



The Role of a Public Health Nurse in Family Planning Programme

BY

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Aim

To help to bring down the birth rate from 41 per thousand to 25 per thousand in the shortest possible time so as to stabilise the population at a level consistent with the requirement of national economy.

Objectives :

1. To provide health and happiness to the families by reducing births of unwanted children.
2. Helping parents to have children only when wanted. This is done by proper spacing.
3. Assisting childless couples to have children.

Introduction

For an effective programme two things are necessary.

1. People's acceptance.
2. People's participation.

Unless people feel that the planned programme is for their own benefit, they will not accept it. Unless they accept they will not participate in the programme. In order to make them accept, people must be made to understand what Family Planning is and why Family Planning is necessary and the advantages of Family Planning. Because the public is under the wrong notion that Family Planning is only birth control hence no need to practise Family Planning. Therefore proper explanation is necessary to remove misconception from the people. Then it is easy to make people accept and participate in the programme.

1. What is Family Planning ?

Family Planning is planning

the family by the couples as to how many children they should have and at what intervals, it should be for the health and happiness of the family according to their socio-economic status.

2. Is Family Planning necessary ?

Yes, it is the need of the hour. Our nation's present most important pressing problem is the control of population explosion. Because of the over population, we see in our daily work quite a number of physical hazards of two-many pregnancies, too close together. We see families suffering from malnutrition leading to deficiency diseases and high infant mortality rate. We see numerous social and economic problems such as low per capita income resulting in inadequate housing, clothing and education. The growth of population is rising in a geometrical progression. The rate of increase is 2.5 per cent in a year. The present population of our country is approximately 515 millions and it is expected to reach the 1000 million mark by the end of this century. If the growth of population is unchecked, the country may have to face a critical situation to keep pace with food production and the most well laid plans of economic development of the country will be impaired.

3. What are the advantages of Family Planning ?

- (a) To increase the span of life by providing better medical services.
- (b) To increase the per capita income and thus improve the security of national economy by increasing national production.

(c) To achieve better standard of living.

Though Family Planning is acceptable in principle, it is not actively practised due to poor motivation. In order to have an effective programme a public health nurse has to play an important role as one of the most important members of the health team. Her responsibilities in family planning programme include—

- (1) Education and motivation
- (2) Service
- (3) Training
- (4) Research

As regards education and motivation she should know whom to educate. She should educate the public with special reference to eligible couples numbering 90 millions in our population so as to bring a change in their attitudes and behaviour (thinking, feeling and doing); for this motivation is necessary.

Motivation is a process which creates an intense desire to compel a person to move for an act to acquire satisfaction of his want. This can be well done by health education. The aim of health education in Family Planning is to create an intense desire in husband and wife to plan their family regarding :

- (1) The number of children they should have. It should be by choice but not by chance.
- (2) Spacing : whatever number of children they are having, proper spacing is essential for the health of the mother thereby she can look after

her children and create a healthy and happy home.

(3) Control of pregnancies.

As Public Health Nurse is an accepted member in the family and in the community she can contribute her mite toward the well-being of society.

But the factors which hinder motivation are :

- (1) *Religion* : e.g. Catholics and Muslims are against Family Planning. But now Pope Paul and some Muslim leaders have given their consent to accept Family Planning through natural methods.
- (2) Public opinion about Family Planning.
- (3) Ignorance and superstition. This must be vanished from people by giving correct information.
- (4) Habits, Customs.
- (5) Vested interests and economic laws.
- (6) Regard for old members of the family.
- (7) Fear of what will happen after operation.

Public Health Nurse is visiting homes and patients are coming to the clinics. It is a two way process. Since the Public Health Nurse is working with the people and for the people, she will be an acceptable person in the family and in the community as a health educator. She can utilise the opportunities of health education in the clinic as well as in the home. Thus she can motivate the public by tackling—

- (1) The most desirable needs of the people.
- (2) Contacting first the educated groups.
- (3) Economically backward classes.
- (4) Persons with ill health.

During field work, she makes house to house survey and finds out who are the eligible and effective couples for Family Planning Education.

She can explain the methods to them in order to facilitate the use of available methods.

She can convince the thoughtless parents that it is 'incorrect' to bring children into the world for whom they cannot provide even one square meal a day.

She will take part in village health committee meetings where she can convince the leaders about the need for Family Planning.

For educated people, she will supply pamphlets in simple local language.

Colourful flash cards, she will use to illustrate the methods to the villagers.

Through the help of films, magic lantern, puppet shows etc. she will be able to impress the old people of the villages.

Motivation can be effectively done through local leaders, Gram-sevaks, Mahilamandals, Teachers, Midwives, Sanitary Inspectors, Panchayat Unions and Yuvak Sabhas.

Couples who are using Family Planning Methods can also be motivated to motivate others.

She can also educate the Nursing, Health Visiting and ANM students regarding Family Planning and stimulate them to motivate the people with whom they come in contact.

Service means serving or helping the people wherever and whenever it is needed. The Nurse should make herself available with necessary supplies and information free of cost.

1. The Public Health Nurse can render Family Planning Services in the home, in the centre and in the camps.

2. She can explain temporary and permanent methods and give the couple the opportunity of selecting the suitable devices.

3. She can assist in Vasectomy and Tubectomy camps.

4. Follow up -visits can be made during home visits.

Training

Training is preparing a person to undertake a particular type of job. For this purpose the Public Health Nurse can—

1. Organise the in-service training for the existing nursing staff.

2. She can participate in training of the village leaders, teachers, Gramsevikas, Dais etc.

3. She can train the teachers to educate others about Family Planning, distributing supplies and helping for I.U.C.D. camps etc.

Research

Careful research or enquiry for endeavouring to discover facts by scientific study of the subject or a course of critical investigation is most essential. The Public Health Nurse can—

1. help to improve the recording and reporting of vital events.
2. help in finding and reporting about the effectiveness of the specific method and also the side effects of other methods.
3. find out the popularity of each method among public—especially women.

What are the problems of a Public Health Nurse ?

1. Owing to lack of trained personnel, education and motivation are unsatisfactory in rural population. As a result, acceptance also is very poor.

2. Lack of confidence in the devices due to some side effects of the methods.

3. Inadequate supplies and services in certain areas.

Suggestions for the improvement of education, service, training and research

Education

1. Methods for communication must be improved by providing Radios, together with information which should pass through the various programme divisions so that it could be included in all the programmes.

2. Plans to provide Transistors to workers at Sub-centre level to equip them with the latest information of the programme.

3. Visual publicity.

4. Strengthening mailing arrangement.

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