

**The Political Economy of Development  
Communication Policy: The Family Planning Programme  
in India**

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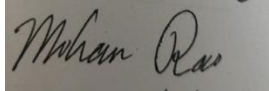
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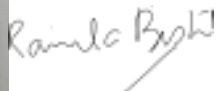
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*Dedicated to all women who have been deprived of their  
rights:*

*My grandmother being one of them.*

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New Delhi

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Communication has always been an integral part of all development projects which were initiated post World War II as an outcome of the Marshall plan being implemented in the European world. The plan was targeted towards the Western European countries. It is generally believed that the Marshall Plan instigated the Cold War as USSR (United Soviet Socialist Republic) was ruling over most of the Central and Eastern European countries. This was the origin of the tussle between the non-communist and the communist forces. Both forces did their best to attract the newly-independent countries towards their respective development models.

The understanding that the developing countries require proper dissemination of information in order leapfrog into development essentially informed the development communication projects. The theory of modernization (Rostow, 1956) and the theory of classical diffusionism (Malinowski, 1927) helped in establishing the intellectual hegemony of the development discourse of the First World. The rising fear of the spread of communism in the poor countries and growing power of the Soviet Bloc compelled the capitalist philanthropists to come together to ‘rescue’ the ‘underdeveloped’ countries from poverty. Long debates took place in the US Congress regarding this issue.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of an overpopulated India holding back development in the country began way back in the early 1900. This was also a way of covering up the massive exploitation and resultant impoverishment that India witnessed during the British colonial rule. Famine followed and Malthusian narrative that of population multiplies in geometric progression while food is produced in arithmetic progression gained legitimacy in the Indian context as well. The census reports and the famine reports helped in adding to the narrative of ‘over-population’. The Western-educated, upper-caste Indians became mesmerised by the idea of eugenics and birth control with people like Pyare Kishan Watal writing books and robustly engaging in the population debate. The birth control and eugenics debates motivated a flurry of activities in the urban milieu. Indian eugenics

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed discussion on this, refer to Congressional Debates: proceedings and debates of the United States Congress, US Government Printing Office.

was peculiar as it was based on purity and pollution-centric discourse of caste (Hodges, 2006). Along with caste, the notion that of the Aryan being a pure race was added and was mixed with Brahmanical supremacy to create a 'unique' Indian concept of eugenics. In this way, a Western idea was adapted to the Indian traditional culture, and by doing that, the superiority of India as a nation could be established. Also, this helped the newly-Independent India to pin the entire blame of the 'lost glory' of a 'great civilization' to the perpetrators who were not the British but the Muslims. The British scholars were also happy to help in establishing this notion through academic manoeuvring. They promoted the theory that India had to be free of the Muslims to regain her lost glory! This, in turn, helped the British rulers a great deal in legitimising their rule over India. In fact, the British rulers continuously propagated the theory that population growth of India was an unanticipated fallout of their good governance.

The dissemination of the status-quoist, hegemonic ideas being propagated by the colonial machinery ensured, that the educated class gives its consent to the imperialist ideology and colonial rule. By the time India became de-colonised, it already became an established notion that India is alarmingly over-populated, and hence all development projects would fail until and unless birth control becomes a national agenda. There was a national push, along with an international pressure, with a promise of a requisite funding to undertake population control as a state policy. Gandhians in the government did resist artificial birth control methods, but were not averse to the idea of population control per se. Development projects were funded by the Rockefeller Foundation in agriculture before birth control/ family planning became a state policy. Even during the implementation of the agriculture projects the Malthusian warning- that better technological intervention in the domain of agriculture will not be sufficient to feed the ever-increasing population, was constantly being invoked. This, in turn, triggered a panic button amongst the political leadership as well as the intellectual class in India. Hence, India adopted a national family planning policy as early as 1952, and became the first country to do so. The Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation which were already engaged in aiding the agriculture sector became the co-travellers in formulating and implementing population control programme in India.

The history of birth control movement is essentially the history of policies and programmes, incentives and disincentives, coercion and contraception introduced by the government. Though research is conducted on the target population, but, it is done with the in-built belief that people are ready for the programme, without looking at their socio-cultural contexts. The extensive use of

mass media to build support for legalisation and publicity regarding fertility control and availability of contraception is often taken for granted. In India, family planning communication is the area where initial financial aid came from international developmental organisations. Though many studies have been conducted regarding the how the Ford Foundation actively supported the family planning programme in India (Connelly 2008, Harkavy 1995, Lyle Saunders 1968, Anna L. Southam 1968, Wooster 2004, McCarthy 1995, Francis X. Sutton 1987 etc.), there are very few on the Foundation's role in the family planning communication process. As the communication part was initiated in India, it is important to understand the socio-cultural implication of the process in the Indian context. In fact, the family planning communication was the precursor of the highly technical and technology-dependent health communication process that we are witnessing today. Most of the discussion till now has been on the process that was implemented in family planning communication including 'massive campaign', 'direct mailing', 'contraceptive marketing', 'intensive campaign', 'multi-media campaign', 'role of television' etc. A few scholars like Parry (2013), Capo (2007), Watkins (1998), Goldstein (1985), Sarcar (2017) have discussed the use of media in population control/ birth control/family planning programme but most of them have discussed more about the print media campaigns. Moreover, there is next to no study which discusses exclusively the Indian experience. This thesis endeavours to reconnoitre this hitherto unexplored area.

This thesis argues, that, the discourse on India's population problem was located at the heart of the development dialogue promoted by the British colonial administration. I argue that this particular perspective of the population problem in India influenced the thinking of the Indian intellectuals and political leaders and, in turn, facilitated the process of institutionalisation of the family planning programme. The significance of population debate in the domain of development discourse stemmed from the census data. The censuses were systematic, organised and supposedly accurate, and conducted across the country. This data provided information which reflected the difference in the development trajectory between the Western world and India. And all those differences were traced back to the population data. The differences were felt across all the development markers, health (including maternal mortality, child mortality, life expectancy, morbidity etc), urbanisation, infrastructure, agriculture and literacy rate. The gap was yawning. And rather than taking the blame for creating the gap, the British colonial rule blamed the Indians for their plight: You procreate too much!



I argue that the engagement of the upper caste Indian intellectuals with the population debate (from the pre-independence India) made it easier for the international aid-giving agencies to consolidate their position in the policy making process in population control. This position was again facilitated by development communication in family planning. During colonial period, the media in India was in a nascent stage and was essentially used by the British government and the Indian freedom fighters for political mobilisation. After decolonisation the propaganda aspect continued, though it was supposedly done for “propaganda by the state”<sup>2</sup> with an intention of “dissemination of news and useful information”<sup>3</sup> so as to make the general population aware of various development programmes being introduced by the state. The media thus focussed on awareness building of certain values which are pre-decided by the state, supposedly keeping the best interest of the people in mind. I also argue that under the garb of population control, the idea of a homogenous nation, an ideal Indian family, and an ideal Indian woman premised on Brahmanical patriarchy was projected.

While family planning as a state policy was formulated by the independent Indian government, the idea of population growth as a deterrent to development has its origin in the British rule. The narrative of exponential growth of the population and its connection to underdevelopment found advocates of various hues who were part of the nationalist movement of the nineteenth century. This thesis will attempt to analyse this relation and examine its implication on the policies and regulations formulated after decolonisation.

Development communication as a stream was initiated by the UN organisations when development projects were started in the newly-decolonised countries such as India. It was believed that the people need to be informed about the development projects and its resultant benefits so as to make them access as well as accept those projects. The entire discourse of development communication is premised upon the idea that people do not have knowledge and thus they are required to be told what to do and what not to do in order to make them overcome their traditionalist attitude and thinking.

Development communication was initially practiced in agriculture in India. However, the real practice at well-structured and organised level, was first executed in the sphere of family

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<sup>2</sup>National Planning Committee series, Report of Sub-Committee on Communications, Vora and Co Publishers Ltd, Bombay. Downloaded from <https://ia801600.us.archive.org/33/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.85676/2015.85676.National-Planning-Committee-Series-Communications.pdf> retrieved on 12/02/2020

<sup>3</sup>ibid

planning programme in India. The planned family planning communication was implemented with the financial aid provided by the Ford Foundation. This thesis will trace the political economy of the family planning communication process.

This thesis will add to the existing body of knowledge and go beyond, and examine the political economy of the construction of the idea of India, which conveniently ignored the inherent textured reality of caste, class, gender and religion. It will also examine how family planning communication based on the dominant development paradigm helped a newly-independent country to promote the idea of a homogenised nation. This homogenization of the idea of family wishes away the existence of the structures of hierarchy within the society. The cultural, ethnic, geographical, economic specificity of a community and the power structures acting upon it are entirely negated. And the development communication process which is practiced in the third world countries consolidates the same homogenized idea of family into the entire narrative and thus ascertains the ascendancy of the neoclassical economy and family formation.

Family planning communication had also been instrumental in constructing the idea of an 'Indian Family' as well as an 'Indian Woman' which was assumed to be a more Hindu family and Hindu woman than of any other religion. This was based on the idea of Indian womanhood: the woman who has to be differentiated both from the avaricious immoral Western woman and the superstitious sexually promiscuous common Indian woman. Most of the technologies promoted by the family planning programme has the woman as the receiver and does not communicate the health hazards faced by the women due to the use of various contraceptives. Whereas, it is a given fact that in the matters such as family size women do not have enough power to take decisions within the realm of patriarchal family system.

Caste too does play a strong role in fertility behaviour of couples. Various studies show that the people from upper caste tend to have lower fertility, a smaller family size and greater proportion of contraceptive users than those belonging to the lower caste. Even intra spousal communication also has a caste variation. Similarly, the class dynamics of population was always quite dominant in the discourse. The poor people are always blamed for their miserable condition. The communication material does speak of class mobility but that too as a fall out of family planning. The visuals like a neat and clean and relaxed family with 'modern' amenities always were related to small families, whereas the families with more children were shown as sick, poor and dirty. This gets reflected in the advertisements which were mounted to establish these points:

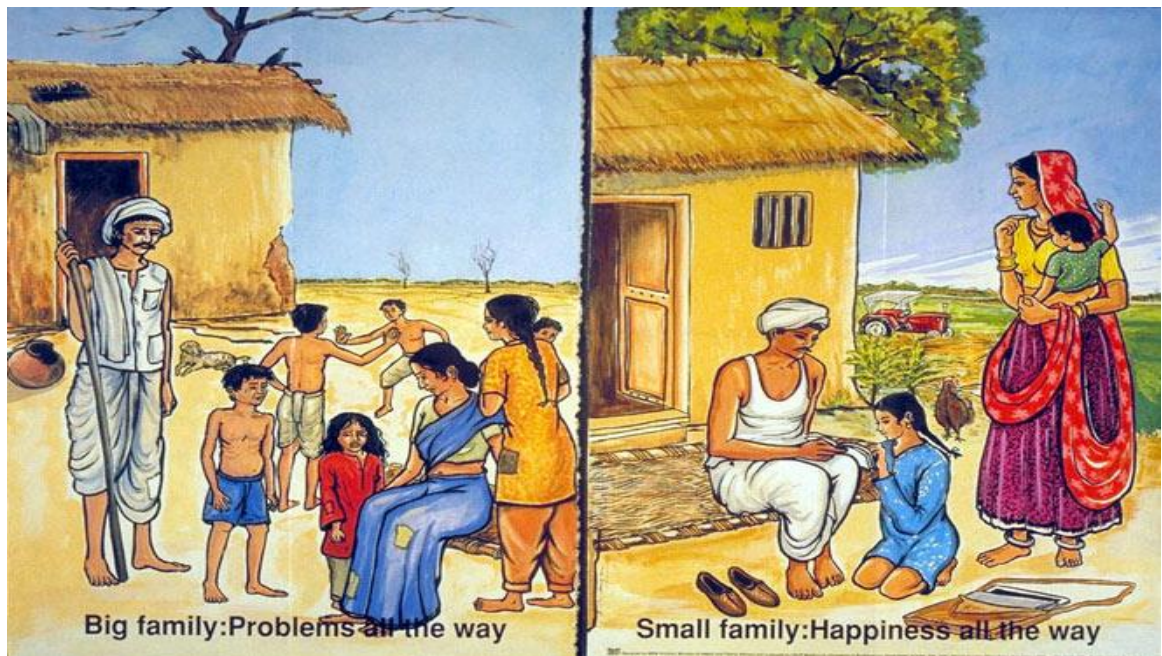


Fig 1, Sources: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

The basic premise of family planning communication has been that people do not understand the positive aspects of a small family since they are ignorant. And this, in turn, makes them all the more impoverished. Hence, they need to be informed not only about the positive aspects of family planning but also about the various modern methods of family planning. It is presumed that once people are informed they will accept, practice and reap the benefits of family planning. This naive understanding was turned on its head way back when Mamdani's (1972) study showed that the question of limiting a family was not simplistic; it was rather nuanced and was embedded in the socio-economic realities of the society. In spite of that, communication to inform and educate about the ideal family size has continued and with the same fervour. The communication process has become increasingly intricate and layered when social marketing and behaviour change communication had been added to it. However, social reality has not changed much. Necessity of social security and intensive labour as well as high infant mortality rate is still a reality in India.

Post-liberalization a sizeable number of contents were directly adopted from the dominant Western media. Thus, media content has become more about entertainment and reality shows than

the 'real' issues in the society. Media being the tool that is controlled by the nexus of politics and business mostly follows the propaganda model as analysed by Herman and Chomsky (2008:1). Taking the hegemonic concept of a woman, family and nation and the role of mass media in creating this hegemonic concept as the theoretical background, I would like to explore the political economy of development communication policies in family planning in India.

This thesis argues that the deliberation on the population issue was actually a part of the larger development discourse taking place during the colonial times. In fact, this discourse was the basis of the development agenda. The population explosion debate had its roots in the census data which was collected during the British rule and made it possible for the data to be compared with similar data of other countries. This, in turn, paved the way for creating a sense of impending gloom resulting from the high rate of growth of population. This way the population growth story helped in establishing the fact that Indian development story is different from that of Western Europe and North America. These data established the wide gap that existed between India and the First World countries which have achieved development as a result of industrialization. Thus, the dominant Western idea of development received legitimacy as the development model in India.

I also argue that the foreign international organisations had a huge impact on the planning of the development trajectory of independent India and family planning communication had a strong role in dissemination of this idea. Thus, when the British colonial rule was over, a different form of colonial power stepped in. The newly-decolonised country was helped by many US philanthropic organisations along with the various specialised agencies and organisations of the United Nations. The interest of all these organisations in India was also because of the underlying worry of the poor and underdeveloped nation getting close to the Soviet bloc as it was believed that poverty breeds communism.

This thesis will trace the intricate relation between the growth of media technology and the furthering of the idea of development vis-à-vis family planning communication. The role of the international organization in the process, along with the Western trained demographers, social scientists, media experts will be critically examined. It will also be discussed how the line between the state and the foreign experts was blurred to such an extent that at one time Ford Foundation consultants were even sitting in the Planning Commission and was engaged in the formulation of the Five-Year Plans and its implication on the development discourse.

### **Rationale of the Study:**

The textured historiography of family planning communication policies in India warrants that these policies are critically examined so that the political economy underlying it is duly evaluated to develop a critical understanding of the process. While doing so, the performance and focus of the development communication strategies will be linked up with the claims made by the government in the field of family planning. It is this objective which constitutes the rationale of this study. The rationale is further reinforced in the context of the fact that despite maintaining somewhat continuous existence in the health sector in India, and a lot of communication being generated in the name of awareness creation, no concrete and coherent study (as mentioned above) has yet been undertaken to critically understand its political economy.

### **Area and Period of study**

The study would essentially be an attempt to examine the political economy of the Development Communication interventions in India with special reference to the family planning programme. It would first make a general survey of the various government initiatives for population control as well as the related communication thereto in the post-independence period and then offer a critical assessment of these initiatives. The study would be based on both historical and contemporary perspectives and would span over six decades, that is, from the launch of the family planning programmes in 1952 to 2012. The historical continuity and changes will also be analysed in the process to locate the issue in time.

### **Statement of Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to conduct a critical analysis of the political economy of development communication policies in family planning programme in India. The study would specifically look at the post-independence period while linking up the historical continuity of the issue from the pre-independence period.

### **Research Questions**

Research questions can be enumerated broadly as follows:

- What has been done for and in the name of family planning communication in India till now?
- What was the source of funding for family planning communication in India?

- How were the ideas of family planning communication in India generated and disseminated?
- What has been the role of the Indian state and the media in the entire process of family planning programme?

### **Research Methods and Source of Data:**

Family planning policy has been a much-researched topic and so is nationalism. There has been no coherent and concrete study on the political economy of family planning communication. Therefore, keeping in view the historical nature of the research this thesis is basically an archival study. This study is essentially a critical analysis of the archival data being pursued from the critical political economic perspective. The Rockefeller Archival Centre at Tarrytown, New York was the primary source of the archival data for this study. The Ford Foundation files, microfilms etc. on family planning communication, served as a rich source of data which threw light on many events and correspondence which were not in the public domain till date and helped me to find answer to the basic research question. I was intrigued with when I started engaging with the issue academically. Who designed these communication campaigns and why? I was offered a grant-in-aid in 2013 to travel to Tarrytown, New York to explore the archives of Rockefeller Foundation, which at that time just got access to the Ford foundation archives too.

The Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), New Delhi's library helped me in accessing many reports on family planning communication programme, conducted by the institute as well as other institutes. The macro reports pertaining to Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) were also accessed through the IIMC library. The library of International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, helped in accessing important reports. Many research and study reports, I could access in the library of the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi. Thanks to the digitization of the resources of Parliament Library, New Delhi, I could access seminal archival documents via online mode. Also, there were other online sources which made it easier for me to access some old out-of-print books, for example, Internet Archive, Project Gutenberg, Archive box, etc. Most of the family planning related films produced by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, I accessed through the National Film Archives of India (NFAI).

## **Chapterisation:**

There are a total of six chapters in the thesis.

The introductory chapter lays the foundation of the thesis. It traces how after the World War II and eventual independence of many colonies, geo-politics changed. The ascendancy of the communist bloc under the leadership of Soviet Russia was threatening to topple the hegemony of Western Europe and the USA. This led to a clamour for control over the newly-independent countries of the global South. With Rostow challenging the economic theory of Marx, the Capitalist North embarked on 'developing' the poor South. The philanthropists and the UN backed them with all means. Aid came flowing to these countries and along with that came ideas which eventually made these underdeveloped countries far more dependent on the developed countries. India, with the 'honour' of being the first country to adopt a state family planning policy, attracted much attention from donor agencies of many countries, most notably from the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. Family planning communication became the arena from where ideas were transferred into the society.

The second chapter, "Malthusian Heritage and Family Planning in India: A Historiography" traces the family planning debate and discourse from the pre-independence period till the present. It traces how the dominant neo-Malthusian understanding and the influence of the international eugenics and birth control movement had informed the family planning movement in India. The census report and famine reports form a very strong part of this chapter. The Five-Year Plans have been analysed to establish the continuity of the family planning discourse in the history of India. This chapter will establish how even after British left, India still kept its dependence on external knowledge. This time the intellectual hegemony was established by the USA.

The third chapter, "Development Communication: Theory and Practice" is a critical examination of the theory of development and how this has informed the praxis of development communication. The role of UN organisations in promoting the development narrative and the development communication process is scrutinised. The theory of development is examined. This chapter also traces the trajectory of family planning communication metamorphosing into an intricate Health Communication stream. This chapter is the linking chapter between the second and the fourth chapter titled 'Family Planning Communication: The Actors and the Act'. This chapter deals with the unfolding of the family planning communication process. This is the most crucial

chapter as it establishes how communication of family planning process became a very strong component throughout the history of independent India and traces the political economy of the communication design being promoted by the international organizations. This chapter also discusses the engagement of the Ford Foundation in the designing and implementation of communication in family planning in India. The deliberations between the Foundation officials located in India office and the headquarters located at the New York office throw light on how the process was conducted. It provides considerable insights about the political economy of the process, suggesting how the Indian officials were toeing the line.

The fifth chapter, “Family Planning Communication through the Intersection of Nationalism, Religion, Caste, Class and Gender”, establishes the main argument of the thesis that family planning communication was an essential part of the entire planned development agenda of India and had helped in promoting the concept of an ideal woman, family and nation, based on the dominant narrative operating within the realm of caste and religion. The idea of development that believed that India if left to itself would remain underdeveloped, made the political leaders opt for ‘planned development’. Through this process of planned development, the notion of a unified India was constructed which was quite subtly built into the population debate, and with the help of the government-controlled media those were imperceptibly turned into the Indian culture. Even when the Ford Foundation left the family planning communication programme and John Hopkins University took over the mantle, nothing much changed as far as the ideation part is concerned.

The sixth and the last chapter, “Analysis and Conclusion” summarises the findings of the research. It argues that family planning communication was instrumental in consolidating idea of a homogenised nation based on the dominant paradigm of one particular religion. By blaming the poor for their poverty, an alarm bell was kept ringing regarding the “uncontrolled population growth”. With the lockdown due to Covid-19, by now every middle-class person in this country has almost given up and with the views of the ‘migrants’ walking down the highways, dying in railway coaches, railway stations, it again boils down to: What can a government do with this sort of population!

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## Chapter 2

### MALTHUSIAN HERITAGE AND FAMILY PLANNING IN INDIA: A HISTORIOGRAPHY

#### The Background: Malthus effect

The dominant discourse in population studies was deeply informed by Malthusian understanding since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Thomas Robert Malthus, a clergyman and an English Economist, had written the book *An Essay on the Principles of Population* and tried to establish the notion of the Law of Nature in the sphere of demography. In the preface to his book which originally was published anonymously in the year 1798, Malthus sought to propose that population must be kept to the level of the means of subsistence. He claimed that no writer prior to him specifically inquired into the means by which this level is affected (2007: vii), though he acknowledged that the principles on which this premise rests were elaborated by Hume and Adam Smith in varying degrees. He held that “food is necessary” for the “existence” of human beings, and “the passion between the sexes” is indispensable “and will remain nearly in its present state” (ibid: 4). He agreed with Godwin’s view which proposed that the passion between the sexes may be extinguished in time. However, he expressed his concern to flag that “towards the extinction of the passion between the sexes, no progress whatever has hitherto been made” (ibid).

Thus, he concludes “that the power of population is greater than the power of the earth to produce subsistence” for human beings. Population which remains unchecked is bound to rise in geometrical progression and subsistence increases only in arithmetic progression (ibid:16). Needless to state that Malthus believed that availability of food leads to increase in population, however, a tipping point comes at a particular juncture in history. Malthus calls this positive check which is put in place by the “Law of Nature”. This includes hunger, famine, epidemic etc. While the phenomenon of having “a foresight of the difficulties attending the rearing of a family” is referred to as preventive check, which ensures postponement of marriage and, in turn, slows down breeding (ibid:24). Malthus maintained that “Law of Nature” is quite often faced by the lower classes of society as he considered poverty as a natural condition. And, preventive check is practiced by the learned and wealthy classes of society which appreciate the necessity of limiting the size of family and hence restrain sexual desire. Herein, it is pertinent to point out that Malthus

absolved the wealthy classes from any responsibility of helping in the amelioration of the poor when he maintained that any contribution (particularly in monetary terms) on part of the rich classes does not help and thereby cannot “prevent the recurrence of distress among the lower classes” of society. In fact, in his view, someone has to face difficulty in the sphere of livelihood which naturally and autonomously falls upon the least fortunate members of society (ibid:31).

His infamous argument is population increases in geometrical progression and agriculture increases in arithmetical progression as mentioned above. He remained convinced that more food means more population and therefore he was against any relief to the poor. He was instrumental in abolishing the Poor Law, which reposed responsibility on the Churches to take care of the poor.

Malthus changed his position as he went on revising his *Essay*. By the second edition of his book he was more convinced that the poor has no right over the smallest amount of food. By the sixth edition after three decades of the first edition, he finally acknowledged that his mathematical and geometric analogy of increase in food and humans were not noticeable in any society, and his theory of “power of number” was merely an image (Rao and Sexton, 2010:2). In fact, in the same edition Malthus promoted universal education as the panacea against the population problem.

His later work saw more changes in his position. By the time he wrote his book *Principles of Political Economy*, he retreated from his earlier views proposing that there can be no betterment of the poor, along with his insistence on iron laws of wages. Rather, he stated that once the labourers living condition is improved, they acquire “new and improved tastes and habits” which, in turn, “advance in a slower ratio as compared with capital than formerly” (Malthus, 1836:162).

Though he changed his initial position regarding the Law of Nature in demography, yet Malthus continued to wield a strong influence on social thinkers, demographers, policy makers, politicians with regard to their perception of the origin of poverty due to over-population (Cassen,1978; Ross, 1998). This worked so well with the capitalist forces that his original theory regarding poverty has been repeatedly quoted by politicians and policy makers as an excuse for slow pace of development.

Thomas Malthus was appointed the first Professor in Political Economy at the East India College at Haileybury from the year 1805 to 1834. The importance of this appointment was quite obvious as it made sure that generations of British officials/scholars viewed India from the prism of

Malthusian framework (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1986: 4). Therefore, it was natural that “the ideas of Malthus were resurrected as an explanation of Indian poverty. As far back as early in the 19th century European travellers, setting the tone for later colonial administrators supervising the plundering of India, invoked Malthus as an explanation for poverty in India” (Rao, 1994: 45). It is important to note herein that India was not a poor country. It remains a fact that industrialization in Britain was dependent on the raw materials supplied by the then British colonies such as India<sup>4</sup>. Towns were destroyed, craftsmen were turned into paupers. Henry Cotton wrote in 1890 how a highly commercial place like Dacca (now Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh) within the space of less than hundred years was pauperised (Dutt, 1970:120).

From a country which used to export finest quality of cotton and muslins, India was turned into a supplier of raw materials. This forced the “artisans and craftsmen, spinners, weavers, potters, smelters, smiths etc. into agriculture. In this way, India was forcibly transformed from being a country of combined agriculture and manufacturers to an agricultural colony of British manufacturing capitalism” (Dutt, 1970: 222). It is from direct effects of British rule that originates the deadly pressure on agriculture in India, which is still banally described in official literature as a fallout of traditional Indian society, and is diagnosed by the superficial and ignorant as a symptom of ‘overpopulation’.

However, the British industrialists were focussed on their objectives of making India an agricultural colony, from where there will be undisturbed supply of all the raw materials required for the smooth functioning of the industries back at home. In the process, India was turned into buyers of the finished goods supplied from Britain. This policy was explicitly spelt out by the president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Thomas Bazley, in his evidence to the 1840 parliamentary enquiry, “In India there is immense extent of territory, and the population of it would consume British manufactures to an enormous extent. The whole question with respect to our Indian trade is whether they can pay us, by the products of their soil, for what we are prepared to send out as manufacturers” (cited in Dutt, 1970: 121).

That in 1833, Englishmen were permitted to acquire land and become partners and that slavery was abolished the same year in West Indies, was no coincidence. Neither was it a

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<sup>4</sup> To understand the effect of industrial revolution on the Indian economy and how it was transformed from a manufacturing and exporting country and turned into importer of goods, please refer to Knowles 1928, Dutt, 1970, Mills and Wilson 1848, Adam Smith 1976, Cotton, 1890 etc.

coincidence that many of the planters were actually slave drivers from West Indies, America and carried the values of slave industry that they were trained in (Dutt 1970: 124). The export of raw material leapt up, especially after 1833. Raw cotton exports “rose from 9 million pounds weight in 1813 to 32 million in 1833 and 88 million in 1844; sheep’s wool from 3.7-thousand-pound in 1833 to 2.7 million in 1844; linseed from 2,100 bushels in 1833 to 2,37,000 in 1844” (Porter 1847:750).

It is also notable that even when Indians were starving export of food grains was significantly increasing. As Dutt (1970:124) notes, “The export of food grains, principally rice and wheat, rose from £858,000 in 1849 to £9.3 million by 1901 and £19.3 million in 1914, or an increase of twenty-two times over. Alongside this process went on a heavy increase in the number and intensity of famines in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the first half of the nineteenth century, there were seven famines, with an estimated total of 1.5 million deaths from famine. In the second half of the nineteenth century, there were twenty-four famines (six between 1851 and 1875, and eighteen between 1876 and 1900), with an estimated total, according to the official record, of over 20 million deaths”.

Interestingly, Indian Famine Commission Report of 1880 blames poverty to be the root cause of the famine as the Indian population is dependent on agriculture. India thus provided a large chunk of the capital for England’s industrialization and simultaneously began the process of her own impoverishment and deindustrialization (Rao, 2004: 91). This helps to explain, why the “frequency and severity of famines, which had occurred under the rule of the East Indian Company, accelerated under the administration of the British Raj, when food production was increasingly displaced by such commodities” (Ross 1998: 149).

On the face of recurring famines, 1870s saw reports being written where facts were turned upside down. It was said in the reports that famines are getting frequent as the population has increased due to many positive regulations and direct interventions like putting an end to warfare, infanticide, epidemic disease and Sati etc. This view was expressed by the *Report Consequent to the Partial Census Conducted in India after the 1877 Famine* and also by the 1880 Famine Commission. Another report of 1881 goes to the extent of saying that as the famine deaths are concentrated in the poorest of the population and as they are not prudent enough to control their population, there is no use to try and stop such deaths (Caldwell 1998: 683). The poor remained the reason for their poverty without any possibility of amelioration.

### **Pre-Independence Census and its Impact on the Idea of Population:**

Malthusian population discourse in India was further strengthened by the census reports compiled in the country. Till the 1860s, India's population was not really an issue, rather there was a concern expressed by the civil servants regarding the possible shortage of labour "to exploit the existing land resources of India" (Ambirajan 1976:3). However, the destructive famines beginning 1837 Agra Famine and the Upper Doab famine of 1860 as well as the continuous occurrence of famines in various states throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to a prominent change in the official discourse. There were differences of opinion amongst the Governor Generals regarding the right policy to undertake: To save lives, or to let them die as the population in India, "has a tendency to increase more rapidly than the food it raises from the soil ... whose consumption, in many places, trenches too closely on the crops already provided by its industry; and which, therefore, runs great risk of having no accumulated produce to depend upon, whenever the earth has failed to bring forth her fruits in due season."<sup>5</sup>

The first Indian census of 1870 was a staggered exercise conducted in only two provinces i.e. the Punjab and Bengal province. Only in 1881 census was held simultaneously throughout the country. The census reports of 1868 published for Punjab and Bengal had taken the Malthusian line of analysis. While extensively discussing the issue of Indian population and comparing it to the population of England, the conclusion reached was that population of India was increasing.<sup>6</sup> The Punjab report clearly mentioned, "As the limit of cultivation is approached, the rate of increase of population will halt"<sup>7</sup> and the Bengal report states "British rule has established peace and security throughout the country, and so far, has removed some of the causes which were at work to check the natural increase of the people."<sup>8</sup>

As mentioned, famines had a formidable effect on the discussion about population since the 1881 census reports. The report mentioned that Benaras division did not witness severity of famine in 1878-79 and therefore, population check did not take place, and population continued to grow.<sup>9</sup> Affirming that famine is Law of Nature and thus absolving the state from the responsibility

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<sup>5</sup> Lord Edward Lytton, Legislative Council Proceedings, Vol. XVI, 1877, p. 588, cited in Ambirajan: 1976

<sup>6</sup> Memorandum on the Census of the British India 1871-72 1989: 8-9

<sup>7</sup> Census report of India 1870:17

<sup>8</sup> Census Report of India 1870:84

<sup>9</sup> Census Report of India 1883: 26

of addressing it. Similarly talking about ‘laws of increase’ and ‘laws of growth’ the report on Baroda territories underlined the difference of “preventive and positive checks” being different in cities and villages as “Diseases and epidemics make their appearance more frequently in crowded cities and towns than they do in the rural districts. The preventive causes, namely moral restraint and vice, or rather compulsory restraint and vice, have a greater operation in the cities and towns than they have in the districts.”<sup>10</sup> Madras report of 1881 commented: “It may be accepted that when food is scarce there are fewer births; whether this is exclusively the result of prudence, and whether that prudence is deliberate or instinctive, it is not here necessary to enquire.”<sup>11</sup> J.A. Baines writing the General Report of the 1891 census reiterated his Malthusian understanding not only by saying that “a population is the resultant of certain opposing forces, whose combined action tends ultimately to equilibrium” but also goes further and comments “The conclusions arrived at by Malthus . . . have been severely criticised, and often misquoted or misapprehended, but, in the main, they have not been disproved.”<sup>12</sup> He observed that in India, child marriage was prevalent during that time and was the main cause behind the “the enormous number of births.”<sup>13</sup>

In the 1911 Census report, E.A. Gait, comments how India can be termed as a continent based on its “teeming population---a fifth of the whole world.”<sup>14</sup> As Caldwell and Caldwell (1986:37) say, “The 1911 Census attempted to relate the cultivable area in different parts of India to the rate of population growth in order to explore Malthusian pressures”. Regarding the issue of population growth, this report said that the growth was not very alarming. It looks alarming because a large tract of the country was not enumerated in 1872 and was included in the 1881 census. More areas like the greater part of Upper Burma and Kashmir and several smaller units were enumerated for the first time in 1891. In 1901 a portion of Upper Burma and a bigger part of Baluchistan was added and in 1911 the Agencies and Tribal Areas in the North-West Frontier Province together with a few smaller areas were included.<sup>15</sup>

In spite of this, the 1921 census reports introduced a sub-chapter on “Pressure of Population on Space.” Before that population increase was discussed only as a statement, not exactly as a problem. However, this discourse started to change by the census of 1921. The Malthusian assertion

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<sup>10</sup> Census Report of India 1881, 1883:73

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*:25-26

<sup>12</sup> Census Report of India 1881, 1893: 58

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*:59-60

<sup>14</sup> Census Report of India 1911, 1913:1

<sup>15</sup> Census report of India 1911, 1913: 55

of “Laws of Nature” was raising its ugly head. The report said that the data collected does not show the actual rate of increase in population as those two decades (1872-1881 and 1891-1901) witnessed many “special disaster” as well as a “famine in South India” and many other famines too. Similarly, 1901-1911 was the decade of plague in Bombay, United Province as well as in the Punjab province. Therefore, the report concluded that the population growth otherwise would have been very high.<sup>16</sup>

The 1921 census was also the time when the West was acknowledging the outcome of artificial birth control; therefore, it is significant that the Superintendent of the Census, J.T. Marten by quoting Carr Saunders, lamented that India while giving up the “old-fashioned methods of limiting population” like “periodic abstention from intercourse, abortion and infanticide”, and did not even practice the new methods of population control. Rather India is dependent on “disease and disease only” to control her population.<sup>17</sup> Marten, in fact, quoted the work of Pyare Kishan Wattal, Messrs. Muckerjee and Kale to back his claim.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture in India of 1928, also reported on the similar line and said that no “material improvement” can enhance the living condition of the people, if it is not followed by a decrease in population.<sup>18</sup> By 1931, the census report introduced a special chapter on, *Population Problem- Nature of the Problem: Remedies*. As per the 1931 census, “population increased had increased by more than 10 percent or 27.7 million people.”<sup>19</sup> The size of the population from then onwards started to acquire a new importance in the thought process of British officials. The Census Commissioner of 1931, J.H. Hutton remarked in the chapter called *Population Problem*, that “the population now even exceeds the latest estimate of the population of China, so that India now heads the list of all countries in the world in the number of her inhabitants. This increase, however, is from most points of view a cause of alarm rather than satisfaction.”<sup>20</sup> He did not agree with the views of Wattal and Ranadive who argued “that the population of India is already living permanently on the verge of scarcity and any increase is bound to result in an insufficiency of the food supply,”<sup>21</sup> rather according to him “the danger of a shortage of the food supply is not the most serious aspect of the question” since “it would seem that the point has not

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<sup>16</sup> Census report of India 1921, 1923:48

<sup>17</sup> Census Report of India 1921, 1923: 48-49

<sup>18</sup> <https://indianculture.gov.in/flipbook/1247> retrieved on 13/06/2020

<sup>19</sup> Census report of India 1931, 1933:29

<sup>20</sup> ibid

<sup>21</sup> ibid

yet been reached at which the ability of the country to feed its occupants is seriously taxed.”<sup>22</sup> According to him “The present problem in India would therefore seem to be less the actual total increase of the population, than the increase of that portion of the population, by far the greater part of course, which is occupied in agriculture and allied pursuits.”<sup>23</sup>

Hutton acknowledges enthusiastically that the Indian economists were keen on introducing artificial birth control methods and that “not only is artificial control publicly advocated by number of medical writers but Madras can boast a Neo-Malthusian League with two Maharajas, three High Court judges and four or five very prominent in public life as its sponsors.”<sup>24</sup>

Interestingly, Hutton made an observation regarding the connection between birth control, reproductive health and population problem which was quite unique for the time. He stated, “Meanwhile, it would appear, in view of the present rate of increase, that efforts to reduce the rate of infantile mortality should be preceded by precautions to reduce the birth-rate, and that if the luxury of baby-weeks (leave for child birth) be permitted they should at least be accompanied by instruction in birth control. A move in this direction has already been made by the Government of Mysore, which in 1930 sanctioned the establishment of birth control clinics in the four principal hospitals of the State.”<sup>25</sup> As Arnold (2006:27) remarks, Hutton’s observation on population paved the way for a change in the official stand on birth control. The discussion moved from population problem to population control.

1931 was also the time of political unrest in India. In fact, Hutton writes how difficult it was to conduct the census as “Mr. Gandhi and his *contrabandistas*” were bent on the non-cooperation movement and “the blessing which he gave to the census at the last minute in 1921 was this time wanting, and, though he himself is not known to have issued any advice to boycott the census, it seemed good to some other Congress leaders to do so, as, although they do not seem to have regarded a census as objectionable in itself, the opportunity for harassing government seemed too good to be missed, and January 11th, 1931, was notified by the Congress Committee to be observed as Census Boycott Sunday.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid*:30

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*:31

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*:31- 32

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*:32

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*: ix



Remarkably the Simon Commission report of 1930 also expressed concern about the growth and size of India's population. The report said that the government needs to be cautious before allowing greater degree of autonomy as the population is growing in size and they might not be able to self-rule.<sup>27</sup>

As Caldwell (1998: 684) said, "(T)he Indian census reinforced interest in Malthusian equilibria, and later played a central role in creating the world's first national family planning program". These reports influenced the officials in such a way that Dr J.W.D Megaw, who held many prominent positions including the posts of Director General of Indian Medical Services, wrote a confidential note to Simon Commission in ominous Malthusian tones. He sounded worried that with this rate of population growth, Nature's balance could be upset. According to him, if the British government is successful in eradicating "famine, diseases and war which are Nature's methods of maintaining a balance between food supply and population we must introduce a counter-poise of another kind. It is probably because of the apparent hopelessness of discovering such a counter-poise that there has been so great a reluctance on the part of the Government to tackle the difficult problem."<sup>28</sup>

Well before that, in 1928, Megaw in an interview to Carter, said, the "people multiply like rabbits and die like flies: until they can be induced to restrict their rate of reproduction there is no hope of doing much good by medical relief and sanitation, as the population is very nearly up to the possible limit."<sup>29</sup> He later wrote in his book, *Medicine and Public Health* regarding the effect of population pressure: "There will be hand to hand struggle for food, with the result that disease and famine must resume their functions in bringing about a natural balance between population and food supply...Nature when left to herself does not create smiling fields, but jungle and desert. Her methods are excessive reproduction and wholesale slaughter" (ibid: 34).

### **Indian Eugenics and Birth Control Movement and Role of the Upper Caste Males**

A flurry of activities in birth control and eugenics could be seen in India from late 19<sup>th</sup> century itself. In 1880, Murugesu Mudaliar from Madras became the vice president of the London Neo-Malthusian League and published the journal titled, *The Philosophical Inquirer in Madras*. As early as 1881, Dewan Rangacharlu raised the issue of population in the Mysore State Legislative

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<sup>27</sup> Indian Statutory commission Report, (London, HMSO, 1930), 1: 11-13 cited in Arnold 2003:29

<sup>28</sup> Megaw "confidential Note", August 1930, RAC cited in Arnold 2003:31

<sup>29</sup> Megaw to Carter, 29 October 1928, cited in Arnold, 2006: 30

Assembly (Ahluwalia, 2008: 27). S. Anandhi (1998) notes how “a Hindu-Malthusian League was formed in Madras in 1882 by a section of Madras elites” including Muthiah Naidu, Lakshmi Narasu, and Mooneswamy Naiker.

It was not surprising, that the propounders of population control were males like Pyare Krishan Wattal, Radhakamal Mukherjee, Narayan Sitaram Phadke, Gopaljee Ahluwalia, Padmanabh Pillay, Raghunath Dhondo Karve etc. Most of them were well educated and upper caste men. Pyare Kishan Wattal, an upper- caste Kashmiri was a fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and in 1912, he joined the Indian Audit and Accounts Service (Raina 1988:250). In 1916 Pyare Kishan Wattal, published *The Population Problem in India: A Census Study* where he drew a very grim picture of the impending disaster called population growth. Many Indians like him were convinced that the alarming growth of Indian population was responsible for poverty and widespread ill health (Wattal: 34).

Radhakamal Mukherjee was a professor of Economics and Sociology at the Lucknow University and was instrumental in organising the First Indian Population Conference in 1936 at Lucknow and compiled the volume called *Population Problem in India* out of the papers presented in the conference. The book bears the testimony of the discourse on population that was in circulation at that time amongst the economists. He argued that the biggest problem of India was overpopulation and that it has a limiting effect on both soil and water (1938:8).

Narayan Sutaram Phadke a professor of Philosophy, was another upper caste Brahmin, who was from Maharashtra. His most important work was his book called *Sex Problem in India* which carried a foreword by Margaret Sanger. His arguments were for eugenic birth control and Sanger regarded that as his patriotic aspiration for a sound biological development of the population of India.

The birth control discourse was tied up to eugenics in India from the very beginning, influenced by the international eugenics movement. Gopaljee Ahluwalia a professor of Biology established the Indian Eugenics society in Lahore in 1921 and the Indian Birth Control society the following year (Bashford and Levine, 2010: 110). He tried to communicate with the international organisations to get literature on eugenics (Hodges, 2006: 120). In an article, he wrote: “India resembled a vast garden literally choked with weeds, fine roses being few and far between” (1923: 288). He was obviously alluding to the lower caste and class and called them “weeds”. Though

Ahluwalia was looking up to the Western eugenics discourse yet there were other people like Phadke, Kartik Chandra Bose and M.V. Krishna Rao, who tried to bring in Aryan/ Hindu supremacy debate into it (Hodges, 2006: 122-123). For example, Bose (1915:151), wrote in his book *Sex Hygiene*: “In the West, eugenics may have taken birth with Mr. Galton but in India, the Science of Eugenics is a part and parcel of the Sacred Literature of the Land”. Similarly, Krishna Rao (1928: iii) wrote: “I admit that the West is providing the scientific explanation for many practices of ours on which our scriptures are silent. It is amusing to a Hindu to behold the air and tone of discovery assumed by thoughtful men of the West whenever they find out the excellence of any natural law of life. Be they ever so original, they can never outstrip the ancient Indo-Aryan sages in whatever realm of Life or Thought conceivable by human insight or experience.” In the same tone, Phadke (1929: 9-10) found solution in Eugenics to “bring happy day when India will claim perfectly fit and healthy men and women for her people” as a huge population is not a fit population. According to him, Indian tradition and history is rife with examples of Eugenic practice (ibid: 17-18), “A goodly harvest of Eugenic literature can be collected from Manu, Yadnavalkya and other Smritis, some Brahmanas, the Ashvalatan Grihya Sutra, medical treatise like the Vagbhata and Sushruta, and the great epic of Mahabharata...The principles which they seem to have used in shaping the marriage institution, the recommendations and injunctions which they clearly laid down regarding selection of partners in marriage, and the hymns which they composed for recital by the bride or the groom on the occasion of the various marital rites, are overwhelming proof of their keen Eugenics sense.”

Not surprisingly, Phadke put the entire responsibility of the carrying forward the eugenic values specifically on the women. According to him mothers were important “...in a Eugenic discussion. The first duty of the Eugenist would therefore seem to be to see that the mothers in the society will all be sound in mind and limb, superior in intelligence, and virtuous act” (Phadke, 1927:50).

State patronage of eugenics began when “in 1920 the Maharajah of Mysore...donated a tidy sum to Britain’s Eugenics Education Society. A decade later he took up birth control...when two state hospitals were authorised to provide contraceptives as part of maternal health care in 1930. Mysore achieved the distinction of having the world’s first government- sponsored birth control clinic outside the USSR” (Connelly, 2008:88). Western educated Indian doctors, academics, businessmen and officials etc. kept on engaging with the population debate.

There was a visible change in the eugenic debate by the 1930s, as has been already mentioned above. This change was also perceptible when Watal added a chapter on birth control in the fourth edition (1934) of his book *The Population Problem in India* and he argued both for and against birth control.

The political and economic atmosphere of the country too was going through a lot of upheaval during that time as a fall out of the World War. The war was changing Indian life, heavy taxes were levied, men were recruited into the army, high rise of price of commodities along with the national movement picking up momentum under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The intensity of the movement increased and eventually in 1935, the Government of India Act was announced by the British Parliament which was basically a set of constitutional reforms for India to institute an Indian government which would rest on federal principles. It was envisioned in the Act, that elected Indians would govern the provincial governments enjoying some autonomy.

Before this Act was promulgated, serious heated debate took place in the House of Commons where the Lord president of the Privy Council, Stanley Baldwin (1935), presented a bizarre justification in favour of the Act. The most important takeaway from the speech was that the successful rule of the British actually was the unseen reason behind population growth of India, mostly because of the successful public health programme. Whereas this very population growth had in fact negated whatever potential material growth would have been achieved by the British rule. Baldwin's speech also underscored the peculiar cultural traditions and religion (we can safely say Hinduism here) which actually he felt was more responsible than any other reasons for the unbridled population growth. He also believed that the British could have no role in changing these peculiarities as that would tantamount to interferences in their internal matters, which might not go down well with Indians.

From the above it would seem as if population growth has become real impediment in the development story of India and as if it would be better that the Indians are given the right to self-rule and left to take care of the mess they have created for themselves. The long-demanded self-rule was diluted down to a case of 'You take care of your mess and put your house to order'. Here also the population discourse came to the benefit of the ruling British in a way to save their face.

By 1940, Indian eugenics started moving towards the field of family planning. In 1934, Pillay the honorary medical director of Sholapur Eugenics Education Society had launched the

journal *Marriage Hygiene* and in 1935 he, along with a few others, formed the Society for the Study and Promotion of Family Hygiene. In 1940, the rechristened Family Hygiene Society of Pillay's merged with the Bhangini Samaj, a family planning clinic ran by All-India Women's Conference (AIWC) to become the Family Planning Society. The Family Planning Association was eventually born of this society (Hodges, 2006: 132).

The 1940s was also important in the history of Indian population debate as Bengal saw a horrible famine killing thousands of people. The Bengal Famine Inquiry Commission (GOI, 1945:110) report stated that "about 1.5 million deaths occurred", whereas Amartya Sen (1999:215) has clearly shown that the "there is evidence that an estimate of around 3 million would be closer to the mark". The Bengal Famine Inquiry Commission was formed with Sir John Woodhead as chairman and R.A. Gopalswami as its secretary and the final report called *The Famine Inquiry Commission: Final Report* (GOI,1945) had extensively dealt with the issue of population. Drawing analogy from the Census reports it stated, "We may reasonably conclude that the relatively slow and fluctuating rate of growth (of population) during most of the period for which census figures are available, was due to high mortality from disease and famine, and that in absence of this checks the population would now be considerably greater than it is" (GOI,1945:75), which is completely Malthusian in its approach. However the solution to the problem of population growth was seen by the report in the increase in agricultural input: "The enormous development in the Americas, Australia and elsewhere" where "vast areas of land" has been made arable and had "augmented the world's food supply and the increased productivity resulting from the scientific development of agriculture...It is well known that at the present time most Western countries are faced with the prospect of a fall in population ...It is natural in such circumstances that the question of over population and the relation between population and food supply, should have receded into the background" (ibid:84). This in fact paved the way for Green revolution and the related Khanna Study on birth control post-Independence, which is discussed later in the chapter. In fact, the report also talks of infant mortality and maternal mortality dichotomy and its relationship to population growth (ibid).

The appendix in the Report, on population where the comments and reaction of government officials and general public from all the states have been incorporated throws interesting conclusion: First, population growth is a problem, second, birth control is the only way and third, the age of marriage should be increased to control population. Thus, the stage was set for independent India to start a family planning programme. Gopalswami, incidentally, went on to

become the director of the 1951 census where again he rang the alarm bell regarding population growth. He even after urged Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to support a nationwide vasectomy programme (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1986).

In 1943, under the chairmanship of Sir Joseph Bhole, the government of India appointed the Health Survey and Development Committee. The committee is widely referred to as the Bhole Committee. This objective of the committee was to do a holistic survey of the public health system of India and come up with recommendations regarding its betterment. The chapter XXVIII in Vol II of the report of this committee, was on the population problem. While tracing the origin of underdevelopment, be it housing, clothing or feeding to “the steady growth of population” it refers to the census reports to confirm how population had increased from 1872 to 1941, rate of increase being 1.5 in 1872-81 to 13.6 in 1931-41. This contention and many other listed in the report conformed to the now-established belief that population was the major problem. Thus, the recommendations were almost expected. It is interesting to note that the committee recognised that population control can be a reality only when the economic condition of the working class is raised. It also suggested that early marriage to be another culprit of population growth. It is mentionable that the Hindu widow remarriage act was passed in 1856, and was mooted to be one great progressive law enacted by the British. Yet this committee wonders what will happen if the unofficial ban on widow marriage that people are practising undergoes a “change in social outlook” and there is a relaxation on “the ban on their remarriage, the effect will be to raise the fertility rate.” Which was an oblique acceptance of the fact that the Act was openly flouted and is actually good for the society. To prove their point the committee even refers to Kingsley Davis’s estimate that “if the proportion of widowed women in India becomes as low as it was in the United States in 1930, there would be a net gain of 14 per cent in fertility” to assert that this can be a worry (GOI, 1946: 482). In other words, the committee actually supported the unofficial practice of ban on widow remarriage that was still in force.

The recommendations of the committee were the following: 1) emigration of Indian people to other sparsely populated geographical locations, 2) Use of scientific methods with meticulous planning to increase the standard of living thus motivating people to have less children (as poor breeds more than the rich!) and 3) The third recommendation requires to be quoted verbatim to understand the magnitude of its implication: “A reduction in the rate of growth of population may be brought about by permitting the death rate in the community to rise... (but as) our social

instincts (will) militate against this” so the recommendation came down to three: “1) a raising of the age for marriage for girls, 2) an improvement in the standard of living and 3) intentional limitation of families” (read birth control) (ibid: 482-83).

It is worth quoting a very bleak observation in the line of eugenics which was made by the committee regarding the working class:

It may also be mentioned that a certain number of defects and diseases are known to be heritable. These include congenital blindness and congenital colour blindness and congenital deafness, haemophilia (bleeding disease, an abnormal tendency to bleed), certain abnormalities of the nervous system and some forms of mental disorder. The classes which possesses many of these undesirable characteristics and known to be generally improvident and prolific. A continued high birth-rate among these classes, if accompanied by a mankind fall in the rate of growth of the more energetic, intelligent and ambitious sections of the population, which makes much the largest contribution to the prosperity of the country, may be fraught with serious consequences to national welfare (ibid: 487).

Though a number of suggestions on health were quite bold, when it came to family planning, this committee, however, had nothing special to offer. In fact, the committee report also invoked Malthus as expected: “The history of the growth of population in India, therefore, seems to illustrate the contention of Malthus that disease and famine impose checks on an unlimited growth of population” (ibid: 477-78).

The Second World War created a slowdown in the family planning projects as all the Western countries were deeply embroiled in it. In India, Family Planning Committee was established in 1949 with Lady Rama Rau as president and in 1951 it was named as Family Planning Association of India (FPAI). FPAI was instrumental in getting large funds from the international agencies like Rockefeller Foundation (RF) supported IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation). In 1952, Margaret Sanger and Lady Rama Rau launched the IPPF in Bombay. “The IPPF has been a major force in the population control movement across the globe. The funding for the IPPF initially came from the Hugh Moore Fund and Rockefeller Foundation. Soon it attracted funding from DuPont Chemicals, Standard Oil and Shell. On the board of IPPF sit representatives of DuPont, US Sugar Corporation, General Motors, Chase Manhattan Bank,

Newmont Mining, International Nickel, Marconi RCA, Xerox and Gulf Oil, a veritable Who's Who of America's corporate and finance capital” (Rao,1994: 48).

Earlier, Indian National Congress established the National Planning Committee in 1938 under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru. One of the sub-committees on National Health looked into the issue of health policy to be formulated and was headed by Col. Sokhey. Karve, who had started the first family planning clinic, was also one of the members. Therefore, it is not surprising that this sub-committee on health deplored the fact that "attentions to eugenics or race culture are matters hardly yet in the public consciousness of this country" and went on to say: “Man, who has come to the stage of development where he is anxious to breed carefully such species of the lower animals as dogs or horses to obtain very specific qualities in particular specimens of the species, has not yet, realised apparently the possibilities inherent in carefully scientific breeding of the human race” [NPC, 1948a].

This committee, also examined the issue of population and the linkage between maternal and child health. Eugenics and birth control obviously found uninhabited mention and almost an unquestioned acceptance in the document. One of the members, Lakshmi Bai Rajwade advocated birth control. The Appendix IV, which Rajwade had authored and was titled *A note on the Investigation into the Volume and Causes of Infant Mortality as well as Mortality Among Women and Suggestions of Ways and Means of Reducing such Mortality*. She quotes Prof Gyanchand, “...if we take it for granted that our birth and death rates are in the neighbourhood of 48 and 33 per mille respectively the position of our country becomes still more conspicuous as a land in which the interplay of life and death secures an increase of population at the tremendous cost in human suffering”. Adding to this she writes: “...to keep up this interplay of life and death about 20 mothers will have to starve or poison themselves to death for each thousands of births; that out of the thousand children born at such awful cost, nearly 175 to 200 die before they are a year old; that on the scarred survivors of this stupendous ordeal is laid the responsibility of reproducing and building up their race in this land” (NPC 1948a: 119).

She also advocated the importance of birth control and held that there is a “supreme need for attention” (ibid: 131) towards the pre-natal and ante natal care of motherhood, of which “birth control” is of utmost importance as, frequent pregnancies were leading weakness of the women. It is required that the reproductive system is “kept fresh and vitalised to respond creatively and must



not be subjected to that strain. That can only be done by controlling pregnancy by contraceptive methods” (ibid: 133).

Another sub-committee on Women’s Role in Planned Economy, of which Rajwade was again a member in its Chapter X, titled *Resolutions of the National Planning Committee on the Report of the Sub-Committee on Women’s role in Planned Economy* adopted the following resolution as one amongst many: “The health programme of the state shall aim at the eradication of serious diseases, more especially such as are communicable or transmissible by marriage. The state should follow a eugenic programme to make the race physically and mentally healthy. This would discourage marriages of unfit persons and provide for the sterilisation of persons suffering from transmissible diseases of a serious nature, such as insanity or epilepsy” (NPC, 1948b:226).

This sub-committee also had a very important observation to make in its first chapter titled *Civic Rights* under the sub head of *Racial Health*: “We would like the *Wealth Sub-Committee* to bear this in mind while chalking out a programme for the ensurance (sic) of a physically and mentally healthy race. Therefore, the committee suggested that the focus of the programme should be to check the spread of the diseases like venereal disease, tuberculosis, leprosy and some forms of mental disorders so that the degeneration of the race can be prevented. To achieve this, it was recommended that medical certificates should be made mandatory before marriage, sterilisation of the unfit under strictest medical advice and care, in circumstances to be laid down by the state; and disposal of the embryo strictly for reasons of the mother’s health and where pregnancy is the result of rape, assaults etc.” (NPC, 1948b:40).

In the chapter titled *Family Life* under the subhead, *Birth Control or Limitation of the Family* it has been categorically mentioned that: “In India specially, where population is increasing by leaps and bounds, and where poverty increases in the same proportion, control of population is absolutely necessary. From the eugenic point of view the Indian stock is definitely deteriorating for want of proper selection as well as due to poverty, malnutrition etc., factors which are detrimental to the nation’s health” (ibid: 175).

Thus, the document propagates the importance of birth control, whether through self-control or scientific method of birth control, the most important thing was that birth control empowered women and lowered infant and maternal mortality (ibid). There it was “recommended

that birth control clinics controlled by the state and staffed by medical men and women should be established where instructions should be imparted to those persons who wish for it” (ibid:176).

The National Planning Committee also had a sub-committee on *Population*. The report of the committee vociferously pleaded for birth control mostly for eugenic reasons. Observing that abortion is quite rampant in India because of “irregularity of menstruation and hypoplasia of the reproductive system” (NPC, 1948c: 63-64) which results in sterility, therefore birth control was necessary as it “would prevent the undesired or undesirable pregnancy by methods which are safer and surer than those now in vogue...with the spread of contraceptive knowledge, then abortions will be reduced and the high maternal mortality due to too early and frequent maternity as well as child mortality will largely diminish” (ibid:64).

It is important to note herein that, the interlinkage between class and caste to population growth was very much pervasive in this report too: “Not only have we not reached any adoptive fertility in this country...but the disparity in the natural increase of different social strata shows a distinct trend of mispopulation. Throughout India, the backward sections are more progressive demologically than the rest of the population...the general increase of population is more in evidence among the more fertile but less intellectual strata of the society.”

Citing the caste-based data of populations of Bengal, Bihar and the United Province, the document argues that, “the percentage of children among the advanced and intermediate caste is strikingly low...but the percentage increases steadily as we proceed downward in the scale of caste and literacy until the figures for illiterate castes are very high. Secondly as we descend the scale of caste and literacy, the proportion of adult population diminishes...the survival value increases as we ascend the social scale” (ibid:65-66).

With the above data as the basis the document argues for ‘Eugenic measures’:

For the upper Hindu castes, some of which are actually decaying in certain parts of India a eugenic programme will include inter-caste marriage, affording a basis for a better selection, widow remarriage and abolition of hypergamy, dowry and bride purchase, as well as of regional, sectional and other barriers to inter-marriage among the upper Hindu castes...As education has spread contraceptive practice has been adopted by the advanced castes, and in the absence of birth control propaganda the mispopulation will be more manifest. No doubt birth control has been adopted by the upper classes in the towns of the

major provinces and this demands all the more diffusion of its knowledge among the masses to prevent the deterioration of the racial makeup (ibid:66).

The fifth chapter deals explicitly on 'Social Welfare and Eugenics'. This chapter discusses many ailments and the way these can be tackled to create a eugenically proper society:

There are defective, infirm and socially inadequate persons in every country, but in India these rise to millions. Most civilized countries adopt in this regard systemic programmes of prevention and treatment, and some have taken measures to prevent the birth of individuals doomed by their inner nature to suffer from handicaps that make a happy and useful life impossible...a programme of compulsory segregation and sterilisation of the feeble-minded, insane, deformed or other markedly defective persons should also be considered in India for checking in mental and social defectiveness (ibid:79).

Interestingly the document observes that blindness "is rare among educated people in India" (ibid:80) and as far as leprosy is concerned, "tribes and castes which are separated themselves from the hill and forest environment, and have not yet assimilated new ways of clean living in the plains, those who are accustomed to diets that are normally unbalanced or addicted to unsuitable foods such as dry or decaying fish and rice which are allowed to ferment, whose bodily resistance is lowered by various kinds of diseases in an unhealthy environment and who are unclean in habits" (ibid:83).

The author further narrates how during his visit to Bankura in Bengal he found that, "not a few (of the lepers) belonged to the upper caste...and that "the highest infection rate (was) amongst the Mohammadans" (ibid:84). He suggested that "Many lepers would require permanent segregation and their marriage should also be legally prohibited. Compulsory detention and the legal disability in respect of matrimony may be expected to combat the scourge successfully" (ibid:85).

Birth control through sterilisation for the "feeble-minded" was the next level of eugenic practice that the report was quite keen on: "In India the majority of the insane and all the definitely feeble minded who would number about 8 million are at large, and producing abnormals and sub-normals who at the lower levels are a burden to the society. Children of parents either or both of whom are mentally defective are on the average sub-normal. It has been found that nearly one third

of such children as survive are defective, and that more than two-fifths exhibit some degree of mental abnormality” (ibid:87).

Taking United States of America as the ideal, the report suggests that there should be legal provision to sterilise the insane, feeble-minded, epileptic people. According to them such people should be stopped from procreating as that would solve the problem of prostitution and illegal births as the “majority of illegitimate children in India are born of mentally deficient mothers; while the greater proportion of prostitutes and mentally inferior and many are definitely feeble minded”. The report finds that “trail of crime, murder, pauperism” as well as prostitution and illegitimate children are result of “defective families. Poverty in India makes the efficient functioning of the race as a whole impossible...Selective sterilisation of definitely defective types would not only decrease the present costs of these unfortunate to society but also diminish the economic handicaps of the social normals...Thus the prevention of reproduction in this class would reduce the number of undesirables more rapidly than it would if matings occurred entirely at random. Caste has created outcasts and contributes to make the problems of eradication of the defective types probably easier than in the West” (ibid: 87-88).

There is another interesting observation regarding the monks, nuns and religious mendicants (without really specifying which religion, though it can be safely believed that this population belonged to the Hindus), “many of whom show some kind of mental abnormality or other. The sterilisation of monks and religious mendicants will be desirable measure contributing to the decrease of illegitimacy” (ibid: 88). The document enumerates the total number of these religious communities as 231,730.

In the summary note of the report, the issue of population composition by religion, caste and community and its political implication is also discussed. The report regrets that the number of populations by religion, caste and community endows political power to negotiate and thus it becomes difficult to have a national population planning (ibid:130).

The final resolution of the National Planning Committee on the report submitted by the sub-committee on population underscores three important points: That India’s population is a matter of grave concern and is detrimental to economic policy-making and thus defeats “many social and ameliorative measures” (ibid:144), therefore a national programme of “family planning and a limitation of children are essential, and the state should adopt a policy to encourage these”

(ibid:145) and lastly, “An eugenic programme should include the sterilisation of persons suffering from transmissible diseases of a serious nature such as insanity or epilepsy” (ibid).

### **Family Planning: Malthusianism, Neo-Malthusianism and Eugenics**

Family planning or population control has its origin in Malthusian ideas as has already been discussed. However this idea has also seen transformation through time. As has been discussed above, the late nineteenth century witnessed concern regarding the menace of population growth and this led to Malthusian ideas to be redefined and presented in the form of neo-Malthusianism. Rao (2004a:92) calls this only a “new avatar” of Malthusianism as it was not “conceptually or methodologically distinct”. Rather the difference was in the case of “victims” and “methods”. He says (ibid), “While Malthusians were concerned with the poor of their countries, neo-Malthusians looked across the seas at the poor in developing countries. And while Malthusians spoke of moral restraints, neo-Malthusians equipped with contraceptive technology. The parents of neo-Malthusianism were the eugenists and birth controllers”. Ross (1998:6) says that the capitalist ideology accepts Malthusianism as it “naturalises poverty” and attributes “poverty and starvation to personal inadequacy and excess fertility” which stands in opposition to the “philosophical premises of socialism.”

Calling the Malthusians as “alarmist” Hartmann (1995:13) says that it survives in the feelings of “parochialism, racism, elitism, and sexism”, they go to the extent of advocating elimination of “famine relief” to the over populated countries. This according to her compliments the Social Darwinist approach of “survival of the fittest”, which was the original thought behind eugenics. According to Hartmann, neo-Malthusianism applies Malthusian ideas by “selectively applying it only to the poor majority in the Third World and, some cases, to ethnic minorities in the West” (ibid:15).

According to Rao (2004a:117), “Malthusianism and neo-Malthusianism offer an excessively simplistic, but appealing, understanding of the complex relationship of resources and population” which he calls a “red herring”. However, this understanding informed the official family planning programme as we will see it. And as Rao (ibid) said, this understanding is behind the “programme’s failure”, not “technical, administrative, or strategic” issues which is generally thought and discussed to be.

Therefore, Malthusianism was adapted in the form of neo-Malthusianism to establish the relationship between poverty and population and diverting the attention of the development projects towards the poor rather than the inherent inequality that gives birth to poverty.

### **Post-independence Family Planning Efforts: The Neo-Malthusian Discourse**

In spite of so much of pro-family planning discourse, post-independence, it was not all smooth sailing for the Nehru government as far as adopting a family planning policy or programme was concerned. The Prime Minister's position on family planning was also not clear. He was also influenced by Gandhian prejudices and many of the parliamentarians were close followers of Gandhi as well. In fact, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur the first Minister of Health, was a little edgy too regarding the issue. "Kaur continuously resisted Nehru's attempts to implement a national family planning programme" (McCarthy, 1995: 297). In fact, in 1951, she entreated the World Health Organization (WHO) to assist in the promotion of the rhythm method, which conformed to the Gandhian principles. Accordingly, WHO deputed Dr Abraham Stone, who was then the director of the Margaret Sanger Birth Control Clinic, in USA to assist the health ministry of India. The experiment turned out to be a failure and it also ended the one and only attempt of popularising and adopting natural means of family planning.

"When Nehru set up a committee in 1951 to advise on the need for, and design of, the family planning content in the 1952-56 Five Year Plan, the committee sought advice and reports from three Americans, Kingsley Davis, Pascal Whelpton, and William Ogburn. Davis had just published his *Population of India and Pakistan*" (Caldwell, 1998: 689). It was also not coincidental that Ford Foundation (henceforth the Foundation) entered the population field the same year. In 1952 the Foundation gave a grant to the Population Reference Bureau in the USA. That was the same year when the Foundation Representative in India, Douglas Ensminger, informed Jawaharlal Nehru that the Foundation regarded population growth as a serious issue for India and that they would eagerly help India to fight it.<sup>30</sup>

However, the Foundation was cautious in the initial years and did not support activities in developing countries until 1959, with a grant to the Indian Ministry of Health (Caldwell & Caldwell, 1986). The Foundation eventually was instrumental in setting up two important family

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<sup>30</sup> Edward M. Humberger, "Population Program Management: The Ford Foundation in India, 1951-1970," RAC, FFR, Unpublished Reports, Box 18672, Folder 03673, April 1970.

planning organisations in India, the Central Family Planning Institute and the National Institute for Health administration and Education (Minkler, 1977:404).

Ensminger was successful in convincing the reluctant Minister of Health, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur about the necessity of concerted effort on population control. Eventually, in 1956 the National Family Planning Board was instituted to supervise a national effort that would go beyond the natural family planning efforts (Ensminger, 1971 cited in Harkavy and Roy, 2007: 306). Lt. Colonel B.L. Raina became the first director of the board. It may be mentioned here that Raina was a medical officer in the Indian army and was instrumental in setting up the *Matra Sewa Sangha*, which worked in the area of maternal and child health as well as family planning. Not surprisingly, Margaret Sanger was one of the board members (ibid: 307).

Under the guidance of Ensminger, the Foundation's programmes eventually “helped to lay the groundwork for India's ascendance as a world-class centre of contraceptive research; built two national, quasi- governmental research and training agencies; and launched a publicity campaign of national dimensions. At the head of each of these ventures stood a Ford consultant, designing and managing the programmes, overseeing the research, sharing skills” (McCarthy, 1995:296).

It seems to be no coincidence that Indian government focussed on the issue of birth control almost concurrently with the green Revolution (Ross 1998: 161). Ross writes how Harvard School of Public Health was funded by the Foundation “to establish a new Centre for Population Studies”, and the first project of the centre was the Khanna Project, a family-planning programme sponsored by the India government and the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) in Khanna district of the Punjab, where the Green Revolution was already underway (ibid). RF allocated one million dollars for the study and by dint of that got involved in population control (Mamdani, 1972; Connelly, 2008). Connelly notes, that the motive behind RF getting involved in the study was because they were “hoping to learn how to implant this small family system in a peasant population” (Connelly,2008:171). “The Khanna study was developed and implemented as a collaborative effort of the Harvard School of Public Health, the Government of India’s Ministry of Health, the Ludhiana Christian Medical College (a missionary institution supported with funds from the RF), and behind the scenes, the eugenicist-philanthropist Clarence Gamble” (Williams, 2011: 2). Clarence Gamble was the “grandson of the soap manufacturer of Procter & Gamble fame, who saw himself as a provider of ‘risk capital’ for start- up projects” (Connelly, 2008: 173).

The fear of growing hold of communism also had its effect on the RF's decision of involvement in the population control programme. In fact, as has been already noted several times, this fear was dominant in the population debate and it firmed up further when neo-Malthusian understanding of poverty and poor became rooted in development discourse. Demographer Frank W. Notestein, of the RF funded office of Population Research in Princeton University visited China in 1948 and wrote in his report "The subcontinent of India, precariously divided between Hindu and Muslims, comes most forcibly to mind as the next possible location for a serious outbreak of communism" (Balfour et al cited in Ross, 1998: 148). The image of an 'outbreak' draws parallel with that of an epidemic or plague, and the sense of alarm was evoked. The Khanna study is generally regarded as a failure. Connelly (2008: 171-173) "described the Khanna study as, American social science at its most hubristic" and a, "notorious example" of a large research grant which failed to reshape reproductive behaviour. And Rao shows how, "Malthusian arithmetic" had informed the Khanna study that was used to justify the population control programme (2004: 130, 134). Mamdani in fact turned "the logic of the Khanna Study on its head and argued that overpopulation was not the cause of poverty, but the result of poverty" (Williams, 2011:6).

With this background India started its Family Planning Programme in 1952 with a humble budget of Rs. 6.5 million and became the first country in the world to formally do so. The First FYP (1951-56) stated clearly: "The recent increase in the population of India and the pressure exercised on the limited resources of the country have brought to the forefront the urgency of the problem of family planning and population control... Family limitation or spacing of the children is necessary and desirable in order to secure better health for the mother and better care and upbringing of children. Measures directed to this end should, therefore, form part of the public health programme."<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, the Ministry of Health entrusted the responsibility of supervising the fund distribution to the birth control clinic to the FPAI. By 1961, India already had around 4000 birth control clinics which were offering different kinds of contraceptives ranging from condoms, to diaphragms, and vaginal foaming tablets as well (Harkavy and Roy, 2007).

The programme envisaged in the First FYP period was to create provisions in the government hospitals and health centres of advice on methods of family planning and making them aware of the options available. Also, to conduct "field experiments on different methods of family

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<sup>31</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 18/06/2020



planning for the purpose of determining their suitability, acceptability and effectiveness in different section of the population.”<sup>32</sup>

The Second FYP (1956-61)<sup>33</sup> reiterated that, “The problem of regulating India's population from the dual standpoint of size and quality is of the utmost importance to national welfare and national planning”, and plan to “develop this programme further during the second plan”. It was also proposed to open clinics in all big major cities as well as towns, in the ratio of one clinic for every 50,000 population. To achieve this, it was planned to constitute a central board for family planning and population problems, which was to be the nodal institute and would function in an autonomous way.

In the meantime, the GOI established a committee called the Health Survey and Planning Committee, known as Mudaliar Committee to “undertake the review of developments that has taken place since the publication of the report of the Health Survey and Development Committee (Bhore Committee) in 1946 with a view to formulate further health programmes for the country in the third and the subsequent Five-Year Plan periods” (GOI, 1961: 7). The Committee accepted that the objective of the “family planning movement in India is to accelerate the shift from second phase to the fourth phase by planned effort to bring down the birth rate” (ibid: 398) and recommended that “if family planning movement is to produce early and effective results, it has to be in the nature of a mass movement” (ibid: 401). Many important recommendations were suggested such as, involvement of “voluntary and social organisations”, extensive “demographic, sociological and anthropological study” to be conducted, high priority to contraceptive production in the country, extensive use of radio for reaching out to the rural areas, involvement of all political parties. The committee suggested voluntary sterilisation based on informed decision, and suggested that “a small financial assistance may be given as a compensation for loss of time and wage”. Research on oral contraceptive was also one of the important suggestions. And most importantly, the committee “suggested the creation of a separate ministry for” population control so that the focus can be a dedicated one (ibid: 401-405).

Over and above the recommendations, the committee also listed a few suggestions for “accelerating the rate of spread of family planning” which was a report compiled by five members of the committee. Eventually those suggestions became part of the family planning programme in

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<sup>32</sup> ibid

<sup>33</sup> ibid

India some way or the other. Therefore, it is important that the suggestions are discussed in details (ibid:408-410):

- **Introduction of a different tax slab after the third pregnancy**. Before that the couple should be offered the option of sterilisation to the mother with two healthy children. The sterilisation service should be free of cost and she should be “given a prescribed amount as honorarium for the performance of what is deemed to a national service.
- **Removal of disadvantages regarding income-tax in respect of unmarried persons:** The bachelor and the spinsters came under higher tax than the married people. It was suggested that it should not be so as by not marrying they are helping in controlling the population. Therefore, they should be offered the same tax slab.
- **Withdrawal of maternity benefit in the case of those refusing to accept family limitations.** The maternity benefits offered should be limited to three pregnancies.
- **Limitation of certain free services rendered by the state to children:** Free education and other benefits conferred by the state on children may be limited to three children in each family.
- **Increasing participation by employees of governments, local bodies and aided institutions in the spread of family planning.**
- **Abortion for socio-economic reasons:** Referring to the experience of Japan and Soviet Russia the committee was not convinced whether abortion should be legalised though data showed that “appreciable number of abortions is taking place every year” and that “It is likely that most of them are done by persons with no medical competence to perform abortions and in the circumstances these abortions are likely to cause harm to the health of the person”. Mulling the option of legalizing abortion, the committee says: “We are aware that there are weighty reasons against such legislation, including strong religious and social reactions of an adverse nature”. Therefore, the committee concluded that “We are not prepared at present to recommend large-scale abortions as legalized measure to combat successfully the population problem in the country.”

As Rao (2004a: 31) noted that this minority report “foreboded, in a sense, the shape of things to come: the iron hand of coercion behind the velvet gloves of rhetoric. This was the beginning of a period in the West when a sense of doom and panic was being created with

reference to the ‘population bomb’ ticking away in third world countries, posing not only a threat to themselves but to the entire world.”

The Third FYP incorporated the suggestions of the Mudaliar Committee and commented that the “central feature must be the integration of family planning with normal medical and health services” and that in the Third and the subsequent Five-Year plans should give more importance by expanding it to “intensive education, provision of facilities and advice on the largest scale possible and widespread popular effort in every rural and urban community.”<sup>34</sup>

The Plan document also emphasised on making it a national movement by focussing on, “(a) education and motivation for family planning, (b) provision of services, (c) training, (d) supplies, (e) communication and motivation research, (f) demographic research, and (g) medical and biological research. The programme as approved, involves a total outlay of Rs. 50 crores.” This was a major jump from 65 lakhs in the First FYP to 50 crores in Second FYP.

In the meantime, the census of 1961 revealed that the clinical approach was not helping much in lowering the population. A total reorganisation of the programme was initiated by the director of Family Planning in 1963 at the behest of the Foundation (Demerath, 1976 cited in Rao, 2004a:32). Hence the clinical approach was changed to target setting approach, with extension education becoming the major thrust. This meant huge change in the organisational capacity of the programme. “Each PHC was staffed by some family-planning personnel, who were expected both to provide in-house services and also to tour the nearby villages, educating the peasants about the kind of modern birth-control devices available and encouraging them to use these” (Vicziány, 1982: 383). Thus, the PHCs were staffed with two doctors, one Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), male family planning worker, extension educators and health assistants, Lady Health Visitors (LHVs). “The ANMs supervised LHVs was to be the infantry of the programme” (Cassen, 1978:147). With that a militaristic approach was woven into the discourse of the family planning programme in India. The increase in the number of health workers strengthened the PHC but only for family planning activities. The central government too promised to bear all the expenses for the programme but the other staff of the health department remained in the State’s payroll.

The first UN Mission examining the family planning programme came to India to convince the government to adopt Intra Uterine Contraceptive Device (IUCD) and so did many other foreign

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid*

experts. India's engagement with IUCD also has a quite interesting story related to it. Dr Segal, who was also a faculty at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, "smuggled the first Lippes Loops into the country disguised as Christmas ornaments" (McCarthy, 1995: 298). The Health Minister, Sushila Nayar was apprehensive of the testing of the IUCD device. However, Dr Alan Guttmacher, a leading gynaecologist in the US and the president of Planned Parenthood, convinced her regarding the safety of the Loops (IUCDI).

The Central Family Planning Council in its first meeting in December 1965 recommended the formation of a committee to "review what additions and changes are necessary as a result of the greatly altered situation due to IUCD having come in the forefront of the programme, in the staffing pattern, financial provisions etc." (GOI, 1966: 1). This committee, which was called the Mukherji Committee, reported that "on account of the IUCD method becoming available, a mass programme has been feasible on account of this method's very clinical and administrative advantage over sterilisation" (ibid:1).

The committee was of the opinion that a number of changes will have to take place after IUCD is added to sterilisation and condoms as a part of family planning process. Those were listed as, "Target oriented programming, fixing the targets both for different areas of operation and periods of time. Need for considerable strengthening of the educational and publicity effort" as well as seamless availability of the supplies and involvement of voluntary agencies and local leadership in a more intensive way.

Basically, the core focus was on achieving targets. The committee report also extensively described how all these can be achieved through setting targets for IUCD insertion starting from the rural, up to the state level. Reinforcement of the staff capacity of the separate health department secretariat was another significant suggestion. The committee stated that their observations were reflected by the "Evaluation Report of the World Bank (Bell Mission report), the UN Evaluation report and the Report of Family Planning Programme and Evaluation Committee" (ibid:5) as well. They also remarked enthusiastically that the "promising results in terms of numbers achieved in some parts of the country within the first few months" (ibid:9) explained why the staff needs to be strengthened to make IUCD pan Indian plan. They further quoted the World Bank report: "The numbers relating to various methods are impressive but the base population is so large that massive numbers of effective users are required if there is to be any measurable effect on the overall birth rate" (ibid) and so concerted efforts were justified to increase the real numbers. The committee also

wanted incentives to be offered to the women who were inserted with IUCD “for difficulties, loss of wages or any other such disadvantages which they have to suffer.” (ibid:33) Noting that the “West Bengal Government...stated that already in some areas of that state it was beginning to appear as if the programme was slackening because” (ibid:34-35), the women were losing wages and they were even incurring travel expenses. Thus, the committee recommended that ‘For IUCD insertions a woman should be paid Rs. 5/- towards loss of wages, cost of food, transport charges and other incidental expenses” (ibid:35). Not only compensating the people who undergoes vasectomy and IUCD, compensation was also suggested for the workers who could motivate the maximum number of people for such operations and insertions to be done (ibid:38). For this it was suggested “that a special fund be placed at the disposal of the state governments out of which rewards can be given to the members of the staff for any outstanding work and to villages and groups of villages which show outstanding achievements” and “that the auxiliary nurse-midwives, nurses, etc., who work beyond their normal hours of duty in camps be allowed an amount equal to their normal daily allowances from the Family Planning budget, to compensate them for hard work that has to be done in camps” (ibid:38). By doing so the flood gate of corruption was opened up and numbers were being manufactured. However, this did not stop the government eventually from introducing incentives. The malpractices around incentives will be discussed later.

The Estimate Committee of the 5<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha which prepared the Thirteenth Report on the Family Planning Programme (1971-72) received a memorandum on Foreign Assistance from a prominent social worker (not named) stating (GOI, 1972: 189<sup>35</sup>):

Government works from the top and often takes advice and grants from opulent foreign foundations who cannot possibly be expected to understand the conditions in the interior of our country or the mind of our common man. Acceptance of financial help from outside constraints our government into accepting some of the scheme suggested by donors. The sudden introduction of loop programme and its constant failure is an illustration of the decent haste in accepting and operating a new idea. This episode not only gave a temporary setback to the sterilisation programme which was in full swing, but created a feeling of suspicion and distrust in the minds of the public regarding all family planning schemes.

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<sup>35</sup> [https://eparlib.nic.in/handle/123456789/57754?view\\_type=search](https://eparlib.nic.in/handle/123456789/57754?view_type=search) retrieved on 14/09/2019, Page no 189

Elaborate programmes for family planning are formulated again with foreign help, and launched at every level employing people who have little contact with the masses.

Therefore, the Committee examined the representatives of the Ministry of Health and Family Planning and questioned them whether any study has been carried out about the harmful after-effect of IUCD insertion the committee was informed that, there was international pressure due to which the IUCD programme was started and there was no research on its effect conducted before implementation of the programme. And when reports of large number of women suffering from ill effects surfaced, the use of loop went down (ibid: 82-83).

To the question whether any research was being carried out in India to improve upon the present IUCD with a view to making it free from its side effects, the ministry in a written reply stated as follows: “Technical Committee of the Indian Council of Medical Research has been constituted to advise modification of the present IUCD. The committee has already held its meetings four times. They have considered the new types of IUCDs and also modifications of the present ones and have recommended clinical trials with it” (ibid:83). This bureaucratic reply bought them space and time.

In a written reply about the availability of data on removals and expulsions of IUCD, the ministry informed that studies conducted by Indian Institute of Population Studies and National Institute of Family planning found that the removal rate of IUCD was 21.1 percent and expulsion rate 12.7% (ibid).

The central government reimbursed a sum of Rs 11, Rs 30 and Rs 40 for each case of ICD insertion, Vasectomy and Tubectomy respectively to the state government. For tubectomy in large camps the amount was Rs 90 per case and for those in small camps and also at places where food is not given by the state governments the amount was rupees 65 per case. Broad breakup of these amounts was suggested to the state governments. However, the state governments were allowed the discretion to device their own breakup of this amount for payments to volunteers, motivators, doctors, etc. Under this scheme, the volunteers and other persons become entitled to receive the compensation once the services were rendered. Doctors employed whole time on family planning programme, part time doctors and private medical practitioners working in government clinics were not allowed to claim the doctors fee unless they have given the performance prescribed by the government. For private medical practitioners performing these cases in their approved clinics, the

lump sum payment was Rs 11, Rs 30, and Rs 40 respectively for each case of IUCD, vasectomy and tubectomy respectively, subject to their giving necessary reports, undertaking to do the case free of charge and also render follow-up services.

In a written reply whether government had undertaken any assessment to find out the extent of the effectiveness of monetary incentives, in the furtherance of the program the ministry stated: “no direct study in this matter has been carried out. In various states however, experience has shown that, wherever compensation money incentive to various categories of recipients like doctors, motivators, individual acceptors has been introduced or increased the acceptance rate has gone up” (ibid:85).

Whether any malpractices have been noticed by the government in payment of compensation for IUCD insertion and sterilisation, written reply stated:

(S)ome instances (in about 200 letters of complaints) malpractices have directly come to the notice of the department. An appropriate action has been taken in all such cases. No information about instances brought to the notice of the state government at various levels is available. This is being collected from now onwards. However, considering that there has been about 13 million acceptance of sterilisation and IUCD program the magnitude of malpractices has been insignificant. Various steps have been taken to ensure that there is no mis-utilisation of the monetary incentives and steps have also been taken to ensure that the reports about the number of operations are genuine (ibid:85-86).

Regarding foreign assistance, the Thirteenth Committee noted (GOI, 1972: 185-189<sup>36</sup>):

Foreign aid in the field of family planning was initially in the form of technical assistance by way of consultants and fellowships. In these fields, the Foundation has been taking interest in the programme since 1959, followed by Population Council in 1964. Since 1967-68 agreements have been signed with foreign governments and agencies for aid to family planning programme. In these intergovernmental agreements, emphasis has been on receiving aid by way of commodities to be utilised directly in the programme. Consultancy services required in connection with the utilization of these commodities have also been procured.

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<sup>36</sup> ibid

The document details the contribution of organisations like the Foundation, Population Council, USAID, and countries like Sweden, Norway, Britain as well as UN organisations like WHO, UNICEF and World Bank.

The committee expressed regret at the end regarding the government having to succumb to the pressure from the foreign advisors and going on with the IUCD scheme without conducting any tests on its effect. They also showed their unhappiness regarding the failure of the government in building adequate infrastructure to conduct such a vast exercise. Therefore, they suggested a critical evaluation of the foreign assistance in that area (ibid:191). In spite of such reactions from the Estimate Committee, IUCD activity was still continued without even batting a lid. Almost a million insertions were recorded in 1966, and a target of four million slated for the following year. But the programme acquired notoriety as rumours started floating regarding IUCD- triggered “cancer, excessive bleeding” and even deaths. “Some users also reportedly became pregnant, raising delicate questions about whether therapeutic abortions, although still illegal, could be performed” rather than IUCD insertion (Ensminger 1971: 34 cited in McCarthy, 1995: 306). “The IUCD campaign left a mixed legacy in its wake, increasing government suspicion of foreign innovations and demonstrating that there would be no panaceas in family planning campaigns” (ibid: 299). Thus, the focus of birth control shifted to vasectomy. Though vasectomy was already in practise in India for some time; but it received an official impetus only after the IUCD debacle. “The World Bank, the UNFPA, and SIDA supported these ‘dynamic initiatives’ with considerable funds” (Rao, 2004a: 40).

The Third FYP was one of perceptible shift of policy, strategy and emphasis in the area of family planning. Accordingly, the budget was also quite formidable, with family planning being allocated the largest chunk in the health component. The Fourth FYP document states:<sup>37</sup> At the end of Third Plan there were 3,676 rural family-planning centres, 7,081 rural sub-centres, and 1,318 urban family-planning centres. In addition, 450 family-planning annexures to primary health centres were established and 2,770 sub-centres constructed.

India fought a disastrous war with China in 1962, followed by drought, resulting in the fall of food production. Therefore, during the period of 1966-69, annual plans were drawn up rather than five-year plans. Jawaharlal Nehru died in 1964 and in 1966 India lost the next Prime Minister,

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<sup>37</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 10/06/2020



Lal Bahadur Shastri. In April, 1966 a separate Department of Family Planning was carved out at the Centre. This department was responsible for co-ordinating the family planning programme between the Centre and the States.<sup>38</sup> Raina (1988:71) noted that this step was taken to impress upon the World Bank as well as other international aid-giving organisations to fund the programme. The World Bank became increasingly interested in the population control programme of the developing countries during this period. In 1966 the second UN Advisory Mission recommended that the Directorate of Family Welfare should exclusively concentrate on family planning and “be relieved from the other responsibilities such as maternal and child health” (Banerjee, 1985:285). This was a dangerously exclusivist tendency which continued for quite some time.

Though only annual planning was done however, the budget for family planning was not affected much, rather, it saw increase of allocation to Rs. 0.75 billion as compared to the Rs. 249 million of Third FYP.<sup>39</sup> When eventually the five-year plan format was revived, the Fourth Five Year plan (1968-74) showed the same concern and urgency regarding family planning activities:<sup>40</sup> “Family Planning will remain a Centrally sponsored programme for the next ten years and the entire expenditure will be met by the Central Government. It will be ensured that performance does not lag behind with expenditure. The effort will be to achieve enduring results through appropriate education and motivation. General health services will be fully involved in the programme.”

The Draft Plan outlay of Rs. 300 crores for family planning was revised upwards to Rs. 315 crores so that the programme could be strengthened and speeded up. Out of the total amount Rs. 269 crores was earmarked for activities and compensations related to IUCD and Rs 46 crores was to be “spent on training, research, motivation, organisation and evaluation”. This was the time when targets were set for sterilisation and IUCD insertion as well as reduction of birth rate from 39 per thousand to 32 per thousand. The numbers were thrust on the civil and health administrator to adhere to. The draft plan document also referred to the Indian Council of Medical Research study regarding oral pills for women under medical supervision, and suggested the scheme to be “expanded both in urban and rural areas in a phased manner depending on experience gained during the expansion of the programme.”<sup>41</sup> The document also writes about the well laid plan on vasectomy and sterilisation for women with provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, from

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid*

<sup>39</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 14/06/2020

<sup>40</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 14/06/2020

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*

surgical equipment to vehicles etc. Over and above the ongoing scheme of free distribution of contraceptives “through family welfare planning centres and voluntary workers (depot holders)”<sup>42</sup> it was planned to launch “a massive programme of distribution of condoms (Nirodh) through 600,000 commercial retail outlets will be developed and sold to consumers at 15 paise for a packet of three condoms. It is estimated that 1200 million pieces will be indigenously manufactured.”<sup>43</sup>

It is mentionable here that vasectomy had seen a downfall during the late 1960s to early 1970s and “a host of reasons were given at that time, for example: that the programme had ‘reached’ most of those interested and was bound to fall; and the fee became less attractive once the hard time of 1967 eased; and also that vasectomy had become unpopular because of the number of cases of post-operative pain and illness; further, there was opposition to vasectomy in the villages for number of social reasons--- vasectomised men were laughed at as ‘eunuchs’; they could be object of great shame if their wives become pregnant; moreover that, vasectomy led to loose morals as men could indulge in sexual licence without fear of consequences” (Cassen, 1978:160). Vasectomy however regained its popularity with the officials after IUCD started losing its glory. Moreover, there were few officials in the government, who also ensured that vasectomy camps were organised with great fervour. One of them was S. Krishnakumar, the District Collector of the Ernakulam district of Kerala. Krishnakumar is offered as a classic example. He narrates the fervour using terminologies borrowed from festival as well as war. I will quote from the article (Krishnakumar,1972: 177-85) extensively:

The Ernakulam camps set a world record in vasectomy performed for a given population group for a given length of time...The camps demonstrate that large masses of people can be motivated to accept sterilisation in a short span of time by an organized and concentrated effort... The District Family Planning Bureau, under the guidance of the collector organised publicity and field work. Intensive publicity and educational activities began two weeks before the time the camp opened...lists of eligible couples with their addresses, data on age of husband and wife and the number of children were prepared for each local area by the family planning workers...House-to- house campaigns and squad work by teams of family planning educators and public workers were organised in each panchayat...The progress of field work in each panchayat and block area in terms of the number of persons

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<sup>42</sup> ibid

<sup>43</sup> ibid

who had registered with the committees was critically reviewed by the district collector for the two weeks preceding the camp, through a system of progress report...The field work and publicity reminiscent of a high powered election campaign, reached a crescendo two days before the opening of the camp...In the 24 hours preceding the scheduled day the entire propaganda machinery in the district was concentrated in the particular localised area so that no eligible couple could miss the family planning.

It is also worth noting how the central venue of the camp was modelled on a festive tone, almost like a wedding. He narrates:

The festival premises were attractively decorated and illuminated. Inside the auditorium 50 white painted hard board cubicles with operation tables and accessories were set up. Arrangements were made in the festival sets for reception of the acceptor's registration, medical check-up, pre-operation preparation (etc.) ...Also provided were free coffee stalls and free canteens, counters to issue incentive money, distribution of condoms...an entertainment auditorium where variety shows were performed 24 hours a day.

Lots of activities like audio visual exhibition, baby-shows (where babies whose parents were adopting permanent methods of family planning were allowed to participate) were organised at the camps to project the image of family planning.

It is also remarkable how the language of war and festival was used intermittently in the entire narrative. The room from where everything was being monitored and made operational was called the 'control room' evoking war-like situation:

The control room maintained continuous liaison with the similar control rooms established at each block development office in the field. This arrangement facilitated supervision and coordination and ensured the unexpected developments could be dealt with quickly.

Staff Deployment: About 100 medical officers and adequate numbers of nurses, nursing assistants, ministerial staff, pharmacists, drivers, attendants and others were stationed at the camp during the drive...the total staff working at the July 1971 festival site numbered 981... A sub-camp was organised in Thodupuzha and a mini camp at the Cochin's naval base as well as other mobile camps.

This 'festival' became a live site for observation research as well:

A statistical cell for ongoing analysis functioned at the camp site. Research teams from the Rural Institute of Health and Family Planning, Gandhigram and the University of Kerala and observation team specially deputed by the Government of India observed and conducted research while the festival was in progress...the venue was visited by Cabinet ministers, ministers of state government, eminent economists, representative of national and international organisations concerned with the issue of Family Planning etc.

The monetary incentives for vasectomy was increased beyond the centrally approved limit. Over and above the normal incentive provided by the government, the state governments sanctioned one week's free ration for the family adopting vasectomy, CARE (Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere) provided a gift kit consisting of 3 kilograms of rice, one saree and one dhoti for the couple. Even the promoters received Rs 10 in place of approved rate of rupees two per adopter, in which rupees eight was contributed by CARE. Suitable incentives for the project staff and field workers in the form of monetary and other awards were announced by the District Collector...the project other than those compensated by the government as per rules on a per operation basis (doctors, nurses and so on) were given a daily project allowance as a token compensation for the arduous nature of their work (ibid:180).

The middle-class conviction in vasectomy to be the only panacea for the problem of population was quite palpable in the way organisations like Rotary Club, Lions Club, Chambers of Commerce "competed with each other to assist in vasectomy camps" (Rao, 2004a:40).

This experiment was lauded by many social scientists at that time and many were critical about it too. However, the mood for vasectomy was set very firmly by such 'festivals' and it became the flavour of the 1970s. Another such example was the state level camps held in Gujarat mostly modelled on the Ernakulum experience. In the case of Gujarat, it was not one District Collector who initiated the programme, rather the Chief Secretary and the Secretary of Health along with the entire state machinery worked for the camps for months. The campaign and organisation were done the Ernakulum way but thinking 'about the possible dangers of single district camp' and the possible increase of 'problems of follow-up' the Gujarat state 'decided to hold state wide campaign with each district holding three to ten main camps at central location and several mini camps in far flung areas'. Another modification over the Ernakulum model was the

very high incentives, 'Cash incentives ranging from 65 to 75 rupees' for the acceptors and '...cash prizes for officials and non-officials were awarded for outstanding performance. These awards ranged from a gold medal worth 1000 rupees for the best district president in each category of districts, to 300 rupees cash for the best motivation in each category of districts to silver medals and lower cash awards...' (Thakor and Patel, 1972: 186- 192). Dr, V H Thakor was engaged in the camp in the capacity of the director of Health Services of Gujarat and V M Patel was the mass education media officer in the family planning project of the state. They concluded their experience with a big thumbs up to the incentivisation approach of the camps and said (187-189) "There has been heated debates both in India and abroad on the appropriateness of incentives in family limitation. Much of the criticism against incentives stems from an inadequate or improper understanding not only of the role played by incentives, but of the local situation as well. Unquestionably, the role of higher incentives at Ernakulum was significant. Experience in Gujarat only further demonstrates the importance of incentives in attracting volunteers for sterilisation". Therefore, they were of the opinion that "...the policy of giving higher incentives to the acceptors should be adopted immediately on a wider basis' (ibid:192).

However, things were not as smooth as it looked on paper. Cassen (1978: 164) notes, "Though there is something ethically disturbing in the payment of a high incentive fee to the very poor in times of abnormal economic difficulty- this issue was certainly a factor in governmental decisions before 1976. But paying a fee to someone who brings in a client is another matter and it was this which led to trouble". He cites a report of PRAI of a study conducted in 1966 on this topic which, according to him, "became mysteriously unobtainable in India after publication" and which "recommended...that the motivator's fee be abolished."<sup>44</sup> He adds (ibid) that, "the motivators not only brought in men who were old, unmarried, impotent or with sterile wives, they also brought in young men, many a times, misleading them about the intent of the operation. These motivators sometimes even bullied and blackmailed the people and even extorted money from their incentive amount. The situation was sometimes even worse when persons in authority were doing the 'motivating'; thus a village headman might be offered some facility for the village if he 'delivered' fifty clients...Even some farmers were refused credit or fertilized supplies unless they would consent to having vasectomy...(such approaches) created resentment and they stemmed once again, from a government policy to raise the number of clients with an urgency which many, both

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<sup>44</sup> Cited in endnote no 49:361, Cassen, 1978

inside and outside India promoted and approved”. This method earned maximum notoriety during the internal emergency period with the Prime Minister’s son reportedly targeting a particular community (discussed in details later).

In 1969, the Nirodh Marketing Division of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare commissioned the Operations Research Group (ORG), a private consulting organisation based in Baroda, to conduct India's first national family planning survey. This survey was again repeated in 1980, with the ORG conducting this as well. The objective was to get a comprehensive picture of the prevailing attitude toward and practice of family planning among the people in India, with a special emphasis on the acceptability of Nirodh and the pill. The 1970 survey showed that the economically empowered sections of society “preferred to experiment with a wide range of birth-control techniques”, whereas amongst the “lower socio-economic groups, sterilisation was the dominant method” (Khan and Prasad, 1985: 319).

In the meantime, owing to changes in the geopolitics of the subcontinent leading to a tilt of America towards Pakistan, the operation of the American NGOs including the Ford Foundation in India became difficult. As a result, as McCarthy writes, “the Asia (sic) Foundation was ordered to terminate its Indian operations and Ford was briefly implicated in covert activities in West Bengal” (1995: 300-301). The charges were eventually dropped but the mood of the Indira Gandhi government verged towards accepting financial assistance without any technical assistance. In 1971, the government terminated its contract with the Foundation in family planning.

However, the Foundation still remained involved in the family planning programme in a different capacity. It got involved in research activities and provided financial help to the researchers in the Family Planning Foundation (FPF), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and National Institute of Nutrition, etc. The study sponsored by FPF and undertaken by Indian Association for the Study of Population: *Population in India’s Development 1947-2000*, influenced India’s official stand in the Bucharest World Population Conference in 1974, where the then Health Minister Karan Singh famously said, “Development is the best contraceptive”. Therefore, the Foundation still wielded influence over the governmental decision-making process on family planning albeit indirectly.

Interestingly, back in November 1967 itself with the souring of the relationship between the Indian government and the Foundation, in a letter, the Indian Embassy in Oslo asked the

Government of Norway to consider assisting India in the field of family planning on a bilateral basis. The immediate needs of the Government of India were put as the services of trained personnel, especially Lady Doctors for the IUCD programme, and supplies of approximately 50 million condoms. This request was not fulfilled, as the Norwegian parliament was then on the verge of a major debate on the issue of aid to family planning in developing countries and to draw an elaborate guideline for future assistance. Family planning was a sensitive and potentially divisive topic, and the outcome of the parliamentary debate remained uncertain (Engh, 2002: 43). It is not that Norway had no previous relations with India. As mentioned above, in the post-Cold War period, there was this latent and mostly covert tension in the North that poverty breeds communism. Therefore, all the Northern and Scandinavian countries clamoured for some space for 'developmental interventions' in the underdeveloped countries. In fact, in 1952 Norway through the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD) had already started to fund a fishery project in India. Through these fisheries projects Norway was, in a way, supporting the family planning programme of the government of India. "The project ran its own hospital, and being part of the Indian health infrastructure, this hospital took part in the country's family planning efforts, and provided information on contraceptives and carried out sterilisations." (ibid: 44). In 1971, Norway parliament passed a resolution and Norway formally entered the family planning programme in India. Norway became involved in the Post-Partum Programme (PPP) and was the sole donor to the programme till 1995. Norway's involvement remained minimal only as a donor. The Post- Partum Programme was a maternity-centred hospital-based programme, aimed at reaching women in the time after delivery or abortion, with the assumption that post-delivery the effect of motivation for family planning is the maximum. PPP was a part of the 'cafeteria approach', where a number of birth control choices were offered to the people to select from. The first phase was mostly concentrated in the urban areas and the second phase which started in 1985 was to spread out towards the sub-district levels. "A review carried out in 1990 was generally positive and recommended that funding be extended, despite diverging views on use of targets and incentives" (Austveg and Sundby, 2005: 29). NORAD continued to be involved with NRHM in the area of reduction of child mortality.

Similarly, Sweden also became the first government to support the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the country actively participated in setting up the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) in 1967. Throughout the 1970s, Sweden streamlined its

financial assistance to family planning activities through multilateral organisation. Sweden's focus area was condoms. They provided condoms to India and also supported the condom factory located in Trivandrum financially. In June 1972, SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency) pledged its support to India Population Project (IPP), which was a collaboration between International Development Association (IDA), a World Bank organisation, and the governments of Sweden and India. The project, was an "experimental project to find the best means to improve the performance of India's family planning programme within the existing demand constraints" (Engh, 2002: 47).

There was a visible setback in Malaria Eradication Programme (MEP) from 1965 onwards when several focal outbreaks occurred. Even a series of smallpox epidemics were reported and a new approach was adapted to contain the disease. As mentioned, the family planning programme was also not showing any remarkable progress. Taking all these into perspective, the GOI appointed the Kartar Singh Committee, also called the Committee on Multipurpose Workers under health and family planning programme, in 1972. It was constituted to look at the "feasibility of having multipurpose/bi-purpose workers in the field" (GOI, 1973:3). The committee reported that the staff situation in the health ministry was vertically divided and had broad division without any integration. As many programmes like, Malaria, Small Pox, Tuberculosis, Leprosy, Cholera etc., were going on the staff were also hired for each programme and they were working in a compartmentalised way. This has made the ministry staff heavy without any real output. The report admitted that there was undeniable success of many programmes but was disturbed that there is also continuous demand for staff under every scheme. Accepting that "the demand being logical" but there can be a question raised "whether the same objective cannot be achieved by coordinating these programmes and pooling the personnel" (ibid: 1-2). The committee cited the decisions taken in the Executive Committee meeting of the Central Family Planning Council of September 1972, and the Report of the Steering Group on Health, Family Planning and Nutrition Plans. Both of them suggested that all the schemes should be integrated. Accordingly, Kartar Singh Committee also vouched that, all the schemes should be integrated, and also suggested that integration should be done in case of infrastructure, drugs and equipment and staff (ibid:5).

The committee also discussed in threadbare the existing workforce, their job definition and pay scales etc. Looking at the huge workforce they were looking at the feasibility of training the entire staff as multi-purpose workers. They came up with this suggestion: "To begin with, the



training of the workers as multi-purpose functionaries could be started in those areas where small-pox is controlled and malaria is in the maintenance phase. Since such areas constitute 59% of the country, the number of workers to be trained though large will be manageable. After the few years when these workers have been trained and other brought into maintenance phase, the programme could be extended to cover the entire country... to start with workers of only four programmes i.e. malaria, small-pox, trachoma and family planning including MCH be included in the multi-purpose concept” (ibid:16).

To sum up, “The Committee was convinced that if integration is to succeed it should not only be confined to sub-centres, sector or PHCs, but the concept must also extend to the tehsil and district levels and also the state headquarters” (ibid:18).

### **Family Planning Programme in the time of Emergency:**

However, the political condition underwent a massive transition when Indira Gandhi declared a state of Emergency in the country in 1975. Excess committed in the name of sterilisation under the direct supervision of Sanjay Gandhi, the younger son of the PM, made it a very notorious phase in the history of the Indian state and more so in the history of family planning in India. The political situation of the time, in fact, is said to have facilitated the smooth passage of the National Population Policy of April 1976. This document stated that, to secure the “future of the nation” and to eliminate poverty, population problem needs to be tackled on urgent basis. To launch a “frontal assault on the citadels of poverty” the Fifth FYP included the Minimum Need Programme. Calling population growth, the “underlying causes of poverty and disease”, the target was to control population growth, but also asserted that “simply to wait for education and economic development to bring about a drop in fertility is not a practical solution. The very increase in population makes economic development slow and more difficult of achievement” and thus called for a “direct assault upon this problem as a national commitment” (Singh, 1976:309- 10). The document accepted that “considerable work has been done in our country in the field of family planning, but clearly only the fringe of the problem has so far been touched” (ibid).

A number of measures were suggested. The three most important of them, which had a long standing effect were, the raising of the “minimum legal age of marriage from 15 to 18 years for girls and from 18 to 21 years for boys”; “freezing of people's representation in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislatures on the basis of the 1971 census until 2001” (decided in 2000 to review only in

2026) and “allocation of Central assistance to State Plans, devolution of taxes and duties and sanction of grants-in-aid on the basis of population figures of 1971 till the year 2001” (this was the norm for a long time, However, the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission constituted in January 2013 used the 2011 census data). The rest of the recommendations were only a re-worded form of the already prevalent practices like, incentives, compulsory sterilisation etc. However, the specific language on compulsory sterilisation is worth mentioning:

The question of compulsory sterilisation has been the subject of lively debate over the last few months. It is clear that public opinion is now ready to accept much more stringent measures for family planning than before. However, the administrative and medical infrastructure in many parts of the country is still not adequate to cope with the vast implications of nation-wide compulsory sterilisation. We do not, therefore, intend to bring in Central legislation for this purpose, at least for the time being. Some States feel that the facilities available with them are adequate to meet the requirements of compulsory sterilisation. We are of the view that where a State is ripe and it is necessary to pass legislation for compulsory sterilisation, it may do so. Our advice to the States in such cases will be to bring in the limitation after three children, and to make it uniformly applicable to all citizens resident in that State without distinction of caste, creed or community (Singh, 1976:312).

Thus, compulsory sterilisation became a state subject, conveniently shifting the responsibility from the Centre to the State. Moreover, it is also important to note that this population policy was being formulated without a health policy though the policy document accepted that the medical infrastructure was not adequate in many parts of the country, even to carry on the massive family planning programme.

The Fifth FYP (1974-79) included the Minimum Needs Programme, with the stated objective of providing “minimum public health facilities integrated with family planning and nutrition for vulnerable groups---children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.”<sup>45</sup>

In the common parlance, the 1970-77 period of family planning programme is notoriously called the coercive phase, which was executed in camp mode. The programme targeted at achieving a stipulated number of vasectomy and the people were incentivised at various levels. The

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<sup>45</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 10/06/2020

most quoted example of such an effort is the Ernakulam camp in Kerala, organised by the District Collector, S. Krishnakumar as extensively discussed above. Two camps were organised in the gap of one year and some 78,000 men and women were sterilised. In 1974, India had declared withdrawal of incentives for vasectomy due to financial constraints but was bailed out by UNFPA with a massive grant of US \$40 million and the camps continued. One of the agendas in the Twenty Point Programme of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, declared during the Emergency, was also family planning. Prime Minister Gandhi, addressing the Joint Conference of the Association of Physicians in India in January 1976, gave this statement: “We must now act decisively and bring down the birth rate. We should not hesitate to take steps which might be described as drastic. Some personal rights have to be held in abeyance for the human rights of the nation: the right to live, the right to progress” (GOI, 1978: 120), setting the tone for the time.

Thus, as Cassen said (1978:183), “sterilisation began to be performed in the country in very large numbers and in a wholly new atmosphere. Targets for sterilisation were set at various administrative levels... For the first time senior politicians went out of their way in speeches on major public occasions to express the Government’s commitment to birth control”. Sanjay Gandhi, who also declared a Five Point Programme, had put family planning as one of them and as mentioned above is generally linked with the excesses committed during the Emergency period. Coercion became a widely practised method of sterilising people and the atmosphere was rife with rumours. “Towards the end of 1976, there was a major episode in the town of Muzzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh; the foreign press estimated the number of deaths at between 50 and 150” due to botched up sterilisation, which made the Prime Minister to issue a statement in the Parliament admitting that “there had been ‘some’ deaths but claimed also that some people who had nothing to do with family planning had been killed by violent groups” (New York Times, 28 October 1976, cited in Cassen, 1978: 184). However, Cassen (ibid:185) cites a report published in the Times of India on 28 October 1976, where it was reported that group incentives were offered to “Panchayats in Bihar...large cash sums for village development if they fulfilled even one-third of the sterilisation targets” and thus he is not convinced that, “...these incentives could be won entirely with voluntary clients...wherever incentives are offered to anyone other than the client, the door is open for coercion.”

Stories of excesses committed in the name of sterilisation gained notoriety to such an extent that as it is widely believed that it was also a reason for the defeat of the Congress party in the 1977

general elections. Cassen also talks of the notorious Turkman Gate (where the population was dominantly Muslim) episode that took place in the early 1976 under the leadership of Sanjay Gandhi:

During a sudden move to clear the hutments in the Jama Masjid area of old Delhi, rehousing was offered only to those who would submit to sterilisation. A riot followed which was not reported in detail at the time, but during which deaths were said to have reached three figures. This 'slum clearance' event, together with the fact that the greatest volume of sterilisation excess occurred in North India in States where he was influential, linked the Emergency sterilisation drive very much with the name of Sanjay Gandhi...Sanjay Gandhi had publicly identified himself very clearly with the sterilisation drive (ibid).

The Shah Commission, was constituted by the Government of India in 1977 after the Janata Party led government came to power to inquire into the excess or malpractices committed during the time of emergency. The report of the committee looked into the "excess of and/or atrocities on persons arrested under the Preventive Detention procedures; use of force in the implementation of the Family Planning Programme and indiscriminate, high-handed or unauthorised demolition of houses, shops and structure" (Rao, 2018:345).

The interim report of the Shah Commission also noted that the demolition of the Turkman Gate area was carried forward on the pretext of redevelopment but eventually extended beyond the stipulated area and under the direct supervision of Sanjay Gandhi. The report noted that, "as the area of demolition speedily increased there was considerable panic and resentment amongst the residents and this culminated in the riot in the Turkman Gate area resulting in the death of at least six persons due to police firing" (GOI, 1978b:96). Even Jagmohan, the vice chairman of Delhi Development Authority who was infamous for his closeness to Sanjay Gandhi, deposed before the commission and said that, "the tension in Turkman Gate area on April 19, 1976 was entirely due to the intensive family planning programme" (ibid:120).

There were reports across the country regarding atrocities committed on the pretext of family planning programme mostly on the Muslims. For example, the final report of Shah Commission states that atrocities were committed on the Muslims of Meo community in Uttawar village of Gurgaon district of Haryana as they resisted family planning programme. For example,

the electricity supply of the village was disconnected, FIR was registered against some villagers for unlawful possession of arms, indiscriminate house-searches were conducted and household properties were destroyed, people were rounded up by the police and 'eligible' couples were sorted out by the SDM of Nuh district, and motivated for vasectomy operations, elderly people were forcibly taken to the health centres and forcibly sterilised, doctors who resisted were forced by the police to perform vasectomy on such people, people with only one child were sterilised, etc. The report also found how the entire administration along with the police connived and created terror in the minds of people. In a conference of the Deputy Inspector Generals of Police, it was decided that it was fine for the police to intervene whenever there was resistance to family planning programme (Rao, 2018: 345-355).

An interesting document that the report cites to demonstrate the change of approach in family planning from voluntary to coercive, was a note by the then Health Minister of India, Dr Karan Singh sent to the Prime Minister, titled, "Crash Programme to Intensify Family Planning" written on October 10, 1975. The note talks about the 'introduction of some element of compulsion in the larger national interest' which can be a judicious mixture of 'incentives and disincentives' and evokes the Emergency to state that, it was the 'appropriate atmosphere for tackling the problem' (ibid:357).

The report also cites the proceedings of the meeting of the Consultative Committee of MPs involved with the Health Ministry, which was held on January 20, 1976 and notes that the Chairman of the meeting vouched for the necessity of introducing "some sort of compulsion" (ibid). There seemed to be a consensus on the aspect of coercive family planning in the entire administrative machinery.

Similar other official communications are also cited by the report where coercion was suggested as the crucial agenda of the family planning programme. The only dissenting voice was the Secretary of Health, Gian Prakash, who noted in his many notings that family planning can be a success through 'proper motivation and availability of services' and that the 'target of sterilisation' has already far exceeded so promotion of other methods needs to be done (ibid: 358- 59).

In fact, Maharashtra introduced the "The Maharashtra Compulsory Sterilisation Bill, 1976", the name of which was changed to "Maharashtra Family (Restriction on Size) Bill, 1976 and was referred to the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, for the assent of the President"

(ibid: 374). The Ministry sent a team to assess the infrastructural capacity of Maharashtra to implement compulsory sterilisation and the team found that the state was quite capable of enforcing the Bill 'provided the provisions relating to compulsory medical termination of pregnancy were deleted from the Bill'. The Ministry of Home Affairs gave their permission with the observation that, executive orders are passed so as to ensure 'proper enforcement of the Act' and ensure no issues of law and order take place. However, the Bill did not come up for discussion in the Cabinet meeting in spite of being in the agenda (ibid: 374-75). Later it was informed to Home Ministry that it might never come up for discussion in the future. Eventually, the Prime Minister instructed the Health Secretary to write to the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Secretary Serla Grewal wrote in February 1977, "...Since it is the policy of the Government that there can be and will be no compulsion in the matter of family planning, I am directed to request to return the Maharashtra Family (Restriction on Size) Bill, 1976 to the State Government to revise it in consonance with the policy" (ibid: 375). Thus, the Bill was never sent to the President.

The Shah Commission also looked into the issue of implementation of the family planning programme by the states. Herein the role of Sanjay Gandhi, the son of the Prime Minister who declared his own 4-point programme (eventually updated to 5-point, where family planning was also one of them) was examined. His 5-point programme was given adequate importance by the All Indian Congress Committee too and in the All India Congress Committee meeting held in May 1976, it was decided that all the Congress ruled states should adopt the 5-point programme of Sanjay Gandhi along with the 20-point programme of the Prime Minister. Uttar Pradesh government decided to 'achieve these goals under these schemes (20-point and 5-point) within the schedule time'. Even the Chief Minister of Punjab 'desired that for a social programme like family planning persuasion should play a vital role, but there should not be any hesitation in bringing about pressure where necessary'. The Joint Director of Family Planning in the State of Maharashtra went a step further and urged the officers of the district on September 30, 1976 that as Sanjay Gandhi was visiting the state on October 28, so everyone should work towards achieving the state target of 5 lakhs sterilisation before that. The Secretary of Health and Family Welfare of Orissa, A.L. Nair in a letter written to the Collectors and Chief Medical Officers in January 1977, was all praise for the 'service rendered' by Sanjay Gandhi and applauded the 'dynamic impetus' provided by him to the speedy fulfilment of the 'objectives of the national population policy'. So, he informed them that "Our State government have, therefore, decided that, as a token of recognition of his services in

this highly important field, we should observe a Special Family Planning Month, throughout the State...” (ibid:379). Sycophancy climbed a new height, at the cost of the people.

Many states were found to have undertaken coercive measures while implementing the family planning programme. 10 states and union territories in fact exceeded the targets set for 1975-76 and 18 states and 5 union territories exceeded in 1976-77 (ibid:380). It was also reported to the Commission that many states carried out the threat of termination of services and around 1,500 family planning staff were actually terminated in Bihar alone due to not meeting the target of sterilisation (ibid: 391).

Uttar Pradesh government issued orders to the government servants that their salary and increment could be stopped if they were found to not have motivated those who are ‘eligible...to get themselves sterilised’ and also if they do not ‘perform such other work’ related to family planning. The Chief Secretary even sent a wire in July 1976 to the District Magistrate and the Divisional Commissioners stating that all officers should be told that failing to meet the family planning target may invite ‘stoppage of salary’, ‘suspension and severest penalties.’

The Commissioner of Health of Bihar issued an order which stated that the salary and travelling allowance and daily allowance of the staff who do not meet the target should not be released. And the local authorities did stop the salary of the school teachers in a few districts. The Education Commissioner, in fact, intervened to stop this but that did not stop the local authorities from impeding the salary payment to the so-called defaulters. Eventually the State Education Department got the Chief Secretary to intervene.

Not to fall behind, the Chief Secretary of Haryana State also issued an order in August 1976, to the Financial Commissioner and the Head of the Departments of the state government that the eligible government servants who are yet to get themselves sterilised should do it immediately and failing which they are liable to be punished under the Punjab Civil Services (Punishment & Appeal) Rules 1952.

The Shah Commission report cites many such examples of state level coerciveness in states like Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi. There were many complaints lodged by unmarried people who were forcibly sterilised, and also reports of death post-sterilisation in 23 states and union territories, with Rajasthan reporting the maximum

number of deaths at 217. The report also noted that in common perception sterilisation and family planning were regarded as synonymous (ibid: 385-86).

As far as the attitude of the central ministry of health and family planning to such allegations were concerned the report says, “It appears general approach of the Central Government in this regard was not to interfere with the freedom of action of the State Government in implementing the family planning programme” (ibid:387). However, the most important statement in this regard came from Dr Karan Singh, the Health Minister during the time of Emergency. He submitted a written reply to the Commission, where he unabashedly stated that even if some states ‘in the name of disincentives (which actually his note to the Prime Minister which has been discussed above suggested) introduced certain punitive measures’ but the Central Government did not do it. And he also stated that the excesses committed in the name of sterilisation did not come out in the open during the Emergency, ‘mainly because of the self-defeating censorship of the press that was enforced at that time’ (ibid:422). He did express regret in his statement regarding the excesses committed, but if we go through all the findings of the commission it is all but obvious that all these could not have happened without the knowledge of the central government, more so as the real push came from the son of the Prime Minister of that time, who was alleged to have been proxy running the country. And Dr Singh curtly mentioned the prodigal son in his statement and shifted the blame to him when he said, “As the Commission is no doubt aware, at that time an extra constitutional centre of power was operating in the country, and Chief Ministers who owed special allegiance to this centre vied with each other in raising their sterilisation targets in order to gain favour. Once the targets were raised, the whole force of governmental machinery in those states was thrust into use to achieve them, and in the process an atmosphere of fear and coercion became widespread” (ibid:423). Though once the Morarji Desai government fell and Indira Gandhi returned to power her government outright rejected the report.

The Prime Minister was so convincing in her dismissal of all reports of excesses committed in family planning during the time of Emergency that, in 1983, United Nations gave Indira Gandhi the first annual United Nations Population Award as a recognition of her contribution to family planning work, along with the Chinese Minister of Family Planning Commission. In the speech delivered while accepting the award, Gandhi echoing what the National Population Policy 1976 document stated, said “It is said that prosperity is a good contraceptive. But the effects of development are submerged unless we bring about a low birth rate. Family Planning is an input for



development, an indispensable exercise in human capital formation” (Gandhi and Xinzhong, 1983: 748-49). Justifying the popularity of sterilisation in the backdrop of poverty, she said, “With low incomes and crowded homes, couples can seldom afford to or have the ability to use contraceptives. So, they choose sterilisation” (ibid: 748). And in spite of so many reported cases of coercion, she blatantly denied all allegations of coercion and presented it as a smear campaign of the opposition: “But we have not and shall not use coercion. It is not workable in so intimate a personal relationship or in our system of governance. A few years ago, when we were intensifying our voluntary family planning drive, political parties deliberately misrepresented it and politicised it into an election issue, making wild allegations of forced sterilisations, which were later proved baseless. But they were believed and helped to change the Government”. Regretting that “A vital element of the national agenda for progress received an unfortunate and irretrievable setback” but she proudly announced “Now we are once more going forward”. Therefore, she solicited “international cooperation” so that those people who “are still unreconciled to the idea of family planning and continue to spread false reports” can be stopped by “academic and media persons scrutinizing such reports” (ibid: 748-49).

However, this was also a time, when some introspection was being done on the vertical approach of the health programmes. It had deemed on the international agencies that vertical programme was not delivering as was anticipated to have. Newell (1978: 903) said that the vertical programmes were not successful because of “the lack of a complete continuing health services infrastructure which could reach every household and remain in place”. Litsios, (2002:711-12) puts this in perspective and noted that the focus of the WHO in the 1950s and 1960s to eradicate malaria, promoted by US government from the face of the world turned out to be unsuccessful by the 60s. Soviet Russia, which left WHO in the 1949, returned in 1957. Thereafter Soviets took the lead in review of the eradication programme in 1969 and eventually it led to the ‘abandonment of the eradication goal’. This gave the Soviets the rightful authority to lead the development of health services.

The mood was changing. And the change was perceptible when in a lecture delivered at the Bucharest World Population Conference, even John D Rockefeller took the ‘developmentalist perspective when he said (1974: 512):

I have already expressed my disappointment at the results of the family planning approach. I would like to make it clear however that I do not mean to be negative about family

planning. My belief is that it should be given a high priority within a **development context** (emphasis mine) ...I now strongly believe that the only viable course is to place population policy solidly within the context of general economic and social development in such a manner that it will be accepted at the highest levels of government and adequately supported

Hodgson (1988: 556-57) sounded a note of caution and said that this stress on “liberal version of developmentalism” should not be regarded as stemming from Marxist theory. “The argument that development will motivate couples to have small families sprang more from analysis of the Western experience than from Marxist theory”. Yet “The adoption of a developmentalist World Population Plan of Action at Bucharest was a political defeat for the United States and for orthodoxy.”

Even the country statement delivered by the Health Minister of India, Dr Karan Singh conformed to the general developmentalist approach. The crux of his speech could be found in his now famous statement that “development is the best contraceptive”. Though Finkle and Crane (1975: 113) saw this as India’s official reaction to the deterioration of relation with the US, “especially since 1971...inducing India to avoid a stand identified with the United States”.

Eventually, the World Bank and Population Council adopted this ‘developmentalist’ approach officially (Rao,2004:44). Similarly, the Rockefeller Foundation and Ford Foundation, both significantly reduced their fund allocation to the family planning programme in that decade, thus making the programme more dependent on public funds (Caldwell and Caldwell 1986). However, the appeal of the vertical programme still remained to some extent, because most of the vertical programmes were “donor-led and each donor wanted to see a programme of their funding on the ground” (Rao, 2004a: 43).

This ultimately culminated into the declaration of the goal of *Health for All through Primary Health Care* at Alma Ata in 1978, which is popularly known as the Alma Ata Declaration. The goal of the document was stated as “primary health care to be essential” and should be based on “practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods”, so that health care be brought “as close as possible to where people live and work” (WHO, 1978:18).

This change of perspective was visible in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1975-80)<sup>46</sup> of India. The focus of the plan document was on the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) as mentioned above. As per the Kartar Singh Committee recommendation, plan was to integrate “family planning services with those of health, MCH, and nutrition” (GOI, 1974) and also begin the process of converting all health workers to multi-purpose worker (discussed above). This plan also saw an increase in the outlay for family planning to Rs. 5.16 billion whereas health was sanctioned an outlay of Rs.7.97 billion.

After the state of Emergency was withdrawn, a review was conducted by two SIDA consultants in 1979, and their report proved that SIDA had been a part of the vasectomy camp and the IPP-I had participated in the excesses committed during the Emergency. It was followed by an outrage in the Indian media as well as Swedish media and eventually protests by the SIDA employees too. Thus, SIDA decided to wind up their IPP-II project and the Indian government too “decided not to seek further co-operation with Sweden in the field of family planning.” (Engh, 2002: 53). This ended another international funding project in family planning.

### **Post Emergency:**

The Janata Party government, which came to power after the Emergency, treaded cautiously when it came to the issue of family planning. The programme was also renamed as family welfare to dissociate it from the disrepute it had earned during the Emergency. As mentioned above, 1978 was also the time of Alma Ata, which talked about Comprehensive Health Care as the objective. The new family welfare program was planned to be a voluntary activity. As a result, the number of sterilisations dropped to barely one million in 1977-78 and other parts of the programme also slowed down. Family planning and population control became anathema to political parties and leaders alike.

The euphoria of Alma Ata was however, short-lived. “The 1980s saw Keynesian world increasingly under attack from neoliberalism, and by the end ‘actually-existing socialism’ also had been overthrown. In these circumstances, the goal of Alma Ata became impossible to achieve. ‘Health for All’ was soon replaced by the oxymoron of ‘Selective Primary Health Care’ and both UNICEF and the WHO beat a retreat from Alma Ata” (Rao, 2009: 264).

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<sup>46</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 04/06/2020

As mentioned above, the euphoric gain of power of the Janata Party government saw an almost equal brutal defeat and Indira Gandhi came back to power with an overwhelming majority in 1980. However, her approach to the family planning programme was cautious this time. In the meantime, the 1981 census showed that the population in the country had continued to rise at an annual rate of 2.2 percent. Once again, the political elites of the country sounded the alarm bell. Government moved again, though haltingly.

In 1983, the government announced a health policy and also promised a new population policy. However, the latter was never formulated and nothing more was done except to allow the bureaucracy to tighten the implementation of the existing programme. Each regime since has followed a policy of similarly cautious support for voluntary family planning. But in the 1980s family welfare programme remained more or less the old “time-bound, target-oriented” programme “and efforts to encourage the use of reversible methods were initiated. Incentive payments were vigorously promoted during this period, leading to the violation of women’s rights in” many cases (Visaria, 2000: 331-382). Not much changed in actuality.

On the recommendation of the Draft Five Year Plan of 1978-83 the Planning Commission established *The Working Group of Population Policy* with a target to come up with a fertility control programme based on the social, economic and environmental variables and “suggest appropriate measures and related developmental programmes” so that it can be incorporated under the Revised Minimum Needs Programme (GOI, 1980a: 1-2). The most important idea generated by the Working Group was dividing the entire country into three broad clusters “on the basis of average proportion of eligible couples effectively protected by contraception during the last three years” (ibid: 23) as against the homogenized concept of the entire country average. The states were to be divided into Group A, Group B and Group C. Here Group C states were those which were not performing as well as the Group A states. The Grouping was done so that “differential programme” could be generated in all three groups of states, “with greater emphasis on the services in Group C states” (ibid:35).

The report interestingly stated that “the women are the best votaries of the family welfare programme. The reasons are obvious. They have to bear the brunt not only of the pregnancy but in a significant number of cases of maternal care and rearing of the children... Therefore (the Group) recommend that the family welfare programme for the immediate future be increasingly centred around women. All services which cater to improvement of status and welfare of women should be

given higher priority. Tubectomies, and spacing methods such as IUD and oral pills should be provided fully” (ibid: 36). Thus, women came to the centre stage of the population control activity and very surreptitiously the focus of contraception was shifted entirely towards the women. Which according to Rao, (2004a:51) was a natural shift “since it was now abundantly clear that a programme focussed on sterilizing men was politically costly” and it was easier to shift towards the women as “In this situation, to take advantage of patriarchal victimisation of Indian women seemed natural” (ibid:56) and he calls this shift a “double-edged sword, not always to the betterment of the women” (ibid).

Another important document that was formulated more on the line of the Alma Ata declaration was the ICMR-ICSSR report of 1980 called the *Health for All: An Alternative Strategy*. The document recommended that a National Population Commission should be set up and that the “objective should be to reduce net reproduction rate from 1.67 to 1.00 and the birth rate from 33 to 21...the family planning programme must be...converted into a people’s movement closely linked with development” (GOI,1980b: vii). The document critiqued “the existing exotic, top-down, elite-oriented, urban-biased, centralised and bureaucratic system which over-emphasises the curative aspects” (ibid: xi) and suggested an alternative model which is “strongly rooted in the community, provides adequate, efficient and equitable referral services, integrates promotive, preventive and curative aspects, and combines the valuable elements in our culture and tradition with the best elements of Western system” (ibid: viii).

The Sixth Five Year Plan<sup>47</sup> (1980-85) document which did refer to both the *Working Group on Population Policy* as well as the ICMR-ICSSR report however did not incorporate much from these documents. The plan document stated that “the objective of reducing the birth rate from 35 per thousand populations at the beginning of the Plan to 30 per thousand populations by 1978-79 could not be achieved. In fact, the level of effective family planning couple protection has come down from 23.9 per cent in 1976-77 to 22.5 per cent in March, 1980.”<sup>48</sup> Hence the Sixth Five Year Plan envisaged a goal of achieving 22 million sterilisation, 7.9 million IUCD insertions and 36.56 percentage of couple protection rate for 1985. While accepting the fact that “economic development can in the long run bring about a fall in fertility rate”, the document as if invoking the National Population Policy of 1976 asserted that “developing countries with large populations

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<sup>47</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 06/06/2020

<sup>48</sup> ibid

cannot afford to wait for development to bring about a change” and called for an integrated approach to family planning by making family planning a part “of the national effort for providing a better life to the people.”<sup>49</sup> The total allocation for family planning increased to 10.1 billion and health in general was allocated 18.2 billion rupees.

In 1983, the government announced the first *National Health Policy* of the country. A striking feature of this policy statement was that it blamed the people for their dismal health condition, thus, absolving the state from its responsibility. Few ideas from Alma Ata declarations, however, did find some reflections in the policy when it committed to the goal of health for all by 2000. Yet, on the other hand, it emphasised the necessity of “securing the small family norm and moving towards the goal of population stabilisation” (GOI: 1983) to achieve health for all and also a separate population policy to achieve it.

An interesting development took place during that time, changing the discourse on the women’s body, which turned to an experimentation hub thereafter. ICMR in 1983 expressed their intention to introduce Net-En which was an injectable contraceptive. “ICMR has been conducting clinical research on various injectables since the 1970s” (USAID India, 2010:3) mostly on Depo-Provera and Net-En. “In 1974 United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) withheld approval of Depo-Provera following which in 1975, ICMR discontinued Depo-Provera trials...The ICMR generated considerable data on one monthly and two monthly injectable contraception in the 1970s and 1980s” (ibid). During 1983-84, in order to assess the acceptability of Net-En with a view to introducing injectable contraceptives in the National Family Welfare programme, ICMR initiated Phase IV (Pre-programme introduction) trial in both urban and rural centres. “Since Net-En had already been approved in its country of origin, Germany, in April 1986, the Drug Controller General of India gave approval for the import and marketing of Net-En in India for use by private practitioners” (ibid:3-4).

However, Rao (2004a, 57:58) says:

Information about trials initiated was not forthcoming to women’s groups and health groups who sought them, aware of the serious controversies that surrounded both injectables and implants in the West. Net-En, for instance, had been withdrawn from the market when it was discovered to be mutagenic--- and potentially carcinogenic--- in animals.

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<sup>49</sup> ibid

It was well known that the authorities in the USA and the UK were under tremendous pressure both from the manufacturers of these drugs and the international population control establishment to license them for use. This would enable the use of these contraceptives in the Third World, circumventing the accusation that they were being promoted in other countries while, in the case of Depo, banned in the USA, the country of manufacture. Public hearings had been held in the USA and UK where women's groups had presented evidence on both the health hazards associated with these drugs and the potential abuse.

In fact, the ICMR studies showed "high rate of failure in the first six months of the trial" and yet it went unexplained by the council. The discontinuation rate was quite high in the Phase IV trial too, which again was not discussed. There was resistance from women's group as well as health groups. Things came to this point that, "In 1985, a court case in Mumbai filed by the government, in which Women's Centre and Medico Friend Circle were interventioners (sic), stalled the move by a private practitioner to import Depo-Provera" (Bal et al, 1995: 2777-78).

Rao recalls an incident (2004a:57-58):

In 1986 in a PHC called Patancheru in Andhra Pradesh a camp was organised to initiate Phase IV trials with Net-En under the aegis of the Osmania Medical College. Members of a Hyderabad-based women's organisation discovered that the potential recruits to the trials were not informed that they were participants in a trial: all they knew was that they were to receive injections to prevent pregnancy. In a similar case in Jaipur, the Sawai Man Singh Medical College issued posters advertising injectables in a similar manner. Three Women's organisations--- Stree Shakti Sanghata, Saheli and Chingari--- filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court asking for a stay order. Not only were these trials violating minimum norms of informed consent, a violation of the Helsinki Declaration of medical ethics, there were also serious questions about the suitability of these contraceptives given the health and socio-economic situation of women in the country.

It is mentionable here that, as the injectables were made available in the private sector, women started using it from them. For example, "NGO such as Janani, DKT India, Family Planning Association of India, Population Services International, *Parivar Sewa Sanstha* and Population Health Services (India), some government and quasi-government institutions such as

the Employee State Insurance Corporation of the Ministry of Labour; and many private sector clinics provide injectables in India” (Srivastava et al, 2012:4). Thus, half the battle of opposing it because of the ill effect was lost.

Trials of another injectable contraceptive called Norplant was conducted in 1984. Incidentally, Norplant was developed by the Population Council’s International Committee for Contraception Research (Harkavy, 1995:4). Twenty-six countries around the world were provided loan by the World Bank to procure these injectables. In the case of India, Rao (2004a:58) writes about two studies conducted on the effect of Norplant. One study comprising of 1,466 women found that 58 percent of them had menstrual problems, because of which they got it removed. Many had problems like deep vein thrombosis, hepatitis, arthritis and other issues which were also reported from other parts of the world. Another small study conducted in Mumbai and Baroda by the Forum for Women’s Health “revealed that many women who had received the Norplant implant had not been informed that they were part of the trial. Neither had they been told of the potential side effects. What is more shocking is that in Baroda, Muslim women had been specifically targeted for the trials.”

The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) while reviewing the achievements of the previous plan also sounded worried about sterilisation targets not been met. So, the solution was to increase the targets with no introspection about why the targets were not been met. Hence the two-child norm stood its ground and during the Seventh Plan period it was followed with renewed vigour with female sterilisation becoming the focal activity. The plan document reviewed the achievements of the Sixth Plan period and reiterated that the objective will be to attain the international target of *Health for All* to be achieved by 2000.

In 1986, a new National Population Policy was formulated. This policy too followed the same line of thought by linking development with family planning when it stated that, “the process of development is apt to be lopsided unless socio-economic imbalances among the people, including the imbalances in the health services, are speedily removed. It looks at birth control not as an end in itself but as means to attainment of Health for All in the shortest possible way” (GOI, 1986:1). The policy document confirmed its commitment towards bringing down the mortality and morbidity rates, through an enhanced health services, as well as enacting laws to increase the age of marriage. The document also said that the financial assistance provided by the Central government



to the states should be continued and reiterated the necessity of providing education and employment avenues to women.

The 1990s witnessed some changes in the family welfare policy and programme in the country. The passing of the 72nd and 73rd Constitutional Amendments which led to the passing of the Panchayati Raj and Nagar Palika Acts in 1992 brought the Family Welfare Programme, legally, under the jurisdiction of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The primary health care including family planning, primary education and provision of such basic amenities as drinking water and roads became the responsibility of the panchayats. One-third of the seats in panchayats were reserved for women, with the aim of women empowerment. The powers of state governments to impose coercive family planning programme through its primary health centres and sub-centres have also been sought to be curtailed. There was criticism from various quarters both national and international about the slow pace of family welfare programme.

Family planning programme underwent perceptible changes in the 1990s due to dramatic changes in international scenario. The economic situation worsened in India as foreign exchange reserve started depleting. By September 1990, FOREX stood at negative value. India was not in a state to indulge in commercial borrowing as it had become costlier. “By December even short-term credit was restricted. Foreign exchange reserves fell to \$1.2 billion in January 1991. By the time a new government took over in June, reserves could cover only two weeks of imports. India was close to defaulting on its sovereign debt for the first time in its history” (Ahluwalia, 2002). And thus “when reserves could cover only three weeks of imports, India negotiated \$1.8 billion under the Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility (CCFF) and the first tranche of a standby arrangement” (Ghosh, 2006: 418). The condition applied by IMF resulted in the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which pre-empted the involvement of the state in state expenditures in many welfare sectors including health and education. World Bank had also brought out the World Development Report 1993 called *Investing in Health*, which had already started to impact the health policies in the Third World countries. Neoliberalism had entered India with full force.

1990s witnessed other turmoil too. The Mandal Commission propagating affirmative action created discontent amongst the upper class. The fragile National Front government fell. The Bharatiya Janata Party embarked on building a temple for Lord Ram in Ayodhya and demolished the Babri masjid leading to communal violence which changed the face of secularism forever.

This was the time of Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97). The Plan document tactfully shifted the focus of health care from Health for All and stated that, “Within the Health for All strategy ‘Health for underprivileged’ will be promoted consciously and consistently.”<sup>50</sup> The 1991 census showed marginal decline in the annual growth rate of population, however, even that growth rate would result in addition of 18 million people annually. Therefore, “The Government’s role is to create an environment for the people to adopt small family norm.”<sup>51</sup> The Plan document stated that, “Containment of population growth is not merely a function of couple protection or contraception but is directly correlated with female literacy, age at marriage of the girls, status of women in the community, IMR, quality and outreach of health and family planning services and other socio-economic parameters.”<sup>52</sup>

Targets of population control were not spelt out centrally, but it was pushed to the states to decide: “The targeted reduction in the birth rate will be the basis of designing, implementing and monitoring the programme against the current method of couple protection rate. While the broad outlines may be prepared by the Centre, suitable parameters would be designed by the individual states for this purpose.”<sup>53</sup> The Eighth plan envisaged that, “the base and basis of the population control programme...will be decentralised, area-specific micro-planning, within the general directional framework of a national policy aimed at generating a people’s movement with the total and committed involvement of community leaders...linking population control with the programmes of female literacy, women’s employment, social security. Access to health services and mother and child care.”<sup>54</sup> The Eighth plan outlay for Health was Rs. 75.75 billion and for Family Welfare was Rs. 65 billion which was lower than that of the Seventh Plan. It was not a healthy sign as the devaluation of rupees actually translated the outlay at a much lower level.

In the meantime, the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994. It brought reproductive rights to the forefront of the family planning discourse. Until then, population discourse was mostly rotating around the usage of contraceptives and related research. It is often said that two opposing groups came together in drafting the Cairo document. “On the one hand there was the population control establishment,

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<sup>50</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 04/06/2020

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*

composed of wide array of actors ranging from the World Bank and the Population Council to a number of NGOs, nation states, health personnel and academics” (Bandarage 1997, cited in Rao 2004b: 2). On the other hand, were the women’s right activists, feminist academics and some health activists.

Hartmann (1995:131) sarcastically says, “Consensus now rolls off the lips of populationists with the same ease as common greetings...The population consensus derives from the New World Economic Order politics of obscuring differences in pursuit of a universal free trade model”. India also had entered the free market economy with Structural Adjustment Programme in place as mentioned above.

Hartmann also sees the political underlining in this process of ‘empowering women’ and leaving out the men. According to her this was the culmination of many strands of development focusing on the ‘women in development’ can be traced to the rise of Western Feminism and spreading it to the Western educated elites of the Third World. This young conscious brigade of women joined the development sector and started raising the issue of the women in the Third World, even if not very coherently. With markets opening up women also joined the workforce as cheap labour and it was proving quite profitable for the market. Research in demography was also showing that ‘enhancing women’s status was an important key to fertility decline’. On the other hand, UNFPA was focussing on women as the ‘very centre of its Population, Development and Environment triangle’. Thus, it became the responsibility of the women to lower their fertility and help in saving the environment. However, women are not a homogenous group of people. Whereas refocusing the population debate on women completely obliterates the variations of class, race and other such difference, which is instrumental in deciding their stand on the issues of population (ibid:133-135).

However, Halfon (2007:7) regards this consensus as “...bringing together previously contentious policy-makers, demographers, and women’s empowerment and health advocates, pushing environmentalists to the margins...”

The Cairo Plan of Action (POA) brought reproductive health to the forefront by softening the term ‘population’. Population was referred to in a generic way rather than as demographic goal. However, Johnson (1995, 178) observes that in spite of the POA having feeble demographic language, many plenary speakers of the Conference talk about the impact of population growth

quite vehemently. The entire discourse of Cairo Consensus was actually about women empowerment, gender and reproductive health. Halfon (2007:73) calls this ‘inclusion of feminist goals and language in the POA...a complex’ story, and at the core is the efforts of the international women’s health movement. This led to ‘political wrangling over the terms abortion, reproductive health, family, and individual’, which created friction between the ‘progressives, and conservative religious actors’ and this was the focus of media coverage of the conference and these four terms became bone of contention.

Visaria and Chari (1998:75) write, "[a]t least in theory, a climate has been created in which female health workers can focus their attention on the health and welfare of mothers and children or on the broadly defined reproductive health of the entire population". Betsy Hartmann (2010:54) argues, ICPD was a handiwork of “neo-Malthusian ideas, actors, and interests...focusing on those associated with US foreign policy and more specifically, the environmental conflict field”.

In 1994, in India, the Expert group on Population Policy chaired by M.S. Swaminathan submitted its report. The report accepted the argument of the Eighth FYP that “Population stabilization is...vital for safeguarding the livelihood security of the poor and the ecological security of nation” (GOI, 1994: iv). The serious note on environmental degradation is underscored in the document and the document warned (ibid: 5): “It is high time the limits to the human carrying capacity of the supporting eco-systems are recognised...population, poverty and environmental degradation have close linkages...”. Thus, the linkage between population and environment debate was established, putting women at the core of this debate. The document also called for a check on “shifting the entire responsibility for family limitation to women” and creating a “culture of joint responsibility of the couple” (ibid:7). The report also said, “No targets for specific contraceptive methods would be set by the Central and state government, except the goal of achieving a national average of Total fertility Rate of 2.1 by the year 2010” (ibid: 12). It also called for discontinuation of incentives for acceptors and motivators of contraceptive usage.

The report was critical of diminishing numbers of male vasectomies and says that “males should come forward again for vasectomy” and observed that “there are now newer hormonal methods, which women can use in spacing. It has to be recognised that no medication, including that for contraception, is completely free from side effects” (ibid:30).

The report suggested the establishment of a body called, the Population and Social Development Commission. Socio-demographic goals were set which more or less conformed with the Cairo POA, for example, reduction of maternal mortality rate, infant mortality rate amongst many others. Containment of AIDS as a target was spelt out for the first time (ibid: 18-19).

There was huge outcry by the Women's groups against the Swaminathan Committee report. As Rao (2004a:206) observes, "Women's groups and health groups made it abundantly clear that they rejected the fundamental, neo-Malthusian understanding of the relationship between population and resources underlying the Committee's report".

Expressing their utter dismay at the report Geeta and Swaminathan (1994:2470) observes:

It seems to us that the attention given to population as a major cause of India's economic problem has ignored the extent to which India's development model adopted since independence is responsible for its severe economic crisis. This model can be characterised as growth with inequality and the decade of the 80s has been really high growth with high inequality. While the report lays great stress on north-south inequality, it is reluctant to address the growing economic disparity within the country and the long-term ill effects of new and evolving economic policy which is certainly not pro-poor, pro-environment or pro-women. It is also important to recognise that the "ever teeming millions" pose a problem not in terms of their numbers, but because they constitute an expanding constituency of the poor, the malnourished, the diseased and the deprived. Unless the deprivations of these ever-growing millions are addressed in terms of a better quality of life for them, concerns about population growth will remain a Malthusian horror...India's development has failed to create social and economic conditions that favour fertility decline. Skewed and unequal land distribution patterns, uneven industrial growth, growing unemployment and underemployment, in short, the structural inequality that underpins our economic system and the social inequality that marks our society are factors that had made for a high fertility rate...It is tragic that the authors of the Draft National Policy should fail to explicitly integrate population into economic and development strategies.

This Draft National policy was criticised on issues of disincentives and two child norm eligibility for panchayat elections. The disincentive of making a person ineligible for government jobs in case of having more than two children was termed as "anti-democratic", "anti-women" and

“anti-poor”. The proposal to debar people with more than two children from contesting panchayat election was termed as “at variance with the Committee’s own commitment to democracy” as well as being anti-women (Rao, 2004a:207).

The World Bank also came up with its policy document which was called, *Investing in Health*, which was actually the annual World Development Report (WDR) 1993 of the Bank. Rao (1999:19) observes, “As the importance of agencies like WHO shrank in this new global environment, that of the World Bank came to increasingly set the agenda for health”. Antia (1999:182) calls this report “an example of cleverly crafted display of concern for the deteriorating health of the world’s poor” by those who are responsible for their poverty. This report was a blatant call for withdrawal of the government from health and also other social sectors, and said that “Just because a particular intervention is cost effective does not mean that public fund should be spent on it...government in developing country should spend less---on average about 50 percent less---than they now do on less cost-effective interventions and instead double or triple spending on basic public health programme such as immunisations, AIDS prevention...” (WDR, 1993:6-7). In the pretext of increasing competitiveness and efficiency in the public health care system, and to ‘improve quality and drive down costs’ the document called for introduction of the private sector into health. It even appealed that, “Government should also subsidize private health care providers who deliver essential clinical services to the poor” (ibid:12). Shifting focus to HIV/AIDS and immunisation, the report called for five to tenfold increase in the budget for controlling HIV/AIDS and increasing the numbers in the basket of immunisation by adding Hepatitis B, Iodine, Vitamin A and Yellow fever. It also appealed to the international donors to increase their part of donation to an additional \$2 billion a year for the “cost of stabilizing the AIDS epidemic” (ibid:16). The report also advocated introduction of “user fees at levels that do not discourage the poor” (ibid:11) which can help the government increase revenue in health sector. Adding a subtle temptation, the report says, “Countries that are willing to undertake major changes in health policy should be strong candidates for increased aid, including donor financing of recurrent costs “(ibid:16).

It is important to remember that, “the 40 individuals who have contributed to the production of this report are almost entirely of Western origin based in USA and Europe” (Antia, 1999:183), who has no knowledge of the amount of research that countries like India had done on the health sector. Antia (ibid:184) regrets that “The World Bank prescription (was) accepted without a murmur of protest by our elite, including the medical profession, health industry, bureaucracy and

majority of our politicians, as they are the chief beneficiary of such a policy---both economically and as recipients of such medical care which they think is of superior nature.”

This changed the face of public health in India as very soon, the economic downturn made India accept the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the policy propounded by WDR became the blueprint for the health sector henceforth.

The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) underscored the regional disparity in the Crude Birth Rate (CBR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and purports to minimise that by “providing resources to fill the crucial gaps in infrastructure and manpower in primary health care ...and improving the operational efficiency of health system.”<sup>55</sup> Looking back at each decadal achievement in Family Planning, the document noted that reduction in CBR, IMR and Contraceptive Prevalence rate (CPR) are the major achievement of the programme since its inception. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 1992-93 data also suggested that apart from place of residence, education influences how these parameters get effected. Thus, Family Planning received an allocation of Rs. 151.20 billion more than twice of the Eighth plan allocation.

In the meantime, in 2000, National Population Policy (NPP) was released. It affirmed “the commitment of the government towards voluntary and informed choice and consent of citizens while availing of reproductive health care services and continuation of the target free approach in administering family planning services” (GOI, 2000:2). The document accepted that there is a “need to simultaneously address issues of child survival, maternal health, and contraception while increasing the outreach and coverage of a comprehensive package of reproductive and child health by government, industry and the voluntary non-government sector working in partnership” (ibid). The influence of the WDR 1993, was evident in the document, as it had also recommended introduction of Public Private Partnership (PPP) in health.

NPP listed short, medium, and long-term objectives. The immediate or the short-term objective was to meet the unmet need of contraceptives. The medium-term objective was “to bring the TFR (Total Fertility Rate) to replacement levels by 2010” and the long-term objective was “to achieve a stable population by 2045” keeping in view the goal of sustainable development (ibid:4).

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<sup>55</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 08/06/2020

Keeping the above in view fourteen goals were set, few of them which are important are (ibid:5):

- Address the unmet needs of basic RCH services, supplies and infrastructure
- Making school education free and compulsory till 14 years of age
- IMR to be reduced to below 30 per 1000 live births
- MMR to be reduced to below 100 per 100,000 births
- Universal immunisation against all preventable diseases
- Promote delayed marriage for girls
- Achieve 80 percent institutional deliveries and 100 percent deliveries by trained persons
- 100 percent registration of births, death, marriage and pregnancies
- Prevent and control communicable diseases including AIDS
- Vigorous promotion of small family norm to achieve replacement level TFR

The NPP identifies 12 strategic themes which they believed would facilitate achievement of the national socio-demographic goals for 2010, which included “decentralised planning and programme implementation, convergence of service delivery at village levels, empowering women for improved health and nutrition”, working towards “child health survival, meeting the unmet needs for family welfare services”, serving the underserved group of population like “urban slums, tribal communities” etc., utilizing the services of private practitioners, vibrant involvement of the NGO and private sector, mainstreaming of the Indian Systems of Medicine including Homeopathy, research on contraceptive technology and RCH, providing for the older population group and evolving the Information, Education and communication (IEC) in the line of total literacy programme (ibid:5-14).

Thus, the document removed the traces of target-oriented approach, disincentive and coercion from the realms of population control, which had been plaguing the programme since its inception in the country. Therefore, the document looks welfaristic, democratic and decentralised as power, rights, responsibilities and funds, were devolved to the level of the Panchayati Raj institutions (PRI). But, the welcoming of the private practitioners and private health system was a sleight of hand that had a long-term effect on the health sector. The mushrooming of the private hospitals and the central government employees getting free service there, under the Central Government



Health Services, removed the focus of the people and the government from the public sector health services.

In February 2000, a new National Population Policy was ratified by the parliament, which was the modified version of the Draft Statement on National Population Policy of 1996. As mandated by the NPP the National Population Commission was established in May 2000. The mandate was to “ i) review, monitor and give direction for implementation of the NPP with the view to achieve the mandate mentioned in the NPP, ii) Promote synergy between health, educational, environmental and developmental programmes so as to hasten population stabilization, iii) Promote intersectoral coordination in planning and implementation of the programme through different sectors and agencies in centre and the states, and iv) develop a vigorous peoples’ programme to support the national effort” (10<sup>th</sup> FYP: 175-76<sup>56</sup>).

Post- SAP there was pronounced decrease in the state expenditure in health, but expenditure in population control increased. The state government of many states formulated “population policies of their own, some at the behest of an American consultancy firm, Futures Group, whose function in the past has been to create fears of population explosion” (Rao, 2004b: 13). These policies are totally violative of the Indian Government’s commitment to women’s empowerment and reproductive health as spelt out in the Cairo conference and many other such international forums.

The policies formulated by the states had one common thread of disincentives, though the NPP was against this. In Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, a person marrying before the legal age to be debarred from government job. Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh also barred persons having more than two living children, from contesting the Panchayat elections. Rajasthan made it necessary to have only two living children for anyone seeking a government job. Over and above these individual targets, the financial provisions for Panchayats was also made dependent on the rate of acceptance of family planning norms in the Panchayat. These disincentives can easily work as coercion, though obliquely.

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007), was mostly focussed on fulfilling the mandates of the Ninth Plan. While unmet need for contraception and high IMR remained as the constant reasons for population growth, a new reason was added as a ‘large-size population in the

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<sup>56</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 08/06/2020

reproductive age-group (10<sup>th</sup> FYP: 167<sup>57</sup>). The document demarcated the states, according to their performance level. Rajasthan, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar (before division) were clubbed together as the states which require special attention in the area of maternal and child health, contraceptive availability. An Empowered Action Group for that purpose was set up (ibid: 169<sup>58</sup>). The document also commented that, without change in social attitude, any legislature banning prenatal sex selective abortions and female infanticide cannot be effective. This concern has actually turned into the worst nightmare with frequent reportage of illegal sex selective abortions mostly in the northern states of India.

In 2003, a two-day Colloquium was jointly organised by the Department of Family Welfare, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; the National Human Rights Commission and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), titled, *Population Policy---Development and Human Rights*. This colloquium agreed that “population policy ought to be a part of the overall sustainable development goals...a rights-based approach is imperative in the framing of the population policies” (Rao, 2018:696). Even while recognizing the importance of population policy framed by the state and the centre, the colloquium noted with concern, that “the population policies framed by some state governments reflect in certain respects a coercive approach, through use of incentives and disincentives, which in some cases are violation of human rights” (ibid). Therefore, they appealed to government of states and union territories to exclude discriminatory/coercive measures from the population policies that have been framed or are proposed to be framed. They were concerned that coercive methods will doubly marginalise the status of the women who are already suffering from low status. Hence it is important that health, education and livelihood of women are prioritised so that they can exercise their rights. In a nutshell, this colloquium brought ‘human rights’ into the centre stage of the population discourse (Rao, 2018: 696-98).

In the meantime, in 2003, the *Jansankhya Sthirta Kosh (JSK)* or Population Stabilization Fund was established as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the objectives of population stabilization by 2045. Here again the target was to meet the unmet need of contraception, support and promote innovative ideas in the government, private and voluntary sector, development of a vigorous peoples’ movement on the issue, to provide window for channelling contribution from individuals, trade organisation and others within the country and

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<sup>57</sup> ibid

<sup>58</sup> ibid

outside, in furtherance of the national cause of population stabilization. Wage compensation of Rs 600 for Tubectomy and Rs 1100 for Vasectomy was provisioned too. The gendered compensation rate was not explained.<sup>59</sup>

The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) which commenced in 2005 continued the same agenda in family planning. The Mission document clearly stated that “population stabilization is still a challenge, especially in states with weak demographic indicators,”<sup>60</sup> and stated one of the goals as “Population stabilization, gender and demographic balance.”<sup>61</sup> The document talks of integrating all the existing health programme including family welfare under the same umbrella and achieve a reduction of total fertility to 2.1.

It is mentionable here that, in 2005, an powerful coalition called “Advocating Reproductive Choices (ARC), was formed, which is a coalition of leading national organisations whose aim is to expand contraceptive choices for the Indian population...(it’s) initial emphasis is on emergency contraception...members include, among others, social marketing agencies, Abt Associates, Packard Foundation, USAID, PATH...Technical support is provided by various organisations including WHO, ICMR and UNFPA” (Mehra and Malarcher,2010: 7-8). A cursory glance at the website of these organisation makes it clear how this is an unholy collaboration. The Core Committee members are: “Abt Associate India, Family Planning Association of India” (in fact the office of ARC was hosted by FPAI till 2015 and thereafter is hosted by Population Foundation of India), “Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecological Societies of India, Indian Association of Parliamentarian on Population and Development, Parivar Seva Sanstha, Population Foundation of India, Population Health Services India, Population Services International. It is in fact a network of 167 individuals and organisations and is working primarily in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.”<sup>62</sup> Even the members of the Task Force on Expanding Contraceptive Choices is “chaired by Dr. Suneeta Mittal, (of Fortis Hospital Gurgaon) and comprises representatives from Abt Associate, Future Groups, Population Services International, Janani, FHI 360 (an US based organisation), Family Planning Association of India, Marie Stopes India (an organisation completely dedicated to providing contraceptives to women),

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<sup>59</sup> <https://main.mohfw.gov.in/publications/annual-report-department-health-and-family-welfare-2017-18> retrieved on 21/12/2019 page 137-138

<sup>60</sup> NRHM Mission Document <https://nhm.gov.in/WriteReadData/1892s/nrhm-framework-latest.pdf> retrieved on 20/12/2019

<sup>61</sup> ibid

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.arccoalition.org/network-structure/> retrieved on 02/07/2020

Parivar Seva Sanstha (originally Marie Stopes Society) and Population Health Services of India.<sup>63</sup> The congregation of this motely group itself speaks volumes about the politics behind contraceptives for women.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) regretted the fact that in health, “we have a flourishing private sector, primarily because of a failing public sector.”<sup>64</sup> feigning ignorance that after implementation of the World Development Report 1993 in letter and spirit, we ourselves have relegated the public sector health care into decadence. Interestingly the document itself offered an explanation about the plight of the public sector when it stated that, “Public Health spending on health in India is amongst the lowest in the World (about 1% of GDP), whereas its proportion of private spending on health is one of the highest.”<sup>65</sup>

The Eleventh Plan document further comments, “The poor are the worst affected because they are frequently affected by diseases and are least able to purchase and utilize health services, such as drugs” so the PHCs should be better stocked with state specific essential drugs so that, “people’s confidence in the public health system is increased.”<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, as that was also the time when NRHM became a country wide programme, there were a lot of discussion of the strategies listed in NRHM. The Panchayat level decentralization of health care started resting on the fragile shoulders of the ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers. These foot-soldiers were envisaged to take care of the neonatal, post-natal, pregnancy related, institutional deliveries, immunisation and all such requirement of the mother and the child (in the time of Covid19, their activities have increased to that area as well). And most importantly, “Orienting ASHAs to postpartum care and linking her remuneration to health checks of both the mother and the new-borns,”<sup>67</sup> has brought back incentives in a different guise, with possibility of coerciveness and other manipulation built into the process.

Under a very interesting phrase called “Voluntary Fertility Regulation” the plan document states that, “gender imbalance in the family planning programme is evident by the fact that despite being more invasive and tedious contraceptive intervention, female sterilisation remains the most

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<sup>63</sup> [https://www.healthpolicyproject.com/pubs/173\\_IndiaCommonAdvocacyPlanFinal.pdf](https://www.healthpolicyproject.com/pubs/173_IndiaCommonAdvocacyPlanFinal.pdf) retrieved on 02/07/2020

<sup>64</sup> [https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/11th/11\\_v2/11th\\_vol2.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/11th/11_v2/11th_vol2.pdf) retrieved on 15/10/2019

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*:68

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*:67

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*:90

common method of family planning.”<sup>68</sup> However, the document is completely silent about how the present shift in policy is actually an outcome of the shift in policy focus post emergency towards female sterilisation. That this ‘feminization’ of population control is an off shoot of policy change as well as patriarchal notion of mother as the care-giver has not been mentioned at all. However, the document stated that during the Eleventh FYP period, greater focus will be on the following for voluntary fertility reduction:<sup>69</sup> “Expanding the basket of contraceptive choices, improving social marketing, enhancing the role of mass media for behavioural changes and disseminating through satisfied users”

### **Conclusion:**

The population discourse in India has maintained the neo-Malthusian understanding of poverty and the poor. Stories of atrocities committed in the name of population stabilization are still making headlines. Many stories of atrocities are still reported by the press.<sup>70</sup> One such story of atrocity committed in the state level was the report published in the English weekly news magazine *Outlook* (12 March 2012). The report narrates horror stories of forced sterilisation being done on the poor and the helpless on every pretext of providing health care in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. And outrageously the Chief Minister said with pride “I think it is an important issue for the nation and we have to control the pace at which our population is growing. Soon it will overtake China...Imagine people having eight children! What will the future of the mothers and their children be?” (ibid:38-39).

After tracing the development of the population debate, the next chapter will be on the understanding of the idea of development communication, how it was an idea promoted by the UN organisations, with the World Bank and other philanthropic organisation helping in its proliferation.

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<sup>68</sup> ibid:94

<sup>69</sup> ibid:96

<sup>70</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/10-dead-after-female-sterilization-in-1-year/articleshow/53074269.cms> retrieved on 21/09/2018

## Chapter 3

### DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

#### **Development:**

Development has been a contested issue since it came into the popular discourse vis-à-vis the Third World countries. The post-war world economy witnessed drastic shift in economic power centres. In the 1950s and 1960s, the emergence of the developed nations as economic power house and birth of many new erstwhile colonies as independent nations led to serious deliberations on the issues of economic growth and development. Post-World War many new institutions were created, for example, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (rechristened as World Bank eventually) as well as the United Nations. The USA was keen to take the leadership in the area of economic development in the newly independent colonies, so as to establish the hegemony of their idea of development. The discourse on development economics started because of this phenomenon.

W.W. Rostow, an economist and a government servant, was deeply involved with the Centre for International Studies (CENIS) at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Centre was involved in the promotion of US foreign aid and international policies so as to win over the developing countries towards the USA and thus hinder the expansion of communism there. He developed an expertise in Asian development, and on the basis of this expertise, Rostow became an influential foreign advisor to many US Presidents such as, Eisenhower, Kennedy and, later, Johnson. In the Johnson administration, Rostow served as ‘Special Advisor to National Security’ (1966-69) and he strongly supported the Vietnam War. He wrote his book, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (which is easily downloadable from the CIA library) which offered an alternative to the Marxist approach of the growth of society. He states, “I found Marx’s solution to the problem of linking economic and non-economic behaviour...unsatisfactory” (1960: ix). Rather he offers his theory of stages-of growth as “an economic way of looking at whole societies’ as an alternative of Karl Marx’ theory of modern history” (ibid:2), thus establishing the discourse of binary in the modernisation debate. According to him, “It is possible to identify all societies, in their economic dimensions as lying within one of the five categories: the traditional society, the pre-conditions for take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of mass-consumption”

(ibid:4). A traditional society is for him is “one whose structure is developed within limited production functions, based on pre-Newton science and society...the central fact about traditional society was that a ceiling existed on the level of output per head” (ibid:4). He terms the “the dynasties in China, the civilization of the Middle East and the Mediterranean; the world of medieval Europe as traditional” (ibid:5).

The traditional society is followed by the take-off stage, which according to Rostow is, “the great watershed in the life of modern societies...the take-off is the interval when old blocks and resistance to steady growth are finally overcome...growth becomes its normal condition” (ibid:7). He finds the pre-condition of the take-off period in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Western Europe (ibid:6). The ‘take-off’ stage according to him is the one where industries are proliferating and the profit is reinvested in the growth of more new industrial units, which triggers expansion of the service sector and factory workers, further having a ripple effect on other sectors too. This stage also witnesses the usage of new technology in agriculture thereby commercialising the entire process of agriculture and generating more jobs and better market for the produce. The innovative changes in agriculture is an “essential condition for successful take-off” according to Rostow (ibid:8).

Rostow opines that the take-off stage continues for around sixty-years to reach maturity. By that time, a society reaches the stage of maturity, the people get habituated to better living which is technology dependent. They gain “command over consumption” which no longer means only the basic necessities, the urban population increases, the numbers of office workers/skilled workers increase manifold. There is an indomitable urge to enjoy the fruits of a mature economy, which is indulging in more and more consumption (ibid:10).

According to him the ‘decisive element’ that facilitated this stage to set-in was proliferation of cheap mass automobiles. He says “even Soviet Union is technically ready for this stage and by every sign, its citizens hunger for it; but Communist leaders face difficult political and social problem of adjustment if this stage is launched” (ibid:11).

Interestingly, regarding the “Beyond Consumption” stage, he more or less leaves it to imagination. It seems that he is hoping for something which is almost out of this world. However he suggests that may be observing the American who “have behaved in the past decade as if diminishing relative marginal utility sets in, after a point, for durable consumer’s goods and they

have chosen, at the margin, larger families---behaviour in the pattern of Buddenbrooks dynamics” This book by Thomas Mann narrates the story of three generations which sought different things in each generation and the last one sought art and culture, thereby alluding to development of fine tastes as the characteristic of the “Beyond Consumption” stage. However, he underscores the role of foreign power combining with the domestic forces in giving a boost to the transitional period, which can be regarded as covert justification of the colonial rule.

Rostow’s take-off notion generated considerable interest among the economic historians and development economists and was highly discussed and circulated by the economists and sociologists of the time and became the bedrock for the theory of modernisation. In common academic parlance this theory is called the evolutionary approach to development.

However, there were many criticisms of this theory too. Critiquing the theory, Gustaffson (1961: 229-244) comments that Rostow’s stages “are too general”. By clubbing all the traditional societies together, he completely ignored the diverse ‘traditional’ societies that existed before capitalist industrialist societies. He dismisses Rostow’s theory as neither an economic theory nor a theory of history and calls his attempt at offering an alternative to Marxism almost a “ludicrous” attempt.

Karl de. Schweinitz (1972: 166) said “The Stages lacked credibility because in trying to explain everything it explained very little. Rather than being a methodological aid to understanding the complex changes that societies undergo during economic development; the stages became reified and seemingly detached from the reality they were intended to identify and describe.”

Irina M. Osadcharya (1962: 49-58), on the other hand, criticises the theory as it distorts “the true process that characterises the economic history of men” by ignoring modes of production. Taking this Marxist analysis forward Semenov (1964: 41) says that this theory, “meets the needs of the contemporary bourgeoisie for a positive theory of progress within the frame work of Capitalism, which at least formally, can be put up in opposition to the Marxist-Leninist theory of historical progress and scientific communism”. Therefore, according to him (ibid:53), “Rostow’s conception, however is a direct glorification of the USA and of other of the most reactionary imperialist states of our time, which have allegedly attained the highest point of progress in the entire history of the world and a direct slander against the socialist world.”



According to Esteva (2010:1-2), the day President Truman took office, and delivered his speech on 20 January 1949, “a new era was opened to the world---the era of development...By using for the first time in such context the word ‘underdevelopment’, Truman changed the meaning of development and created the emblem, a euphemism, used ever since to allude either discreetly or inadvertently to the era of American hegemony.” Truman said:

We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. The old imperialism---exploitation for foreign profit has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealing. (cited in Esteva, 2000:1).

Rostow and Lerner “stated, explicitly that once key institutions and certain behaviour patterns were established, development was more or less sustained. The changes are irreversible and the process of development moved in a common universal direction” (Melkote and Steeves, 2001:84). Lerner (1958: viii) stated, “Modernity is primarily a state of mind---expectation of progress, propensity to growth, readiness to adapt oneself to change...The Western model is only historically Western; sociologically it is global.”

Rogers (1976a:125) calls this paradigm of development as “...overly narrow and ethnocentric in a cultural sense”. Portes (1973:36) went further to say that one can see in this paradigm a “profoundly ethnocentric undercurrent in characterizations of modern men in underdeveloped countries. An invariably positive description obviously has something to do with similarity of these individuals with the self-images and values of researchers...in more than one-way, traditional orientation may at points prove developmental and modern ones stagnating”. Myrdal calls this the tendency of the economic theorists to generalise the idea of development and promote it as a one-size-fits-all paradigm, which is not based on any empirical studies, and when such theories “are used in the study of underdeveloped countries in South Asia, where they do *not fit*, the consequences are serious” (1968:16).

The modernisation theory based its belief on the argument that development is equal to economic growth. Implicit in the modernisation theory is a particular idea of what development should be in the third world countries and the process through which this can be achieved. Rogers

(1976a:122) saw it as an outcome of a historical process, “such as Industrial Revolution in Europe and the United States, the colonial experience in Latin America, Africa and Asia, the quantitative empiricism of North American social science and capitalistic economic/political philosophy”. This remained the dominant paradigm of development. This paradigm was hugely dependent on modern technology. In a way technological development which was the outcome of industrial revolution was presented as the way forward for the developing countries to leap-frog into the stage of development that, the developed countries have already achieved.

The history of the world before the World War II, was the relationship between the colonial powers and their colonies. The industrial revolution sustained and grew with the raw materials imported from this colonies, however the benefits were never shared with colonies, rather the colonies were exploited to the extreme limit. Interestingly the ‘development economists’ never talked about this phenomenon. Rather the colonies were blamed for their dismal economic condition which was regarded as the outcome of their ‘traditional’ ways. That is what Servaes (2008:17) meant when he said that the World War II “simulated relations among sovereign states, especially the North Atlantic nations and the developing nations, including the new states emerging out of a colonial past...the developing countries saw the ‘welfare state’ of the North Atlantic nations as the ultimate goal of development...”. The third world was mesmerised by the way the developed nations planned and executed their policies on health, education and agriculture in a centralised way and used technology to achieve the targets. There was unquestioning appreciation of the path of development that the developed countries adopted. Servaes goes to the extent of saying that this particular appreciation of the new states for this form of economy gave rise to the modernisation and growth theory. He is silent again about how this process of exposure to the model of welfare state begin for the underdeveloped countries, and that too for the erstwhile colonies which were already in touch with the colonial states which were following the welfare state model. This deafening silence on the exploitative ‘welfarist states’ was also surprisingly not discussed much in the evolutionary theory of development.

Inayatullah (1976: 242) raises this issue and in a different way and points out that after colonialism came to an end, “...exchange between West and Asia has passed through three stages”:

- (a) The first stage lasted to the end of the colonial period and was essentially a unilateral transfer of the Western model.

- (b) The second stage began with the Second World War and ended with 1960s, mainly a transition to independent nationhood.
- (c) The third stage began with the occurrence of significant changes in the international power structure in the 1970s.

Thus, he sees the transfer of the knowledge regarding development to Asia from the West, germinating during the colonial time, which led to "...an interest in the comparative analysis of societies" which was augmented by the "Emergence of the theory of evolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century" and which also "provided a new framework for ordering comparative data on societies" (ibid). So according to him "...in the first phase, true exchanges never developed. It was a unilateral transfer of a development model, pure and simple" (ibid: 243). However, he is silent on the question why there was no effect of such 'pure and simple' transfer on the actual development of those countries.

In the second phase after the World War II the unequal relationship and unilateral transfer of the Western model continued, which "...inhibited the emergence of a generalized theory of development" (ibid) and the sole objective was to find the way of smooth transfer of the ideas of 'free enterprise' and 'liberal democracy', without any thought to the consequences of such a transfer on the receiving country (ibid:244). This tendency can be traced to the view of the colonial power regarding the population of the colonies. Inayatullah says that though the emphasis of the second stage was to facilitate the process of adaptation according to the specific culture and necessities of the country rather than unmindful duplication, but in essence not much had changed. This model was regarded as a package that can be either accepted or rejected by the underdeveloped countries, without any change as the package was a perfect one! "Consequently, Asian students, scholars, and bureaucrats continued to look at development through intellectual lenses that blurred and distorted the true image of their own societies" (ibid: 244-45). These scholars were trained in the Western school of thoughts, many of whom were provided scholarship to get educated there and eventually became the ambassador of these ideas in their respective countries. In the case of India, for example, many agriculture universities, demographic institutes etc., were established with generous funds from Western multinational organisation like the Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation and even USAID.

According to Inayatullah the Western concept of development had seen some changes in the third stage. He says that the objective of development changed from creation of affluence to

elimination of poverty. He cites the writings of scholars like Charles K Wilbur, Sugata Dasgupta, Denis Gaultlet etc. and asserts that there is "...greater stress on austerity to be exercised in both developing and developed countries to spare resources that can ensure moderate gains in development" (ibid:246). He sees shift in the focus area of changes vis-a-vis development as well. The traditional approach according to which, the problem of underdevelopment was an inherent condition of the underdeveloped countries itself, changed to focus on "...the external forces such as international power structure, patterns of international trade and influence of multinational corporations" (ibid).

In spite of his criticism of the Western model of development, eventually Inayatullah also agreed that "...without technology, a certain degree of industrialization, and a concomitant social change, the huge Asian population cannot be freed from the poverty that Asians now find intolerable" (ibid: 248). However, he does not comment on how the development model is basically flawed and that actually it is the actual reason behind Asian poverty.

Sosale (2008:87) opines, "The modern idea of 'development' is not an innocent term...It entails a relatively narrow geo-history of construction and contestation." Escobar (1995) contends that the concept of 'developmentalized democracy' is a product of the historical reality of the European nations. Therefore, it is important to analyse it critically and the idea should be implemented keeping in mind the socio-cultural as well economic specificity of the country concerned. According to him the European developmentalized democracy should not be implemented in absolute terms.

Analysing the characteristics of modernisation, Servaes and Malikhao (ibid:159) comments that it is basically an "idea of evolution which implies that development is conceived at first, directional and cumulative, secondly, predetermined and irreversible, thirdly progressive and fourthly, immanent with reference to the nation-state". This means that it was the "developing countries" who wanted to be like the "Western countries", whereas Mody (1991:16) opines otherwise when she said: "The North and the South assumed that planning for technologically-based growth would make it possible for the South to have an industrial revolution of sorts..." but "... did not foresee the enormous complexity of the events, and their inability to control them". She enumerates two forces that were detrimental to the process (ibid: 17): "the impact of external forces (dominant nations, banks, corporations)" and the obstacles in the form of "domestic economic, political, and cultural structures."

In the meantime, the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* was published in 1952 by the United Nations' Department of Social Affairs. This report which had the subtitle: *with special reference to standard of living* mentions in the preface that it “does not propose to cover the entire field embraced by the word ‘social’” but as the subtitle indicates, it would consider only standard of living (UN 1952:2). This report is important as the focus of development shifted to ‘existing social conditions’ and the statistical indices of the time as well as the official reports suggested that these countries were witnessing improvement of the social situation, which was observed as the direct outcome of rapid growth of GNP (Gross National Product) of those countries. The preliminary report in fact, set the tone of other such annual reports to come, which is has now become an annual affair. Here are few of the issues that were flagged and which remained the corner stone for all development parameters even today:

1. The greatest obstacles to social progress---disease, ignorance and poverty...each being in part the cause and in part the consequence of the other (ibid:3).
2. The drastic reduction in mortality now achieved in some of the less developed areas are producing rapid acceleration of population growth (ibid:4).
3. There is a vicious circle: disease—underproduction--- poverty--- poor health services--- more disease (ibid:22).
4. (T)here is a vicious circle of ignorance, poverty and inefficiency which contributed to the backwardness of the underdeveloped areas (regarding food) (ibid:46).
5. A general measure that is frequently considered to be an index of standard of living is national income per capita (ibid:129).

Esteva (2010:9) offers a very interesting and apt analysis of the *Reports*: “The expression ‘social development’, slowly introduced in the *Reports*, appeared without definition, as a vague counterpart to ‘economic development’ and as a substitute for the static notion of the ‘social situation’. The ‘social’ and ‘economic’ were perceived as distinct realities. The idea of a kind of ‘balance’ between these ‘aspects’ became first a desideratum and later the object of systemic examination. The economic and social council of the United Nations (Ecosoc) in 1962 recommended the integration of both aspects of development”.

Apthorpe (1985:48) points out that “It was in the mid-60s particularly that ‘social indicators’, ‘social accounting’, ‘social reporting’, ‘monitoring social change’ were considered in some development studies discourse to lie on the frontiers of new thinking.” According to Sheldon and Parke (1985: 693), this tendency basically stemmed from the “...awareness of rapid social change, from a sense of emerging problems with origins deep in the social structure” added to this was the ambience of the time which believed in “the ideas that the benefits and the costs of domestic social programmes are subject to measurement” also that any inadequacy in the traditional values “call forth a corrective response from the federal government.” Thus, the “Economists...saw a role for their skills as theorists and measures of welfare, sociologists...saw the relevance of their own research tradition in the measurement of social trends, political scientists...sought ways to rationalize government programmes (and there were responses from the) social workers, public administrators...”

In 1962, the *Proposal for Action* of the First UN Development Decade (1960-70) was drafted. There was a visible change from regarding development as just material to encompass social and aspirational needs in its purview. It was also recognised that social reform and economic strategy should go hand in hand to achieve all-inclusive development. The foreword written by the acting Secretary General, U. Thant, set the mood rolling, when he said that “Development is not just economic growth, it is growth plus change...There is now greater insight into the importance of the human factor in development, and the urgent need to mobilize human resources. Economic growth in the advanced countries appear to be attributable in larger part than was previously supposed to human skills rather than to capital” (UN: 1962: v-vii and 2).

So as a follow up, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) was created in 1963, to engage in research into “problems and policies” of social development and try to strike a synergy between social and economic development. Therefore, the Institute proposed to conduct research on the issues which are important to the United Nations Secretariat in the fields of “social policy, social development planning and balanced economic and social development.” Plans were also designed to support regional or national institute in such research under the aegis of the Institute (UN, 1963).

However, when UNRISD published *An Approach to Development Research* in 1979, social development was regarded as “a precondition for economic growth and partly as a moral justification and the sacrifices it implied”. Similarly, the 1969 Meeting of the Expert Committee on

Social Policy and Planning organized by the United Nations also observed that development “either leaves behind, or in some ways even creates, large areas of poverty, stagnation, marginality and actual exclusion from social and economic progress...” McNamara (1970), the then President of the World Bank went a step further and said the 70s decade should be more about economic growth than gross measures. This approach took off as an era which is popularly known as ‘dethronement of GNP’. However, this campaign did not find much traction amongst the academics or the international community.

The Second Decade (1971-80) called for integration of both the economic and social aspects. The *International Development Strategy* adopted in the twenty-fifth session of the UN General Assembly proclaimed the following:

To leave no sector of the population outside the scope of change and development;

To effect structural change which favours national development and to activate all sectors of the population to participate in the development process;

To aim at social equity, including the achievements of an equitable distribution of income and wealth in the nation;

To give high priority to the development of human potentials...the provision of employment opportunities and meeting the needs of children (cited in Esteva, 2010:10).

Esteva (ibid:10-11) also notes that, “As an UN endeavour, it was a very short-lived and frustrating project. Its results were both controversial and disappointing...And its failure to produce simple universal remedies doomed it to rapid extinction. But the project incubated most of the ideas and slogans, and animated the development debate during the years that followed.”

Interestingly, the 1980s has been called ‘the lost decade for development’ as the “development debate had come back to the point where it had begun. The adjustment process led to abandoning or dismantling of many of the achievements in the earlier decade by various countries” (Kumar, 2003:131).

1990s was called the time of *redevelopment*, basically calling on the Global North to develop what was wrongly-developed and Global South to dismantle the leftover effect of the 1980s development process. The tone for the *redevelopment* process of the Global South was set by the *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future* (more popularly known as *Brundtland Commission*) of 1987. It called for *sustainable development*,

which has been the buzzword for development since then. The document stated that there is a “possibility for a new era of economic growth, one that must be based on policies that sustain and expand the environmental resource base. And we believe such growth to be absolutely essential to relieve the great poverty that is deepening in much of the developing world” (UN, 1987).

The First *Human Development Report* was published in 1990 by UNDP. The *Report* stated that “The purpose of development is to offer people more options. One of their options is access to income--- not as an end in itself but as a means to acquiring human well-being” (UNHDR,1990: iii). “The central message of the HDR is that while growth in national production (GDP) is absolutely necessary to meet all essential human objectives, what is important is to study how this growth translates---or fails to translate---into human development in various societies” (ibid).

Weaving in the concept of standard of living more intricately into the debate of development, it further discusses the concept of ‘choice’ of the people for a long and healthy life, choice of being educated so as to have access to resources which enables them to achieve a decent standard of living. “Additional choices include, political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect...human development is measured” in this *Report* “not by the yardstick of income alone but by a more comprehensive index---reflecting life expectancy, literacy and command over the resources to enjoy a decent standard of living” (ibid:1). This tendency to quantify the qualitative aspects of development actually harked back to the good old days of universal yardstick called GNP.

This led to further impoverization of the developing countries as Esteva (2010:18) puts it, “By equating education with diplomas, following the economic definition of learning, they lacked teachers and schools...after equating health with dependence on medical services, they lacked doctors, health centres, hospitals, drugs...after equating eating with technical activities of production and consumption, linked to the mediation of the market or the state, they lacked income and suffered scarcity of food.”

The successive Human Development Reports have basically added nothing new to the discourse and had only ensured flow of aid to the developing countries.

WHO in its preamble signed back in 1946 by 61 states declared health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. In the United Nations Millennium Development Goals adopted by 191 countries in



2000, this philosophy found representation. The goals were very specific about eradicating poverty and hunger, access to universal primary education, achieving gender equality and women empowerment, reduction in the rate of child mortality, improvement of maternal health, special focus on reduction many diseases, specifically, HIV/AIDS and malaria, work towards sustainable environmental development and all these were to be achieved through global partnership. However, while implementing there was no holistic approach. Rather, each goal was viewed separately, planned separately and executed separately too. The organic nature of the goals were not recognised.

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were adopted. These goals have a more integrated approach. It has been stated in policy document that “The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability”<sup>71</sup> and the lead agency for implementation is the UNDP.

Therefore, most of the ongoing development projects in Third World is based on the premises of theory of modernisation and executed with the help of the United Nations institutions. However, it is important to discuss other discourses of development here.

### **Dependency and other discourses of development:**

An alternative discourse of development was initiated by the Brazilian educator Paolo Freire, who believed that the essential meaning of development was absolute liberation. Freire’s liberation theology presupposes that all people want to be fully human which pre-empt liberty to be free and self-reliant and they have all ability to develop if given a chance. Thus, the purpose of development will be to free both individual and communities from oppression. Oppression comes from various sources, and sometimes even the oppressor is oppressed by someone else. To achieve the maximum potential of an individual and a society, it is important that all are liberated.

Liberation theology which was taking shape during the 1960s and 1970s, intrinsically tried to make the Church responsible and connected to the people. As Peter McLaren (2018:253-254) says, “Liberation theology was born out of the self-theologising of radical Catholic Action

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<sup>71</sup> <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html> retrieved on 28/04/2020

communities in America Latina. There were protestant variations as well; since the 1960s many variations of liberation theology, Black liberation theology, Feminist liberation theology and Latino/a liberation theology. Liberation theology is systematically opposed to the trenchant conservative politics of white evangelical America in the US, who encourage individual charity over economic and transformative and distributive social justice, so familiar to many living in the richest countries in the world”

Liberation theology has its origin in the new voices within the church in Latin America, such as Dom Helder Càmara. Càmara was an auxiliary Bishop of Rio de Janeiro. People like him, who were holding positions in the Church, were vocally protesting against the inequality in the society due to the economic system being followed by the state. Càmara had a formidable influence on Freire. Càmara worked towards achieving equality and he was criticised a lot. His famous quote, “I feed the poor, I am called a saint. I ask why the poor have no food, I am called a communist” brings out the stark contradiction in the approach of the state. According to him term ‘liberation’ has three main dimensions: “First, it involves political and social liberation, the elimination of the immediate causes of poverty and injustice. Second, liberation involves the emancipation of the poor, the marginalised, the downtrodden and the oppressed from all those things that limit their capacity to develop themselves freely in dignity. Third, liberation theology involves liberation from selfishness and sin, a re-establishment of a relationship with God and other people.”<sup>72</sup>

Freire’s widely acclaimed work has its beginning in the 1940s and he continued it till the 1960s relentlessly, in spite of being exiled. The right-wing government which overthrew the democratically elected government of João Goulart, arrested him, accusing him of preaching communism through his national literacy programme and exiled him. He led a very productive time during his 16 years long exile. He worked with UNESCO and stayed at Chile, Geneva, Tanzania and other African countries and worked in Harvard University too. Everywhere, he worked for development of education. He finally returned to Brazil in 1980 and taught as a University teacher there.

Freire’s literacy method grew out of the Movement for Popular Culture in Recife, where he was from. As a part of the movement cultural circles were set up to generate discussions with the

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<sup>72</sup> <https://liberationtheology.org/people-organizations/gustavo-gutierrez/> retrieved on 22/04/2020

non-literates. Freire understood from his experience that given the independence to decide the non-literate marginalised could also learn to read, or get educated. He insisted on the development of pedagogy to teach the people, which emanated from their own experiences i.e. a pedagogy which was relatable to them. The art of articulation that the educated had, made them dominate the oppressed class. Even after their rich experiences they failed to explain because of this barrier of expression. This creates the culture of silence in them and the privileged class regard their silence as lack of knowledge. Freire is regarded as the first educational philosopher who understood the political power of education. As McLaren (2018:251) said, “Freire’s approach to literacy created the conditions for the oppressed to liberate themselves and in the process, liberate the oppressors.”

Freire said (1985:73) “Only when the people of a dependent society break out of the culture of silence and win the right to speak---only that is when radical structural changes transform the dependent society ---can such a society as a whole cease to be silent toward the director society.”

Liberation Theology develops out of Christian faith and praxis as mentioned above. People like Juan Luis Segundo, Josè Comblin, Gustavo Gutiérrez and others from the Church were educated in France and were exposed to Marxist thoughts. Though they used Marxism to argue their proposition of liberation theology, they did not accept Marxist thoughts completely. In fact, it is well known that they rejected dialectical materialism. Rather “Marx is accepted and used as a social critic” (Dussel, 1992:58). Che Guevara’s influence on the Latin liberation theologians is also well known. But the most effective influence of Marxism on liberation theology was that of the dependency theory of Furtado, Cardoso etc (discussed below). Gunder Frank’s influence is regarded as strongest on the liberation theologians than anybody else. The liberation theologians questioned the development model vis-à-vis the dependency theorists. Thus, the liberation theologians used certain parts of Marxism, but within the purview of their faith.

Critics like Melkote and Steeves (2001:35) comment, that this form of development is more spiritual than economic where material realities have only a small space. However, Freire and the other liberation theologians did influence the Latin American development model for quite some time.

The 1960s saw a general intellectual churning resulting in Latin American social scientists questioning the development model which was based on European experience. This resulted in the formulation of the dependency theory, which was developed by Raul Prebisch, the then Director of

the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America in the 1950s. “The ideas of dependency were later developed by Celso Furtado, Theotonio Dos Santos, Osvaldo Sunkel, F.H. Cardoso, and other Latin American social scientists. Outside Latin America, the most important writers have been Samir Amin of Senegal, Andre Gunder Frank of Germany and Immanuel Wallerstein of the United States. In a way it can be said that dependency theory can be termed as a product of the third world itself” (Isbister 2001: 43). Not to forget Paul Baran’s contribution to the theory from the Marxist perspective. The dependency theorists are from two intellectual camps: liberal reformers such as Prebisch, who believed that to achieve higher standard of living what is required is targeted policy intervention, and the neo-Marxists, who were votaries of socialist form of economy (Knutsson, 2009:17).

The liberals argued that instituting internal national market which are controlled by national policies can make a difference to the level of dependency. Therefore Prebisch, Cardoso and Faletto advocated for protectionist economic policies that would allow national markets to develop without intervention from the external capitalist forces.

“While an orthodox Marxist perspective posits that imperialism will eventually advance societies towards communism, Gunder Frank and neo-Marxist dependency theorists viewed the core/periphery relationship as constraining structure that would maintain Latin American nations in an indefinite state of dependency” (Schmidt 2018:2).

Another important intellectual discourse which originated from the neo-Marxist ideology is the World Systems analysis. This was initiated by Immanuel Wallerstein, Samir Amin and Andre Gunder Frank. They expanded upon the original theoretical premise of dependency theory and developed the World Systems analysis. This explained the global economic change across centuries, including the rise and fall of hegemonic institutions and discussed the process of incorporation in the capitalist world -system.

Neo-Marxist dependency theorists believes that socialism can be the only path which could break the dependent and exploitative relations between the core and the peripheral countries. As opposed to the modernisation theorists’ view of underdevelopment as a state or condition prevalent in an economy, the dependency theorists regard underdevelopment as a process through which the economy passes. This theory summarily rejects the argument that Third World societies are in a primitive, traditional state and that, that is the reason of their underdevelopment. Rather it says that

in reality these societies have had long association with the capitalist system (for example, the massive export from India of cotton, spices etc.) As Isbister (ibid:44) comments, “The poverty of the Third World is not traditional, and it is not accidental. It is the necessary companion to the richness of the developed countries.” The industrial economy required raw material to ensure growth of their industries and they extracted those from the third world country at a cheaper rate. This ensured that the third world emerged as a poverty-stricken economy which was at the mercy of the developed countries. Isbister further describes how the third world capitalists are themselves a dependent class “responding mainly primarily to foreign signals and incapable of undertaking the risks and responsibilities needed to transform their countries in any fundamental way” (ibid).

Leading American Marxist economist, Paul Baran elaborately explained the theory in his book *The Political Economy of Growth* (1957). According to Baran (1957:14) the independence that the erstwhile colonies have achieved is “sham” as these colonies still remain “economic appendages of the advanced capitalist countries” as their governments still “depend for survival on the pleasure of foreign patrons”. In fact, he says that these “newly won political independence often precipitates merely a change in their Western masters, with the younger, more enterprising, more resourceful imperialist power seizing the controls that have slipped out of the hands of the old, now weakened imperialist countries”. He is very categorical when he blames the neo-Malthusians for their tendency to blame the “backwardness of the backward countries as the inevitable result of their excessive population growth, and who therefore denounce all attempts at economic development in these areas as utopian so long as the population increase has not been brought to a halt” thus “the neo-Malthusian position renders economic development a hopeless task made insolvable by the very nature of the human animal” (ibid:15-16). Whereas the precise fact that these colonies were not developed was because of the perpetrators, “the Western European visitors rapidly determined to extract the largest possible gains from the host countries, and to take their loot home. Thus, they engaged in outright plunder or in plunder thinly veiled as trade, seizing and removing tremendous wealth from the places of their penetration” (ibid:142). “By breaking up the age-old patterns of their agricultural economy, and by forcing shifts to the production of exportable crops, Western capitalism destroyed the self-sufficiency of their rural society that formed the basis of the pre-capitalist order in all countries of its penetration...Thus the people who came into the orbit of Western capitalist expansion found themselves in the twilight of feudalism and capitalism

enduring the worst features of both the worlds...” (ibid: 143-144). In fact, this pattern is quite visible in the pre-independence Indian economy (discussed in Chapter 2).

He discusses the impact of colonial plunder of both India and Japan. He calls India’s exploitation as “an elaborate, ruthless, systematic despoliation...” (ibid:145) and comments that, had that exploitation not taken place India “might have found in the course of time a shorter and surely less tortuous road towards a better and richer society...It would have been, however, an entirely different India (and an entirely different world), had she been allowed ...to realise her resources for her own benefit, and to harness her energies and abilities for the advancement of her own people” (ibid:150). For him the underdeveloped countries can attain “economic and social progress” through “establishment of a socialist planned economy” (ibid:261).

However, Baran’s theory is not beyond criticism. Edward (1957) said, “Regrettably, Baran takes an altogether too uncritical approach to what he calls the ‘socialist’ countries of the world. The last fifty pages of his book consists of a defence of bureaucratic policies in Soviet Union, a defence studded with quotation from Stalin”. There were other American scholars who were understandably anti-Marxists who also offered heavy criticism. For example, Nicholas Kaldor, one of the leading economists along with Rostow who helped UN in formulating its economic policies (1958:164) said, “...the book falls short of the Marxian standards is in failing to come to grips with the central issue of Marxian theory of history...why it is that the proletarian revolution failed to materialise in the countries in the advanced stages of capitalism (which, on Marxian theory were ripe for socialism) and occurred instead in countries like Russia and China where bourgeoisie capitalism never properly established itself. Accepting that Baran had “brilliant intellectual powers” he regrets that Baran did not use it “constructively in persuading his countrymen what they ought to do about the underdeveloped countries, instead of telling them that whatever they do is bound to be wrong. By insisting that the economic and social system in which they firmly believe is not only thoroughly rotten but absolutely hopeless makes it impossible to many of his readers to take him seriously when he exposes the real shortcomings of the American policy” (ibid:170). This critic is much expected from an economist who colluded with Rostow.

As mentioned above, Baran belongs to the group of theorists who are termed as dependency theorists. “Although the dependency approach was often reduced to a straw argument and heavily criticised by both mainstream development theorists and traditional Marxists, and no less frequently pronounced dead, the deeper ‘third-world’ critique of imperialism that Baran and others

introduced has persisted in our time. The original criticism of the dependency approach in the 1970s pointed to ‘economic miracles’ of Brazil, Mexico and East Asia...” (Foster:2007).

Another dependency theorist Andre Gunther Frank also mostly held the same belief as that of Baran. In his seminal text *The Development of the Underdevelopment* (1966) he said,

...even a modest acquaintance with history shows that underdevelopment is not original or traditional and neither the past nor the present of the underdeveloped countries resembles in any important respect the past of the now developed countries. The now developed countries were never *underdeveloped*, though they may have been *undeveloped*. It is also widely believed that the contemporary underdevelopment of a country can be understood as the product or reflection solely of its own economic, political, social and cultural characteristics or structures. Yet historical research demonstrates that contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and now developed metropolitan countries. Furthermore, these relations are essential part of the structure and development of the capitalist system on a world scale as a whole (1966:18).

So according to him the developed countries of the present time actually never resembled the underdeveloped countries of today. The underdeveloped countries of now are in such a socio-economic state because of their economic relation with the developed countries of now. That this lop-sided relationship between the developed and the underdeveloped countries actually is the mainstay of the world capitalist system.

He cites the example of “underdevelopment of Latin America” as the result of “centuries---long participation in the process of world capitalist development” (ibid:21) where these countries became the satellite economies of the capitalist countries. He challenges Rostow’s contention that underdevelopment is an outcome of traditional society and says that rather “underdevelopment was and still is generated by the very same historical process which also generated economic development: the development of capitalism itself” (ibid:23). He puts forward three hypotheses in his support (ibid:23-27):

In contrast to the development of the world metropolis which is no one’s satellite, the development of the national and other subordinate metropolis is limited by their satellite status.

The satellites experience their greatest economic development and especially their most classically capitalist industrial development if and when their ties to their metropolis are weakest...when the metropolis expands to incorporate previously isolated regions into the World-wide system, the previous development and industrialization of these regions is choked off or channelled into directions which are not self-perpetuating or promising.

The region which is the most underdeveloped and feudal-seeming today are the ones which had the closest ties to the metropolis in the past...This hypothesis also contradicts the generally held thesis that the source of a region's underdevelopment is its isolation and its pre-capitalist institutions.

He sums up his hypotheses thus, "...the global extension and unity of the capitalist system, its monopoly structure and uneven development throughout its history, and the resulting persistence of commercial rather than industrial capitalism in the underdeveloped world (including its most industrially advanced countries) deserve much more attention in the study of economic development and cultural change than they have hitherto received" (ibid:30). Because the entire focus of the studies on the underdeveloped economies was mostly on the assumed inherent deficiencies of the underdeveloped countries, not on their relation to the capitalist economies. This attempt is a classic example of victim-blaming.

Samir Amin on the other hand not only talks about the dependency theory, but also analyses the present world order from that perspective. Like all dependency theorists, Amin too suggests that the development discourse changed after the Second World War as the War according to him, overturned the traditional power dynamics of the developed countries and created a different sort of hierarchy where USA emerged as the global leader (1976: 162). According to him the money that flowed to the third world in the form of aids post Second World War, serves to "fulfil(s) a variety of functions", basically "it serves the vital function of maintaining the status quo, which imposes an unequal form of international specialization upon the periphery" (ibid:182). Calling the relationship between the now capitalist countries and the underdeveloped countries 'centre-periphery', he also contends like Frank and Baran that the Industrial revolution changed the trade relation between the centre and periphery. "This was the period in which the international specialization between industrial and agricultural countries was decided" (ibid:183).

He looks at this entire process from the economic interaction between the developed and the underdeveloped countries. He contends that "the commercial and financial relation between the



centre and the periphery” facilitated the extension of the capitalist market flourishing “at the expense of the pre-capitalist system” and in the attempt to increase profit the surplus was absorbed too (ibid:187-88).

According to Amin, the world capitalist system has three important characteristics, the big corporate multinational having their footfall in all countries, immense technological development which help in the shift in “the centre of gravity of the industries of the future towards new branches (atomic power, space research, electronics)” which in turn enable a shift in the “classical mode of accumulation”, and all these result in the accumulation of the technological knowledge in the hands of the corporate houses (ibid:189).

Amin says that the periphery generally has four common characteristics, the economies are dependent on agriculture, the local bourgeoisie is essentially a merchant class which is dependent on the “dominant foreign capital”, bureaucracy has specific qualities which basically ensures that the periphery caters to the centre without any stumbling blocks and the “process of proletarianization remains incomplete (ibid:333).

Amin says (1997:4-5) that the capitalist countries of the Global North uses “five monopolies to compete in the global market”. These monopolies are, dominance in the realms of technology, international capital market, natural resources, media and communication and weapons of mass destruction. A cursory glance at the world today can confirm this.

The law of globalized value operates within the jurisdictions of these monopolies creating a very unique pro-capitalist world order, impoverishing the peripheries further and “reduced them to the role of subcontracting”, and created a hegemony of the centre which became far more overpowering than even (ibid). He underscores the role of the international financial organisations like the IMF, World Bank, GATT (eventually named WTO in 1995) who help nurture and justify the existence of the centre and by many ways of manipulation (structural adjustment programme, for example) facilitated the centre to retain its power and hegemony over the world financial market. This interlinking of the five monopolies actually stifle the independent growth of the peripheries or the nation-states and subjugate them so much that their dependence on the centre keeps increasing (ibid: 18-30). To this list of financial institutions, we can add the other UN organisations as well, which too are an intricate part of the entire web of control that the centre weaves over the periphery. There are two categories of peripheral societies, those who are

manufacturing products and thus are in a better negotiating position than those who are just suppliers of raw materials. He says that the countries of East Asia, Latin America, India and South-Asia come under the first category and are generally called the developing countries and are regarded by the development economists as the emerging economies, which are almost catching up with the developed countries. However, Amin regards these ‘developing countries’ as the “real periphery of the emerging world system”, because the developed country actually promotes their own development agenda without giving any space to the specific necessities of the countries who are manufacturing. The promotion of a particular crop in these countries to be exported eventually to the developed countries is one classic example. The genetically modified cotton and other crops is a very well-known case of India. FAO played a very crucial role in the process. This according to Amin “enable” the centre “to polarize the world for their exclusive benefits” (ibid:148).

And he adds, “The second group (comprising all Africa, North Africa and South Africa), sometimes referred to as the Fourth World, faces the prospects of further marginalization in the new world order” (ibid:149). Indian businessmen investing in these countries is a classic example of periphery becoming centre in peripheral economies.

Wallerstein goes a step further and talks more extensively about the world-system. He explains how development as we know has been used post 1945, when it came to be regarded as a process of stages through which a country has to proceed to attain higher standard of living and thus be termed as developed (2004:10). According to him the world-systems analysis was the outcome of four debates that was taking place in social science in the period of 1945-70. “The concept of core-periphery developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and the subsequent elaboration of ‘dependency theory’; the utility of Marx’s concept of ‘Asiatic mode of production’, a debate that took place among communist scholars; the discussion among historians of Western Europe about the ‘transition from feudalism to capitalism; the debate about ‘total history’ and the triumph of the Annales School of Historiography in France and then in many other parts of the world. None of the debates were extremely new, but each became salient in this period, and the result was a major challenge to the social sciences as they have developed up to 1945” (ibid:11).

Basically, he says that a World-System exists that moves around the process of unabated capital accumulation giving the world a homogenised capitalist world economy which makes it

“impossible to analyse” the peculiarities of “various states” as they are “located in the world-economy” and ruled by process of “the world division of labour” (Amin et al 1982:9).

According to Wallerstein the core social institute through which world system is legitimized is the household or the families. The family is where young minds are conditioned to value norms, practice social rules and thus instil respect for those norms and values unquestioningly. These are “seconded by state agencies such as schools and armies as well as by religious institution and the media”. But the long-term effect of the teaching in a family/household is unmatched. Therefore “a household that is certain of its status-group identity---its nationality, its code of sexuality---knows how to socialise its members” (ibid:36-37).

However, Wallerstein’s World-System theory is quite different from the other neo-Marxist dependency theorists. According to him, the capitalist world system began in the sixteenth century, with the European exploration and expansions around Africa to Asia and across the Atlantic to the Americas. World-System Analysis says that the peripheral countries have been methodically kept underdeveloped by the rich and powerful ‘core’ countries, and for these poor countries to come out of that condition, a world revolution will be required. He also talks about semi-peripheral countries which work as “the global middle class stabilizing the world capitalist system...it is precisely in semi peripheral countries that the strain and contradictions of the world system are more evident, and therefore, that is where revolutions against the world system are most likely” (Chirot 2001:16609).

The idea of the World-System also explains how many world systems came into existence after water ways became a very important mode of transportation in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Before the expansion of colonialism, these were only regional inter-societal networks. During the colonial time, the Euro-centric system was forced into the other World-Systems. Thus World-Systems became more Euro-centric as the world economy started functioning from there. The Afro-Asian regions were mobilized to supply labour for the colonial economy. These countries were forced to continuously redesign themselves due to ever changing geopolitics.

Now, the modern World-Systems is an outcome of the capitalistic mode of production and the competition amongst state and business to maintain the accumulation pattern. The modern World-systems also create their own semi-periphery, and the semi-periphery becomes the intermediate level of economic development. The countries in these three strata often move up and

down (Wallerstein, 2004). Arguing that the semi-peripheral countries play a substantial role in the economy as “they act as a peripheral zone for core countries and in part they act as a core country for some peripheral areas” (Wallerstein, 1976:462-463).

The post-colonial modern economy is peculiar in the sense that the economy is self-preserving, intent on stabilizing the structure, maintaining “the social division of labour whose boundaries are greater than those of any political entity. Political structures do not contain “economies”, quite the contrary: the “world-economy” contains political structures, or states” (Amin,1982: 21-22).

However, Chase Dunn (2001:592) contends, “leaving the core-periphery dimension of treating the periphery as inert are grave mistakes, not only for reasons of completeness, but because the dynamics of all hierarchical World-systems involve a process of semi-peripheral development in which a few societies in the middle innovate and implement new technologies of power that drive the process of expansion and transformation”.

Though the prominent dependency theorists call themselves Marxist, yet the theory has been under sharp criticism from the orthodox Marxists since 1970s. Isbister (2001:50-53) lists the criticism of the dependency theory as provided by the Marxists: “First, the Marxists argue that the fundamental forces for social change are internal to third world societies, not external to them. Second, they argue that capitalism is quite capable of producing growth in the economies of the third world. Third they argue that imperialism both in its historical form and in its current neo-colonial form, is often an agent of progress, that it may operate in such a way as to propel third world societies on the path to capitalistic growth.”

Moreover, according to the modern Marxists, capitalism is essentially a global system which enables the concentration of power in few core countries and the third world countries are left with ‘poverty’, ‘underdevelopment’ and other limitations and disadvantages. According to them the third world countries are intricately entangled with the “international networks of trade, investment, and finance”, however, they argue that the capitalist class of the third world also enjoy certain internal autonomy, and not wholly subservient to the international capitalist system.

This argument is quite flawed when we go back to what Amin had said and what the world has been witnessing till now. The economies of all the countries are controlled by the dollar trade

and thus the USA controls the entire system through the international bodies like the World Bank and IMF.

Cueva et al. (1976: 15) criticises the dependency theory and makes a very interesting observation about Bolivia when he says that if Bolivia had followed the same course of development that Cuba had done, the story of Bolivia would not have been that of dependency. That way the very argument of the dependency theorists that, “nature of our social formations is dependent on how they are integrated with the world capitalist system” can be refuted and partial responsibility of dependency can be put on the third world countries like Bolivia too. However, Cueva et al.’s argument of Cuba being not a dependent country feels like a simplistic argument, if we observe the effect of trade embargo imposed by the capitalist countries led by USA, with the connivance of IMF and World Bank et al, on Cuba. They are resisting but it has had devastating effect on their economy too. The embargo was imposed by USA since 1959 after the US supported government was overthrown by Fidel Castro in Havana. There was some easing of relation when Obama became the president of USA, but Trump again made it stringent like before. This has resulted in a lot of financial constraints in Cuba. Though the authors offer Cuba as an example for an economy which had resisted the effect of dependency, but there has been no serious study on the Cuban revolution from that perspective.

Dependency theorists have been criticized for their attempt to supplant class conflict with national and regional contradiction, as Angotti (1981:129) comments: “While ultra ‘left’ line (in dependency school) fails to consider the contradiction between nations as a part of the international class struggle, the rightists line reduce the class struggle to nothing more than a struggle between nations (or ‘social formations’). In effect, it abandons the theory of class struggle”.

Cueva et al. (1976:15) summarises the Marxist criticism of dependency theory by saying that dependency is only “the concrete form of existence of some society”, and that “there is no theoretical space within which to locate a theory of dependency.”

The core argument of the dependency theorists is that socialism is the path that ensures equitable distribution of resources. Whereas, the modernisation theorists believe that free market and capitalism is the path to real growth and development. The Marxists on the other hand argue that the path to socialism is through capitalism, though capitalism is the enemy which exploits the

working class. “For Marxists, socialism is the ultimate goal, but that goal may have to wait until capitalist engine of growth has done its work” Isbister (2003:57).

The main theoretical arguments of dependency theory retain its relevance even for the contemporary social scientists. These arguments help in analysing the problems of inequalities inflicting the Third World countries, including “Latin America and the other nations across the Global South. By drawing attention to the economic process that extract wealth from Latin America to the global North, dependency theorists challenged the fundamental assumption that previously structured policy discourse: that Latin America’s export-oriented economies are feudal and backwards, that modernity is to be equated with industrialization, and that all nations are equally able to move through ascribed stages of development” (Schmidt, 2018).

“Dependency theorists also laid the groundwork for some of the major research agendas of World-Systems analysis including studies of the international division of labour, commodity chain, and global critics” (Sassen, 1991). As Robinson (2019) says, “In the twenty-first century, as national borders appear to lose relevance in the face of multi-national corporation and an entrenched transnational capitalist class, World-systems analysis must now attend to the role the inter-state system does or does not play in structuring the global political economy.”

Nonetheless, dependency theory enables the understanding of how national level economic developments are influenced by international economic policies. However, as the dominant paradigm of development has been the modernisation, therefore, the dependency theory always remained as a critique of modernisation, not the one which is practiced.

### **Development Communication: History and Theory**

Social scientists of the 1920s and the 1930s were impressed by the effect of mass media on the society and thus were optimistic about the role of mass media in social engineering. The way radio was used for propaganda successfully during the World War solidified this belief about the magical effect of media (Zivin, 1994). In 1936, a convention of the League of Nations assessed the possibility utilizing broadcasting for augmentation of international understanding. Media became the new tool in the hands of the newly independent colonies, social scientists, aid agencies, which

would play a crucial role in uplifting the socio-economic and political development in those countries. Development was defined variously, as we have already discussed above. But one centrality remained to this discourse that, mass media could play a critical role in this process of development. It was also believed that media could help multiply the reach of information in places where resources were of short supply, making education cheap and easily accessible, and thus train a group of people who would help the country to develop in terms of industry and agriculture (Schramm 1963, 1967). It was also emphasised that media believed being the magic multiplier could actually help in fast-tracking the adoption rate of new production techniques (Rogers 1962). In addition to that, it was also envisaged that communication could foster values of a ‘civic culture’, encouraging shared political values instrumental to the development of the ‘nation’ part of the ‘nation-state’ equation. Thus, according to Almond and Verba (1963:503-504), “exposure to the media of communication among the pre-requisites for the development of a civic culture in new states. Early optimism regarding the development outcomes of mass media was enhanced by empirical studies, such as the Harvard University Project on Social and Cultural Aspects of Development (HUPSCAD)” which was conducted in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), Nigeria, Chile initially, with India, Argentina and Israel added as the study progressed). This study found a significant association between the level of exposure to mass media and the level of modernity of individuals in the countries under study. Inkeles and Smith who wrote a book on the study were convinced that “greater modernity of those who were most often exposed to the mass media also resulted in good part from the effectiveness of the radio as teachers of modernisation” (1974: 152).

Building from these positive outcomes and theoretical foundation, all the agencies of development projects, including aid officials and planners in newly independent countries, became convinced that the existence of a robust media of communication was an essential prerequisite for the success of any national development programme. In short, mass communications served as a cheap and effective means to leap-frog “into the ‘take-off-stage’ of growth. Also, many welcomed the promotion of communications systems as a strategy for development because technology was regarded as neutral at that time” (Hornik 1988: introduction). It was also easy to achieve consensus on issues apparently as non-political and essential as education, health, agriculture etc.

Thus, post-World War II, many Western aid agencies, initiated a number of projects with a strong communication programme attached to it. The focus of communication in these projects was to promote the technical innovations and solutions to the otherwise non-technical development

issues. For example, by extensive usage of radio, promoting a high-yielding-variety of paddy as a solution to better agriculture produce and hence self-sufficiency in food grain production. Later on, television was also used to promote such development projects. These processes of dissemination of information was based on the belief that grassroot level effectiveness of development projects will eventually translate into nationwide development.

This emphasis on communicating development projects were not free of hurdles though. The magic multiplier aspect of media of communication was often challenged when sometimes it led to negative outcomes too. There were questions being asked whether “too often, information was being thrown at problems that were defined by lack of resources, not lack of knowledge” (Hornik 1988: xi).

However, an apprehension started to develop that the very presupposition of development communication – that messages received are translated into knowledge and action – may be flawed. For example, specific short media messages on medical issues may be effective, only if a structure for delivery of medical care exists and the recipient of the messages is able to make use of it. In fact, it was often seen that the infrastructures required for development were often outpaced by technologies to advocate their use. We will now try to understand the dilemma besetting the idea of development and as well as try to trace the history of development of the theories of development communication.

On the basis of its theoretical affiliation, broadly speaking, there are said to be four schools of development communication: Bretton Woods School, Latin American School African School of development communication and Los Baños School of development communication. Some communication experts do contend that there is another school of communication which they name Indian School of Communication. But the way these purported schools have been acting, there seems to be no basic difference with the Bretton Woods School.

### **The Bretton Woods School:**

As mentioned above, immediately after Second World War the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) were set up, as a part of the World War Marshall Plan which was officially called the European Recovery Programme or ERP (Melkote and Steeves 2001, Manyozo 2006,



Servaes 2008). The conference was held at Bretton Wood, New Hampshire in the US and hence the name. That conference along with the inaugural speech of Harry Truman of 1949, ushered in the Western-driven systematic and strategic planning of centralised development in much of the global south. Down the time this School was getting its financial and intellectual contribution from institutions like UNESCO, FAO, Rockefeller Foundation, DFID, Ford Foundation and universities like Michigan State, Texas, Cornell, Ohio, Wisconsin, Leeds, Colombia, Iowa, Southern California and New Mexico. The School's voice was found in its journal *Development Communication Report*, which was published by USAID funded Clearing House on development communication between 1970s and 80s. Rockefeller Foundation also funded *Mazi: Newsletter on Communication for Social Change*, which is published by the CFSC Consortium.<sup>73</sup> There are also other Bretton Woods publication houses like Sage, Hampton, Zed and Bretton Woods University Presses which regularly publishes books journals etc on its line of philosophy.

The philosophy of Bretton Woods School of development communication was informed by the writings of Walt Rostow (*The Process of Economic Growth*, 1952), Daniel Lerner (*The Passing of Traditional Society*, 1958), Everett Rogers (*Diffusion of Innovation*, 1962), and Wilbur Schramm (*Mass Media and National Development*, 1964). As has been mentioned above, development communication is shaped by the dominant development theory of modernisation. The dependency/structuralist criticism did compel the communication theorist to rethink the development theory and culminated in Rogers' declaring that the dominant paradigm had passed (1976). But that cannot be called any radical change of the theoretical underpinning because it was still under the framework of Bretton Woods School. The practical application of this school was the farm and educational radio projects in India, South East Asia, Africa and Latin America and the family planning communication programme in India, which were based on these diffusionists models of knowledge management and dissemination built on the theory of communication effects.

The communication theorists too endeavoured to prove that mass media had a very powerful, direct and uniform effect with the help of various theories. For example, the *Hypodermic Needle Theory* (which is also referred to as Bullet Theory) is based on the idea that media has the power of an injection syringe which injects ideas and information into the innocent minds of the people thus rejuvenate them and elicit the exact intended effect. The *Two-step theory* believes that people's experience in media is fortified with further discussion with the opinion leaders, thus,

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<sup>73</sup> <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org> retrieved on 26/04/2020

there is one more step added to the Hypodermic Needle Theory. *The Uses and Gratification* theory believes that people have control over their exposure to media content because of their personal choices and expectations and they only consume the content that makes them gratified. That way they have a control over the content. By the 1970s, the cultural studies approach had emerged in media which believed that there is a scope of negotiation between active audience and media text. Therefore, by the time of publication of the major works of Lerner (1958), Rogers (1962) and Schramm (1964) on using media and communications to scale up/out social change coincided with the time when the US and World Bank were beginning to scale up/out their model of development to the rest of the world. And that was not coincidental. The combination of the two dominant perspectives (development and communication) would prove powerful as Western institutions and governments embarked on intensifying the use of media and communications within the context of development. Thus, was laid the foundation of the Bretton Woods School of development communication. And in this thesis, we will engage in discussion of development communication from the perspective of Bretton Woods School as understanding of modernisation was promoted by the Bretton Woods institutes and the development projects initiated by them.

Both the theories of modernisation and dependency essentially explores the increasing gap between the rich and the poor countries. These theories also form the basis for other branches of studies like literature and communication.

However, it needs to be mentioned again that in spite of all criticism, only modernisation theory forms the primary basis of funded development promoted and initiated by the UN organisations. This elicited a huge array of development communication initiatives. The main reason being the flow of foreign aid to the underdeveloped countries for ‘development projects’ initiated by the UN organisations as well as the International NGOs. When Lerner (1958: 38) said, “what the West is... the Middle East seeks to become,” he is in a sense, corroborating what Rostow had said was essential for attaining modernity. This meant that development was not an end by itself, but it is rather a means for achieving Western modernity.

Development communication has been described by many. To quote a few:

Communication for development is a social process, designed to seek a common understanding among all participants of a development initiative, creating a basis for concerted action (UN FAO. 1984).

Development communication is an interdisciplinary field based on empirical research that helps to build consensus while it facilitates the sharing of knowledge to achieve positive change in development initiatives. It is not only about effective dissemination of information but also about using empirical research and two-way communication among stakeholders. It is also a key management tool that helps assess socio-political risks and opportunities (Mefalopulus World Bank, 2008).

Nora Quebral (2001) who is regarded as one of pioneers in development communication in agriculture, defined development communication as, "...*the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfilment of the human potential*". Thus, according to her the process of development communication entails deracinating the core reason for the inequality and marginalization that existed in the third world country and then with the help of technology take the population forward in the path of economic development.

Development communication is the study of social change brought about by the application of communication research, theory and technologies to bring about development...Development is a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement, including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities for the majority of people through their gaining greater control over their environment (Everett M. Rogers, 1976a).

Communication vis-à-vis development is supposed to be either a process of diffusion or participatory communication. The diffusion theory was introduced by Everett M. Rogers in communication. For Rogers (2003:6) "Diffusion is a kind of *social change*, defined as the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and the function of a social system. When new ideas are invented, diffused, and adopted or rejected, leading to certain consequences, social changes occur." Modernisation in this theory is regarded as a process of diffusion of ideas, information regarding the Western model of development, which helps individuals to give up the traditional way of life and embrace technical and scientific methods of development, and adopt a more rapidly changing way of life. As Servaes (2008: 20) comments, this approach is based on the belief that communication is only "a message going from a sender to a receiver" and is concerned with "the process of diffusion and adoption of innovations in a more systematic and planned way". In this

process mass media has a serious role to spread awareness regarding “new possibilities and practices”. This theory is generally critiqued because of its vertical approach to communication. It has been argued that “active involvement in the process of communication” (ibid) can only accelerate development.

Participatory communication on the other hand believes that adequate importance should be given to the cultural idiosyncrasies of the communities and thus make the process democratic and truly participatory. According to Paulo Freire (1983: 76) “This is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every man. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone--- nor can he say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words.” However participatory does not mean that the planners, development specialist or institutional leaders lose their role in the communication process; it only means that the knowledge base of the local communities are involved in the planning and execution of the development projects.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw massive expansion of media of mass communication. Political scientists, sociologist and psychologists were intrigued as to how technology could affect and influence people at the level of society as well as individual. This led to the formulation of many communication theories, which essentially looked at communication as a one-way process more in the line of hypodermic needle theory or bullet theory, as mentioned above. This theory believed that communication was unilinear. The underlying assumption about society was basically liberal-pluralist, where the problems like social inequality was regarded neither as unjust or even problematic, rather it was believed that all those issues can be resolved by institutional means. Thus, mass media was also regarded as benign and idealistic. It was regarded as a means to transmitting ideas and information to an eager population ready to accept it and thus was developed the ‘transmission model’. Rogers (1986:7) wrote that the transmission model “was the single most important turning point in the history of communication science” and that it “led communication scientists into a linear, effects-oriented approach to human communication in the decades following 1949”. He further said that because of this the communication scientists were led into “the intellectual cul-de-sac of focussing mainly upon the effects of communication especially mass communication” (ibid: 88). In fact, it was convenient for many to look at communication as a linear process, “especially those who see communication primarily as an efficient device forgetting message to many people, whether as advertising, political propaganda or public information” (McQuail, 2010:65).

However, an alternative model was being offered as a critique of the dominant paradigm. Communication theorists like DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989), Chaffe and Hochheimer (1983) showed that mass media in fact does not have the power of a ‘magic bullet’ or a ‘hypodermic syringe’ as it was perceived to have. Rather the messages passed through mass media can actually suffer from transmission loss and misdirected communication and also suffer from clarity due to ‘noise’ in the channels of mass communication, which can possibly lead to lack of understanding of the message by the receivers etc.

The basic conviction that the prevalent liberal capitalist order of the society is not the natural progression that it was thought to be, gave rise to the alternative paradigm. This paradigm also critiqued relation between media and the market. The approach regarding the symbiotic relationship between media and the society is based on the Marxist ideology. Which was institutionalised by the Frankfurt school, that originated in the Marxist School of Applied Social Research in Frankfurt. The most prominent of these scholars were Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno with Walter Benjamin, Leo Lowenthal and Herbert Marcuse adding more to it. Adorno and Horkheimer were very critical of the media and the ‘culture industry’ for its uniformity, monotony, escapism, worship of techniques and “production of false needs, its reduction of individuals to customers and its removal of all ideological choice” (Hardt, 1992:140).

The Frankfurt school’s initial ideological contention was eventually taken to a different level when Stuart Hall (1974/1980) formulated the ‘reception approach’. According to Stuart, the messages are ‘encoded’ by the producer to suit her view and she frames the meaning in a particular way and the audience eventually ‘decode’ the same message depending on their own conditioning and social context. As McQuail (2010:74) states, “the most significant point is that decoding can take a different course from the intended direction of the message... (the key principles like) the multiplicity of meanings of media content; the existence of varied ‘interpretative’ communities; and the primacy of the receiver in determining meaning” are crucial to this theory. This theory challenges the idea that media content has a defined meaning and re-evaluated the political as well as economic nature of the mass media organisation. It also put forward the possibility of symbolic mediation being more powerful and open to analysis than reality itself.

Some scholars could see the link between culture and communication and regarded communication as a process of shared meaning, rather than a simplistic process of information transmission or persuasion. “In this sense, the processes and institutions of communication, of

culture, and of development are all woven together” (Melkote and Steeves, 2011: 31). This focus on the interwoven nature of culture and communication was analysed by scholars who concluded that communication could solidify hegemonic values and priorities in the society.

On the basis of the above theoretical framework, the scholars of development communication are widely divided into two groups in their understanding of the philosophy informing communication. One group believes that communication is an organisational delivery system (based on Rostow’s theory of modernisation) and the other group regards it in a broader perspective as related to culture and society. The philosophy of communication being an organisational delivery system emanates from the idea that development is a process of modernisation and that facilitates the process of the formation of nation- state.

In such a case, communication and information becomes merely a persuasive tool that can assist in the modernisation process. In this process, technology, which symbolises modernity helps information to be disseminated. Thus, development communication under the modernisation framework becomes a process of persuasive marketing of ideas leading to development.

#### **Development communication based on theory of modernisation:**

The flow of aid to the underdeveloped country for development projects necessitated massive dissemination of ideas regarding those projects. Thus, communication had to be a targeted organised activity too.

Under the modernisation framework while tracing the growth of the discipline of development communication, Royal D. Colle (2008) says that it comprises of seven “threads and patterns.” These are: “contributions of organisations like UNDP and individuals like Erskine Childers, processes like Extension Education, Community Participation, Population and Health Communication, Social Marketing, Institution-Building and Information Communication Technology” (ibid).

The pioneering initiative in the field of development communication is generally traced to the United Nations’ Development Support Communication Services (DSCS) unit, which operated under the aegis of UNDP. UNDP was formed after amalgamation of erstwhile Expanded

Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) and United Nations Special Fund on January 1966.<sup>74</sup> The EPTA used to provide ‘technical assistance’ to less privileged nations and United Nations Special Fund was engaged in identifying large and economically feasible development project for the less privileged nations. These two organisations were combined to form the core objective of UNDP. “The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.”<sup>75</sup>

Erskine Childers, was pivotal in the process of formulating UNDP’s development communication process. Childers was a communication expert who personally gave DSCS a targeted approach. Interestingly Childers has no books to his credit, but he actively advocated the necessity of regarding communication as an integral component of every development project. In fact, the term ‘thread’ which is used by Colle, was originally used by Erskine Childers. According to Melkote and Steeves, development communication and development support communication are two different perspectives. They write (2011: 349) “Development communication was guided by the organizing principles of the dominant paradigm... development support communication ...was the response of field workers to the realities in developing countries. With this term, the emphasis changed from viewing communication more holistically and as a support for people’s self-determination, especially those at the grassroots” According to them there was initially resistance coming for various quarters in the acceptance of DSC. However, it eventually, “gained acceptance among several multilateral agencies such as the UNDP, UNICEF, and the FAO” (ibid: 350). According to these organisations, “the DSC strategy has never really taken root among development agencies, partly due to the unwillingness of the experts to give up control over the process, and partly due to the inability of the development support workers to appreciate and operationalize true participatory communication approaches at the grassroots” (ibid). They rue the fact that ‘participatory communication’ had never been understood in its real spirit. Rather it always remained top down as any other form of development communication as the “...design and control of messages, and development agendas...remained with the experts” (ibid: 351). According to Melkote and Steeves (ibid: 350-51), “outcome in most cases has not been true empowerment of

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<sup>74</sup> <https://atom.archives.unesco.org/undp-3> retrieved on 01/05/2020

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/about-us/faqs.html#undp> retrieved on 01/05/2020

the people, but the attainment of some indicator of development as articulated in the modernisation paradigm.”

DSC is generally regarded as a process which is well researched so as to understand the socio-cultural nuance of the targeted audience and the communication is audience-attuned so that the absorption rate is optimal in the people (Childers and Vajrathan, 1968 cited in Colle, 2008). According to them, “The range of Development Support Communications in which project planners and then field executors ought to be concerned is very wide---far, far wider than is covered by...’the mass media’ in the Western World” and warns that “It is equally important for project planners and for the new teams of specialists in Development Support Communication...desperately needs to realize that the ‘project-audience’ for a given act of communications support varies enormously” and that “for professionals in Development Support Communications, ‘media’ or channels are also audience”, therefore “every act of development support communication, and the materials selected and produced for it, have to be tailored very carefully to the intended audience” (ibid:106). Emphasizing the importance of contextualization of the innovations propagated by DSC Childers advocated that those should be “feasible for the audience in terms of their present actual resources” (ibid).

Enumerating various types of Development Support Communication Childers and Vajrathan (1968) say that there are six types, and all of them focus on planning. According to them everyone in the process of DSC require support, from the planners, executors to the beneficiaries. They also regarded research as another essential component of DSC to understand the socio-cultural specificity of the target community. Therefore, they underscored the difference between plain publicity and DSC.

The second thread as Colle calls it is the *Extension* thread. This has been extensively used in the agriculture sector by the World Bank. Extension programmes are informed by the theory of diffusion of innovation, which was very popular during the 1940s and 50s. Bryce Ryan and Neal C. Gross’ study *Acceptance and Diffusion of Hybrid Corn Seed in Two Iowa Communities*, Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Menzel’s 1944, 1948, 1968 studies on *The People’s Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Election* and such other studies confirmed that “information about decision options was communicated by the mass media to key opinion leaders, and from them others throughout the social system” (Melkote and Steeves 2011: 55-56).



Ameur (1994) notes that the World Bank invested more than US\$ 3 billion to extension, which exceeded the combined investment of other international donors. This extension method was “was ‘exported’ to India in the second half of the twentieth century largely through a US Agency for International Development (USAID) project that helped establish agricultural universities in most of the India’s states” (Colle, 2008: 123).

### **Diffusionism:**

The dominant notion in the diffusion or extension approach is that individuals is inclined towards new technology, when they understand the functioning and also the objective of the technology (Andreasen, 1995:9). As mentioned above, extension has its theoretical grounding on the diffusion of innovations theory of development communication. Diffusion of innovations takes off from the theory of diffusionism. Its classical form was described by Malinowski (1927: 31) as the belief “that culture can be contracted only by contagion and that man is an imitative animal.” In other words, culture and development does not happen by itself, it comes from without. And it is believed that “some places are permanent, natural centres of creativity and invention. Even the opponents of classical diffusionism tended to accept its main proposition that Europe is the world's source of culturally significant innovation” (Blaut, 1987:30). Modern diffusionists tend to view the centre as the developed capitalist countries (ibid). Classical diffusionism was rooted in the belief that colonialism is a natural process of diffusing information and culture to the colonies thereby justifying colonial rule.

The earliest models and its basic premises were laid down by Torsten Hagerstrand. According to him, the most important component in the process of diffusion is communication of information about an innovation. “Geographic expressions of human behaviour must be viewed in terms of the information available to the individual decision-maker...and thereby analysed in terms of the ‘social network’ of interpersonal communications through which the information circulates” (Hagerstrand 1967:300).

It is to be noted that Hagerstrand had developed his theory based on a geographical space which was culturally more or less uniform and comprised of a population which had potential adopters and were endowed with technical and economic resources and also “a set of innovations which had demonstrable utility. Information was, in essence, the only missing variable, the only element needed to set the diffusion process in motion” (Blaut, 1977: 344). However, what would

be the applicability of the theory when it came to non-Western world was not clear in his writings and nor did any of the followers of his theory attempt to explain that.

On the other hand, Fred B. Kniffen's theory of conceptual diffusion was "explained and predicted from the theory of culture; hence culture as a complex whole, not one or a few of its elements, becomes the axiom-set for diffusion theory" (ibid:349).

Similarly, modern diffusionism is projected as a theoretical model in which diffusion of ideas and innovation from the developed countries to the third world countries is projected as the only way towards development and modernisation of the third world countries. In a way diffusionism is the process that facilitates modernisation as propounded by Rostow (1952). The basic assumption of the diffusion theory here is that ignorance based on tradition is inbuilt and it is the main hurdle in the process of adoption of new ideas of development. Here "tradition means low rate of civilization and slow rate of change...The idea of tradition as used in diffusionism is basically an idea of absence-of-qualities. Usually the missing qualities are psychological (e.g., 'rationality') or institutional (e.g., 'private property', 'the state'). The myth of emptiness also asserts an actual emptiness of the landscape: there were no indigenous people, or their population was negligibly small (and sparse enough to allow unimpeded settlement by foreigners), or they were 'nomads' and thus had no real claim to land, resources, and territorial sovereignty" (Blaut, 1987:32). These arguments deny the fact that common people might also be intelligent enough to want to acquire knowledge given a chance and a conducive atmosphere to do so (Blaut, 1977:345). Modern diffusionism tends to assert that diffusion proceeds "from person to person, rather than from community to community or from culture to culture" (Rouse, 1961: 96, commenting on Edmonson 1961), "reducing cultural process to the level of individuals, who are thought to be adopting new ideas freely (the myth of 'voluntarism') and as a reflection mainly of cognitive processes and interpersonal communication."

Everett M. Rogers advocated the diffusion of innovations theory in development communication and gave the extension approach an academic rigour. According to him diffusion brings in social change by altering the social structure and its function. He believes that new ideas are to be "invented, diffused, and adopted or rejected, leading to certain consequences, social change occurs" thus according to him "Diffusion is a special type of communication in which the messages are about a new idea" (Rogers, 2003: 6). According to Rogers there are four elements in the diffusion of innovations process (ibid:11-38): a) Innovation which can appeal to the people and

is based on their necessity, b) An appropriate communication channel which is used by maximum numbers amongst the target population, c) Understanding of the social system in which the society operates. As Katz (1961) said “It is as unthinkable to study diffusion without some knowledge of the social structures in which potential adopters are located as it is to study blood circulation without adequate knowledge of the veins and arteries”. Without any understanding of the norms and values of the targeted society the information on the innovation can face obstacles. Rogers sees a very strong role for the opinion leaders in the process of acceptance of the innovation amongst the people. An opinion leader can be any influential person who is held in high esteem by the society and whose words are regarded with lot of respect. In traditional societies he can be the village head, or a teacher or a doctor and even a religious leader. d) The time taken by the people to accept an innovation also is crucial to the success of the diffusion process. According to Rogers, there are five categories of adopters, classified according to the time they take to adopt, they are: (1) innovators, (2) early adopters, (3) early majority, (4) late majority, and (5) laggards (Rogers 2003:22).

However, the most important part of the diffusion process is the innovation itself. The diffusion of innovations research established the importance of communication in the modernisation process at the local level. Rogers, invoking Rostow says that modernisation is a process through which “individuals change from a traditional way of life to a more complex, technologically advanced, and rapidly changing style of life” (Rogers 1969: 48).

Rogers (1976b:220) observed that due to recent change in the concept of development, which “stress equality of distribution, popular participation in decentralised activities, self-development...the concepts and methods of diffusion inquiry must change appropriately.”

Explaining the process of modernisation in development communication, Lerner (1958) in his book *The Passing of the Traditional Society* says, traditional societies are not very forthcoming like the modern societies which are participatory in the societal activities and is built on the basis of consensus. In such a situation, the mass media performs a special role in generating participatory consensus and thus facilitate the process of modernising the society. Mass media exposes people to the innovation, new ideas, and new attitudes and thus accelerates the process of modernisation. Hence the people of the third world countries expand their experience by exposure to mass media. As Melkote and Steeves (2001: 115-116) say, Lerner believed that “mass media had the potential

of blowing the winds of modernisation into isolated traditional communities and replacing the structure of life, values, and behaviour there with ones seen in the modern Western society.”

Similar sentiments found reverberation in Wilbur Schramm’s *Mass Media and National Development* (1964). He commented that third world villages “are drowning in their traditional patterns of life...the urge to develop economically and socially usually comes from seeing how the well-developed countries or the more fortunate people live” (Schramm, 1964: 41-42). Hence, according to him, mass media can function as a “bridge to a wider world.” Therefore, Schramm says, “the task of the mass media of information and the ‘new media’ of education is to speed and ease the long, slow social transformation required for economic development, and, in particular, to speed and smooth the task of mobilising human resources behind the national effort” (ibid: 27). Thus, Schramm regards information as the necessary but missing link that can spur development in the traditional societies.

Extension education added another component called Training and Visit (T and V) in the early 1970s, and was experimented as a component in two regional irrigation projects, the Seyhan (Phase 2) project in Turkey, and the Chambal (Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh) project in India, both funded by the World Bank in 1974. It was believed that through training and visit information could be diffused and that could increase the acceptability of the projects, and thus “overcome some of the inherent weaknesses of public extension system” (Anderson et al 2006:11). In fact, according to Moore (1984:305) India was the “primary nursery of T and V... (as) the World Bank’s handbook on T and V although intended for worldwide use, refers almost extensively to Indian experience and data.”

The external fund which was flowing from the World Bank started dwindling after the first phase mostly because, “the external donors expected that these systems were already ‘mainstreamed’. Thus, the extension systems had to be maintained through national or state budget only” (Anderson et al 2006:16). By that time more than fifty countries were using T and V as an extension method. Though studies showed that T and V system was not a very effective method due to various reasons yet once it was instituted by the government of India and other countries, they remained committed to it and eventually earmarked a substantial budget for the component (Moore 1984:304).

Interestingly, World Bank kept on promoting the T and V experiment as a model one “on the basis of apparently astonishing successes in the early years of the Chambal experiment, including in one area as increase in yields despite a decrease in fertilizer use...The World Bank ‘preached T and V like a religion’. No questioning of the concept was permitted, and the Bank used its considerable resources and propaganda apparatus simply to persuade” (ibid:306-307).

When T and V was introduced, the argument for it was that it will be operational with very little cost, more so in India as India already had the *Gram Sevaks* (village level workers) in existence along with the field staff of the agriculture department. However, it did not turn out to be as cost effective as it was originally thought it would be. In fact, Moore (ibid: 309) writes: “Between 1977 and 1982 the World Bank and the Government of India signed 12 agreements to fund part of the cost of introducing T and V in 13 states. The value of these loans amounted to \$199.6 million. Each related to a five-year period, and the World Bank Annual Reports indicate that this sum amounted to half the total cost of the project...the total value of World Bank loans for these projects in 13 states (not total cost as defined by the Bank, when averaged over five years, is equivalent to 0.11 percent of total Indian Gross Domestic Product derived from agriculture in 1977.”

The T and V lost its sheen due to many reasons as listed by many scholars like Moore. However, it was also found lacking even in the domain of content. As Anderson et al (2006:14) note, “90 percent of completed T&V projects...recorded serious recurrent cost funding shortages, some even while the project was still under implementation. In our judgment this is the most crucial aspect responsible for the ultimate fall of the T&V extension model within a 25-year period from its inception in 1974, rather than the fact that the design contained features that limited the improvement in effectiveness. The promoters of T&V, while being aware of the cost, did not appreciate the political ramifications of high recurrent costs”.

According to Colle (2008:123-125) extension thread suffered from certain issues and mostly he based his observation on the Indian experience. The top down approach of information flow mostly decreased the acceptability of the information and many-a-times it is rendered useless for the population concerned. As information which were diffused were extremely targeted, therefore there was always the potentiality of the farmers finding it not relevant to the issues ailing them. Most of the time the hurried way the trainings were conducted also rendered the diffusion

irrelevant. Other such issues also inflicted the process and therefore the desired effect was not achieved.

The funding and advocacy for this form of extension was primarily done by the World Bank with subsidiary help from FAO and International Fund for Agricultural Development. However, it could not be sustained due to the recurring cost. This attempt at T and V initiated the strong training component that we still see in development communication programme even today.

The third thread, in this fabric of development communication is the *Community Participation* thread. It was again Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) who initiated the inclusion of Community Participation in the communication field. However, the community participation approach was already being practiced by the Puerto Rico's Division of Community Education. Paulo Freire's participatory approach gave community participation an academic grounding and since the mid 1990s the World Bank established a policy of participation into whichever programme it was appropriate for (World Bank, 1994). The District Primary Education Programme (1994-2009), in India, which was funded by the World Bank in 1994 had a component called Community Participation.

“Prior to the 1970s, almost all of Latin American communication development theory and practice was based on concepts and models imported from the United States and Europe and used in ways that were both incommensurable with and detrimental to the region's social context” (Beltran, 1975, quoted in Huesca, 2008:181). These models and framework of theory attempted to change individual behaviour and preferences ignoring completely the socio-political and economic idiosyncrasies of the larger society these individuals are located in. This led to pinning all responsibilities of underdevelopment on the individuals rather than on the system. As Huesca (ibid: 182) observes, “The vertical structures of many extension projects paralleled the hierarchical organisation of landlord-peasant relations preceding it in Latin American *latifundios*, resulting in an unintended continuity of in-egalitarian relations.”

Rogers, who was the communication theorist who talked about the dominant paradigm initially, changed his stance in the mid 1970s. He talked about rise of new concept of development which according to him endeavours to bring about social and material change through a participatory mode, “...thus the concept of development has been expanded and made much more flexible, and at the same time more humanitarian, in its implications” (Rogers, 1976a:19). In fact,

even Schramm who was a vehement advocate of evolutionary model of development also came to this conclusion that, “things are not as simple as had been assumed, and the generality sought by the old paradigm may not now be possible” (Schramm, 1976:48). Echoing the mood of the time, Oshima (1976:17-18) opined, that the dominant discourse on development strategy went through a re-thinking as the earlier strategy believed that industrialization is the panacea to modernisation. This was contraindicative of the ground level reality where traditional producers hold the fort. Therefore, the demands for industrial commodities could not be sustained along with the long-term community dependence on traditional produce. Thus, the thrust for participatory development, involving the traditional producer was mooted as the new form of development communication.

*The Report on Means of Enabling Active Participation in the Communication Process and the Analysis of Right to Communicate*, presented at the nineteenth session of the UNESCO General Conference at Nairobi in 1976, declared that: “In the past the role of communication in human society was seen essentially as to inform and influence people. It is now been proposed that communication should be understood as a process of social interaction through a balanced exchange of information and experience...This shift in perception implies the predominance of dialogue over monologue. The aim is to achieve a system of horizontal communication based upon an equitable distribution of resources and facilities enabling all persons to send as well as receive messages” (cited in O’Sullivan-Ryan and Kaplan, 1978:3).

The community participation thread comes more or less from the dependency theory. As mentioned already, the dependency theorists argue that rather than being a force for development, foreign penetration, technology and information have only created under development. When the Latin American theorists started articulating their criticism of the dominant theory of development communication, many votaries of that theory interestingly almost immediately changed their stand (Lerner 1976; Rogers 1976a; Schramm 1976). “They acknowledged that their conceptualization of development has been oversimplified by focussing narrowly on individuals as locus for change, theorizing in a universal, evolutionary manner, ignoring cultural specificity, and emphasizing mass media” (Huesca, 2008: 185). However, that realization did not mean necessarily that they changed their stand completely. In fact, they rather believed that dominant paradigm basically still holds water and in fact Lerner (1976: 61-62)) as mentioned above, emphasizes that, “...the proper work of social science is the finding of *regularities* in the human condition---those common characteristics that unify human beings everywhere despite the endless diversity of the

characteristics that differentiate them... advocacy of the “culture-specific” will divert the quest for new paradigm onto an abandoned side-track.” Lerner and Schramm (1976: 343) do agree that in the area of development communication there “...is a shift in the centre of gravity...from the centre toward local theatres of activity” and that there is a need to “unlock local energies” and “include interpersonal networks in addition to opinion leaders”. In fact, the concept of participation only added and expanded the range of dominant paradigm for its proponent making it more expansive, flexible, and humane (Rogers, 1993).

This change of perception which was visible in the 1970s with the dependency theorists also effected the practice of development communication, albeit with the ‘primary’ objective of turning the underdeveloped world into the Western developed world remaining unchanged.

Ever since it had come into the discourse, approach towards the practice of participatory communication had been strictly divided. According to a group of scholars, participation itself was sufficient. They believed that the people at the grass-root had the required know how to improve their standard of living based on their cultural specificities. Therefore, for them participatory process become essentially enlightening, liberating and enabling (Dissanayake 1985; White 1994; Vargas 1995). “Under these circumstances, all people are said to take ownership of communication and to experience empowering outcomes. These utopian visions of development communication have been called ‘genuine’ and ‘authentic’ participation, as opposed to the manipulative, pseudo-participation...” (Huesca, 2008:187). The other group of scholars believe that participation needs to be integrated into the essentially top-down development theories, in a way redeem the dominant paradigm from the interrogation it experienced in the 1970s. “When put into practice, such uses of participatory communication exemplify, at best, passive collaboration, at worst, manipulative consultation done only to advance predetermined objectives” (Diaz Bordenave 1994; Dudley 1993).

However, in practice a whole lot of experiments were done in participatory communication. After the declaration of the New World Information and Communication Order, many scholars attempted to reinterpret the role of participation in communication. O’Sullivan-Ryan and Kaplun (1978:18) defined participation in communication as “higher level of public involvement in communication system. It includes the involvement of the public in the production process and also in the management and planning of the communication system.”



In spite of being in practice for almost 40 years, the theoretical understanding of participatory communication has been still quite fuzzy. Huesca (2008: 193) aptly comments, “Much of the conceptual fuzziness in this field is due to instrumental adaptations and adaptations of participation in projects that are essentially attempts to improve information transfers and cloak them as communication”. Therefore, he suggested, “Adopting process models as the foundation of theory and practice will provide conceptual guidance for negotiating the means-end polarity and for distinguishing participatory communication from information transfer” (ibid).

In the meantime, the World Bank, and many special agencies of the UN as well as other donor agencies successfully incorporated participation into programmes wherever applicable and ironically participation became “an operational principle diffused slowly through ministries and major development agencies” (Colle, 2008:129). Therefore, it is natural that when participatory communication was adopted by the donor agencies like the World Bank it was sanitised enough by the theoretical argument that participation should be bereft of any ideological pinning (Chu, 1987;1994). This decoupling of ideology from participation made it easier for participation to develop its compatibility “with social marketing, capitalist expansion and global trade” (Moemka, 1994). In the process it turned the essential principle of participatory communication upside down.

The fourth thread is the Population IEC (Information Education Communication) and Health Communication thread. Along with agriculture development, an exhaustive amount of communication material was also generated in the domain of population control (area of this thesis). In this area, the most widely used approach was IEC i.e. Information Education Communication, which was meant to disseminate knowledge of contraception usage, motivate people towards family planning and thus influence their behaviour positively. In 1969, UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) started using the label of IEC for its communication activities. Since then for a long time IEC was regarded as exclusively a part of the population and family planning programme.

IEC underwent changes due to various issues in the last two decades or so. The first change came with the growing concern for gender equality. The discourse on population control was always targeting the women as the potential user of the contraceptive technology almost neglecting the role and responsibility of the man. Even the usage of condoms was also supposed to be the responsibility of the woman. Hence the women rights group began protesting against this targeted communication holding the woman responsible for the entire population debacle. The women's

groups generally did agree that women should have the right to make informed, unconstrained choices on reproduction and to have free access to high-quality family planning services. By the time of the United Nations Conference on the Decade of Women, held in Nairobi in 1985, "(T)he pro-motion of reproductive rights as fundamental to women's achievement of a just status in society had become a worldwide goal of women's rights activists" (Petchesky 1990:1, cited in Finkle and McIntosh 1994:24).

IEC however went through transformation after the ICPD (International Conference on Population and Development) held in Cairo in 1994. This conference saw a paradigmatic change in the approach towards the population programme. The core topic was 'reproductive health' which was defined as "a state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity in all matters relating to the reproductive system" (World Health Organization, 1997: xi). The discussion on women's empowerment visibly shifted from narrow contraceptive delivery to the more wider development approach, emphasizing the significance of reproductive health, political empowerment, education, economic prospect, and many such objectives. It was simply believed that if women are empowered in all those areas, they will make the best reproductive choices for themselves, which, effectively will translate into reducing the world population eventually. In the process, men became an important target of IEC as they "often (had) dominant roles in decisions crucial to women's reproductive health" (Drennan, 1998).

This new approach towards the population issue had a dramatic influence on the perception of IEC too. The Programme of Action of ICPD made the task for the communicators broader with the issue of reaching out to men becoming a part of the communication agenda. Thus, the focus of IEC began to turn towards advocacy. Servaes (2000:104) says that advocacy requires to support in developing policies which offer solution to issues. There are generally multiple stakeholders in the process advocacy, from religious leaders, to political leaders and community leaders as well. Many institutions too come together in this case to promote and execute the advocacy process. The John Hopkins University's Centre for Communication Programmes designed the advocacy approach for the new IEC. Phyllis Piotrow a long-term head of the Centre believed advocacy needs to be made the top priority of the grassroots level organisation and only then can they hope to elicit support from the policy makers for reproductive health (Piotrow, 2005). The Centre termed advocacy as a "six-step process involving Analysis, Strategy, Mobilization, Action, Evaluation and Continuity and designed the communication strategy based on these six steps" (Cole, 2008:131).

Piotrow et al (1997: 15 footnotes) writes about the changing nature of IEC from three independent terms to one consolidated idea where communication is the linkage between the other two.

For each of the thematic areas of reproductive health and population and development there are many sub themes. These thematic areas have specific IEC and advocacy objective. For example, IEC in Reproductive Health had very defined objective: “To increase awareness and knowledge about health hazards of early marriage, female genital mutilation, and other malpractices, and bring about change in attitudes and behaviours among relevant segments of the population” (ibid:133). Similarly, with other campaigns too, the specific objectives were defined before IEC is designed. Thus, IEC became a more technical and targeted effort, unlike community participation and the other forms of development communication.

The fifth component of development communication is Social Marketing. This is a process through which development is sold to the people the way other consumer items are sold. The idea of social marketing was first developed by Kotler and Zaltman in 1971. They regarded social marketing as a “much larger idea than social advertising or even communication” and defined social marketing as, “the design, implementation, and control of programmes calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product, planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research” (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971:5). Social marketing specifically focussed on the “four Ps” --- product, price, place, and promotion. But each of the four elements gradually expanded. “By 1995 the definition of social marketing had expanded to include not only most voluntary public health programmes but many other social issues” (Piotrow et al, 1997:19 and Kotler and Zaltman, 1971:10).

However, it is also important to mention here that, social marketing and later on behaviour change communication were strategies which were expressly used only in regards to health, starting with family planning. As Cole says, social marketing strategy has increased the importance of research in development programmes. It has also brought the beneficiaries of development programmes to the core of the communication and information process, targeting them specially and designing the campaigns (2008:134). Unfortunately, social marketing is often confused with advertising and commercial marketing and thus dilutes its essential nature. It was Alan Andreasen who gave social marketing a theoretical dimension when he wrote his book *The Marketing of Social Change* (1995), explaining the difference of social marketing and commercial marketing

thus: “the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programmes designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society” (Andreasen, 1995:7).

The 1980s and the 90s saw huge expansion in the social marketing programmes, so much so that it is generally termed as the era of social marketing in family planning. It was conducted mainly under the aegis of Population Services International and the Social Marketing for Change programme of the Futures Group (which was responsible for selling of condoms, oral contraceptives, IUDs, injectable contraceptives, oral rehydration salt and even mosquito nets). The perceptible threat of the spread of HIV/AIDS gave a serious boost to social marketing. “By the mid 1990s, 54 social marketing programmes were under way in 50 countries, providing 13.9 million couple-years of contraceptive protection and serving nine percent of couples of reproductive ages in developing countries” (Harvey, 1996).

Piotrow et al (1997:20) could see many positive aspects of this “strategic form of communication” as it brought “a useful discipline” to the area and made the communication component organised and strategic. The communication materials began to be regarded as a product to be sold to the target audience, because of which audience research to understand the nature of the audience segment became very important. These practitioners were excited that communication component, which was till then more or less a subsidiary part of development projects would get the right boost by soliciting the services of professionally skilled communication experts, like the market researchers, advertising experts, public relation professionals, advertising agencies etc. They believed that this would enhance creativity in health communication. Nobody bothered that that was the beginning of the end of socio-cultural nuance in development communication.

With social marketing, health communication reached the specialised space of strategic communication. In fact, Piotrow et al (ibid) say, “the present era in which, field, and marketing approaches all play a role in national health strategies, can best be described as ‘the strategic communication era’ both for programme and for communication.”

Kotler and Zaltman (1971:12) regret that most of the social campaigners practice social advertising rather than marketing, but that does not mean that social marketing is not effective rather they opine that “Social marketing appears to represent a bridging mechanism which links the

behavioural scientist's knowledge of human behaviour with the socially useful framework for effective social planning at a time when social issues have become more relevant and critical." In fact, with social marketing the process naturally became market oriented.

The social marketing process was refined further and a new strategy was formulated. This strategy was to motivate people to change their behaviour and adopt new habits which would make them behave in a certain expected way and it was called Behaviour Change Communication (BCC). UNICEF (2005:6) mandated that "BCC is a research-based, consultative process of addressing, knowledge, attitudes, and practices through identifying, analysing, and segmenting audiences and participants in programmes and by providing them with relevant information and motivation through well-defined strategies, using an appropriate mix of interpersonal, group and mass-media channels, including participatory methods."

Population Communication Services, (a program in the Centre for Communication Programs at the John Hopkins University's School of Hygiene and Public Health, established with the fund from USAID) accordingly developed a theoretical framework called the Steps to Behaviour Change (SBC). It was more or less modelled on the diffusion of innovations theory. As Piotrow et al (1997:22) say it was a mixture of "diffusion of innovations theory and the input/output persuasion model, enriched by social marketing experience and flexible enough to use other theories within each of the steps, or stages as appropriate. It consists of five major stages of change: knowledge, approval, intention, practice, and advocacy."

The SBC model was based on the belief that there is a steady progress in individuals as well as groups from knowledge gathering to sustained behaviour change and advocacy. It also further recognises that every individual or group needs different messages and different approaches through various platforms to reach them and sensitise them towards an issue.

Population Communication Services (PCS) project team gave the process of developing strategic communication a systematic approach. In 1982, Phyllis Piotrow brought the PCS project to the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.<sup>76</sup> The PCS team included the Academy for Educational Development; Porter; Novelli and Associates; and the Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health. This team developed the initial 'P' project for Health Communication. The P-process is a framework designed to guide communication professional to develop

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<sup>76</sup> <https://ccp.jhu.edu/about-ccp/> retrieved on 28/04/2020

communication strategies across the world. This process comprises of six steps (Fig 1) viz., a) Analysis, i.e. to talk to the potential audiences to gather knowledge of the existing resources and policies of communication in the countries, b) Design strategy: which takes into consideration the region specific issues, the behaviour change model or theory to be used as the framework, media channels to be used etc., c) Development, Pretesting and Production i.e. to develop messaging according to the findings in the first two steps and testing its credibility and then producing the content, d) Management, Implementation and Monitoring: Mobilize key organisation, implement the action plan and constantly monitor implementation during the process of dissemination of the communication materials in the population, e) Evaluation, this step is crucial to the further development of the communication process and f) Planning for continuity, which takes into consideration the newly emerging challenges and redesigning the messaging accordingly and achieving self-sufficiency. (Piotrow 2017:27, Health Communication Partnership 2003, Health Communication Capacity Collaborative 2013).

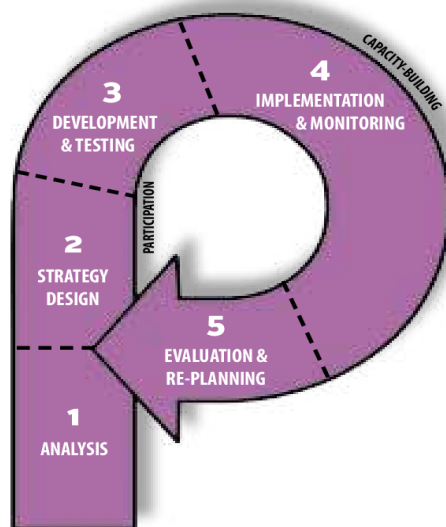


Fig 1, The P-Process, Source: researchgate.net

In 2002 Global Health Initiative of John Hopkins University, initiated the Health Communication Partnership (HCP). The partnership was supported by USAID and it included motely of organisations, viz., John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/ Centre for Communication Programme, the Academy of Educational Development, Save the Children, the Institutional HIV/AIDS Alliance and the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at the

Tulane University. This alliance works to strengthen public health in the field of family planning, maternal health, child survival, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis etc., through strategic communication programme. It ended in 2008.<sup>77</sup> HCP added improvement to the P-Process so as to address the goals of HCP as well as enhance the quality of strategic communication based on the experience of P-Process since its inception in 1983 (John Hopkins University, 2003).

CCP developed the Pathways to a Health Competent Society model as the theoretical framework for HCP. The model emanates from the belief that a highly health competent person works positively towards enhancement and sustenance of health in a holistic way, touching the lives of all people around her. According to this model, communication in various ways designed according to the target of the programme, can bring about positive changes in the society regarding the health issue in hand. Therefore, it originates in the socio-economic and political specificities of the society concerned. Based on these specificities the communication process is designed to take the message to the people through relevant platforms. The success of the communication process is dependent on various domains within which it functions: ‘the socio-political environment, health services delivery system, and among individuals within communities.’ The synergy of all these domains in the communication process can eventually enable changes in the society (Storey et al Undated).

According to McKee (2004:45) “The Pathways model reflects the concept of mutually supportive channels of communication, aimed at different levels: the socio-political environment, service delivery systems, communities, families and individuals. It also outlines the initial outcomes and behavioural outcomes that precede actual changes...In short it summarises the multiple elements that together lead to the desired long-term outcome”. It must be mentioned here that the most extensive usage of this model was seen in the HIV/AIDS communication campaigns initiated by the HCP.

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<sup>77</sup> <http://hopkinsglobalhealth.org/faculty-research/project-map/health-communication-partnership/> retrieved on 28/04/2020

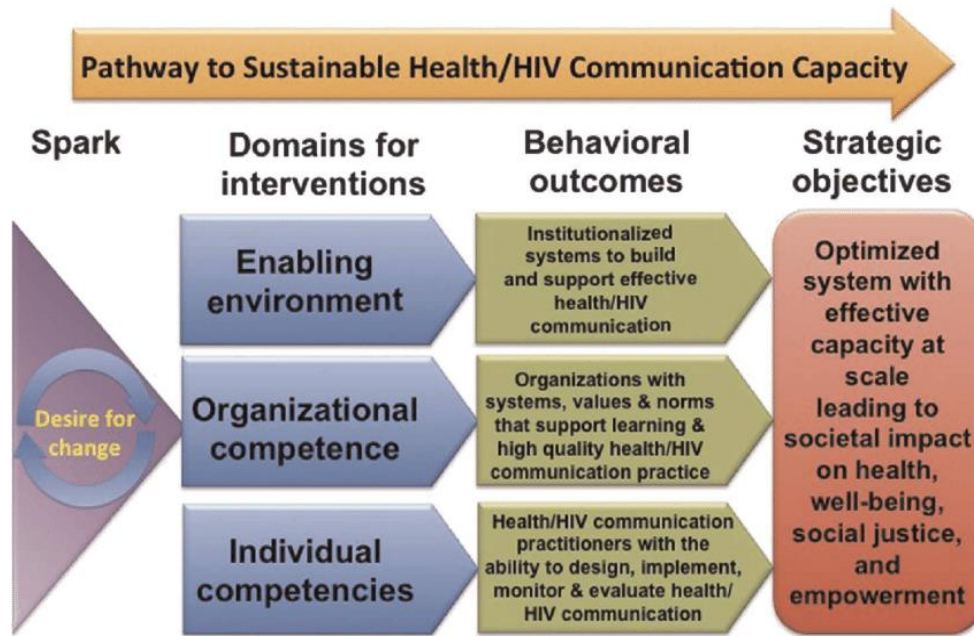


Fig 2: Pathways Model, Source: researchgate.net

The P-Process which was in practice since 1983, went through some organic changes as new experiences were added to the process. The new enhanced P-Process has five steps and a component which runs throughout the project. The five steps are: a) Analysis, but executed in two-levels, situation analysis and communication and audience analysis, b) Community participation, where every decision is taken with the help of the involvement of the community, c) Once the participatory decisions are taken then comes the bigger step of implementation and close monitoring, d) in this new P-Process, management is clubbed with feedback, e) the original P-Process mentioned evaluation as the last stage. However, the new strategy allows the usage of the evaluation results for designing new projects or even to analyse the existing project and f) the sixth step is not actually an independent step. Rather it continues throughout the P-Process, which is participation and capacity building. This allows building of strong partnership and coalition between the international, national, local and community level.

To sum up, the revised P-Process gave better focus to the analysis step by making it better structured and thus through situation analysis, epidemiological data could be collected for better strategic planning. Communication and audience analysis were envisioned to collect information on the behaviour and values of the audience which could be used to strategize better communication content. It also incorporated the concept of community participation so that the



involvement of the target population is better ensured and process of strategic communication is strengthened. The new P-Process also ensures that the feedback of the programme is utilized to strengthen the programme further.

From this entire trajectory flowed the next step of strategic communication, which was community mobilization. For the complete involvement of the society, communities across the spectrum has to be mobilized to support as well as practice the communication process designed to achieve the development target, thereby realise the desired behaviour change. Most of the World Bank financed development projects in the 1990s had a strong component of community mobilization built into it (mentioned above). It is to be noted here that the global threat of HIV/AIDS catapulted the process of communication to a more strategic form.

After the completion of the HCP project, the Johns Hopkins Centre for Communication Programs (CCP) received two five-year awards from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to lead its social and behaviour change programs around the world, one from 2012-17 and the next from 2017-2022.

The project for 2012-17 was called the Health Communication Capacity Collaborative or HC3 which used SBCC based on the Pathways model and improved P-Process, but targeting to not only change behaviour, but also “positively influence knowledge, attitudes and social norms.”<sup>78</sup> In India HC3 was involved in offering technical assistance “to unite the SBCC community in India through Springboard for Health Communication, including facilitation of virtual and face-to-face activities targeting health communication professionals.”<sup>79</sup> That way the project was involved in skill strengthening at individual level for journalists, program managers, video and radio producers, health workers and counsellors, health education units and local government staff etc. It also offered support to state and national government to implement national health communication strategies.

The 2017-22 project of SBCC is called Breakthrough ACTION. India is not a part of this project. “Firmly grounded in proven practices, Breakthrough ACTION works in partnership with governments, civil society, and communities around the world to implement creative and

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<sup>78</sup>[http://ccp.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/JHU\\_Social\\_and\\_Behaviour\\_FULL\\_OUTLINES\\_V2.pdf](http://ccp.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/JHU_Social_and_Behaviour_FULL_OUTLINES_V2.pdf) retrieved on 30/04/2020

<sup>79</sup> <https://healthcommcapacity.org/where-we-work/hc3-technical-assistance-countries/> retrieved on 30/04/2020

sustainable SBC programming, nurture SBC champions, mainstream new techniques and technologies, and advocate strategic and sustained investment in SBC.”<sup>80</sup>

The health communication strategies from 2012 onwards was very extensively started using the mobile platform and the content is being generated for mobile listening as well as on the other traditional platforms too.

It is clear from the above that in this entire trajectory of development of IEC to Social marketing and to Behaviour Change Communication, that health communication/development communication has supposedly become ‘scientific’ and ‘strategic’ based on “quantification” of data, dependent on research but somewhere down the line the nuanced social idiosyncrasies has been lost.

If we observe the strategies and the rest of the threads listed above, the next thread naturally flows from these i.e. the institutions involved in theorising, legitimizing, generating and sustaining the development communication approaches and strategies. Colle (2008:137) calls in “nation-building.”

For example, the Ford Foundation supported the family planning communication programme in India in the 1950s. Ford Foundation also got involved in the Green Revolution and “funded the creation of a modern agricultural communication centre at the G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology in Uttaranchal state, where Agriculture Extension was taught as a core subject. In fact, FAO too later contributed to upgrading the centre into a Centre for Advanced Study of Agriculture Communication” (ibid).

Similar efforts were visible in other third world countries too by various organs of the United Nations. One such agency which has been quite active in institution building is UNESCO. “The first study on the professional training of communicators (journalists) was undertaken as far back as in 1949. In the same year, UNESCO commissioned a film-maker to train Chinese village educators in animation techniques for the preparation of cartoon films” (UNESCO, 2008: 222). UNESCO had been organizing the United Nations Round Table on Communication for Development every two year since 1988.

UNESCO was also involved in the Global Knowledge Network (GKN) for the United Nations Task Force on Information and Communication Technology as well as with the

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<sup>80</sup> <https://breakthroughactionandresearch.org/about/breakthrough-action/> retrieved on 30/04/2020

International Telecommunications Union in the organisation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in 2003 and Tunis in 2005.<sup>81</sup>

UNESCO also patronised many associations working in the realms of communication and media to facilitate the promotion of various contemporary ideas of development communication. Prominent among them were the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), Asia Media Information Centre (AMIC) in Asia, African Council for Communication Education (ACCE) in Africa, Asociacion Latinoamericana de Investigadores de la Comunicacion (ALAIIC) in Latin America, ECREA in Europe. UNESCO acknowledges that their involvement with these organisations was because, “It is through this academic network that many conceptual dimensions of dependency theory, participatory theory, or of critical research, have been exercised and reinforced” (UNESCO, 2008:223).

UNESCO in fact had a Division of Development of Communication which was always active in various seminars and workshops being organized with cooperation of various agencies of the United Nations. “In 2000, and in close co-operation with UNAIDS, an innovative health care information methodology was developed through investigative journalism in East Africa” (ibid:224).

The Third Medium Term Plan of 1989 of UNESCO put special focus on communication when it stated that one of the objectives is “to strengthen communication capacities in the developing countries so that they may participate more actively in the communication process” (Hancock, 2000:39). In 1980, after years of debate and discussion on its mandate, UNESCO came out with the International Programme for the Development Communication (IPDC) as its main operational instrument for upgrading the communication capacity of developing nations. In India, Film and Television Institute of India located at Pune (which is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) received funds for infrastructure development. UNESCO also assisted in the “planning and development of a number of national news agencies, notably in Bangladesh, China, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Tanzania, Tunisia and Zimbabwe” (UNESCO, 2008:229).

UNESCO has also been active in the development in the area of Community Radio. The low power transmitter developed by UNESCO has been effectively used by countries like Sri

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<sup>81</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/building-knowledge-societies/wsisis> retrieved on 20/04/2020

Lanka, Bhutan, Tonga, Phillipines, Jamaica, Kenya, Ghana etc. “UNESCO’s international initiative for Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs) aims to promote community empowerment and to address the digital divide by combining community broadcasting with the Internet and related technologies” (ibid:227). These low-cost community telecentres attempt at breaching the digital divide of the third world by providing Internet, phone, fax and photocopying services to the remotest part and help the people to communicate information for development. These CMCs are combined with the community radio stations in those places. Even now UNESCO sponsors a chair in the University of Hyderabad on Community Media, which has been running since 2011.<sup>82</sup>

There had been other attempts by UNESCO to empower the communication angle of the developing world. “UNESCO had collaborated in the development of a software called AFRALPHA which enables all African languages to be transcribed for printing in various forms. UNESCO also initiated the first move to computerization of Asian non-Latin alphabets and scripts” with the help of the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok (UNESCO, 2008:230).

As UNESCO itself states: “UNESCO’s interest in communication is holistic, encompassing all aspect of the discipline---technological, social, political, and cultural. That is UNESCO’s strength...At times, UNESCO’s contribution is no more than as a source of information, or of informants. On other occasions it plays a more prominent role; in promoting South-North dialogue, in reinforcing communication capacity in the developing countries, or in monitoring a free flow of information” (ibid: 231). UNESCO was also active in developing the model curricula of *Journalism* education for the third world countries. It is generally observed that most of the third world countries have accepted the syllabus and has implemented it almost regarding it as a sacrosanct document.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) had always been very active in the development communication activities in the developing world, as already mentioned above. The main goals of FAO are “eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; the elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all; and, the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations.”<sup>83</sup> During the period of 1970s to the 1980s, the main focus of FAO in the realm of development communication was dissemination of information and

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<sup>82</sup> <https://ucommedia.in/about-us/> retrieved on 27/04/2020

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.fao.org/about/en/> retrieved on 25/05/2020

motivation as well as training field workers and rural producers. Many specific programmes were undertaken to achieve these targets. Accordingly, development communication programmes were also devised.

To motivate and disseminate information, the most used medium by FAO was the radio. With high adult illiteracy, radio became the most cost-effective mode of communication for developmental messages. “But while much of the emphasis in the 1970s was on supporting open broadcast with a national and regional reach, a number of disadvantages were noted. Typically, it was conducted without involving farmers or extension in its programming and was literally ‘open’ in the sense that broadcasts were directed at unorganized audiences” (Coldevin, 2008:234). In spite of criticism, radio always remained the mainstay for all multimedia campaigns. A World Bank study of 1983 even reiterated that, controlled class studies too show that, processing of data from various media platform have individual differences and therefore providing information through multi media campaigns caters better to both learning styles and learning necessity (World Bank, 1983).

FAO has a long history of utilizing multi-pronged communication to achieve targets of various development issues related to agriculture. For example, the swamp rice production campaign in Sierra Leone, project to stamp “out rinderpest viruses in 34 countries across West, Central, and East Africa, increase of maize and sorghum production in Lesotho, campaign for rat control in Bangladesh and Malaysia, for integrated weed management in Malaysia and pest surveillance in Thailand etc.” (Coldevin, 2008:236). The modus operandi for all these campaigns were to conduct a baseline survey of knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP), and media access and preference drawn from stratified sample of the population concerned. Focussed groups discussion was also as important to get additional qualitative information.<sup>84</sup> “Overall, the results of all campaigns were impressive. For example, the rat control campaign in Bangladesh during 1983 raised the adoption of rat control practices among wheat farmers from 10 to 32 per cent, resulting in an average harvest gain of 54 kg per hectare in treated fields. A follow-up campaign in 1984 with all types of farmers showed 47 per cent practicing rat control before and 67 per cent after the exercise with average overall harvest gains of 44 kg per hectare” (Coldevin, 2008:237).

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<sup>84</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-y4774e.pdf> retrieved on 25/05/2020

As far as the training component for field workers and rural producers is concerned, the main focus was on to improve their interpersonal communication skills. While training the rural producers the extension workers or the subject matter experts generally depend on group media such as slides, film-strips, audio cassettes, flip-charts, village theatre and video” (ibid). These “group media always elicit immediate feedback from the producers and establishes a strong two-way flow of information” (ibid). It has been found that, “...video has emerged as the medium of choice for supporting participatory farmer training in a variety of FAO rural development projects” (Coldevin, 1988). “During extensive long-term projects in Peru, Mexico and Mali, FAO has perfected a complete learning package that combines video with discussion, simple printed materials, and practical fieldwork” (Coldevin, 2008:237).

The 1990s saw a change in the approach to development communication towards participatory communication from diffusion of innovations, as mentioned earlier. One of FAOs “early exercises in ‘interactive’ participatory communication for development was carried out over a three-year period in Philippines from 1991-1994” (Coldevin, 1995). This project was funded by UNDP and “was implemented by the Applied Communication Division (ACD) of the Philippines Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development and five of its Regional Applied Communication offices” (ibid). Development Communication was a curriculum which was being taught in the Los Banos based University of the Philippines, from 1954. They had a independent College of Development Communication for that purpose. That college also provided support to the project. The main take-away from the project was the introduction of Community Audio Towers (CATS) which was operated by local farmers and extension agents. A 4-month School of the Air was run with the help of the CATS. The farmers were given know how on modern methods of rice farming and integrated pest control. The end result was better pest control and yield of rice (Semujju, 2016).

Many such participatory development communication projects were practised in various parts of the developing countries, for example, the SADC (South African Development Community) Regional Centre of Communication for Development of Harare was a 4-year FAO project aimed at “providing communication advice, setting up linkages, a clearing house for documentation, production of information and discussion materials, and training for all development sectors with an emphasis...on agriculture, health, sanitation, and environment”

(Coldevin, 2008: 241). FAO had also been “actively supporting the use of ICTs for agriculture development through rural telecentres, and other means” (Ibid: 243).

Another remarkable experiment in development communication by FAO was the Farmer Field Schools or FFSs. It was initially begun in Indonesia in 1989. These schools were run for a cropping season. Farmers meet and discuss issues related to the crop and decided on their own the best method for the crop (Coldevin, 2003:7).

In 2001-2002, FAO experimented with a new platform of development communication in Egypt. It is called the Virtual Extension, Research and Communication Network or VERCON. This project was targeted towards breaching the gap between research and extension with the help of open internet network, making access possible for the farmers. The Egypt project was launched in 2003, followed by one in Mali and in 2005 the Bhutan project was launched (Treinen, 2010).

One very important and universally lauded development communication project which was successfully launched and sustained in India was the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) project. This has been discussed extensively in the Chapter four. However, the most important fact which needs to be pointed out here is how many international institutions like UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, ITU, NASA etc. came together to provide logistic, financial, intellectual and academic support to make this project a one of a kind in the realms of usage of modern technology, i.e. satellite technology for development communication. This project which was active during 1975-76 changed the face of media of communication in India.

Another institution that has been actively engaged in development communication is UNICEF, working in the areas of health, sanitation, safe drinking water, immunisation etc., in almost all developing countries. In matters related to health and related issues, the focus of UNICEF activities is to change the behaviour of the target population. The theoretical framework for the development communication activities of UNICEF has been for behavioural change communication. Therefore, it is believed that for such changes to be effective and sustained, “development communication must be integrated and coordinated with other interventions in education and policy advocacy and implementation aimed at nurturing the new behaviour” (McKee et al, 2008: 254-55). This integrated approach is defined in the following figure:

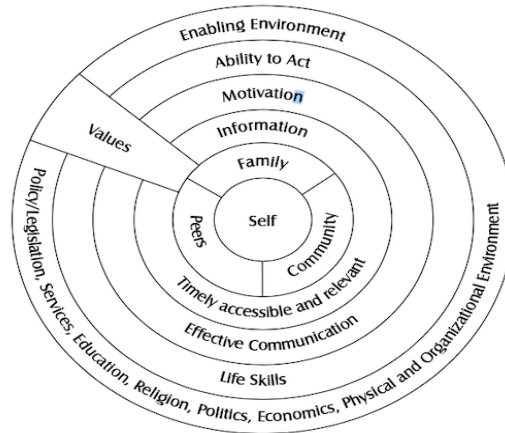


Fig 3, Source: McKee et al, 2008: 255

An excellent example of UNICEF’s usage of behaviour change communication is the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) which was designed for the benefit of adolescent girl located in Eastern as well as Southern Africa. “The SCI is primarily aimed at delaying the age of sexual debut for African girls and empowering them to handle sexual advances from boys and men, including ‘sugar daddies’, and other forms of sexual exploitation” (McKee et al., 2004:1). Sara was projected as a symbol for girls’ empowerment in the face of HIV/AIDS in Africa. The SCI involved formative research and production of an expanding set of communication tools, including animated videos, comic books with users’ guides, posters, and a radio series. These tools were conceptualized, researched, and implemented in 12 African countries between 1995 and 1999. An independent, mid-term evaluation, completed during 1999-2000, provides evidence that girls are positively influenced by Sara to delay having sex for the first time, or avoid situations of sexual abuse and exploitation. UNICEF, governments, NGOs, and private-sector partners should continue to use Sara tools and expand SCI implementation through partnerships. Sara is popular in many countries and had the potential to represent a “brand” for girls’ empowerment throughout sub-Saharan Africa (ibid).

A similar project was launched in South Asia called the *Meena* Communication Initiative by UNICEF in 1998. “The Meena Communication Initiative was developed by UNICEF as a mass communication project aimed at changing perceptions and behaviour that hamper the survival, protection and development of girls in South Asia. The Meena Initiative (similar to the Sara Initiative) involves the production of a multimedia package. Gender, child rights and educational messages are communicated using the medium of popular entertainment. The main character is a



young girl called Meena whose life experience exposes the discrimination against girls and women and offers positive insights from which families and communities can learn”<sup>85</sup>. Comic books, radio programmes, posters, cartoon films were generated with extensive research trying to understand the cultural specificities of the region, training communication experts on generation of the programmes, focus group discussion on the issues etc. Clark Christian, the head of the Meena Communication Initiative for UNICEF, South Asia discussed the peculiarity of the Initiative: “it is a radical departure from traditional communication projects in the non-profit sector. It has been designed to be ultimately self-financing. As a result, after the launch the project is planned to move out of UNICEF and be set up as a quasi-independent foundation in its own right...the foundation will operate something like the US-based Children’s Television Workshop which produces the popular children’s television show Sesame Street” (Clark, 2012).

The evaluation study conducted by the Social Research Institute confirmed that the campaign “had a very positive impact in improving life skills among children, for example, 98% of the children interviewed, felt that they were feeling more confident and could communicate more freely among the peers as well as with parents and teachers.”<sup>86</sup>

Similar development communication projects are still continuing under the aegis of UNICEF in all the third world countries. “UNICEF Communication for Development (C4D) employs a mix of social mobilization, advocacy and behaviour and social change strategies on issues ranging from polio immunisation to birth registration, from Ebola response to girls’ education, from exclusive breastfeeding to prevention of HIV and AIDS. C4D practitioners believe that sustainable and long-term behavioural and social change is the result of a participatory, human rights-based process of social transformation. This process helps shift political, social and support systems by giving voice to members of all communities and providing them with the skills they need to advocate effectively for long-lasting changes. C4D ensures that children with disabilities, as well as indigenous children and minority children, are included in all processes.”<sup>87</sup>

C4D of UNICEF functions on the basis of the following principles,<sup>88</sup> “Create spaces for plurality of voices and community narratives; Encourage listening, dialogue and debate; Ensure active and meaningful participation of children and women; Reflect principles of inclusion, self-

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<sup>85</sup>[https://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index\\_8021.html](https://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_8021.html) retrieved on 02/12/2019

<sup>86</sup><https://unicef.in/Story/82/Meena-helps-in-improving-attendance-of-girls-in-schools> retrieved on 03/12/2019

<sup>87</sup>[https://www.unicef.org/cbsc/index\\_42328.html](https://www.unicef.org/cbsc/index_42328.html) retrieved on 02/05/2020

<sup>88</sup> ibid

determination, participation and respect by prioritizing, giving visibility and voice to marginalized and vulnerable groups; Link community perspectives and voices with sub-national and national policy-dialogue; Start early and address the whole child; Children as agents of change and as a primary audience; Build self-esteem and confidence of children and care providers.”

All these efforts targeted to involve people to evolve an expected behaviour pattern by creating an enabling environment for practicing that particular behaviour. This is how strategic development communication was translated into practice. Therefore, such programmes focused “on creating a supportive and enabling environment which are supportive to positive behaviours and minimize or change those which are negative or resistant” (McKee et al, 2008: 268).

Colle (2008:139) calls the last thread a parallel or a sub-component of the sixth thread i.e. ICT (Information Communication Technology). ICT basically means the usage of the latest communication technology in the area of development communication. That way ICT has been used in the development sector for a long time, rural radio forums of the 1950s used radio technology and it was the latest technology available at that time. Similarly, in the case of SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment), in India, communication satellite was used to reach out to the most underdeveloped areas of the country, is also an example of usage of new ICT for development communication. But with the advent of internet, radio and television is being increasingly cited as traditional media and internet mooted as the new generation ICT. The communication content, pattern and form changes with each ICT platform. In fact, with every new technological development in communication, new communication challenges evolve. More importantly, the latest ICT throws the challenge of erasing the gap between reach and access of the technology. For example, there might be internet signal available in an area but people might not access it. Mostly this gap of access and reach happen because of number of reasons, but the most common is the cost of that technology. Therefore, many international bodies, especially the UN organisations always liaise with the governments of the developing countries to make the new technology accessible to the masses. Many a times the developed countries are also motivated by the UN to support the process. However, when ICT came to be used in common parlance of development communication, it generally was used to refer to internet or the world wide web. The latest platform of ICT being the mobile telephones.

UN General Assembly in its 52<sup>nd</sup> session held in 1997, issued a statement on Universal Access to Basic Communication and Information Services.<sup>89</sup> Through this, the crucial role of information and knowledge play and stated that “generic technologies, information and communication technologies permeates and cut across all areas of economic, social, cultural and political activity”. Expressing concern at the uneven access to ICT across the developed and developing countries, the statement committed to “assisting developing countries in redressing the present alarming trends”. As the internet access at that time was fully dependent on a robust telecommunication network UN called on the government, civil societies, private sector as well as all development sector to combine their efforts to build the sector. It said that, “introduction and use of information and communication technology must become a priority effort of the United Nations in order to secure sustainable human development.”

In 2000 in the G-8 meeting held in Okinawa, Japan, it was also recognised that ICT “is one of the most potent forces in shaping the twenty-first century (and) its revolutionary impact affects the way people live, learn and work, and the way the government interacts with civil society.”<sup>90</sup> Therein was drawn the Okinawa Charter on the Global Information Society calling all, “in both public and private sectors, to bridge the international information and knowledge divide”<sup>91</sup> and also a commitment from G-8, “to the principle of inclusion: everyone, everywhere should be enabled to participate in and no one should be excluded from the benefits of the global information society.”<sup>92</sup>

By 2001 G-8 constituted the Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force), which is called the Genoa Plan of Action. It came up with a report which noted four major thrust areas for concerted international action:

- Fostering Policy, Regulatory and Network Readiness---through establishing and supporting both developing country and emerging economy National eStrategies including eGovernment, and universal participation in new international policy and technical issues raised by ICT and the Internet.

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<sup>89</sup> <https://www.unsceb.org/CEBPublicFiles/press/9724387e.pdf> retrieved on 02/05/2020

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/summit/2000/documents/charter.html> retrieved on 02/05/2020

<sup>91</sup> ibid

<sup>92</sup> ibid

- Improving Connectivity Increasing Access and Lowering Costs - through establishing and supporting a range of targeted interventions as well as dedicated initiatives for the ICT inclusion of the Least Developed Countries.
- Building Human Capacity - through a range of targeted training, education, knowledge creation and sharing initiatives, as well as promote ICT for healthcare and in support against HIV/AIDS and other infectious and communicable diseases.
- Encouraging Participation in Global e-Commerce and other e-Networks - through enterprise and entrepreneurship for sustainable economic development, including poverty alleviation, and promote national and international effort to support the creation of local content and applications (DOT Force 2001).

The report further lists five interrelated areas for intervention (ibid), for example, infrastructure, human capacity, policy, enterprise and content and application.

In 2001, UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, set up the UNICT Task Force, whose main objective was to “tell, realistically, what ICT can or cannot do, especially in terms of making its benefits accessible and meaningful for all humanity, in particular the poor” (UNICT Task Force 2001). Even in his opening speech at the special session of General Assembly held in 2002, he put ICT at the core of the tools for development agenda. He said, “A wide consensus had emerged on the potential of information and communication technologies to promote economic growth, combat poverty, and facilitate the integration of developing countries into the global economy. Seizing the opportunities of the digital revolution is one of the most pressing challenges we face.”

The 2005 report of the UNICT task Force very clearly links ICT with the MDGs by listing five areas of intervention:

#### *1. Evidence of Impact*

The case for mainstreaming ICT to meet the MDGs cannot be made without rigorous analysis and empirical evidence of development impact. Emphasis must shift from simple ICT access to more sophisticated data sets on the improved efficiency of ICT-enabled delivery of public and private services particularly in LDCs.

#### *2. Policy Development*

National e-strategies need to be linked far more explicitly to national economic development plans and vice versa. The special case of LDCs demands immediate and full

integration of national e-strategies within the poverty reduction strategy process (PRSP), accompanied by enhanced cooperation and coordination among donors.

### *3. Resource Mobilization*

There remains a serious deficit in the current approaches and financing mechanisms for bridging the global digital divide. Flows of adequate funds will fail to materialise until scepticism among donor countries is countered, developing country prioritisation is enacted, and the private sector is persuaded of profitable business models for investment.

### *4. Global Alliance for ICT and Development*

An open, multi-stakeholder and forward-looking framework for employing ICT and media in accelerating the achievement of the MDGs is urgently required. The MDGs provide a common denominator and common agenda for the creation of a “Global Alliance for ICT and Development” drawn from actors both within and outside the ICT sector.

### *5. Global Campaign & Initiatives*

The sheer ambition of the MDG challenge demands an unprecedented response at the global as well as at national level. Scaling and replication of ICT efforts will require aggregation of knowledge and resources across markets, and innovative breakthrough approaches to meet key price points and economies of scope and scale for MDG delivery (UNICT Task Force, 2005: 30-31).

The World Bank also got involved in ICT in a formidable role by providing more than US \$ 1.5 billion, to be mostly invested in Africa and Latin America. Through the *infoDev* unit of World Bank established in 1995, 200 projects in more than hundred countries were funded (Colle, 2008:145). Two of the most important projects were the *e-Readiness* and *Country Gateways*. The *e-Readiness* project was supported by many international NGOs like UNDP, USAID, the International Telecommunications Union the UK Department of International Development etc. It was instituted to assess a country’s status of ICT, the infrastructure, accessibility to the people etc. By 2001, more than 130 countries had conducted the assessment with the support of *e-Readiness*.

The *Country Gateways* was launched by *infoDev* in 2001 and was allocated US\$1.8million. “It is a partner to the World Bank’s Development Gateway initiative which is directed by the Development Gateway Foundation, a public-private partnership created in December 2001 and whose Board of Directors represents civil society and public private donors. The Development Gateway is an internet portal for information on sustainable development and poverty

reduction...its search engine is dedicated to helping public, civil society and private sector people navigate the internet to find useful information and resources” (ibid:146).

In spite of huge investment in ICT and the lure of technology, it has been a proven fact that technology always excludes a major chunk of the population as the access is limited. Technology can be empowering, but to use the technology people requires to buy a commensurate gadget, which is cost intensive. This aspect leads to exclusion of the poor and the marginalised in the developing countries. Irony is, this is the demography which supposedly need development communication the most. Moreover, technology also necessitate big financial investment in building infrastructure and maintaining it on the part of the government. Most of the times it had been a reality that what is started with much zeal lose the sheen within few years. That had been the case with the Rajiv Gandhi Computer Saksharata (Literacy) Mission which aimed at providing computer literacy to the rural population died a silent death after 2012.

### **Conclusion:**

The above discussion gives a fairly comprehensive idea about how the entire trajectory of development communication has spanned out based theoretically on the premise of modernisation. The most prominent characteristic of development communication vis-à-vis modernisation framework is the intricate involvement of the international organisations, both philanthropic, governmental (USAID, DFID etc.) and also most prominently the UN systems. Development communication has paved the way towards a particular form of development, knowledge and expertise which, has been always monopolised by the developed Western nations. It must be mentioned here that modernisation as a process advocates use of technology for proficient utilisation of the resources. The attempt was to achieve extensive social change using mass media as the vehicle was based on the belief that by inspiring the developing countries to imbibe some qualities of development practiced by the developed countries, they will be enthused eventually, to usher in holistic change. This would ensure ‘modernisation’ to be established successfully in the developing countries. As we have already discussed, development communication attempted to bring about social change through behaviour change. This was not very easily achievable as was witnessed by the development communication practitioners. They realised very soon that every social issue is linked to the broader political economy of the concerned state. That means to achieve the target of ‘social change’ turned out to be a very tall order. Therefore, to escape this conundrum, the development communication projects started looking at small-scale schemes using

one media platform. In spite of many pitfalls, the grandiose plan of the development communication programme has not faltered. From the innocent diffusion of information, it has transcended to a complex form of technology intensive exercise. This has alienated the people or the receivers and has created a new breed of communication experts.

The next chapter will therefore attempt to historicize the trajectory of development communication process vis-à-vis the family planning programme in India. In fact, family planning was the first programme where communication received a targeted attention from the international organisation, the civil society, the private sector, the UN and not to forget the Indian government too.

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## Chapter 4

### **FAMILY PLANNING COMMUNICATION: THE ACTORS AND THE ACT**

#### **Introduction:**

In this chapter, I will discuss the way the communication component of family planning was institutionalised in India. This chapter is predominantly based on the primary data collected at the Rockefeller Archive Centre at Tarrytown, New York. The data collected from the archives throw light on the political economy of the family planning communication policies in India and how it played a crucial role in the ‘planned development’ of post-independent India.

#### **Family Planning Communication: Initiation**

Development communication as a strategy was in the initial stage practised in the domain of agriculture and family planning as targeted development was initiated in these sectors to begin with. Agriculture communication generally depended on the extension method (details in Chapter 3). But family planning communication has evolved significantly from extension method to incorporate many nuanced strategies. Family planning communication was started as a process of sensitising the target population about the basic premises of family planning as well as the services available thereto. As mentioned in the previous chapter, development communication as a process has been promoted as well as executed mostly by the UN organisations with the help of the multinational NGOs.

In 1958, the United Nations General Assembly requested the UNESCO as well as the Economic and Social Council to ‘initiate action’ to assist the underdeveloped countries “wherever possible and as expeditiously as possible...to build up adequate media of information which could facilitate the free flow of accurate and undistorted news and information within these countries...” (UN 1958), inviting the UNESCO to develop a concrete proposal to help these countries in building their media infrastructure.

Accordingly, UNESCO conducted a research in the underdeveloped countries in the form of meetings with policy makers and academicians in Asia, Latin America and Africa and submitted its report to the UN. Citing that report, the UN in the 1962 General Assembly noted, “70 percent of the population of the world lack adequate information facilities and are thus denied effective enjoyment of the right to information”. Underscoring the importance of media and information in education and in economic and social progress the Assembly requested the UNESCO to “continue



to further the programmes for development of information media including the application of new techniques of communication for achievement of rapid progress in education”. The Assembly also recommended to the member countries which were underdeveloped, to develop their media keeping into consideration the United Nations Development Decade, which was declared in 1960 (Refer to Chapter 3). Simultaneously the Assembly appealed to the developed countries “to co-operate with less developed countries with a view to meeting the urgent needs of the less developed countries in connection with this programme for the development of independent national information media, with due regard for the culture of each country” (UN, 1962).

In fact, in 1948 itself, article 19 of the United Nations Human Rights Declaration stated: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” Thus, the development of media of information in various underdeveloped countries began at the behest of the UN with UNESCO facilitating the process. The concept of media being the vehicle of information and empowerment for development was thereby given the universal seal of approval.

As a result, every development project always has had a communication process built into it. In the case of the population control programme, the communication process was intricately interwoven with the national population programme adopted by all the countries.

### **Family Planning Communication Process:**

The family planning communication process has been a defined one in every country that has adopted it. The process is initiated after a national programme on family planning is undertaken. Rogers (1973: 9-11) explains the stages which every country goes through while adopting a national family planning programme eventually. He came to this conclusion after observing the family planning communication process been adopted by many countries for almost two decades, India being the primary one. According to him, in the first stage the interest in the issue of population growth is shown by a national planning body with economists discussing the adverse effect of population growth on development. At this stage external forces in the form of foreign advisor or international agencies get involved. In case of India Ford Foundation became intricately involved as we will see later in this chapter.

His observation on the stage two is quite idiosyncratic of India: “Almost every nation has a private family planning association launched several years prior to the government programme...Typically, the founders are upper class (read caste too, in case of India) women and doctors. Advice and financial assistance may be given to the private body by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) in London, the federation of private associations...the private association is one vehicle through which the idea of a family planning programme receives increased attention”. As mentioned in Chapter 2, India already had vibrant family planning associations in the private sector which was functioning well before India became independent.

In the stage three, according to Rogers (ibid), “...some key government official, often a development planner or a minister of health, promotes the idea of family planning among top national leaders. International agencies like World Bank, U.S. AID, the U.N. organisations, or private foundations may exert influence (1) by threatening to withhold financial assistance for development projects unless population growth is checked, and (2) by offering to donate partial costs of the family planning programme”. Thus, a national family planning programme is instituted. All these were witnessed in India too.

The last and the fourth stage is execution, wherein the official family planning programme becomes a part of the national health policies. However, this stage which is generally called the ‘clinic era’ does not yield much result, and the target audience are not reached. Thus, change in approach occurs and the field approach is adapted. In the clinic approach, a bouquet of contraceptives are made available to the people and the onus of selecting a contraceptive is left to them. However, in the ‘field approach,’ the health workers have to reach out to the people in their home or workspace, to convince them to adopt family planning. Thus, this process required information regarding the importance of family planning as well as the methods to be available to the field workers to be disseminated or diffused. This stage called for better communication between the health workers and the target population. At this stage, the experience of using ‘classical diffusion’ process in agriculture is generally resorted to. In the case of agriculture communication, the change agents or the field workers were educated, technically proficient university graduates. However, in the case of family planning communication, it was really difficult to find health professionals in such a large number. The situation was more complex as agricultural targeted a lesser number of populations in comparison to the wider population that family planning catered to. The extension agents were supplemented by radio, posters, folk media

performances, mobile film vans etc. for the field era exercises. The dissemination of information was quite successful, but the adoption level was not up to the mark. Two studies were conducted on the communication process in family planning by Rogers (1973) and Schramm (1971). They were critical about the lack of coherence and a lack of systematic strategy of communication in family planning. According to Rogers (1973: 28) “communication efforts for family planning goals would be much more effective if explicit attention were given to communication strategies.”

In such a scenario after a national policy is implemented, the change agents for family planning are generally the traditional midwives, ex-clients etc. The main components of this field approach are, field agents reaching out to the people and receiving piece-rate incentives. This stage is called the ‘cafeteria approach’. In this stage, contraceptives are offered free of cost by the government, research and evaluation units are established to guide the programme and a demographic target is set keeping in view the effectiveness of the family planning measures. This is the time when a wide scale mass media campaign is launched to support the national programme.

The 1970s saw the increase in the usage of television as a means of Development Communication and this was called “Entertainment Education”. As Singhal and Rogers (1999: xii) state, “Entertainment-Education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience knowledge about an educational issue, create favourable attitudes, and change overt behaviour. This strategy uses the universal appeal of entertainment to show individuals how they can live safer, healthier, and happier lives.” The central idea informing the Entertainment-Education strategy is that people do learn from positive role models. The most successful experiments in India on Entertainment-Education were SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment) and the first soap opera of state-owned television channel Doordarshan, called *Humlog*. Both had a sizeable portion of the programme content dedicated to family planning messages.

#### **SITE:**

The Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) was an experiment which was a brainchild of the influential scientist, Vikram Sarabhai. “SITE was conceived in the mid-1960s when mass media was considered as the powerful agents of development, and satellites were becoming available to carry the development message to otherwise unreachable areas” (Mody, 1978: 120). SITE was loaned a telecommunications satellite by NASA for one year during 1975-

76. United Nations, helped to set up the experimental satellite communication earth station in Ahmedabad. SITE became the training ground for representatives from developing countries. It has been pointed out by many critics that the “beneficiaries of SITE included indigenous manufacturers of satellite equipment, their foreign counterparts that included NASA, Ford Aerospace, General Electric, Hughes Aircraft, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and not to forget the members of the international community who were interested to have a general case study of educational broadcasting by satellite” (Thomas 2010:67). It started beaming development-oriented programmes to 2400 Indian villages, and the software was designed according to the socio-cultural specificities of the targeted population. These experiments were called revolutionary in character by some critics as “market forces would never have taken TV sets to many of these villages and most certainly not to the houses of the poor and the marginalised – the most information needy” (Karnik 1987:88). Others however hold a different opinion. For example, Thomas (2010:66) says, “...while it certainly helped in the development of indigenous satellite technology and helped popularise television, its educational impact has been contested.”

SITE was also important because of the support the project received from some important personalities. The most prominent of them was Vikram Sarabhai. He was very vocal about the necessity of using television to help India to ‘leap-frog’ into sustained economic growth and development (Abraham 1998:129-44). Sarabhai was also instrumental in setting up ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) and the setting up of SITE was obviously helping ISRO to take off too. Though Sarabhai died before SITE actually took off, it did give ISRO the much-needed push.

Another important individual who contributed to the success of SITE was the Director of Space Applications Centre (SAC) in Allahabad, Professor Yashpal. He was instrumental in getting ISRO the rights to producing programmes for SITE where as the administrative rights were still with All India Radio (AIR). He further argued for the continuation of ISRO’s involvement in educational programming even after the SITE experiment ended. Even the extensive evaluation of the programmes was done under the aegis of the Development and Educational Communication Unit (DECU) of ISRO.

The third and the most important person in this entire project was none other than Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, who was in fact going through a very rough patch at that time in her political career. As Mody (1987:156) opines:

The most decisive reason was the demonstration of the political advantages of the government-controlled communication system that reached villagers in the remotest corners of the country with the official line from the party in power. The daily satellite news programme gave the then beleaguered prime minister...instantaneous monopoly access to voters.

It was also a safe mode of introducing the new medium which took 23 years to reach India. Because those who had an interest in the expansion of the industry also realised that educational experiments would be the least risky introduction to the new form of media.

There was one offshoot of the SITE project, the Kheda project, conducted in the Kheda district of Gujarat. This is regarded as an example of participatory project where, programmes were produced in a small village by the villagers on their local and often 'controversial' issues. It started in 1975 and even won the UNESCO prize in rural communication in 1984. But in 1985 the transmitter was dismantled and sent to Chennai for starting an entertainment channel. According to Joshi (2002: xxviii), "The Kheda Project...was wound up under tremendous pressure of the new rural middle class which was carried away by the glitter and glamour of the new television software..."

Post liberalization in India even family planning communication saw a concerted effort in its planning and implementation. USAID funded the Population Communication Services (PCS) to adopt a strategic communication framework to strengthen family planning communication process (refer to Chapter 3 for detailed discussion). As Melkote and Steeves comment, this strategy tried to incorporate "the concepts of social marketing and behaviour change models in the design, execution, and evaluation of communication strategies intended to influence behaviour change" (2001: 129). Due to this evolution of the process, family planning communication has become more intricate than ever. The Behaviour Change Communication model used in family planning communication has also undergone various stages too. Melkote and Steeves (ibid: 130) enumerates them as follows:

Stage Models	Hierarchy of effects	Source
Social Psychology	Cognition-Attitude-Behaviour Change	Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield (1949)
Diffusion of Innovations	Awareness-Interest-Evaluation-Trial-Adoption Knowledge-Persuasion-Decision-Implementation-Confirmation	Rogers (1962) Rogers (1983,1995)
Marketing and Advertising	Attention-Interest-Comprehension-Impact-Attitude-Sales	Palda (1966)
Social Marketing	Cognition-Action-Behaviour-Values	Kotler (1984)
Psychotherapy	Precontemplation-Contemplation-Preparation-Action-Maintenance	Prochaska, DiClemente, and Norcross (1992)
Family Planning and Reproductive Health	Knowledge-Approval-Intention-Practice-Advocacy	Piotrow, Kincaid, Rimon II and Rinchart (1997)

Source: Communication for Development in the Third World Countries: Theory and Practice for Empowerment by S.R. Melkote and H.L. Steeves, 2001 Sage, Delhi

These stages are representative of stratified communication necessary to achieve different results. It also signifies how Behaviour Change Communication model has become more intricate and nuanced with the passing of time (refer to Chapter 3).

However, this building up of intricacies in the process is not much reflected in the content that has been generated. A cursory glance at the communication material will give us the feelings that more or less the messages have remained the same with minor changes here and there. For example, the initial inverted red triangle was speaking about the goal of declining birth rate (Chatterjee and Riley, 2001). Then came pictures of good contrasted with bad. There was one of a family which had many children, dilapidated house and unproductive field and obviously a bleak future (Fig.1, Chapter 1). In contrast was the family with two children, a happy ambience and a tractor and a green field in the background. Hence 'family planning' means material prosperity, or modernisation. The family planning communication messages mostly presupposes that people are traditional and have no rational thinking, in the line of modernisation theory of Rostow (1952). Thus, they do not understand the importance of planning a family. As Chatterjee and Riley (2001: 832) say "Planning is a hallmark of modernity: if you plan you are modern and if you are modern

you plan”. But this modernity is “*Indianised*” rather than Westernised. The communication material does not question the prevalent patriarchy neither does it reflect on the socio-economic dynamics that engulfs a woman. For example, we can look at this communication material:

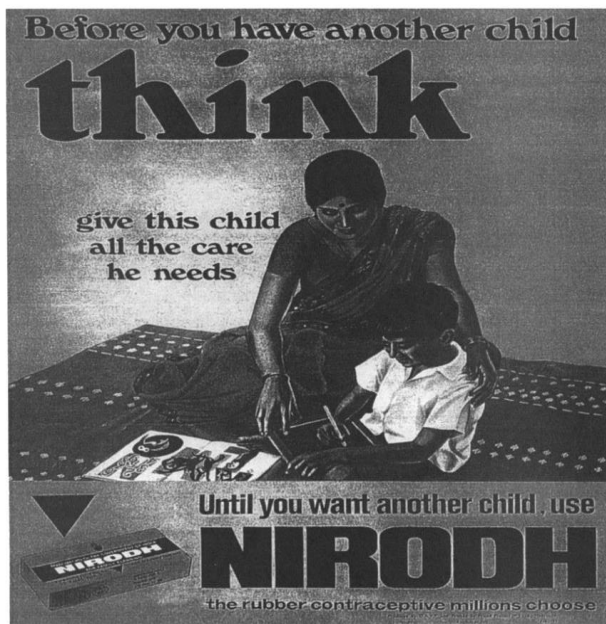


Fig 1, Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India

Here the woman is supposed to take the decision, she is the one who plans the family but the contraceptive advertised is for the male. So, who takes the decision here? The reality however shows that the men are rarely ready to take any responsibilities in the case of family planning.

In all communication material “Poverty is blamed on the reproductive strategies of the poor, and it follows that class differences are related not to inequalities in access to resources but to individual inability or unwillingness to maximize opportunities for change” (ibid 838-39) which also is the dominant understanding of poverty and population.

The emphasis on behaviour change and social marketing has shifted the attention on the individual. The latest focus in the family planning communication is individual self-reliance and people’s movement, which underscores the responsibility of the individual in population control rather than a national or international restructuring or redistribution (ibid).

### **Media in India**

The growth of media and its content has a very strong relationship with the political economy of the country. This is true of India as well. The political economy of India in the period

1947-1985 has two prominent characteristics: the hegemony of the Indian National Congress (INC) for the entire period except the brief gap when Janata Party came to power, and the nature of the economy which was mixed, state controlled and popularly known as licence raj. The state remained engaged in most of the productive sector, including information and communication technologies. In fact, the engagement of the state in the area of communication and media began when Indian national Congress constituted a sub-committee to visualise the future trajectory of communication as a part of the National Planning Committee (NPC). However, what eventually was planned for communication and media was not very different from what the British were practicing. As Lelyveld (1990: 42-43) puts it “broadcasting can stand as one of the last instances of a long history of British efforts to transfer their institutions armies and police, bibles and churches, tax collectors and judges, schools and colleges, elections and legislatures to India”.

The report of the sub-committee of NPC cited the following as the target of broadcasting: “(a) Dissemination of news and useful information; (b) Adult education; fighting rural ignorance; (c) Propaganda by the State and (d) Entertainment.”<sup>93</sup>

It is to be noted here that the industrialists like the Tata and the Birla were intimately involved in the growth planning for the country after independence. The Bombay Plan, also called *A Plan for Economic Development of India* was drafted by J.R.D. Tata and G.D. Birla and was extensively discussed in the Birla-owned journal called the *Eastern Economist*. This plan supported private enterprise and protectionist politics to boost indigenous capital. However, the state remained the nodal agency in the area of economic growth. At the 1955 session of the Indian National Congress in Awadh, the *Industrial Policy Statement* was adopted based on the Bombay Plan. In this policy, basic and strategic industries, including heavy industrial plants etc. were all reserved for development in public sector. Similarly, in the industrial policy resolution of 1956, telecommunication, broadcasting and defence equipment were also reserved for the public sector (Parthasarthi, 1988: 7). Thus, broadcasting was retained under the control of the state.

The print media in India was traditionally in the hands of the private sector before independence. And even after independence the newspaper business was transferred to Indian

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<sup>93</sup> National Planning Committee series, Report of Sub-Committee on Communications, Vora and Co Publishers Ltd, Bombay. Downloaded from <https://ia801600.us.archive.org/33/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.85676/2015.85676.National-Planning-Committee-Series-Communications.pdf> retrieved on 12/02/2020



business houses, and thus it remained in the private sector. Interestingly these business houses have interests in multiple industrial sectors (Thomas 2010, Sainath 1997). This fact remains so even now.

In the case of broadcasting media, radio initially and then in television, state's involvement was undisputed till the 1990s till the economy was liberalised. From six radio stations of 1947, it grew to 86 stations by 1983 and by 1985 the coverage area of radio went up to 95 per cent of the population. The story of the growth of television was quite dramatic. From one experimental channel in 1959 as an organ of All India Radio (AIR) and bifurcation to form Doordarshan in 1976 it went on to handle the crisis of the state and the Congress party in the 80s. As Thomas (2010: 64) comments "During the Emergency, All India Radio under the likes of the then Information Minister, V.C. Shukla, became the mouthpiece for the Congress party and was systematically censored."

In fact, the attempt to consolidate the hegemonic idea of the ruling class through AIR was evident way back in the 1950s. During the period when K.V. Keskar (1952-61) was the minister of Information and Broadcasting he banned Hindi film songs on AIR because he wanted to validate "Sanskrit classical music against what he saw as the pernicious influence of low forms of Muslim-inspired music" (ibid: 65). As Lelyveld (1995: 57-59) comments, "Under partition All India Radio's major political battles had revolved around Hindu-Muslim communal disputes, especially the issue of Hindi versus Urdu versus Hindustani...under Keskar, measures were taken to assure that the 'Hindu' side will prevail."

The 1980s saw a decline in popularity of radio not only with the people but also with the state. The television serial *Ramayana* earned Rs 23.7 million as revenue for Doordarshan, and many suggest that it was one of the impetuses not to decentralise or privatise broadcasting. When Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister, expansion of television was quite remarkable. Between the years 1984-85 over 120 television transmitters were installed in India (Singhal et al., 1988b). The primary trigger was the phenomenal widespread transmission of the 1982 Asiad Games which was hosted by India. S.S. Gill, "an officer of the Indian Administrative Service who was involved in the creation of stadia, roads and other infrastructure for the Asian Games, was appointed Secretary of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with the express purpose of creating an all India structure of television network within a short span of time. Beginning July 1983, an 18-months project to expand the network was sanctioned by the government, with a budget allocation

of Rs 680 million” (Chatterji 1991:31). Similar efforts were visible during the time of Rajiv Gandhi too. In fact, Masani (1986) notes how in 1987, one television transmitter was installed every tenth day.

However, this expansion of television was not designed to increase the diversity of programming, rather it increased the reach of programming that originated in Delhi. As Mehta (2009:5) observes, “broadcasting was seen by the state as a powerful tool of political and cultural control... in a Foucauldian sense, for entering the homes of its citizens daily with the audio-visual message of its idea of India, conflated often with the idea of the ruling class”. All the stations in the entire country were required to uplink programme broadcast by Delhi centre from 8.30 to 11pm.

The political economy of the early 1990s went through massive changes. The power of the Congress had dimmed, and regional forces had begun to flourish. Incidences like Mandal Commission Report on reservation or the Babri Masjid demolition saw the media both print and broadcasting taking sides. Indian television also witnessed a paradigmatic change in its content when *Ramayana* was serially broadcast. As Rajagopal (2001:73) says, “This serial was sponsored by a Congress-led government, in the hope that its flagging electoral fortune might be revived with an infusion of ‘Hindu vote’, inspired by Hindu solidarity and its attendant exclusions”. According to him it had a more layered reason than what met the eyes:

The euphoria over liberalization, the growing assertiveness of its beneficiary classes and the spread of a consumerist ethos, required a new set of ideas to replace a political world-view that now became associated with stasis and quietism. The Hindu nationalists’ appeals echoed and reinforced those of an expanding market economy, both expressing the cultural and political assertion of newly rich classes (ibid: 42).

This was also the time when the monopoly of Doordarshan came to an end when Star TV based in Hong Kong started beaming programme into India via ASIASAT-1 satellite in May 1991. This “...development coincided with the Indian government accelerating its process of economic liberalization. In keeping with the new thinking, (the government) did not try to restrict or ban the reception of foreign channels” (Sonwalker 2008: 120). As Kumar (1998:34 cited in Sonwalker 2008) states, “The Government’s initial response to the illegal transmission and distribution of cross-border television channels was one of tolerance rather than of resistance... (The) Congress party, which had ushered in a new economic policy of liberalization, did not wish to give the

impression that it wanted in any way to restrict or block the transnational television channels”. Simultaneously the Ministry was also deliberating on opening up the airwaves to private players and so in September 1992 a committee was constituted to look into the matter. The committee was specifically asked to work out the modus operandi to give licences to private producers to produce programmes for the second channel of Doordarshan as well as on FM radio channels. This was a drastic policy change as the Government was warming up to the idea of inculcating private players to their fold with not much censorship. This was also the time when the Supreme Court of India gave a ruling, declaring airwaves to be public property which came in 1995.<sup>94</sup>

India got her first private 24-hour news channel in 1998 and by 2007 it grew to 300 television channels of all genres combined. Now India has 866 registered television channels, according to the data available till December 2018 on the Ministry of Information and broadcasting website.<sup>95</sup> It is interesting that no data is available on the ministry website beyond that date. However, access to that huge resource is not equal in the entire country as “...there remains vast sections which are media poor, whose life’s situation are increasingly priced out of the market” (Sonwalker, 2008: 128) and even disappearing from the content as well. The classic example is the remaking of the village-based film *Nadiya ke Paar* into the upper-class suave *Hum Aapke Hain Koun*.<sup>96</sup> As Mehta (2008:185) says “The structural problems in television’s political economy, focussed exclusively on urban India, were a major reason why the problems of rural India were unlikely to be the subject of sustained and focussed news coverage.”

In a way, satellite television can be regarded as an agent of global capitalism. Nehru had resisted television worrying that it can become the toys in the hands of the middle class and it just turned into that when cable television made inroads into the Indian homes of the middle class who are the natural and major consumer of television like any other commodities.

Radio similarly had grown in an entirely different trajectory with the private FM channels being the flavour of the time. As Thomas (2010: 86) comments, “a handful of big business houses, which have extensive non-media and media interests have cornered the FM radio market”. The most important feature of this time as far as media is concerned is the growing presence of the private sector in media, where state’s role has been diminished to being an ‘enabler’. Even the state

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<sup>94</sup> <https://www.mib.gov.in/document/supreme-court-judgement-airwaves> retrieved 19/12/2019

<sup>95</sup> <https://mib.gov.in/sites/default/files/Status%20at%20a%20Glance%20of%20Permitted%20Private%20Satellite%20TV%20Channels%20as%20on%2031.10.2018.pdf> retrieved on 20/01/2020

<sup>96</sup> For a detailed discussion on this refer to Juluri, 1995, Uberoi, 2008

media apparatuses, Doordarshan and AIR have been following the revenue model of the private media houses.

The loss has been entirely of public broadcasting. Even the organs of Information and Broadcasting Ministry which were beefed up during the 60s for various development communication activities related to agriculture, family planning etc. also is going through a phase of existential crisis with the ministry not investing much innovative thought on its growth and future plan of action.

### **Development Communication Policy: Implications on Family Planning in India:**

As India was the first country to officially adopt a family planning policy, naturally it became the first country as well in the realms of family planning communication. The fund allocation in the Five-Year Plans as well as the objectives laid out in the plan document evidently illustrate the growing importance communication in family planning enjoyed.

### **Five-Year Plans and Family Planning Communication**

In the First Five-Year plan, the budget for family planning was only 65 lakhs out of which only about 22 percent was utilised. In spite of that, the ground work that was laid down during that period consisting of research, surveys and studies, it became the base for further work in the area.

In case of the usage of media, films became an important vehicle. Films Division of India was established in 1948 immediately after independence. Deprez (2013:149) comments, "Nehru created the Films Division to lead the production and distribution of information, enlisting documentary cinema for the larger project of nation building, integration and development". Adding to that Mohan (1990) writes that Films Division helped the newly independent nation "to establish rapport between the rulers and the ruled, to inform the masses about the plans and projects being launched, to present them balance-sheets of progress, the Film, the Short Films especially was found to be indispensable". In fact, Films Division actually coordinated the dissemination of information related to the various schemes promoted by different governments for amelioration of the people and the specialized films were distributed through information vans and community projects (Beveridge:1955 cited in Vasudevan). Interestingly, even after independence, the 1944 Defence of India Rules 44 passed by the British was retained, which made it mandatory for all the cinema halls to run government produced and distributed films in every show of the day and also pay the government for them (Deprez, 2013:153). This ensured that Films Division makes profit

out of the films they were making. Thus, Films Division served the purpose of shaping “a distinct identity for the state as an authoritative representation of the Indian nation, an identity that could be recognised both by non-state audiences and by state elites themselves” (Roy, 2007:34). Therefore, family planning which was in the priority list of the government even before independence (refer to Chapter 2), also was amply promoted by the Films Division. The first film on the subject of population control was titled, *Planned Parenthood*<sup>97</sup>, which aptly discussed the national tension of the growing population. The film discussed the issue with the tone of urgency and reminded the people about their responsibility to curb the social evil and thus contribute to national development. The film ends with these words, “Let this be an age of planned parenthood...by limiting the size of our family we can overcome many of the chronic ills that inflict our land”<sup>98</sup> thereby making people regret their act of having a big family and feeling guilty for contributing to the ‘ills’ inflicting the country.

Another film that was produced by Films Division towards the end of the First Five Year Plan was *My Wise Daddy*.<sup>99</sup> Made with line diagrams and in black and white, the narration was in English like that of *Planned Parenthood*. It is a first-person simplistic narration of a child whose parents are ‘kind’. By asserting that his daddy is wise at the beginning the child sets the tenor of his acceptance of the family decisions. The ending comments of the ‘wise’ father “Mummy is wise too, because she knows that when incomes are limited only a small family is a happy family” talks about the mood of the nation. This period witnessed many such films which were produced to drive home this idea that people need to feel responsible about the effect of their action of having a big family, which is underdevelopment of the country.

Analysing the family planning communication process during the First Five-Year Plan the Planning Commission observed: “A beginning has been made in the production of leaflets, posters and other literature and two films were produced and some family planning exhibitions have been held” (GOI, 1957). However, that was a very nascent state as far as communication in family planning was concerned, it was actually only ‘a beginning.’

Second Five-Year Plan attempted to make the people accept contraceptives. And as “a part of the communication drive, by 1960 about 4,60,000 copies of posters, 80,000 copies of pamphlets,

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<sup>97</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivw0MjOgSaA> retrieved on 02/02/2020

<sup>98</sup> *ibid*

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVt0Z0NK2TI> retrieved on 02/02/2020

and 70,000 folders on family planning had been distributed. Films and slides were also provided. Occasional radio broadcasts on family planning also came into vogue” (Banerjee, 1979: 6). The attempt was completely target oriented as the family planning programme was.

With the publication of the 1961 Census data, Third Five Year Plan called for an urgent relook at the programme and the communication part was also regarded with more seriousness. The plan document stated, “Various studies suggest that there is already considerable awareness of the need for family limitation and desire for practical help and guidance...The intensification of the educational programme is crucial to the success of the entire movement. Family Planning education, being part of education for a better life has to be interwoven with other constructive activities...Information has to be made available in the largest possible scale and condition created in which individuals can freely resort to family planning.”<sup>100</sup>

The Central Health Education Bureau had organised a seminar in 1960 on the topic of *Family Planning Education* wherein it was decided that there will be a cap on the expenditure on family planning education at 25 percent of the total budget. Raina (91:164-165) narrates how the views of Derryberry a “Vice President of a large New York Advertising Agency” had influenced the decision. Raina quotes him, which I quote here in detail, as it shows how media campaigns in family planning communication was regarded only as a secondary activity to the main programme. Interestingly Derryberry cites the example communication regarding buying of bonds and draws parallel with communication regarding family planning:

...the most extensive use possible was made of all known information media, including news articles, bill boards, radio, exhibition, pamphlets, motion pictures, etc., in an effort to induce people to buy bonds, not only for financing the war, but also for curbing inflation. When the final tabulation was made, it was found that over 80 percent of individual purchases was made on personal solicitation, which shows the need for intimate and personal contact in order to induce action in a large proportion of the population...Our mass media or so-called major media of communication are relatively minor media, when it comes to moving serious ideas into the heads of people. They have, I believe, only a secondary role in helping you with your problems, and it is important that you do not divert too much of your limited resources, chasing after these media. They are not the first or

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<sup>100</sup> Third Five Year Plan Document

<https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/welcome.html> retrieved on 12/12/2019

second or even third media you should think of, in efforts really to reach people and to teach them serious things for their own good.

Raina also notes how V. Ramakrishnan, the first Director of Central Health Education Bureau was also influenced by his mentor, Dorothy B. Nyswander and circulated her views in the Bureau.<sup>101</sup> She basically believed that inter-personal communication stands way above communication through mass media in influencing people's decision-making process. These two views influenced the communication process of that time and more importance was given to face to face and group communication. This led to the launch of extension education in the line of agriculture extension education (refer to Chapter 3). This necessitated the "setting up of 3,676 rural family welfare planning centres, 7081 rural sub-centres and 1381 urban family welfare planning centres and a huge cadre of field workers were recruited as well. To meet the requirement of training of these field workers twenty-eight centres were set up."<sup>102</sup> This immediately required a large volume of mass communication material to be produced. Therefore, eventually in spite of Nyswander and Derryberry, massive media campaigns were launched with radio, films, press and publications and was supported by billboards, wall painting, campaigns on match boxes and on the side of the railway carriages. This campaign was envisioned to supplement the extension education campaign which was underway at that time.

The All India Radio network was mobilised to reach out to the wider population, and programmes were generated in regional languages. As the Fourth Five Year Plan document notes, "Family planning programming cells were located in 22 All India Radio stations. Thirty audio-visual units were provided under the Directorate of Field Publicity for carrying on intensive campaign in selected districts. The mass education programme through film exhibition, wall painting and hoardings were intensified."<sup>103</sup>

Ford Foundation had a very engaging role in developing family planning communication in India (details below). In 1963, Ford Foundation sponsored a study led by a group of internationally renowned communication specialist along with the information officers of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of the Government of India to look into the mass media resources in

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<sup>101</sup> Refer to Ramakrishnan (1964) to gauge the extent of Nyswander's influence on his understanding regarding family planning education.

<sup>102</sup>Thirteenth Report of Estimate Committee, Fifth Lok Sabha (1971-72)

[https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/57754/1/ec\\_05\\_13\\_1971.pdf](https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/57754/1/ec_05_13_1971.pdf) retrieved on 12/12/2020

<sup>103</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 17/06/2020

the country. The study found out that the country had, “A national radio system with 31 stations of origin and several relay stations broadcasting to 3,00,000 receiving sets...A documentary film unit of the Government producing almost 100 titles annually...nearly 600 daily newspapers with a circulation of five and a half million copies, and 2000 weekly newspapers with a circulation of five and a three fourth million in circulation...(however) the service is too small for the job; too little purposeful information is reaching either the cities or villages” (cited in Banerjee, 1979:9).

The study also commented that “...the flow of family planning information to urban and village public is very small. The Village Level Workers (VLCs) have little time for this in the villages, the Social Education Organisers are relatively few, and primary health centres are not yet available in large numbers. Much of the programme depends on volunteers. Of all the development programmes, this one requires the most of expert person-to-person communication, but the needed supply of trained workers is not available. There is also a shortage of film and other media material to support the direct flow of information and persuasion...There is need for much more accurate knowledge of target audiences and of the motivations and knowledge which might make these audiences more favourable to the desired actions. Above all, success in the family planning programme will require study, planning, and a massive sustained campaign” (ibid).

Dr Donald Bogue, of the University of Chicago, visited India in 1964, and suggested to the Central Family Planning Institute that, as a part of the programme, simply written direct mailing to village leaders might be effective. Accordingly, a project study was conducted in Umrain block near Alwar of Rajasthan. “The research team concluded that a direct-mailing campaign can be an inexpensive and very effective technique in improving people's awareness of the necessity of family planning and in providing information about family planning methods” and that “This is particularly important for the upcoming IUCD programs” (Bhatia, 1966: 351). IUCD or Intra-Uterine Contraceptive Device was a new contraceptive device which was being promoted extensively in India (discussed in details in Chapter 2). Hence Bogue's suggestion was quickly incorporated into the communication strategy of family programme.

It is worth noting that Indira Gandhi was the Minister of Information and Broadcasting during 1964-66. Her interest in family planning was very clear even before she became a minister. In fact, “she donated her family's ancestral home in Allahabad so that it could become an institute for Family Planning. As the Information Minister, she had pressed a plan to distribute hundreds of thousands of radios across rural India to disseminate family planning information...The day after



she was formally sworn into office (as Prime Minister), the Ministry of Health was renamed as the Ministry of Health and Family Planning including, a separate department with its own permanent secretary and Minister of State for Family Planning” (Connelly, 2006:653).

The Second UN Advisory Mission visited India in 1968, at the request of the Indian Government to analyse the family planning programme. The First Mission of 1965, “had noted that the extension approach, which required a huge injection of staff (and associated education, training, transport, new facilities and so on) would make the plan slow to be implemented and slow to generate results” (Cited in Johnston:6-7). The Second Mission report however recommended the following regarding communication, motivation and education: that adequate utilization of the “available resources” should be ensured so as to meet the gap existing in access to “basic information” in the hands of the “communications campaigners”; a multimedia approach should be adopted; the administrators and the medical personnel should also be trained so that they are equipped with “professional skills” and become proficient in communication and motivation. Observing that there is “lack of effective coordination among the various units” the mission suggested that “A machinery for such effective coordination should be developed either by expanding and strengthening the present mass education and media unit or by recruiting fully qualified communications specialists or by setting up a full-time coordinating council in place of present several committees which meet only occasionally” (Sady et al, 1970:6-7).

The end of Third FYP it became amply clear that the task of family planning communication was a tough one as the birth rate was not decreasing as expected, rather it had remained more or less stagnant at 41 per thousand for most of the two decades till 1965-66. One of the studies conducted by the department of Statistics of the University of Kerala in 1965, found out that newspaper, radio and films, the standard media platforms used for family planning communication was not easily available in the rural areas. Similarly, another survey report of Greater Bombay (now Mumbai), also found out that rampant illiteracy was the barrier in consumption of messages communicated through newspapers. It was also noted by both the studies that radio set owners were not very common in the rural areas and thus family planning messages were not reaching the population as was presumed to have (Dubey and Devgan, 1969). As far as

films are concerned, it came out as a very popular medium, but how much effective it was for family planning communication was not very clear.<sup>104</sup>

In June 1965, Bert Johnson, Consultant, Information and Communication of Family Planning at Ford Foundation India office wrote to B.L. Raina, Director Family Planning, Directorate General of Health Services regarding the proposal of mounting “A Nationwide Publicity and Information Services Programme to Assist Rapid Spread of Family Planning.” He wanted to solicit the approval as well as support of all concerned in the campaign, therefore he wrote:

This draft is for detailed preliminary review...when adjusted to the satisfaction of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Ministry of Health, the resulting document should be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission, and the Cabinet, as authorization for long-continuing operation of a mass publicity/information programme on behalf of family planning. It is hoped that inter-Ministry revision and agreement will be completed by July 15, 1965, in time for preliminary 1966 budget consideration, and that subsequent policy may be completed in time to launch this publicity effort before April 1, 1966.<sup>105</sup>

The draft rationalises the necessity of such a massive campaign by saying that it is meant “to assist the programme (of family planning) achieve its purpose, information regarding the Family Planning Programme, its services, and benefits afforded by family planning must be disseminated to the public on a continuing and broad scale.”<sup>106</sup> And purpose of the programme is stated as:

...to broaden social acceptance of a smaller-family norm within the Indian society as a whole through wide spread dissemination of knowledge and motivational information regarding family planning. Utilizing mass communication media and techniques, it will assist the Family Planning Programme in informing the public, village and urban, of the benefits of planning family-size, the availability of knowledge and supplies for family planning, and the sources where technical information, supplies can be readily

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<sup>104</sup> Inventory of Family Planning Communication Study by Barota Malhotra and Frank Wilder. FF Report No 004129, Box no 18695, 1970

<sup>105</sup> Rockefeller Archive Centre (hereafter RAC), Ford Foundation Records (hereafter FFR), Microfilm no. 4026, 1965

<sup>106</sup> *ibid*

obtained...The publicity/information programme will pay particular attention to enlisting the support of officials and leaders at all levels, in advancing the family planning ideas, and in strengthening family planning organisation and implementation.<sup>107</sup>

Accordingly, an *Overall Plan of Work of Family Planning Publicity* was planned with extensive engagement of all the media wings of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting discussed and detailed elaborately. This included appointing of a full-time Coordinator, three full-time principal assistants loaned from the Ministry of Health, and two from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, “six officers, one in each of the principal media branch of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry,” to be “designated to serve as chief information officers for family planning in their particular media branches, these officers may be assigned for full-time service to family planning. Each will serve as liaison agent with the Coordination Officer, and will advise and assist that officer in its work, as well as assist in the publicity work of his branch for family planning.<sup>108</sup>

It is important to understand the scope of what was planned for family planning publicity to comprehend how it was visualised to change the face of communication in family planning from the earlier tepid efforts. Here is an excerpt of the plan:<sup>109</sup>

The plan was quite extensive, taking care of personnel and logistic arrangement to organisation of conferences. It was planned that the Films Division will produce three motion picture documentaries. The 35mm versions to be given to the commercial cinema halls to screen them for two weeks and the 16mm versions to be screened through the family planning vans, which held film exhibitions in villages. The plan was also to produce family planning films in other languages. During the years 1967-68, it was planned to produce at least 10 family planning films as well.

For DAVP it was proposed to supply three large new sets of exhibition panels to every state. DAVP was supposed to go full strength with activities of putting out hoardings, centre posters, street signs, banners, press advertising as well as popular publication.

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<sup>107</sup> *ibid*

<sup>108</sup> *ibid*

<sup>109</sup> *ibid*

As far as AIR was concerned, the activities planned were: a) 20 seconds reminder announcements to be repeated in all broadcast with specific gaps, b) Twice per month, a 15-minute interview type broadcast (two voices) will be made by each radio and television station (only Delhi station was functional at that time) at suitable hour, c) each radio and television stations will broadcast one four-minute item on family planning each week, d) Radio script writers and other radio personnel required for these production tasks will be provided on the staff of AIR in New Delhi and at various stations, for full-time service to family planning, f) Experimental testing of radio effectiveness for intensive family planning promotion will be performed in at least one local area (an Intensive Health and Family Planning district or IADP district), utilizing a special concentration of radio receivers, advance publicity and special programming. One mobile transmitter will be used, g) The placement and use of local broadcasting stations in several districts will be sought, in cooperation with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Ministry of Community Development.

Press Information Bureau (PIB) was to produce five press items per week of family planning including a monthly feature story and released to selected lists of newspapers and periodicals by the PIB in Delhi. Regional PIB offices were to be encouraged to write on the issue and to forward such items to Delhi for release.

The Central Song and Drama units was to be utilised in family planning support for selected occasions and for reaching key audiences. They were to supplement those of the State Publicity Departments and the Community Development organisations in field situation.

The Director of Field Publicity was to be provided with A-V van to show family planning films and accompanying officers was to give talks and distribute leaflets on family planning. The plan also emphasized on the maintenance of “close and friendly liaison between the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in planning and providing necessary publicity and promotional services for the Family Planning Programme.”

In other words, all the units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was to be completely immersed into the family planning communication activities and necessary logistic and other support was to be provided.

To execute the *Overall Plan*, a special division was created in the family planning department called, Mass Education and Media Division in 1966 and “the media units of Information and Broadcasting Ministry were strengthened for family planning communication. The objective was to evolve a differential communication strategy. Simple messages with simple pictures were selected for wider dissemination and through media which were easily visible and audible” (Goswami, 2010).

As a commitment to the plan, the media units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was provided with staff and other inputs for the exclusive purpose of promoting family planning amongst the people. “These inputs included 36 family planning extension units in the All India Radio network, six family planning extension units in the All India Radio network, six family planning exhibition units in the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity, 30 field publicity units in the Directorate of Field Publicity and six large units with sizeable troupes in the Song and Drama Division. The Press Information Bureau and the Photo Division were strengthened suitably” (ibid).

This was also the time of extensive promotion of IUCD. As a part of the intensive family planning promotion plan, massive publicity campaign to promote the ‘loop’ (as IUCD was popularly referred to at that time) was launched in April, 1965 in the Hooghly district of West Bengal. This was a practical experimentation with the exhaustive use of the media platforms as mentioned above. Bert Johnson, visited the campaign sites before the commencement of the campaign and wrote a very positive report, expressing his satisfaction about the selection of the site. Similarly, a flurry of activities was initiated, with Ford Foundation in the pivotal role. An undated letter filed under the 1965 files addressed to a Programme Discussion Group comprising of Douglas Ensminger, McGravan, Haynes, Sachs, Kundu, Mathews, Bert Johnson and Lyle Webster, written by Rey M. Hills narrates how the Family Planning Institute has printed “ten thousand English and ten thousand Hindi copies of pamphlets... for semi-literate urban males, mainly the class IV government workers”. Along with it, the institute was mounting a programme to distribute contraceptives through all major government offices in Delhi and this pamphlet was planned to be distributed to all for acceptance. Hills also observed that, “The notable fact is that for the first time

very direct information material is being produced and distributed on a mass scale through official government agencies.”<sup>110</sup>

Many studies were conducted to see the effectiveness of the mass media campaign during the Intensive Family Planning Promotion Campaign across the country. One such study conducted by the Indian Institute of Mass communication (1967) in Delhi had interesting findings, as follows:

The entire area where the campaign was launched could be described as a “high-awareness” area as far as family planning is concerned because practically everyone (134 out of 135) had heard of family planning. Seven out of eight knew about the campaign...While awareness was widespread, it is interesting that as many as 40.7 per cent had never used any modern family planning method. The percentage of those who had never been to a family planning clinic was even higher, 52.6 per cent. Obviously, many people who use contraceptives, particularly in the middle-income groups, did not depend on family planning clinics for supplies.

As to the effect of family planning promotion campaign, the survey revealed that seven out of every eight people (87.4 percent) in the sample were unaware that there had been a family planning campaign. While about 73 per cent of the sample had attended the film shows, 47 per cent said that they had read the leaflet and seen posters. A third of the sample, or their wives, had attended the group meetings and 12 per cent (in most cases the wives) had gone to the mobile clinic.

As a result of the campaign nearly a third of those who had never before been to a family planning clinic had now visited one---22 out of 71. The remaining 49 persons, however has still not gone to a clinic and they constituted 36.3 per cent of total number of respondents.

It was also revealed that five out of six people contacted, had read the literature handed out in the experimental campaign or had it read to them. Almost two third had used the contraceptives that were handed out and of the remaining third, **quite a few** (emphasis mine) said that they were already practicing family planning. A sizable number (almost a quarter) had gone to the family planning clinic for replacement of the contraceptives; another 22 percent had approached the clinics for advice on the loop and 5.2 per cent for insertion of the loop. At the end of the campaign, the survey revealed that only one out of 135 said he did not believe in family planning (IIMC, 1967:6).

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<sup>110</sup> RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 05900482, Microfilm Reel No. 3351, 1959-66

Regarding the sources of information “as many as 39.1 per cent said that they had heard about it first from their friends and neighbours; 26.5 per cent had known about family planning from health and family planning workers. Both these sources are inter-personal. Those who first knew about the programme from the mass media numbered 34.3 per cent. Among those were some who said they had become aware of family planning by reading books...The awareness about the existence of the family planning clinic was quite high; 72.6 per cent of the respondents knew that there was a family planning clinic in their area, while 27.4 per cent were not aware of it at all” (ibid:11).

The study came up with a number of suggestions regarding the campaign which includes all the activities planned with the help of the Ford Foundation as mentioned above. However, it emphasized the existing “misgivings and misapprehensions particularly about the more permanent methods like the loop” and therefore suggested that “the information programme in urban areas should now emphasise the safety of these permanent methods rather than the need for family planning which is generally accepted” (ibid:15).

However, every campaign was not apparently as smooth and successful. Like Bert Johnson, Ann Hayes, another consultant travelled to Mysore from 1-4 September 1965 and she reported that, “Except for a few radio programmes and a press conference, IUCD week received little attention. The posters and pamphlets were received when the week was over. The poster is not liked.”<sup>111</sup> It is obvious that Delhi being the capital city had the best exposure to the campaign.

Sripati Chandrasekhar, a demographer by training, was made the Minister of Health and Family Planning in 1967. He supposedly “brought an infectious enthusiasm to his position”. He made President Johnson commit to 455 million dollars as loan in 1968 for India. In his view, “the major obstacles to family planning in India were: (1) inadequate supplies of contraceptives, (2) a shortage of trained personnel; and (3) lack of national network of mass communication to publicize the advantages of birth control” (Ledbetter, 1984:742).

D.K. Tyagi the Assistant Commissioner of Media in the Family Planning department had drafted a document<sup>112</sup> in 1967 called “Role of Mass Communication in Family Planning in India.” In the very first line he accentuates the importance of communication when he writes, “The Family Planning program may be regarded as comprising of three major elements, organisation, services

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<sup>111</sup> RAC, FFR Microfilm no 4026, 1965

<sup>112</sup> RAC, FFR, Grant no 64-303, Microfilm no 1996, 1967

and communication” and adds that, “Organisations and services can only perform their functions if there is successful communication with the people. He is of the opinion that “mass communication must first be presented to bridge the void between the services we provide and the many millions of people who must practice family planning, if we are to reach our targets. He was quite clear on the difficulties faced by mass communication in a country with “so many different groups with such large variations in social and cultural backgrounds and speaking so many different languages.” Keeping that and “the serious lack of mass media channels to communicate” in perspective he charts out the way to reach out to the people in the Fourth Five Year Plan.

It is interesting to note that radio had not yet grown as a medium of mass communication. Tyagi writes, “All India Radio now covers 80% of the country, but the majority of the 5 million receiver sets are concentrated in the urban areas. We propose to give 50,000 transistored (sic) radio receivers set to our field workers. We are also strengthening the broadcasting facilities by setting up special family planning cells at the headquarters and 22 regional stations of All India Radio.”<sup>113</sup>

As far as newspaper was concerned, Tyagi visualized it as a medium to motivate the opinion leaders and therefore suggested that newspaper could be used to disseminate good news about the family planning program. He also suggested the use of motivational message through paid advertisements in the newspapers. Comprehending the usefulness of printed materials to “convey detailed information about family planning and contraceptive methods and even give instructions on the use of contraceptives,”<sup>114</sup> he planned to provide an offset printing press to every state family planning bureau. The idea behind providing the printing press at state level was to enable them to print the materials in the local language for better dissemination of the information.

One of Tyagi’s favoured and eventually much lauded approach was of the family planning elephant, Beautiful Flower---dubbed *Lal Tikon* for the programme. She and her keeper were “discovered by Tyagi, who had together with a consortium of family planning supporters employed *Lal Tikon* to tour the villages as part of the family planning campaign. Wearing banners with the Red Triangle symbol, the elephant would tour from place to place, doling out condoms and fliers with her trunk” (Harkavy 1995:138 and Johnston, 2015:160). Written on her side in bright paint was the slogan, “My name is Lal Tikon. My job is to spread happiness”. The outcome of Lal Tikon’s visits was reportedly positive---one reporter who was reporting on the issue found that in

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<sup>113</sup> *ibid*

<sup>114</sup> *ibid*



one village, which she visited, five men volunteered to be sterilised (Myron Belkin, cited in Johnston: 2015:160). Ashish Bose on the other hand called this an “asinine solution to an elephantine problem” and even for the red triangle he had this explanation: “the top represents the massive Indian inertia. The right side irrelevant British bureaucratic proceedings and the left side, fancy American ideas” (Bose, 2010).

Though Ensminger (1971), the Foundation’s representative to India says, that the campaign was a credible effort at creating mass awareness of the government family planning programme thus promoting the small-family norm, but many others like Freyman felt that “substantial resources poured into the campaign detracted from the less superficial administrative and organisational measures that should have been taken to mount an effective educational programme” (Moye Freyman, 1990 cited in Harkavy,1995:138).

In fact, Tyagi’s document was also instrumental in the drafting of the *Overall Plan* which led to the establishment of the Mass Education and Media Division, as mentioned above. As per the recommendation of the special Committee appointed by the Central Family Planning Council, a post of District Mass Education and Information Officer was sanctioned. It was also planned that more man-power to hold exhibition, coordinate with the field units of mobile AV vans etc. and other supporting staff was be appointed. However, the nodal department will always remain the Mass Media wing of the state Family Planning Bureau.

Though this extensive plan led to beefing up of the infrastructure of the government media units for family planning communication, the impact was not as was desired. Frank Wilder the Ford Foundation Consultant to India on mass media for family planning called this a problem of the bureaucracy not being sensitive enough to organically structure the publicity activities to a separate ministry and argues that, “it is essential that the overall engineering and design of the mass communication strategy and its implementation be housed within the family planning organisation, rather than a separate information agency. More effective messages and more economical media exploitation can thus be achieved. Also, it is difficult to instil in other departments the same knowledge about the programme and the same devotion to its objectives that are possessed by those within the family planning organisation. Finally, the family planning programme is not likely to receive the special attention it requires from a ministry or department that bears responsibility

for the entire load of government information programmes. This is true whether the Ministry of Information is devoted to straight propaganda or national development.”<sup>115</sup>

Therefore, Wilder advocated for a family planning mass communication unit which would become the reference point for solution to all family planning related communication issues. According to him, “India was fortunate to have attracted massive attention from the aid-giving countries, but hasn’t shown any impressive record of mass communication at work in a national development programme. Then in the summer of 1966, the Department of Family Planning examined its allocation for the use of radio, films, press, exhibitions and printed materials and decided that no amount of investment in these media would bring the message to India’s 560,000 villages in time” (Wilder and Tyagi 1968:774). Govind Narain, Secretary of the Department of Family Planning, speaking in August 1968 at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication described the department’s motivation thus:

Perhaps it is the special nature of family planning that forced upon us the need for re-examining our tradition always of communicating with the public and of devising new ways to accomplish a communication jobs that seemed almost impossible. In the first place the success of our total population control programme depends primarily on the individual's acceptance of the idea of preventing pregnancy for his own good. This means that many crores (tens of millions) of individuals must have sufficient information and be highly motivated to adopt one of the several family planning methods. The difficulty here is that we are dealing with the most intimate aspect of human life. The practice of family planning means a radical change in behaviour, ranging from the frequent use of a conventional contraceptive device to submission to a surgical procedure such as vasectomy or tubectomy. In dealing with such an intimate and difficult situation, you will appreciate that many of our people, especially in the rural areas, will readily listen to and accept rumours and misinformation about family planning. When you realise that we do not have at our command "What is the Best Method for Me?" the benefit of instantaneous dissemination of information, such as through the radio, to the remote villages of our country, you will appreciate our concern to try to find different ways to spread the message of family planning as far and wide as possible (cited in Wilder and Tyagi 1968:774-75).

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<sup>115</sup> RAC, FFR, Unpublished Report, *What do we know about promoting Family Planning Through the Mass Media*, Frank Wilder, Box no 46787, Folder 17970, 1969

There seems to be general sense of enthusiasm regarding the vigorous implementation of mass media. “Many new usages of mass communication have been introduced. Bill boards and posters are commonplace. The national family planning symbol, the apex-down red equilateral triangle, is becoming almost as ubiquitous as the fading signature of National Malaria Eradication Programme Spray teams.”<sup>116</sup> The glitter and the glitz were attracting all but no one was really analysing its effect.

Price<sup>117</sup> (ibid:10) further observed, “A recent innovation uses the family planning budget to add a team of three to the staff of each of the twenty-two regional centres of All India Radio. Each team consists of an extension worker, a script-writer, and a reporter. Its purpose is to obtain the maximum impact for family planning in the station’s programming. All the team members have recently attended a ten-day workshop and are now assuming their duties”. There was an urgency, but the approach was top-down.

However, Wilder was cautious, “Our good mass communication talent, knowledge and experience alone will not break through the monstrous impediment of deep rooted, evil governmental practices in administration, finance and personnel selection and promotions.”<sup>118</sup> He also observed, “The difference between the family size desired by parents and the size desired by us has obvious vital meaning in shaping the approach and content of the mass, community and personal persuasion that will have to take place. As far as I know, only India has mounted a mass communication effort that is centered totally on the direct appeal (or exhortation): Two or Three Children; than stop! As and if traditional and political resistance melt, the Indian hope to move to a message even more powerful: If You Have Two, That will do!”<sup>119</sup> He sounded cautious knowing the underlying resistance still at work in the country.

Douglas Ensminger in fact, put it far more clearly as his experience of negotiating with the bureaucracy had a longer history. Being the Ford Foundation Country Representative, and the person who can be credited with bringing family planning communication to the forefront of the population debate in India (discussed in details below), he was rightly worried that, “India’s bureaucracy is filled with officers in an attitude of conformity and passive self-protection. At all

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<sup>116</sup> RAC, FFR FA739B, S3255-6261, B166, Report no 003686, “*In Search of Influence*” by David E Price, 1967 pg 10

<sup>117</sup> ibid

<sup>118</sup> RAC, FFR FA739C, S6262-9286, B310, Report no. 006915, “*Mass Communications: Easier Said Than Done---But Doable*” by Frank Wilder, 1968

<sup>119</sup> ibid

levels government officers are obsequious to superiors and imperious to subordinates. Their attitude combines a kind of Maharajah Syndrome and the professional equivalent of the caste system. Nobody makes waves. This attitude works constantly and effectively against expressions of dynamism beyond the call of that sluggish bureaucracy. It shuts off the possibility of teamwork, for departures from the routine for deserved praise. Above all it throttles ideas and actions. Government operation in India are a disastrous parody of efficient British bureaucracy” (Douglas Ensminger and his family planning team in India quoted in a paper for Dave Bell as quoted by Wilder, 1967:13-14<sup>120</sup>).

Thus, a memo<sup>121</sup> written in December 1970 states the following:

The extent of communication inputs in India’s family planning programme is considerable. In 1969-74 Five Year plan allocates about 8.3 percent of the total family planning budget for mass communication, and an additional 21.7 percent of incentives to adopter, motivator and family planning staff. The Plan allocates 156,000 positions to family planning, which are supplemented by about 300,000 piece-rate aides; each of these individuals is a producer of interpersonal communication messages aimed at the receiving audiences.

India’s family planning communication programme has largely accomplished one very important goal, but is yet faced with a much more difficult objective. The successful accomplishment is represented by the rather high percentage of the Indian population that is aware (1) of the family planning programme, (2) of the small family norm of two or three children, and (3) of such family planning innovations as Nirodh, IUD and sterilisation...However, the adoption (or practice) effect of the family planning communication programme in India has been relatively disappointing to date. While 75-90 percent of the target audience possess awareness knowledge, and most of these have favourable attitudes, adoption of the family planning methods is only around 10-15 percent. Choosing this so-called KAP-gap is the major communication task facing India’s family planning programme today.

This limitation of the popular media and the lag in adoption necessitated that an alternative strategy is designed. Thus, the slogan of *Hum do Hamare do* (We Two and Our Two) and the

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<sup>120</sup> *ibid*

<sup>121</sup> RAC, FFR, FA739C, S6262-9286, B310, Report no. 006949 “*Communication Research and Family Planning in India*” dt 16 Dec 1970:04

symbol of the red inverted triangle were crafted. The symbol was the brainchild of Frank Wilder and Tyagi in 1968 along with “the 'Four Faces', a happy family of four, which came to symbolise the country's family planning programme for an entire generation. Billboards, buses, locomotives anything that moved and many things that did not, were adorned with the new symbols in an attempt to raise public consciousness about contraceptive use” (McCarthy, 1995: 299). As Kakkar (1978: 22) opines, “the intention behind it was to establish in the public mind a clear identification of the programme.”

In fact, Frank Wilder drafted a paper for the Ford Foundation Family Planning Consultants' Conference held at Lake Como Italy in April, 1968. Where he narrated the thoughts and ideas behind the Red Triangle and Four Faces<sup>122</sup>. I quote it here in detail:

“There is an interesting paradox in India's special new approach to mass communication for family planning: the new Indian mass communication programme represents a sharp departure from our widely accepted reliance on the modern media (press, radio, and motion pictures) ...they are visualizing a single simple message in the daily real-life setting of the common man, in the places he visits every day and, on the objects, he sees or handles routinely” (pp:2).

“The first element of India's special strategy in mass-communications, then is massive exploration of what we may call the “outdoor” media...Slogans would change; approaches would change...they decided to find a message that would be direct exhortation to have a specific number of children; to present this message in the same form in all media, to keep it simple and understandable; and to stay with it until everyone knew through this message, that family planning is legitimate and what it means. And in their belief that no literate Indian in the target group does not know his language, no materials were produced in English. The basic message presents visually the stylized front-view faces of a smiling mother and father, a son and a daughter. The message in words no Indian can fail to understand, says simply: Two or three children are enough...the same message is verbalised in an appealing song written by a popular song writer, recorded by a famous voice recognizable by most Indians” (pp: 3-4).

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<sup>122</sup> RAC, FFR, Box 12, Report no. 017963 *Four Faces and the Red Triangle: India's Special Strategy in Mass Communication for Population Control*, Frank Wilder April, 1968

“This simple distinctive is repeated on billboards, buses, posters, handouts, matchboxes, rickshas, pocket calendars, newspapers, and magazine advertisements, carnival banners, shopping bags, official village civic registers, and---most important---in large lasting paintings on the walls of buildings...The major obvious pay-off in this approach is that it handles the barrier of illiteracy” (pp:4).

“The third and the final ingredients of the Indian strategy is the Red Triangle. Its main function is to identify family planning clinics, vehicles, personnel and products...the departure here was in the Indian decision to eschew selection of a symbol for the programme...that is a sign that conveys meaning through its shape and design. Instead, they sought a sign with no prior meaning or connotation...in the belief (now proved correct) that it would, in virtually no time, take on distinctively and exclusively the idea of Family Planning...indeed the whole concept of limiting children to two or three” (pp:5).

“In order to convey such awareness of a programme or a product it is not necessary for the symbol to visualise any idea or any physical thing. Its design and shape need not have any meaning by themselves. The Red Cross is a good example. But it has two small defects. One is that it is suggestive of Christianity and for this reason it is not used in some Moslem countries. The second is that the Red Cross has come to be recognised widely as representing not only the Red Cross organisation, but also its medical services, hospitals, first-aid, drugs doctors and so on. What family planning needs is such a symbol...if possible without those defects of the Red Cross. Such a symbol would be meaningless, representing nothing except the thing with which it will become associated in the public eye...namely family planning...The Red Triangle is “distinctive...this means that it will be identified in people’s minds only with family planning and with family planning services and products...The Red Triangle is easy to reproduce anywhere...it is clearly visible at some distance...But probably of greatest importance is the fact that , unlike elaborate graphic emblems, the red triangle can be verbalised in any language in the world. It can be called by name---“the Red Triangle”. Illiterates quickly learn to call the Red Triangle by name in their own particular language. This makes it easy for persons to enquire about the location of a clinic and to converse about family planning. They can even ask for contraceptives without embarrassment, if contraceptive products carry the symbol in their

packaging or carry the brand name “Red Triangle” ...This entire approach, taken together is unheard of elsewhere. But it promises to work” (pp:6-7).

The paper underscores the excitement of devising a multimedia campaign and also detailed the nuances as well. Red Triangle was a noble idea and it remained so forever, as Sarkar (2017:14) says, it was “...an Indian effort towards creating an international symbol for the family planning movement” as Wilder eventually took it even to Nigeria.



Fig2: Inverted Red Triangle, Source: MoHFW website



Fig 3, Four Faces, Source: MoHFW website

The urgency of having a vibrant family planning communication programme seems to have remained a top most priority with the Ford Foundation. Ensminger wrote a letter to Satya Narayan Sinha, the then Minister of Health, Family Planning and Urban Development in February 1968 where he discusses extensively about the urgency of the family planning communication process in the success of the programme underscoring the importance of the involvement of the private sector. This document is extremely crucial to the entire trajectory of family planning communication

process as it charted out the next step and also moved towards strategic communication (refer to chapter 3). Therefore, the letter is extensively quoted here:

There are **three interrelated methods** by which the tremendous **tasks of communication and motivation** are being and will need to be successfully accomplished. The **first of these methods is mass communication and use of media**. The second method is closely related to the first except that it utilizes somewhat different channels and techniques and falls generally within the private sector; that method is **commercial advertising**. The third method which depends upon individual contact and group work, is the process of extension education (all emphasis mine) (Goswami, 2013).

Through the division of Mass Education and Media, the Department of Family Planning has made a good beginning in developing and testing a strategy for mass communications. This strategy has taken into account the size of the task, the limitation of resources, the demands of time, and the like, and the GOI has responded by providing significant financial backing for it. Unfortunately, there are not yet enough methods, personnel and resources to carry on a national mass communication effort, particularly in the assistance to and stimulation of states and large cities to implement their own media programmes. New methods are being explored including air dropping of basic informational leaflets on villages, painting outdoor walls in villages and towns, and exploiting such government channels as ration cards, electricity bills, mail boxes, bus tickets, and postal stamps. The results so far indicate that general awareness of family planning is at high level in towns and cities, but there are serious handicaps to creating the same degree of awareness in rural areas through mass communication efforts (ibid).

Commercial advertising can be extremely successful in convincing persons that they should use one or another product. Knowledge of effective advertising techniques exists presently in India, and it is expected that a great deal more in mass communications about family planning may shortly be expected from the commercial advertising field...The goal of the Family Planning Programme at all levels is based upon social change enhanced by extension education leading to the trial and acceptance of methods of birth control not presently known or used. Extension education is the method of communication which most effectively can lead to motivation. This method was field tested in India for family planning and was found to be effective before being introduced into the national programme. Since



extension education by definition means that workers “extend” their knowledge and ideas through community leaders and others who themselves carry the message to the people, there must be created a very large cadre of persons trained and experience in extension education because there are so many communities to reach.

Even though unpretentious and personal in its application, extension education is quite sophisticated in philosophy and practice and requires good training and regular “back-stopping” and supervision. We have been deeply impressed with the effectiveness of the field programme, particularly in extension education...

We are currently providing consultant assistance to the Mass Education and Media programme. In response to departmental requests, we will also provide material assistance for certain audio-visual equipment, the demonstration of air-dropping, and fellowships. We are presently also providing consultant assistance to the training programme...primarily to help with the multiplication of extension educators through the Department’s programme of support to the State Regional Family Planning Training Centres where most of the extension education will be taught. We recognise that additional assistance in the field of Communication and Motivation should be guided by several factors, including the steps already taken by the Department to strengthen these activities and to increase the Department’s effectiveness in intelligence and evaluation, manpower and training, consultation and field services to states and the interest of the Department in having additional help.

Since the private business sector effectively links advertising or the creation of consumer demand to manufacturing and distribution, it could be expected that more than just an additional source of mass information would result from the involvement of the consumer goods industry.<sup>123</sup>

The emphasis here was to introduce commercial marketing. Accepting that the government communication efforts are quite extensive, he was not sure whether it has been as effective as required. Thus, was ushered in the complex process of communication called marketing communication into the family planning programme in India. This also justified the intervention of experts from the marketing sector into the family planning communication sector. This resulted in

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<sup>123</sup> RAC, FFR Unpublished Report, Family Planning in India and the Ford Foundation, Douglas Ensminger Box no 19643 Report no 003688, 1968

the idea of the Nirodh (Indian made male condom) programme. It was initiated by the U.S. advisor to the Ford Foundation in India in 1961 itself by Dr Moye Freymann, along with another American Mr. Peter King, who was then a visiting faculty at the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. The ideating part took four more years and ultimately in 1968 Nirodh was made available and a massive mass media campaign launched. In 1969 Ford Foundation drafted the blue print of this campaign. Every detail was listed and planned out:

Field Sales operation will be conducted and managed by five of the nation's largest and most experienced consumer good marketing organisation, Brooke Bond, Hindustan Lever, Imperial Tobacco, Lipton Tea and Union Carbide.

One of the key features of the new programme is the establishment of a highly specialised marketing organisation, within the Ministry. This organisation, which is now being set up, will consist of a small group of able professional managers with experience in the fields of marketing operations, marketing research and advertising.

Beginning 25<sup>th</sup> September 1968, the first phase of a massive, continuing advertising and sales promotion programme will be initiated in the introductory market areas. In addition to press and cinema publicity, which will be conducted through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the promotion campaign will make heavy use of posters, handbills, instruction leaflets, metal stockists signs and other point of sale materials, all of which will be distributed and placed by the distributing companies' salesmen. When in peak operation, the advertising and sales promotion programme will be extremely powerful, equivalent to probably five times the effort over made by commercial organisations in introducing a new product in India.<sup>124</sup>

A letter was written on October 3, 1968 by Samuel E. Bunker, Assistant Representative of Ford Foundation to K.N Srivastava, Joint Secretary Department of Family Planning, Government of India, offering to "provide the services of three high-level, short-term Indian Consultants to the Marketing Executive of the Ministry's Board, one in each of the following field: 1) Advertising Management, 2) Marketing Operations Management and 3) Marketing Research Management. Accordingly, Subrata Sengupta was hired from Clarion-McCann Advertising Services Ltd (An

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<sup>124</sup> RAC, FFR, Unpublished Report: The Nirodh Marketing Program: The Case for a New Organisational Base, Box no 18672, Report no 003677, 1969

American advertising agency) in Advertising Management.<sup>125</sup> With this step, experimentation of advertising techniques and knowledge from USA to India became institutionalised. The hapless population became consumers to be prompted and allured to buy products. And India with the ‘teeming’ population was indeed an exciting market.

Peter King along with the Central Family Planning Institute designed the plan of distribution of the Nirodh condoms with the help of the ‘regular networks of salesmen, wholesalers’ as well as the retail outlets of five companies: Brooke Bond Tea, Hindustan Lever, Imperial Tobacco, Lipton Tea and Union Carbide. This was a huge network of “40,000 grocery stores, restaurants and other commercial establishments, backed by a massive press and cinema campaign to make their public sale more acceptable. It was an immediate success, with Indian condom sales nearing the 400 million mark by 1970” (McCarthy, 1995: 300; Chandy, 1965).

It must be noted here that during June-July 1969, a series of meetings were held with the Swedish Ambassador, the Danish Ambassador and the High Commissioner for Canada by Ensminger, Peter King and Krusa, to negotiate about “garnering their financial support for the proposed Nirodh Marketing Organisation.<sup>126</sup> Arthur D Little, Inc (ADL) a consulting firm whose main office was in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA was retained by the Ford Foundation to help the Ministry of Health and Family Planning as well as Urban Development, Government of India in working out the plans of this project.<sup>127</sup>

It is obvious from the above that the international focus of family planning communication started to shift towards strategic marketing of a condom. This facilitated the sizeable presence of international experts in the family planning communication process.

James Q. Harrison in an inter-office memo dated December 2, 1969 addressed to Ensminger narrates the minutes of the meeting held with the USAID official regarding their possibility of coordinating in the family planning efforts. He writes that Lionardo Saccio, the director of USAID India, informed them that there was a general consensus in the recently concluded *Aid to India Consortium* meeting held in Stockholm, on Family Planning, and, “there is scope for intensifying effort and accelerating the pace of family planning programme in India”. The Indian delegation informed that as only 300 crores was available for expenditure in family

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<sup>125</sup> RAC, FFR, Grant no 64-303, Microfilm no 3847, 1968

<sup>126</sup> *ibid*

<sup>127</sup> RAC, FFR Unpublished Report, Box no 18599, Report no 2567

planning, only foreign assistance can boost the programme further, “The Indian viewpoint was that any assistance the donor nations wanted to give to family planning would have to be in addition to pledges already made since the present plan and budget had been evolved in view of those pledges” Mr. Saccio offered 50 million dollars, subject to the approval of the US government. No other country made any offers.<sup>128</sup>

There were many surveys researching the impact of the communication campaign related to IUCD. In a study conducted in a locality of Bombay (now Mumbai) 28 percent of the women interviewed said that they have come to know about IUCD from the programme broadcast in AIR, while the rest said that they could not listen to the programme as it was broadcast on a Sunday and they were busy in their household chores. The effect of the programme was that the knowledge score of the women was found to have raised from 3 to 11 points. Even the numbers of women who had heard that IUCD causes diseases reduced to 11 percent from the 22 percent before the survey. Whereas the survey done amongst 70 acceptors in the family planning clinic of Irwin Hospital proved that the three most important sources of information were the neighbours, lady doctors and relatives. Similar finding was also reported by another study done in the Chembur area of Bombay.<sup>129</sup> It is to be noted that, along with the redesigning of the communication campaign, All India Radio embarked on extensive programme broadcasting on family planning. From 6,000 programmes in 1967, the number went up to 12,000 in 1968 and to more than 16,000 in 1969 (Banerjee, 1979: 12).

The survey findings might not be very exciting, but this period is regarded as seminal for family planning communication in India with the Red Triangle and the Four Faces solidifying the idea of family planning as well as usage of the multimedia platform. This was indeed a long way from the initial ‘interpersonal communication’ days.

The Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission of India, published a report titled, *Family Planning Programme in India---An Evaluation*. It was a report on a survey conducted in 1968, in 35 districts, 69 rural family planning centres, 15 regional training centres, 350 villages with approximately 7000 respondents. It found that “Whatever programmes in the

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<sup>128</sup> RAC, FFR, Grant no 64-303, Microfilm no 3847, 1968

<sup>129</sup> Quoted in cited in *Family Planning Communication Studies in India: A Review of Findings and Implications of Studies on Communications* by Dinesh Chandra Dubey and A. K. Devgan, CPFI Monograph Series No 8, Central Family Planning Institute, New Delhi, 1969

field of education and communication have been in operation, they have not been fully effective either due to insufficient number of extension educators or to the poor quality of the extension staff..." (PCI, 1970:5). This is interesting as the *Overall Plan* mentioned that manpower needs to be increased.

The report further stated, "Our field observation in the selected rural areas revealed that the population in a number of areas had not been subjected to any prolonged or effective exposure to family planning publicity and education. It was reported that there was a shortage of films on family planning and that the audio-visual equipment(s) were not being put to maximum use. In some districts the bureaux did not have suitable vehicles to take the equipment to the rural areas...It was noted that the publicity van sanctioned for family planning work was used for other work and not exclusively for family planning work" (ibid:31).

The lack of equipment or missing equipment seem to be the real problem in the case of diffusion of information regarding family planning, "There is a provision for an audio-visual unit with necessary equipment(s) such as projector, generator, slide projector, P.A.E. sets and accessories. Many of the district bureaux reported having the audio-visual equipment but in a number of them many of the equipment were not there. The items in short supply were the generators and films and in few districts absence of the audio-visual vans was reported. Portable family planning exhibition sets were also available in number of districts. The position in respect of audio-visual aids at the family planning centre level cannot be considered satisfactory" (ibid).

The team was quite critical about the effectiveness of mass media campaign, "Of the mass media of communication, the radio and newspaper appear to be less important sources of family planning communication as they reach only a small proportion of rural people. The film is a very good medium of information and education especially since the literary level in rural areas is low...At present, the coverage of villages by film shows is low both in terms of number of medium and small size villages covered as well as number of film shows" (ibid:33).

The urban centric reach of the newspaper and its role in making the urban population aware of the family planning issue was already underscored by another survey conducted in 1967 in eleven cities by the Indian Institute of Public Opinion (IIPO).<sup>130</sup> In the study, one out of every seven respondents said that newspaper was their source of information. Another study conducted in

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<sup>130</sup> *Urban Attitudes Towards Family Planning: A Survey in Eleven Cities*, Monthly Public Opinion Surveys, Vol XIII, no 1, The Indian Institute of Public Opinion, New Delhi, 1967

Delhi in the same year found that newspapers were the important source of information regarding IUCD amongst the middle class, educated, male government employees (Dubey: 1969).

Similarly, radio was not really ubiquitous in the country at that time as has been observed by Tyagi. Mitra (1969) observed that radio was generally regarded as the voice without a face and was equated with the state. Thus, though it can make people understand the importance of small family norm, it might not be possible to promote the methods of family planning through the medium.

Another study, which is important to cite here, was the one conducted in Baroda district of Gujarat spread out for several years. It was a study conducted to understand the impact of media on people's perception of family planning. The study found that more often than not, newspapers tend to fuel rumours and thus have disruptive impact rather than carry the correct information. This study also analysed the interest of the people in radio programme for two years and found that listeners are more interested in radio plays, skits and gossip programmes than serious messages/information. Talks by government officials are of the least importance, mostly boring. Even the films did not have the required impact as very few viewers really associated the issue of population explosion with the family size. The study suggested that there needs to be discussions held before and after the film screening to drive home the issue (Poffenberger, 1969:93).

The above-mentioned Planning Commission of India study found that there was a disconnect between the plan and the ground level requirements: "Carrying the message of family planning to the village people requires the knowledge of the norms and values of the community, individual aspirations and life experiences. The vast majority in the rural or urban areas does not constitutes a monolithic group. They are divided into different strata requiring somewhat different types of appeal for the educated, the literates and the illiterates. It is doubtful whether the present family planning messages take care of the needs of the different groups. The script and the situations portrayed in the films and other audio-visual media in most cases do not generally reflect the local milieu" (PCI, 1970:5).

The communication process in this period of 1966-67, was more about informing people rather than motivating them to adopt small family norms. The emphasis was to make people aware of the benefits of family planning and the services available for family planning. In a study conducted by Veronica Heiskanen (1966) she analysed print material of family planning

communication from 35 countries, out of which 15 were from India. Out of these 15, three were in Bengali and one in Tamil and rest in English. Her study found that 67 percent of the messages were completely focussed on creating awareness, 27 percent for evaluation and only six percent to motivate to act. Similarly, the above mentioned IIPO study while analysing the effect of the messages found that 99 percent of the urban population have either heard or have read about family planning, thus awareness generation was more or less achieved.<sup>131</sup>

It was obvious from many KAP (Knowledge Awareness Practice) studies conducted during that period that though awareness did increase, practice was not been as robust. Knowledge not being transformed into practice was the challenge that was ahead for the family planning communication programme in the future. The next phase of family planning communication therefore involved more direct communication strategy.

The time of Fourth Five Year Plan was quite difficult for the family planning programme. On January 17, 1969, Wilder, in a communication which was marked urgent-confidential and internal addressed to Ensminger, wrote that he was informed by reliable sources that the Planning Commission is planning to close “the door on any expenditures this year beyond the expenditure of last year.”<sup>132</sup> He also stated that there was “disturbing report” about Planning Commission staff stating that “there was to be no further acceptance of foreign assistance, since such aid would only be a future burden on our resources.”<sup>133</sup> On January 16, same year, Donald T. Rice had already written to Ensminger that “An emergency situation seems to have arisen in the negotiation between the Department of Family Planning and the Planning Commission. A great many objections have been raised to the increase in expenditure and in fact one blanket recommendation seems to be to keep the expenditures for 1969-70 to same level as for 1968-69.”<sup>134</sup>

However, when the final Fourth Five Year Plan was approved Family Planning programme received 315 crores, out of which about 15 crores were earmarked for FP communication. Almost one fifth of this amount was allocated for production and exhibition of films, which meant more focus on that medium as most of the surveys noted that the people could relate to films and the message of family planning was easily communicated to them through this medium.

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<sup>131</sup> *ibid*

<sup>132</sup> RAC, FFR, Grant no 64-303, Microfilm no 3847, 1968

<sup>133</sup> *ibid*

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The Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-73) laid out the plan for communication in family planning thus: “Mass education activities will be strengthened in rural areas and small towns. Traditional and cultural media like song, drama and folk entertainment will be effectively used. Extension education will be strengthened and population education will be introduced. The strategy will be to bridge the gap between knowledge and adoption of family planning by couples in reproductive age-groups”<sup>135</sup> Multiple steps were taken to achieve the objectives. The previous practice of having central and state level planning was supplanted by integrating the mass education media and extension education components (mentioned above).

The government also developed a mass direct mailing process planned to reach out to 2.5 million key, local opinion leaders with a flow of family planning information (Humberger, 1969:34). Direct mailing was supposed to serve three purposes, firstly to increase the knowledge of the opinion leaders regarding contraceptive methods and related physiology, secondly to empower the opinion leaders with tools of knowledge and information so that their role as opinion leaders is fortified and lastly, to inspire the recipients to discuss family planning with others and thus participate in the diffusion of information process (Placek, 1974-75:553).

Before the Fourth Five Year Plan, Central government assistance to the State expenditure was 96-97 percent. During the Fourth Five Year Plan the assistance was raised to 100 percent. The main body in the Department of Family Planning responsible for mass communications was Mass Education and Media Division (MEMD) as mentioned above. The major MEMD efforts were organised at the State and district levels. Radio and films were the area where Central assistance was provided. “The MEMD was also required to design the strategy, coordinate the activities of various official and non-official agencies and also provide guidelines and prototypes” (Banerjee, 1979:18).

Kakar (1978:23) lists the principal functions of MEMD as:

- a) Designing of basic policies and strategies
- b) Guiding the states in promoting the programme
- c) Helping the states in increasing the level of awareness
- d) Developing favourable attitudes among top opinion leaders
- e) Organizing national level motivational conferences

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<sup>135</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved 02/06/2020



- f) Developing media and extension education prototypes
- g) Achieving collaboration with media set-ups in other Ministries, particularly in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; and
- h) Achieving collaboration with international organisations in the area of family welfare communication and education

The idea of spacing of birth of children became the dominant message during this period. The Red Triangle was retained but the earlier slogan of *Hum Do Hamare Do* (We two our two) changed into *Agla Baccha Abhi Nahin, Teen ke Baad Kabhi Nahin* (Next child not now, after three never ever). From a feel-good message, the tone was set to exhorting to act with urgency.

As found by the many surveys cited above, the mobility of the extension and communication workers were attempted to be increased by augmenting the availability of the audio-visual vans. However, tryst of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with the Family Planning Programme continued. Not only all the media units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was mobilised, the folk and traditional media was also actively involved in the process of disseminating messages of family planning as was envisaged in the Fourth Plan document.

Films came to be at the forefront of this massive integrated communication drive. Almost all 336 districts were provided with 16mm audio-visual units and on an average 80 films were produced on family planning every year. The Government felt that film was “the principal instrument for family planning communication followed by television and radio.”<sup>136</sup>

Analysing the films produced during that time, Banerjee (1979:19) says that the major difference between the films of the fifties and sixties and that of the seventies was that these films desisted from showing statistics like it was done earlier, rather these films “concentrated instead on the benefits that could accrue from family planning to the individual. The emphasis thus shifted to family welfare” from population control. The attempt was to convince the people that limiting the number of children was more important for the health and wealth of the family. However, there was a subtle doomsday declaration to be found as well in the messaging. The concept of “*Teen ke baad kabhi nahi*”, actually can be perceived as an order.

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<sup>136</sup> Towards New Approaches for Health and Family Planning Motivational Strategy, working paper of the Ministry of Health and Family Planning 1973 (Mimeo)

However, the messages were not very clear as there was always a possibility that the rural audience interprets the small family size as the contributing factor to wealth or comfort or that a small family is a consequence of affluence.<sup>137</sup> Mainly because “In many of the films we find a stereo-typical picture of the two families. The large family is always shown to be poor, and unhappy, rural dirty, desi, dark and rowdy. The other family is urban, middle-class, Westernised, fair skinned and placid. This is the small and of course happy family. The lesson to be learned is that those who plan their families automatically fall into the second category” (Mira Binford, cited in *ibid*). The possibility was more that they feel disconnected with the message as they could not relate to what was being projected. It must have been obvious to them that as they could never become Westernised so there was no use of attempting to control the family.

Many of the films were made on the subject of contraceptives and the availability of these in government outlets. However again, it had a disconnect with the mass population, who were illiterate to understand the intricacies of reproductive biology and functioning of the various contraceptives on offer. Iyer (1973) noted that “...no films intended for a non-medical audience has been made where the basis of birth control, the biology of human reproduction, or the facilities available in health centres and the role of field workers, or the various contraceptive choices, are specifically or clearly explained. Though re-assurance for the efficacy and the harmlessness of these methods are sometimes given there is generally no explanation...Material used involving real situation and people have not been used except in one case, which too is controlled...only one series of films have been attempted where the actual users are shown in the film and interviewed to describe their experiences with the Loop, and their history and reasons for using it” (Iyer, 1973).

A critical study done by the Media Division also rues the same fact: “Even those films that start from the personal problem, end up with declarations that the only problem of India is too many children, who are represented as consuming ogres eating into the resources of the nation. It is quite possible that these approaches lead to resistance rather than acceptance of family planning. Family planning is often offered as a panacea for all ills. Government’s own declared policy that the economic development is the primary objective and demographic action complementary to it is distorted by such approaches. The attempt to create a panic was in line with our crash approach.”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> *ibid*

<sup>138</sup> *ibid*

The distribution network of the films was beefed up to reach at least 75 percent of the total population. However, a study sponsored by the government found that the exposure level was not commensurate with the availability mainly because of lack of adequate number of staff members on the field. They also raised the issue of lack of maintenance of the vehicles, generators, projectors and other equipment and suggested that “standby equipment should be provided on the scale of one for five units instead of 10 at present.”<sup>139</sup>

Other recommendations offered by the study were:

There is also a need to commission films dealing in an intimate way with common doubts and fears of eligible couples, for screening to groups of males and females separately. The screening of such films will be facilitated with the supply of Super-8 projectors...A large percentage---about 40 or more---of the audience at non-commercial film shows comprises children and adolescents. There is need therefore to commission films which will provide population education for this age group as well as for out-of-school youth. Most of the films now available are addressed to eligible couples...Film shows should be invariably accompanied by talks which relate the theme of the film to the particular place and audience. Extension staff should be informed in advance of the venue and timing of the proposed film shows whether conducted by family planning or other State information units or by AV vans of Central field publicity units---so that they can follow up with personal contact. This will help to bridge the present gap between mass education and motivational work.<sup>140</sup>

As far as Radio and Television was concerned, Radio's role has been discussed above. However, television was at the nascent stage during that period. Only station available was the Delhi station which was dependent on the community viewing sets. Only 7000 sets were available in Delhi. However, studies conducted on the effect of television programmes on people proved that television reaches people of all socio-economic strata and educational levels equally effectively and its effect is far better than radio due to the visual stimuli.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Report of the Study Group on Improved Utilization of the Mass Education and Extension Staff of Family Planning, Department of Family Planning GOI, 1972 (Mimeograph)

<sup>140</sup> *ibid*

<sup>141</sup> Inventory of Family Planning Communication Study by Barota Malhotra and Frank Wilder. FF Report No 004129, Box no 18695, 1970 page 49

Another research conducted by Helen Parris for her PhD thesis found that “When (television) viewers are seeking information they tend to prefer the advice of an expert, an individual who can efficiently handle his topic and more straight to the point. But for those individuals who are less motivated to learn about new ideas, the appearance on television of an individual like themselves, one who speaks their idioms and shares their experience has more appeal.”<sup>142</sup>

Wilder in a discussion paper presented at a Seminar on “The Need for Television in India” sponsored by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi in 1968 had already noted that “Television is beyond question, the most effective medium known today in mass education in national development” and “If television were present today in two-thirds of the country’s villages and towns, little other effort would be required in meeting the need of initial public awareness of family planning and interest in adoption of birth control methods.”<sup>143</sup>

Underscoring the importance of television, Wilder argued for satellite communication to be started in India so that television can receive a boost and be used for making family planning communication robust.<sup>144</sup> Eventually the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) was launched in 1975 (detailed discussion in Chapter 4). The role of SITE in family planning communication will be discussed later in the chapter.

It was found through research that the new slogans like *Do Ya Teen Bachche---Bas* had 87 percent recall for women and 97 percent for men and for *Agla Baccha Abhi Nahin Do Ya Teen Ke Baad Kabhi Nahin* recall rate was 61 percent for women and 63 percent for men. It was also found that *Agla Baccha Abhi Nahin...* was not understood by the people as they could not associate it with the need for spacing children (Banerjee, 1979:22).

The Media Division of the Ministry of Family Planning critically analysed the supposedly low impact of such a massive communication campaign and stated the following:

We have regarded communication as a one-way traffic of information and indeed we have often held back even information from the people which we think fit for them or which we

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<sup>142</sup> *ibid*

<sup>143</sup> RAC FFR No 3727 Box no 18675, Major Consideration in the Application of Satellite Communication in India’s family Planning Programme: A Discussion paper for Joint Study Group for Satellite ETV organized by Indian Department of Atomic Energy and the United States National Aeronautical and Space Administration), January 25, 1968

<sup>144</sup> *ibid*

felt to be inconvenient... (regarding IUCD) There is a tendency to ascribe its crashing failure to the doctor, who, it is said did not do proper medical follow-up. But the causes were more deep-rooted. Perhaps it is worth considering that the failure of the loop campaign has been the failure of a certain style of communication. The people were told only one side of the picture, namely that the loop was easy to wear. The information that the loop could create trouble was withheld in the fear that people might shy away from acceptance in the first instance. We wanted results and quickly too! But when several women found that their experience of the loop was different they not only lost confidence in it but became its active opponents. It never occurred to the communicators that this kind of incomplete or incorrect information is disastrous.<sup>145</sup>

This created a negative effect on the acceptor of IUCD. Thus, the actual achievements in practise of family planning was not very inspiring. Fourth Five Year Plan had targeted 6.6 million IUCD insertion, but effectively it was only 2.4 million. Similar trend was visible even in the case of sterilisation, which was only 10 million as against the target of 15 million in the Fourth Plan. Similarly, use of contraceptives like the Nirodh was only 4.1 million as opposed to the target of 10 million in the Fourth Plan Even the target of reducing the birth rate from 39 per 1000 to 32 per thousand was also not met as the birth rate was found to be 35 per 1000 at the beginning of the Fifth Plan. All these failures were staring at both the ministries of Information and Broadcasting and Health and Family Planning. Communication effort mounted was huge as has been already discussed above. This forced the Department of Family Planning at the insistence of the Ministry to constitute a working group of *Media Choice and Media Organisation and Implementation* in 1973. The group submitted a working paper, where they delved into all the aspects of communication.

Regarding the content of the messages the paper stated that the messages were more or less “simple and direct slogans”, which was a conscious approach, because of which “what we have done is to use a demographic idea as an exhortatory slogan. The thing that we did succeed in doing was to create an association of a symbol---the Red Triangle with a slogan.”<sup>146</sup>

Analysing the content of the films, which was the main focus of the family planning communication programme at that time, the working group found gaps in its credibility. Citing the

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<sup>145</sup> Towards New Approaches for Health and Family Planning Motivational Strategy, working paper of the Ministry of Health and Family Planning 1973 (Mimeo)

<sup>146</sup> *ibid*

example of one film, the paper observed, that in the film (without naming it), “it is shown that while massive buildings are coming up, people have to live in hovels; it is concluded that the one and the only reason for this is the increasing population; from here the visual takes us to an India packed with people, and children being born with horrifying speed. Has it ever occurred to us that the slum dwellers to whom this film is addressed may have a mind of his own? He might well ask as to what percentage of the total housing area in Delhi is occupied by the poor and what percentage is occupied by the affluent?”<sup>147</sup>

The group also was critical about the presentation style, about which they stated that it was top down and patronizing, “we regarded communication as a one-way traffic of information...New ideas and norms will arise if these ideas are debated and tested by the people and found compatible with their aspirations. Such debate and testing are possible only if the manner in which these are presented to the people helps them to articulate their own ideas and their aspirations.”<sup>148</sup>

The group was also unconvinced about the merit of repeating the same slogan through all the media platforms as it can easily become so ritualistic and thus people might get saturated, so they suggested that these messages should be “used with discretion or as ancillary to a campaign.”<sup>149</sup>

The group was quite insightful when they analysed the importance of designing culture specific messages, when they said: “The question of communication has to be viewed in the context also of the needs and motivation of the people...It is true that we have plastered the countryside with our slogans. It is true also that much energy and creativity might have gone into making these slogans and symbols rhythmic and artistic and attractive. But the question is: Are they relevant? ...We began with *Do Ya Teen Bacche Bas; Doctor Ki Salah Maniye* (Pay heed to the doctor’s advice). But then we discover that the Indian villager had no doctor to consult. We went on to *Do Ya Teen Bacche, Hote Hain Ghar Me Acche* (Two or three children is good for the family): from there, on to *Do Ya Teen Bacche Bas, Parivar Niyojan Kendra Ki Pehchan Lal Tikon* (The symbol of family planning is Lal Tikon). We then came up with *Hum do Hamare do* and then

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<sup>147</sup> ibid

<sup>148</sup> ibid

<sup>149</sup> ibid

beat a retreat into *Agla Bacha Abhi Nahin Do Ya Teen Ke Baad Kabhi Nahin*.”<sup>150</sup> According to the group this vacillating messaging did more harm than good.

They were convinced that, “Changes in norms about family size have to arise from within the situation---which includes the objective socio-economic environment and the value systems--- which confronts the mass of the people, for whom human hands are often the only tangible capital. The idea of child as consumption rather than as investment capital maybe relevant to the upper strata to which the communicator too belongs. It may be totally irrelevant to the people from whom the communicator demands a change of norms...the ability of family planning communication to break through the barriers of poverty and backwardness has yet to be demonstrated.”<sup>151</sup>

The group still offered few recommendations which emphasised that messaging should be need based and should only offer solutions to their problems by addressing the demonstrable availability of the resources. They suggested, “The Family Planning administrator should indeed show a vested interest in adequate communication support to those development programmes which alone will create the climate for his success. Family planning communication has always asked and received support from others; it is time it gave the support of its vast communication structure to other sectors, especially the health sector.”<sup>152</sup>

Regarding the use of media, the paper suggested that films should remain the main focus to address the illiterate masses. Television should be also used more, provided community viewing sets are made widely available in the villages, and then the focus should be on radio due to its reach amongst the people. It was also suggested that, programme production should be decentralized so as to give more space for discussion on local issues and thus make the process democratic.

Similarly, another study group was constituted to analyse the role of the ‘extension workers’ in the family planning programme in 1972. The ground level communication was being done as a part of the extension approach by the Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM), Family Planning Health Assistants (FPHA). During the Fourth Plan, there were one FPHA per 20,000 population. Though the ratio was not very impressive, yet the effect on motivational work was far less impressive. Thus, the study group came up with the following observations:

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<sup>150</sup> *ibid*

<sup>151</sup> *ibid*

<sup>152</sup> *ibid*

1. (The FPFA) has nothing to offer to the people except the message of family planning by word of mouth, supplemented by the distribution of very small quantities of print publicity material, and of conventional contraceptives.
2. Low level of education, the prescribed qualification being only middle class.
3. Pitifully inadequate training, ranging from one week (in most cases) to a month.
4. Lack of professional supervision and guidance in extension education.<sup>153</sup>

The group was also critical of the utilization of the AV vans, as it was used by the Mass Education and Information Officer (MEIO) sporadically whenever those were “available to him for publicity” as the numbers of these vans were not adequate as “there is provision at present for only one AV van per district...The present scale is inadequate for achieving the desired impact. Two to three AV vans per district, corresponding to the number of deputy mass education officers...are required.”<sup>154</sup>

Thus, according to them the scarcity of media materials combined with the dearth of equipment worked as a detriment to the smooth functioning of the family planning communication process. The group was of the opinion that, the “distinction between information and extension is unreal since extension work builds on and is a continuation of the educational effort through mass media, and the contents of mass communication (whether radio, films or print publicity material) depend for their relevance and effectiveness on continuous feedback of the questions and problems encountered by extension workers.”<sup>155</sup> The study group suggested better training facilities and pay scale for the extension workers. They also suggested that a mechanism needs to be constituted to elicit constant feedback from the population and also use of traditional folk media for better connect with the target audience. They were also of the opinion that the films which are shown in the villages should also touch upon wider issues around socio-economic development over and above the family planning ones.

The opinion leaders, like the village headmen (sarpanches), teachers, priests and other educated people who were also regarded as an important group of people for interpersonal communication. The second level of such communicators were the barbers, washermen etc, who had direct communication with the target population. In 1965, the CFPI through the direct mailing

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<sup>153</sup> Report of the Study Group on Improved Utilization of the Mass Education and Extension Staff of Family Planning, Department of Family Planning GOI, 1972 (Mimeograph)

<sup>154</sup> *ibid*

<sup>155</sup> *ibid*



programme, reached out to these opinion leaders by sending them printed material on family planning, and thus stimulating them to transfer the information to others in the village through word of mouth. This activity has been discussed above. Surveys conducted later by the institute proved that a large number of this population even those who were not entirely educated, this method of reaching out to these people proved to be effective in raising their awareness level regarding family planning methods.<sup>156</sup> Therefore the Fourth Plan had incorporated this as a part of the communication process too.

But as discussed at the end of the Fourth Plan, analysis of the massive communication process pointed out to the uninspiring role of communication in the family planning programme.

In the meantime, Everett M. Rogers visited 12 communication research centres involved in family planning communication around the country along with N. Bhaskara Rao, Communication expert at Ford Foundation. He eventually wrote a memo to Pratap Kapur, an Indian Information Service officer who was heading the ME &M division in the Department of Family Planning. Rogers wrote his observations on the process of communication research in family planning in the country. His note highlighted two issues related to family planning communication: priority areas of needed research on family planning communication and utilization process of the research conducted till then.<sup>157</sup> He praised the communication initiatives and said, “India’s family planning programme has largely accomplished one very important goal but is yet faced with a much more difficult objective. The successful accomplishment is represented by the rather high percentage of the Indian population that is aware (1) of the family planning programme, and its symbol, the Red Triangle, (2) of the small family norm of two or three children and (3) of such specific family planning innovation as Nirodh, IUD and sterilisation. Considering the many difficulties facing any national communication campaign in India, the accomplishment rate is rather remarkable.”<sup>158</sup> (all emphasis original).

He regretted that in spite of 75 to 90 percent of the target audience having awareness-knowledge, however, “the adoption (or practice) effect of the family planning programme in India has been relatively disappointing... (it is only) around 10-15 percent. Closing this so-called KAP-

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<sup>156</sup> Inventory of Family Planning Communication Study by Barota Malhotra and Frank Wilder. FF Report No 004129, Box no 18695, 1970 page 17

<sup>157</sup> RAC, FFR Unpublished report, Box no 18833, Report no 006949 1970, pg 1

<sup>158</sup> Ibid pg 4

gap is the major communication task facing Indian family planning programme<sup>159</sup> (all emphasis original).

Therefore, he said that “the major function of all family planning communication activities should be to persuade, to convince, to motivate overt behavioural change”, in which according to him, “research might contribute more effectively to (close) the KAP-gap, by increasing adoption and hence reducing fertility rates in India.”<sup>160</sup> Thus, he signalled the change of focus from extension education to behaviour change.

During his visit he found that in comparison to 26 studies in 1962 by 1970, 241 KAP studies were completed and according to him, these were the reasons due to which these studies were not making any impact in increasing the adoption rate:

- 1) Most of the family planning communication research in India is completed by investigators employed in research institution rather than by university scholars. Thus, the post graduate training of researchers is separated from the actual conduct of research.
- 2) Most of the researchers are Indian nationals, but their work displays a strong U.S. influence, which is... due (1) to presence of US research advisors in India (2) to the researcher’s postgraduate training in the U.S., and (3) to the heavy reliance of models and methods imported from abroad.
- 3) Most of the researchers do not have previous experience in the conduct of family planning programme; nor do they maintain much contact with programme officials. This hiatus contributes to the research utilization gap mentioned previously.
- 4) Most of the family planning communication research is not utilized in family planning programme and much of it is unutilizable (sic)<sup>161</sup> (emphasis original).

He is in fact critical about the use of the “classical-diffusion model” in India and says, “The classical model derived from the diffusion of innovations in the Midwestern United States, where farmers largely do make individual adoption decisions. Yet, a recent study at the Gandhigram Institute found that only about 30 percent of vasectomy decisions are made by the man alone.”<sup>162</sup>

However, he still showed some faith in the researchers as they, according to him, were “relatively well-trained” and “committed” as well as “oriented to applied communication research”

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid pg 5

<sup>160</sup> Ibid pg 5-6

<sup>161</sup> Ibid pg 6-7

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, foot note pg 7

and also that “An adequate resource base has been provided, and continues to exist, for family planning communication research.”<sup>163</sup>

Rogers recommended the following areas for probable research in the future:<sup>164</sup>

1. Mix Media Model: How much to invest in which media. A proper research is required keeping in view the 1) media costs, 2) the size of various media audiences, and 3) the types of effect that are to be obtained.
2. New Communication Technology: Family planning is one of the four main programme content areas planned for the 1973-74 (eventually it was carried out during 1975-76) SITE project. Research efforts need to be initiated now in order to design prototypic TV messages, and test them for their effectiveness with receivers.
3. Message Strategies: Especially ignored in past research, have been message variable (in comparison with channel or receiver variable). We know precious little about the effectiveness of one-sided versus two-sided message treatment (e.g. is it better to admit that a family planning innovation has some disadvantages along with its advantages?), the use of fear appeals, and the credibility of various message sources (e.g. physicians versus homophilous peers).
4. Plateau Effects: What causes plateau effect (number of adopters declining after plateauing) should be researched so that an early warning system can be designed “so that programme officials can know when the rate of adoption begins to go awry.”
5. Incentives: To understand “how large the payment should be, when and how they should be paid, and the form they should take” (whether cash or kind) ... “we do not know how many adoptions results from incentives that would not occur without incentives”. Nor do we have a clear picture whether “adoption incentives” are as economical as a communication investment as “diffusion incentives” (which is paid to the canvassers).
6. Communication Programme Effectiveness: Why few family planning units have better adopters than the rest?
7. Inter Personal Diffusion: Research into how interpersonal diffusion work: Will men talk with women about Nirodh? Will low-caste villages discuss tubectomy with their higher-caste neighbours?

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid, pg no 8

<sup>164</sup> Ibid pg 15-18

8. Sexual Behaviour: Know the sexual habits of the population.

Rogers eventually wrote his seminal book called *Communication Strategies for Family Planning* in 1973, incorporating his study conducted in India as well as in other countries in Asia and Africa. Rogers (1973:30-33) said that most of the communication processes in family planning suffer from four “consistent mistakes.” First according to him is the *large-volume error* (italics original). By which he means the “source-oriented approach to the communication process: If I produce lots of messages, my responsibility is finished”, which in a sense is just “firing off indiscriminate messages at a general audience”. He narrates how he counted more than 800 signs of Red Triangle and slogan in a 40-mile distance in the state of Tamilnadu in 1972. In fact, this conforms to the study findings cited above, regarding too much of the same message being plastered all over leading to normalization without impact.

Second mistake is the *overdependence on “modern” mass media channels*, (italics original) ignoring the “extensive network of traditional media like the balladeers, village theatre etc”. The third mistake is the “assumption” that “*creating awareness-knowledge automatically leads to persuasion and adaption*”. Whereas KAP-gap is a general phenomenon in the developing countries. Lastly, “Most family planning communication specialists just *accept the message content as given* to them by the superiors and then try to transfer it via various channels to the audience.”

In another study conducted by Emerson Foote (1969), he too listed the following problems with the family planning communication programme in India after critically evaluating the programme:

1. There is no master plan for the programme, so it essentially operates without strategies.
2. The communication division of the government family planning agency only has budgetary control and advisory influence over the mass communication activities, which are actually conducted by a separate ministry. The net result is an unintegrated campaign; the radio messages stress one theme while billboards stress another, for example.
3. While a good job has been done of creating public awareness of the family planning symbol (the red triangle) and of the slogan “Two or three children---enough,” little campaign attention is given to persuading and motivating adoption of contraceptive

methods. There has been a communication overkill on the symbol and the slogan in India, which has short-changed the logical next step in communication campaign: Telling the receivers where to go and how to obtain family planning methods, and providing motivation for smaller families.

Rogers (1973: 406-411) talks about the various misunderstanding related to family planning which requires to be eliminated to make it a success:

National population policy goals can be reached if family planning programmes simply provide contraceptive services and conduct information activities for family planning, without implementing social, structural and institutional changes to provide motivation for acceptance of the small family norm.

Married fertile women are the main audience for family planning innovations, especially for “female contraceptives”. Rather research shows that, “husbands are more important than the wives... (as) husbands are more opposed to family planning than are wives. So, he calls it dangerous oversimplification.

Family planning is a taboo subject in Asia, but the programme officials do not grasp it. Therefore, communication strategy should be designed to remove the sense of taboo from the topic of family planning.

Family planning diffusion is via mass media, rather than interpersonal, channels. Although the potential of mass media communication for certain purposes is encouraging, most family planning diffusion at the present time is interpersonal.

Contraceptive technology is ‘perfect’ enough to achieve high levels of adoption and major decreases in fertility rates. Perfect contraceptive does not exist...The widest possible range of family planning methods should be made available to give the client the greatest possible choice.

Keeping in view the above misconception, Rogers suggested that the future communication research in family planning should be on the following topics (ibid: 411-412):

1. Why do parents decide to have a child, particularly the third or the fourth child?
2. How are family planning methods perceived as interfering with the enjoyment of sexual intercourse?
3. What are the traditional mass media, the traditional practitioners, and the traditional methods of family planning?

4. What are the interpersonal communication networks through which family planning ideas (including rumours) diffuse among peers?
5. What are the sociolinguistic aspects of family planning word symbols?
6. How can the KAP-gap be closed?
7. Which family members are involved in making the innovation-decision for family planning?
8. Which beyond-family-planning policies may best be utilized to provide motivation for the small family norm and lower fertility?

Keeping the above observations in the background, family planning communication was planned in a different way in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79). The Planning Commission while drafting the Plan document factored in various issues. Mostly, the limitations of the existing media infrastructure, the accessible new technology for the masses and utilization of television for family planning communication was analysed. The Plan document stated that the mass media was reaching only 30 percent of the population and not more than 10 percent of the rural population. Therefore, it is important that the people are reached through audio-visual media and other platforms which are accessible to them.<sup>165</sup> It was also decided that the focus of the communication process would be to motivate the 60 million couples who were already aware of various methods, to practice small family norms and efforts will be on to motivate the rest of the couples by making them aware and facilitate practice amongst them eventually.<sup>166</sup>

Out of the total 497.36 crores earmarked for the family planning component in the Fifth Plan, 13.13 crores were allotted for mass education. The plan document talks of the integration of the family planning with maternal and child health and nutrition as mentioned in Chapter 3. Similar attempt at integration was also visible in the family planning communication area. The focus was to gradually integrate family planning communication activities with other developmental programmes (This was in sync with the international agenda, as has already been discussed in Chapter 2). The family planning extension workers were redesigned as multi-purpose workers, who would be paying special attention to surveying family planning motivation and services.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 01/06/2020

<sup>166</sup> *ibid*

<sup>167</sup> 'Background to the News' a note prepared by Research and Reference Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, for use by the media units of the Ministry, February, 17, 1976

A Family Planning Communication Board was constituted under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, with the Minister of Information and Broadcasting as the Vice-Chairman, in 1974. Secretaries of various related ministries and a number of communication experts were co-opted as members. The Board was expected to advise all concerned ministries on the integration of communication strategies and also to close the gap existing between awareness and actual practice of family planning (Banerjee, 1979:30; Chandra, 1987:105).

The Fifth Plan did not do anything different, rather, talked about the same multi-media approach using radio, television, films, exhibitions, advertisements, hoardings, bus boards, cinema slides, education materials, song and drama troupes, direct mailing etc. Interestingly, in spite of low literacy rate the focus of communication was on printed material with a sizeable amount of the financial allocation being given to production of printed material.

The communication resources of India were not very impressive at that time. UNESCO had suggested that the ideal ratio of media to population thus: minimum diffusion rate of 100 copies of newspapers per 1000 people, and at that time it was just 15 copies per 1000 in India. As far as radio and films were concerned, the suggested diffusion rate was 50 radio sets and 20 cinema seats per 1000 population, and in India the rate was 21 radio licences and 5 cinema seats per 1000.<sup>168</sup> Even if we do not regard these parameters as sacrosanct, yet the media penetration was not really impressive at that time. In fact, TV was still in the process of incubation. There were only six television stations, one each in Delhi, Bombay (now Mumbai), Calcutta (now Kolkata), Madras (now Chennai), Srinagar and Amritsar. However, television for development communication became a concerted effort during the SITE project (inception discussed in chapter 3). As mentioned above, communication specialists were arguing for use of satellite communication for better dissemination of family planning messages.

The specific thrust of programming of SITE was to, a) contribute to family planning, b) improve agricultural practices and c) contribute to national integration.<sup>169</sup> A study conducted by the Planning Commission in three phases during the duration of the SITE project brought up the following issues: The transmission hours were one and a half hour in the morning and two and half hour in the evening. The evening hour programming was targeted towards the adults. The percentage share of Family Welfare Programme increased from 6 percent in the initial three

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<sup>168</sup> World Communication---A 200 country survey of press, radio, TV and films, UNESCO, 1975

<sup>169</sup> Report on Evaluation of Karnataka SITE-Experience, Department of Communication, Bangalore University, 1977

months to 30 percent in the last three months of the project.<sup>170</sup> This study also found that the family welfare programmes were 38 percent of the total programme. Family welfare programmes were regarded as of good quality by the respondents, and, 100 percent of the programmes were regarded as relevant. It was also found out that there was gain in knowledge and attitude in respect of family planning amongst the viewers.<sup>171</sup>

### **SITE and Family Planning Communication:**

The plan to integrate family planning with the wider development narrative was visible in the case of SITE as well. Family welfare through family planning was emphasised by invoking the socio-cultural, educational, health and occupational angles of the issue (Krishnamurthy 1976:412).

A longitudinal survey conducted by the Space Application Centre (SAC) noted that, Formats of these TV programmes were generally of social drama, graphic cartoon, folk song and dance and ...discussions and interviews. The assumption underlying these programmes was that the viewers would be persuaded by these programmes and will rationally decide to adopt family planning. The programme on family planning were of two types: (i) those that roused public awareness about population explosion and, (ii) programmes emphasising small family norms...There were no specific programmes on medical termination of pregnancy. A holistic study conducted during the project, reported that the programmes broadcast on family planning acted only as a reinforcement of the already prevalent knowledge on the topic. The discussion that was generated on the issue was observed to be comparatively rational than the pre-SITE period.

A feedback study which was also conducted during the period, indicated that the percentage of family planning programmes were quite low. These ranged between four to 20 percent in the states where SITE was functional. Family planning programmes were regarded as 'softcore' instructional programmes.

It was also reported that though family planning programmes were given a high rating by the audience in terms of comprehension of the message, they were rated low on need, interest, likeness and utility compared to the programmes on health and nutrition. In Orissa, family planning programmes were rated low also on comprehension. The Message System Analysis based on content analysis of sample Hindi programmes reported that three percent of the total programming

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<sup>170</sup> Evaluation Report on Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (1981), Programme Evaluation Organisation, Planning Commission of India, pg. 21-23

<sup>171</sup> Ibid pg. 86



time was devoted to family planning. In a nutshell, programmes on family planning were fewer than those in other SITE instructional areas, and could generally be categorised as “softcore” instructional programmes” (Agrawal et al, 1977:80-81) as mentioned above.

The study also showed that the gain in the area of awareness of family planning methods was more among those females who reported to be TV viewers than males whose level of awareness was high even before the SITE started (ibid:85). In fact, the survey found that interest of the males and the females regarding different methods of contraception increased post-SITE, but the increase was more visible amongst the females. The study accords this to the fact that access of females to such information was not easy before SITE. And the audio-visual nature of the medium made it easier for the illiterate women to absorb the information on family planning. This must have generated a discussion with their spouses, friend or family planning workers. The gain was more perceptible in the area of awareness and interest than in the area of adoption (ibid:88).

Arbind Sinha, a communication expert with the SITE project says, most of the studies conducted during the period affirmed that awareness and attitude formation was positive in most of the cases (regarding family planning) but many of the ideas could not be translated into practice due to socio-cultural factors (Sinha, 1986:69). This was also proved by the longitudinal study mentioned above and according to the study, “This is not surprising as one year’s time was too small a period for behaviour change” (Agrawal et al 1977:88).

Prof E.V. Chitnis, the Programme manager for SITE, who was handpicked by Vikram Sarabhai was critical about the way software was developed as a second thought and not as the primary concern, whereas software was supposed to be the lifeline of the project. He noted that, “The software came late in the game and really no time for experimentation. Producing programme, good or bad, became an end in itself and it was a miracle that such a large number of programmes were produced in such a short time...The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in September 1969, and May 1974 happens to be the ATS-6 launch date. Incidentally, half the hardware effort was completed by May 1974. The software had barely 50 hours of programmes in the can. For a long time, an impression was created that SITE will, for one reason or another, not happen...For the software, there was no money assigned on a project basis. Equipment required for production was not procured in good time. Studios were ready just in time so that production had to be done in a “fire-fighting” or a “last-ditch” mode. Thus, engineers and producers did not have time to experiment with hardware which would have made an impact on the quality of software. It

was not considered necessary by the decision makers to make provision for researchers in the programme producing organisation...the other lacuna on the software side was the marginal involvement of the extension agencies at the central and state levels...The extension agencies had neither the dedicated staff nor the project budget to provide useful timely inputs for SITE programmes production” (ibid: ix).

G D Shukul, who was in the team of producers from AIR also echoed the same sentiment regarding software development, “There was hardly time for experiment with modes in the preparation of the programme. As they say in Chinese, ‘if you want to reach fast, keep to the old roads.’ By and large, old routine and values in broadcasting, were followed...Whatever success was achieved could perhaps be credited to the novelty of TV and not much to experimenting with techniques in programmes suited to the requirements of audience...” (Shukul, 1986:110-111).

As the Delhi station of television was under the supervision of All India Radio (AIR), so naturally AIR became responsible for programme generation for SITE as well. AIR had till then sent about 20 programme personnel and 30 engineers abroad for training in television to handle the two hour-a-day operation in Delhi. India did not have private television training institute. Only one that existed was the Film and Television Institute in Pune, which was also run by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Thus, the Staff Training School of AIR which was located in Delhi was assigned the additional task of training for television” (Vepa, 1967:65-66). The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) provided research inputs and some programmes of prototype nature and science education...AIR had located field units in each of the direct reception cluster regions. Those units provided films for programmes that were taken at the base production centres. Each base production centre had capability of producing programme (per month) lasting 12 hours. Apart from the programmes produced by these base production centres, AIR utilized the facilities of Delhi, Srinagar and Bombay TV Centres also. Common programmes of 30 minutes duration were taken care of by these centres and rebroadcast from their transmitters.<sup>172</sup>

Anyway, SITE was basically planned to “provide a system test of direct broadcast technology in relation to a large developing country” (ibid: iii) which was “designed as a learning experience” (Chitnis, 1977: vii). SITE paved the way for proliferation of television in India. As far as family planning/welfare was concerned, SITE only added to the already popular film media.

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid pg 21

Indira Gandhi declared Emergency in June 1975 and the declared population control as one of the primary objectives of the government (discussed in detail in Chapter 2). In February 1976, the Research and Reference division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting circulated an internal note as a guideline for all the media units under the Ministry stating the government line during that period: “Over the years it has been found that while family planning is fairly widely practised by people in the higher socio-economic strata, its acceptance is particularly limited among the poorer and backward sections of the society, whose abject life conditions often drive them to higher reproduction, thus completing a vicious circle...”<sup>173</sup> Therefore the strategy for communication was planned so as to reach “100 million literate and illiterate couples in the reproductive age group, mostly living in rural and remote areas.” The note commended the measures like incentives and disincentives, which were being implemented by various governments for their employees.

Remarkably, the National Population Policy of 1976 was also quite elaborate on the communication strategy to be adopted for proper dissemination of family planning messages:

In order to spread the message of family planning throughout the nation, a new multi-media motivational strategy is being evolved which will utilize all the available media channels including the radio, television (specially programmes aimed directly at rural audiences), the press, films, visual displays and also include traditional folk media such as the jatra [traveller’s talk], puppet shows, folk songs and folk dances. The attempt is to move from the somewhat urban-elitist approaches of the past into a much more imaginative and vigorous rural-oriented approach. In this context my (sic) Ministry is working in close co-ordination with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and is also trying to draw the best media talent available in the country into the structuring of the new programme (Singh, 1976: 312).

In the event of massive and unprecedented media censorship during the emergency period a lot of information regarding massive coercion in family planning did not get attention immediately. However, the Shah Commission came down heavily on the issue and eventually the tone and tenor of family planning communication also went through a tectonic shift.

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<sup>173</sup> ‘Background to the News’ a note prepared by Research and Reference Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, for use by the media units of the Ministry, February, 17, 1976

“The Government of India executed an agreement with the Advertising Agency Association of India to design a communication strategy for the states of Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal and this agreement is still considered a landmark in evolving communication strategies in family planning programme. The objectives of the strategy were to provide appropriate knowledge about methods of contraception, allay fears among the people, provide accurate information as to where one can have family planning services, and finally stimulate inter-personal contacts” (Goswami, 2010).

### **Role of Ford Foundation in the Family Planning Communication in India**

During this entire period, the Ford Foundation was intricately involved in the process of political economy of communication policies in family planning in India<sup>174</sup> (Goswami, 2013). The Ford Foundation in fact instituted the field of family planning communication from the very beginning, and because the Foundation was already involved with India’s family planning program, it was natural for its consultants to expand their work into communications as well.

In 1959, after being involved with family planning in India for almost seven years, the Ford Foundation made its first attempt to help the program financially. In May 1959 Donald Ensminger, the Foundation’s representative in India, wrote to Lieutenant Colonel B. L. Raina, India’s Director of Family Planning, about “possible Ford Foundation assistance for strengthening the communication aspects of the Family Planning Program,” suggesting that the Foundation begin a “five-year Family Planning Action-Research-Training Program in Communication... in three to five geographic areas.” The objective of the exercise would be “scientifically to determine the role of all available methods of communicating information about family planning, for attracting interest, for gaining acceptances and for motivating continuous use of family planning practices.” He proposed basing such communication in a “sympathetic appreciation of local beliefs and attitudes,” and devising a “comprehensive educational program... to bring understanding of family planning principles and motivate adoption of whichever family planning practices are most acceptable.” He suggested a few areas in which the Foundation could help. These included funding for infrastructure and fellowships abroad, placing a Ford Foundation specialist in the office of the

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<sup>174</sup> This part of this chapter was earlier published online as Rockefeller Archive Research Report. The author was a recipient of the Grant-in-aid of the Rockefeller Archive Centre, New York for the year 2013-14

Director of Family Planning, and forming a Family Planning Communication Research Committee.<sup>175</sup>

In June 1959 Lt. Col. Raina responded to Ensminger that “the proposal on the communication aspect of the family planning program is under consideration and I will let you know at your Delhi address immediately some decision is reached.” The Indian government did not take long to decide. Raina wrote back in July of the same year that the Ministry of Health was ready to consider the first two proposals, of infrastructure and fellowships. It rejected outright, however, the idea of having a Foundation representative in India’s Family Planning office as well as the creation of a research committee on family planning communication.<sup>176</sup>

Other evidence suggests that Indian officials were, in fact, interested in those parts of Ensminger’s proposal as well. According to John and Pat Caldwell, “as early as May 16, 1957 Ensminger was [*sic*] reported to F.F. Hill that Colonel Raina had talked jointly to him and to Marshall Balfour, representing the Rockefeller Foundation, about developing educational materials for the Indian family planning program” (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1986:2). In a 1970 report, moreover, Edward M. Humberger, a Ford Foundation family planning training associate, hinted that there had indeed been a “formal request for Foundation assistance” from the Indian government.<sup>177</sup>

Whatever the reality, in 1959 the Ford Foundation approved a grant of \$330,000 to the government of India for a period of approximately five years to assist in developing research on the communication aspect of the government’s family planning program.<sup>178</sup> The grant focused mainly on: 1) strengthening the office of the Directorate of Family Planning with a qualified Indian public health physician and behavioural scientists; 2) administering a program of grants for small research projects in the preventive medicine departments of medical colleges or in the behavioural science departments of universities; 3) establishing and operating an action-research unit in the same departments of such institutions; 4) instituting a training program for equipping personnel in the

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<sup>175</sup> RAC), FFR, Grants, No. 05900482, Microfilm Reel No. 3352, 1959-66.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Edward M. Humberger, “Population Program Management: The Ford Foundation in India, 1951-1970,” RAC, FFR, Unpublished Reports, Box 18672, Folder 03673, April 1970.

<sup>178</sup> RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 05900482, Microfilm Reel No. 3351, 1959-66, D.O no. 10-35/50-FP, November 5, 1959.

research methods of this field; and 5) providing for a program of “higher training abroad for Indian personnel who will be leaders in this field.”<sup>179</sup>

The Ford Foundation made the requirements and objectives of the training program and fellowships quite clear. The Foundation expected trainees to “head one of the field research project areas which would involve coordination of a fairly large family planning action program...”<sup>180</sup> The Foundation accordingly undertook elaborate discussions with various universities in the US regarding the training curriculum. The program’s major requirements consisted of general training in public health, behavioural sciences, and health education, along with supervised field work in countries where family planning has been already developed. Correspondence between the Foundation’s New Delhi and New York offices shows that the New York-based Institute of International Education (IIE) also took part in developing communication research related to family planning.<sup>181</sup> The Ford Foundation allotted amounts of \$89,000 and \$120,500 to IIE to finance eighteen new fellowships for 1962-63.<sup>182</sup>

The Foundation commissioned a number of narrative reports out of the \$330,000 grant.<sup>183</sup> During the period of 1965-69 the program conducted a total of eleven studies in various Indian states. The Central Family Planning Institute undertook two of them, the Planning Research and Action Institute did another, and the Ford Foundation itself ran a third study under the direction of M.W. Freyman. H.W. Mitchell, an independent consultant, conducted another six. Mitchell also ran four more studies in 1967. The Institute of Economic Growth of the University of Delhi initiated another study and the Ministry of Health had done two others in 1960. These studies, however, were mostly experimental.

It is not clear how the Indian government’s initial reservations about setting up a Communication Action Research Committee vaporized, but in 1960 the government established a Central Family Planning Communication Action Research Committee (hereafter, Central FPCAR Committee). The Indian Ministry of Health constituted the committee with the following as members: Prof. P.N. Mahalanobis, Hony Statistical Adviser of the Cabinet Secretariat, S. N. Ranade, the Principal of the Delhi School of Social Work, the Ministry of Health’s Financial

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<sup>179</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 05900482, Microfilm Reel No. 3352, 1959-66.

<sup>180</sup>Ibid.

<sup>181</sup>Ibid.

<sup>182</sup>Ibid.

<sup>183</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 05900482, Microfilm Reel No. 3351, 1959-66.

Advisor, the Director of Central Health Education, Donald Ensminger, the Ford Foundation's representative, the Commissioner of Family Planning, and Lt. Col. Raina. The committee had the authority to bring in outside members as well.<sup>184</sup>

During the early 1960s the Ford Foundation also employed a team of consultants who spent much of their time advising the centres and helping them develop constructive programs. Prominent Ford-appointed family planning communication consultants in India included Moye Freyman and his wife Katherine Freyman. In May 1962 George F. Gant of the Ford Foundation in New York wrote to Ensminger about the appointment of Dr Betty Mathews and Dr Dorothy Nyswander, specialists in family planning communication research, as health education consultants for India. The Indian family planning program, Gant wrote, had been using the Directorate of Audio-Visual Publicity of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for most of its broad-scale communications program. With the help of Dr Nyswander and the Freymans, these publicity services could be further rationalized so as to focus on target groups. A lot of data was being gathered regarding the factors that influenced the acceptance of family planning, but much of it remained unprocessed. Gant hoped that the consultants could help to exploit this information as well. The Foundation also planned field evaluations of these efforts for the first time, and there were further plans to observe one day of the year as a special family planning day involving village leaders, among others. These two consultants, according to the letter, had experience in developing community education programs with a social research background. Gant made a case for there being a special need for such consultants and asserted that they could be hired using the money earmarked for fellowships and training abroad. The letter ended by emphasizing that "these two consultants would not only be essential for the communication research work, but could also make major contributions to the planning and implementation of the Intensive Districts Program and the new National Institute of Health Administration and Education."<sup>185</sup>

In March 1961 the Foundation approved a second grant for communication research in family planning, this one of \$603,000. In 1961 and 1962, the Central FPCAR Committee selected the following six institutions as the centres through which action research could be undertaken:

- The Central Health Education Bureau New Delhi, which was transferred to the Central Family Planning Institute in 1964

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<sup>184</sup>Gazette Notification No. F. 14-47/65-F.P.III, February 1, 1968, in *ibid.*

<sup>185</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 05900482, Microfilm Reel No. 2610, 1959-66.

- The Demographic Training and Research Centre, Bombay, 1961
- The Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, June 1962
- The Department of Statistics, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, November 1961
- The Institute of Rural Health and Family Planning, Gandhigram, July 1962
- The Planning Research and Action Institute, Lucknow, February 1963<sup>186</sup>

The Central FPCAR Committee defined the purpose and methodology of the action research program as “to help build an effective national family planning program” and “to test and demonstrate improved techniques of motivation and communication about family planning techniques to be incorporated into the national program.”<sup>187</sup>

The Central FPCAR Committee was to focus on “knowledge, attitude and practice” (KAP), to ascertain the reasons why family planning was not being accepted, to design and administer an action program testing out a hypothesis and, finally, to evaluate effectiveness in relation to a baseline survey. To conduct the action program, each centre selected a demonstration area where in most instances the centre organized a communication program in cooperation with the existing family planning staff and clinics. The Central FPCAR Committee also made research grants to eleven other institutions spread over Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Bihar in the years 1962-67 for subjects ranging from family interpersonal relations to district action research programs. The Committee sought to incorporate as many places as possible and to spread the research over a wide area.

The Central Family Planning Institute served as the program’s principal coordinating agency. The Department of Family Planning, however, also created a social science research unit to look after various programs in demography and communication action research. A number of workshops were organized that enabled researchers from FPCAR centres to exchange notes as well as to develop a standardized methodology and to learn from each other.

During the grant period the Foundation made three important changes in the grants to relate them more effectively to the actual needs of the programme:

- i. The Foundation transferred an amount of \$32,400 from staff support to the fund for research grants to Indian institutions at the Indian government’s request.

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<sup>186</sup>Ibid.

<sup>187</sup>Ibid.



- ii. In June 1962, the ministry requested that the Foundation provide funds for more fellowships than had been planned, and the Foundation therefore shifted funds from the foreign consultant budget line to the fellowships line.
- iii. Because the ministry could arrange its own financing to set up the three centres, the grant amount of \$543,231 was withdrawn from that head. The ministry utilized that amount for other needs of its family planning program, which required foreign exchange.<sup>188</sup>

In April 1963, Lt. Col. Raina prepared the document “Family Planning Program, Report for 1962-63,” which basically narrated the activities of the family planning program during that period.<sup>189</sup> In the document, he accepted that “the extension education wing of the program is yet to be fully developed.” He added, however, that “a great deal has been done to increase people’s general awareness of family planning.” As examples, he listed the printing and distribution of posters, pamphlets, folders, films being produced, leaders’ camps being organized, and so on. The document contains a few comparatively vague lines on communication research, but does not spell out the objective and the approach being undertaken.

The Ford Foundation’s own views regarding the communication research program, however, started to take a different turn by the mid-1960s. In 1965, Rey M. Hill, the Foundation’s deputy representative, wrote to Douglas Ensminger about the “unhappy situation” of the two grants. According to Hill, the first grant was never satisfactorily accounted for. Yet the unused amount had been transferred to the 1961 grant, bringing the total to \$692,500. Of this, an amount of \$68,100 was retained for expenditures in the states, conducted under the Foundation’s supervision. The letter goes on to say that the Ministry of Family Planning had received sufficient funding from the Indian government and therefore never needed the money. Yet the ministry wanted that fund to reimburse the past expenditures for which they were unable to give firm accounting.<sup>190</sup>

It is interesting to note that even though Foundation officers understood that the ministry did not need the money, they still never considered withdrawing it. Rather, they decided to add that remaining money to the \$1.9 million earmarked to help India accelerate family planning under the circumstances that prevailed in 1965. Foundation officers were also not very sure whether they

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<sup>188</sup>Ibid.

<sup>189</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No 06400303, Microfilm Reel No. 1996, 1964-67.

<sup>190</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 05900482, Microfilm Reel No. 3351, 1959-66.

should allocate the money for post-expenditure payment, as the Indian government was asking, or to take a tougher stand to hold back the entire \$549,900. In Hill's opinion, the second option would have been more helpful for the family planning program, as otherwise it might also create embarrassment for Lt. Col. Raina. He added, however, that refunding would be "on the side of progress."<sup>191</sup> The Foundation thus ultimately decided that the remaining amount of \$543,300 for communication research would be spent on vehicles, equipment, and the like.

In 1969, Robert Queener, assistant to the Foundation's representative in India, submitted a grant evaluation report suggesting that the area in which the projects had been least successful was in developing the necessary central leadership for the FPCAR program. The two central government research coordinators that the grant document had specified had never been appointed. Most FPCAR centre operatives felt the action research and family planning programs remained disconnected. Family planning communication research, however, had been effectively institutionalized, particularly in the six FPCAR centres.<sup>192</sup>

In 1967, the Assistant Director of the CFPI's Social Research Division, Dr Kamala Gopal Rao, prepared a compendium on *Social Research Related to Family Planning in India* wherein she discussed the various projects taken up by the FPCAR centres.<sup>193</sup> In 1969, a sociologist in the Social Research Division, Dr D.C. Dubey and A.K. Devgan, also published a report on *Family Planning Communication Studies in India*, in which he analysed the findings of the family planning communication programs.<sup>194</sup> These studies clearly find that family planning communication action research had been successfully institutionalized and that government support as well as leadership had been adequately established. These studies pointed out the loopholes in the communication process too.

In his 1969 report Queener had also observed that the findings of the Dubey and the Rao studies neither found an immediate audience in the Department of Family Planning nor were incorporated in the family planning program. According to the two reports, Queener noted, Bhatia believed that senior administrative officials were never convinced that communication research was necessary or that it could inject new wisdom into the program. Dubey and Rao held Bhatia

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<sup>191</sup>Ibid.

<sup>192</sup>Ibid.

<sup>193</sup>Kamala Gopal Rao, with Saroj Mullick, *Studies in Family Planning in India: A Review for Programme Implications* (New Delhi: Central Family Planning Institute, 1968).

<sup>194</sup>Dinesh Chandra Dubey and Aadesh K. Devgan, *Family Planning Communications Studies in India: A Review of Findings and Implications of Studies on Communications* (New Delhi: Central Family Planning Institute, [1969]).

responsible for the failure to create a departmental coordinating cell and to maintain close supervisory contact with the research centres. They also observed that although the FPCAR centres conducted a number of research endeavours, many of the centres used relatively unsophisticated statistical research methods and had taken samples that were too small to enable a reliable conclusion that could be regarded as representative of a larger population. Inadequate guidance by the Central government had also resulted in lack of clarity in the research standard.

Queener remarked that during the grant period twenty-four people were sent on study fellowships abroad, mainly to the US. The goal of the training was to produce competent health educators fully conversant with communication action research. The fellowship scheme did help a few of the FPCAR centres, but its results were far below target. Interestingly, three of the FPCAR centres did not send any trainees for the fellowship. Ford Foundation also sponsored seven health educators from India to attend a conference organized by IPPF in Singapore in February 1963.<sup>195</sup>

Fellowships in various subjects were also offered by other organisations during the grant period. The Population Council offered ten of these and the Worcester Foundation offered five. Bhatia notes that in 1962-63, the Ford Foundation sent 14 people to the US on fellowship in the area of Communication and Education and offered two people fellowships in India itself.

According to the 1970 report compiled by Edward M. Humberger, these initial grants “moved the Foundation even more into the forefront as an innovator and change agent... [with this] New York made clear its commitment to India’s population program.” He felt that the initial grants could be considered successful in their own right, and that “the real success was that in spite of a cautious and hesitant environment a role of leadership was established.”<sup>196</sup>

By the time of the Third Five Year Plan, another Ford grant was in the offing to the tune of \$12 million. According to Humberger, the Foundation’s consultants had been very closely associated with the government during the preparation of India’s five-year plans, which allowed them to identify many gaps in the program, gaps that the grant proposed to address. The grant included a provision for “continued research and training in the communication aspects of family planning to provide a sound basis for educational effort.” The Foundation proposed a sum of \$800,000. Of this, \$500,000 was earmarked for a communication research program and \$300,000

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<sup>195</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 05900482, Microfilm Reel No. 3351, 1959-66.

<sup>196</sup>RAC, FFR, Unpublished Reports, Box 18672, Folder 03673, April 1970.

for training in social psychological research. The Foundation revised the proposal, however, because, as Humberger explained, “New York stated that it did not consider it wise to provide the total rupee cost... because it would give the impression that these program phases were Ford Foundation property as well as an impression that they constituted a foundation program.”<sup>197</sup> To this Humberger added, almost as a passing thought, that the situation of the US in respect to foreign expenditures was also not very conducive, and hence, “New York felt a social responsibility not to aggravate the balance of payment situation...” The Foundation therefore excluded Communication from the grant.

A document entitled “Family Planning in India and The Ford Foundation,” compiled by the Ford Foundation in February 1968, took stock of the role of the Foundation in family planning program. <sup>198</sup> The document discussed further areas of possible collaboration between the Foundation with the family planning programme in India. Regarding “Communication and Motivation” the document accepted that:

One of the most formidable tasks in the family planning programme is to communicate information and knowledge about family planning in order to create public awareness and interest which, when carried further through individual and group motivation, will hopefully lead to trial and acceptance of family planning on a widespread basis.

The document further notes that:

There are three interrelated methods by which the tremendous tasks of communication and motivation are being and will need to be successfully accomplished. The first of these methods is mass communication and the use of media. The second is closely related to the first except that it utilizes somewhat different channels and techniques and falls generally within the private sector; that method is commercial advertising. The third method which depends upon individual contact and group work is the process of extension education.

The document commends the Mass Education and Media Division of the Department of Family Planning for the activities through which it was able to generate a high level of awareness of family planning in the towns and the cities. It made clear, however, that there remained “serious handicaps to creating the same degree of awareness in rural areas through mass communication

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<sup>197</sup>Ibid

<sup>198</sup>RAC, FFR, Unpublished Documents, Box 18673, Report No. 003688, 1968.

efforts.” Still, the document saw a bright future in the area of commercial advertising (which has been discussed above).

The document also proposed to establish a new National Institute of Population and Health, in which, among many proposed departments, it was to include one on Communication and Motivation. It listed six objectives for the department:

- i. To develop and provide training courses of all kinds, particularly for those who will be conducting training or as demonstrations in methods of teaching or communicating.
- ii. To work closely with training and services institutions for paramedical personnel, family planning workers, communication and media specialists, etc.
- iii. To carry on research and development in new methods of communications, teaching aids and so on.
- iv. To assist advisory committees for research grants and demonstration project grants in media, communications, field education, etc.
- v. To stimulate and encourage research in other agencies, in training institutions, and in the private sector.
- vi. To provide consultation.

The general environment for technical assistance during this fifteen-to-twenty-year period was a movement from a congenial, flexible atmosphere in 1955, in which foreign aid and advice were welcomed, to a guarded, controlled atmosphere by 1970. According to Humberger, this was a natural movement away from dependence and towards self-determination. As Ensminger wrote, however, “the relationship between donor and recipient nation is not an easy one.”<sup>199</sup>

“In the early phases of Foundation assistance, the unified political structure of the government i.e. the dominance of the Congress Party, made the government relationship relatively flexible. If an idea or approach was accepted by the leadership, open opposition and resistance were minimized.”<sup>200</sup> He enlists the following as the tentative causes of the shift in attitude and behaviour:

- A war with China in October 1962.
- A war with Pakistan in September 1965.

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<sup>199</sup>Staff document prepared for the December 3-5 meeting of the Ford Foundation’ International Division in Mexico City, November 26, 1969, quoted in Humberger, “Population Program Management.”

<sup>200</sup>Ibid.

- Two successive monsoon failures in 1965 and 1966.
- The general election of 1967.
- The discovery of CIA/Defence Department activities in 1967.
- Some agricultural breakthroughs since 1968.
- A spiralling rate of population growth.

Humberger quoted Ensminger, who had written that “another aspect of the environment which affects the foundations’ relationship with the Indian government is the growing feeling that foreign advice and technologies are not relevant to the Indian social-cultural or developmental context.” He felt that it too often relied on “Western methodologies to solve Indian problems, methodologies which may neither be applicable nor desirable.” Likewise, the great number of Western researchers using India as a case study data which yield little return for India is producing an adverse climate for foreign involvement.”<sup>201</sup>

Ensminger suspected that the ministry gets too many offers for funding and, rather than reject them, sits on the offer till the time that the organisations themselves withdraw the offer. He further commented that the Foundation had also grown a lot and changes in the top-level personnel in the New York office had also had an impact on the Foundation’s relationship with the ministry.

In a July 1970 confidential document, Ensminger expressed serious criticisms of the report compiled by Humberger earlier in the year. He felt “horrified,” he wrote, “by the conclusion and inferences he [Humberger] draws in the absence of accurate knowledge of what actually happened or the actual environmental situation.” He accepted that the files of some crucial meetings and discussions had not been accurately maintained and thus created gaps in the picture. He went on to explain the political atmosphere in India as well as that in the New York office during the initial years of the family planning program. When Indira Gandhi became the prime minister, he noted, she created a Division for Family Planning within the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and also renamed the Ministry of Health as the Ministry of Health and Family Planning. This appeared to express India’s seriousness about a national family planning policy. According to Ensminger, however, the prime minister was “simply reacting to pressure from the developed countries.”<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>201</sup>Ibid.

<sup>202</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 06400303, Microfilm Reel No. 1995, 1964-67

Ensminger also criticized the Health Minister, Dr Sushila Nair. Because Dr Nair had been Mahatma Gandhi's physician, he argued, she also shared his views on family planning. Gandhi had believed in natural birth control rather than artificial contraception. Ensminger alleged that, because she wanted to be a cabinet minister, "she paid lip service to family planning, but her every move was directed towards diverting budgeted funds from family planning activities to build up public health infrastructure." Ensminger believed that the Ford Foundation could only work in the area of family planning through a Planning Commission. He also related in the document how the connection between Lt. Col. Raina and the Ford Foundation had undergone change in the meantime. "When Lt. Col. Raina was 'pushed out' as Commissioner for Family Planning," Ensminger wrote, "he took full charge as director of [the] Central Family Planning Institute" (CFPI), and transferred to the Institute "as many of the functions as he could from the office of the Commissioner of Family Planning. The net effect has been confusion between CFPI and the Commissioner for Family Planning." Ensminger said that Lt. Col. Raina was very unhappy that the Ford Foundation did not support CFPI on certain issues.<sup>203</sup> Indeed, in August 1967 Rey M. Hill wrote to George F. Gant in the New York office expressing his displeasure at "Lt. Col. Raina's meddling in what is plainly none of his business," and that he had "brought pressure through the embassy in Washington."<sup>204</sup>

He also issued a clarification regarding Humberger's comments on the changing relations between the centre and the state after the 1967 elections. He said that the Ford Foundation had been dragged into the electoral campaign in the West Bengal Assembly elections and had been tarred as affiliated with the CIA, among other misunderstandings. Eventually, however, it was West Bengal as a state that insisted on the continuation of the services of the Foundation-appointed consultant, Kirk Mosley.

Ensminger vehemently rejected Humberger's conclusion that the role of the consultant had been minimized because of the government's "anti-foreign consultant policy," describing it instead as a natural process. It is interesting to note, however, that in his report Humberger substantiated all his statements by quoting extensively from a report written by Ensminger himself.

In the 1970s, Dr James Goddard arrived in India to direct the Ford Foundation's involvement in the country's family planning programme. The Foundation tried to redefine its role

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<sup>203</sup>Ibid.

<sup>204</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 06400303, Microfilm Reel No. 1996, 1964-67.

in the program during this period. As far as family planning communication was concerned, Tyagi, the Assistant Commissioner of Communication in the Department of Family Planning, had died suddenly and it had “upset Frank [Wilder] emotionally.” According to a May 1970 document prepared by Ensminger, USAID was “planning to provide consultancy support in mass communication on a continuing basis.”<sup>205</sup>

In May 1972, Harry E. Wilhelm, who succeeded Ensminger as Ford representative, wrote to John Cool (who had initially been a Project Specialist posted in India and was the one who oversaw the termination of the grant in 1976), regarding the Family Planning Communication research grant. He recommended that the grant be closed. He strongly expressed his displeasure at a two-year delay in the production of a critique of the 1969 Queener evaluation report, which was to have been submitted by Dr Moye Freyman, director of the Population Centre of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (as mentioned above, he had previously served as a consultant to the family planning communication research program in India). Wilhelm, however, personally read through the report and issued his own critique of the grant.<sup>206</sup>

The Foundation, Wilhelm found, had assumed family planning to be an issue mainly related to health and medicine, and had therefore believed that “medical people with additional public health training and social research orientation could successfully carry out the motivational and communication research required. Of the 24 individuals sent for training under this project seventeen were medical doctors.”<sup>207</sup>

None of the FPCAR centres had been established in university departments of social sciences, while more than half were in health-related institutions. Wilhelm doubted whether the level of competence required for high quality communications and motivational research studies existed even in the best universities in the world in the 1960s. According to him, therefore, “part of the difficulty encountered in administering and implementing this grant was the general problem of upgrading the quality of social science training and field research capacity.” Hence his comment that “it was almost naïve to think that FPCARs could do much beyond the KAP (knowledge, attitude, and practice) type studies which they did actually undertake.”<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>205</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 06400303, Microfilm Reel No. 3846, 1964-67.

<sup>206</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 05900482, Microfilm Reel No. 3351, 1959-66.

<sup>207</sup>Ibid.

<sup>208</sup>Ibid.



Wilhelm also expressed serious unhappiness with the way information regarding the research work carried out under the communication research program was being disseminated. Although the Deputy Commissioner of Research and Training was supposed to do this, he doubted that “the Deputy Commissioner was ever strong enough to discharge the function.”<sup>209</sup> In the meantime, the Demographic Communication Action Research Committee had also been dismantled, its activities now being supervised by an expert committee comprised wholly of administrators and medical officers. Wilhelm was therefore pessimistic about the “future of the FPCAR centres.” In spite of all the money the Foundation had allotted to the program, the basic issue of “what would be researched, who will do the research and who will actually use the research results, remain.”<sup>210</sup>

Still, Wilhelm did not see the outcome of the grant in an entirely negative light. In his view, as a result of the communication research grant, people had been sensitised to the need for communication in family planning, and this was visible in the government’s growing financial support for the programme. The problem remained, however, of “how to identify, train, and motivate competent social scientists to work in this field... and how to link the results of relevant research to program design and implementation.”<sup>211</sup>

A discernible shift occurred in this period in the views of the people at the helm of affairs toward locating communication in the broader area of social sciences. The Foundation sent a mission to India comprising of Dr Reuben Hill, Dr Edwin D. Driver and Dr Moni Nag. The mission aimed “to identify the research priorities in population and family planning as defined by social scientists and administrators in India.” It also sought to identify “scholars and institutions which might undertake the needed research; and an analysis of the obstacles to the implementation of the research proposal.” The report stated that no one in the Delhi office of the Foundation was especially aware of the difference of population from family planning. The mission also realized that “many social scientists in India do not know where to go for assistance in research or in the financing of the projects.”<sup>212</sup> A January 1969 letter from Davidson R. Gwatkin, a Ford Foundation program officer for population, written mainly to Oscar Harkavy, the Foundation’s officer in charge of population, narrates his meeting with Everett M. Rogers. Rogers was a professor in the

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<sup>209</sup>Ibid.

<sup>210</sup>Ibid.

<sup>211</sup>Ibid.

<sup>212</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 06400303, Microfilm Reel No. 1995, 1964-67.

Department of Communication at Michigan State University who was involved with the diffusion of innovations project in the field of agriculture in Nigeria, India and Brazil. Gwatkin reported that Rogers added health and family planning to the project as an afterthought. Interestingly, the letter mentioned that “to familiarize himself with family planning, Rogers had assigned himself to teach a course on diffusion and to participate in still undefined research activities at the Michigan Centre for Population Planning.” Gwatkin said that he had agreed to brief Rogers on the family planning field prior to Rogers beginning serious research. He had asked Rogers about the possible collaboration of the academic communication community for population research and to that Rogers reportedly said that the community was too young, with Rogers at thirty-seven being one of the most senior researchers in the field.<sup>213</sup> Interestingly, Rogers provided a very critical analysis of the communication research being conducted in India and offered solutions too. This has been discussed above.

In an April 1975 memo-to-file, John Cool tried to explain why this friction of interest had happened. He looked at the historical context in which this particular area of Ford Foundation involvement had evolved. He noted that when Ford Foundation started its involvement with family planning program in India, it was the largest-ever commitment of external assistance to the Indian family planning effort. With the passage of time, that assistance had been “eclipsed by grants from USAID, SIDA, IBRD and UNFPA.”<sup>214</sup> The Foundation had lost its central role.

With the changing of the guard at the Ford Foundation, its communication research area in family planning took a different turn. The Foundation tried to fortify the research area with more involvement in social science research. The Foundation thus ended its involvement in family planning communication, passing the baton onto USAID.

### **POST-EMERGENCY FAMILY PLANNING COMMUNICATION:**

The national focus on population control underwent drastic change post Emergency. The fiery dedication to population control also dampened in the international scenario as well, during that time due to obvious failure to achieve targets. The Ford Foundation’s relationship with the Indian government had also soured in the meantime as mentioned above. The Family Planning

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<sup>213</sup>Ibid.

<sup>214</sup>RAC, FFR, Grants, No. 06400303, Microfilm Reel No. 1995, 1964-67.

Foundation (FPF), which was a re-grant agency created by Ford Foundation (Ensminger, 1972: A26<sup>215</sup>, Harkavy,1995:149), and a number of Indian donors in 1971, filled in that gap “attempting to rekindle the nation's commitment to population reform. In addition to sponsoring a series of workshops on the role of population issues in the Sixth Five Year Plan, it acquired the services of the popular television personality, Rami Chhabra, to choreograph its public affairs work under a two-year consultancy from Ford” (Gwatkin, 1977 cited in McCarthy, 1995:304). Rami Chhabra joined FPF with a stipend from Ford Foundation (Harkavy, 1995) and was retained to sustain the family planning programme in the popular consciousness. When the Janata Party came to power Chhabra did a sort of coup when she persuaded J.P. Narayan, (the main ideologue of the party and the brain behind the downfall of Indira Gandhi) to give her an interview, on the then volatile issue of family planning. Chhabra (2012:149) notes, “Underlining the importance of family planning, he pleaded eloquently that it should not be politicized anymore and the Janata government must take it up as a priority concern. The 15-minute interview on celluloid was shown prior to the feature-film in every cinema-hall in the country and nationally telecast at prime time by *Doordarshan*. It helped to somewhat defuse the intense negative politicization of the subject in the immediate after-math of the Emergency.”

Similarly, Chhabra also persuaded Mrs. Gandhi to give an interview in December 1980 after she returned to power in January that year, which as she writes did not “make it to the cinema-halls, but it did bring her on record that never again would there be coercion in family planning, yet she firmly stood for family planning implementation---the right way---as a priority of her government (ibid).

Therefore, it is not surprising that she was almost annoyed that, “The Emergency/Post-Emergency intense politicization of the family planning programme had been followed by very confused pronouncements by the Janata Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Shri Raj Narain, sending the family planning programme into a total spin.” And calls him a “homespun peasant character with no health expertise, the Health Minister’s principal claim to fame and position lay in the court-case he had won to cancel Indira Gandhi’s election---which led to the declaration of Emergency---and subsequently, his successful vanquishing of Mrs. G in the Allahabad elections” (ibid:143).

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<sup>215</sup> RAC, FFR, Ensminger Oral History Paper, Folder no A1-A43, Box no 47019 June 1972

Her Malthusian approach towards the population issue was quite evident, when she goes to the Turkman Gate area of Delhi, the area which saw the most despicable coercion during the Emergency and reported that she saw “many women there were actually searching for contraceptive support” (ibid:144). In her article in *Seminar*, she actually expressed her suspicion that the complaints of excesses committed during the Emergency, filed before the Shah Commission was done with mala fide intention, as according to her, commission has “not furnished particulars of how many of these cases have been verified to be true...” (ibid:156). Her exasperation can be felt when she writes, “No doubt there is a fashionable ideology now gathering currency among certain intellectuals that the population problem is not a pivotal but a secondary affair to poverty-elimination; that tackling the latter will automatically bring about the desired structural-changes in population, as happened in the developed world. The theory clearly overlooks the historical reality; that, in those areas the industrial revolution preceded, not followed the population blow-up; and that, for us poised on a geometrical progression of growth, the time-lag needed for this cause-and-effect relationship to establish itself is not available” (ibid:157).

Chhabra along with the FPF staff was also instrumental in engineering “public endorsement of continued need for family planning by eighty Indian leaders, ranging from artists to political figures and the Indian Association of Parliamentarians for problems of population and development” (Gwatkin,1977: 305). In fact, she herself accepts, that her report about the Turkman Gate area in the newspaper, *The Statesman*, “led to early resumption of the family welfare services in government dispensaries in the area and a building of bridges with the local *Anganwadi* workers” (Chhabra, 2012:144). Thus, Ford Foundation with the help of Indian institutions and also India personalities was successful in keeping family planning on the national agenda.

The Report of the Working Group on Population Policy of 1980 meanwhile, reiterated the necessity “to improve motivation and change the perception of people” as the main focus of the communication policy in family welfare.

Television, which had remained at a nascent stage for a long time, received a major boost when India hosted the Asian Games in 1982. The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) in fact envisaged, “a provision of Rs. 86.95 crores...made for Television expansion” and stated that “The role of the mass media in propagating family planning is crucial. The potential of the mass media such as

Radio, TV, Cinema and newspapers will be fully exploited.”<sup>216</sup> It is indeed interesting to note that every Plan document has been repeating the same lines in various ways.

The National Health Policy 1983 re-emphasised Information Education and Communication (IEC) as the core communication strategy, almost like a routine assertion. “The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare realized that IEC needs to be used for improvement of health care facilities and as well as creating a positive notion about the health care providers. The necessity to create a sustainable demand for health care was recognised as the elementary responsibility of IEC. In brief, IEC was given a special focus in the document” (Goswami, 2010). This was planned in consonance with the international focus on IEC as mentioned in Chapter 3. Television became the flavour of the time.

Coloured and commercial television lured the professionals and practitioners to the medium. In the initial days of Entertainment-Education (E-E), the driving force behind the idea of diffusion of E-E was from Population Communication International (PCI) and the Centre for Communication Programme of John Hopkins University (JHU/CCP) both based out of the United States of America (discussed in Chapter 3).

The PCI was the brain child of Rodney Shaw, who was quite perturbed about the population issues and regarded population explosion as more dangerous than the nuclear war. Shaw founded the Department of Population Problems in the Methodist Church to begin a population project in 1970. He recruited David Poindexter, a long-term E-E television practitioner as the Director of the Population Communication Centre (as it was called at that time), which was supported both by the Church’s Department of Population Problem and the Population Institute, the fledging organisation that Rodney Shaw had started (Poindexter,2004:23). The centre was eventually named Population Communication International in 1973 so as to expand beyond the US and Poindexter was candid when he said, “The institute was essential because if I wished to establish a working relationship with national television networks, I could not do so wearing the hat of a religious group” (ibid). Poindexter met Miguel Sabido to understand the reason behind success story of the Mexican telenovela based on E-E that he was producing. Sabido “through his telenovelas was successfully disseminating educational messages on a variety of topics, including of family planning” (Parry, 2013:112). In fact, Sabido’s strategy was the first one to be called

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<sup>216</sup> Sixth Five Year Plan <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 01/06/2020

Entertainment-Education. Poindexter met I. K. Gujral, the incumbent Minister of Information and Broadcasting of India in a communications conference in Strasbourg, France. That meeting resulted in Poindexter visiting Gujral in his Delhi residence in 1981 and eventually convincing the government to adopt E-E methodology showing them the Sabido video (Poindexter,2004:29). He visited India many times after that at the invitation of Gujral and his successor, S.S. Gill and the formal collaborative project was officialised. “In May 1983, a Mexican team led by Miguel Sabido spent better part of a month in India meeting with a large group that was assembled not to develop an E-E project, but only to listen to a savant from the West” (ibid). According to him, in spite of his efforts the project was almost shelved. But there were few conducive internal reasons due to which the project eventually took off. Prime Minister Gandhi was keen to expand the national television network for her personal political interests. “A hardware technology for covering India with download/re-transmitting ground stations allowed India over 10 months to move from 14% television coverage of the land area to more than 70% and the Sabido team met with the Prime Minister Gandhi and they sold her the importance of Sabido methodology for India” (ibid).

Thus, Population Communication International (PCI), offered its ‘helping hand’ in training Indian media professionals with help from Miguel Sabido at *Televisa*, the Mexican conglomerate of television. By the end of 1983, an Indian team was trained at *Televisa* by Sabido. Gill himself received his own orientation there in 1984.

Events in India moved rapidly following Gill’s return from Mexico. He decided that regulations could be tweaked so that he could mount a commercially sponsored programme in primetime. He assembled an untraditional team: Manohar Shyam Joshi, scriptwriter from Bollywood, P. Kumar Vasudev, as director, Satish Garg as executive producer and Sobha Doctor, who used to run the advertising agency called, Concept Agency. These group created a company called *Time and Video Space Corporation* (Poindexter, 2004; Singhal and Rogers, 1988).

Doordarshan went on air in July 1984 with India’s first social-content soap opera, *Hum Log* (“*We People*”) (Ryerson, 1994; Singhal and Rogers, 1988; Poindexter, 2004). The first episode cost about \$6000 and eventually the cost increased to \$12000. The income to cover these expenses were collected from commercial advertisement. “The early broadcast fared poorly in television ratings. Viewers in 40 viewing clubs, set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to monitor *Hum Log* and to provide feedback complained of didactic family planning sermons, indifferent acting, and a slowly developing storyline” (Singhal and Rogers, 1988:114-115). As

mentioned above, the push for *Hum Log* was basically from PCI, so the thrust of the telenovela was naturally on family planning. However, “pressures from audiences, sponsors and debates in Indian parliament resulted in toning down the family planning theme (only six percent of the total series content emphasised family planning eventually). After the 13<sup>th</sup> episode scriptwriter Joshi emphasised such closely related themes as the status of women, family harmony and family welfare, and decreased the prior “hard sell” approach to family planning” (Singhal and Rogers, 1989: 338). Though family planning was abandoned like a hot coal yet PCI still believed, “Over 17 months of broadcast, the programme achieved extraordinarily high ratings, while emphasizing use of family planning and promoting women’s equality” (Ryerson, 1994: 259).

Research conducted by Everett M. Rogers and Arvind Singhal through a sample survey proved that “Most *Hum log* viewers reported learning positive attitudes and behaviour about an equal status for women, national integration, health and smaller family-size norms” (Rogers and Singhal, 1990: 177). “Among other things, the programme stimulated over 400,000 people to write letters to the Indian television authority and to various stars in the programme, stating their views on the issues being dealt with, or asking for help and advice” (Singhal and Rogers, 2001:91).

Analysing the impact of Entertainment-Education (E-E) tele series, Piotrow and de Fossard (2204,39) says, “E-E serial dramas proved especially effective in changing knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, and norms because they evoke emotions, create role models, stimulate discussions among listeners and viewers, and show the ultimate consequences of both healthy and unhealthy behaviour to large, attentive audiences”. According to them the challenges of E-E are many. But the most critical was to maintain the balance between too much of entertainment vs too much of education. Sometimes the entertainment is forced, not organic, as if the attempt was made just to maintain the entertainment quotient. Many-a-times the suggestions are very stale and routine, which do not touch the people as genuine. There is often a disconnect with the target audience. As the programmes are designed as one-fits-all, often they stand in contradiction to cultural and traditional beliefs of the target audience. This results in disinterested viewing of the programme rather than involvement. Therefore, it is important to remember while generating programmes in the E-E model that it should be designed keeping in mind the nine P’s: Pervasive, Popular, Passionate, Personal, Participatory, Persuasive, Practical, Proven-effective (ibid:44-52). Only if these are maintained in generating programmes then can it resonate with the target audience and likely elicit behaviour change in them. These directions gave E-E an academic rigour.

During the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1989), as in the previous years, entertainment education maintained its prominent position in the plan document. The academia was involved in analysing the E-E strategy at that time. These documents reiterated that “the mixture of entertainment and educational message content can serve to attract large audiences to the media and thus earn high profits from advertising and/or sales” (Singhal and Rogers, 1990:180).

The objective of IEC was defined in the Seventh Five Year Plan thus:

Efforts will be made for the active use of different types of media to create awareness among the people and motivate them to utilise health services and to adopt healthful practices. Behavioural sciences research (to study human behaviour) for wider expansion of health education, will be encouraged.<sup>217</sup>

The plan laid out an elaborate strategy for implementation of IEC in the following words:

Management and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) skills of various categories of personnel would be suitably upgraded. For this purpose, training needs of different personnel would be identified. Capabilities of various institutes at the state, regional and central levels would be ascertained and suitably strengthened. At the national level there will be a consortium of premier management institutions with National Institute of Health and Family Welfare as a focal point to coordinate, plan and undertake training activities.

Allocation of funds for IEC activities would be regulated in an appropriate manner and not be only confined to agencies like the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Directorate of Audio-Visual Publicity. The strategies and channels would be diversified for better and more effective educational coverage. State would be allowed flexibility for adopting innovative approaches.<sup>218</sup>

Thus, the E-E approach was legitimised in the case of family planning communication. PCI remained involved in another E-E series in India after the success of *Hum Log*. “In August 1986 PCI President David Poindexter catalysed the creation of a new private sector family planning broadcasting production unit, with support in the form of commercial sponsorship from Mr J.R.D. Tata...In December 1986, a production team from India visited Mexico City and received training

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<sup>217</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 04/06/2020

<sup>218</sup> *ibid*



from Miguel Sabido in the technique of researching, writing, producing and evaluating social content serial dramas. After extensive research and preparation of a communication plan for the second family planning serial drama, extensive work was required to obtain a favourable time slot in Indian television for the programme. Ultimately, the series *Humraahi* (Co-Traveller) went on air on January 14, 1992. The focus of the first 52 episodes was on the status of women, with particular attention to age of marriage, age of pregnancy, gender bias in childbearing and child rearing, equal educational opportunity and spouse selection...By March 1992, the programme had garnered 78% of the television viewership in four major cities in the Hindi belt where television ratings were taken...By May *Humraahi* was the top-rated programme on Indian television” (Ryerson, 1994:259-60).

However, Rajagopal says, “The idea of “mixing entertainment with education” was in words of one group (he was alluding to Singhal, Brown, Rogers etc.) of proponents, a “win-win situation, offering the prospect of profit making along with education. But although *Hum log* ran for seventeen months, it was as a family drama that it retained sponsors and viewers “development” messages jettisoned within a few weeks. One more attempt ensued in 1992, *Humraahi*, which also earned substantial ratings but was (ironically) described by its script-writer as just entertainment” (Rajagopal, 2004: 79). Rajagopal in fact cites his personal interview with Gill and Joshi and says that both “agree that the experiment was a failure” (ibid:324).

This opened the floodgates of sponsored serials in Indian television, which Singhal and Rogers (1989) calls the “unintended impacts.” Few prominent among them were *Buniyaad*, *Nukkad* and *Ramayana* etc. and also the popularising the fast food culture through the advertisement of the iconic Maggi Noodles.

While planning for the Eight Five Year Plan (1990-1995), the IEC activities of the Seventh Five Year Plan was analysed. It was observed that IEC was not very effective and there was a formidable gap in the process of execution. It was also observed that the content of the programmes were not adapted to the socio cultural specificities of the geographical localities. Therefore, the Eighth Five Year Plan document stated this clearly: “till recently, the IEC activities have been directed more towards national issues rather than personal issues. Undoubtedly, this incongruity of perception between the people and the providers of services has cost the programme dearly”<sup>219</sup>.

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<sup>219</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 03/06/2020

Further, it noted, “The Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities within each programme would be given special attention for enlisting community participation, which constitutes one of the weakest links, for carrying out the disease control programmes.”<sup>220</sup> This transition from IEC to community participation again conform to the changes which were discussed and incorporated internationally as discussed in details in Chapter 3.

To meet the family welfare target set for the year 2000, Government of India, with financial support from USAID, contracted the Operation Research Group based in Baroda, to research and develops the strategy for IEC. The technical know-how was provided by the John Hopkins University/ Population Communication Services (Ghosh, 2006: 151). Accordingly, the field study was conducted in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal, and elaborate IEC strategy was formulated and the report submitted in September 1992. The report broadly suggested what should be the “target segments for communications; Family Welfare issues to be addressed; messages to be conveyed; and communication channels to be adopted” (ibid: 152), and all these are to be incorporated into the ideating process of the IEC to be formulated. IEC was to take into consideration the organisational aspects, demographic issues and messages and media before coming out with a strategy.

After the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) of 1994, there was a paradigmatic shift from population control to reproductive health and gender equity popularly called RCH (Reproductive Child Health) as mentioned earlier. UNFPA became immediately involved in the process of designing and developing the communication strategy too. The Country Programme -6 (CP-6) of UNFPA was specially designed for this as it “draws its philosophy from the goals and programme of action of ICPD and the National Population Policy 2000. The goal of CP-6 was to support the national goal of population stabilization and improve quality of life through working towards the elimination of human poverty and inequalities and sustainable human development with full regard to NPP 2000 and ICPD principles and goals.”<sup>221</sup>

The communication strategy was also designed in such a way that it adheres to the new policy decision. As RCH included myriad issues including maternal health, unwanted pregnancy, child health, women’s empowerment to name a few, communication strategy also went through a massive change of focus. This is the period when IEC was termed as Entertainment Education

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<sup>220</sup> ibid

<sup>221</sup> [http://www.popfound.org/advocacy\\_com\\_4.html](http://www.popfound.org/advocacy_com_4.html) retrieved on 18/08/2018

targeted at eliciting Behaviour Change, i.e. targeting individuals to change their behaviour rather than the society as a whole, with the active participation of the community. The mood was set by the ICPD document itself which said: “It is especially important that IEC strategies are linked to, and complement, national population and development policies and strategies, as well as a full range of services in reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, in order to enhance the use of such services and improve the quality of counselling and care. Governments, NGOs and the private sector should make greater and effective use of the entertainment media, including radio and television, folk theatre and other traditional media.”<sup>222</sup>

The reflection of this plan was visible in the National Communication Strategy planned and designed for RCH in India which is often termed as the first attempt at drawing out a National Plan for Communication. Experts from various fields like communication, management, paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, donor agency representatives, NGO partners etc. were invited for a national-level workshop to deliberate on the communication strategy. The strategy termed as one “... that would make the leap from awareness generation to behaviour change, from being instructive to being empowering, and from generic approach to taking the individualised approach.”<sup>223</sup> In this way behaviour change became a formidable communication process for the first time in India. This approach purportedly tries “...to elicit the participation of families and communities in determining the health needs of the community” (Ghosh, 2006:167), which alludes to community participation. Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) is defined as a strategic communication “that incorporates the concepts of social marketing and behaviour change models in the design, execution, and evaluation of communication strategies intended to influence behaviour change” (Melkote and Steeves, 2011:129).

The focus of health communication strategy based on IEC for RCH was premised on three aspects, viz., “i) stratification of the population on the basis of qualitative and geographical characteristics and then attempting to elicit behavioural change by devising special schemes of IEC, ii) Necessity driven information dissemination, and iii) Usage of media platform based on the media consumption pattern of the target population” (Goswami, 2010).

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<sup>222</sup> Chapter XI, Population, Information, Education and Communication. Section B 11.23 [http://www.partners-popdev.org/icpd/ICPD\\_POA\\_summary.pdf](http://www.partners-popdev.org/icpd/ICPD_POA_summary.pdf) retrieved on 19/03/2020

<sup>223</sup> *National Communication Strategy for the Reproductive and Child Health Programme*. MOHFW, 2000, New Delhi

Interestingly the Total Literacy Mission<sup>224</sup> was entrusted the responsibility of anchoring the IEC component of family welfare. According to the Department of Health and Family Welfare this was done because, “An important initiative of the new IEC strategy is to decentralized (sic) IEC efforts to the level of district, so that every district is able to plan and implement local specific IEC keeping in view the cultural, ethnic, linguistic requirements. IEC was to be conducted with the help of the *Zilla Shaksharta Samitis*<sup>225</sup> (ZSS) (part of the National Literacy Mission) network. Under the ZSS scheme, the concerned districts are to plan and implement their IEC programme, with a thrust on the folk media, design and display of posters, wall writing and paintings and specific cultural medium in their respective areas” (Goswami, 2010). However, the outcome was not very impressive. In fact, it worked as a hurdle in proper functioning of IEC for family planning. With the bureaucratic tangles of the health as well as the education department coordination became a nightmare for the functionaries.

In September 1992, GOI along with USAID established SIFPSA (State Innovations in Family Planning Services Project Agency) as part of the Innovations in Family Planning Services (IFPS). From then on SIFPSA along with Futures Group and Centre for Communication of John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health has been instrumental in designing the communication programme in family planning in eight states viz., Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Delhi. From the late 1990s USAID was mostly instrumental in leading the family planning communication strategies along with Futures Group, Deloitte Touché Tohmatsu International, Schering, Wyeth, and Organon. Futures Group negotiated and signed co-promotion agreements with Wyeth and Organon to promote low-dose Oral Contraceptives (OC) in the Goli ke Hamjoli campaign, a program targeting promotion of OCs<sup>226</sup>. The objective of the campaign was:

To decentralise the issue of family planning and trigger open dialogue among couples, other family members and within the community

To present couples with a choice of spacing methods and encourage them to choose a suitable method

Address the specific fears and concerns among couples regarding spacing methods

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<sup>224</sup> A literacy drive meant to ensure total literacy, which was a very strong movement initially but fizzled down due to various reasons later on

<sup>225</sup> District Literacy Committee

<sup>226</sup> [http://ccp.jhu.edu/documents/BCC\\_Report\\_0.pdf](http://ccp.jhu.edu/documents/BCC_Report_0.pdf) retrieved on 18/08/2019

Highlight the health benefits of spacing

Equip service providers with informational and counselling materials to enhance the quality of interpersonal communication.<sup>227</sup>

The IFPS Technical Assistance project was funded by USAID and implemented by Futures Group India and partners (John Hopkins University Centre for Communication programme (CCP), Sibley International, QED Group and Bearing Point), and was functioning in the states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand as well as in the national level too from 1992-12. Under the IFPS project, the Futures Group has a decision-making role in many areas including behaviour change communication. As per their website key thrust areas for the project were:

- Design, demonstrate, and disseminate public-private partnership mechanisms for family planning and reproductive health, financing strategies, and scale-up strategies that reach the poor and the vulnerable communities with these services;
- Develop behaviour change communication strategies to build the communication capacities of health departments;
- Assist India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in implementing the reproductive health component of the National Rural Health Mission;
- Form linkages with Indian technical organisations to deepen partnerships and build capacity for international –quality technical assistance;
- Conduct research, surveys, and assessments on variety of issues and share findings with policymakers and senior administrators to encourage informed decisions and refine programs; and
- Bring successful models to scale with other (non-project) resources.<sup>228</sup>

In the mass media campaign promoting family planning, conducted under the aegis of CCP, various “TV and radio spots with family planning messages have been aired across India since 2009...nine new TV spots and seven new radio spots were developed by CCP under the Innovations in Family Planning Services-II project...that addresses reproductive child health activities at the national level and in three states in northern India.”<sup>229</sup>

National Population Policy (NPP) was formulated in 2000 and even in this document the importance of IEC was reiterated. The policy document stated more of the same that was being

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<sup>227</sup> *ibid*

<sup>228</sup> [http://futuresgroup.com/projects/innovations\\_in\\_family\\_planning\\_services\\_technical\\_assistance\\_project\\_itap\\_i](http://futuresgroup.com/projects/innovations_in_family_planning_services_technical_assistance_project_itap_i) accessed on 03/12/2017

<sup>229</sup> <http://www.jhuccp.org/news/mass-media-campaign-promotes-family-planning-india> retrieved on 04/12/2017

repeated for some years till then: “Information, education and communication (IEC) of family welfare messages must be clear, focused and disseminated everywhere, including the remote corners of the country, and in local dialects. This will ensure that the messages are effectively conveyed. These needs to be strengthened and their outreach widened, with locally relevant and locally comprehensible media and messages.”<sup>230</sup> The document prepared an ostentatious plan strengthen the IEC process, involving all possible players including the local governing bodies, students, religious leaders, political leaders, opinion makers and NGOs. It advocated “Optimal use of folk media” radio television with special emphasis on interpersonal communication.

National Health Policy (NHP) 2002 was however critical of the IEC strategy that was in practice and said, “The present IEC strategy is too fragmented, relies too heavily on the mass media and does not address the needs of this segment of the population. It is often felt that the effectiveness of IEC programmes is difficult to judge; and consequently, it is often asserted that accountability, in regard to the productive use of such funds, is doubtful. The Policy, while projecting an IEC strategy, will fully address the inherent problems encountered in any IEC programme designed for improving awareness and bringing about a behavioural change in the general population.”<sup>231</sup>

The NHP 2002 projected the activities of IEC in these words:

NHP-2002 envisages an IEC policy, which maximizes the dissemination of information to those population groups which cannot be effectively approached by using only the mass media. The focus would therefore be on the interpersonal communication of information and on folk and other traditional media to bring about behavioural change. The IEC programme would set specific targets for the association of PRIs/NGOs/Trusts in such activities. In several public health programmes, where behavioural change is an essential component, the success of the initiatives is crucially dependent on dispelling myths and misconceptions pertaining to religious and ethical issues. The community leaders, particularly religious leaders, are effective in imparting knowledge which facilitates such behavioural change. The programme will also have the component of an annual evaluation of the performance of the non-Governmental agencies to monitor the impact of the programmes on the targeted groups. The Central/State Government initiative will also focus

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<sup>230</sup> <https://india.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/NationalPopulation-Policy2000.pdf> retrieved on 21/03/2020

<sup>231</sup> *ibid*

on the development of modules for information dissemination in such population groups, who do not normally benefit from the more common media forms.<sup>232</sup>

In spite of reiterating the importance of IEC in the process of dissemination of information, a new thought process was also developing in the domain of communication in family planning. The uneven access to technology of media created a class divide amongst the population. Therefore, the focus was turned again towards interpersonal communication. In 2004, Population Foundation of India (PFI) was engaged by GOI to design an “innovative” communication strategy for promotion of family planning in the eight EAG states (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha) with special focus on Behaviour Change Communication.

The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) document categorically mentions that one of the basic premises of Family Welfare programme since its inception was that effective IEC was necessary to improve awareness and the lessons learnt during the entire process was that “IEC activities are powerful tools for achieving the small family norm.”<sup>233</sup> The document also envisions the objective of IEC in the Ninth Five Year Plan as to: “i) Ensure responsible reproductive /sexual behaviour; ii) Improve awareness about reproductive health needs and iii) Promote community participation and optimal utilisation of available services.”<sup>234</sup>

Regarding prevention of unwanted pregnancies, the plan document says that “IEC efforts through appropriate channels of communications to improve awareness among women about availability of safe abortion services at affordable cost through appropriate channels of communication will be intensified.”<sup>235</sup> The document further plans to involve the NGOs in area specific IEC activities. The government-controlled media was planned to be utilised as IEC has an important role “in improving utilisation of available services for RCH care, Doordarshan and Akashvani (AIR) will be persuaded to provide specific time slots on a larger scale either free or on concessional rates for IEC efforts.”<sup>236</sup>

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) spoke a different language from the other plan documents when it came to IEC. IEC was talked about more in the line of social marketing,

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<sup>232</sup> *ibid*

<sup>233</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 24/06/2020

<sup>234</sup> *ibid*

<sup>235</sup> *ibid*

<sup>236</sup> *ibid* section 3.5.132 plan document

conforming to the international changes. Even the industries and organised sectors were planned to be involved in the entire process as “The marketing skills of industry may be useful in improving the IEC and motivation activities and in social marketing.”<sup>237</sup> As in the time of RCH I, it was also planned in the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan that all *Zilla Saksharata Committees* will be involved in the IEC activities of RCH-II programme. IEC was planned to be horizontally integrated along with all other components like supplies, monitoring etc.

In the meantime, the ambitious National Rural Health Mission was inaugurated in 2005. The Mission pledged to achieve the targets fixed by the National Health Policy as well as those in the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals). As far as family planning is concerned IEC was visualised to be “carried out to achieve wider publicity of RCH and population control programme by respective Mass Education and Media set-ups created in the States and Media units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.”<sup>238</sup>

Therefore, the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012), reflected the targets of NRHM in Health as well as Family Welfare. IEC and Social Marketing became two separate components but were integrated into the programme rather than kept as stand-alone component. It could be seen in the separate budget being allocated for IEC and Social Marketing in the plan document.<sup>239</sup>

The ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) became the focal point of the communication process, keeping in line with the NRHM: “ASHAs would also provide immediate and easy access for the rural population to essential health supplies like ORS, contraceptives, a set of ten basic drugs and she would have a health communication kit and other IEC materials developed for villages.”<sup>240</sup>

The approach paper to the Twelfth Five Year Plan comments on the issue of “population stabilization” thus: “The Twelfth Plan hopes to address this issue by providing dedicated funding for family planning services in high fertility states, bundled with RCH services under NRHM. Convergence must also be established with programmes that address the underlying factors of high

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<sup>237</sup> <https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index5.html> retrieved on 24/06/2020

<sup>238</sup> NRHM Framework pg 124. [www.mohfw.nic.in](http://www.mohfw.nic.in) retrieved on 04/10/2019

<sup>239</sup> [https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/11th/11\\_v2/11th\\_vol2.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/11th/11_v2/11th_vol2.pdf) retrieved on 24/06/2020

<sup>240</sup> *ibid*



fertility like child mortality, women's empowerment, early age of marriage etc.”<sup>241</sup> and goes on to say that “...the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan would prioritise the convergence of various National Health Programmes in India, where IEC is mentioned as one of them.”<sup>242</sup> Therefore a shift from an obvious national target to focus more on the high fertility states was the objective of family planning in the Twelfth Five Year Plan. Thus, IEC finds mention in all health activities, not as a separate component for family planning.<sup>243</sup>

As mentioned above, family planning communication in India is now mostly handled by organisation like the SIFPSA, Centre for Communication Programmes of John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health etc. Futures Group has been running a project called Innovations in Family Planning Services Technical Assistance Project (IFPS) from 2005-2012. The time tallies with that of launching of NRHM. To quote the website of Futures Group, “Futures Group was the prime contractor, with Johns Hopkins University Centre for Communication Programs, Sibley International, QED Group, and BearingPoint as partners. The primary objectives of the project were to create demand for reproductive health and family planning services and products, foster public-private partnerships to improve access to high-quality health services, and encourage informed decision making at all levels.”<sup>244</sup>

Even a superficial analysis of the mass media campaign activities of SIFPSA or for that matter IFPS does not give us any feelings of any special innovation being achieved. What they were basically doing was producing spots and jingles which were not different from what has been practised in the past. The entire project can rather be termed as just an attempt at public private partnership. An important project undertaken during this period was the *Goli Ke Humjoli* (GkH) (Friends of the Pill), which started in 1998. It was a campaign for popularization of Oral Contraceptive (OC) for females which the USAID supported through its Programme for Advancement of Commercial Technology---Child and Reproductive Health (PACT-CRH) and roped in ICICI Bank, the largest private bank in India, as well. The bank hired the services of the prominent advertising agency, Ogilvy and Mather (O&M). The project was targeted towards the

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<sup>241</sup> [https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/12appdrft/approach\\_12plan.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/12appdrft/approach_12plan.pdf) retrieved on 20/06/2020

<sup>242</sup> *ibid*

<sup>243</sup> [https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/12th/pdf/12fyp\\_vol3.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/fiveyr/12th/pdf/12fyp_vol3.pdf) retrieved on 20/06/2020

<sup>244</sup> [http://futuresgroup.com/projects/commercial\\_market\\_strategies\\_project](http://futuresgroup.com/projects/commercial_market_strategies_project) retrieved on 18/08/2017

North Indian states of India as 42 per cent of the population lived there and the area had a high prevalence of higher fertility as well as infant mortality rate.

O&M conducted a market research analysis as well as qualitative research and found that there were 5.4 million potential OC users in the North Indian states. Television was regarded as the most cost effective medium to promote the OC. In the first year the campaign depended on the TV commercials and print articles. Two months into the programme, a tracking study was conducted which showed that the awareness level was not up to the expectations. They roped in four famous female television personalities to pro bono promote the pills. Over the period of next five years, 19 themes and informational advertisements were developed. This campaign is mooted as a successful example of integrated communication project even by experts (Piotrow and Kincaid 2001, Leavell and Sinha 2005).

According to the Futures Group website, which was accessed in 2017 (now not available), the *Goli Ki Hamjoli* campaign, “achieved great success, winning several advertising awards. More importantly, Oral Contraceptive use among the target group increased enough to encourage new pharmaceutical companies to sign on as part of the campaign and to launch their first new brands in over a decade. The contraceptive manufacturers provided support for promotion, detailing, and distribution of leaflets under *Goli ke Hamjoli* and also paid Futures Group for training of their staff in Evidence Based Detailing.”<sup>245</sup> PACT-CRH eventually supported three other campaigns, one of those was to neutralize the negative image of condoms called, *Yahi hai Sahi/Condom Bindas Bol* (This is the right choice/Just say it). It is important to remember that this was also the time when threat of HIV/AIDS was perceived as life threatening and condoms were promoted not only as a contraceptive, but also as a means to have safe sex.

These strategies developed and continuously monitored by UNFPA, USAID and PFI forms the backbone of the communication strategy being followed not only for family planning but for almost all components of NRHM too. The campaigns became standalone and highly technology

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid

dependent, which justified the knowledge flow from the 'Western' organisations/ universities etc. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the international organizations are still continuing their association with the communication process in the family planning programme in India, though covertly.

The tone of dependence on the donor agencies and the Western knowledge of communication were set in the field of development communication way back in the initiation process itself in family planning programme in India. In fact, when Frank Wilder and D.K. Tyagi asserted that India should "...introduce the new communication technology developed in the West, thereby hurdling years of Western communications evolution" (1968: 774), the fate was sealed.

### **Review of existing studies**

There have been a few seminal works on family planning communication, health communication etc. Wilbur Schramm wrote his book, *Communication in Family Planning* published by Population Council, in 1971. Schramm basically reviewed the then existing family planning communication strategies and observed that there is "relatively little difference, from country to country, in what is said by family planning programmes to their publics" (Schramm, 1971:10). According to him radio was the "chief mass medium" used in family planning communication in the form of radio spots. Radio novel reading was also being experimented with. He felt that there was hardly any experiment with alternative messages or even pretesting of the messages being used. Schramm (1971: 32) noted, "ten years of family planning experience...have led to the conclusion that public information can create a climate of knowledge and attitudes that will make it easier for the field and clinical staffs to recruit new acceptors." However, he accepted that impact of the mass media effort was "not clear" and tended to be based on "anecdotal evidence" from case studies. He concludes that there was immediate necessity of rigorous evaluation research to determine what effect communication was having, why and with whom.

Everett M. Rogers', *Communication Strategies for Family Planning* (1973) was the first attempt to look at family planning communication strategy in a scientific and theoretical way. Rogers with an extensive experience in development communication planning and execution used his practical experience in the Third World countries to write this comprehensive work. In the process he explores the nuances of the policies of family planning in all the countries and their implications. He then offers a theoretical basis to the family planning communication strategy. He says that the classical diffusion model (discussed above) can be easily used in the process of

designing the strategies for family planning communication. At the end, he devotes an entire chapter “to summarize and synthesize what is known about communication strategies in family planning, to define the field of family planning communication and to point out directions for future research” (Rogers, 1973: 397). Thus, he goes into the flaws of the assumptions of family planning communication of the time. He deplors that family planning communication had remained an unexplored domain and a homogenised effort is visible in all countries. He comments (ibid: 407) “family planning programs simply provide contraceptive services and conduct information activities...without implementing social structural and institutional changes to provide motivation for acceptance of the family planning norm.” He is also sceptical about the assumption that “married fertile women are the main audience for family planning innovations especially for female contraceptives” (ibid: 408). Interestingly, he emphasised that family planning diffusion cannot be only through mass media channels rather he saw a strong potential in interpersonal channels for such information dissemination. He is also critical of the planners who believe that all family planning communication is positive and that all contraceptive “technology” is infallible. Rogers however later accepted that in 1973, when he had authored the above-mentioned book “there was not a great deal to write about” (Piotrow et al, 1997: xiv).

A few social scientists in India were sponsored by the Ford Foundation to conduct studies on the ongoing family planning communication projects. Studies on this aspect started almost simultaneously with the launch of a nationwide project, conducted in various states. One such study was conducted by Kumudini Dandekar called *Communication in Family Planning* published by Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics in 1967. It was basically a review of an experiment on family planning communication. The report describes an attempt at devising an education programme in family planning for the residents of a small town with a population of about 8,000 in the district of Poona. It was a descriptive study, therefore offered no critique of the communication design as such.

During the 60s another study was conducted by the Central Family Planning Institute on family planning communication in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh and another in Hooghly district of West Bengal by two academics. The Meerut study called, *India: A Study in Family Planning Communication, Meerut District* (1967) was conducted by Lieut. Col. B. L. Raina, Director of the Central Family Planning Institute, Robert R. Blake, Media Consultant, Ford Foundation and Eugene M. Weiss, Research Associate. The study was conducted after a five-pronged

communication strategy was launched in the district viz., simple written materials, campaign materials on availability of IUCD services, cinema slides distributed to cinema halls, advertisements on district newspapers and point-of-sale materials for retail outlets selling condoms under a scheme to use existing commercial channels for sale of condoms at subsidized rates. The study findings were interesting because it was mainly looking at the marketing and distribution of condoms. The authors commented, “Promotional efforts must be considered as an integral part of the distribution scheme. It is not difficult to put stocks on dealers' shelves. To sell condoms it is necessary to promote their sale through mass publicity and efforts at the dealer level. These promotional efforts should utilize all the modern merchandizing techniques used by large commercial concerns dealing in consumer products” (Raina et al, 1967:5).

The study conducted in the Hooghly district of West Bengal titled *India: Evaluation of a Publicity Program on Family Planning* (1967) was an independent study conducted by T.R. Balakrishnan then an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Western Ontario in Canada and Ravi J. Matthai, then the Director of IIM Ahmedabad. The authors comment that “The most important finding of our study is the extent of the impact an intensive campaign can have in a rather localized community. A well-conceived mass communication programme using primarily mass media can effectively increase the awareness of family planning in a rather limited time” (ibid: 8). However they agree that there are certain gaps in their research findings and feel that “while it is easy to educate the people through an intensive campaign in a short time, it is considerably more difficult to increase the motivation to practice...” however “this may very well be the optimum strategy to be followed till knowledge is almost universal, because it is easier than trying to increase motivation among those who already know some method” (ibid).

Both the studies were targeted to analyse the effectiveness of communication campaign in promoting two different methods of contraception rather than about the communication campaigns as such. In other words, the communication campaigns were conducted with a particular objective; these had no relation to understanding the necessity of a campaign in family planning. As Schramm had commented, in this case too, before launching the campaign no pre-testing was done. The study was conducted basically to analyse the effect of the campaign on the target audience.

Another study conducted in 1969, again by the Central Family Planning Institute, and published as *Family Planning Communications Studies in India*, also was an analysis of findings and implications of family planning communication.

V. N. Kakkar in 1978 had written a book on family planning communication called *Population Communication in India*. However, the book looks at only the prevailing techniques of family planning communication by drawing on its historical origin in India. He comments how at the onset of the family planning policy, “there was hardly any guidance available...there was virtually no coordination” (1978: 21) for the component of communication. He then traces how after 1965, AIR, as well as other organs of Information and Broadcasting Ministry like the Directorate of Audio-Visual Publicity (DAVP), Field Publicity Office (FPO) and Song and Drama Division, Press Information Bureau, Photo Division, were strengthened considerably for family planning communication. “Inter-media coordination committees were established at the headquarters of the State Governments to identify local communication needs relevant to family planning. At the Centre a bilateral coordination committee consisting of the representatives of the Ministries of Information and Broadcasting and Health and Family Planning were established at the same time. Later a Family Planning Communication Board representing all development departments of the Government also came into being to involve communication people in other departments in family planning programme promotional efforts” (ibid: 23).

Sumanta Banerjee, wrote his book *Family Planning Communication: A Critique of the Indian Programme*, which was a ‘Family Planning Foundation and Centre for Development of Instructional technology (CENDIT)’ book in 1979. It is important to reiterate here that Family Planning Foundation was an organisation which was established under the leadership of Tata and was a regrant organisation of Ford Foundation (discussed above). It is a book which gives a brief history of the family planning communication in India and elaborates on a study conducted in Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. This study was sponsored by Family Planning Foundation and was conducted by CENDIT and Banerjee was a part of the team. So, the term ‘Critique’ in title of the book is actually a misnomer. The first three chapters are of value only as plain historical documents. There is no critical analysis of the family planning communication process as expected. Even Ford Foundation and its activities are very scantily mentioned, almost as an afterthought.

As already been discussed in Chapter 3 and in this chapter as well, the Centre for Communication Programs (CCP) of John Hopkins School of Public Health, was involved in the family planning communication process since 1982. In 1997 after 15 years of rich experience in the field, CCP published the book *Health Communication: Lessons from Family Planning and Reproductive Health*. This book is an academic analysis of family planning communication as it

has been practised down the years. It re-emphasises the theoretical basis of family planning communication strategy as devised by Rogers and Schramm. This book traces the evolution of the family planning programme in the world along with the evolution of family planning communication programme. We get to know how “by 1976, about 11 per cent of US population assistance was devoted to communication” (Piotrow et al 1997: 12). The book predicts certain challenges that might be faced by family planning communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Important among them is financial constraint because “donor nations may become more concerned with their own domestic deficits and social security” (ibid: 197-98). Another apprehension expressed by the authors is the possible change in theory and research in behavioural science and the unknown and complex territory it was spanning into. The authors comment:

“When national family planning programmes began about 35 years ago, no one knew whether they would have any impact. When family planning communication programmes began to assume a more distinct role some 20 years ago, no one knew what strategies would be effective or even be acceptable. Even a decade and a half ago, when Population Communication Services project began, no one knew what a national communication strategy was or how to combine mass media, community mobilization, and interpersonal communication synergistically to help people adopt healthier behaviour “(ibid: 200-1).

They however agree that:

For the next few decades family planning communication will face many challenges. But with each challenge comes opportunity. With determination, professional skills, and, above all, a willingness to learn from experience, family planning and health communication programmes will achieve their goal--- to make family planning a household word, a community norm, and an informed individual choice for everyone. (ibid: 2002).

The importance of this book lies in its acceptance that family planning communication still remains a developing stream. The book also narrates the way technology had defined the communication strategy with various other complexities being thrown in. This book gives us insight into the way the strategy has expanded and matured to incorporate many theories of behaviour science as well as other social sciences.

Avik Ghosh’s book *Communication Technology and Human Development: Recent Experiences in the Indian Social Sector* (2006) is based on his hands-on experience in the

development communication sector as an independent consultant with Observer Research Foundation, UNICEF and the World Bank. He devotes an extensive chapter to the evolution of family planning communication practice in India. This again is a historical documentation of who became involved when and how. The chapter offers no critique of the process of involvement and ideation of the process of family planning communication.

Two books which look at the process of development communication are *Communication for Development in the Third World Countries: Theory and Practice for Empowerment* (2001) by Srinivas R. Melkote and H. Leslie Steeves and *Communication for Development and Social Change* (2008) edited by Jan Servaes. Melkote and Steeves' book analyse the theoretical framework on which the academic stream of development communication has been based. It looks at the usage of development communication on various sectors like health, agriculture etc. In fact, the book illustrates how the dominant paradigm of development has informed the formulation of development communication. They comment "The dominant development paradigm has exacerbated gaps between the haves and the have-nots and too often has resulted in worsened living conditions for the poor... (but) an ethical perspective on development must recognize and support the value of traditional cultures, consider all levels of society, involve people at the grassroots in all facets of the process..." (2001: 365). In other words, this book tries to look at development communication in a more inclusive way. As mentioned, Melkote and Steeves' book offers a critique of the theory of Development Communication as it has been in practise in the Third World countries, but does not have any case study of India nor much on family planning communication as such.

Servaes' book on the other hand is a look at the different approaches of development communication, for example, participatory, behaviour change, IEC etc. This book is hugely influenced by Servaes' own involvement with FAO, World Bank etc. in the realm of communication. UNESCO's effort and experience in the area is quite elaborately documented in the book. As a concluding remark he writes "Policy-makers, academics and practitioners alike should recognise that communication is a process, not a product of a set of technologies. It includes formal (for example, campaigns) and informal (for example, community participation), direct (for example, media exposure), and indirect (for example, communication in social networks) forms of communication" (Servaes, 2008: 390).



Bella Mody's book *Designing Messages for Development Communication: An Audience Participation-Based Approach*, published in 1991 also analyses the theoretical underpinning of development communication and the process of designing messages. It does not focus on any particular area of development communication.

It can be seen from the discussion above that the various studies on family planning communication had accepted the process as given. Though Schramm and Rogers did express their dissatisfaction at the way it was practiced, these reservations find no reflection on the family planning communication being practised. The studies conducted from 1960s to the late 1970s were confined to the effects of the communication practices rather than critiquing the basic terms of the practice. From 1980s there have been very few studies on family planning communication maybe because of the change of international focus from family planning to reproductive health and now increasingly on HIV/AIDS. This made the focus of communication different as well. The transformation from bullet method to the highly sophisticated behaviour change communication and social marketing has never been questioned nor analysed, what we rather see is the easy acceptance of the changes. Another interesting fact is that, from the very initial days, interpersonal and traditional form of communication has been mooted as the best form and had found ample space in family planning communication discussion and policies. But with the variation in the media consumption habit due to availability of new communication technology, this focus has undergone drastic change. But rather than taking a critical view of the new technologies they have been used as platform for projection of traditional form of communication too. Now development communication in all sectors is concentrating on the usage of mobile telephone platform where content remains the same. It is almost as if the communication experts are confirming to Marshall McLuhan's contention that "Medium is the message" (McLuhan, 1967).

It is widely believed that communication does sensitise people to the necessity of adapting family planning methods and importance of small family, but the socio-economic reality deters people from practising it. It had been very well documented way back when Mamdani did his research on the Khanna study. This rarely finds space in the deliberation on family planning communication. It has never been discussed in the family planning communication process that it is only a sub-part of the larger population debate, which in turn is a part of the larger health services and health services is a part of the socio-economic condition of a country.

Rather, it is believed that continuous streaming of information on a particular practice and its positive aspects would ultimately convince the receptors to imbibe it. That belief has sustained the development communication process till now. But rarely do we see a region or culture specific communication design nor do we see pre-testing of the communication process before implementation. Most of the time a project is implemented and then communication is designed. Even with the radio or TV spots or the print advertisements generated by extensive research in CCP of John Hopkins University for SIFPSA, we see a homogenised form of communication, where often a North Indian couple is presented as an Indian and so on and so forth.

More importantly, no study critiques the political economy of this process of family planning communication which is being practised since the 1950s. The generation and dissemination of the communication design and the ideation process underlying it has not been analysed in the studies rather it has been taken as granted by default.

The next chapter will try to locate family planning communication in the wider discourse of nationalism. How the idea of an ideal Indian woman is woven into the family planning communication to fit into the homogenised idea of a nation.

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## Chapter 5

### FAMILY PLANNING COMMUNICATION THROUGH THE INTERSECTION OF NATIONALISM, RELIGION, CASTE, CLASS AND GENDER

#### **Introduction:**

In this chapter I argue that, the family planning communication process has been a part of the formation of the idea of India as a nation-state. This idea was initiated long before the Indian independence movement attained its momentum. In this chapter, I will examine how planned development helped in nationality formation in the newly independent India. I will also examine how the larger debate of unbridled population growth as a detriment to ‘modernisation’ and ‘development’ became deeply-rooted notion in the Indian psyche. And how it helped to create ‘guilt-consciousness’ in the minds of the people for not helping the nation (read government) in the process of developing and modernizing the country. Not surprisingly, this guilt-consciousness helped the government not having to be answerable regarding the dismal economic situation of the country. Even now the textbooks at all levels contain chapters on the ill-effects of population, not the reasons behind it.

In this chapter an attempt will also be made to enquire into the way the discourse of religion, caste, class and gender was woven into the nationalism narrative and how family planning communication process dutifully toed the set line and solidified the discourse.

#### **Nation as an Idea:**

Modern nation states, it is commonly said, write their histories retrospectively in order to justify their present state by connecting it to a mythical, glorious past which was destroyed by alien cultures and thus need to be rewritten (Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1990, Bhaba 1990, Anderson 2006). This history is often constructed with the help of cultural identity markers such as language, literature and food, and disseminated with the help of media (Gellner 1983, 1964; Hroch, 2020). This ensures that an “imagined community” is formed around the idea of a nation (Anderson, 2006). This nationalistic pride has its origin in the supposedly highly refined and ancient grand tradition that the ‘nation’ always had. This grand tradition helps in creating the shared memory of valour, scientific knowledge and a grand religion, which is ageless as well as common to the nation (Hroch, 2020; Anderson, 2006). This idea of the nation which is ancient and ‘God-given’ is created

for the benefit of the political powers with the help of manufactured memories (Anderson 2006; Gellner, 1983). The political powers pledge their unadulterated allegiance to the ‘ancient’ history, and pledge to maintain the sovereignty and sanctity of the ‘great land’.

Foucault (1988) said, “... [modern nation] is neither the constitution of the state, the coldest of cold monsters, nor the rise of bourgeoisie individualism”. Rather it was an attempt to integrate the individual to the political totality. According to Hobsbawm (1990) the sense of “nationalism” precedes the creation of a nation. For example, the sense of Indian nationalism was constructed before independence through various means (discussed below) even though eventually that particular geographical territory was divided into three nations, the larger debate of the Indian nation continues till date. The Hindu right however stuck to the concept of *Akhand Bharat* (Unified India), which comprises not only Pakistan and Bangladesh but also Afghanistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Tibet, Burma, Indonesia, part of Laos, Thailand and Kampuchea (Bhatt:2001:128). The North-eastern part of India became a part of British India only in 1826 after the Yandaboo treaty. However, the idea that it was an intrinsic part of the ‘Indian’ nation was created even before independence. It is important to create nationalistic fervour for the survival of capitalism since ‘nation state’ was ‘the main building block’ for a world capitalistic structure (Hobsbawm, 1990: 163-68).

### **India as a Nation: Construction and Continuation**

The path to Indian nationalism was not as straight as that of the European countries. Indian nationalist thought was “derivative but different” and arrived at similar conclusions to other nationals via a “crooked line” that was a consequence of engagement with the national via colonialism (Chatterjee 1993b).

Nandy conceives nationalism through the writings of Rabindranath Tagore and calls nationalism a form of Western knowledge which was irrelevant for India. Nandy (1999) however distinctly differentiates between ‘nationalism’ and ‘patriotism’. According to him patriotism is a positive category (and a non- ‘Western’ one) and radically distinct from nationalism.

Between the last quarter of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century India witnessed a nationalist movement which argued for the rights of the Indians to have more representation in the government of British India. This movement did not attempt to bring about any drastic changes therefore it cannot be termed as an anti-colonial movement. The elite upper

caste, upper class young Indians who had come back after acquiring education in the Western world, who were exposed to the idea of secularism and modernism, organised themselves under a body called Indian National Congress, the brain child of a British civil servant, Allan Octavian Hume. They were not home-grown and therefore, they were speaking a political language of democracy and liberty which indeed was Western, and hence alien (Nandy,1983). According to Chakravarti (2018:41), these nationalists romanticized the Rig Vedic society. There was a strong need for them to establish the superiority of their culture and religion in front of the British imperial power. By asserting the supremacy of the Rig Vedic society, they attempted to establish that the women were held in high esteem during that period. It helped them to dismiss the argument that the status of women was low in the Indian culture. Thus, the Vedic age became the reference point of the glorified past for these Indians. And by doing that they also could refute the British claim that women are marginalised in Indian (read Hindu) culture.

However, by the 1870s a section of the English educated men belonging to the middle class of Bengal was convinced that the old institutions and practices of society required fundamental changes. They were termed as ‘conservative’ or ‘traditionalist’ and were associated with the movements of Hindu revivalism. They were enthusiastic advocates promoting reform and modernisation of the Hindu society. Notwithstanding the difference between ‘progressives’ and ‘conservatives’ among the new intellectuals in the nineteenth century, they were all “convinced that the old society had to be reformed in order to make it adequate for coping with the conditions of the modern world” (Habib, 2017). Nandy (1983:24-25) calls this an attempt to “Christianise Hinduism, particularly the dominant Hindu concept of the desirable person”. Giving the example of the two *swamis*, viz, Vivekanand and Dayanand, he discusses their approach to Hinduism. According to Nandy, their approach towards Hinduism was “an attempt to turn Hinduism into an organised religion, with an organised priesthood, church and missionaries; acceptance of the idea of proselytization and religious ‘conscientization’...an attempt to introduce the concept of The Book” (Vedas and Gita)...“following the Semitic creeds...the acceptance of the idea of linear, objective and causal history...and a certain puritanism and this worldly ascetism borrowed partly from the Catholic church and partly from Calvinism” (ibid:25). This institutionalisation of the religion has had a massive impact on its practice.

Chatterjee (2018) says that the construction of a history and a classical past which glorified the concept of India as a nation was essentially a requirement to create the idea of a nation. This

narrative glorified the past in every respect and blamed Muslim rule for the downfall of the “Hindu nation” by obliquely justifying the British rule. The creation of the idea of a “Hindu India” started with the writing about the mythical past while othering ‘the Muslim’. The Hindu nationalist argument was that the Hindu society became corrupt and decadent due to the long rule of the Muslims. This notion gave birth to the religious nationalism which, in fact, verged on towards communalism in due course and took a very nasty turn post-independence (Habib,2017).

Hobsbawm observed that in order to create the concept of one unified nation the ‘other’ is important so that “they can be, must be, blamed for all the grievances, uncertainties and disorientations” and these ‘they’ are those who are ‘not us”, interestingly, “they are universally present and recognisable within our cities, as public dangers and agents of pollution, universally present, beyond our borders and control, but hating and conspiring against us. In the unhappier countries they are, and have always been, our neighbours, but our very co-existence with ‘them’ now undermines the exclusive certainties belonging to our people and our country” (Hobsbawm,1990:174).

This ‘othering’ of the Muslims in India was also facilitated by the European Indologists, who seconded the idea that the history of Hinduism has its origin in the classical age. They agreed with the notion that the rule of the Muslims was essentially despotic and it marginalised the Hindus and turned them into second-class citizens in their own land. By academically arguing this dominant sentiment held by the educated upper caste Hindus, they helped in justifying the British rule in India (Chatterjee,1993:101-02). This way the British became the saviour of the Hindu religion and by default the land called India.

However, Sharmila Rege (1998) argues that the way Partha Chatterjee talks about nationalist movement is more from the Brahmanical perspective. That he ignores the role played by the Dalits and the women in the nationalist movement. Sumit Sarkar is also critical of the way Chatterjee dismissed the huge participation of women in Ambedkerite movement “as Western inspired, orientalist, for they utilised aspects of colonial policies and Western ideologies as resources” (Sarkar1996).

One of the most significant counter-narrative to the Brahmanical nationalism, was Jyotiba Phule’s project for the liberation of the *shudras*, *ati-shudras* (both lower castes) and women from the slavery of Brahmanism. He conceptualised a Bali Rajya, as opposed to Ram Rajya as Ram

Rajya operated in the realm of Varna Ashram Dharma. By this, he attempted to create the subaltern history as opposed to Aryan history of India. He also challenged the upper caste Brahmanical sleight of hand attempt at reforms which in reality ended up in sustaining patriarchy (Rege, 1998).

Ambedkar used to organize women's conference as a part of the general meetings that he organised. Eventually this became a routine exercise in the 1930s. In these meetings which were called 'parishads', the Dalit women passed resolution against child marriage, enforced widowhood and dowry as practices of Brahmanical rituals and being detrimental to the women more than any other category. Therefore, they supported *Dharmantaar* (religious conversion) from Hinduism to another one where they would be given an equal status. Ambedkar regarded both caste and the status of women as essentially stemming from the Brahmanical order. This perspective provided the space to the Dalit feminists to voice their legitimate concern, which was missing in the dominant discourse of nationalism led by the elite group of nationalists (Pardeshi, 1997<sup>246</sup>). In 1931, the Indian National Congress passed the Fundamental Rights resolution which provided freedom, justice, dignity and equality to all women, as an essential part of the nation building process. This effectively made the Dalit women's protest immaterial. However, all those lofty ideals remained on paper and in practice the marginalisation of women (more specifically that of the Dalit women) is still a reality. But the protest movement of the 1930s still holds historical importance in understanding the development of India as a modern nation-state.

Agreeing with the dominant notion that, the Hindu national culture was threatened by the Muslim rulers when they invaded the Aryans, the Hindu right held a different view of the colonial power. They believed that the Aryans were a peace-loving and accommodative race because of which the Mughals could conquer them. The concept of a spiritually superior race being dominated by sheer physically brute force fitted the idea which projected Hindus as morally and intellectually superior. In this discourse, the British was seen to have "planned" to subvert the Hindu minds by exposing them to supposedly superior Western knowledge. According to the Hindu right, the British destroyed the idea of a single national culture and tried to supplant it with a false sense of secularism by talking of the country being inhabited by equal communities with their peculiar cultural ethos. This was the root of India becoming a fractured nation. The Hindu right tried to undo this fallacy and restore the glorious days of "one nation" and "one culture", wherein the nation is Hindu Rashtra and the culture in Hindutva. The British by enacting the Morley-Minto

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<sup>246</sup>Cited in Rege, 1998:41-42

reform and creating communal electorate permanently sealed the idea of Hindus and Muslims being separate identities. This helped them to play the divide and rule game through political exclusivism and ruled India for some more time (Hasan, 1980:1395). Therefore, “the idea that ‘Indian nationalism’ is synonymous with ‘Hindu Nationalism’ is not the vestige of some pre-modern religious conception. It is a modern rationalist and historicist idea. Like the other modern ideologies, it allows for a central role of the state in the modernisation of society and strongly defends the state’s unity and sovereignty. Its appeal is not religious but political” (Chatterjee 1993:110).

This has given rise to the question regarding the position of the inhabitants of India who are excluded from this nation. Out of several views, the most widely adopted one is that, that of majoritarianism. The idea of the majority community being the Hindus and the minority being Muslims in a modern state became rooted into the psyche of the nation. The policies of the state also began to reflect this majority-minority dichotomy. The minorities are given the preferential treatment thus leaving them at the mercy of some dole outs by the majority. It is incumbent upon the minorities to unquestioningly accept the leadership and protection of the majority. Any protest by the Muslims was doubted as an act of separatism. This mentality took roots from the early twentieth century itself. The two dominant ideas of the nationalism wherein Muslims stand as the ‘other’ actually had an inherent commonality i.e. Brahmanical patriarchy. One had faith in the Western idea of secularism and nationalism, whereas the other dismissed the Western ideas as an attempt to subjugate a ‘grand’ civilization. This sentiment is still prevalent in the political economy of India, and has become more pronounced since 2014. It is pertinent that we discuss what was the perspective of the Hindu right towards minorities here. M.S. Golwalker, one of the prominent Hindutva ideologues, was of the opinion that the minorities do not deserve any ‘right-what-so-ever’ rather they should “live only as outsider, bound by all the codes and convention of the Nation, at the sufferance of the Nation, and deserving of no special protection, far less any privileges or rights...the non-Hindu peoples of Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture...in a word they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment---nor even citizen’s rights. We are an old nation and let us deal as old nation ought to and do deal with foreign races who have chosen to live in our



country” (Golwalker, 1944:48-9). The assertion that every person living in India is a Hindu has its origin in this thesis of Golwalker.<sup>247</sup>

Proliferation of Western education before independence played a significant role in the creation of the nationalism debate. Anderson talks about how promotion of Western education by the colonial administrators like Macaulay helped in creating the phenomenon of official nationalism. Macaulay believed that after thirty years of English education not a single Bengali (read Indian) will remain an idol worshipper (Anderson, 2006:90-91).

Western education was spread not “only by the colonial state but also by private religious and secular organisations. This expansion occurred not simply to provide cadres for governmental and corporate hierarchies, but also because of the growing acceptance of the moral importance of modern knowledge even for colonised population” (ibid:116). It is through the intelligentsia that nationalism is propagated and sustained. They give nationalism the required scholarship through ‘research’ and convince the population regarding its validity. Homegrown intelligentsia became a prerequisite as the rest of the sectors like the industrial, agricultural and other professional class remained under the dominance of the colonial power. This was one area wherein the native domination was ensured because of their exposure to Western education. Western education ensured that they were bilingual, because of which they could access various ideas and debates of nationalism.

The rise of the reformist organisations like the Brahma Samaj and eventually the Arya Samaj gave Hinduism the much-required boost. Both the organisations, which were revivalist in nature, talked about modernising India by invoking the grand traditions and values of Hinduism. As Jaffrelot (2007:7) says, “They (reformists) were inclined to reform their traditions along modern lines but not to the extent that they would abandon or even disown them; in fact, they often wanted to reform their traditions in order to save them”. Brahma Samaj was founded in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. It was not merely a Bengal centric organisation; rather it attracted people from across the country. The foremost amongst them was Dayanand Saraswati, who came to Bengal from the Bombay Presidency. While Roy accepted that the ‘ills’ like polytheism or sati was not something to be proud of, agreeing with the views of the Christian missionaries, but he insisted that all these

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<sup>247</sup> This was asserted by Mohan Bhagawat, the RSS chief in his address to the RSS workers in Meerut in September, 2018 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/everyone-who-lives-in-india-is-hindu-by-identity-says-rss-chief-mohan-bhagwat/story-AkrwvZutu2pR4T2v7RP45O.html> retrieved on 12/07/2019

ills were accrued along the passage of time, and believed that the original form of Hinduism never had such ill practices. Dayanand took a leaf out of Roy's idea of Hinduism and established the racist concept of the 'Aryans' being the original population of India. He believed in the egalitarian quality of the Aryan society. Nandy (1983: 25) calls "Dayanand's decision to call his church Arya Samaj" a political decision. Dayanand spoke about the merit-based division of labour as the precursor of the caste system. His ideas found resonance with the British orientalist like William Jones, who propounded the concept of Sanskrit being the mother of all the Indo-European languages. While Ram Mohan wanted to adapt Western knowledge to the Hindu philosophy, Dayanand wanted to make the values of Hinduism acceptable to the West. He saw nothing negative in the Indian (read Hindu) way of life. Dayanand founded Arya Samaj in 1875 in the Punjab Province, where he was acutely aware of the dwindling population of the Hindus. Muslims were 51% and Sikhs 7.5% of the population of Punjab at that time. The movement started with the process of *Suddhi* (purification) and *Sangathan* (unity) to reconvert the Hindus from Sikhism, Islam and Christianity and halt the process of conversion altogether. That was the first attempt at creating the 'other' (Dua,1970).

As Anderson (2006:149) says, "The fact of the matter is that nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulation: outside history." This line between nationalism and racism became obliterated in pre-colonial India.

Hobsbawm (1992:68) discusses the way religion becomes a connecting thread amongst disparate groups when the process of formation of nationalism takes place. He states, "Religion is an ancient and well-trying method of establishing communion through common practice and a sort of brotherhood between people who otherwise have nothing much in common...Yet, religion is a paradoxical cement for proto nationalism, and indeed for modern nationalism, which has usually (at least in its most crusading phases) treated it with considerable reserve as a force which could challenge the 'nations' monopoly claims to its members' loyalty."

According to Anderson (2006:163-64), the census, maps and the museums shaped the idea regarding the colonised people for the colonial forces. These three institutions helped the colonial forces to academically theorise the historical, geographical and racial characteristics of the colonies. Charles Hirschman (1987) writes how the colonial power consolidated its rule and the

census categories became more visibly and exclusively racial. We already have discussed in Chapter 2, how census data was used to create the discourse on population growth in India.

In India, however, along with establishing the menacing population growth, census data was also used by the Hindu nationalist force to establish the threatened decline of the Hindu population. Arjun Appadurai (1993), Bernard Cohn (1987), Kenneth Jones (1981), Charu Gupta (2004) et al have discussed how the census data was used historically not just for enumeration, but also for comparison. In fact, the scare of declining Hindu population was promoted by the Census as early as 1921, when it stated, “Both relatively and absolutely Hindus have lost...Hindus have decreased during the last decade by 347 per 10,000 or just under 3.5 percent.”<sup>248</sup>

However, it should be remembered that census was not just to enumerate the population only, it was used to find out the caste composition of the population too, so that the hierarchical position of castes could be established. Cohn (1987b:250) cites the example of how “Arya Samaj began to propagate its own brand of unified Hinduism (and) the population of Lahore was instructed, through a handbill, to fill the census columns in the following way: That their religion was ‘Vedi Dharma’, their language was ‘Arya Bhasha’, their sect was Arya Samaj, their race was ‘Aryan’ and their caste was nil.”

Similarly, maps gave legitimacy to the geographical areas being controlled by the colonial powers. And at the same time, it also gave legitimacy to the Indian ‘nationalists’ to proclaim the historical tenacity of that territory. Therefore, the Mahabharata eventually stretched its stories to encompass the tribal people like the Dimasas and Nagas into its fold. It is another matter that the women from those tribes were termed as the Rakshasha or demons. This process is still ongoing. As recently as in March 2018, Chief Ministers of four North eastern states of India led by a central minister followed by a strong contingent of artists attended the Madhavpur Mela celebrated in Gujarat to celebrate the union of Krishna and Rukmini. Myth has it that Rukmini was a girl from the Idu-Mishimi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.<sup>249</sup> As Hobsbawm (1992:19) says, “The equation, nation=state=people, and especially sovereign people, undoubtedly linked nation to territory, since structure and definition of state were now essentially territorial”. Maps served the purpose of defining that territory.

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<sup>248</sup> [https://censusindia.gov.in/Census\\_And\\_You/old\\_report/census\\_1921.aspx](https://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/old_report/census_1921.aspx) retrieved on 31/05/2020

<sup>249</sup> <https://theprint.in/politics/gujarat-festival-celebrates-rukminis-arunachal-link-experts-say-no-basis-of-this-myth/45382/> retrieved on 13/05/2020

Another identity marker of a nation is language, as mentioned above. Ascendency of Hindi as the 'real' Indian language as it had its origin in Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas, was the contention of the Arya Samajis. While agreeing to Anderson's opinion of 'Print Capitalism' laying the foundation of developing a modern 'national' language, Chatterjee however, says that this was not easily developed in the colonial states. In fact, the efforts were of the colonial rulers and the missionaries to initiate the process of standardising languages in the colonial states. With the institutionalisation of a standard language, simultaneously, English became the official language of the powerful elite and in that process a new bilingual Indian elite class grew. In fact, this Indian elite became the vehicle of curating, "adequate language for modern culture, keeping the 'colonial intruders' out" and thus language "became a zone over which the nation first had to declare its sovereignty and then had to transform in order to make it adequate for the modern world" (Chatterjee,1993:7). Interestingly the attempt to standardise a language to be acceptable as a common language and give it a façade of being sacrosanct, required grammar and pronunciation to be standardised too. This was done with the help of print media (newspapers, literary texts etc) and in the case of India, All India Radio played a very crucial role. This standardised language was obviously of the rulers and the educated elites and through public education and administrative communication it was popularised in the country (Hobsbawm 1992). For example, this process was visible in the process of Sanskritisation of literary Bengali which took place in the nineteenth century. This process essentially separated the literate upper-class Bengalis from the general masses. This process also ensured Hinduisation of the language and othering the Muslim Bengalis. And after independence the reverse process was visible in the case of Bangladesh. Similar efforts were visible in the case of Hindi. "Savarkar mentions language as pillar of Hindu identity. When doing so he refers not only to Sanskrit but also to Hindi: hence the equation he finally established between Hindutva and the triptych: 'Hindi, Hindu, Hindutva'. Hindu nationalism (discussed below) appears for the first time as resulting from the superimposition of a religion, a culture, a language, and a sacred territory---the perfect recipe for ethnic nationalism" (Jaffrelot, 2007:15). This process of Sanskritising Hindi became a formidable project via AIR post-independence (discussed below).

### **Indian National Congress: Nationalism vs Secularism**

The multi-layered sub-nationalism that was inherent in the Indian society was not very easily accepted by the Western-educated Congressman. Rather they behaved as if their identity was that of a homogenised and political 'one', negating the existence of the socio-cultural variations

inherent in the society: They were just “Congressis”! They believed that this “cultural pluralism” could be ignored (McLane, 1977:14<sup>250</sup>). But the larger population, still continued to operate in the realms of language, religion, caste etc. In fact, these remained their identity markers. These forms of sub-nationalistic loyalties were quite prominent in the northern and western India as well as in Bengal too. Congress could not understand the gravity of this sub-nationalism and failed to capitalise this for their benefit. Rather they liked to believe that they were beyond this parochial identity gimmick. But, it was not that all the educated Congressmen were a-cultural. Many could not give up their socio-cultural conditioning at their personal level. As mentioned above, various socio-cultural movements were taking place in India during the nineteenth century. The Congressmen of that time participated in those movements in their individual capacity, shunning their ‘Congress’ identity. For example, “Madan Mohan Malviya was active in the movement to secure government recognition of Devanagari as an official script in North-western Province and Oudh. Romesh Chandra Dutt wrote Bengali novels about Hindu heroism in wars in which, almost incidentally Hindus fought Muslims. Lala Lajpat Rai championed the use of Hindi in place of Urdu and the reconversion of Muslims and Christians to Hinduism. Tilak organised festivals in honour of Shivaji, the seventeenth century rebel against Muslim rule. In each of these cases the intention was to overcome division and deficiencies within Hindu society, not to create antagonism between Hindus and Muslims. The consequence of their activities, though, was to strengthen a specifically Hindu rather than an all-India identity” (ibid:15-16).

The Congress remained an organisation which met once a year, dominated by Western-educated Indians and led by a Britisher, Hume. Even when it became a more of a year-long active organisation, they ended up electing Hume as General Secretary, who had retired by then. A few Muslims and lower-caste Hindus were elected as delegates in some years, but that was more or less only tokenism. Interestingly, Congress was supported by most of the largest circulating Indian-owned newspapers of that time.

It is noteworthy that the core Indian leadership of Congress, was in the hands of nine men who bonded during their time in London. McLane narrates how most of the prominent Congress leaders were lawyers and earning more than their fathers and also were recipient of kindness from Englishmen in some form or other in their lives (ibid:52-57). He also points out that higher caste

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<sup>250</sup><https://archive.org/details/indiannationalis0000mcla/page/16/mode/lup?q=Indian+Nationalism+and+Early+Congress>  
retrieved on 12/02/2020

people dominated the Congress leadership between 1885 to 1914. Even those who were non-Brahmins, were from warrior caste, or trading caste or even writers of prominence (ibid:63).

The religious consciousness of the Hindus and the Muslims were at its revivalist mode during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Every province established its own organisation to promote and defend the traditional religious customs and practices. Previously oblivious towards religion, Hindus started to defend idol worship, caste and the sanctity of the Puranas and cows, and the legitimacy of customary marriage practices etc. Similarly, Muslim began to connect with the pan-Islamic identity with the revival of the position of the Ulema, and resistance to the study of modern science...Brahmo Samajis, Arya Samajis and Sudharaks clashed with the Sanatanis (the orthodox). And Wahabis and Deobandi scholars dissented against the Islamist scholars of Aligarh. The “Hindu cow protection movement of the late 1880s and early 1890s challenged the Muslim practice of cow slaughter and provoked a series of serious riots in 1893” (Gupta, 2009). In fact, the riots were used to justify the argument of the Muslims as well as the British about the necessity of the role of a third-party intervention, i.e. the British.

The Islamist newspapers blamed the Congress for being behind the cow-protection movement, whereas the Hindu-run newspapers made a clear demarcation between the cow protection group and the Congress. However, most of the Hindus blamed the British of being partial towards the Muslims by administering certain regulations like selectively allowing the Muslims to slaughter cows, ignoring Hindu sentiments altogether. This internal tension kept the British happy as this destroyed the possibility of a united front against the Raj. In the midst of all this, the non-communal image of Congress took a good beating and Muslim attendance started to dwindle in the meetings. More than support to the movement, the silence of the Congress party regarding the cow-slaughter riots created the real rift between the Hindus and the Muslims. If the Congress was to allay Muslim fears about kine slaughter, language policy or representative institutes, it was necessary that the Congress made positive and imaginative gestures towards Muslims, which did not really happen. During the cow protection movement and in the decade after the riots, the Congress did nothing, thereby demonstrating that it was at least as concerned with the opinion of Hindu communalist as with assertions of Muslims.

Even Gandhi during the Khilafat movement appealed to the Hindus to allow the Muslims to give up cow slaughter by themselves (Gandhi,1924: 410-413), not that the Hindus should accept the right of the Muslims to eat beef. However, the Arya Samajists were not satisfied with the

approach of the Congress towards Hindus. Rai Bahadur Lal Chand, an Arya Samajist argued that Muslims had “extra-territorial support based in Constantinople and were seeking a ‘Muslim Raj’ in India, whereas Hindus, who had no support outside the walls of Hindusthan, were weak, gullible and disunited. (His) target were the Congress and the Indian Press” (Bhatt, 2001:57).

Early twentieth century saw a lot of critical writing in the press against the Congress by people like Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, G. Subramanian Iyer, Aurobindo Ghose etc. Eventually however, this group joined Congress and ran the organisation. However, by the time this group started running the Congress, the aims and objectives of Congress had undergone substantial change. There was renewed faith reposed in Hindu culture, values, norms, and even the Sanskrit language. Max Muller in fact raised the bar further in case of Sanskrit. On the other hand, the continuous assertion of the Hindus regarding Hindi language and cow slaughter kept the Muslims on tenterhooks regarding what would happen if the Hindus get political power. When Bengal was partitioned in 1905 the Muslim League became solidified and a mass population of apolitical Indians became strongly political and this created a rift between the moderates and the extremists within the Congress which became prominent in the 1907 Surat session of Congress.

The already fragile unity of the Congress was on the verge of total collapse. Many extremists seceded from the Congress, but they were rendered almost leaderless after the arrest of their principal spokesmen that of Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo Ghose and Bipin Chandra Pal. The government of India moved to strengthen the moderates by reforming the legislative councils in 1909 in a manner which would enhance their visibility and influence. The extremists had challenged the moderates and lost. The Congress lost its most creative politicians. It required World War I, the Khilafat movement and also Gandhi to bring the extremists and Muslims close to the moderate leaders again (McLane, 1977:368-69).

In 1920, some 56.5 percent of the members of the AICC came from major cities and provincial towns in India. By 1923, this proportion was reduced to 34.6 percent, with a decisive majority of party activists hailing from small towns and rural areas (Krishna, 1966: 420). However, the membership of the AICC continued to be predominantly from the upper caste. Virtually all had Western education and most of them were professionally trained as lawyers, doctors or journalists. (ibid:423-24).

Under the leadership of Gandhi, the dress code of the Congressmen underwent a change too. Even the urbane and Westernised nationalists, adopted traditional style of dress like the cotton dhoti instead of trousers and speeches were delivered either in Hindustani or other local dialects instead of English at party meetings (Frankel, 2005:29).

At the end of the First World War, the Muslims came closer to the Congress as they could see a threat to the Khalifa. That led to a close relationship between the Muslim League and the Congress. The result was visible in the religious composition of the members of Congress. From 11.1% in 1919 the number of Muslim members increased to 24.5% in 1923 (Krishan, 1966:421). Even the rural base of Congress membership increased from 41% in 1919 to 65.4% in 1923 (ibid:423). However, the majority of the members still remained the professionals like lawyers, teachers, journalists and allopathic doctors, with lawyers being the maximum in numbers (ibid:423-24). Thus, Congress remained a party of Western educated upper caste, upper class members throughout.

It is surprising that in spite of having professionals as members the financial condition of the Congress party was not robust. Gandhi improved the financial health of the party and managed to turn it into a national party. At ideological level, his ideal of Ahimsa resonated with the Hindu tenor of conflict management and helped establish the supremacy of Hindu religion morally over other religions. Interestingly, Gandhi insisted on keeping the political and social issues apart. This remained a puzzle for critics. On the one hand, he did not support protests of the tenant farmers of Champaran against the stringent tenancy laws, and on the other hand, he implored with the Congress members to work for the betterment of the poor people at Champaran. According to many political analysts, he maintained a mid-way strategy so as not to ruffle the British administration. He was worried that the use of the name of Congress would end up being “the *bête noire* of the Government and their controllers...To them the Congress was a by word for lawyers’ wrangles, evasion of law through legal loopholes, a by-word for bomb and anarchical crime and for diplomacy and hypocrisy” (Gandhi, 1927: 412).

There are other similar instances like Champaran. For example, the Kheda Satyagraha or the Ahmedabad labour strike of 1919, in both the cases Gandhi managed to control the unrests in such a way that it was ensured that “the capitalist system was not under attack” (Frankel, 2005:43). This was not surprising as Gandhi remained close to the Tatas, Birlas as well as other businessmen, mill owners and merchants across the country throughout the independence movement. He, in fact,



praised Ratan Tata, “as a humane and considerate employer” and asked other mill owners to emulate him in providing facilities to the employees (Gandhi, 2011: 62-65). Many critics attribute this to his caste identity enabling him to side with the business class. However, according to Frankel (2005:45) Gandhi did not want to dissociate the business class as there was a fear of them joining ranks with the British against the Congress and also his fear that a class-based movement would go beyond the control of the Congress as well.

Nehru was not comfortable with the party’s approach towards the class dimension. He was sceptic of the class nature of the upper class and held the opinion that there is “no instance of a privileged class or group or nation giving up its special privileges or interests willingly...Always a measure of coercion has been applied, pressure has been brought to bear, or conditions have been created which make it impossible or unprofitable for vested interests to carry on. And then the enforced conversion takes place. The methods of this enforcement may be brutal or civilised” (Nehru, 1933:34).

The Congress Socialist Party (CSP) led by Jayaprakash Narayan and Narendra Deva found resonance with the sentiments of Nehru. Though CSP was a part of Congress, however, ideologically it was slightly closer to Marxism. In 1936, CSP accepted CPI members into their organisation, in spite of their “notoriety” of accepting funds from the Communist Party of Great Britain as well as Soviet Russia. Moreover, earlier thirty-one of the CPI members were arrested and convicted in the Meerut conspiracy case too. To remain relevant, they had to find allies in the anti-imperialist forces.

The Communists reposed hope on the CSP. Nehru also used to support CSP in the issues of social reforms. During that time, another leftist force too became active. A farmer’s group called All Indian Kisan Sabha (AIKS) under the leadership of N. G. Ranga (better known as Ranga), a founding member of CSP, became hugely popular and eventually gained success in the United Province as well with the support of Jayaprakash Narayan. In the meantime, Nehru was travelling the rural areas of the United Province and giving speeches on socialism. Frankel (2005:57) notes that this made the conservatives quite dissatisfied and eventually, in protest of Nehru’s activities, Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel and C. Rajagopalachari resigned from the Congress Working Committee. This forced Gandhi to intervene and stop the permanent split in the party.

In the AICC meetings of August and December 1936 held in Faizpur, the atmosphere was surcharged with socialist slogans demanding the right of the workers and the peasants, and there was a huge pressure to adopt an amendment to begin an “uncompromising revolutionary struggle with imperialism,”<sup>251</sup> voted by a massive cadre both in the AICC meeting, as well as the open session.

This massive support of peasants to AIKS helped Nehru to ultimately convince Gandhi to adopt “a far-reaching programme of agrarian reform that became part of the Congress manifesto for the election of 1937” (Frankel, 2005:58). But, he could not achieve to bring about any change in the constitution of the Congress, as it was resisted by the conservatives within the party. The AIKS did support the Congress in the election but it was extremely scathing in its criticism of the ministers. The rift became quite pronounced when, in 1938, AIKS launched a campaign for implementation of the Faizpur demands. By this time the control of the Communist party within AIKS was also quite visible with the red flag becoming omnipresent in the protest marches organised by them.

This led to eventually a bitter split in the relationship between the Congress, CSP and AIKS. In the 1938 Haripur AICC meeting Subhas Chandra Bose, who was influenced by the socialist ideology of the CSP, was elected the party president. This made the conservatives almost redundant. Gandhi with his supporters hurriedly passed a resolution on the AIKS stating that Congress had nothing to do with those Congressmen who adhered to the ideology of Kisan Sabhas, which were against the principles and policies of Congress (Sitaramayya, 1966: 82).

The Tripuri session of the AICC in March 1939, was mostly a show of strength of Gandhi who converted the presidential election into an issue of his personal respect vis à vis the nationalist movement. However, in spite of all his efforts, Bose was re-elected. Gandhi took the defeat of his selected candidate Sitaramayya personally and the entire working committee resigned at his behest. Bose, his brother Sarat and Nehru did not resign. Bose was pressurised to appoint a working committee which would have the blessings of Gandhi, or else Gandhi threatened to snap his relation with Congress forever. CSP, looking at the broader issue of the nationalist movement against the British rule, tactfully took a resolution against Bose and forced him to resign. Gandhi got his nominee Rajendra Prasad elected as the president of the AICC (Frankel, 2005: 61-62).

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<sup>251</sup>cited in Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India*:67

The left movement lost its steam after that. There were other reasons as well. The CSP became wary of the infiltration of the communists in its rank and file and expelled them from membership in 1940. Due to the increasing militant activities of the CPI, the AIKS and newly formed Forward Bloc of Bose completely snapped their ties with the CPI in 1941. In the meantime, Germany attacked Soviet Russia and that forced CPI and AIKS to support Britain. The members of AIKS and CPI who were in prisons were released. But, they did not support the Congress in their call for Quit India movement. This established the stigmatic perception about the Marxists that they indirectly helped the imperialist forces rather than the nationalist agenda.

Gandhi, it is said, lost his touch with the young cadre. When he and the other leaders were arrested during the Quit India movement, the ground was left open for the socialist group, who refused to get arrested and they went underground and engaged in terrorist activities to sabotage the British administration. Gandhi was appalled, but, did not intervene. The socialist force liked to believe that without their pressure tactic, combined with the War, India would not have attended independence (Interview with Aruna Asaf Ali, cited in Frankel, 2005:63).

After independence, as is already extensively discussed by many scholars and is still alive in the memories of Indians, India and Pakistan saw bloodbaths in the communal lines. Many million lives were lost from both the religions and Gandhi was hurt immensely. He tried to stop the violence by embarking on a fast-unto-death. The Congress Socialist party went into deep introspection as they were deeply disturbed by the communal riots as well as the eventual assassination of Gandhi. Jayaprakash Narayan went on to say that the only way socialism can be achieved is through Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence.

Even Nehru, as mentioned above, with his socialist leanings, never really stood up to defend and implement his ideology when it was called for. Though he did not resign along with the Working Committee to protest the election of Bose as president of the AICC, but that can be seen only as tokenism, as it resulted in nothing concrete. Nehru did continue with his hesitant approach towards socialism for long. One example was his approach towards the National Planning Commission, which was constituted in 1938 under his Chairmanship. According to him this planned approach to development was definitely going to benefit the business class. Nehru said that he "accepted the Chairmanship of the committee not without hesitation and misgiving" (1985:395). He reiterated that though the objective was to attain "national self-sufficiency...but, we were anxious to avoid being drawn into the whirlpool of economic imperialism" (ibid:398). Therefore, he

was hopeful that the plan was “inevitably leading” India “towards establishing some of the fundamentals of the socialist structure. It was limiting the social acquisition factor in society, removing many barriers to growth and leading to a rapidly expanding social structure. It was based on planning for the benefit of the common man, raising his standards greatly and giving him opportunities of growth, and releasing an enormous amount of latent talent and capacity” (ibid:400).

Post-independence the development story of India had two contradictions built into it. Congress as a party, endorsed socialist ideology which vouched for state ownership over major developmental areas, so as to stop concentration of economic power with a few industrialists. However, the government pursued a different agenda. Private investment was promoted and the reason cited for that was to achieve better production.

The composition of the party too saw an impressive change, when, it was quite clear that independence would be earned with the Congress leading the country. In the thirties itself membership was given to people from the prosperous land owning caste, who owned land between twenty-one to a hundred acres (Kochanek, 1968:337-8).

Serious differences were visible between the two most powerful ministers in the government, the Prime Minister, Nehru and the Deputy Prime Minister, Vallabhbhai Patel. Unilateral decisions were being taken by Patel, which upset Nehru immensely. Patel was more pro the capitalist class, whereas Nehru had faith on the state ownership of resources. In a way this socialist approach towards the economy was a bone of contention between Patel and Nehru forever. Patel was therefore supporting the West rather than the communist bloc on the issue of Cold War too (V. Shankara, 1974).

Even in case of religious minority, Nehru and Patel did not agree. As Guha says, Nehru wanted the Muslims to feel welcome in the country whereas according to Patel, “Muslim citizens in India have a responsibility to remove the doubts and misgivings entertained by a large section of the people about their loyalty founded largely on their past association with the demand for Pakistan and the unfortunate activities of some of them” (Guha, 2007). This Hindu right approach is still visible and has become far more dominant since 2014. No doubt, Patel has become an icon for the Hindu right and is much lauded by them than the Indian National Congress. The BJP government erected his statue in 2018, which is the World’s tallest statue.

It is interesting to note that till attaining independence Congress maintained the façade of being a secular party and therefore nationalism was defined as secular too. This brief discussion above shows the great faultline that existed within the Congress party. However, “Once a unified anti-imperial front was no longer necessary for independence the difficulties of such a view returned to roost” (Rajagopal:21). All the ‘difficulties’ of nationalism, vis-à-vis religion, caste, gender and class could be seen in the planned development that India embarked upon. In the case of population control it had manifested very strongly as the topic touched the very core of human existence: Reproduction.

In the next part, I will discuss the implication of planned development which ensured a strong role of the state in almost every matter personal or even societal.

### **The Recipe of Nationalism: Religion, Gender, Caste and Class**

Before I proceed, it is important to evoke Amrita Basu’s (1993:4) argument that “...movements like Hindu nationalism must be understood not in the monolithic terms they use to describe themselves but as fragmented by gender, class and caste identification. Politically, Hindu nationalism points to the power and days of movement that enables one historically oppressed group to acquire empowerment by victimizing another such group”. Going a step further I will venture into the political economy of the family planning programme, as well as the related communication process, through the prism of gender, caste, class and religion. How the idea of an ideal Indian woman, an ideal Indian family, which, family planning communication tries to promote is essentially the ideals inherent in the Hindu nationalism vis-à-vis Hindu religion. I will also establish how the international aid providers for the project were essentially playing into the hands of the fundamentalist forces by projecting those ideals as the ‘modern’ ideals of development.

### **Post-Independence Indian Nation:**

According to Zachariah (2011:108-09), post-independence, Nehruvian nationalism became more acceptable as “a developmental ‘nationalism’ and is allegedly more progressive than a ‘cultural’ one, because it is a version of inclusive civic belonging rather than of ethnic belonging and its concomitant exclusions. The (nation) state is legitimised and naturalised by the state claiming to be the nation through a project of collective ‘development’, in which the ‘people’ are the ultimate beneficiary, and whose role it is to support the state’s leadership.”

Developmentalism thus was attempted to project as the new 'nationalism'. The newly independent country inherited geographical boundaries created by the colonial powers and it became difficult for the newly formed government to establish the 'naturalness' of the boundaries. Thus, to take away the focus from such debates, development was promoted as the glue to sustain the 'nation.'

However, the Hindu or majoritarian nationalism that was being promoted before independence was not obliterated by developmentalism. It still remained the guiding principle of independent India but in a different way. By promoting 'development' which purportedly was for the good of the country and eventually good for the people in the long run, a different discourse was created regarding objective of the nation. It helped the language of the Indian National Congress not to sound sectarian. When Gandhi was eventually killed by the Hindu supremacist force, their voice did not find a legitimate place in the discourse around the concept of India. This does not really mean that India turned out to be a truly secular nation. In the garb of development whatever was preached remained in a tricky territory.

The continuous discussion as well as promotion of the idea of India being exploited by the colonial powers, which gave the impetus to the independent movement made it almost obligatory for the new government to take up 'socialism' as one of the objectives. This gave the government legitimacy amongst the poor and the marginalised Indians. Even the Gandhian way of development redefined modernity so as to incorporate decentralised, rural, labour intensive economy as its development model.

"Development was potentially the solvent of sectarian identities. The basic of development was, in earlier versions of this argument, to be socialism. In the post-independence Indian state, this basis changed implicitly to a state-led development where the state led by Nehruvian elite would stand for the nation, and use the rhetoric of collective belonging to the nation to direct developmental plans from above on behalf of the people" (Zachariah, 2011:218).

The gory post partition communal riots came as a challenge for Nehru. When Rajendra Prasad urged Nehru to declare a ban on cow slaughter as a part of celebration of independence, Nehru resisted as it would mean cosying up to the upper caste Hindus (see Zachariah:232). Nehru faced resistance from the Congress-Right but could withstand these forces as he had the blessings

of Gandhi and was much appreciated by the British for his British education. He was also liked by the left for his 'socialist' worldview. He was the 'man' for everyone, from USSR to USA.

India after independence was left with borders and boundaries which were created by the colonial forces as mentioned above. Many states were later also incorporated into the Indian state. This left the ruling government with a population which was till then united for only one purpose i.e. independence. Hence, after independence it was extremely urgent to find some common goals and objectives for the entire nation. And what could be better than development! There were common issues of underdevelopment across the country. For example, health, education, agriculture, infrastructure etc.<sup>252</sup> In the discussion of development, the cause of underdevelopment has always been pinned to population explosion. It helped that there was a continuity in the discourse on population from pre-independence India as discussed in Chapter 2. Nehru promoted development as the route towards national self-sufficiency which could undo the economic imperialism unleashed by the colonial powers for so many hundred years. This also was to defuse the sectarian politics which was gaining ground after partition.

These issues of underdevelopment worked as the adhesive for the country as it helped people connect to the issue of development and also feel responsible for it. This eliminated the possibility of people asking the question of belonging or not belonging to the nation. Such goals were projected as being for the common good. Therefore, the idea of a homogenised nation-state was rooted in the imagination of the people through development communication. We will now discuss how it was executed.

### **The Ideal Indian Family:**

As has been already mentioned earlier, the last few decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a fairly revivalist-nationalist political formation had materialized specially in Bengal. It was led by a group of people comprising of newspaper proprietors, Hindu orthodox urban estate holders of considerable civic importance within Calcutta and pundits as well as modern intellectuals whom they patronized. "They used an explicitly nationalist rhetoric against any form of colonial intervention within the Hindu domestic sphere..." (Sarkar, 1993:1869) as well. The idea of an ideal Indian family can be traced back to those days.

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<sup>252</sup>See Zacharia 2011 and Chatterjee, 2007 for an extensive discussion on this topic

The British enacted many Acts which was seen as an assault to the Indian (Hindu) social values. The Native Marriage Act of 1872, which had radical implications like prohibition of polygamy, divorce legalization, comparative raising of the age of marriage was not received well and witnessed widespread dissatisfaction in the population. Due to the pressure of the mass population, eventually the jurisdiction of the act was limited to the 'Brahmos' who in fact were the initiator of the Act.

The Criminal Law Amendment Act 10 of 1891 revised the Section 375 of the Penal Code of 1860 and raised the minimum age of consent for married and unmarried girls from 10 to 12 years of age. This again created unrest in Bengal where the '*garbhadhan*' ceremony (according to which the girls had to sleep with the husband immediately after attaining puberty), was celebrated immediately after the girl attained puberty. After the Act was implemented, this ceremony came under threat. Because, if a girl attains puberty before 12 years of age, then '*garbhadhan*' could not be performed as marrying a girl below 12 became a criminal act. And that would mean that the sons born to such women would not be regarded pious enough to offer 'pinda' (offering to the forefathers), and thus the ancestors would remain starved. As a result, people came out openly in mass protest in Calcutta.

There is another dimension to these protests. It was not easy for the Hindu patriarchal society to give up the control over the women's sexuality as it was a direct assault on the air tight concept of purity and impurity. The socio-cultural reason of getting the upper caste girl married before she attains puberty is to ensure that she carries an "unpolluted womb" to the marital home. So, consummation of marriage immediately after the first time of bleeding is extremely crucial to ensure complete control over the girls' sexuality. This stems from the concept of caste purity and pollution. The age of consent Bill was therefore the most fiercely fought issue between the colonial government and the upper caste men led by Tilak who formed the spine of the Indian Nationalists in the 1890s. "It subjected the woman's body to the most critical gaze in the public sphere as issues of female sexuality, the medical development of a woman, age of puberty, and her preparedness for sexual intercourse and reproduction were bandied in the press" (Chakravarti, 2018:127). That way it established the control of men over one of the most intimate function of a female body: menstruation.



There were attempts to institutionalise the household management to give it a formal look. This was visible in a massive volume printed on household management during that time where, to quote Sarkar (1993:1870-71):

the household was likened to an enterprise to be administered, an army to be led, a state to be governed---all metaphors, rather poignantly derived from activities from which colonised Bengalis were excluded. Unlike Victorian middle-class situation then, the family was not a refuge after work for the man. It was their real place of work...the new nationalist world view, then, reimagined the family as a contrast to and a critique of alien rule. This was done primarily by contrasting two different versions of subjection---that of the colonised Hindu male in the world outside and of the apparently subordinated Hindu wife at home. The forced surrender and real dispossession of the former was counter posed to the allegedly loving, willed surrender and ultimate self-fulfilment of the latter. It was in the interest of this intended contrast that conjugality was constituted as the centre of gravity, around which the discursive field on the family organised itself. All other relations, even the mother-child one (which would come to take up its place as the pivotal point in the later nationalist discourse) remained subordinated to it up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was the relationship between the husband and wife that mediated and rephrased within revivalist-nationalism, the political theme of domination--- subordination, of subjection, resistance as the lyrical or existential problem of love, of equal but different ways of loving...The household generally, and conjugality specifically, came to mean the last independent space left to the colonised Hindu.

This idea of the Indian family became an exotic and oriental fantasy. The Britishers generally were quite appreciative of the “Hindu joint family system, whose collective aspects supposedly fully submerged and subordinated individual rights and interests, was generally with warm appreciation” (ibid:1871). The Indian joint families have been idolised in many literary texts too. There is a sort of romanticism attached to the Indian (read Hindu) families promoted by the Indian movies as well.

However, for the purpose of development, and that too family planning, the ideal Indian family was projected where the number of children were limited according to the desire of the state. It has been a given belief of the policymakers that deficit of information about family planning, methods and benefits thereto, is a hurdle which has to be by-passed before reaching

equilibrium of supply and demand. This argument conforms to Gary Becker's theory of family as he had explicated in his seminal work *A Treatise on the Family* (1981). Becker looked at two perspectives vis-à-vis family: fertility and altruism. Becker's theory of fertility assumes that people have children so as to contemplate and relax in the thought of their children's happiness. The more parents savour their children's happiness, the more "altruistic" Becker declares them to be.

Becker (1988:4) equating a child with a car says "an additional child lowers the utility per child to parents in the same way as additional car lowers the utility per car" and that a "social security system tends to reduce demand for children" (ibid: 5). He opines that the parents utilize the resources available to them through inheritance and earnings on bringing up their children, on themselves as well as on keeping some away for future usage and that the inter-generational income increases if the total resources bequeathed to each child is more than the capital inherited by each parent. Parents always check and balance the cost of bringing up children with the available resources. This in turn affects the fertility behaviour of people. He views fertility choices within a general consumption frame-work, emphasizing trade-offs between quantity and quality of children. Becker conceives of the quality of a child as its expected wealth as an adult.

He offers a "modified Malthus-neo classical model" which says that "family choices cause long cycles not only in population growth, but also in capital output and other variables if the elasticity of the degree of altruism per child with respect to the number of children declines as family gets larger" (ibid: 7). Becker further says, that, the parents of richer countries have more money to spare on the children as well as to protect themselves from the insecurity of old age. This way Becker uses the economic model of demand and supply to justify the decision on the number of children. He makes family planning decision sound like a decision taken on any other consumer durable. The feminists have critiqued Becker's concept of 'altruism'. It is been argued that the assumption that all family members have uniform interests ignores the inherent conflict and inequalities in households. For example, the decision-making process is completely controlled by the man in a family. His concept is criticised as there are many studies which have adequately illustrated how the family dynamics work and the resources are often not distributed equally and the women and girls inevitably suffer disproportionately from this inequality (Woolley and Marshall, 1994). Moreover, the number of children depends only many socio-cultural reasons like availability of contraception, access to abortion, religious beliefs, boy preference, economic status of the woman etc. Barbara Bergman, another very strong critic of Becker's concept of family

comments, (1996:10) "Becker brings to bear the theoretical apparatus developed in the last hundred years for the analysis of markets.... a major characteristic of this mode of analysis is the paucity of factors taken into considerations, which is a necessity if 'proofs' using diagrammatic and algebraic models of characterization and persuasion are to go through". She (ibid) adds, "Becker concentrates most of his attention on the Victorian ideal of the family... (his) analysis of the family reveals the lack of reality and the inapplicability of this type of analysis". Bergmann dismisses Becker's theory of family as "preposterous" as "Becker's method of thinking about the family leads, as does almost all neoclassical theory, to a conclusion that the institutions depicted are benign, and that government intervention would be useless at best and probably harmful" (ibid).

Thus, this attempt at homogenization of the idea of family like Becker has explicated, wishes away the existence of the structures within society and also outside. The cultural, ethnic, geographical, economic specificity of a community and the power structure acting on it is entirely negated. And family planning communication, as practiced in the India as well as the other Third World countries consolidates the same homogenized idea of family into the entire narrative and thus ascertains the ascendancy of the neoclassical economy and family formation. In case of India, this serves another purpose, i.e. to create a homogenous Indian (read Hindu) family and thus help in creating a uniform idea of the nation-state. Therefore, it becomes natural that the idea of an ideal Indian woman will also undergo similar makeover. This project was initiated back in the nineteenth century itself.

### **The Indian Woman:**

Bengal was the heartland of regressive practices like child marriage and *sati*. Therefore, the Hindu women supposedly had the resilience to accept pain and adhere to harsh customary discipline, hence she was the last vestige of hope for the country which was doomed by the intruders. These feelings were aptly expressed by the eminent Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (naturally a brahmin) when he almost eulogises *sati*: "I can see the funeral pyre burning, the chaste wife sitting at the heart of the blazing flames, clasping the feet of the husband lovingly to her breasts. Slowly the fire spreads, destroying one part of her body and entering another. Her face is joyful...the flames burn higher, life departs and the body is burnt to

ashes...Women of Bengal! You are the true jewels of the country.”<sup>253</sup> This exalted discourse actually feels like a disguised appreciation for the physical desire for a feminine body being consummated by observing the actual burning of it.

It was a dominant understanding that the (Bengali) women’s body is chaste and faithful, conforming to the *shashtras*. She is supposed to be ‘ruled by the scriptures’ and who follows and upholds the customs and rituals, making her the true custodian of culture and tradition. She is no longer weak and dependent on a ‘feeble’ Bengali man. The nationalists visualised her as “‘a repository of power, the kali rampant, a figure of range and strength” (Sarkar, 1993b:1871).

Even though the British abolished *sati* in 1829, yet they moved cautiously on the issue of gender especially after 1857. They mostly never interfered in religious beliefs and practices of the personal domain of both Hindu and Muslim religions. The British upheld the hierarchies especially in inter-caste relations that impinged upon gender. For example, when the rape law was being formulated, their approach towards rape was caste specific. They were convinced that an upper caste woman who was raped would regard the rape as ‘worse than death’ especially if her rapist was a lower caste man. Even a British judge echoed the same sentiment when he said:

On the one hand, take the case of a high caste female, who would sacrifice her life to her honour, contaminated by the embrace of a man of low caste, say a Chandala or a Pariah. On the other...a woman without character, or any pretensions of purity, who is wont to be of easy access. In the latter, if a woman from any motive refuses to comply with the solicitation of a man, and is forced by him, the offender ought to be punished, but surely the injury is infinitely less than...in the former (Dhagamwar, 1992:115).

As Dhagamwar(ibid:118) writes,

the distinction implied here made a difference between women of the upper castes and women of the low castes [the latter] who, because of their low social and economic status, were likely to find it impossible to escape assaults on them by men of the more powerful castes; the law protected one and abandoned the other. Caste here was being regarded almost as a natural factor in understanding notions of chastity and therefore differences, real or imaginary, in sexual practices which, in turn, would shape the nature of the

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<sup>253</sup>*StreelokerRoop* in KamalakanterDaptor by Bankim Chandra Chattapadhyay<https://bdebooks.com/books/pdf-book-by-bankim-chandra-chattapadhyay/> retrieved on 14/05/2020

punishment ordered. Manu's differential punishments---less for the brahmanas and more for the sudras---were still informing legal practices in matters of sexuality!

In the case of widow remarriage many states imposed the penalty of losing the right to the first husband's property on remarriage as per the 1856 Widow Remarriage Act. Few states did not apply it invoking customary rules. The court was also required to adjudicate on the issues of inter-cast marriages. Thus, in India even before independence, family and the woman became the inner domain of the national discourse. We have discussed above, how the European criticism of Indian tradition as barbaric and worth restructuring was mostly focused on traditions and norms related to religious beliefs and practices associated with the treatment of women, *sati*, child marriage, widow remarriage etc. And the reformist work of Brahma Samaj with the help of the colonial power was also related mainly to such issues. With the rise of the revivalist forces like the Arya Samaj, there was visible resistance to this process of 'demonising' the 'Indian tradition'. They took the position of not allowing the colonial force to legislate the reform of the traditional Indian society. They rather sought intervention from the people of the nation on such matters without the colonial powers having any say on these issues.

As a result, of the revivalist as well as the Hindu nationalist forces, a new form of patriarchy came into practice. In the changed circumstance of the family, and the woman, the attempt was to redefine both, as non-traditionalist and non-Western. The new Indian woman will have to emerge as one who is steeped in the nationalist culture and not be frivolous like the Western woman. Similar expectation from the family too: progressive but not Western (Chatterjee, 1993).

Gupta (2009:13) talks about the *Suddhi* and *Sangathan* project promoted by the Arya Samaj which resulted in unprecedented communal flaring ups in UP in the 1920s. This led to the Hindu women's body becoming "a marker to sharpen communal boundaries in ways more aggressive than before". The atmosphere was rife with rumours and propaganda. The print media owned by the Hindus went overboard to sustain the propaganda and create a panic situation. This was led by the Arya Samajists as expected. Stories of rape, abduction, conversion, elopements etc. were fed to the people regularly to create the atmosphere of paranoia. Though the cases were never substantiated properly but it was successful in painting the picture of victimization of the Hindu community.

Gupta (1998, 2006, 2009) also discusses how number of ‘tracts’ which appeared during that time discussed about the rape, conversion, abduction etc of the Hindu women. The most intriguing of all the discourses were the ones related to the widow. There was a palpable tension regarding the virility of the Hindu widow who were prohibited from all social activities and were almost locked up inside the homes. Accepting that the widows were victims of the social norms, there was a parallel discourse regarding the widows being potential protestors because of that. The widows were sending letters to a magazine called the *Chand* in the 1920s narrating their dismal situation. *Chand* even came out with a special issue covering the conditions of the widows. Many letters poured in where widows narrated their pitiable condition (Orsini, 1999:150-154). This event unleashed a volley of texts written by men. One such text was the *Vidhwa Karyalaya* series. In the second part of the series there is a poem written by a male narrating, not surprisingly, how a Hindu widow feels and why she elopes with a Muslim man (Gupta,2006:187):

*Jis din than jayegi man me kahi nikal main jaoongi*  
*Kisi yavan ka haath pakarkar, usko me apnaungi*  
*Paida karke bacche ushse, uski shakti barhaungi*  
*Gauoko katwangi nit, mandir main torwaunugi*  
*Devsthanoko mitwakar, masjid main banwaungi*  
*Dharm-granth jalwa dunggi main, Chotiyonko katwanugi*  
 (The day I determine in my mind I will leave from hence  
 I will hold the hand of a Muslim man and become his  
 I will produce his children and increase his potency  
 I will have the cows slaughtered and temples destroyed  
 I will have temples destroyed and mosques erected in its place  
 I will have the holy scriptures burnt and the *choti*<sup>254</sup> cut)

These sorts of discourse were important to establish two things: firstly, that the women are vulnerable and need protection and secondly, painting men as the saviour of the vulnerable women. It became the legitimate responsibility of the men to restore the societal and familial honour. Gupta calls this attempt to safeguard the Hindu women at any cost a “self-image of a community at war” (Gupta, 2009:14)

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<sup>254</sup>A small weft of hair kept longer than the rest by the brahman men on the top back of their head

There were raging discussions and debates regarding the vulnerability of the Hindu widows. Instances of real elopement of the Hindu widows with Muslim men challenged the concept of a Hindu family. Charu Gupta (2004:4304) analyses articles and poems published during that time to explain how the Hindu communal forces repeatedly asserted that the Hindus were becoming minorities and blaming it on to the high potency of the Muslim males and the higher fertility of the Muslim females. The issue of decreasing numbers of Hindus was viewed together with the conversion of Hindu widows and thus widow remarriage derived traction from the staunch Hindu nationalists as well. As she is the one responsible for the upholding of Hindu customs and tradition, it is also her pious responsibility to be the one to take the leadership in the process of Hindu identity formation. Chakravarti (2018:79) adds another dimension to it when she says, the secondary marriage of the widow should be seen from the perspective of the woman becoming the potential labour for agricultural and other activities for many castes. Discussion of her sexuality is just a façade, as both her productive and reproductive labour important for them. “While maintaining land structures intact in the patrilineal household, levirate marriage among the Jats and other servicing castes ensured the full reproductive potential of a woman to provide for the maximal replenishing of the labouring and servicing castes.”

On the other tangent was a peculiar norm practiced in Bengal. Karlekar<sup>255</sup> narrates how ‘wholesale polygamy’ was prevalent amongst the *Kulin* (of aristocratic or noble descent) Brahmins in Bengal in the nineteenth century. A *Kulin* man used to take wives in various places in exchange for money and property. This tradition was mostly to ensure that the unmarried daughters of brahman families are given the tag of a married woman, whereas she stayed at her maternal home even after marriage, her much married husband visits her once or twice or may be more in the year depending on his financial requirements. This way her sexuality was controlled and her social status was ensured as a ‘married woman’. Bibhutibhusan in his seminal work *Pather Panchali* talks about this tradition too. It has been discussed by many scholars that law of inheritance was more liberal in Bengal, and has been argued that rituals like *sati* has a strong link to such laws. However, the wives of the Kulin Brahmins who never left the maternal homes had no rights over any property, neither paternal nor marital.

Though the Nayars and Nambudiris of Kerala had a similar societal norm of the daughter staying at her maternal home, however it was not forced, rather it was a socially accepted system.

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<sup>255</sup><https://www.cwds.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ReflectionsonKulinPolygamy.pdf> retrieved on 11/03/2020

Amongst the Nambudiris, who are at the pinnacle of the caste hierarchy, the eldest among the sons were only allowed to marry a Nambudiri woman and carry forward the family lineage. The rest of the sons were allowed to indulge in sexual liaisons with Nayar (lower in caste status than the Nambudiris) women. The children born out of such unions were the sole responsibility of the mother (Kurien, 1994:393). According to K. Saradmoni (1999) and Manu Pillai (2016) this gave the women a sense of identity and they also enjoyed the comfort of staying at their own paternal homes as it was not frowned upon. However, Jeffrey (2004-5:648) does not view this system as empowering as it is made out to be, as the “controllers and decision makers were men” as the society was not matriarchal. Similar practice is still prevalent amongst the Khasis of Meghalaya. However, whatever empowerment these women had, as referred to by K. Saradmoni, underwent drastic change due to two reasons. Victorian notion of morality was introduced to the society with coming of Christianity. As mentioned above there was concerted efforts of the colonial power to civilize the Indians. In that process, the Nayar women were termed as concubines (Pillai, 2016) and the children born out of such unions were labelled as bastards (K. Saradmoni,1999). The second reason was the introduction of the colonial laws from 1830s onwards, made it important to define families according to those laws so as not to lose the land rights (Jeffrey, 2004-5: 650).

My father told me about a very different social system which was prevalent even till the early twenty-first century amongst the brahmins of Assam. My grandmother was bought by the groom’s family by paying twenty rupees for every kilogram of her weight. That was the time when a rupee would buy one quintal of rice. If a young brahmin widow gets pregnant by any male member of the family, she was given away to a Muslim male and never allowed to come back to the family. The system was called *Boiri* (*Boiri* in Assamese means the enemy). In return the Muslim man was given a piece of land to cultivate. Therefore, in the lower Assam tract almost every Hindu village has a Muslim village adjacent to it.<sup>256</sup>

The binary of the fallen woman and the *bhadramahila* (gentlewoman) was attested by the colonial as well as the nationalist forces. But the *bhadramahila* need to always be the lesser one when compared to the *bhadralok* (gentleman). Almost as if taking a leaf out of Manusmriti, in 1856, a Young Bengal radical said, that the education of the females need not be like that of the males as her primary responsibility is towards her home, husband and children. She needs to be

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<sup>256</sup>Interview with Prof. Dwijendra Narayan Goswami Retired Professor of Cotton College (now university) on various days in November 2019



“refined, reorganised, recast, regenerated” and should strictly adhere to the responsibilities of a respectable home” (Banerjee, 1990: 162-4).

However, by the time of independence, most of the reformists policies did not bear the fruits that were expected. But the process of identity formation which regarded the Hindu woman as the ideal woman remained dominant in the nationalist discourse. Family planning communication, which became a pet project under developmentalist nationalism, imbibed most of these Hindu narratives.

When we analyse the way the Indian customs and traditions were called regressive and barbarous it is clear that the entire body of sacred norms and customary practices were called so. On the other hand, when the colonised people rationalise such behaviour within the framework of religious beliefs, they end up justifying them. By taking a high moral ground on such issues the colonial power created the picture of oppressed women and regressive culture, which they regarded as worthy of their intervention.

This question of the status of women was not really a genuine concern as stated above, about their social condition, rather it was about the “political encounter between a colonial state and the supposed ‘tradition’ of a conquered people. It was colonialist discourse that, by assuming the hegemony of Brahmanical religious texts and the complete submission of all Hindus to the dictates of those texts, defined the tradition that was to be criticised and reformed. Indian nationalism, in demarcating a political position opposed to colonial rule, took up the women’s question as a problem already constituted for it, namely as a problem of Indian tradition” (Chatterjee, 1993:119).

This ‘new woman’ stood out from the ‘common woman’. She was refined, sophisticated, morally very strong, sexually chaste, i.e. exactly opposite to what a common woman is. And that was supposed to be achieved by education. As education would bring all the bourgeoisie virtues to the woman, which was necessary for her to run an ‘ideal Indian family’, disciplined, clean, thrifty, with a personal sense of responsibility, skilled in accounting, aware about hygiene. This ‘spirituality’ in her makes her eligible for many forms of independence, right to access education, travel alone, even employment, but “signs of her femininity were now clearly marked---in her dress, her eating habits, her social demeanour, her religiosity”. This new woman by dint of her ‘religiosity’, ‘spirituality’, ‘education’ becomes responsible to carry forward the ideals of the

nation building, which include, maintaining the social and religious norms, keeping the family together, teaching the children the 'family' values, strictly observing all the moral and ethical norms and thus become the torch bearer of the society. This included limiting the number of children and helping in taking forward the national population control agenda. Thus, in the name of emancipation she is bound to an entire new form of subordination, which is socially sanctioned like the older norms were sanction: by the males (ibid:130).

Family planning communication had also been instrumental in taking forward this idea of an "Indian Family" as well as an "Indian Woman" which was not surprisingly a more Hindu family and Hindu woman than of any other religion. This was based on the idea of Indian womanhood: The woman who has to be distinguished both from the materialistic un-godly Western woman and the superstitious sexually promiscuous common Indian woman (read Muslim woman). As Rao (2004: 21) comments, "This modern woman was to be a good woman, a chaste wife, a good mother, enlightened yet spiritual, who would participate in nation building by harnessing children as resources." In fact, the entire concept of modernity in Indian context was an Indianised version. The communication material had a more docile woman who conforms to the concept of a traditional Indian woman. As Chatterjee and Riley (2001: 815) argue, "the message is that fertility control need not be associated with Westernisation and immodesty but is consistent with tradition." So, by adapting family planning methods the Indian (read Hindu) woman was contributing to the process of nation building. Thus, sanctioned!

### **Gendering the Nation:**

Gender and communal politics witnessed a very heady copulation in the process of the formation of the majoritarian Indian identity. It is interesting to note that the metaphors determining the idea of a nation across the world is mostly female. In case of India those are: *Bharat Mata* (Mother India), *Matribhumi* (Mother land), *Matribhasha* (Mother tongue) and added to it is the Hindu symbol as opposed to Muslims is the *Gaumata* (mother cow). The potent symbol of the motherland as *Bharat Mata*, identified India as essentially a Hindu nation, thus politicising the spiritual, traditional and aesthetic aspect of the nation.

Charu Gupta (2001) talks about the *Bharat Mata* temple in Varanasi, which was established by Shiv Prasad Gupt, a hardcore Hindu nationalist and a wealthy person. Though it was a temple it did not have any idol. Instead it has a huge relief map of undivided India. As Anderson (2006) said,

maps helped the colonial administration replicate and reproduce the idea of a geographical coherence. For the Hindu nationalists it helped to create a sense of sanctity for the country by hybridising science and modernity with tradition, evoking emotions. The Bharat Mata temple affirms Anderson's view and goes beyond. The map here denotes the idea of a geographical territory called India, which is Hindu and the 'mother' to the citizenry. The male children of the 'mother' pay their obeisance and promise to uphold the integrity of the nation, her territory and her religion, drawing the analogy with the women who need the protection of the males of the society.

Though Gandhi, in his speech while inaugurating the temple talked about its secular characteristic, but the very fact that it was a 'temple' and that *Vandemataram* ('praise thee mother' in Sanskrit) was inscribed on the doorway to the temple blatantly gave away its Hindu majoritarian nature. Gupta (ibid:4293) notes, "The Bharat Mata temple can thus be seen as a mark of the basic confusion and conflation between Hindu/Indian/ nation...The symbol of Bharat Mata, and that too enclosed in a temple, expressed Hindu nationalism, alienating the Muslims further" as Islam is a religion which is against idol worshipping.

Similar tendency can be seen as regards to language as well. Language was termed as the 'mother tongue' or '*Matri Bhasha*' and (the Hindi language) as the daughter/granddaughter of Sanskrit was the "hope and soul of India" (ibid). The clamour for that tag of a daughter is still visible in other Indian languages too, each one trying to prove its ancientness as well as closeness to Sanskrit.

Christopher King (1994:137) noted that the Hindi writers of the colonial time contrast "the virtue and morality of *Nagari* or Hindi with the vice and immorality of Urdu... (according to them) Urdu behaves like a woman of loose morals or a prostitute". A Hindi writer and avowed proponent of Hindi interestingly likens the two issues, cow slaughter and Hindi (cited in King, 1994):

Let Hindi enter office, cow killing cease to be

Then India like sun and moon will shine most splendidly

King (1994:139) notes that "this part of the poem gives us a revealing glimpse of the process of multi-symbol congruence: the author identifies Hindi, the cow and patriotism with the master symbol of Hinduism". Therefore, Gupta (2001:4293) says, the dominant view was that, "Urdu was so bad and erotic that its knowledge had to be denied to respectable Hindu women...Women were seen as having no practical use for Urdu as they were not seeking

employment. Urdu was not only a prostitute, but also not worth studying for women. Later, with assertion that Urdu was truly Islamic, its appropriateness for Hindu women was further reduced.”

The cow symbolised the necessity of creating a strong nation with her products termed as necessary ingredients to build strength in people. As the Hindu men being vegetarian are weaker than the non-vegetarian Muslims, they need milk and ghee to build a strong physique, a symbol of male virility. In Assam, for example, milk and milk products were introduced by the Brahmins in the society. Even today there is no ethnic dish comprising of milk. This can be understood by looking at the cuisines of the region. Except curd which is only had during festivities like a novelty no original Assamese cuisine talks about milk products. The local cows of Assam breeds during August-September which comes under the Bhadra month in the Assamese calendar. Milk become scarce during that time. So, if by any chance any cow is milching during those months it was a tradition to offer that milk to the Brahmins. It was believed that the milk of that time is meant for them. It does not happen now but till the early twentieth century this was in practice. It is mentionable here that the Brahmins of Assam are non-vegetarian by culture, therefore, milk products are promoted as an essential ingredient to develop the brain.<sup>257</sup>

Therefore, *Gaumata* became an important symbol, which was invoked to also cite economic argument that can ensure a nation consisting of physically and intellectually (milk is supposed to help in brain development as mentioned above) strong Hindu population which was obviously male. By calling it a mother, again the modern and traditional was blended to adhere to the nationalist agenda of that time. Thus, with the help of the maternal symbols of language, nation, cow etc. the symbolic role of women is accentuated to conform to the actual role of women in nation building. However, it is important to remember that the issue of property rights, which is patrilineal, marks the departure of the women’s status in the society. She is to be idealised and a lot of ritualistic activities are observed around her fertility, for example, puberty, marriage, child birth etc. But all these are again observed for her to give birth to a male child. As Manu puts it: “To be mothers were women created, and to be fathers, men; religious rites, therefore, are ordained in the Veda to be performed (by the husband) together with the wife” [IX:96].<sup>258</sup> So, there is a clear distinction of her lofty idealization and her property rights. Even now when the Hindu Succession Act 2005, has given the female children equal right over the paternal property, the social

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<sup>257</sup> Interview with Prof. Dwijendra Narayan Goswami, retired Professor, Cotton College (now university) on various days of November 2019

<sup>258</sup> [https://ia801301.us.archive.org/23/items/ManuSmriti\\_201601/Manu-Smriti.pdf](https://ia801301.us.archive.org/23/items/ManuSmriti_201601/Manu-Smriti.pdf) retrieved on 19/04/2020

conditioning is such that, rarely a girl claims her rights over it, as once married she is a *parayadhan* (someone else's property).

Thus, the purity of family lineage rests on the purity of the woman. Hence, she apparently enjoys a special status in the family. Women were regarded as the symbol of family honour, be it as a daughter in her paternal abode or as a wife and a mother in her marital residence. "By constantly evoking the twin notions of honour and dishonour, families either condition or shame women into appropriate and inappropriate behaviour" (Chen 2000:22-23).

This gendered outlook on nationalism was very aptly reflected in the family planning communication process. Most of the technology promoted by family planning communication has the woman as the receiver thus the active participant. The utter confusion of forcing the woman to take the decision was contrary to what was being practised in reality. It has been proved by research that in the matter of family size and other related issues, women have no voice, it is mostly the men who decide. As Haq (2007: 109) comments: "The segregated role structure develops such a wide gap between the worlds of men and women that there is little or no communication between the husband and wife, particularly on matters related to sex. There has to be a full compliance on the wife's part in every activity of the household... He views reproduction as his prerogative alone. It is something that he takes for granted". There is a clear demarcation between the way traditions, customs etc are upheld by the male and the female. The males uphold them by enforcing them and the female uphold them by practicing them. This role of both the men and the women is far more visible in case of reproduction and marriage Chakravati (2018).

### **Family Planning and Religion:**

The population issue which had been at the top most agenda for the newly independent country, was also the fallout of the dominant narrative of nationalism. As mentioned earlier the central idea regarding India was that it was the land of the Hindus. Looking at every problem inflicting the society through anti-Muslim prism became a tradition which had its beginning during the colonial time, as has been discussed extensively in this thesis by now. Therefore, the issue of population growth also could not escape the same prismatic outlook. The narrative that has been dominant regarding population growth is that the Hindu population is dwindling as opposed to high fertility rate of the Muslims.

### **Hindu Nationalism and Saffron demography:**

The Hindu right believed that “Nationalism is not a mere political programme. Nationalism is a religion that has come from god” (Aurobindo, cited in Thapar,1975:12). The idea of a Hindu nation is generally traced to the 1909 book written by U.N. Mukherjee, entitled *Hindu a Dying Race* (Rao, 2010 and Datta, 1993). This book inspired Swami Shradhanand to raise the issue of Hindu Rashtra (Nation) in a pamphlet published in 1924, to advocate ‘as a first step towards the organisation of the Hindus, the building of one Hindu Rashtra Mandir in every city and important town in India...each temple was to be devoted to the worship of the three mothers, ‘Gau Mata’ (Mother Cow), ‘Saraswati Mata’ (Goddess of learning) and ‘Bhumi Mata’ (Mother Earth) (Pandey, 1991:2998). However, it is generally believed that Savarkar’s book *Hindutva* published in 1923 was instrumental in establishing Hindu nationalism as a political ideology. This was the first political treatise which proposed that India is meant only for the Hindus and that Bharatiya (Indian) and Hindu are synonymous. Similarly, Bharatendu Harichandra who is regarded as the father of Hindi Literature, also declared that “whoever live in Hindustan is a Hindu” (Pandey, 1991:2999). The Hindu nationalist argument was that the Hindu society became corrupt and decadent due to the long rule of the Muslims. This notion gave birth to the religious nationalism which, in fact, verged on towards communalism in due course and took a very nasty turn post-independence (Habib, 2017).

The approach of the Hindu nationalist to population growth was also coloured saffron. (Rao: 2006<sup>259</sup> and 2010, Jeffrey and Jeffrey, 2005). As Rao (2010:28) says “Saffron demography...is based on assumptions that---there exists a uniform and homogenous Muslim community and equally undifferentiated Hindu community in India”. The insecurity regarding Muslim population growth according to Rao (ibid) was also used to unify the “hugely diverse and often antagonistic castes into one community”. And it had worked. When it comes to population discourse the slogan that finds resonance with the Hindus is: *Hum Do Hamare Do, Woh Paanch Aur Unke Paschees* (We two, our two, they are two and theirs twenty-five).

Sarkar (1999:2161) says that the Hindu right loves to reiterate that Hindus are in minority as in fact they are in the minority when observed from the perspective of the upper caste, middle class cadre base, “which is acutely aware of its own miniscule size and disproportionate power within the Hindu community”. This tendency was boosted by the Census figures. It did not help

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<sup>259</sup><https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/Saffron-Demography/articleshow/1496543.cms> retrieved on 06/07/2020

that H.H. Risley, the Home secretary to the Government of India wrote in the early 1900: “Can the figures of the last census be regarded in any sense the forerunner of an Islamic or Christian revival which will threaten the citadel of Hinduism or will Hindus hold its own in the future as it has done through the long ages of past” (Cited in Lajpat Rai, 1966).

The Hindu Muslim fertility difference has been a raging issue of discussion in the population growth debate in the country since forever. Most often than not the Muslims are hauled up for their high fertility rates as well as polygamous social norms. Jefferey and Jefferey (2000) calls this over emphasis on the high population growth of the Muslims a part of the long-standing design of the Hindu right. They point out that the idea of family planning became intricately tied to the method of sterilisation and to coercion because of the experience of the Muslim community during the emergency. The continuous marginalization and pushing the Muslims to the periphery as minority also has some effect on their resistance to the method. They also point out the lack of access to health care, thereby lack of access to family planning services for the Muslims. According to them, the health care facilities were, “less likely to be sighted in Muslim or schedule caste villages or in Muslim or schedule caste mohallas” (Jeffery and Jeffery, 1998) Therefore, the authors reiterate that, “the attempts to understand the ‘cultural’ aspects of fertility change must be located in specific social, political and economic context and must take into account the meanings and implications of family limitation on a case-to-case basis. Any attempt at global explanations using ‘religion’ (or any other variable) as a blanket catch-all is inevitably misleading” (2000:3258).

P.H. Reddy (2003:3509) using the data sets generated by three surveys conducted by ORG in 1970, 1980 and 1988 as well as the NHFS-I (92-93) and NHFS-II (98-99), and came to the conclusion that, Muslim fertility is indeed high and they resist family planning methods and the Muslims need to be educated to adopt family planning methods and reduce their fertility in theirs as well as the nation’s interest. Refuting Reddy’s logic, Krishnaji and James (2005) argue that Reddy completely ignores the socio-economic and geographical differentials of fertility behaviour and targets only the Muslims on the basis of data which also ignores the same. Therefore, according to them, the fertility rate has no religious variation rather it has regional variations.

Bhat and Zavier’s (2004) analysed the NSS data of the 43<sup>rd</sup> round (1987-88) and 50<sup>th</sup> round (1993-94) shows that as far as rural poverty is concerned there is not much difference in the poverty ratios between the Muslims and Hindus, whereas in the urban population poverty is much more prevalent amongst the Muslims. According to the authors this poverty is due to the higher

fertility rate of the Muslims. As far as inequalities within the communities are concerned it is higher among Hindus both in rural and urban India. Similarly, another study conducted by Pal et al (1986) based on the 28<sup>th</sup> round of NSSO (1973-74) found that Muslims are poorer than the Hindus in all the states except Assam and in the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir.

The National Council of Applied Economic research (Shariff 2001) surveyed 33,230 households of 16 states between January and March 1994 and came out with the data which proposed that the rural poverty is marginally higher amongst the Muslims than the Hindus and it was lowest amongst the Christians.

Srinivasan and Mohanty's (2004) study which analysed the NSS data of the 43<sup>rd</sup> round (1987-88) looked at the state level deprivation in the groups classified as Hindus, Muslims and others, shows that the Muslims in rural areas had slightly higher margin of deprivation as compared to that of the Hindus but in case of the Urban population it is the opposite.

John and Mutatkar (2005) on the other hand computed the estimates separately from rural and urban areas in 17 states covering 97 per cent of the country's population and based their study on the unit level consumer expenditure data elicited from 55<sup>th</sup> round of NSSO (1999-2000). The authors found that Hindus are mostly a rural community in almost all states under consideration. They concluded that in addition to variation in the rate of poverty based on castes, "there are striking variations in the level of poverty among different religious groups both within and across states in India and that the religious diversity in India also has an economic dimension" (1343).

Iyer and Borooah (EPW, 2005:426) who analysed the impact of education on fertility, say, "a husband being literate served to raise the sex-ratio ---both at birth and currently living children--but that the effect of husband's literacy was stronger for Muslims and Dalits than it was for Hindus". However, if the husband is illiterate, son-preference is higher, resulting in the increase in the number of children in the family. Interestingly they observe that, "...in the specific case of India, higher Muslim fertility may well be the consequence of lower daughter aversion in the community, reflected both in an analysis of infant deaths and the sex ration. Moreover, many of the observed effects are mediated by economic characteristics such as literacy" (ibid:429).

As seen in the various studies above, the fertility difference is not religious rather it is dependent on other social variables like class and caste. In spite of the ground level reality, the family planning communication material never really took care of the nuanced variation. The BCC



strategy<sup>260</sup> developed for Uttar Pradesh for NRHM is a point of example. Under the heading “BCC innovation” the newlywed couples were given a *Subh Vivah* (Happy Wedding) kit which would consist of a packet of *Bindi* (the traditional red dot that a married Hindu woman wears on their forehead) among many other things. It is expected that the Muslim women will not mind that item in their *Subh Vivah* kit, even if they do not use it.

It is also quite ironical that, the communication material almost absolutely neglected the social nuances of the Muslim community, whereas, the blame of overpopulating the country rested with the Muslims. On the other hand, as discussed in Chapter 2, the most draconian coercive family planning methods were implemented on Muslims.

### **Caste discourse and family planning:**

The narrative around caste in India is mostly that of discrimination. As it is not under the purview of this thesis to analyse the intellectual discourse on caste, only a few relevant debates will be dealt with. There are extensive research-based writings available on caste. One view tries to establish that caste became institutionalised after the British made efforts to compartmentalise the Indians from the perspective of religion and caste. Whereas another view is that, caste is an invention of the British, who forced the colonial population to be identified in one or the other caste, just for the convenience of administration. Supporting this view Dirks (2003:5) argues that:

[C]aste (as we know it today) is a modern phenomenon, that is, specifically, the product of a historical encounter between Indian and the Western colonial rule...It was under the British that ‘caste’ became a single term capable of expressing, organizing, and above all ‘systemizing’ India’s diverse forms of social identity, community and organisation...In short, colonialism made caste what it is today.

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This argument is well refuted by none other than Jotiba Phule, D.D. Kosambi and above all by Dr B.R. Ambedkar. Phule regarded Hinduism as a pure manifestation of Brahmanism. Therefore, his issue with Hinduism permeated across the religious texts as well all the Hindu belief system. According to him, varna and jati were not different; the Brahmans use varna to dominate the caste pyramid. “The brahmans divided the shudras into various castes, punished or rewarded them according to their loyalty and established their control over them...And now enjoying themselves at their cost” (Deshpande, 2002:45). According to him, caste system helped the Brahmans to control both the means of production as well as means of intellectual knowledge generation. Periyar’s view regarding the caste system was rather social than economic. He believed that the caste system was mostly the dichotomous relationship between the Brahman and the non-Brahman. Ambedkar, on the other hand, refutes the original defence of the caste system of being a division of labour and says that it is more of ‘*division of labourers*’ (Rodrigues,2002:263, emphasis original). According to him, the caste system in fact “appoints tasks to individuals in advance, selected not on the basis of trained original capacities, but on the social status of the parents” (ibid:263). Therefore, he is of the opinion that, “as an economic organisation, caste is, therefore, a harmful institution, in as much as it involves the subordination of man’s natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies of social rules” (ibid:267).

As discussed, caste and caste-based social stratification is the basic characteristic of the Indian society. It was always believed that access to education would change the caste structure in the long run. However, in reality what we observe is that, expansion of education has not ensured any far-reaching transformation in the caste structure; however, there are some changes in the patterns of relationship among various classes. There are many studies by sociologists and anthropologists which have discussed the general patterns of behaviour of people of different caste groups and the normative basis of those patterns. However, those studies have not analysed how different caste groups have different demographic behaviour and not even the influence of caste on the nature and the size of the caste composition of population. There are some surveys and also macro level studies, which analyses the relationship in a broader way, but the studies do not show any universal pattern. The studies conducted by Dandekar 1959, Agarwala 1960, Wyon and Gordon 1971 interestingly found no fertility variations by caste. However, it is important to note that these studies did not consider the inherent caste variations. Rather all the caste categories were considered as one homogenised variable.

On the other hand, the studies such as Davis 1951, UN Report 1961, Driver 1963, Desai 1969, Saksena 1973, and Mandelbaum 1974, observed that variation in fertility is related to the factor of caste. That the caste factor per se contributes to fertility differences. The findings of Delhi Fertility Survey (Desai 1969) and the Lucknow Fertility Survey (Saksena 1973) conform that fertility varies by caste. For example, the mean live births among upper, middle and lower caste is 3.8, 3.9, and 4.0 respectively. This means that the people from the upper castes tend to have lower fertility, a smaller family size, and greater proportion of contraceptive users than those belonging to the lower castes. This pattern has been observed in several other studies, particularly the study conducted by Mahadevan (1979) in Madurai district of Tamilnadu. This study found a clear fertility variation by specific castes. It found that the most important factor that regulates inter-caste and intra-caste variation in fertility is the duration of marriage. There are certain caste related norm, customs and practices that act through these variables to affect the duration of the marriage, causing fertility variation. Among the caste Hindus, many complex and diverse socio-cultural rituals enhance the age of fertility among them. Contrary to this in other caste groups, particularly the Dalits, the “weak socio-cultural rituals and practices shorten the age at marriage and enhance the duration of marriage and keep their fertility levels higher”. This study shows that the median age at marriage in the upper castes is 18 years, in the intermediate caste it is 17 years, and in the lower castes it is 16 years.

The study further illustrates that the lower and intermediate castes tend to marry their women at an early age after puberty as compared with the upper castes. Such variations by caste are a historical fact in Indian society, which is a part of the caste culture. The studies say that, among the upper castes, the most important cultural norms affecting the age at marriage are the ritual of matching the horoscope, difficulty in forging marital alliance within the caste according to the social status and costly and complex rituals of marriage. The study also says that, other values like taboo regarding sexual mores, *brahmacharya* (celibacy), social status related to marital alliance and other such societal control delay the age of marriage in the upper class. Whereas the other lower castes do not practice all these customs and traditions.

There are many caste-based customs regarding divorce, widowhood and separation, which also determines reproductive behaviour in the population. The question of widow remarriage is very much related with the traditional function of caste, which determines the pattern of behaviour among different caste groups (Kapadia, 1972). “The central norms to affect the function are the

purity-pollution, strict endogamy, and restricted and rigid marital rights of women. Such norms are strictly adhered to by certain caste groups” (Haq, 2007:103).

Mortality also has a caste characteristic. It is usually observed that mortality is higher in the lower castes than in the upper castes. The Urban Fertility Survey of Lucknow (Saksena 1973:23) reveals that infant and child mortality rates vary inversely with caste status within the Hindu community, where there is a high survival rate of children in the upper caste than the intermediate and lower caste categories. Although there are studies (Sandhya, 1991:80) which show that the influence of caste becomes least significant when the SES (Socio Economic Status) is controlled, the pattern of the relationship remains negative between mortality and the caste status. This is also supported by the NFHS (National Family Health Survey) data of 1992-93 as well 1998-99, which show that the proportion of underweight children below four years of age is much above the average level among the scheduled castes, whose socio-economic status is much lower than the normal standard of the non-scheduled caste population. Among the scheduled castes, the rate of all indicators of mortality are comparatively much higher including, that of infant mortality rate.

### **Intersectionality of caste and gender**

It is mentionable, that, in most of the religious texts of Hindu religion including the *Manusmriti* (a Brahmanical text defining the roles and responsibilities of caste and gender), women and shudras (lower caste) are treated identically. The restrictive rules are almost similar, in the case of right to religion as well as education etc. Historians have also debated that the caste system not only determines the social division of labour but its gender division as well. For instance, women are allowed to engage in watering, transplanting, weeding in agriculture activities, but are not allowed to plough. The critics opine that endogamy is another social system through which labour and sexuality of women is controlled which depends on the concept of ‘purity’ and ‘pollution’ and thus segregate groups and regulate the mobility of women. Thus, *anuloma* marriage (upper caste men marrying women of lower caste) are allowed, but *pratiloma* marriage (the reverse of *anuloma*) are not (Deshpande, 2011:107).

There is an obvious overlap between caste and gender which is quite relevant to this thesis. As Liddle and Joshi (1986:50), say, “the subordination of women was crucial to the development of caste hierarchy, the women being subject to increasing constraints, the higher the caste in the hierarchy”. The caste-religion intersection is evidently more stringent among the upper castes, as

they view themselves as custodians of the religious tradition, which they use to establish their hierarchy in the caste order. On the other hand, the Dalit castes are comparatively more democratic for women.

However, M.N. Srinivas (2003:457) argues that “the subsistence economy of rural India, dependent on the Jati-based division of labour, is the ‘essence of caste’. As this is rapidly breaking down, it will ‘augur the end of a social order which has continued for 2000 years or more’”. He is convinced that “production will become free from Jati-based division of labour; economic relations will become autonomous, and grain payments will be replaced by cash. Indian rural society will move or is moving from status to contract.” That does not seem to have happened yet.

Though the caste system has undergone a lot of changes, yet, it is far from becoming less pervasive. In almost all spheres of life, its strong presence can easily be noticed. The study conducted by Shah et al. (2006:15) found that untouchability still exists in rural India and has “survived by adapting to new socio-economic realities and taking on new and insidious forms”. They refer to the notorious *Khap Panchayats* and their role in maintaining endogamy. Most of the sociologists who studied caste (Beteille, Gupta, Shah et al) are unanimous in stating that caste difference does strongly determine access to economic and social benefits for the population.

Gandotra et al. (1998:17) were of the opinion that “fertility differentials by caste/tribe tend to be considerably smaller, than fertility differentials by residence, education or religion. In the country as a whole, the TFR (Total Fertility Rate) is 3.9 among SC (scheduled caste) women, 3.6 among ST (scheduled tribe) women and 3.3 among non-SC/ST women. Although SC women have higher fertility than ST women in the country as a whole, this is not true for all states. The differential is reversed in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Variations among states in differential fertility by caste/tribe are difficult to interpret partly because the list of SC and ST varies from state to state”. A caste which is in the SC list in one state might not be SC in another state. It is similar in the case of the STs too. Moreover, within the SC and ST categories, the relative proportions of particular castes and tribes vary from state to state. In some states, there are no STs at all.

We can summarise from the discussion above, that, mostly the fertility differentials vis-à-vis caste can also be explained through socio-economic parameters. In India the normal trend is lower the caste, lower is the class.

Chakravarti (2018:6-7) rightly points out that most of the sociological analysis of caste has been attempted by men and thus they often “masks rather than explains the structure of the caste system, namely, on its ritualistic aspects to the exclusion of material conditions and questions of power. This is a consequence of focussing on the Brahmanical texts. It completely evades the views of Dalit writers who have provided a counter view on the caste system by focusing on the experiential dimensions of caste-based oppression...Scholars like Louis Dumont and Michael Moffat dominated the world of sociological scholarship rather than Joan Mencher or Gerald Berreman, precisely because they present the caste system as a system of consensual values- a set of values accepted by both the dominant and the dominated.”

As Chakravarti says (ibid:7) Ambedkar regarded caste as a system of “graded inequality in which castes are arranged according to an ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt. That is as you go up the caste system the power and status of a caste group increases; as you go down the scale, the degree of contempt for the caste increases as these castes have no power, are of low status and are regarded as dirty and polluting.”

Therefore, Chakravarti argues that cultural oppression of the Dalit women is far more dehumanising than economic exploitation, “The consequence of caste-based exploitation, where access to material resources are themselves closed to the lower castes, are more pernicious than class-based exploitation and appropriation of surplus---which in any case in India is almost invariably drawn from Dalits...Unequal access to material resources and power is an inherent feature of the caste system in terms of lived experience, which the pure-impure dichotomy obscures” (ibid:7-11).

Gail Omvedt on the other hand analyses the relationship between caste and class thus: “Caste is a ‘material reality’ with a ‘material base’; it is not only a form but a concrete material content, and it has historically shaped the very basis of Indian society and continues to have crucial economic implication even today” (Omvedt, 1982:14).

Chakravati underscores the importance of realising the peculiarity of the Indian society which faces two sets of hierarchy one is caste based with the Brahmans at the top and the Dalits at the bottom based on racial purity. The other is based on political and economic hierarchy where the landlords at the top and the landless at the bottom. The necessity of protecting the physical purity of the upper castes made it mandatory for the ‘untouchable’ to do the cleansing work which are

defiling (2018:12-14). As Chakravarti (ibid:25) says, “we not only need to understand how production was organised and who controlled it---that is, the class dimension of it---but also how reproduction was organised and who controlled that.”

It is mentionable here that Lerner’s (1986) analysis of class and gender has been used by Indian feminists to examine caste and its relationship to gender. It is important not only to analyse the relationship between class and caste i.e. which caste/class controlled the production and which ones supplied labour; but it is also important to know the pattern of reproduction, who controlled the crucial resource of female sexuality and what ideologies sanctioned and legitimised such control.

The sanctity of caste cannot be maintained without maintaining endogamy and it is for this reason that endogamy has been regarded as a tool through which caste and gender subordination is enforced and continued. Therefore Ambedkar<sup>261</sup> argues that “the absence of intermarriage or endogamy is the one characteristic that can be called the essence of caste”. He underlies the fact that the caste system can be maintained only through the control of women’s sexuality and in this sense, women are the gateway to the caste system. Pardeshi (1997, cited in Rege, 1998) also writes how in his speech delivered at the gathering of women at Mahad satyagraha, Ambedkar drew the linkages between caste exploitation and women’s subordination by alluding to the control of women’s sexuality and called upon women to contest the “claim of upper caste women’s progeny to purity and the damnation of that of the lower caste to impurity. He locates the specificities and varying intensities of women’s subordination, both as ‘Dalit’ and as women.”

Therefore, Chakravarti (2018:33) rightly says:

Brahmanical patriarchy...is a set of rules and institutions in which caste and gender are linked, each shaping the other and where women are crucial in maintaining the boundaries between castes...Brahmanical codes for women differ according to the status of the caste group in the hierarchy of caste with the most stringent control over sexuality reserved as a privilege for the highest castes...it incorporates both an ideology of chaste wives and pativrata women who are valorised, and a structure of rules and institutions by which caste hierarchy and gender inequality are maintained through both the production of consent and

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<sup>261</sup>Ambedkar B.R. *Writings and Speeches Vol 1* downloaded from <https://ruralindiaonline.org/library/resource/dr-babasaheb-ambedkar-writings-and-speeches-vol-1/> retrieved on 19/04/2020

application of coercion...The larger 'rationale' of the caste system as a system of labour appropriation has shaped the codes of gender to further the ends of the upper caste.

Kumkum Roy (1994) shows how rituals dictated by the Brahmanical texts, which were practised by the Kings as well as the *Yajamana* (priests), were invoked to legitimise varna stratification, as well as the control over production and reproduction process. In fact, there was a concerted process to include the tribes into the caste system as well. Bose (1967:207) discusses how tribes were absorbed in the caste system in the modern times. Bose argues that while the caste structure was used to include and assimilate tribal communities and carve out new Jatis, at the same time they were also allowed to retain the monopoly that they had over their traditional occupation. By doing this, it was ensured that every caste continues with their occupation and culture and not much changes taking place in the fabric of the society. In the process the non-hierarchical tribal community was made to accept the caste system hierarchy and thus they were also expected to maintain the internal purity of their own caste. This was a significant shift in the move from tribe to caste. However, the resultant confusion regarding how to define caste of the tribal community still continues. The attempt to appropriate them into the Hindu religion was concerted, but the acceptance was not there. Till date, matrimonial alliances between the Hindus and the tribal community is not quite prevalent even amongst the educated class.

The intersectionality of class, caste and gender is undeniable. Every caste system has its own structure of marriage, sexuality and reproduction pattern. This is how inequality is sustained. And therefore, there is pronounced distinction in fertility pattern based on these variables.

### **Ancient Hindu Texts and Women:**

According to the *Mahabharata* [XIII.38.30] women have been moulded to be sinful from the very beginning when the creator first made the five elements, and gave shape to men and women. According to Manu [IX.17], women have the habits of lying, wasting time and have an indiscriminate love for ornaments, full of anger, meanness and treachery, and bad conduct (Nothing much has changed in this perception even now). The *Satapatha Brahmana* believed that a woman, a shudra, and a crow are the embodiments of falsehood, sin and darkness. Even the *Ramayana* associates most of the women with being essentially weak and sinful, conniving and mean. According to *Kaushalya* women do not care for good family, good deeds or wisdom, and their nature is deceitful. The sage *Agastya* states in the *Ramayana* [III.13.5] that it has been



women's nature ever since creation began, to be with a man only when he is successful, and desert him when his luck changes for worse. He compares this frivolousness with the flash of lightning. "According to an eighteenth-century brahmana commentator on Manu, one reason for the 'innate' impurity of women is that women suffer from the guilt of brahmicide, the heinous sin of killing a brahmana, along with the earth and trees, which was shifted upon them by Indra when he killed Visvarupa. Thus, women became impure, and menstruation, according to this myth, is the reason behind women's participation in brahmana murder. It is the mark of their innate impurity and at the same time of their innate sexuality" (Bhattacharji, 1994:266). I am sure many can find a resonance with all these even now when we talk about menstruation.

Women are controlled by various mechanisms. There are ideologies which are promoted as meant for the 'ideal' woman. They are taught from their childhood without spelling as much that they are not adequate, they need to work hard to become an ideal woman. This justifies the other controlling mechanism, which is the right of the men to disciple and punish them for any behaviour which is deemed by the ideological standard as errant. The male ideologues with the help from the mythologies keep on promoting the importance of chastity and wifely fidelity. Thus, women are not only controlled socially, their sexuality is controlled too, which ensures ultimate control over their biology. As Chakravarti (2018:72) says, "The Ramayana is the most ideologically coherent of all normative texts composed in early India, which created role models for men and women. There are idealized brothers and sons in the text but the most powerful and long-lasting of these ideals is that of Sita, the long-suffering, patient, loving and faithful wife of Ram." Sita came out with flying colours even after being subjected to *agnipariksha* (trial by fire).

These texts have reference of other such chaste women. *Arundhati* can stop the movement of the sun, *Savitri* can make her dead husband alive by wresting his life from Yama, the God of death and *Anusuya* turns lustful men into babies to safeguard her virtue. Only common thread binding these women is their chastity and their wifely virtue. If showcasing virtues is not enough, then the errant women and their plight is also aptly demonstrated. A slight appreciation of a young flying *gandharva* by Renuka, the wife of sage *Jamadagni*, robs her of her unparalleled gift of carrying water in freshly moulded wet mud pots and results in her death in the hands of her son *Parashurama*. The concept of 'honour killing' is thereby glorified.

In this entire process of establishing the hegemonic model of gender and caste, women were always complicit. Women were always rewarded for their vigorous practice of the ideas of chastity,

fidelity, purity, pollution etc. However, they practice these to gain acceptance of the men folk and eventually they allow the men to control their sexuality as a result of their compliance.

Nineteenth century did witness certain challenges to the caste hierarchies. For the lower castes, conversion to Christianity gave them a chance to get educated, as education for the lower castes was available in missionary schools even before the government schooling system was opened to them. Education provided the converted lower castes access to government jobs and thus ensuring comparative upward class mobility. Dick (1989:148) discusses how this new-found identity enabled the lower castes to challenge the symbolic world of status, as the 'breast-cloth' controversy of the *shanars* in the Travancore region exemplifies. As the *shanars* were converted to Christianity, they sought to appropriate the right to cover the breasts of their women---which until then was a prerogative of the uppermost castes as these women were deemed to possess the 'virtue' of chastity. The *shanars* were not happy with the option that missionaries were offering to cover the breast, with a blouse, rather they wanted the right to cover their breast the *same way as upper caste women did*---with a breast cloth, not a blouse. They wanted exactly the same rights as that of the upper castes---no less! (Dick 1989:148). As Chakravarti (2018:113) observes, "The entire breast-cloth controversy is a telling example of Bourdieu's argument on the importance of looking closely at bodily demeanour, which according to him exemplifies social class and gender."

Phule had a very different approach towards caste and he was radically opposed to the process of Sanskritisation. According to him Sanskritisation worked in the realm of Brahmanical ideology. In other words, he challenged the very basis of upper caste hegemony of looking at Jatis as the inevitable hierarchical relationship with each other. Phule's attempt was to show to the lower caste the inherent injustice and inequality built into the caste hierarchy. Therefore, he rejected the Sanskritisation moves of the local kunbis, a peasant caste, who were trying to adapt the rituals of the upper castes. Phule wanted the lower caste to challenge the hierarchical structure of caste system altogether. He laid great emphasis on acquiring education or knowledge to get out of the caste system. "Education was regarded as the *traittiyaratna*, or the third eye, which enabled those who possessed it to see beyond what the normal eye could see, that is, it would provide the lower castes with a new mode of social perception" Chakravarti (2018:115).

More often than not we hear people complaining the women are the worst enemy of women. That poses the question as to why do women become complicit in maintaining a system which actually works towards making them subordinates. Generally, upper caste women through

their menfolk, have access to economic resources and social power. And those women who conform (fall in line) are honoured and respected; at the same time, they become responsible for perpetuation of caste and the restrictions which comes with it, in their everyday lives.

The nexus of caste, class and gender is quite visible in the history of the caste system and the power dynamics with which it operated. It is based on unequal control over material assets, particularly unequal access to cultural capital through centuries of embedded hierarchical order. Ambedkar (1943:31-33) quite aptly said, "...the Hindus most often succeed in pulling down the untouchables is largely due to many causes. The Hindus have the police and the Magistracy on their side. In a quarrel between Untouchable and the Hindus the Untouchable will never get protection from the police or justice from the Magistrate. The police and the Magistrate are Hindus and they love their class [caste] more than their duty. But the chief weapon in the armoury of the Hindus is economic power they possess over the poor Untouchables living in the village."

The class dynamics was always dominant in the discourse of family planning. The poor is always held responsible for their economic condition. Sripati Chandrasekhar (1961: 103), a demographer and the Union Health minister during 1967, identified the fertility of the poor as a result of "poverty, ignorance and cultural inhibitions". He also opined that "the simplest way out of family poverty is to have less children" (Chandrasekhar 1972: 288). Hence the poor was supposed to be taught how and why control their teeming population as they are "responsible for their own condition and that of the nation and the world" and "they are expected to shoulder the burden gratefully" (Chatterjee and Riley 2001: 832).

In all the communication materials the poor are told that they are behaving irresponsibly. They do not seem to understand that their poverty is a result of the irresponsible behaviour of having many children. In fact, they can compete in many ways with the 'developed' if they prefer to have lesser children. This narrative absolves the state completely from its responsibility. There is no discussion on the lack of access to health and other resources that define class in a society. This remains the dominant understanding about the dynamics between poverty and population. The communication material does speak of class mobility but that too as an outcome of family planning. The visuals like a neat and clean and relaxed family with "modern" amenities at home were always related to small families, whereas the families with more children were shown as sick, poor and dirty. For example, the family planning message which has also been referred to in Chapter1, had one family comprising of five children, two daughters and three sons, the children

are visibly undernourished, the clothes are almost rags. The mother is sitting on a string cot (charpoy), looking at the crying child with helplessness and the father is standing looking clueless and worried. The house is dilapidated and the field around the house is unproductive. In fine, poverty is writ large on the picture. The message reads: “Big family: problems all the way.”

In contrast is the picture of another family with two children. The father with a happy smile sitting on the string cot helping the daughter in her studies, his shoes prominently placed near the cot. The mother well dressed with appropriate ornaments adorning her, holding the infant of unrecognizable gender, standing and indulgently looking at the activities of the father daughter duo. All the members of the family look well fed, well clothed, healthy and happy. The ambience is positive and hopeful. A tractor in the courtyard symbolises materialistic achievement and a green field in the background with a fat hen completing the picture of prosperity. And the message here reads: “Small family: happiness all the way.”

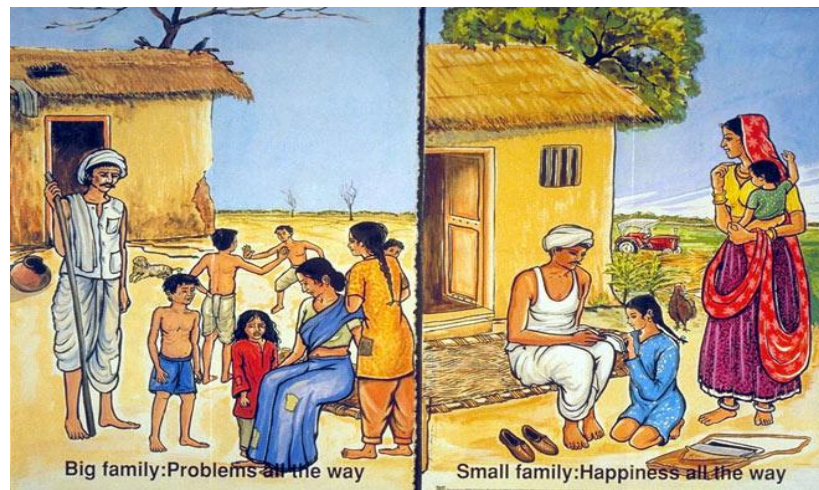


Fig 1, Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GOI

Hence the message transmitted is that--- ‘family planning leads to material prosperity’. The family planning communication messages mostly presuppose that people are traditional and do not possess rational thinking, thereby not understanding the importance of planning a family. As mentioned above, India planned its economy to achieve development, and development is understood to be modernity. But modernity that the state is planning to achieve is not supposedly Western idea of modernity. Rather the attempt is to maintain the Indian national values and achieve modernity/development which is “Indianised”, based on the idea of an ideal Indian.

Such examples are abundant in the family planning communication. The debate of poverty is embedded in the modernisation framework which we have discussed earlier. It proposes that development is equal to economic growth. But Isbister (2003:43) dismisses it and holds, “The poverty of the Third World is not traditional, and it is not accidental... As a condition for its own development, the industrial world required cheap raw materials from the Third World. The expansion of the industrial world therefore shaped the structure of the emergent Third World, deforming it, impoverishing it, and rendering it incapable of balanced development.”

The communication process has become more intricate and layered when social marketing and behaviour change communication had been added to it (discussed in Chapter 3). However, social realities have not changed much. Necessity of social security and more labour as well as high infant mortality rate is still a reality in India as it was in the 1970s when the Khanna study was conducted and Mamdani conducted his research in the 1970s. Neither the health centres are functioning any better. Bhaskar Ghose (2005) narrates how a near mutiny had taken place in Rajasthan when Doordarshan had vigorously broadcast family planning messages. People flooded the Primary Health Centres only to find that the contraceptives were not available there.

### **All India Radio: His Master’s Voice**

We have discussed how media has been a co-traveller of the family planning programme in India. All India Radio (AIR) has been involved from the very beginning. Now we will attempt to analyse how AIR has been used for political communication since its pre-independence days and the newly independent country also charted the same path for the organization. We will look at it through the prism of family planning communication. We are discussing AIR because of the very fact that AIR was the mouth piece of the government forever, moreover, a lot of nationalistic propaganda was promoted through AIR. Print media, traditionally remained independent from government control.

Historically radio has always been used by political powers for consolidating their position all over the world. War time saw the maximum usage of radio in this respect and “...it willingly disseminated government propaganda and... played a crucial part in transforming the public and cultural arena into a wartime culture” (Horten, 2002: 3). In India too, radio has always been used as a tool of political communication. India saw the coming of radio in a different context in the times between two world wars. It was also the time when “the colonial state in India declared its own

lateness – that is, its impending demise - after the First World War, when the Wilsonian principle of self-determination was on everyone's lips; and the formula of 'trusteeship' was invented to cover the division of parts of the former Turkish empire and the colonies of the Central Powers among the victorious allies. The progress of the peoples who inhabited these territories was entrusted to the colonial powers; in this atmosphere, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in India offered Indian nationalists, as a reward for their cooperation during the war, a ten-year course in 'nation-building', and an examination by Statutory Commission thereafter” (Zachariah 1999: 23).

1920's amateurish experiments in radio broadcasting took a serious turn when the state started its involvement first by loaning money to the Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC) in 1927. “The main shareholders were Raja Saheb Dhanrajgirji Narsinghirji (Rs 2.64 lakhs), and the Indian Radio Telegraph Company (Rs 2.63 lakhs)” (Luthra, 1986) along with many other small shareholders contributing the remaining Rs 73,000. At the time of IBC's liquidation in 1929, Lord William Peel, the Secretary of State for India wrote to the Viceroy:

The more I think of it, the more important it seems to me, to develop broadcasting in India for propaganda purposes. If it cannot be made to pay, ought not the government to undertake it? How otherwise is the government case ever going to be heard? You may be having a general election in the autumn; in any case, before very long there will be a good deal of propaganda to be done when Commission has reported and new reforms have been decided on. Is it not worth your while to try to have some machinery perfected in time (quoted in Luthra, 1986).

As has been mentioned many times above, 1920s was a time of social and political unrest in India. It was essential for the government to reach out to the people. Examples of usage of radio to create 'illusion of political consensus' in Fascist Italy, broadcasting of messages to create the sense of political consensus by Soviet Russia and in Britain radio helped the government to contain the General Strike of 1926 (Gupta, 2002:447). Therefore, it was not surprising that Lord Birkinhead, the Secretary of State to India wrote privately to the Viceroy:

“If broadcasting can be made to reach the villager in his own language, the assistance which would be afforded to Government, provided a proper control over the programme is exercised, in spreading accurate information and combating dangerous unfounded rumours would be great.”<sup>262</sup>

That broadcasting could be used as a potent tool for political communication, was clearly mentioned in an internal BBC discussion document from 1927 (filed as Empire Service Policy): “The influence needed is not propaganda in the ordinary sense of the term. It is a means of intercourse which will bring about familiarity with the everyday affairs of Empire. This is where an Imperial Broadcasting Service will prove to be so valuable. It cannot fail to stimulate and keep alive interest in the affairs of Empire, and it will, to a very large extent, prevent the imperial ideal from being swamped by local nationalism.”<sup>263</sup>

There was also the pressure of international geo-politics which had a considerable influence on the growth of radio in the British colonies including India. Radio Moscow was reaching out to a wider population as well as the Nazi radio’s influence was rising so much that it is said to have impacted the Saarland plebiscite of 1935.<sup>264</sup> All these convinced the British government about the strength of radio to motivate people through planned propaganda Walker (1992:27). Therefore, it was natural that the Government of India decided to purchase the assets of IBC and re-designated it as Indian State Broadcasting Services (ISBS), and those were placed under the control of the Department of Industry and Labour. 1930 was also the time of ‘Civil Disobedience Movement’ in India and the government could see the potential of ISBS being utilised in the process of consolidation of the Indian state and political unity. However, the post war great depression started affecting the financial condition of the government of India. The financial difficulties and lack of real enthusiasm on part of the government to continue with broadcasting led to the declaration of the closure of ISBS in October 1931.

Meanwhile a rumour started circulating in Britain that the radio stations of Bombay and Calcutta might be sold to American commercial interests. The Federation of British Industry became markedly worried and in turn lobbied against the proposed sell-off. Representations and protests ultimately compelled the government to withdraw the orders on November 23, 1931 while

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<sup>262</sup>(IOR/L/PO/3/1: Broadcasting in India; Private letter from Lord Birkenhead to Lord Irwin (15th July 1926) cited in Pinkerton

<sup>263</sup>BBC WAC. E4/1 Empire Service Policy (1927) cited in Pinkerton

<sup>264</sup>Saarland a resource rich portion was given to France as a part of treaty of Versailles. A plebiscite was held in 1935 under the supervision of League of nations, where nine out of ten voters voted to join Germany

doubling the cess on radio sets. In 1932 the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) started an Empire Service which resulted in two-times increase in the sale of receiving sets in less than two years' time (Pinkerton, 2008: 11).

Lionel Fielden, an old BBC hand, was sent to India to oversee the growth and expansion of radio. Fielden was “brilliant but impetuous . . . [o]ne of those very highly imaginative, creative individuals whom the BBC was sometimes alleged to look on with disfavour” (Reith, 1949: 233). Fielden came with the understanding of modernity which “posed great dangers to imperial prerogatives. The distances that broadcasting could cover and the boundaries it could transgress, the mass society which it was expected to cultivate, and the novel expertise it demanded (from outsiders like Fielden) all violated what little was left of the ‘Imperial idea’” (Zivin, 1998:725). Fielden got the name of ISBS changed into All India Radio (AIR) in 1936.

In 1936 a set of strict editorial guidelines were laid down regarding the most controversial radio issues – political broadcasting and ‘broadcast talks’- by the department of Home and the department of Industries & Labour. ‘Violent controversies’ were to be avoided, and political parties were banned from making any use of news service. In addition, the Government of India also decided “not to use the service for political purposes.”<sup>265</sup> India’s political parties, in particular the Indian National Congress were prohibited from engaging in any ‘potentially subversive’ transmissions and even the most balanced political debates.

On one hand political debate on radio was prohibited; and on the other, the External service of AIR was developed as fierce propaganda machinery by the British. In 1939 “the first broadcast in Pashto was targeting the listeners of Afghanistan. External broadcasts expanded rapidly under the influence of World War II wherein several radio services were joint responsibility of AIR and Far Eastern Bureau of the British Ministry of Information. The initial transmissions were known as ‘Political warfare broadcasts’”(Masani, 1976: 16). “The Indian government was responsible for broadcasts in English, Tamil, Hindi and Gujarati, while broadcasts in Chinese, Japanese and other languages were the responsibility of Far Eastern Bureau of the British Ministry of Information. The studios used for the broadcasts belonged to All India Radio, whereas the control of the broadcasts to the Far East was in the hands of the South-East Asia Command General Headquarters (India) and the Far Eastern Bureau (FEB)” (Clark, 2003:147). According to Masani, “In theory E.D.

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<sup>265</sup>NAI: Home-public-1936-File No. 106/36. Minute by E.M Jenkins, 13 January 1936 cited in Pinkerton



Robertson, the Special Officer (Far East) was responsible jointly to AIR and FEB but, in fact, AIR had no say in the contents of the broadcasts” (Masani, 1976:16).

Shortly after the outbreak of the World War II in 1939, German radio stations regularly started broadcasting for India, primarily in Hindustani, as well as in various other regional languages. These news broadcasts routinely and intentionally exaggerated the truth, withheld crucial information, and/or broadcast downright false stories, both about the war in Europe and about developments in India. One alarmed British government official wrote in 1939 that during a relatively tranquil week in India, German radio reported that there was “rebellious activity on the frontier” and that “labour was in violent revolt” (Alonso, 2016).

That was also the time when the Azad Hind Radio and Congress Radio started resorting to political propaganda. Azad Hind Radio was a propaganda radio service that was started in Germany in 1942 under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose, in a bid to encourage Indians to fight for freedom. Williamson<sup>266</sup> writes, how Bose received help from Hitler to establish, “Axis-sponsored Radio Azad Hind network, which bombarded India with violent anti-British propaganda from Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and Japanese-held Singapore, Rangoon and Saigon. Though initially based in Germany, the headquarter was shifted to Singapore and later to Rangoon following the course of the war in South East Asia. Following Bose’s departure to South East Asia, the German operations were continued by A.C.N. Nambiar, the head of the Indian Legion in Germany”. Over a broadcast on Azad Hind Radio on March 5, 1942, Bose targeted BBC’s propaganda by saying, “Free India Radio is the voice of freedom-loving India. It is the harbinger of the revolution which is fast approaching and which will soon strike a death blow at British power in India” (Orwell,1985: 222).

Similarly, Indian National Congress also operated a propaganda radio named, the Congress Radio. After Gandhi and other Congress leaders were arrested on 9 August 1942, the idea of starting the Congress radio took wings and ultimately started the broadcasting from 26 August 1942 onwards. “The Congress Broadcasting station had mainly operated from Bombay and Nashik. But the Broadcasting station was shifted many times to evade police detection...it spread the message of secularism, internationalism, brotherhood and freedom...it took up the challenge and disseminated the much-needed information to the masses so that the leaderless movement could be

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<sup>266</sup>The Mahatma’s Ham, <http://www.ooocities.org/sadaqathullah/mahatma.html> retrieved on 05.04.2018

sustained” (Chatterjee, 1989:15-17). However, as Williamson<sup>267</sup> observes, the official history of the Indian National Congress party has largely been silent on the activities of Congress radio and its contribution to the independence movement. Soon after three months of survival, the Congress Radio was ultimately closed down in November 1942 when the police confiscated the equipment and put the operators behind bars.

The legacy of radio was handed down to the independent Indian government by the colonial powers. In case of print media, the British owners sold off their business interest to Indian counterparts, but as radio was under government control, it directly went to the government like all other government assets. The Indian system absorbed many British initiated institutions like the armies, polices, churches, tax system, bureaucracy, judiciary, schools and colleges, elections and legislatures as well as the broadcasting apparatus. Therefore, “India, in 1947, inherited a national radio system shaped by the needs of an authoritarian colonial government but aware of a public-broadcasting ethos originating from the BBC. With independence this legacy came under the control of the Congress Party, which brought to media policy its own experience, ideas, and prejudices” (Jeffrey, 2009: 174-75).

The political economy of India during 1947-1985 has two prominent characteristics: the hegemony of the Indian National Congress (INC) for the entire period (except the brief period during which the Janata Party came to power) and the nature of the economy that was mixed and state controlled, popularly known as licence raj. The state remained engaged in most of the productive sectors including information and communication technologies. As radio was the only medium under the direct control of the state, the state’s involvement remained undisputed in broadcasting. The NPC document notes, “One cannot exaggerate (radio’s) enormous influence in shaping the character and political views of a nation”. The document quotes the words of the General Director of German Radio, The Reich Rundfunk Gesellschaft and acknowledges that broadcasting needs to be utilized for state’s propaganda in such a way that “...one day the whole nation will be soaked with the philosophy”. Therefore, it is understandable that the document mentioned “Propaganda by State” as one of the principal functions of broadcasting (NPC, 1948: 57-58).<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>267</sup>Pre-independence Clandestine Broadcast in India <http://www.qsl.net/vu2msy/ clandestine.htm> retrieved on 05.04.2018

<sup>268</sup>National Planning Committee Series, Report of Sub Committee on Communication.

It is by now obvious that, the colonial rulers in India patronised a limited group of English educated elite depriving the masses from education. Through this elite group, the concept of liberal politics entered the Indian Nationalist movement. Thus, after independence this implicit rift between the literate elite and the mass audiences continued. The elite naturally went about running the country whereas the masses increasingly went on feeling that they are the “impediment” to development of the country. Print media being the medium of the literate, it catered to their necessities and issues. Films were left to the masses.

Rajagopal (2009:11-12) was right when he said that the “Indian nationalists saw the establishment and enhancement of the Indian nation as the aim of the media and as the principal criterion for assessing it...(therefore) the task of media; since national independence was achieved was understood as fulfilling the mission of education and information, in terms defined by the Indian state”. All India Radio therefore naturally remained the medium for political communication even after partition. The fervour of independence that ran through the country during the independence movement helped in creating the idea that India as a state had already existed before independence. Therefore, the entire energy of the post-colonial government was only to be streamlined in single point agenda of achieving political cohesion. This perception of an already existing nation was established through cultural communication and this, on the other hand, fed into the process of formulating the broadcasting programme policies of AIR. This tendency to create an integrated ‘Indian Nation’ through AIR was very much visible in its programming patterns. A plethora of national programmes of various genres were designed in Delhi, and it became mandatory for the stations across India to relay these programmes which, in turn, created a profound sense of connectivity amongst varied cultures. Similarly, country wide programmes on education, health, agriculture etc were mounted with the principle of developmentalist nationalism at the core. These programmes ensured the homogenization of the idea of socio-cultural and economic development of one nation.

The first minister of Information and Broadcasting of independent India, Sardar Vallabhai Patel wanted to ‘clean up’ the AIR and one of his attempts in doing so was to prohibit those artists from performing for the AIR ‘whose private lives were a public scandal’. And in the process, he attempted to keep away the Muslim women artists who had traditionally been in the majority in that profession in the Northern India. Soon the singers changed their names from ‘Bai’ to ‘Devi’ and ban did not have a long-lasting impact (Luthra, 1986). It is no coincidence that “the first three

(Information and Broadcasting) ministers were upper-caste Gandhians and well-credentialed veterans of the nationalist movement” (Jeffrey, 2009: 177). This underscores the importance of AIR as the vehicle for propaganda.

Language, particularly the official language had been a bone of contention in independent India. There was a struggle for ascendancy of language which was seen as Hindi vs Urdu vs Hindustani prevalent in AIR even before independence. Which was the dominant narrative of the time as we have already discussed above. In fact, in October 1946, Sardar Patel, Minister of Information and Broadcasting in the interim government, forced AS Bokhari, the Director General of AIR to resign as he was working towards a unified language called Hindustani, drawing from both Hindi and Urdu and appointed an ICS officer, PC Choudhuri, in his place. Choudhuri was renowned for his command over Sanskrit and literary Hindi (Lelyveld, 2009: 351-367). This nationalist agenda of creating a standardised language can be traced to the creation of a nation state. As Bourdieu (1991:48) states, “only when the making of the ‘nation’, an entirely abstract group based on law, creates new usages and function does it become indispensable to forge a standard language impersonal and anonymous like the officials uses it has to serve, and by same token to undertakes the work of normalizing the products of linguistic habits.”

The above-mentioned practice became the dominant standard of functioning in the regional AIR stations as well. AIR created a standardised language for cultural communication and in most of the states, (which were formed on the basis of language), eventually the standardised language also became the lingua franca. Similarly, the national programmes such as programme of folk music ended up in projecting the folk music of the dominant classes of the states. For instance, the people outside the state of Assam know about Bihu as the dance/song of Assam, whereas Assam is the home of multiple cultures and folk music. This way the cultural hegemony of the dominant class and often the dominant caste was established through the platform of AIR. Bourdieu (Ibid: 45) summarises it well which is true even in the context of India: “The official language is bound up with the state, both in its genesis and in its social uses. It is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language.”

When K.V. Keskar (1952-61) became the minister of Information and Broadcasting he banned Hindi film songs (as well as the harmonium and cricket commentary, as those were according to him, colonial legacy) on AIR, because he wanted to validate “Sanskrit classical music

against what he saw as the pernicious influence of low forms of Muslim-inspired music” (Thomas 2010: 65). Therefore, it became important for the state to “repair the damage done under Muslim and British rule” Lelyveld (1994:118). As Lelyveld (1995: 57-59) comments, “Under partition All India Radio’s major political battles had revolved around Hindu-Muslim communal disputes, especially the issue of Hindi versus Urdu versus Hindustani...under Keskar, measures were taken to assure that the ‘Hindu’ side will prevail”. However, many lauded the efforts of Keskar dubbing it a brave move, as film songs were generating sizeable revenue for AIR, and the ban meant loss of revenue. They also appreciated the timely intervention of the state in providing the much-needed state patronage to classical music when the original patrons of classical music, the Indian princes, had disappeared. AIR was regarded as being saviour of respect, employment and wider acceptance of classical songs. (Singh: 1956). This tendency to sanitise language has been called by Bourdieu (1991:47) as the attempt to “purge it of the usages linked to old society” and also an attempt to “impose a thought that would itself be purged and purified.”

The concept of nation found its way through consolidation of the idea of ideal Indian family and ideal Indian woman that was manufactured through family planning communication in the country (discussed above). As we have already discussed, communication research became a huge project financed by the Ford Foundation that helped in establishing the hegemonic idea of family and citizens.

All India Radio, which was the sole broadcasting media after independence maintained the discourse in a very subtle way. The elite literates who were at the helms of affair in the area of programming generated programme which reinforced the idea that the masses need to “change” and “adopt” habits and practices which would lift them out of the dismal underdeveloped condition, tactfully making them responsible for their own condition.

AIR and eventually Doordarshan, continued to be the strategic partners of all development programmes of the state along with the family planning programme. The sheen of AIR and Doordarshan has been lost down the line and more so after television became a national obsession post liberalization of the economy in the early 1990s. The proliferation of the private FM radio channels also had added to its woe. The original objective of utilizing AIR for “propaganda by the state” (NPC, 1948: 58) still stands. In fact, in 2006, the then Information and Broadcasting minister, Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi, in an interview to BBC defended why news was not allowed to be broadcast over private FM channel thus:

“the news broadcast on (radio)...is considered the last word and has unmatched credibility. Therefore, it is our duty to see that the news being broadcast on radio is correct and does not provoke any section of the society. Our challenge is greater than any other country” (cited in Jeffrey, 2009:180).<sup>269</sup>

After such a long journey of one of the most versatile creative media, AIR and Doordarshan as well remained stagnant as the vehicle of political communication albeit without the state patronage it enjoyed once. However, post 2014, with the monthly speech series, called *Man ki Baat* (words of the mind), of the Prime Minister, Modi, being broadcast through AIR, a little life is back to the organization as a state apparatus of political communication. To conclude with the words of Jeffrey (2009: 171), “The spread of broadcast radio (read media) does not necessarily make people happier or more democratic”. And the story of the political economy of AIR reaffirms it.

The growth of Media in India has already been discussed in the previous chapter. The role of media in family planning communication has been discussed too. It is obvious from the discussion that media growth was an entirely state subject and have had a growth history which is basically driven by political agenda.

Post liberalization with the entry of satellite television and private FM channels, and government losing the absolute control that it had earlier, over broadcasting, it ushered in the market forces which began to control content as well. The focus of development communication remained with the state broadcasters, All India Radio and Doordarshan. The state broadcasters had to vie for listeners/viewers, and eventually, succumbed to the pressure of the market forces. Religious programmes started to be broadcast based on Hindu mythology, a move called by Rajagopal (2004) as ‘political opportunism’ and sadly that “became the successor to the government field experience in developmental soap operas”. The shift from development-oriented programme to agenda-based entertainment was also reflective of the economic shift that the country was going through. Television was also transitioning toward the commercial marketing model. This required the programmes to be ‘entertaining’. Entertainment also serves another purpose as it not only helps to sell commodities, it also “is an effective vehicle for hidden ideological message” Eric Barnouw (1978). Herman and Chomsky (2008: xviii) further added, “in a system of high and growing inequality, entertainment is the contemporary equivalent of the

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<sup>269</sup>Excerpts from an interview with BBC Hindi service, January 2006. retrieved by Jeffrey (2009) on <http://us.indiantelevision.com/interviews>, in 25 July 2008

Roman 'games of circus' that diverts the public from politics and generates a political apathy that is helpful to preservation of the status quo." In this discourse television has been recognised as the most powerful medium. Whereas according to Rajagopal (2004:4), "As a medium, television's work is parallel to and interlinked with that of the economy. Both, disseminate information: to help circulate goods as well as socialize members of the society. Television is thus active in the material and symbolic reproduction of capitalist relation". Raymond Williams (1974:89-90) on the other hand, talks about how advertising is woven in subtly into the programme flow. When a programme flow is read out or published there is no mention of the advertisement that actually is behind the origin of the programme. That way the audience become a part of the marketing process without their knowledge.

As Sengupta (2009: 88) states, "Television plays an important role in building perceptions about events and communities". Television has been called the private life of the nation-state (Hartley, 1992: 101) as it is always socially contextualised. This is not the public space which Habermas (2001: 102-7) said was important in building the atmosphere of liberal democracy in the Western world. In the Third World, it is rather a constructed space moderated by state and the market. As Mehta (2009: 33) says "Politics now passes through a mediated arena and the media create a new kind of publicness that is despatialised, non-dialogical and received in settings spatially and temporally remote from the original context of production."

As already discussed, media can be easily termed as a tool in the hands of the state and adheres to the propaganda model as Herman and Chomsky have said. The authors (2008:1) comment that the basic functions of media are to "amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfil this role requires systematic propaganda". They argue that there are few subtle filters through which news are passed and propaganda is constructed. According to them every news/information goes through the sieve of : "i)The size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass media firms; ii) Advertising, as the primary income source of the mass media; iii) The reliance of the media on information provided by government, business and 'experts' funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; iv) 'Flak' as a means of disciplining the media; and v) 'Anticommunism' as a national religion and control mechanism" (ibid:2).These filters according to Herman and Chomsky help in

manufacturing consent and create an apolitical and complying citizenry to help sustain a neoliberal agenda.

The change in the political economy of media content can be easily analysed through the change in the advertisement of the condoms for the purpose of this thesis at least. Nirodh, advertisement was more about population control, it lodged the idea of India as an underdeveloped country, teeming with irresponsible, insensible adults and hapless children, and whose fate can be changed by the usage of condoms. Whereas, the advertisements for *Kamasutra*, condoms launched in 1991, demonstrated the sexual liberation of the woman, “a new public legitimation of sexuality in the form of consensual, mutual, safe, and private heterosexual pleasure” (John, 2009:279).

In a nutshell, family planning communication being the first organized communication process undertaken post-independence, using mass media, conformed to the idea of the nation which was attempted to bring a coherence to the newly independent nation. Through family planning it was also attempted to promote the idea of an ideal Indian family, an ideal Indian woman. The intersectionality of class, caste and gender in the entire narrative around family planning was a part of the larger plot of creating a supremacy of the culture of the dominant religion. The process of generation of the communication material shows how the Western knowledge system patronized this ‘nationalistic’ idea and by doing that promoted the technology dependent form of modernisation. That was a very interesting coming together of two almost diametrically opposite ideas for their mutual benefit.

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## Chapter 6

### Analysis and Conclusion

The Covid19 pandemic and resultant movement of the migrant labourers visually, caught by media has again brought the population discourse to the centre of the discussion on development. Millions of them walking, cycling, hitch-hiking, thousands of miles, to reach a place called 'home', from where they had migrated to live a neo-liberal dream was played on the screens relentlessly for weeks. This was a dream fuelled by media through the promotion of aspirational reality shows like, *Kaun Banega Crorepati*, the Hindi version of the British Television Quiz show, *Who Wants to Become a Millionaire?* and many others. These shows were replicated in other Indian languages too. This dream happily crafted by television helped the state to systematically withdraw from the welfare projects and convince people to accept that they are competent enough to *Just do it!* If they cannot, it is their fault, state is not to be blamed. These invisible masses, who were left to fend for themselves, returned as eyesore for the aspirational middle class and as a bone in the throat for the political class. Thus, the pandemic brought the visuals of a huge poor population back to the popular discourse which made everyone uncomfortable. Political leaders were saying that given a chance these poor people just go home, and that they are behaving irresponsibly like a 'rider without a helmet'.<sup>270</sup> The middle class spoke through the virile television media asking innate questions like why are they walking for thousands of miles? And even worse, trying to divert attention from the dismal condition of the migrants walking home, and shift it towards the communal angle of the irresponsible Muslims becoming the super spreaders.<sup>271</sup> It kindled the nagging worry of a massive population being a roadblock in the path of development. Nobody of course questioned what happened to the population control programme which has been there since 1952. Everybody was persuaded that the poor and the uneducated are to be blamed for this.

This brief discussion is sufficient to show how convincing the role of media and communication is, and can often be used by the state, for their own benefit as well. This role of

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<sup>270</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/migrant-workers-fleeing-delhi-is-like-driving-without-helmets-balbir-punjs-remarks-stir-controversy/articleshow/74867320.cms> retrieved on 07/07/2020

<sup>271</sup> <https://theprint.in/opinion/tablighi-jamaat-congregation-and-how-religion-has-been-the-super-spreader-of-coronavirus/392531/> retrieved on 08/07/2020

communication has been very crucial in establishing the development agenda of post-independence India.

This thesis shows that, the population discourse in India which has its origin in pre-independence India and was based on the Malthusian idea, and maintained the neo-Malthusian understanding of poverty and the poor after independence. The census report was used by the British as well as the Indian administration to establish the idea that Indian population was growing beyond control. It was also used to give a communal angle to the population growth story. Horror stories of atrocities in the name of population control are rampant even today and the women bear the maximum brunt of such state sponsored activities.<sup>272</sup>

Post-independence, India followed the path of planned economy. Population explosion came to be regarded as the major deterrent in achieving development. Therefore, as discussed, India undertook a formal family planning programme. Major international organisations became involved in the process. As Indian population was regarded to be ‘traditional’ massive development communication activities were undertaken in family planning programme to inform and educate the population on the benefits of population control. The path of development communication was based theoretically on the premise of modernisation framework. Therefore, the process became dependent on one particular form of development and the knowledge and expertise for that flowed from the developed Western nations. The basic premise was to change the behaviour of the ‘traditional’ and ‘backward’ Indian masses through technological interventions which were to be promoted through massive media campaigns. The family planning communication programme was launched by the Ford Foundation and a lot of activities took place which eventually defined the trajectory of development communication in health. Even after the Foundation left the area of family planning communication, the role of international organisations still remained in the area. However, the campaigns were designed in such a way that those were in tandem with the ‘Indian’ values. Therefore, it promoted the idea of a unified nation, which was crucial for unifying the newly independent country. The idea of an ideal Indian family, and ideal Indian woman was built into the psyche of the population through the family planning communication materials. Through this, the supremacy of the dominant religion and its specificities of caste, class and gender were established too. This process enabled the Western knowledge system to help in establishing the ‘nationalistic’ idea and also promote the technology dependent form of modernisation.

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<sup>272</sup><https://feminisminindia.com/2020/01/06/family-planning-india-anti-women-approaches/> retrieved on 08/07/2020

The population growth debate is still as rife as it was before independence. Therefore, as recently as July 2019, the Population Stabilization Bill 2019, which is a private member's bill was introduced by Member of Parliament Rakesh Sinha, was tabled in Rajya Sabha and will definitely go through, as the ruling party has absolute majority in the parliament. This bill is actually the same water in a different bottle. We have discussed about the population policies attempted to be instituted in India. This Bill is just a reiteration of the same. Incentives and disincentives which have been a part of population control debate find prominent place in this Bill too. One of the important disincentives is, barring a person with more than two living children from contesting parliamentary and legislative elections. Till now this rule was applicable in many states at the panchayat level.

Enacting population policies has been a continuous effort since family planning programme was adopted by the Government of India in 1952. Till date, it has been an accepted belief that, in spite of such a long history of population control programme, Indian population has not decreased. After the 1991 census, the government of India acknowledged that the centralised policy and the target-oriented approach of family planning programme has not been successful in India. Therefore, the M.S Swaminathan committee was constituted to draw the National Population policy in 1992, as has been discussed. One of the crucial suggestions of the committee was to allow the states to formulate their own population policies. This led to many states drafting their own population policies. Amongst these states, Andhra Pradesh (before bifurcation into Anadhra Pradesh and Telangana), Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh drafted their policies with the help of the Futures Group International. A slew of incentives and disincentives were declared and the most important of them was that, people with more than two children were not allowed to be elected to the panchayat as has been mentioned above. These incentives and disincentives which have been implemented by the states affect the poor and the marginalised more and is a classic case of victim blaming. These policies also stand in contradiction to the commitment given by the government of India in various international platforms. This has been a tendency of the government and policy makers to victimise the vulnerable. But the government has still gone ahead with the incentives and disincentives and now it finds its place even in the 2019 Bill.

It is interesting that even after many research studies coming up with the data that India's population growth is not really as worrying as it was a few decades back, yet population growth still remains in the public discussion. The UN's Population Division of the Department of

Economic and Social Affairs, released the *World Population Prospects 2019*<sup>273</sup> in June 2019. This report accepts that India's population will exceed that of China in 2027, yet the new number which has been projected for India was less in decades. This is also corroborated by the 2011 Census report. It shows that the growth rate of population has declined from 21.5 per cent during 1991-2001 to 17.7 per cent during 2001-2011, across all religious groups. Though the regional variation of population growth still exists, yet India is on her way to achieve population stabilization with TFR (Total Fertility Rate) being close to replacement level fertility.

Looking at the regional variation, government of India launched the *Mission Parivar Vikas*, which is providing intensive and improved family planning services in the 146 high fertility districts and has widened the choice of contraceptives available through the public health system by adding three new methods. This is not much different from the earlier strategies where technological intervention is supposedly the only solution to population growth.

After the BJP led government came to power in the state, Assam tabled its own state population policy in 2017 titled, Population and Women Empowerment Policy. By adding "women empowerment" in the title the policy tries to sound progressive, however the policy still has the criterion of disqualifying people with more than two living children from being elected to the State Assembly amongst other standard disincentives and incentives.<sup>274</sup> Along with Assam, now there are 12 states in India which have two child policy and related paraphernalia. The rest eleven states are Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttarakhand. These states have at some point implemented two-child policy for state government employees. Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh later revoked their two-child policy laws.<sup>275</sup> In spite of the proven fact that policies have really not helped in control of population growth, rather it ends up victimizing the vulnerable section of the population, the push for population policy remains unabashed.

From the discussion in the previous chapters, it is obvious that the disquiet around population which began before independence continued to haunt the independent India's law makers as well as the policy makers. There has been no informed debate regarding the veracity of

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<sup>273</sup>[https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019\\_Highlights.pdf](https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_Highlights.pdf) retrieved on 21/03/2020

<sup>274</sup>[https://hfw.assam.gov.in/sites/default/files/swf\\_utility\\_folder/departments/hfw\\_lipl\\_in\\_oid\\_3/menu/document/Population%20and%20Women%20Empowerment%20Policy%20of%20Assam.pdf](https://hfw.assam.gov.in/sites/default/files/swf_utility_folder/departments/hfw_lipl_in_oid_3/menu/document/Population%20and%20Women%20Empowerment%20Policy%20of%20Assam.pdf) retrieved on 01/06/2020

<sup>275</sup><https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/india/assam-becomes-12th-state-to-implement-2-child-policy-for-govt-employees-2391351.html> retrieved on 31/05/2020

the claim of a population bomb ticking in India, rather the debate is always settled by quoting numbers, which supposedly is enough to create a condition of desperation. Population clocks have been installed in public places to drive in the terror of the rate of increase of population. International organisations helped sustain the sense of desperation through financial and intellectual help. Media has been complicit to the process as it is under the control of the government.

The metaphor of development, therefore, worked as the meta-narrative that justified various technological solution of issues which are actually socio-economic in nature and issues emanating from inequitable access to resources. The poor are blamed for their poverty. Nobody talks about the socio-cultural reality of having many children. Though Mamdani (1972) discussed this long time back, yet his study finds resonance in no policies. It is interesting because in spite of Malthus going back on his initial theory of geometrical growth of population, yet the population debate till now is informed by his initial theory. One can understand why: it suited the policy makers and their dominant narrative. Therefore, the solution provided was top down and based on technological interventions. Technology on the other hand requires research and development, which for an underdeveloped country like India meant dependence on industrially developed countries, which was very easily available from the 'generous' donor organisation. Therefore, the quid-pro-quo was convenient for both the countries.

We have seen that; family planning became a very focussed area of intervention along with agriculture. The social science and history text books for generations made the educated understand the negative impact of the "uneducated" and the "poor" on the development story of India. As it was envisioned, that, radio will help in promoting development programme amongst the people, the focus remained so, albeit with the top down patronizing programme content. Even when television was introduced as a platform for development communication, through the SITE project, it was in collaboration with multiple international aid giving agencies etc. It was an interesting cocktail, of developmental planning, orchestrated by the international aid giving organisations and implemented by the Indian elites. This process generated massive amount of content and generations of communication experts well trained in mostly USA. Communication in family planning gathered a theoretical dimension with diffusion experts experimenting the same process in family planning. Mostly, the political economy of the communication process in family planning and for that matter all development projects followed a pattern: development objectives are decided

after “consultation” between the national government, the related UN organisation and the philanthropic international aid giving organisations, the “advanced” knowledge and technology available with the developed countries are offered, which the much-distressed developing countries obligingly accept. The upper class/caste elite male in the bureaucracy already motivated by the development model pursued by the developed countries become the wheels for the movement of the projects. Ideas for communication are exported from the developed country and keeping with the tempo of the development programme of India, downloaded on the “uneducated and poor” masses.

So, we see that the development model that was followed by India was not homegrown, rather it was the dominant model which was based on the modernisation theory. This theory was promoted as the alternative to the model followed by the Communist bloc. The worry of the Western European countries and North America, that condition of poverty might breed leftist ideology kept them on their feet to ‘help’ India control its population growth. The linking of family planning with the national goal of development solidified the role of population in development. Technology like IUCD, Nirodh and other contraceptives found a flourishing market due to the policies implemented by the government. Family planning communication process was used to legitimize such technology. In the 2014 Family Planning Summit held in London, India committed to more of the same i.e. increase in the usage of contraceptive, which is a bouquet of injectable contraceptives, Progesterone only Pills (POPs) and Ormeloxifene (non-hormonal weekly pill: Centchroman---Indian brand) and also new forms of Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARCs).<sup>276</sup> No mention of male contraception can be found. Added to this was a more sophisticated form of ‘360 Degree media campaign’ and ‘expanding role of private sector.’

This thesis also shows, how family planning communication was one area, which developed and found its full growth in India, with the help of Ford Foundation. The Foundation controlled the affairs from the very beginning and till the early 1970s. The process of family planning communication initiated during the time of the Foundation was never given up. In fact, even during the Emergency and after that, those were the strategies which helped the government to legitimize even the atrocities committed during that period. After the Foundation was almost forced to leave family planning communication area, they still remained in the country by

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<sup>276</sup>[https://www.familyplanning2020.org/sites/default/files/Indias-Vision-FP2020-structure\\_country-commitment\\_FINAL\\_2017.pdf](https://www.familyplanning2020.org/sites/default/files/Indias-Vision-FP2020-structure_country-commitment_FINAL_2017.pdf) retrieved on 31/05/2020

providing financial support to social science research in socio-cultural areas. In fact, till 2012, Ford Foundation offered fellowships to Indian students to study in US and come back and work in India, media being one of the areas of fellowship.

The synergy between the Foundation and other international development and media organisation with the Indian state is one which had a far deeper implication for the development story of India. It has been amply proven, that the concept of nationalism was driving the Indian state and its development agenda. Population explosion was regarded as the real threat to development. Family planning communication not only helped the state to promote the technology of contraception, it also enabled to convince people that they are responsible for their own underdevelopment. After convincing the population about their irresponsible behaviour, they were then told that the government is sincerely interested in their welfare and thus they should follow whatever has been offered to them as “plan.”

The Indian media helped the government to establish the dominant development agenda. Till 1990s only print media was relatively free, whereas radio and television were under the control of the government. Post-liberalisation, though radio and television were allowed to grow in the private sector, yet they were no less propagandist than the government- controlled media. It has been proven that in a capitalist system the relationship between the industrialists and the government is based on mutual dependence. Hence, we see JRD Tata and the likes and internationally Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation et al., oiling the wheel of family planning communication in India.

Through this communication process the intended effect of creating the ‘real Indian’ and the ‘real India’ was achieved. It has been a well-planned and well executed exercise. Therefore, the political economy of family planning communication defines the content and the content creators and their role in disseminating the larger idea of the nation. By this the government created a homogenised idea of the nation, which still ignite the nationalistic fervour and, in the process, has submerged the lesser cultures into the larger discourse.

The most important intended effect that family planning communication elicited was institutionalising the relationship between population and development. In spite of numerous studies which have evidenced otherwise, population explosion is still blamed for

underdevelopment. This way the Western countries imposed their ideas on India and our development discourse is still reeling under it.

We have also seen that, beyond the intended effects, family planning communication has had some apparently unintended results too. The most important of them is the development of the stream called Health Communication. It was family planning communication area where a huge amount of activities and research were conducted and eventually it evolved into a scientific form of communication process. From simple field communication to diffusion, to IEC and Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) to Social and Behaviour Change Communication, it has traversed a long way to form an intricate development communication wing called Health Communication. The family planning communication research in India also turned many people, involved in the project, into experts in the area. One name which comes to our mind immediately is that of Everett M. Rogers. He was in fact invited by the Foundation officials to come and conduct research on the ongoing projects in India and that led to the publication of his seminal book, *Communication Strategies in Family Planning* (1973). Many universities in the US became centres for family planning communication research, prominent among them is Carolina Population centre in North Carolina University.<sup>277</sup> With the fellowships being offered to Indian fellows by not only Ford Foundation, but also Rockefeller Foundation and others, many universities in the USA became the training centres almost overnight. One such centre was the East-West Centre located in Hawaii. It was established in 1960 as an international centre which would deal in matters related to Asia and Pacific region so as to "...make a valuable contribution to the programs of the United States for the promotion of international educational, cultural, and related activities."<sup>278</sup>

Most of the fellowships were routed through International Institute of Education (IIE). IIE was established by USA, in the post-World War I situation as a soft-power activity. At that time IIE activities were concentrated in Europe. After World War II the activities were extended towards the Asia region. Family planning communication fellowships were all handled by IIE and it became a hub of accomplishments in this area.

Satellite communication came to India as a vehicle for development communication. SITE project, a multinational and multi institutional project which had family planning as a core area of communication, legitimized the usage of satellite communication in India along with the

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<sup>277</sup> <https://www.cpc.unc.edu> retrieved on 31/03/2020

<sup>278</sup> <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/about-ewc/origins> retrieved on 31/05/2020



proliferation of television in the country. When the reach of television expanded, family planning communication also turned its attention to that medium. With the help of international organisations, many television broadcasters were trained in Mexico to start the television soap genre in India. This was the beginning of the culture of sponsored programme in Indian television and attracted the advertising industry to the medium.

Many social scientists, physicians, demographers, communication professionals from India were trained in the US as a part of the family planning communication project. This ensured a continuous flow of knowledge from the US to India and maintained the knowledge dependence on the country. As mentioned in Chapter 4, USAID took over when the Foundation left the field of family planning communication. USAID tied up with Centre for Communication Programme (CCP) of John Hopkins University to run many programmes in the developing country.

Communication is an extremely subtle exercise and it is a continuous process; family planning communication is more so. It has achieved what is not very easy to achieve otherwise. But, at the same time communication is a small part of the family planning movement and family planning is again a small part of the health system. However, the history of family planning communication shows that the effect has been monumental. It has moulded the understanding of what a woman, a family and a nation should be and legitimised it.

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