

**CHAPTER VIII**

**ATTITUDE OF SIMPLE PERSONS TOWARDS ABORTION AS A  
METHOD OF FAMILY PLANNING**

## CHAPTER VIII

### ATTITUDE OF SAMPLE PERSONS TOWARDS ABORTION AS A METHOD OF FAMILY PLANNING

#### 8.1 Introduction

In this chapter the following hypotheses will be tested :

Hypothesis 1 : Women in the sample villages do not like the idea that abortion should be encouraged as a method of family planning.

Hypothesis 2 : A few men in the sample villages think that abortion may be encouraged as a method of family planning but that method should be adopted in the case of extreme necessity and not as a regular feature.

#### 8.2 Methodology

331 men and 229 women were interviewed ( sample married persons who adopted family planning ) with the following questions :

(a) Do you think that abortion should be resorted to more and more as a method of family planning ?

(b) If you think yes, then what are the grounds you may suggest to substantiate your contention ?

(c) If you think in the negative, then what are the arguments you may like to put forward to substantiate the validity of your stand ?

(d) Do you think that in the case of extreme necessity to prevent the birth to an unwanted child, abortion should be adopted ? If yes, what are the arguments you may suggest to justify your stand ? If not, what are the arguments you may like to put forward to substantiate your stand ?

Information were collected with regard to the above questions through direct interview method from the aforesaid sample.

### 8.3 Difficulties

The following difficulties were experienced to gather relevant information in this regard :

Firstly, it was found that most of the women did not have adequate idea of what they meant by abortion. They had their idea of own which perhaps, was difficult to gather due to their shyness, etc. It was difficult for the investigator to explain the term to them in details. Under the circumstances, the helps of female field-staff of the Family Planning Office were fruitfully used.

Secondly, even among men also, the term was not sufficiently clear or <sup>it</sup> might be that they had the idea of their own but they did not like to divulge their sentiments etc.

in this regard to an inquisitive outsider. The helps of Gram-sevaks, male field-staff etc. were fruitfully utilised in this regard.

Thirdly, it was also found that to certain sample belonging to different religious groups having more or less the same poor economic background, the term when put forward did not appear to be pleasant. They became angry and they did not like to utter a single word in this regard. To them, such discussions were not morally desirable. They were so much antagonised that even they threatened not to co-operate in any type of discussions with regard to family planning with the present investigator. The difficulty was, however, eased by the help of field-staff and continuous persuasion to make them understand the spirit and real purpose of the question. Sometimes, indirect ways like gossips, stories etc. were made to get rid of initial resistance to the term. Gradually the difficulties which proved to be insurmountable in the beginning did not appear to be so and their co-operation was ultimately obtained to a certain extent.

#### 3.4 A Note to the Future Investigators

The future investigators on family planning should note the following points which the present investigator had experienced during his field investigation :

- 1) The investigators should keep it in mind that the question should not be put directly at the very first time of the

interview. They would do it well to remember that if the above procedure is followed i.e. if the questions are put directly at the very first time of interview, there may be possibility of misunderstanding <sup>and</sup> complications which may mar the entire prospect of the project to a great extent.

2) They should try to pass through some familiarisation period when it would be desirable that both the interviewer and respondents should have developed mutual understanding and respect for each other so that replies to the questions should come automatically amidst frankness.

3) During the familiarisation period, it would be better for the interviewers to make some gossips, chit-chats, stories etc. which may give opportunity to the respondents to be frank to the interviewers who should be the men of them as far as possible. He should remember that he should avoid sophisticated behaviour and action, remarks and discussions and they <sup>\*</sup> should also remember that almost a constant watch generally is being made by the rural people over the activities of the interviewers. Hence, at the very outset, it is desirable that he should have some idea to study human actions and behaviours particularly under rural set-up and how to move the ball in the right court to get meaningful information from the respondents. Hasty action, complicated words and expressions, use of tall talks etc. are to be avoided as far as possible. It should be remembered that one should not consider them to be lacking of the ability

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\* Future investigators

to understand the mind of the interviewers. It may be that they may not understand fully but they have their own way of appreciating the mind of the interviewers who should be careful from the very beginning to avoid such actions and behaviours which may affect the very purpose of the interview.

4) While dealing with women respondents, particularly with such problems like family planning, it is desirable on the part of the interviewer to adopt tact, intelligence, foresight as far as possible. To avoid misunderstanding, it would have been better, if it is possible for him to take help of the local influential people, field-staff of family planning office, nurses, doctors etc, so that meaningful information may be available from the women respondents. One should not insist on women respondents on some questions to answer which they may not like to say because of shyness and or personal and other difficulties. A tendency may be developed among the interviewers to get as many information as possible and as a result, they may insist on getting answers to the questions which some women respondents may like to avoid. In such cases, in the initial stages it would be preferable to avoid insistence and to wait for the time when reasonable atmosphere would be created when they would come out openly with such questions with a clear mind.

5) One should be careful to know the art of putting questions before the women respondents. It would have been better if before going for interview, one gets some reasonable idea about

aptitude etc. of the rural areas so that slow but steady progress should pave the way for having purposeful information from the women respondents. The question should be very simple, clear in meaning and purpose and the answer to which should not be clumsy and nature should be such that one question may prepare the climate for getting answer to the next question and so on as far as possible.

6) If the interviewer is <sup>a</sup>/bachelor one, like the present investigator, he should take special precaution not to be misunderstood by putting questions on family planning and the help of the local influential people, nurses, field-staff, doctors, etc. should be taken as far as possible to avoid any scope of misunderstanding etc.

### 8.5 Difficulties in determining the attitudes

A researcher may find it difficult to move smoothly when he introduces the concept/the term attitude in his analysis because of the following reasons :

- A. What does the attitude really constitute ?
- B. Are the different elements of the term separable from one other ?
- C. Can we really identify different elements of the term ?
- D. Even if we assume that some elements can be identified, to what extent such identification would be purposeful,

and can be assumed to be complete in the process of such identification ?

E. To What extent personal elements and inter-personal elements can be separated ?

F. To what extent internal and external effects on the term can be identified and to what extent their effects can be measured in reality ?

G. To what extent different varying factors and their impacts on the term can be measured in reality ?

H. How to determine the short-term and long-term effects of the term ?

The above are some of the many difficulties which have been pointed out in this connection to suggest that there are indeed, various difficulties in using the term in an analysis particularly so when one goes deep to the problem. For the present analysis, the use of the term had posed multiple problems as stated already and at one stage, it was thought that it might not be meaningful to use the term to test the hypothesis referred to already. But at the same time, it was felt that it was really difficult to avoid the term altogether while testing the aforesaid hypothesis and in the process one suggestion came to the mind and that was to drop to test the hypothesis altogether. It might be that there might be some other methods which might be used to test the hypothesis than using the term. It should be frankly admitted that the present investigator did not have



requisite knowledge of the existence and/or use of such alternative methods if already accepted in scholarly works. It was felt by him that the nature of the hypothesis is such that while testing the same it would be indeed difficult to avoid the term altogether. Due to significance and importance of the hypothesis, even with these limitations, the term has been used.

### 3.6 Methodology to know the attitude about abortion

Under the circumstances the following indicators\* were used to know the attitude of the sample persons with regard to abortion :

1. His/Her knowledge about the term abortion ;
2. His/Her knowledge about different methods of family planning vis-a-vis abortion ;
3. His/Her idea of the situation/situations when abortion should be <sup>adopted</sup> / as a method of family planning ; and
4. His/Her approach towards tackling the problem of over-population in the family.

In the initial stage, before using the indicators as stated above, the sample were made to understand the term -- its utility, nature, scope, problems etc. and its importance and significance in family planning by the present investigator. In the second stage, when it was realised that they had developed the requisite understanding of the term and its utility and significance in family planning, further attempts had been made to make some tests through gossips, etc. to know the nature and

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\* Indicators are not exhaustive.

extent of their understanding. In the third stage, when it was realised that reasonable idea of the term was formed amongst them, questions on the indicators stated already were put before the sample. It was believed that the above approach had yielded good results, though one might question the efficacy of the said approach, because the same needs among other things, a tremendous amount of tact, patience, intelligence, foresight and all that on the part of the investigator and one should be very careful in using the above approach in an analysis like the present one.

But it was felt that in a set-up where most of the people are illiterate and poverty-stricken and particularly when one deals with women respondents, one should be very much careful from the beginning of such investigation.

### 8.7 Field Results

Out of 329 sample for Hypothesis I, it had been found that all the sample did point out that they did not like the idea that abortion should be encouraged as a method of family planning and therefore, we find that Hypothesis I was found to be true.

The reasons for such an attitude/idea identified during investigations, appear mainly to be the following :

1. They thought that this was not morally acceptable ;
2. This would affect the health of the women, particularly in the rural areas where they might come out for abortion perhaps

mostly at the later stage due to shyness etc. and if at that time the method was introduced, that might cause death even ;

3. The doctors etc. might refuse to do so because of many complications that might result if the method was introduced ;

4. After abortion, the women concerned need sufficient food, medicine, rest etc. which the poor rural people would ill-afford to supply;

5. General attitude among the sample with regard to abortion appeared to be not encouraging and they apprehended that if such method was introduced, their image might fall before neighbours in the process ;

6. Even in case of unmarried women, they did not suggest the method because they thought that, this might cause corruption, social complications, etc. in the village ; and

7. They also thought that possibility of coming further children in future might be adversely affected if the method was adopted.

### 8.8 A Note on 8.7

There may be danger due to abortion arising out of medical complications, etc. Moreover, there may be scope for exploitation out of it by untrained abortionists whose help may be taken due to lack of adequate abortionists in the sample village.

Moreover, after abortion, certain necessary precautions should be taken for which requisite guidance may be required but one very much doubts the availability of such a guidance in the sample village.

### 3.9 Results of Hypothesis II

Out of 331 male persons who adopted family planning, only twenty five thought that abortion might be encouraged as a method of family planning but that method should be adopted in the case of extreme necessity and not as a regular feature. Thus, it was found that the hypothesis was true.

Reasons extended by the 25 persons who constituted a few men in the Hypothesis II, may be summarised in the following way :

Firstly, they believe that in case of any unwanted child, the method might be adopted with the full consent of the women concerned.

Secondly, if before marriage a girl becomes pregnant, she should be given an opportunity to use the method, if she desires so to avoid any unwanted child.

Thirdly, in those cases where some women who could be identified (who do not like to undergo Tubectomy or whose husbands do not undergo Vasectomy operation but where such women concerned have become pregnant while they consider that these pregnancies are not wanted) might be given a chance to use the method if they like.

Fourthly, there might be some cases when some women are not medically fit for undergoing Tubectomy operation and happen to be pregnant while liking to avoid such pregnancy, they might be given an opportunity to use the method if medical condition of such women does permit.

Next male respondents did not like the idea that abortion should be encouraged as a method of family planning under any circumstances because of the reasons which were more or less similar to what have already been given in the case of women respondents and hence, they are not repeated here.

The 25 persons who constituted a few men in Hypothesis II also suggested that there should be proper medical care which was conspicuous by its absence in their respective villages. They also pointed out that there should be frank and easy atmosphere where the women did not feel it difficult to approach for going for the method and there should be adequate mental set-up in their villages among the rural people to understand and appreciate the necessity of this method in some cases. They opined that in these villages most of the rural people did not have adequate understanding and appreciation of the need for <sup>adopting</sup> the method at least, in extreme necessities.