THE IMPACT OF FAMILY PLANNING PROPAGANDA OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION

By Miss Aleyamma Abraham

Family Planning Propaganda envisages spread and acceptance of the conception control programmes by the people for the purpose of having fewer members in a home for a happy family life. In its broadest sense, it envisages happiness and prosperity in every individual family in the country since it is intended to raise the standard of living of the people.

The all-India birth rate of 41.7 per thousand population for 1951-61 has been reduced to 37.6 per thousand in 1967-68 according to statistics available. This achievement, no doubt, is based largely on the work done among the urban population in the country whereas 88.4 per cent of the "eligible couples" are still unprotected. To convince these unprotected couples of the reproductive span of life for the acceptance of the small family norm and to make the best use of the devices available require concentrated effort.

In our efforts for creating the desired motivation for small-family norm, there is need for still deeper concern about the couples of tomorrow, the young adolescent boys and girls of today. About 900,000 girls enter the reproductive age group every year. The increasing number of couples entering married life every year has already stirred the mind of the government and voluntary agencies engaged in the propagation of Family Planning.

I conducted a research study during January-April 1969 in Chhindwara in Jabalpur division, which is one of the 43 constituent districts of Madhya Pradesh, to investigate the impact of Family Planning propaganda on the younger generation. Chhindwara is predominantly an agricultural district. There are 1997 villages and 8 towns on the district (according to 1961 census) with a population of 7,82,555 persons on a land area of 4576 sq. miles. The density of the population is 78.5 per cent. The male-female ratio is 1000:980.

Sources of Study

The research study was carried out in two urban schools namely, Maharani Laxmibai Higher Secondary School for Girls, Chhindwara, and Dayalband Higher Secondary Multipurpose School, Chhindwara, and seven rural schools around the Chhindwara town, including: Umranala (12 miles), Jam (15 miles), Parasia (18 miles), Mohshed (18 miles), Chourai (22 miles), Chand (29 miles) and Lodhikhedha (43 miles).

Low Literacy

Literacy level of the girls were found very low. Very few girls of 13 to 17 years attend the school in rural areas on account of the existing custom of early marriages for girls. This limitation led to extend the field of survey to several village schools to complete the target of 100 unmarried adolescent school girls of rural areas.

Appreciations

The study brought to light many relevant social factors which invite the attention of the propagators of the Family Planning scheme.

(i) The women folk of these villages were noted to be very keen to get the help for preventing further pregnancies after their third child.

(ii) It was also noticed that the husbands of these women were not motivated enough to fulfill the wishes of their counterparts in preventing further pregnancies, mainly due to ignorance, illiteracy and indifference to progress.

(iii) The younger age group in the school situation was noticed to be taking special interest and showed enthusiasm in giving answers to the questions from their own knowledge, without any suppression or superstition.

Thirty-seven out of 200 (18.5%) households were having 8 children each while there were 151 households (75.5%) represented by the respondents with 4 to 8 children. It was also noted that some of the households (24 or 12%) had even 9 to 12 children. Only a few percentage (3.5% to 6%) households were within the accepted family size of 2 or 3 children.

The Red Triangle posters seem to be the most effective media of propaganda. Ninety-nine per cent urban and 94% rural respondents were aware of the existence of the "Red Triangle" in various places while awareness through cinema was second in the series according to the urban respondents whereas it occupied a third position in numeral of respondents of rural area. Newspapers were the more popular media than cinema or radio in rural areas. The Radio, as the media of Family Planning propaganda seems to be the least effective in rural areas.

It was further noticed that "Red Triangle" were more effective to attract the attention of the younger age groups. Ninety-nine point five percent respondents possessed knowledge about the Red Triangle.

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