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INDIA

SUCCESS STORY

Smaller Families Thanks to More Family Planning

Providing counseling



Constella Futures Group

Community-based distribution worker providing family planning counseling to a local village woman

“Now we can get condoms at our neighborhood paan shop* at all times.”

– Ramakant, a resident of Baraura, talks about the availability of contraceptives in nontraditional outlets.

* A shop that sells *tamul paan* – a preparation consisting of the areca nut, betel leaf, lime, and spices, enjoyed by natives of Assam and northern India.

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Shahjahan Begum is one of many community-based distributors in India's Uttar Pradesh (UP) state who help village women in under-served areas understand family planning and the use of specific contraceptive methods. She provides oral contraceptives and condoms and refers women to government workers and facilities. She is the sole source of health information in her village, Amiya Kalan in Sultanpur district.

Since 1992, UP has been a focus state of the joint Government of India/U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Innovations in Family Planning Services (IFPS) project, which provides high-quality reproductive health and family planning services in UP and other parts of India. With 175 million inhabitants, UP is larger than all but five countries in the world and is India's poorest state.

Thanks to IFPS, couples in India are now closer to their desired family size of two to three children. While the average family in UP had more than five children in the early 1990s, the average family now has fewer than four. Moreover, approximately one-third of married women in UP used a modern family planning method in 2006, almost twice as many as in 1993 (NFHS-1, 1992-1993; NFHS-3, 2005-2006).

IFPS trained Shahjahan Begum and many other volunteers and health workers in family planning methods, enabling them to provide counseling, contraceptive supplies, and referrals to 1.6 million clients. As one village woman explained, “Shahjahan Begum counsels us on different family planning methods, and we can buy condoms and oral contraceptive pills from her anytime.”

Innovations such as community-based distribution campaigns and social marketing efforts at the state and regional levels led to an increase in the availability of birth spacing methods. The number of social marketing outlets selling oral contraceptives and condoms increased. By 2005-2006, 41 percent of rural villages had at least one outlet (up from 19 percent in 2000). In addition, IFPS engaged numerous nongovernmental organizations as family planning partners, thus increasing the availability of services through the private sector.