

CHAPTER V

INVOLVEMENT OF NON-OFFICIALS IN THE FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMME

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5.1 Introduction

The following hypothesis will be tested in this chapter : The role of non-officials in popularising Family Planning Programme in the district was inadequate during the period of the study.

5.2 Meaning of Non-Officials

For this study by non-officials we mean those persons, organisations, institutions, etc. which are not directly connected with the Government, for popularising Family Planning Programme among the people. The following non-officials were identified during the period of the study :

- 1) Persons who directly or indirectly might take active part in popularising Family Planning Programme among the people but in no way connected with family planning office (Social workers who were in any way connected with social works in any organisations and institutions and might take active interest in popularising Family Planning Programme and other persons who might take active part in this regard directly or indirectly).
- 2) Social and other organisations and institutions

which might take active interest in popularising Family Planning Programme among the persons/organisations/institutions identified might take indirect help, guidance, etc. from the official quarters but in no way directly connected with them.

5.3 Methodology

First of all, from the sample villages altogether 300 persons (taking 50 from each village) were selected through stratified random sampling technique and these persons, all are men, were directly interviewed to know their role in Family Planning Programme. In the second stage, 10 social workers from each of the sample village i.e. altogether 60 social workers were selected through random sampling technique and they were interviewed directly to know their role in Family Planning Programme. *

In the third stage, from different organisations like Gram and Anchal Panchayats, Social Organisations like Ramkrishna Mission, Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Viswa Hindu Parishad, Lions Club, Jalpaiguri Unit, 25 persons were selected at random and they were directly interviewed to examine their role in Family Planning Programme.

In the fourth stage, data and information collected from the above sources were arranged and analysed for final drafting.

* Total sample of persons = 300 + 60 = 360. Persons are referred to as the First Group and Institutions/organisations as the Second Group.

5.4 Field Results

5.4.1 Results from the First Group

Out of 360 persons, only 30 were identified who some way or the other, had taken some interest in popularising Family Planning Programme, 10 of them had done it through discussions with neighbours, 8 of them did it through directly co-operating with the official personnel, 7 of them did it through attending discussions, seminars, etc. organised by Family Planning Centre of the district and made attempts to spread their ideas what were they had learnt from such seminars, discussions, etc. among their neighbours and rest of the 5 did it through different ways like participating and organising discussions, meetings etc. for Family Planning, participating in folk dances, dramas etc. connected with popularising the programme etc.

It is found from the above that only a very few of the people participated in popularising Family Planning Programme, while the rest did not make any attempt whatsoever in this regard. The reasons for their non-participation may be analysed in the following way :

Firstly, they pointed out that they did not find any interest in the participation because they had their own pre-occupations which took away most of their time and it was practically impossible for them to snatch away some time to work for the programme.

Secondly, some pointed out that they did not find it a reasonable attempt which they should have undertaken when already different Government organisations, etc. were there to do this job. They did not like to poke their noses over their work which they considered were mainly the responsibility of the Government and not of them.

Thirdly, some of them pointed out that they considered it more prudent to utilise their off-time to earn extra money and or to relax or to see the interest of their families than to go for such works. They also apprehended that such works would welcome for them various complications like misunderstanding etc. and they preferred all these to avoid.

Fourthly, some of them pointed out that they had not the expert knowledge on the subject and they did not consider themselves to be adequately fit and or capable of assuming such responsibility with practically little or no knowledge about the programme.

Fifthly, in village, various rumours, etc. appeared to spread on some touchy issue like family planning and some of them apprehended that if they went for the same, that might lead to further rumours which might affect their image among their neighbours.

Sixthly, some of them considered it rewarding to be involved in some other fruitful activities from which they might gain economically and or socially, politically etc. which might

Biswa Hindu Parishad is a social-cum-religious organisation. The Parishad has been engaged in various types of social works. It gives relief to those who are victimised by flood, drought and or other natural calamities in the sample district. It has also organised night school in the district for spreading education for uneducated adult masses.

It was gathered that this organisation was not engaged in popularising Family Planning Work in the district as because the members of this organisation did not get any instruction from the higher authority. It was the opinion of the convener of the Parishad in this district that self-control measure might work well for successful implementation of Family Planning Programme. He opined that farm-family should accept self-control measure. To him, to curve population, artificial measures as a tool for family planning should not be encouraged as because adoption of artificial measure might bring complexity in human body.

There was a feeling in the present investigator that the members interviewed in this Parishad were not adequately familiar with different types of Family Planning measures and it was also felt that in the near future, they had not^{had} any plan even to undertake any measure to popularise Family Planning Programme in the district. One has to decide, however, whether the local unit had given an excuse for not participating in the programme in the sense that as because instruction did not come

from the higher authority, they were not involved in the programme. But to what extent they were themselves interested for the programme was not clearly known. If they were themselves interested they might approach the higher authority for the approval of a proposal for participating in the programme. But it was gathered that they did not take any such initiative ^{as} might be interpreted as their lack of identifying the need for participating in the programme and they used higher authority as a scape-goat for their own inability and or unwillingness to work for the programme. Even it was felt that they had not requisite mental set-up to appreciate the need for their involvement. Moreover, it was felt that they appeared to consider that the work should be done by Family Planning Organisation of the District and the Parishad should not involve itself in such a programme.

Coming to Ramkrishna Mission and the Bharat Sebashram Sangha, it was found that these institutions were not taking any steps to popularise Family Planning Programme in the district. They were engaged in social work like giving relief to those who were affected by flood, drought, natural calamities, etc. They were also engaged in giving education to the students and they were trying their best for religious upliftment of the people.

In the opinion of a Swamiji of the Ramkrishna Mission, too many children in a family might cause problem and

rural people would face problems like poverty, malnutrition, unemployment problem, etc. for too many children in a family. But at the same time, any forceful method for successful implementation of Family Planning Programme should not be encouraged. He also opined that some problems might crop up due to operation.

Another Swamiji of the Bharat Sebashram Sangha pointed out that there were some problems of operation. For instance, a father having two children adopted vasectomy operation but if it was found that after operation, two children died all on a sudden, the person undergone such an operation, might suffer mentally and so, it was the opinion of that Swamiji that after having limited children, parents should live like a brother and ^asister. According to him, for implementation of Family Planning Programme, Government should take a comprehensive approach and the programme should be extended equally to Muslim Community also, otherwise, he apprehended that in the long-run the Hindu Community might suffer decay.

It was felt that these organisations had not adequately understood the importance and significance of their utility of involvement in the programme though they had resources, personnel, etc. and people in general, appeared to have some faith in these organisations because of their long-standing social involvement. It appeared strange to the

investigator that, being leading social organisations in the country, how these organisations could play passive role in the programme when it was generally understood by the members of these organisations that, there indeed, was need for Family Planning Programme. If there was a need, one might wonder how could they remain a silent spectator in this regard? One wondered how these organisations could not take requisite initiative in making themselves involved in the programme? It was felt that, they failed to appreciate the importance of their role in this regard. It might also be thought that, they were by-passing a very important problem like involving themselves in Family Planning Programme. These organisations had almost general acceptability among the rural people/and also among the sample families but none of the sample families had been approached by these organisations in this regard. It was felt that these organisations had not the requisite understanding of the need, etc. of approaching the rural people in this regard. Even utter ignorance of what was going on for the programme in the district could be clearly identified among these personnel. One had to decide whether one should allow such important organisations to remain passive spectators in such an important programme, while it was felt that their involvement might help the programme, because people mostly in the sample villages had a favourable opinion for these organisations and in such an atmosphere, if these organisations could be utilised for the success of the programme, it was believed that the programme

itself would get stimuli for going ahead.

Coming to Lions Club in this district, it was found that the local unit of the Club appeared not to consider it as a step to be undertaken by them. The unit was mostly engaged in social services like opening of eye-operation centre free of cost, aid to the poor, etc., but in no way, ^{were} they found to be involved in popularising Family Planning Programme. It was gathered that they had not immediate plan for being involved in the programme. It was gathered that they considered that the responsibility should be taken by the Government concerned and the unit might not look after the programme. Like the earlier social organisations, of which mention has already been made, this organisation was also not willing to appreciate the importance of their involvement in the programme adequately, and it was also found that they mostly lacked a clear understanding of what was going on for the programme in the district.

Coming to Gram Panchayat and Anchal Panchayat, we find that they did not take any initiative in popularising Family Planning Programme in the sample villages. The members thought that it was not their responsibility which should rest with the Health and Family Planning Department of the Government.

One important question arises whether important institutions like Gram Panchayat and Anchal Panchayat should be allowed to remain silent on such an important issue like

Family Planning Programme ? These are important institutions at the grass-roots and the members appeared to know better their neighbours in the sample villages and if this could be utilised to popularise the programme, it might be easier for the Government to extend the scope and nature of the programme. The rural people might be more frank to the members of the Panchayats and this frank atmosphere might help to create a situation that might pave the way for popularising the programme among the rural people.

The reason for which members of the Gram Panchayat and the Anchal Panchayat did not participate in the Family Planning Programme may be summarised in the following way :

Firstly, members felt that they should not involve themselves in the Programme, because already a separate Government machinery was there for the programme. They had other things to do and any involvement in this regard was not considered desirable by them.

Secondly, members felt that they had not the adequate paid staff and they were finding it difficult to manage their own assigned duties and any further addition to the existing work might pose further complications to them.

Thirdly, members considered that such involvement would not perhaps, brighten their image when there was any success, because, if that was there, that might be claimed by the Family Planning Department of the Government. Therefore, this work might be left entirely on the Government.

Fourthly, it was found that members did not have requisite will and power to work for the programme perhaps, because, they had very little understanding of the utility of their involvement for the programme. Even it was found that, they did not consider it as a part of their duty.

5.5 Conclusions

The hypothesis has been tested and it was found true.

One point needs to be remembered in this connection and that is, the inadequacy of this involvement should be more scientifically tested with in-depth studies to have more meaningful insights than what have been obtained through the present study. But this needs perhaps, among other things, the application of interdisciplinary approaches involving psychologists etc. to get purposeful information in this regard.