



Photo Credit: Nokafu Sandra Chipanta, IRH

Pragati: “Fertility Awareness for Quality of Life”

LOCATION

Five districts in Nepal: Bajura, Pyuthan, Rupandehi, Nuwakot, Siraha

PARTNERS

Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University, Save the Children

DONOR

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Fertility Awareness for Community Transformation (FACT) Project (2013-2018)

FOCUS POPULATIONS

- Married and unmarried adolescent women and men
- Hard-to-reach communities (Janijati, Dalit, Muslim, Chhetri)

What is Pragati?

The Approach: A Participatory Intervention

Working through existing social networks, FACT's Pragati intervention uses a series of games to diffuse information about fertility awareness and family planning to individuals, catalyzing conversation with others. The games also facilitate discussion around social and gender norms—unspoken rules that govern behavior—in order to challenge those norms that negatively influence family planning use. Through the games, participants critically reflect on social barriers, the expectations of others that impact behaviors in their communities, and their personal values. Pragati defines 'critical reflection' as asking participants to look beyond commonly held beliefs and behaviors, to add depth to understanding, to speculate about the future, and to act.

Games and topics are introduced and facilitated by influential community partners who are well-positioned to share information and promote reflection among their own family members and peers. A detailed manual, including game materials, guides *Pragati* influencers in facilitating the games in the community. *Pragati*'s partnership with health and community-level networks provides linkages to long-term support and care in the communities where they work.



Health Facility Operation and Management Committee: Coordinate health facility staff, access to marginalized communities, and resources



Health Facility Staff: Oversee game implementation and monitor data collection



Female Community Health Volunteers: Deliver and promote the *Pragati* games in the community alongside the Health Mothers Groups



Health Mothers Group Champions: Deliver and promote the *Pragati* games in the community



Male Champions: Engage existing men's groups, such as Ward Citizen's Forum, to catalyze reflective conversations around social and gender norms related to family planning using the games

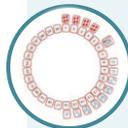
Research & Evaluation

A mixed-methods quasi-experimental study is being conducted to assess the impact of the intervention on uptake and intention to use family planning. Additionally, this study will identify associations between contextual factors and fertility awareness, define measurement related to social and gender norms, and describe the impact of migrating husbands on social and family planning outcomes. Data will also inform ways to improve the delivery and potential scalability of *Pragati*, as well as the effectiveness of the approach in increasing fertility awareness and improving attitudes and behaviors towards family planning use. Data collection methods include:

- **Baseline and endline household surveys** to assess increases in fertility awareness knowledge, diffusion of information, and family planning use
- **Observational data** to assess delivery and potential scalability of *Pragati*
- **Focus Group Discussions** to understand how fertility awareness information is diffused through the community
- **In-depth Interviews** to understand perceptions of the intervention and whether it influenced attitudes towards and uptake of family planning

Fertility Awareness is actionable information about fertility throughout the life course and the ability to apply this knowledge to one's own circumstances and needs. It includes basic information about the menstrual cycle, when and how pregnancy occurs, the likelihood of pregnancy from unprotected intercourse at different times during the cycle and at different life stages, and the role of male fertility.

COMPONENTS: GAMES



Menstrual Cycle Game

This game provides concrete information around fertility and the menstrual cycle. It challenges existing social norms that make it taboo to talk about menstruation and fertility, or to involve men in discussions. The game visualizes the menstrual cycle: 'bleeding days,' 'fertile days,' and 'safe days.'



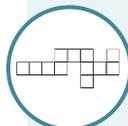
Son or Daughter Determination Game

Using different colored beads to represent male and female genes, this game demonstrates how the sex of a baby is randomly determined by the composition of men's sperm.



Side Effects & Method Matching Game

Recognizing that managing side effects and fear of long-term consequences are significant barriers to family planning use, this game raises awareness about what is normal, and how side effects can be managed.



Life Cycle Hopscotch Game

By defining hopscotch squares as different age ranges, this game encourages discussion about when in the life course certain reproductive health decisions are made.



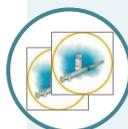
Hot Potato Game

While social norms in Nepal dictate that women and men are not to discuss fertility, reproduction, or family planning, this game promotes open conversations about the benefits of family planning. Topics include fertility, delaying first birth, and couple communication.



Agree/Disagree Game

Using two cards with the words "Agree" and "Disagree," this game challenges participants to reflect on statements related to family planning, fertility, decision making, and what contributes to a happy family.



Method Match Memory Game

This game involves matching cards with the same family planning method name, information about use and effectiveness, and illustration, allowing women and men to learn about and understand their modern method options.



Side Effect Puzzle

Participants assemble a picture of a Nepali family using 20 cards that include a common side effect or a myth related to family planning methods. Participants distinguish between actual side effects and myths.



Role Play Game

Understanding that friends and family often influence individuals' confidence to make decisions related to family planning, this game uses eight cards with images of people in the community to practice conversation.



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Health



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