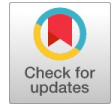


Fostering Women's Empowerment through Men's Involvement in Family Planning Initiatives and Effective Strategies: A Systematic Review

Susmita Mukherjee, Archna Kumar



Abstract: Family planning is one of the most important aspects of family health and welfare. Men's engagement in family planning is a critical component in promoting women's empowerment. In this study, we conducted a systematic review following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to explore the multifaceted dynamics shaping the relationship between men's involvement in familial planning initiatives and women's empowerment. A systematic search was conducted in the Scopus database, employing carefully selected keywords such as "women* empowerment", "female empowerment", "empowerment of women", "male", "men*", "family planning", "contraceptive practices", "birth control", "reproductive health", "pregnancy prevention", and "planned parenthood" on January 30, 2024. The study provides a comprehensive insight into men's involvement in family planning globally and in India, revealing a need for significant social change to address bias favouring men in resource allocation. The findings emphasize the efficacy of modular survey approaches, particularly in capturing indicators related to antenatal care and contraceptive method usage. Globally, successful interventions like mass media campaigns and participation in maternal and child health programs were identified, emphasizing the importance of tailored approaches to cultural contexts and the need for cross-cultural learning. Overall, the results highlight the multifaceted nature of men's involvement in family planning and its crucial role in advancing women's empowerment.

Keywords: Family Planning, Men's Involvement, PRISMA, Women's Empowerment.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the heart of a rural village in Madhya Pradesh, India, a remarkable success story unfolds.

Mr. X, a resident of Bhopal, India, grew up in a traditional environment, Mr. X was accustomed to societal norms that often relegated family planning decisions solely to women. However, a turning point in his life occurred when he became aware of the challenges faced by women in his community, including limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Motivated by a desire to contribute positively to his community, Mr. X decided to take action. He became involved in local community organizations working on family planning initiatives. Recognizing the need to challenge existing norms, Mr. X began attending workshops and awareness campaigns specifically designed for men, where he learned about the benefits of family planning for women's health and overall family well-being. Equipped with newfound knowledge, Mr. X became a catalyst for change within his community. He initiated small discussion groups, engaging men in conversations about family planning, dispelling myths, and emphasizing the importance of shared decision-making. His efforts extended to organizing educational sessions, using his influence to bring healthcare professionals and educators to the community. Mr. X understood the significance of community engagement. Leveraging his interpersonal skills, he reached out to fellow community members, sharing his own journey and encouraging them to actively participate in family planning discussions. Through town hall meetings and community gatherings, he fostered an environment where men felt comfortable discussing traditionally taboo topics related to reproductive health. Over time, Mr. X's efforts yielded tangible results. The community experienced a noticeable increase in awareness about family planning, with more men actively participating in discussions. Women reported feeling more supported in making decisions about their reproductive health, and couples began embracing shared decision-making. This case study exemplifies the transformative impact of an individual's commitment to challenging societal norms and actively participating in family planning initiatives. Through his personal journey, Mr. X not only improved the lives of women in his community but also set a precedent for men's involvement in family planning as a catalyst for positive change. His story serves as an inspiring example for communities seeking to empower women and foster collaborative decision-making in the realm of family planning.

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India, with its patriarchal norms, presents unique challenges to women's autonomy and empowerment. Limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities further exacerbates gender disparities. Recognizing the potential of family planning initiatives, this paper investigates the role of men in empowering women within this framework.

Women's empowerment is a key issue in India, where women face numerous challenges including limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Family planning initiatives have been identified as a potential avenue for empowering women, but it is important to involve men in these efforts. This essay will compare strategies for fostering women's empowerment through men's involvement in family planning initiatives in the Indian context. Men's involvement in family planning initiatives is critical for promoting women's health and well-being. By engaging men in family planning discussions and decision-making, women can gain greater control over their reproductive health. In India, where patriarchal norms often limit women's autonomy, involving men in family planning initiatives is particularly important. Strategies for engaging men in these efforts include educating them about the benefits of family planning for women's health and well-being, as well as highlighting the role that men can play in promoting gender equity and supporting women's empowerment. Effective strategies for fostering women's empowerment in family planning initiatives include empowering women through education and information, promoting gender equity, and addressing social norms that limit women's access to family planning. By providing women with information about their reproductive health and family planning options, they can make informed decisions about their bodies and their futures. Promoting gender equity involves challenging patriarchal norms and stereotypes that limit women's access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Addressing social norms that limit women's access to family planning involves engaging communities in discussions about the benefits of family planning for women's health and well-being. Comparing men's involvement and effective strategies for fostering women's empowerment in family planning initiatives in India and other countries can provide valuable insights into successful approaches. In some countries, men have been successfully engaged in family planning initiatives through community-based programs that emphasize the importance of family planning for women's health and well-being. Effective strategies for fostering women's empowerment in family planning initiatives in other countries include providing women with access to education and economic opportunities, as well as addressing social norms that limit women's access to family planning. Lessons learned from successful initiatives in other countries can be applied to India, where men's involvement in family planning initiatives and efforts to foster women's empowerment are critical for promoting gender equity and improving women's health and well-being. Mathur et al. (2004) [10], aimed to assess male involvement in female reproductive health, specifically focusing on safe motherhood and family planning. The research employed a community-based, mixed-method approach, including both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Results revealed that 39.9% of

couples planned their pregnancies, and only 33.5% made joint decisions about the place of delivery. While 76.7% of wives desired their husbands' involvement in family planning, both spouses actively participated in child rearing for 60.3% of participants. Tubectomy was the preferred method of permanent contraception for the majority of couples. Factors influencing male involvement included changing societal dynamics, healthcare provider initiatives, and literacy levels. The study concluded that men played a role in planning pregnancies, supporting their spouses during antenatal checkups, and discussing pregnancy complications. However, hindering factors included healthcare facility-related issues and faith-based considerations, as perceived by both genders. Kotelchuck, 2021, [7], study findings indicate that the prenatal period is a time of active engagement and joy for men as they transition into fatherhood and establish families, marking a potentially transformative period in their development. Over 98% of fathers express excitement about becoming fathers, with 93.2% reporting being very excited. Nearly 92% have spent considerable time contemplating their impending fatherhood. Communication between expectant fathers and their partners is robust, with over 92% engaging in discussions about fatherhood, and more than 90% expressing plans to be present in the delivery room and take time off after the child's birth. While 94% of fathers express confidence in their parenting abilities, a significant proportion also acknowledges the need for additional knowledge and practical caregiving skills. Notably, 77.3% of fathers seek help with practical parenting skills. Moreover, the survey reveals high levels of paternal involvement in a partner's prenatal care, with a majority (79.2%) consistently accompanying their partners to prenatal visits, and a significant portion (19%) taking unpaid time off work to attend prenatal visits.

Engaging men and boys in family planning (FP) is increasingly acknowledged as crucial for addressing unmet FP needs and, consequently, improving maternal and child health outcomes ((Aventin et al., 2021, [1]); Hardee et al., 2017, [4]; Lohan et al., 2022, [8]; Phiri et al., 2015a, [18]; Sahay et al., 2021, [19]). Programs that specifically target the transformation of gender inequalities for women and girls have demonstrated significant potential in this regard (Barker et al., 2007, [2]; Phiri et al., 2015b [18]; Ruane-McAteer et al., 2020). The rationale for involving men in FP recognizes their role as primary decision-makers on family size in many countries, where they may influence or restrict women's access to FP. It also acknowledges that men themselves may have unmet FP needs (Nzioka & Press, 2002, [17]).

In practical terms, the involvement of men and boys in FP can encompass encouraging them to support autonomous FP decision-making among women and girls. Additionally, it includes more inclusive perspectives where men and boys are viewed as both supporters and users of contraceptive methods, actively contributing to addressing unmet FP needs within their families and communities,

while also attending to their own reproductive health requirements (Hardee et al., 2017, [4]; Lohan, 2015, [8]; Sahay et al., 2021, [20]).

II. METHODOLOGY

The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method is a widely recognized and extensively used framework for conducting and reporting systematic reviews and meta-analyses in various fields of study. It was developed to improve the transparency, quality, and comprehensiveness of reporting in systematic reviews, thereby enhancing the reliability and reproducibility of research findings (Moher et al., 2009, [14]; Liberati et al., 2009, [15]). In this study, we conducted a systematic review following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to explore the intricate interplay between men's participation in family planning initiatives and women's empowerment. On January 30, 2024, a comprehensive search was carried out in the Scopus database, employing carefully selected keywords such as "women* empowerment", "female empowerment", "empowerment of women", "male", "men*", "family planning", "contraceptive practices", "birth control", "reproductive health", "pregnancy prevention", and "planned parenthood". The title, abstract, and keywords were used in the article search together with the Boolean operators "OR" and "AND" to make sure that all potential records were included.

A. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The eligibility criteria for study inclusion and exclusion were meticulously defined as follows: (1) only peer-reviewed journal articles were considered, recognizing them as the primary medium for disseminating research findings. Documents such as abstracts, letters, editorials, case reports, and commentaries were excluded; (2) studies published between 2004 and 2023 were included to capture developments that occurred in the last two decades; (3) only studies published in the English language were considered; (4) full-text availability was a prerequisite for inclusion. The overarching goal of this review is to provide a nuanced synthesis of the existing literature, contributing insights into the multifaceted dynamics shaping the relationship between men's involvement in family planning initiatives and the empowerment of women.

B. Organizing and Screening the Report

This step was performed in two phases:

Phase 1: The study incorporated both complete papers and abstracts, with titles and abstracts screened concurrently to identify those aligned with the study's context and objectives. Subsequently, any discrepancies in the extracted data were resolved by the investigators. The authors independently reviewed the articles to ensure they met all eligibility criteria, aiming to minimize selection bias.

Phase 2: After extracting 216 studies, a secondary screening process was conducted. Decisions for exclusion from the final analysis were made based on the previously mentioned criteria, with the number of excluded studies indicated in parentheses. The search process overview is illustrated using the PRISMA flow chart, encompassing four

stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion in the review. Ultimately, only 131 studies within the Indian and Global Context were deemed suitable for in-depth and thematic analysis.

A detailed account of the methodology employed in this study is presented in Figure 1.

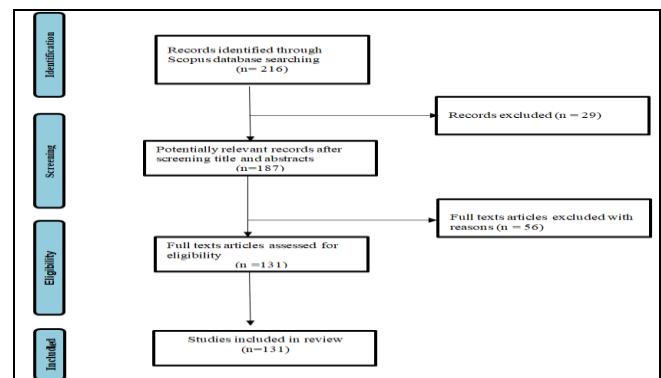


Fig. 1: Flow Diagram of the Study Selection Process Based on the Prisma Approach

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1. "How do men's engagement in family planning strategies and implementation differ between the Indian context and the global scenario, and what are the key factors influencing the effectiveness and outcomes of such initiatives?"

RQ2. "What are the many sorts of interventions targeted at incorporating men in family planning, and how can successful methods and interventions be discovered to achieve positive results in effectively engaging men in the context of family planning?"

RQ3. "What challenges are encountered in engaging men in family planning initiatives, and how can effective strategies be explored to overcome these challenges and enhance the overall success of interventions?"

RQ4. "What role does men's engagement in family planning play in women's empowerment?"

IV. ANALYSIS

Interrater coding was employed to analyze the studies identified. All the selected articles were entered into a separate spreadsheet providing the following information in columns: (a) authors (b) Title of the paper; (c) year, (d) Source title, (e) Link of the source, (f) Abstract of the paper, including background, objective, methodology, results and conclusions. To control any biases and errors, peer review was done.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Men's Engagement in Family Planning Strategies and Implementation in Indian Context

This theme focuses on understanding the demand for contraception in EAG states of India and family planning strategies designed to meet the unmet need.

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It includes research on promoting male involvement in family planning in both Vietnam and India, exploring the Health Bridge experience. The theme also examines spousal discordance on contraceptive communication, use, and ideal family size in rural India. By investigating men's attitudes towards contraception, sexuality, gender equality, and their actual contraceptive use, this theme aims to unveil the multifaceted nature of men's engagement in family planning in the Indian context. When we isolated the studies on male engagement that reported contraceptive use from the larger dataset, we investigated the influence of these interventions (male engagement interventions with a contraceptive use outcome on intermediate outcomes assessed by the included studies). The identified intermediate outcomes encompassed attitudes toward family planning (FP) services, attitudes toward contraception, knowledge about contraception, FP communication, gender equitable beliefs, joint FP decision-making, and FP service use. Mejía et al. (2021, [11]), conducted National Family Household Survey in India, revealing persistent gender norms and power imbalances affecting family planning. Over a decade, unmet needs and contraceptive use remained stagnant. Using men's attitudes as proxies, the study finds negative associations between men's norms and women's contraceptive use. For instance, an increase in the belief that contraception is women's business correlates with a 12% reduced likelihood of contraceptive use. The impact remains even when considering modern methods or excluding female sterilization. Interestingly, women's education or wealth doesn't enhance contraceptive uptake in communities with strong attitudinal norms, but working women or those married as children are more likely to use contraception. The study emphasizes the need for programs to address both men's attitudes and women's employment for effective family planning choices and gender empowerment.

Mishra et al. 2014, [12], The majority of men in the four cities exhibit elevated or moderate levels of decision-making that consider gender sensitivity, along with limited to moderate constraints on their wife's mobility. Additionally, they demonstrate moderate to high levels of attitudes that promote gender equity. Notably, there is a notable positive correlation between gender-sensitive decision-making and equitable attitudes, while a significant negative association exists between constraints on the wife's mobility and the current use of contraceptives. MacDonald et al., 2013, [9], focused on the issue of unwanted pregnancies and unmet contraception needs that persist due to gender inequality. Most family planning initiatives in Asia predominantly target women, yet their limited decision-making authority, even concerning their health, obstructs effective family planning. This article outlines achievements and insights gained from a Health Bridge program in India and Vietnam that promoted male involvement in reproductive health, emphasizing family planning and the utilization of male-centric contraception. The program's outcomes indicate that, with suitable role models and conducive environments, men are receptive to actively and positively participating in reproductive health matters.

B. Men's Engagement in Family Planning Strategies and Implementation in Global Context

In the global context, men's engagement in family planning strategies and implementation has emerged as a crucial component of comprehensive reproductive health programs. Recognizing the influential role men play in family decisions, initiatives have been devised to involve them actively in family planning discussions and practices. Successful approaches include educational campaigns, community outreach programs, and integrating men's reproductive health components into existing healthcare services. Strategies are designed to address cultural nuances, societal norms, and gender dynamics prevalent across diverse regions. By fostering an inclusive dialogue on a global scale, these initiatives aim to create a shared understanding of effective men's engagement in family planning, ultimately contributing to improved reproductive health outcomes internationally. Mohammed et al., 2021, [13], This cross-sectional study conducted in Harar, eastern Ethiopia, aimed to assess husbands' knowledge and involvement in women's reproductive rights and identify associated factors. Out of 611 husbands surveyed, 48.3% had knowledge, and 40.1% were involved in their partners' reproductive rights. Factors associated with knowledge included social media utilization, partner discussions, and the type of health facility. Husbands' involvement was linked to experiences with reproductive services, partner discussions, social media use, and age 40–49 years. The study underscores the importance of promoting effective media utilization, enhancing reproductive health service utilization, empowering women, and encouraging open discussions between partners to increase husbands' knowledge and involvement in executing reproductive rights. Kassa et al., 2014, [6], Merely 44 individuals, constituting 8.4% of the respondents, were engaged in or directly utilizing family planning services, primarily relying on male condoms. The cited reasons for the limited participation included a preference for having more children, objections from wives or partners, concerns about side effects, religious restrictions, insufficient awareness about contraceptives, and the misconception that family planning is solely a woman's matter. Male involvement in service utilization was found to be linked with opinions on family planning services, approval from men, and the present utilization of family planning methods.

C. Nature of Interventions and Successful Approaches in Indian Context

Based on the above-mentioned reviews in the Indian context, interventions aimed at engaging men in family planning have gained increasing significance as the country continues to address reproductive health challenges. Various strategies have been implemented, ranging from community-based awareness programs to targeted campaigns within healthcare facilities. Understanding the cultural nuances and societal dynamics is crucial, as men often hold decision-making power in matters related to family planning.



Successful approaches in this context involve tailored educational initiatives, involving community leaders, and leveraging existing healthcare infrastructure. Identifying and replicating strategies that resonate with the Indian cultural landscape can significantly contribute to bridging gaps in men's engagement in family planning, ultimately promoting more comprehensive and effective reproductive health outcomes. Jacob et al., 2006, [5], This article showcases the endeavours of the Community Health and Development (CHAD) Programme at Christian Medical College to tackle gender discrimination issues and enhance the status of women in the Kaniyambadi Block, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India. The program encompasses various initiatives specifically designed for women and general community projects that women can also benefit from, reflecting a comprehensive strategy aimed at advancing women's health, education, and employment within the framework of community development. Despite a dedicated focus on women over five decades, the progress in women's health and empowerment has not kept pace with that of men. The article posits that the community, with its prevalent male bias, tends to channel health facilities, education, and employment programs more towards the advantage of men and boys than women and girls. A shift in approach is advocated, urging open discussions and debates within the community on gender and women's issues. It is suggested that only through substantial social change can improvements in women's health and a semblance of gender equality be achieved in the region. Singh et al., 2022, [23], This research seeks to assess the impact of administering both shorter and longer versions of questionnaires on crucial indicators like age displacement, birth displacement, age heaping, and question skipping regarding antenatal care (ANC) visits and contraceptive method usage in India, utilizing data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4. The study's outcomes underscore the efficacy of adopting a modular approach in extensive surveys, contingent on the investigative scope. Nonetheless, the varying workload necessitates an extension of survey duration in Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) with a higher count of eligible women. The observed variations in key data quality indicators at the state level may be partially attributed to discrepancies in investigator training by the agency and the utilization of translators.

D. Nature of Interventions and Successful Approaches in Global Context

On a global scale, the nature of interventions and successful approaches in engaging men in family planning is diverse and adaptable to different cultural settings. Initiatives such as mass media campaigns, educational workshops, and involving men in existing maternal and child health programs have demonstrated positive outcomes. The global context emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of societal norms and gender roles, acknowledging that approaches successful in one region may need customization for applicability elsewhere. Exchange of best practices, collaborative research, and cross-cultural learning play pivotal roles in identifying universally effective strategies for men's engagement in family planning on a global scale. This approach ensures that successful interventions are not only context-specific but also contribute to a broader, international

dialogue on reproductive health. Mohammed et al., 2021, [13], this study aimed to assess husbands' knowledge and involvement in women's reproductive rights and their associated factors in Harar, eastern Ethiopia. Results indicate that less than half of the husbands were knowledgeable and involved in executing their partners' reproductive rights. Promoting and creating effective media utilization is important for creating awareness of reproductive rights. Moreover, working on reproductive health service utilization, women empowerment, and open discussions between partners are crucial to increasing the knowledge and involvement of husbands. Ruminjo et.al., 1996, [19] the study provides a summary of existing acceptability data on the innovative female condom and introduce a new study comparing its acceptability with the latex male condom among low-risk women in private obstetrician/gynaecologists' clinics in Nairobi, Kenya. According to the interviewer-assisted questionnaires, 84% of participants expressed a liking for the female condom, with over two-thirds favouring it as much or more than the male condom. Approximately 55% of women expressed willingness to use the female condom in the future if it were available. Some challenges included perceptions that the device was too large for easy insertion, messy to handle, and reduced sensation. However, experience improved ease and comfort of use. Positive aspects included enhanced sexual enjoyment, protection against sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy, and control for women. Male partner response was somewhat less favourable, impacting women's compliance or discontinuation. The study suggests that the female condom is reasonably acceptable for certain Kenyan couples, emphasizing the need for further research on safety, cost-effectiveness, and barriers to acceptability.

E. Challenges and Recommendation for Men's Engagement in Family Planning: Indian Scenario

In the Indian context, men's engagement in family planning faces several challenges rooted in societal norms and traditional gender roles. Deep-seated patriarchal structures often make it difficult to promote open discussions and active involvement of men in reproductive health decisions. Cultural expectations and limited awareness contribute to resistance among men to participate in family planning initiatives. Additionally, prevailing misconceptions about contraceptive methods and concerns about societal judgment hinder men from embracing supportive roles in family planning. To overcome these challenges, targeted awareness campaigns and educational programs are crucial. Initiatives should focus on breaking down cultural barriers, dispelling myths surrounding contraceptives, and fostering positive attitudes towards men's involvement in family planning. Implementing community-based interventions, involving influential community leaders, and incorporating men in healthcare services can lead to a more inclusive approach. Moreover, fostering gender-equitable norms and promoting joint decision-making between couples can gradually shift traditional perspectives, making men more receptive to family planning.



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(Cp 1999 [3]), Effective fertility regulation research in India hinges on addressing socioeconomic, educational, and religious influences. Access to quality contraceptive options is crucial for family planning and maternal health. Emphasizing awareness, gender equality, and male involvement can enhance the impact and accessibility of fertility control methods."

F. Challenges and Recommendations for Men's Engagement in Family Planning: Global Scenario

Globally, challenges in men's engagement in family planning share similarities, with variations based on cultural contexts. Societal expectations and norms influence men's perceptions worldwide, impacting their willingness to actively participate in family planning. To address these challenges globally, collaborative efforts are essential. International organizations, NGOs, and governments should collaborate to design culturally sensitive campaigns, providing resources and support for men's education on reproductive health. Global platforms can facilitate the exchange of successful strategies and interventions, creating a collective movement towards increased men's engagement in family planning on a global scale. Sciortino, 1998, [22] Women-centred programs try to empower women, yet they may not address power inequities in society. Despite empowering initiatives, women in patriarchal societies may struggle to express their reproductive rights inside the home, as evidenced by the Indonesian experience. Gender power disparities can make it harder to communicate and engage in safe sex practices. The Gender Sensitization workshop had a positive impact on society. Mugo-Muna, 1995, [16], conducted a 3-day Gender Sensitization workshop by UMATI in Morogoro, Tanzania, targeting gender imbalances identified by the IPPF Africa Region Task Force on Involvement of Women. With 32 senior officials and volunteers participating, the sessions delved into gender awareness, management, inequality, and the link between public plans and gender. Family planning was highlighted as a gender issue due to factors like male dominance, gender-biased methods, and sociocultural pressures. The workshop aims to instil gender sensitivity within UMATI, fostering an environment attuned to gender dynamics, and ultimately improving the organization's approach to addressing gender imbalances in family planning and reproductive health.

G. Evidence of Impact on Women's Empowerment in Indian Scenario

Fostering women's empowerment via men's participation in family planning activities is a complicated and varied strategy that necessitates a thorough knowledge of the elements influencing men's attitudes and behaviours regarding FP and women's empowerment. Resolving gender stereotypes, building health systems, giving information and training, involving communities, and adopting policies that promote men's participation in FP and women's empowerment are all effective solutions for resolving these issues. A thorough evaluation of the literature on this issue can assist in identifying the most successful tactics and informing future research and initiatives in this field. Sangar, S. 2018, [21], The National Family Planning Programme (FPP) in India aims to address the challenge of population

growth by reducing high birth rates. It is also promoted as a strategy to alleviate poverty, and hunger, and prevent maternal and childhood deaths. Research indicates that empowering women is associated with lower fertility, longer birth intervals, and reduced unintended pregnancies. While family planning services provide women with autonomy in deciding when and how many children to have, the burden of family planning predominantly falls on women due to services being primarily focused on them. This has led to challenges in achieving equitable family planning, with limited male involvement and potential negative impacts on women's economic empowerment. The article highlights the need to shift the focus towards shared responsibility between men and women in family planning to achieve gender equality in family planning programs. Unfortunately, there aren't many researchers looking into how men can play a more active role in family planning to empower women in India. This shows that we need more research and a better understanding of how involving men can make a difference in women's empowerment in family planning. It's time for more thorough studies and increased awareness of the complex dynamics at play in this important area.

H. Evidence of Impact on Women's Empowerment in Global Scenario

A thorough examination of facts about the influence of women's empowerment in the global context reveals a varied picture. Numerous treatments and programs have produced significant results, notably in reproductive health, education, and economic involvement. Initiatives promoting gender equality and women's rights have helped to strengthen decision-making autonomy and access to resources. However, the efficacy of these treatments differs by region due to different cultural, economic, and social settings. The worldwide debate on women's empowerment is expanding, highlighting the need for long-term initiatives and inclusive methods that overcome structural hurdles. While progress has been achieved, problems remain, needing continued study and a more nuanced understanding of the intricate interaction of factors that influence women's empowerment on a worldwide scale this literature supports the study of Tesfa et al., 2022, [24], the research sought to investigate women's independent decision-making capacity and the reasons for not utilizing contraception. The survey comprised 5,598 Ethiopian women who are now married and aged 15 to 49. The findings revealed that various individual and community-level variables were strongly related to women's independent decision not to use contraception. Individual characteristics included living in a female-led family, belonging to certain religious groups (orthodox and protestant), and membership in numerous unions. Community-level characteristics included poor community education and belonging to certain areas of Ethiopia, the study concluded that women's independent decision-making capacity to not utilize contraception was limited and impacted by both individual and community-level influences.

Vizheh et al., 2021, [25], The purpose of their systematic review is to determine the influence of empowerment on child nutrition outcomes, with a focus on empowering girls and young women in sexual interactions to promote health outcomes. Studies from Kenya and South Africa, published in PLoS ONE in 2018 and 2019, highlight the link between relationship power, HIV risk, and partner violence, calling for gender transformational programs. Furthermore, several research in Sub-Saharan Africa, Spain, India, Pakistan, and other countries look at women's empowerment, highlighting the importance of understanding gendered factors on women's reproductive health and its implications for poverty reduction. This corpus of research highlights the complex relationships between empowerment, gender dynamics, and health outcomes across a wide range of worldwide contexts.

Overall discussion recommended the development of policies and programs that promote women's empowerment and incorporate their partners in each region of the nation to encourage women's independent decision-making regarding the use of contraceptives [26][27][28][29][30].

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this systematic review, we can conclude that the research study provides crucial insights into the complex dynamics of men's engagement in family planning initiatives and its impact on women's empowerment. The identified biases favouring men within communities underscore the pressing need for transformative social changes to enhance women's health and advance gender equality. The study's revelation on questionnaire length affecting data quality highlights the importance of adaptive survey methodologies for more accurate insights. Recognizing successful global interventions emphasizes the significance of culturally tailored strategies in fostering men's participation. The gaps in husbands' knowledge and involvement in eastern Ethiopia signal a call for intensified media efforts to raise awareness. The overarching message is clear: achieving gender equality and empowering women in family planning requires inclusive, gender-sensitive approaches addressing biases, improving data collection, adapting interventions culturally, and promoting active male engagement on a global scale.

VII. LIMITATION

Despite our careful efforts to avoid all possible sources of errors and biases in the literature review, there remain certain limitations. One such restriction is the review's possible narrowing of its reach due to its emphasis on English-language research publications, which might lead to the omission of important studies done in other languages. Furthermore, even with a thorough search conducted in the Scopus database, there may be pertinent research in other databases or sources that were overlooked, which might affect how thorough the results are. However, because the study's primary focus is on India and the wider world, it could not adequately represent the variety of social, cultural, and economic elements that influence men's involvement in family planning in other particular geographical contexts. To fully understand the subtleties of men's participation in family planning activities in various cultural and geographic

contexts, more study may be required. Finally, while the study emphasizes the variety of treatments and effective strategies for getting men involved in family planning, it does not go into great detail on the long-term viability and scalability of these initiatives. Comprehending these constraints can direct further investigations to bridge these deficiencies and augment the resilience and relevance of discoveries in this domain.

VIII. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study on men's engagement in family planning strategies and its connection to women's empowerment holds significant future implications. By exploring the dynamics between men's involvement in family planning initiatives and women's empowerment, the study provides insights that can shape future policies and programs in this area. Understanding how men participate in family planning and the impact of empowering women can lead to the development of more effective interventions and strategies. Additionally, the study's systematic review methodology, following the PRISMA guidelines, sets a benchmark for future research in this field. The detailed screening process, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and analysis methods can serve as a model for researchers undertaking similar studies. This can contribute to advancing the quality and rigour of future research on family planning and women's empowerment. Moreover, the study's focus on the Indian context, while also considering global perspectives, highlights the importance of addressing cultural and contextual differences in family planning initiatives. Future research could further investigate these nuances to tailor interventions that are culturally sensitive and effective across diverse settings. In conclusion, the study's findings and methodology pave the way for future studies to delve deeper into the relationship between men's engagement in family planning and women's empowerment, ultimately contributing to improved health outcomes and gender equality initiatives globally.

DECLARATION STATEMENT

After aggregating input from all authors, I must verify the accuracy of the following information as the article's author.

- **Conflicts of Interest/ Competing Interests:** Based on my understanding, this article has no conflicts of interest.
- **Funding Support:** This article has not been funded by any organizations or agencies. This independence ensures that the research is conducted with objectivity and without any external influence.
- **Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate:** The content of this article does not necessitate ethical approval or consent to participate with supporting documentation.
- **Data Access Statement and Material Availability:** The adequate resources of this article are publicly accessible.
- **Authors Contributions:** The authorship of this article is attributed equally to all participating authors.

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