

DIFFICULTIES FACED

The investigator, in a prolonged survey as this, has to face an overwhelming number of difficulties. It needed repeated personal contacts initially to impress upon the people the harmful effects of intestinal parasites and motivate them for their cooperation in the study. Only then were they willing to offer their faecal samples. Again, children were something else to contend with. Cajoling them bore fruit only when they were offered toffees, somewhat in the line of an incentive.

A survey team working in public health cannot just make observations on a rural and largely illiterate population and not offer medicine. That, to some villagers, was not acceptable, and whenever there ensued clamours for medicine, we offered multivitamin tablets.

It may be mentioned here that there were 'no - sir - no - nuisance - we - refuse - to - accept' types -- tough and non-resilient, heads of households too. One head of a household, after apparently having sat attentively through our talks, graciously accepted the specimen bottles we offered, and then in absolute anticlimax threw the bottles to a dirty spot in his courtyard and ordered us to leave at once.

The help of the influential people of the village was sought successfully to seek the cooperation of non-responders. However, most of the selected people were enthusiastic and cooperated throughout. And it is due to them that in every one of the eight surveys conducted during the two-year study period the investigator was able to collect more number of stool samples than what was required statistically.

However, their initial enthusiasm gradually waned as time passed, as is evident in bar diagram in Graph No.4 (page 52) showing the number of stool samples collected during different quarters of the study period.