



Engaging **Men**
in
Family Planning

***SIFPSA supported comprehensive NSV strategy
to boost male participation in FP in Uttar Pradesh***

Vasectomy, though one of the most effective contraceptive methods, with no side effects, is little used around the world with only 2.4 percentage men sterilized globally. As per NFHS IV India findings, male sterilization is at an all time low with 0.3% vasectomies (a further 0.7% dip from NFHS III) in a population of 1.34 billion. Uttar Pradesh is no exception with a miserably low percentage of male sterilizations (0.1%) in a population close to 22 crores.



As also revealed by a recent research study on barriers to adopting long acting and limiting methods of family planning in rural Uttar Pradesh conducted by SIFPSA, of all sterilization cases reported, only 0.2 percent were of vasectomy. Major barriers cited for low acceptance of male sterilization clearly hinged on the prevailing myths and misconceptions like unfit to work after sterilization, opposition by wife, fear of operation, lack of knowledge and reduction in pleasure after sterilization, opposition from family, difficulty in accessing the service etc. Moreover, almost two-fifths showed lack of awareness about vasectomy, reflecting major demand-promotion barrier. The study also revealed, while almost all ASHAs regularly motivated and referred clients for various spacing methods and female sterilization, only 38 percent reported referring a client for male sterilization.



The above clearly depicts both demand and supply side gaps. In the past also, there has been a historical precedence of consistent efforts made by SIFPSA in enhancing male engagement in family planning through various strategies focusing on both demand and supply sides. Demand creation interventions by SIFPSA included engaging Corporates for workplace interventions and occupational groups like barbers and postmen for encouraging practice of male engagement in FP. Supply side interventions involved concerted efforts by SIFPSA in encouraging male engagement in family planning by supporting the establishment of a Centre of Excellence (COE) for NSV at Urology Department of King George's Medical University for training and promotion of NSV in the state, way back in 1997. Additionally, three satellite NSV Centres were also established at GSVM Medical College Kanpur, LLRM Medical College Meerut and MLN Medical College Allahabad. Ever since, the team of trained surgeons has been providing training in NSV technique and services under the overall guidance of a National level trainer from the department. SIFPSA has been supporting these training centres in the state with financial assistance from NHM.

These centres have been playing a key role in imparting NSV training and service delivery in the state. More than 700 doctors have been trained so far, with 114 trained between February and December 2016 by these four NSV training centres.



However, gradual decrease was observed in number of clients accepting NSV over the last few years. This also had an adverse impact on the training outcome with insufficient clients for hands-on training for doctors undergoing NSV training and called for a dedicated strategy for enhanced client mobilization. Although the state had successfully attempted to pitch in various development partners working in family planning program to support client mobilization, the effort did not yield the desired results due to their limited geographic reach.

workplace meetings at small scale industries and workshops etc. These coordinators, recruited in December 2016, are showing promising results.



▲ Chauraha meeting with labourers



Based on the learning that emerged from the efforts made by SIFPSA and various development partners in the past in supporting the strategy for male engagement in FP in the state, SIFPSA decided to implement a comprehensive project to revitalize male engagement in family planning in 2016-17. The key objectives of the project were: increasing the pool of trained service providers in NSV technique (both in public as well as in private sector), supporting the existing four NSV training centres in terms of additional manpower, administrative and operational costs and effective implementation of a targeted strategy to support client generation at NSV training centres.



▲ Meeting with Rickshaw Pullers

SIFPSA introduced a dedicated cadre of 'Innovative Coordinator' for NSV client mobilization in 2016-17 in each of the four NSV training centres located in Lucknow, Kanpur Nagar, Meerut and Allahabad. Some of the specific innovative interventions being implemented through these coordinators include holding early morning labour chauraha meetings on regular basis, meetings at bus and railway stations, meetings with vocational groups like rickshaw pullers, barbers, tea, paan and vegetable vendors, onsite

Analysis of quarterly progress reports submitted by the Innovative Coordinator of Lucknow NSV Training centre shows that on average about 25 to 30 group meetings were conducted by him per month, reaching out to over 270 potential clients every month. Further analysis shows that out of every 100 clients reached out, nearly 15 percent clients got motivated to consider NSV, with successful conversion of 3 percent clients as NSV acceptors. On average, the Innovative NSV coordinator of Lucknow NSV Training centre was



able to get 8 clients accept NSV every month, which is nearly 54 percent of the total client load at the Lucknow NSV Training centre. Similar analysis of reports from Innovative Coordinator of Meerut shows that on average 13 group meetings per month were conducted by him, reaching out to over 160 potential clients. Further analysis in terms of successful conversion of clients shows that out of every 100 clients reached out, nearly 27 percent clients got motivated to consider NSV, of which about 3 percent became NSV clients. On average, the Innovative Coordinator of Meerut NSV Training centre was able to get 6 clients accept NSV every month, which is nearly 56 percent of the total client load at the Meerut NSV Training centre. Analysis of Kanpur data shows that on average the Innovative Coordinator successfully motivated about 14 clients in a month to adopt NSV. The Allahabad Innovative NSV coordinator on average conducted about 72 group meetings per month, reaching out to over 563 potential clients, eventually generating 23 NSV clients on average per month.

With consistent efforts, it is hoped that this innovative strategy of SIFPSA would help in boosting male participation in family planning in the state.

In spite of the best efforts made from time to time by the state government, male contraceptive rate remains abysmally low. In yet another attempt to revitalize the NSV program, on Gol directives, the state is observing 'NSV Fortnight' between November 21 to December 04 2017, with special NSV camps providing male sterilization service to clients at the health facilities. While the first week of the NSV fortnight will

focus on client mobilization, service delivery will be extended in the second week. To give momentum to the effort, the government of Uttar Pradesh has decided to observe the 21st of every month as the NSV day. This strategy, it is hoped, would galvanize extensive awareness towards NSV across the state, yielding positive results.



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