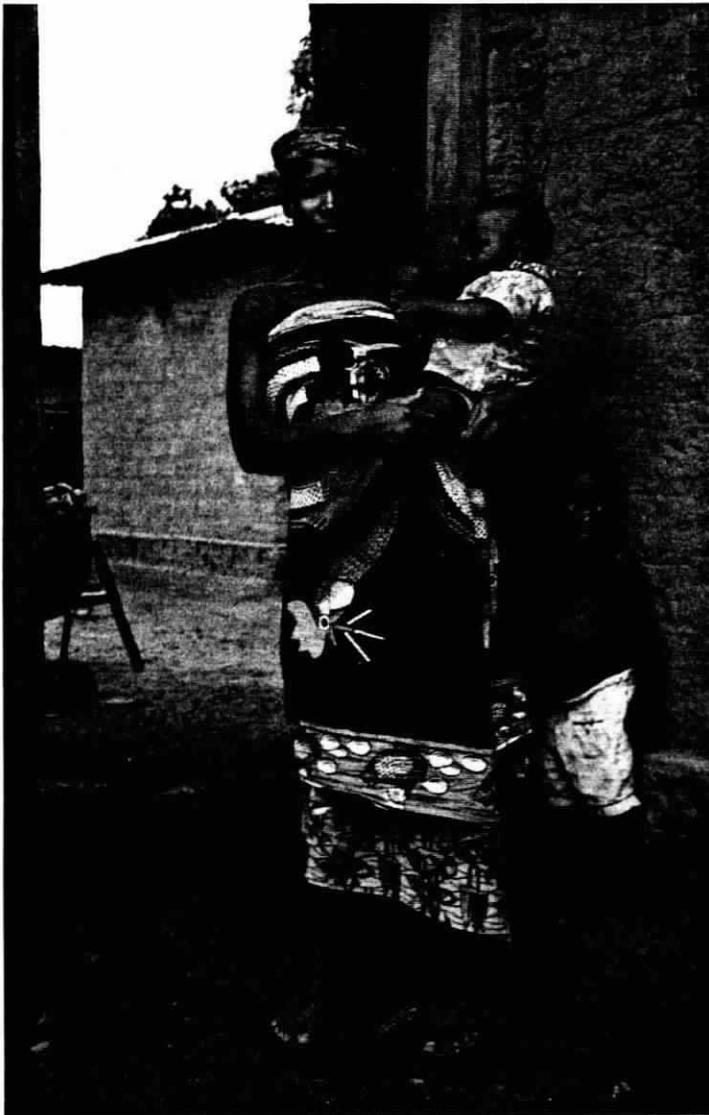
***Currently married women 15 to 44

THE POTENTIAL NEED FOR CONTRACEPTION AMONG WOMEN

In every country surveyed, a sizable number of women say that they would like to stop having children or wait at least two years before having their next child. Many of these women are not using contraception. These women are said to have an unmet need for family planning services.

At least 30 percent of women in eight of the sub-Saharan countries surveyed, as well as in Bolivia and Guatemala, would like to limit or space their next birth but are not using family planning.

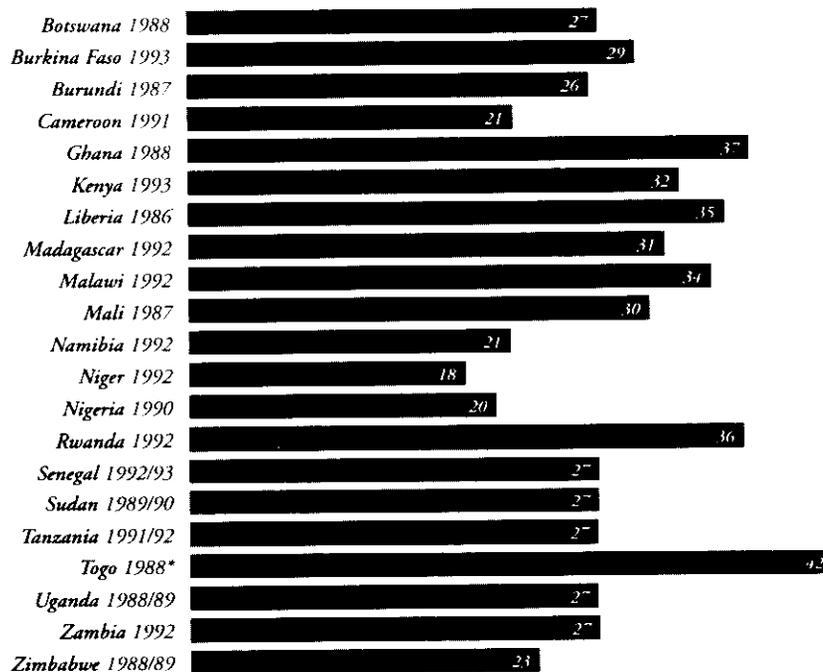
Levels of unmet need among women are often low where contraceptive use is relatively widespread. For instance, less than 15 percent of women in Brazil, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand have an unmet need for family planning.



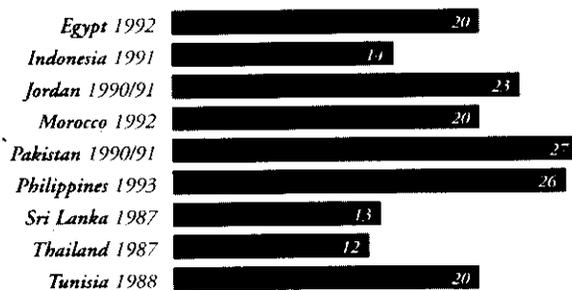
UNMET NEED FOR CONTRACEPTION

Percentage of currently married women 15 to 49 potentially in need of contraception

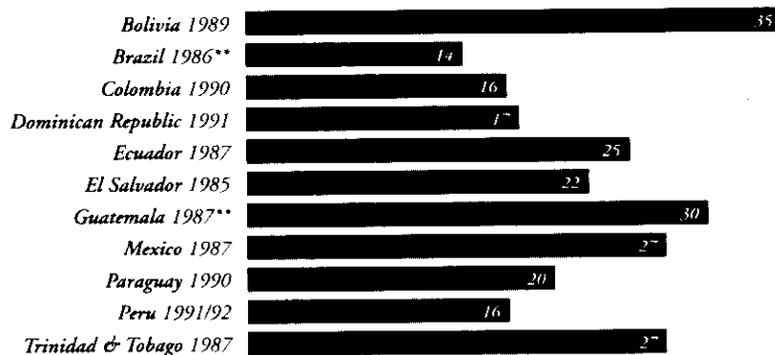
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



ASIA/NEAR EAST



LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN



0 25 50

*Users of prolonged abstinence were considered potentially in need of family planning.

**Currently married women 15 to 44