

CHAPTER VI

THE ROLE OF OFFICIALS IN FAMILY PLANNING

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6.1 Introduction

The following hypothesis will be tested :

The role of officials in popularising and or extending nature, scope, extent of Family Planning Programme in sample villages was not adequate during the period of the study. 7

6.2 Who are Officials ?

For the present study personnel connected with District Family Planning Office are considered as officials.

6.3 Indicators to Examine the Role

The following indicators were used to test the hypothesis :

1. To what extent personnel connected with District Family Planning Office (D.F.P.O) have taken interest in popularising Family Planning manifested through their attempts in this regard by using various media like radio, newspaper, magazines, cinema, seminars, debates, public-fairs,

motivation-orientation camps etc. ?

2. To what extent the training to field-staff by the Family Planning Centre to equip them for the programme is squarely adequate ?

3. To what extent the supply of goods for Family Planning from the Family Planning Office in the district is adequate ?

4. To what extent the sample families are motivated for Family Planning by the Family Planning Office to adopt Family Planning ?

5. To what extent there is co-ordination among the different field-staff engaged in the programme ?

6. To what extent the field-staff are able to get co-operation from the sample families to adopt Family Planning ?

The indicators do not, however, claim to be exhaustive.

6.4 Methodology

Information were collected from both the field-staff as well as from the sample families (Total sample families = 130 and total persons = 560 ; 331 = male and 229 = female).

Regarding field-staff, difficulty arose because no specific field-staff was engaged in sample villages. Field-staff were generally meant for the entire district. Therefore, the following personnel were selected through stratified random

sampling technique : Doctor = 5, Administrator = 3, others 12 (others included clerk, steno-typist, field-workers, health assistant, cashier, male and female nurses, etc.). Total sample of the field-staff came to be twenty.

6.5 Field Results

6.5.1 Radio talks, discussions, plays etc. organised by the Family Planning Office

560 sample persons were interviewed to know :

(a) Whether they had heard any Radio talks, discussions, plays etc. with regard to family planning ? (b) Whether such talks etc. if any, had any influence on them to take decision for family planning ? 150 of the sample replied in the affirmative for question No. (a) but none of them specifically said anything with regard to question No. (b).

Difficulty of course was there to know both (a) and (b) because with regard to (a), even various conflicting remarks were expressed which made it difficult for the present investigator to make meaningful conclusion in this regard. However, conflicting remarks were balanced through enquiries and through heart to heart talks. But even then it was not quite clear as to what extent they told the correct information. It appeared they might speak something to an outside inquisitor to project their image or it might be that they were not quite sure of the validity of their remarks.

Regarding (b) the difficulty was further pronounced because the concept of influence appeared not to be sufficiently clear to them inspite of the best efforts by the present investigator. It appeared intriguing that there was no influence of such talks and discussions on them. It was believed that some influence might be there about which they were not quite sure of. When they were asked several times to know the correct information they felt embarrassed and in order not to disturb the project, no further enquiry was made in this regard. One may question the justification of keeping this portion when doubt was there regarding the validity of statement. To this it might be said that retention was made not to lose the aforesaid finding which might otherwise reflect the difficulties of having reliable data and information from village people in this regard. Another difficulty was to isolate different impacts on their decisions for family planning. Most of them did not have sufficient educational background etc. Difficulties were indeed there, to isolate different impacts separately and to know the impact of each on the said decision.

6.5.1.1 Publicity in Newspapers, Magazines, etc.

organised by Family Planning Office

To the sample persons, following questions were asked :

- (a) Whether they have gone through any news, stories,

features etc. in newspapers, magazines etc. issued and organised and or published by Family Planning Office ?

(b) Whether such publications have any influence on them in taking decisions for family planning ?

Out of the sample persons, 65 said in the affirmative regarding (a), but with regard to question (b), none was quite clear about the question. The explanations which had been given with regard to Radio talks, plays etc. might also be given with regard to this and hence, these are not repeated.

6.5.1.2 Debates, discussions, seminars, etc. organised by the Family Planning Office

All the sample respondents replied that they had not seen any debate, discussion, seminar etc. organised by Family Planning Office in these villages.

6.5.1.3 Public-Fair

The Department of Publicity, Family Planning Office in some cases, organised public-fairs in different villages of the district. In sample six villages, public-fair took place in the following number :

$$V_1 = 1, \quad V_2 = 1, \quad V_3 = 2, \quad V_4 = 3, \quad V_5 = 3 \quad \text{and} \quad V_6 = 4.$$

The following question was put forward before the sample respondents : whether they have ^{been} inspired by such fairs in their decisions for family planning ?

Thirty of the sample replied in the positive. But here allowances should be given with regard to their reply in the sense that they were not sufficiently clear with regard to their answers.

But those who replied in the positive were asked the same question several times in different forms to know the correct information in this regard and when it was found that in each case the answer was the same, only then they were included in this group. Therefore, it may be said that conflicting replies might have been minimised to the best extent possible in this regard.

6.5.1.4 Motivation-orientation camp organised by Family Planning Office

Total motivation-orientation camps during the study in the sample villages took place in the following order :

$$V_1 = 1, V_2 = 2, V_3 = 3, V_4 = 5, V_5 = 5 \text{ and } V_6 = 6.$$

The following question was put forward before the sample :

To what extent such camps have influenced them in taking decisions on family planning ?

Fiftyfive out of five hundred sixty sample, replied in the positive. Difficulties in getting answer in this regard

had been minimised by adopting the same method/^{as} applied in the case of public-fair and hence, they are not repeated.

6.5.1.5 Door to door visit by field-staff of the Family Planning Office

Out of 560 sample, seventyfive replied that the field-staff approached them directly on the issue of family planning and tried to convince and or to compel them to adopt family planning. Out of seventyfive, sixty such persons were influenced by such visits in their decisions for adopting family planning. Here, the difficulty of identifying the influence was less pronounced because they could more or less, tell the impact of such visits which appeared to be clear from their replies. But one redeeming feature was noticed that a tendency was developed among most of the sample persons to avoid the field-staff because of their apparent boredom by seeing the field-staff pointing out the same arguments etc. which made them vexed. This might be noted by appropriate authority while motivating the field-staff in popularising the programme in their respective areas.

6.5.2 Supply of goods used for family planning supplied through Family Planning Office

During the period of the study, the following goods were supplied by the family planning office through Health

Centre in sample villages in the following order :

Villages	Nirodh (in nos.)	I. U. D. (in nos.)	Foam Tablet (in nos.)	Jelly (in nos.)	Oral Pill (in nos.)
V ₁	1506	9	-	-	-
V ₂	1604	11	-	-	-
V ₃	1663	13	-	-	-
V ₄	1682	15	-	-	-
V ₅	1703	16	60	36	804
V ₆	1732	17	63	33	830

Nirodh and I. U. D. were supplied free of cost but other items like Foam Tablet, Jelly and Oral Pill were distributed not free of cost.

From the above information we find the supply of goods used for family planning from the Family Planning Office through Health Centres during the period of the study. One redeeming feature to be noted in this connection is that sample persons did not complain much about the availability of articles supplied. But with regard to Jelly, Foam Tablet and Oral Pill, the number of sample persons who were supplied ^{with} these articles, were low mainly because these items were not supplied free of cost and most of the persons did hesitate in spending money for these due to their poverty and or other factors which have already been stated in chapter IV.

The various complaints with regard to these items by the sample persons have been stated in chapter IV. Hence,

they are not repeated here.

6.5.3 Training to field-staff

The field-staff were generally trained in District Family Planning Training Centre situated near Jalpaiguri Government Engineering College, Jalpaiguri. The approach to training was to equip the field-staff through theoretical and practical ideas/methods so that they could undertake the extension work of the family planning in their respective areas successfully. It was indeed, difficult to determine to what extent they were really equipped because the same depended upon the nature and approach to training, motivation of the trainee to apply the fruits of training into practice, integrity and devotion of the field-staff so trained to use their knowledge etc. It was indeed, difficult to isolate all such variables to find out to what extent they were really equipped. But a feeling was there that they had not adequate motivation for the programme which was manifested through their lack of adequate will in sample villages to answer various problems of the sample persons with regard to different methods of family planning. It was observed that in many cases, they tried to avoid various queries of the sample persons with regard to different methods of family planning and sometimes, even attempts were made by the field-staff to avoid

complications etc. while answering to the queries of the sample persons. It appeared that in many cases, attempts were made to somehow manage their shows without adequately trying to satisfy their* queries purposefully and one may point out that this tendency might be taken as lack of motivation etc. of the field-staff for the programme and thus, to a certain extent, the real purpose of the training was defeated.

It might be due to several factors like their attitude towards the whole problem which was marked by somehow managing the shows, their lack of adequate understanding that their present action might have far reaching consequences on the programme and their somewhat tendency to play somewhat a safe game, etc. Moreover, the lack of proper utilisation of the field-staff could also be noticed in the sense that there was no evaluation system of examining their performances in these regards. One may very much like to see that after the training was over how they could perform in the field should have been evaluated and ultimately, the future training programmes should be reformulated accordingly but no such reviews of their performances were noticed and this might be taken as a gap in the training programme of these personnel. It was pointed out that an in-depth study should have been undertaken to study the impact of training on family planning purposefully by separating variables associated with the

* Sample persons.

training which had impacts on family planning programme and to study the impact of each on family planning. Therefore, our observations might be taken as a sweeping generalisation of the problem which should have been avoided in a scholarly work. But the observation was made to note how the field-staff actually handled the sample persons in the field and therefore, the same might not be equated with the sweeping observations though there was sufficient scope for the improvement of these observations.

6.5.4 Co-ordination among different field-staff

Field-staff included various personnel like doctors, sisters, field-workers who used to pay visit once or on various occasions to extend nature and scope of family planning programme in the sample villages.

Sometimes the field-workers who had to pay visit door to door to sample families on many occasions complained that they did not always get the requisite guidance from the Family Planning Office at the time of their need. In the interior sample villages (in our case V_1 , V_2 and V_3), there were difficulties of transport and communications. The high officials and doctors of the town where District Head Office was situated appeared not to be adequately willing to visit villages where various queries of the sample persons remained mostly unsatisfied. As a result, in some cases, the field-staff

tried to avoid queries and somehow they tried to manage the show without adequately realising that such half-hearted attempts of them might have far reaching consequences that might affect the healthy movement of the programme.

It would have been perhaps, better if there was adequate co-ordination between the higher officials (including doctors) and field-staff so that they could resist their attempts to avoid to answer the queries. Actually what they were doing in the field were not adequately reviewed.

The field-staff complained of their poor pay (generally they got Rupees one hundred and eighty as basic plus D.A. per month) and they pointed out that with such a poor pay it was difficult for them to get the requisite incentive for their work. Whether the poor pay was actually the factor of their lack of adequate motivation of the programme was of course, a debatable issue because there was no such guarantee that if their pay was enhanced they would rise to the occasion. But what was redeeming to note was that they had some grievances of which the higher officers were not adequately aware of perhaps, because of their lack of adequate touch with the field-staff when they were actually performing their duties. Whether a close touch in the above line would enable the higher officers to know their real grievances was a question of which it was difficult to answer satisfactorily but what might be noted in this connection was that their grievances, and their actual performances in the

field perhaps, could be better tackled by observing them in the field at least for a certain period. Even it was found that the supply of these goods was not fully made even when these goods were available. There were complaints about the defective goods by sample persons and these were not always replaced due to lack of adequate attention of the field-staff on the sample persons due to the fact that the field-staff did not always like to report such problems to the District Head Office in order to avoid some complications which might be there and in this process, the programme appeared to suffer to a certain extent.

Sometimes, the complaints were raised by some of the field-workers specially Health Assistants for Family Planning and Maternity and Child Health Extension Educators of the sample district that they did not have any permanent residence in the district and most of these categories of the staff were serving in the sample district for more than 5 years and they also pointed out that non-compliance of their transfer-prayers might have lowered their incentive to work. But this type of problem would have been perhaps, better appreciated, if the higher officials would get adequate information from the sources and if the communication gap between the source (here, field-staff) and the receiver (here higher officials) was not so pronounced as was identified during the field investigations.

Another problem pointed out by the field-staff was that quite a large number of sample persons used to talk in a language slightly different from the language of the field-worker and as such motivational work became difficult. But the real problem could perhaps, have better been appreciated by the higher officials, if they could actually see in the field how difficulties were creating problems to the field-staff either directly or indirectly. The field-staff also pointed out that the procurement of goods for family planning from stores at the District Headquarter by sending messengers off and on seemed to be a costlier affair. System was to be evolved at an early date for the smooth supply and easy procurement of these goods.

6.5.5 Co-operation from other organisations/institutions in the Sample Villages

The following questions were put forward before the sample field-staff whether they had obtained requisite co-operation from other institutions/organisations like Panchayats, Community Development Projects, Clubs and other associations in the sample villages ? To this, the answer came mostly in the negative form in the sense that excepting certain few help and co-operations like informing some names of certain persons, some addresses etc., the other forms of co-operations like involving such institutions and organisations for the family planning programme in the sample villages were not fruitfully

considered. The following reasons appeared to be responsible for this (the information were obtained from the sample field-staff);

Firstly, they were of the opinion that through conversations with some of the personnel of such organisations/ institutions it was their feeling that such personnel appeared not to like the idea of their involvement in the programme.

Secondly, it was also felt that they appeared to avoid them in many cases when requested to co-operate with them.

Thirdly, they also complained that there was a feeling among these personnel that they were not paid for such a co-operation and the work was to be done by the personnel of the Family Planning Office and hence, such personnel (here the institutions/organisations) did not find much significance and utility in involving themselves into the programme.

The co-operation and help of some of the touts by giving them some money in lieu of their service were taken by the field-staff. But that was only because of the attraction of money which touts used to receive for their service and hence, this might be said as not voluntary co-operation.

6.6 Conclusion

The hypothesis has been tested and it has been found that it is true. The factors through which testing has been made did not claim to be exhaustive. The approach to testing also needs improvement to get more purposeful results.