

Male Involvement: A missing link in Pakistan Family Planning Program



Muhammad Khubaib Kayani



Junaid-ur-Rehman Siddiqui



Aaliya Habib



Ghazunfer Abbas

Affiliation: The Challenge Initiative (TCI), Greenstar Social Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Greenstar social marketing is implementing "The Challenge Initiative" project in Punjab, Sindh and Islamabad. This program is focused on family planning. Department of health including IRMNCH and Population Welfare Department are leading the program while the role of The Challenge Initiative is limited to provision of technical assistance to implementing government staff. Currently this program is being implemented in 15 districts in Pakistan. Different family planning high impact interventions are being implemented in these selected districts.



METHODS

Direct observation was used to observe clients visiting the government facilities. Three facilities were assessed directly for identifying potential areas for male involvement in Islamabad and Faisalabad. Moreover, key stakeholders i.e., DoH and PWD government officials, facility providers and staff, and health workers provided inputs on male engagement during different capacity building sessions. Their responses were noted and discussed in a larger team to strategize for future planning and implementation of the ongoing TCI program.

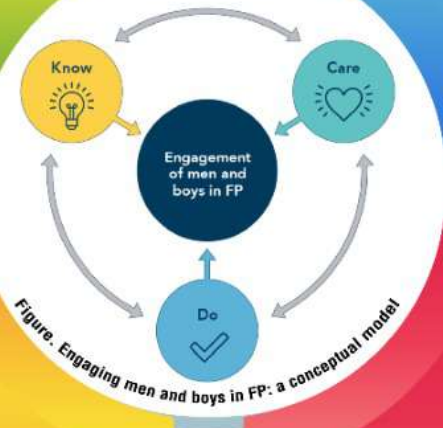


Figure. Engaging men and boys in FP: a conceptual model

RESULTS

Doctors and LHVs mostly believed that allowing males to enter a facility would make the environment uncomfortable for women. Another major argument for barring men to enter the facility was that talking to them about FP is a difficult conversation, and female service providers felt that they will struggle during this process. There were a few facilities where a male family welfare assistant was deputed but they also had same approach from the stated matter.



CONCLUSION

Males are being ignored in Pakistan FP program. Male family health days can be helpful for both community male members and service providers to initiate the discussion and build mutual trust. Training curriculum for relevant cadres should include a chapter on the importance of male involvement. Service providers should receive capacity building sessions on FP value clarification, communication skills and gender intentionality. Men accompanying their women to the health facility should be welcomed and encouraged.

