

## **Enhancing Involvement of Men in Reproductive Health: An Intervention Strategy in Slums of Mumbai**

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The Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) set a new agenda in 1994 on male responsibilities and participation. Realizing the need the draft National Population Policy (2000) suggested a holistic approach to family welfare programme and stressed on male involvement particularly in the context of prevailing gender inequality. If men are brought into a wide range of reproductive health information (RH) and services, better outcomes are expected in all health indicators. Hence, there is need to involve men in the reproductive health issues such as safe motherhood, family planning, contraceptive utilization and prevention of infections for improving the RH of couples.

Keeping above points in view an intervention study was designed with the objectives: (i) to study the awareness, perceptions and practices of RH issues; (ii) to plan appropriate intervention strategy; and (iii) to evaluate the intervention programme.

Baseline data obtained from a random sample of married men from experimental (561) and control (588) areas through a semi-structured interview schedule during 2005. Based on the baseline information, the interventional strategy designed and implemented both at community as well as clinic level, through providing information, education; counseling and clinical services. Resurvey had been carried out after the intervention. This study was carried out in Mohili village and Asalfa village in collaboration with the MCGM, Mumbai. In view of the above, an intervention study was designed and carried out in urban slums of Mumbai

The results of the study indicated that a significant increase was observed in awareness of NSV, emergency contraception, injectables and female condom. Majority of husbands from experimental area opined that vasectomy is better than tubectomy. Awareness about RTIs/STIs symptoms were increased with significant increase in reporting RTIs/STIs problems among women where as marginal increase among reporting RTIs/STIs problems in men. Awareness about routes of transmission of HIV and test for HIV detection increased. Misconceptions such as HIV spreads by shaking hands with HIV positive person and mosquito / bed bug bite spread of HIV had been decreased. Significant increase was observed in reading material and private clinics as a source of HIV/AIDS information in experimental area.

The findings of the study suggest that the intervention strategy decreased preference for son, promoted early registration for ANC, improved awareness about NSV, injectables, emergency contraceptives and female condom; and improved condom use.