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THE DRIVERS OF FAMILY PLANNING IN RURAL NORTHERN INDIA



A Mixed-Methods Approach

Family planning (FP) is an important method used to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Governments around the world have prioritized investments that increase the access to family planning methods. In Uttar Pradesh, India, for example, the government and its partners have made notable efforts to increase awareness, supply, and access to modern contraceptives, however the uptake of FP remains low.

To research and understand why people are or aren't using modern methods, this study used a mixed-methods approach to analyze three existing quantitative data sets to identify trends, geographic variation, gaps, and contextual factors associated with family planning uptake. Qualitative data was collected through immersion interviews, journey mapping, and decision games to understand systemic barriers to FP use and household decision making patterns.

Reasons for family planning are extremely complex. Access and awareness are crucial, but they are not enough for increasing the uptake of modern methods. There was a steep 59% drop-off between high awareness of modern contraceptive methods and the intention to use them with an additional, yet smaller, drop-off of 9% from the intention to their actual use. Perceived access, age, education, and other demographic variables partially predict modern contraceptive intention to use, however the qualitative data shows that other behavioral drivers such as household decision making dynamics, embarrassment to obtain modern contraceptives, and high-risk perception around side-effects also contribute to low intention to use modern contraceptives. The data also revealed that strong norms and financial considerations by couples is the driving force behind the decision to use and when to use family planning methods.

The study's finding emphasizes the need to shift focus towards building intention, as well as ensuring access of trained staff, commodities drugs and equipment, and building capacities of health care providers.



Discussion Questions

- Why is it important to get familiarized with the different family planning methods?
- What are the types of family planning?

