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Balochistan-Early Childhood Development Project

FORMATIVE ACTION RESEARCH ON USE OF MEDIA

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The 18-month Formative Action Research (FAR) project served as an opportunity to test media campaign with the operationalization support of Implementing Partners (IPs) and communities of Gwadar, Quetta and Qilla Saifullah. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of media campaign (Radio and TV programmes) in promoting good practices for Early Childhood Care and Development in the three project districts of Balochistan. The ultimate aim was to ascertain the extent to which it has helped in changing knowledge attitude and practices of the caregivers about child care and development.

Formative action research design was adopted for this study using the Social Learning Theory framework. The FAR completed four phases in each field site with action reflection cycle as main component in each phase. In the first **“inception”** phase available and preferable media resources for the community were examined and community resource groups were formed. During the second phase of **“Planning and Development”**, ECD messages were framed in consultation with CRGs and finally, 10 Radio promos and 2 Videos (animated and docudrama) were developed. Third phase comprised **“Action and Implementation”**, during this phase radio promos and videos were broadcasted. The last phase was **“Evaluation”** where the impact of media campaign was measured through Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) and In-depth Interviews (IDIs) of various stakeholders.

The results of evaluation have demonstrated that use of radio and TV as medium for promoting good practices for Early Childhood Care and Development was an effective method. This media campaign increased parents' ability to critically analyze their attitude, behavior and pattern of parenting and take action to correct them in a positive way. The messages increased their knowledge about role of parent, child care, child play and other activities. The messages helped in changing their attitude and practices in reducing discrimination against girl child, scolding behavior towards children and hostile relationship between husband and wife. Respondents highlighted the increased use of positive practices of praise and encouragement with children on any task. A positive change in home environment, among siblings, parents and other family members were also reported by almost all participants of FGDs and IDIs in all three field site.

Although timing of broadcasting and media channels were selected on the recommendation of IPs and CRGs, however due to household chores and engagement of males in outdoor activities, varying timings of electric load shading and lack of access to selected media channels, a very limited number of participants could listen to or watch those programs. Most of the children liked the video and wanted to see that again and again. Besides this, few elders of community did not fancy watching animated video as they thought that it was like a cartoon and was more for children to watch and enjoy.

Whereas, very small number of respondent who benefited from broadcasting hence qualitative analysis showed that participants shared very positive feedback about the media campaign. It is concluded that media campaign was an effective tool to raise awareness about early child development among parents, children and other family members. However there is need to use convenient timings and various media channels for greater promotion of messages.