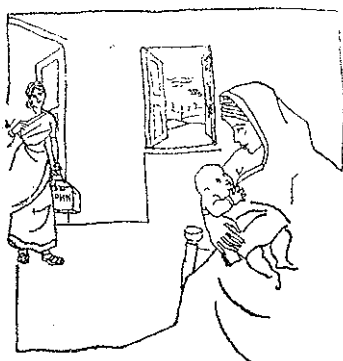




Motivation and Communication for Family Planning*

By

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FAMILY Planning is a multi-dimensional concept which involves various aspects of total life-situation. To achieve overall planned progress and to raise the standard of living of a people it is of utmost importance to motivate people to adopt methods of conception control. This requires adequate and effective methods of communication so that need for Family Planning is aroused among the people. Once the need is created, it is easier to make Family Planning as a way of life for the people. However, it is very essential that people should feel that Family Planning programme is their own programme and unless a healthy atmosphere is created Family Planning programme cannot succeed.

Now the question arises as to how to create an atmosphere for Family Planning and how to arouse need for Family Planning among the people. The answer is not simple, for the obvious reason that there cannot be a panacea for all diseases. Each situation is unique in itself which requires careful analysis for diagnosing the community. Unless a systematic and careful diagnosis of the community is made any attempt to motivate the people for Family Planning will merely be a patch work and effect will not be permanent.

Diagnosis of Communities

To diagnose the community it is very essential to understand the people, their culture, their social institutions, leadership pattern etc. To understand the community and the

culture of the people, it is important to know what do we mean by culture. Culture is a complex whole which includes all our notions, folkways, beliefs etc. In other words culture is a way of life, which consists of a number of "patterns" and each "pattern" consists of a number of "traits"; for instance, the whole process of worshipping is a pattern and taking off cap in a temple or putting turban on the head in a "Gurudwara" is a "trait" and the whole way of life is a culture which consists of combination of patterns.

Therefore, a health worker should know each 'trait' of a culture to bring about a change in the present practices to a desired one, or in other words for bridging the gap between present practices and desired one. Also one should understand the weak and strong traits of a culture, so that he may either try to remove the weak traits or strengthen the strong traits. (Here weak traits are used in the context of Family Planning and consist of factors which are at work against family planning).

It is also essential for a field worker to know the basic fact that no culture is pure and no change in culture can be brought about as such, but the change in culture takes place through bringing about a change in traits, resulting in change in patterns of culture and ultimately in the culture itself. This is known as diffusion of culture. Thus, a social scientist or a health educator or a field worker should try to adjust his health and family planning activities according to the needs of the people, keeping in view their cultural patterns.

There are various methods for understanding the problem and one of them which is very important is the "self discovery of facts". The other method is "learning by doing". Thus a list of methods can be given but the best method to my mind is to discover facts by experience.

Approach to Family Planning

It is not enough to diagnose the community; however, it is a prerequisite and necessary condition for family planning activities. Once the diagnosis is made, care should be taken to analyse the following factors in detail for treatment:

1. Whether there is lack of information.
2. Whether people are interested in something else.
3. Does Family Planning practice interfere with people's own goal?
4. Whether it is accepted by the people.

The next step is to prescribe a course for "Treatment". But the question arises: who is to administer the treatment, whether social scientist, health educator, nurse, health visitor, midwife, social worker? So this depends upon situation and availability of personnel working in Family Planning.

Once it is decided who should administer the treatment, the next step is to find suitable media for communication such as news releases, movies, radios, posters, group discussions, community organisations and personal contacts. This involves changing and rechanging the methods of approach based on evaluation and

(Continued on page 205)

*A talk delivered to nurses at General Hospital, Chandigarh, on 23.3.65.