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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**INDIA**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Smaller Families Thanks to More Family Planning

### Providing counseling



Constellia 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 non-traditional 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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With 175 million inhabitants, India's Uttar Pradesh (UP) state is larger than all but five countries in the world, and is India's poorest state. Since 1992, UP has been a focus state of the joint Indian Government-United States 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.

Thanks to IFPS, approximately one third of married women used a modern family planning method in 2006, almost twice as many as in 1993. Moreover, the average family in UP had more than five children in the early 1990s (NFHS-1, 1992-1993), the average family in UP now has fewer than four.

Innovations such as community-based distribution campaigns and social marketing efforts at the state and regional level led to an increase in availability of birth spacing methods. Community-based distributors have provided counseling, contraceptive supplies, and referrals to 1.6 million clients.

Shahjahan Begum is one of many community-based distributors, who help village women in underserved areas understand the concept of pregnancy prevention and the use of specific contraceptive methods. She provides oral contraceptives and condoms to village women and refers them to government workers and facilities. She is the sole source of health information in her village, Amiya Kalan in Sultanpur district. 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.”

IFPS has trained Shahjahan Begum and many other volunteers and health workers in family planning methods. IFPS has also increased the number of social marketing outlets selling oral contraceptives and condoms. By 2005-2006, 41 percent of rural villages had at least one outlet (up from 19 percent in 2000). IFPS also engaged numerous nongovernmental organizations as family planning partners, thus increasing the availability of services through the private sector.