

Male Involvement in Family Planning Programs in Iran: An Analysis of Levels and Correlates

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Extended Abstract:

Iran established its first official family planning programs in 1967, but, following the 1979 Islamic Revolution the programs bring to a halt for a decade. By 1968, Islamic Republic government adopted an antinatalist population policy and reintroduced the family planning programs. Revival of national family planning programs had been so effective that contraceptive prevalence rate has risen to just under 75 percent of all married couples in 1997 (Mehryar, Mostafavi and Agha 2001). The program was therefore very successful among developing world by the international standards.

Although national family planning programs had been directed primary toward women, assuming responsibility by Iranian men had a crucial role in the success of the program. Indeed, one of the strengths of Iran's promotion of family planning was the involvement of men. In this paper we examine the role of Iranian men in decision-making concerning family size, reproductive health, motivation to have children and contraceptive use.

Main sources of data for the study come from IDHS conducted in 2000. Besides, data from a small scale survey among married men, which recently collected by authors in the city of Yazd, used for the analysis. Data from the city of Yazd specifically has been collected to investigate role of men in decision-making concerning family size and practicing contraceptive use. Yazd, a city located in the central part of Iran, is a religious and traditional city with one of highest level of male participation in the family planning in Iran.

Data shows that around 36 percent of all contraceptive users in Iran used a male-based method in 2000. Corresponding percents for urban and rural areas is 42.5 and 23.6

respectively. The majority of male method users were, however, relying on the “traditional method” of coitus interruptus. Results also show that male contraceptive use is associated with some socio-economic and individual characteristics. For example, male involvement in family planning increases with a rise in wife and husband education and decrease with rising age.